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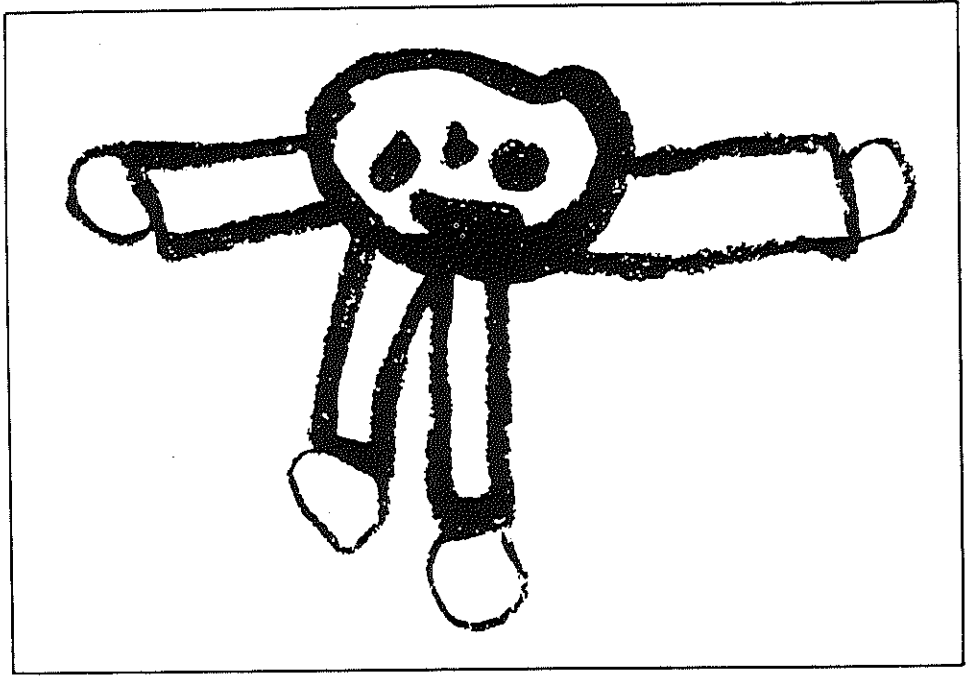
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**USE AND SETTING:  
DEVELOPMENT IN A  
TEACHERS' CENTER**

In November 1972, educators from several parts of the United States met at the University of North Dakota to discuss some common concerns about the narrow accountability ethos that had begun to dominate schools and to share what many believed to be more sensible means of both documenting and assessing children's learning. Subsequent meetings, much sharing of evaluation information, and financial and moral support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund have all contributed to keeping together what is now called the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation.

A major goal of the Study Group, beyond support for individual participants and programs, is to provide materials for teachers, parents, school administrators and governmental decision-makers (within State Education Agencies and the U.S. Office of Education) that might encourage re-examination of a range of evaluation issues and perspectives about schools and schooling. Towards this end, the Study Group has initiated a continuing series of monographs. In addition to discussions of evaluation, the series includes material on children's thinking, children's language, teacher support systems, inservice training, the school's relationship to the larger community. The intent is that these papers be taken not as final statements but as working papers, written by people who are acting on, not just thinking about, these problems, whose implications need an active and considered response.

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University of North Dakota  
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## Introduction

A teachers' center is first of all a place: it has physical continuity and it centralizes previously-scattered resources and experiences. After protracted observation in one teachers' center of long-standing, the Workshop Center for Open Education at City College of New York, it was clear that activities such as courses--previously taught in temporary and usually barren spaces--changed significantly by being offered in the richer, permanent setting. Workshops at which rich materials were offered to teachers on a one-time basis also changed when given a permanent setting. In addition, this setting promoted educational experiences, including independent use of resources, and informal interaction with others, that the usual class or workshop provided only minimally, if at all. Further, as the setting accumulated resources, staff, activities, and participants and their work, and as people became more involved, new uses emerged which, in turn, affected the setting. As these uses developed, revealing new aspects of the setting--new possibilities that could be made available to all participants--they led to yet further diversity in use. Use contributed to building up the setting, just as the setting encouraged development of use. Thus, setting and use appeared to be reciprocal, emerging through relationship to each other. This study was intended to explore this relationship and its implications for the development of teachers' centers.

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By focusing on what is a fundamental feature of most teachers' centers--the fact of physical continuity and centralization of resources and experience, we thought it would be possible to illuminate the issues involved for teachers' centers in working towards self-definition and self-understanding as a facility. How does it come about, we asked, that a center establishes and continues to develop an identity, a visible continuity and presence, that encourages and expresses the possibilities inherent in being truly a *center*?

Our interest in this question grew out of observing and experiencing the Center as an implementation of a number of related ideas that had been the rationale for its establishment. These ideas were concerned with the kinds

of school and teacher education settings that would support teachers in becoming active agents of change and shapers of their own learning. The study depended in its timing on the development of the program to a point where these ideas were sufficiently particularized to be visible in a detail and complexity not predictable at the Center's beginning.

Though we expected to learn more about the Workshop Center through the study, we anticipated that what we found would also be of interest to other centers. Of course, the experience and history of every center is particular to that center. Centers have different roots locally, different contexts for their beginnings. Over time, differences in history, use, and participation result in great individuality among centers. Nevertheless, there are enough commonalities among centers to make the experience of one relevant to another. Two of these seem especially pertinent for this discussion: (1) the fact that permanent workspaces are characteristic of most centers and distinguish them from other forms of teacher support and development, including the one-time workshop which has to be set up and then dismantled in a temporary space; and (2) the fact that most centers, including the Workshop Center, aim to develop diverse uses responding to the individual needs and purposes of participants. Thus most centers sooner or later will have to confront the question of how to develop the possibilities of the permanent workspace to establish an identity and a presence that draws school people to it.

Use and setting at the Workshop Center were documented for the study through observations, questionnaires, interviews, and perusal of the Center's records. A description of the procedures for collecting and interpreting this material, tabulations of questionnaire responses, and examples of how interview material was charted appear in our final report on the project, from which this monograph is taken.\*

#### THE STUDY AS EVALUATION: EMERGENT POINTS OF DISCUSSION

Because of the close relationship of the study to the Center as a program, changes in our thinking about the formulations of the study represent a rethinking of the program as well. In this sense, the study was part of an internal evaluative process, seeking insight into effects rather than a judgment of value or effectiveness.\*\* In the context of the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation series, it has seemed purposeful to indicate some of these changes, themselves part of the effects of use on the setting.

\*The report is available from the Teachers' Centers Exchange and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education (ERIC Doc. #SP017791).

\*\*A previous study of the effects of changes in school setting on the development of curriculum by teachers and children was, similarly, an internal evaluation. The introduction and discussion of methodology in that study contain a more extended discussion, applicable to this study as well, of how the location of the study within the program itself not only determined its conception but influenced its methodology. See Alberty and Weber, *Continuity and Connection: Curriculum in Five Open Classrooms*, New York: Workshop Center for Open Education, 1979.

In two instances especially, our understanding of the Center and the study problem evolved far enough beyond what we had understood when we undertook the study to affect our analysis and presentation of findings. One of these instances was the role of the Center's philosophy in relationship to use. Several of our questions to participants asked about the Center's "open education orientation." It became clear from the responses that this phrasing did not relate to the assumptions about rationale and participation on which the Center was founded, even though the Center's name includes the phrase and its participants include many who call themselves open educators. The responses and their significance are discussed in the last section of the report, where the mutual effects of rationale and use are laid out. The analysis of these responses sharpened our sense of the meaning of the Center's original assumptions and their implications for use, a sharpening that was itself an effect of use on setting.

The formulations about use were also changed in the course of the work. Among the things we had planned to emphasize was what we thought would prove to be increasing diversification of participants' uses. We asked people about different uses they made of the Center and they did indeed respond with accounts of a wide range of different uses and sequences of use. We found, however, that these different uses were not perceived by participants themselves as discrete or isolated occasions (and in this sense clearly different from each other) motivated by a series of specific one-time needs. Participants saw the interrelatedness of their uses as complex rather than linear. They also thought of the Center setting as a whole rather than as discrete resources or responses.

These accounts focused our attention increasingly on the phenomenon of the *interpenetration of uses* that occurs over time in the continuous (permanent) and centralized setting. We came to see that past activities remained to permeate new ones, that different perspectives of individuals and different groups of users influenced each other. (We will describe these and other ways of interpenetration at length.) In addition, we came to see that diversification of use for any individual was actually an aspect of the interpenetration of use. (We discuss this aspect under the rubric *personal configuration of use*.) Finally, we saw how interpenetrating uses were retained in the setting and became part of its increasing *density*, a density that in turn fostered greater interpenetration and diversification of use. These formulations--interpenetration and personal configuration of use; density of setting--went beyond our original conception of diversification of use and have become the major organizing points of our discussion. They have led further to our rethinking the role of the person in the setting, the

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nature of responding to needs within the setting, and the effects of persons on the rationale embodied in the setting.

#### DEFINITIONS

For working purposes, we had defined *setting* as comprising but transcending particular materials, arrangements, programs, participants, uses, and staff. The setting was characterized by continuities of location and visual presence, of activity, person, and relationship. This definition has been much enriched but substantially unchanged by the study. As already mentioned, we were very impressed with participants' appreciation of the wholeness of the setting. They seemed to experience the place as if it were a living, integrated entity. The analysis of the support proffered by the setting for interpenetrated use led us to the further idea of *density* of setting and to the imagery of *fabric*. Though not an entirely exact metaphor (because it suggests both finish and passivity), *fabric* does serve to conjure up certain characteristics of the setting that came through the data: the qualities of interwoven color and texture and of capacity to be shaped by the user according to his or her needs and purposes.

We initially took as inclusive a view of *use* as we did of setting, but our definition of use has been subject to greater rethinking. We began by defining use as any way in which a user related to the setting. Use could then be considered in relationship to either of the two terms, user or setting. Considered in relationship to setting, use could be differentiated according to *aspect of the setting used*. Thus, attendance at scheduled events was considered different from independent use; participation in workshops was different from giving workshops; immediate participation was different from receiving publications; and so on. In practice, this definition of use by aspect of the setting was too limited and even discrepant with the nature of what participants were reporting and what we observed as their diverse and multiple uses. The data allowed us to break through this definition to the conception of *interpenetrated use*, which is the major subject of our report. We rely on our description of a typical day and on the description of interpenetration and personal configuration of use to suggest the many uses of aspects of the setting that went on.

In considering use as *related to user* the situation was somewhat different. Users or participants were defined as all those who related to the Center in any way. Users were grouped into: City College faculty, staff, and students; inservice and preservice teachers; paraprofessionals; parents; principals; current staff;



children; visitors and researchers; former advisors and staff; friends and colleagues; etc. Confounding our efforts to classify uses according to groups of users was the fact that individual members in all of these groups might 'use' materials or might participate in the interactive possibilities of the setting. They might even use them in apparently similar ways. Also, there was considerable cross-over among groups of users: teachers were former students; faculty members were former teachers who had used the Center; principals had attended the Summer Institute as students; staff were also parents. The data directed us to a different way of describing use: the idea of *configurations of use*. The section of the report titled "Uses by Different Groups of Users" describes configurations of use by groups. A later section contains a discussion of personal or individual configurations of use.

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## *Framework and First Analysis*

The Workshop Center was set up in 1972 to serve the diverse needs of people from various groups within the education field, including teachers and all other workers in schools, and to be a facility useful to City College faculty and students. The Center drew on prior experiences in several arenas for its ideas on curricular inquiry, on what it had defined as its obligation to children, and on what constituted support of their learning. It was planned to be a relatively permanent setting that would 'centralize' resources, activities, experiences and interactions previously embedded in the Open Corridor program, the annual City College Summer Institute, and the City College graduate program, "The Child and the Individualized Curriculum."

The implications of differences between the prior settings and the new center were not clear in 1972. In the Open Corridor program, begun in 1967, advisors were assigned to work over time with teachers in their classrooms and schools. Help to teachers generally started around their questions about classroom organization; questions about curriculum were responded to with immediate reference to the individual context. How help for teachers at the Center might differ from help offered in the school was not fully worked out. Differences in the roles of advisor in the schools and advisor at the Workshop Center only surfaced gradually. The implications of extending service to *all* teachers and other school people in New York City could not be completely anticipated. Many people would come from more isolated and difficult situations as well as from other grade levels than the Open Corridor schools generally represented.

Assumptions based on prior experience were the basis for first provisions and arrangements. However, neither prior experience nor rationale predicted the details of arrangements, program, selection of materials, storage, calendar, or what the diverse uses would be. What sorts of materials would be needed by teachers? What would be the uses and the limitations of particular materials and resources? What is independent work? What arrangements would make resources flexibly and easily available for a variety of uses, according to individual need? What

impact would such arrangements have on workshops?  
Should materials be locked up?

Time was spent in thinking through the possibilities and rationale for different materials and activities--how these related to the substance of curriculum as well as how they corresponded to particular classroom situations. Actual use clarified and specified participants' needs and interests, and suggested the kinds of materials and programs that would respond to these needs and interests. New and different needs came out. Staff found ways of supporting these through additions and adaptations of the setting, as well as through direct response.

Preoccupation with storage and access arrangements was one reason why outside consultants were used at first to give workshops. The consultants freed staff to focus on setting up. The staff needed time to adapt and develop workshops in the new context of possibilities created by a permanent setting. Previously advisors had focused on school organization. The experience of the new Center staff, hired because of their content expertise, was largely with one-time workshops in settings that had to be prepared anew each time. Awareness that these experiences might be modified by the permanent setting and curricular aspect of the Center affected the choice of consultants. Consultants were selected who brought an extended view of deep questions in their disciplines, and who could frame those questions with the cutting edge of current work: What are children trying to make sense of? What do adults need to experience--to know--in order to respond and serve as support for children's inquiry? Workshops given in this frame could allow staff to look further at how the setting might need to be structured in order to evoke participants' reflections on how the concrete experiences they were having related to these questions. Staff gradually began to take over more responsibility for workshops and tried different workshop formats. They developed experience in observing and thinking about where the questions typically asked by participants lead, and how aspects of the Center interconnected to illuminate, extend, and enrich the questions.

As these changes evolved, Workshop Center staff began to see that relying on self-contained, one-time, how-to workshops, on the resourcefulness or 'dynamism' of specific workshop leaders or staff, would not be sufficient to release participants' interests and independent use. Such experiences, which certainly had their role, did not involve participants deeply in developing their own connections to materials and areas of inquiry.

An analysis of the calendars shows that gradually scheduling changed, too. At first workshop and other activities were scheduled simultaneously. As independent use

grew parallel to scheduled activities, the workshops were reduced in number and were modified in other ways to make them more permeable to connection with independent work. Passing observation or more intense interaction then become part of the fabric of possibilities for participants, a fabric planned and prepared but specified by participation at the moment. Observation extended participants' view of what could be done in the setting; the possibilities for spontaneous interaction enriched an activity and the sense of community of use.

The idea of staff always *giving* workshops began to give way to having at least some staff simply available for conversation and consultation. During these periods, staff were encouraged to pursue their own curricular interests sometimes, working with unfamiliar materials or extending expertise they already had, and to make these explorations visible for participants to observe or join. Such explorations would not only add to staff understanding, but would illustrate for participants the independent inquiry process and the interest of materials. In fact, the visibility of all Center activities, including maintenance and clean-up, was considered essential in ensuring that visitors became real participants with a sense of familiarity and ownership, which invited further use:

*A staff member was working on the wheel, perfecting his own technique. The workshop that was scheduled began to assemble and a couple of them stopped and were watching Stan at the wheel. He was being very conscientious and was going to stop and go on to do the workshop. And I said, 'Oh no. Just keep on, because how are they ever going to see what goes on on the wheel unless you allow this observing, whether it's the workshop or not. This is part of their joining, to see you do your thing--and then in a few minutes, you can drop it when you come to a suitable point. . . .' The point is that the only way in which you could have an expanding field of what was going on was if people were openly working and could be observed to be working openly. (I)*

L. Weber, recalling early development of access

There were other changes in staff role. Staff continued to offer their greater familiarity with the setting as part of the resources, but it became clear that their role could not be limited to servicing participants' requests. Participants had to be drawn into their own active use rather than stating a request and waiting for staff to fulfill it. The setting had to be developed in ways that would evoke participants' own activity in behalf of their learning and professional growth rather than engaging them solely in the selection of workshops, or other activities, with no further connection to the *place*:

The source of quotes is indicated as follows: (I) = interview, (Q) = questionnaire, (O) = observation.

*. . . our first aim is to provide and extend the experience of the workshop (setting) itself as an alternative facility, that is, a facility whose own organization offers starting points for teachers seeking change. (Title III Continuation Proposal, 1973, p. II-B-1)*

Answering participants' inquiries, staff indicated the materials, books, displays, or whatever they considered would be responsive to the participants' immediate requests or interests. With the setting prepared, the staff were freed from the burden of reorganizing the entire setting around each request, as if each were unique and separate. They did not need to present themselves as teachers in the didactic sense, even in workshops, passing on information and opinion. They did not need to hover. They could step back from their role as 'expert' and become facilitators of participants' use of the setting.

Participants were offered an initial view of what was there and were invited to select, combine, extend, and shape their own use. Staff could then join in conversation, inquiring further about the context of participants' requests, about the problems they were trying to address, or about what was going on in their classrooms. They could join participants, observing with interest their selection and shaping of independent or group use. In responding to participants, they did not need to reduce the complexity of what they had come to know about the materials or topics by pre-selecting what participants could engage with.

In the prepared setting, staff were also able to take advantage of connections they observed in participants' work or, for that matter, in their own. By joining participants in use they could add to their understanding of the possibilities for use, since each participant's or group's use was different. They were not 'interrupted' or 'hassled' by the unexpected or 'accidental,' since these were viewed instead as learning occasions.

Closer connections with City College faculty and staff, and with students, were sought as a way of adding the uses and perspectives of different groups of users to the setting. Since faculty and students were on-site, they would create a casual, drop-in use that would encourage drop-in use generally. They would be further resources to support inquiry, and for the development of new programs of use, established with a college standard of distinct requirements.

Observations of the use of the setting continue to feed the discussion of how to modify the setting so as to make it more responsive, and more available to individual definitions of need and determination of use. These changes are described in more detail in other Center documentation.

#### A TYPICAL DAY

The Workshop Center is located on the ground floor of one of the most heavily used buildings on the campus of the City

College on the heights overlooking central Harlem, and the corridor leading to the Center is, from morning until night, full of the flow of people, since it goes on past the Center to the school cafeteria and to other offices and classrooms. You experience the Center before you see it. Displays and overflow work from the Center cover the walls of the hall--on this day, there are large mural exercises and other work by teachers from the Summer Institute; a wall-size Egyptian tomb painting by children, donated by a former member of the Advisory; articles in tribute to Piaget; a set of pictures and documents about work in schools and at the Center from the celebration of the Center's tenth anniversary; pages from a recent Center publication; etc. (During the Summer Institute, a wall was set aside for newspaper articles on science news, things to do in the city, school issues such as busing.) The hall displays catch the eyes of passers-by (mostly students) who often stop to look and read, and sometimes come in to ask about the Center.

Nowadays most people enter the Center through the office door.\* Just inside the door, the entry is boxed in by files and cabinets on which are posted job openings, events, courses, and conferences of interest; current articles from English and United States papers on everything from specific schools and testing to poems about the city and notes from friends overseas and out-of-town. The office is crowded; it is lined with bookshelves and covered with papers and more papers.

Lillian Weber, who, as Professor of Elementary Education at the College, is released part-time for her duties as Director of the Center, works simultaneously at answering mail, talking to another faculty member about accommodating a large class for clay work, and greeting a group of Puerto Rican visitors from New Jersey, with whom she will be meeting shortly. Earlier, Lillian had met briefly with Henny Wong, the Center's full-time staff member, who doubles as workshop staff and administrative aide. Together they had sorted out the day's schedule.

Having looked around the office, the Puerto Rican group trickles into the next room through a connecting door and enters the Center proper: two long, narrow, two-story high former physics laboratories. In this middle room, four 15-foot-long free-standing oak workbenches left from the earlier period cross the room at regular intervals while two more are set against each end wall. Walking down the aisle between the benches and the wall, one passes the woodwork area (surmounted by a substantial wood storage loft) and tool storage on the left, and the kiln and clay work-in-progress shelves on the right. The next bench is taken up with two levels of animal habitats and terrariums, including a seven-year-old self-sustaining pond environment. Suspended from the ceiling is a beehive and an X-ray of its interior, as well as other

\*The register and guest books show that about 3,200 users, excluding class users, made some 8,700 visits to the Center between Sept. and April 1980, while this study was in progress. These figures are typical of use since the Center's founding: annual use is generally 5,000 users.





displays and evidences of teachers' work. The remaining benches in the room are clear on top but filled underneath with bins of various art, math, and science materials, including sand and water tables on wheels. Overhead are clothes wires for hanging more work, a teacher-made geodesic structure of rolled newspaper, a display of fall leaves laminated in plastic. Shelves and cabinets along the wall contain science and math books--everything from the Nuffield series to books on nature in the city; science materials chosen to foster investigation of physical knowledge--pendulums and balances, lights and other means of optical exploration, etc.; math games, Cuisinaire rods, pattern blocks, etc.; and art materials ranging from crayons to silkscreens. On this morning, some papier mâché masks made in the previous day's workshop are drying on one of the tables. At the far end of the room is a kitchen area with necessary cooking supplies and equipment.

While the Puerto Rican group is looking at all of this, students in a Spanish conversation class, which meets daily at the Center, walk through to the kitchen area where they will be doing a cooking activity.\* Introductions between the two groups made, the Puerto Rican group gradually moves into the next room. While the Spanish class goes on, Henny Wong works to prepare a tadpole breeding ground at the other end of the room. A student who has dropped in to meet a friend, stops to watch Henny. Two student teachers come in wanting to learn how to use the kiln for their class project and make an appointment to talk with Henny at a later date. Then he takes a call from a teacher who has a sick turtle. Someone from the neighboring Day Care Training program comes in to schedule daytime and evening workshops, and also to discuss budget. Henny walks back down the hall with her to xerox an article on parent contribution that the Center wants to distribute. The Spanish class leaves, having shared their cooking with the students and staff who are around. Meanwhile, in the far room, the Puerto Rican group has been meeting with Lillian Weber. This room is entered from the kitchen area by passing through a walk-in supply closet. It contains first of all, the Center's two darkrooms, snuggled under another storage loft. Another laboratory bench stands in front of the darkroom and serves as photography workspace and also as a reception-and-coffee area for more public occasions. Beyond the bench the room is open and all the other furniture is movable. Two large meeting tables and many wooden chairs are pushed back against shelves that contain the Center's library: children's writing, children's literature, child development, theory on reading, language, etc., social studies materials, art and music books, periodicals such as *Natural Science*, *Principal*, and *Outlook*. At the far end of the room, in addition to the main collection of books, are shelves of musical instruments, a typewriter, materials for sewing and

\*In the 1979-80 school year, class sessions at the Center numbered 131, including classes that met at the Center only once and those that had all sessions there. Class sessions are scheduled before 4:00 P.M. and after 6:00 P.M. A special workshop course enables students to put together a course from workshops on the public calendar (held 4-6:00 P.M.).

weaving, and another closet (used for storage of documentation, films, slides, some supplies and equipment). The walls are lined up to the ceiling with children's work, documents about schools and curricula put together by teachers and parents, Summer Institute work, photographs of the spring institute, Center publications. The walls *speak*, inviting careful attention, making suggestions.

During lunch, the Puerto Rican group, joined by an Israeli visitor, watch a film. Discussion of issues raised by the film continues over lunch. Afterwards, the group moves to the middle room to do some printing and woodwork, and to discuss the use of a rotting log brought in the day before for another workshop. There is much browsing among books and displays, and constant discussion over the work.

Henny is in the office working on orders for new supplies and answering questions from a stream of students. Some of them have been asked by other professors to do projects at the Center. Another wants to borrow an xylophone for her work in school and goes through the workshop in the middle room to get it. A potential applicant for the Summer Institute calls for information. Two students who have never been to the Center come with some math problems--a friend had told them they could get help here. They look around, mingling with the Puerto Rican group, before taking out some math books. After a bit, they ask Henny for some materials mentioned in the books. He shows them where to find what they want, and asks what they are working on. It appears they are planning a lesson on measurement and Henny offers a few ideas and other things they might look at.

Towards the end of the afternoon the Center gets busier. The Puerto Rican group breaks up and gradually leaves after more browsing and buying some of the Center's publications. The student aides who help man the office have gone off to class. In their place appear the leaders for the 4-6:00 P.M. workshop announced on the Center calendar, some high school students who have come to join the workshop, and teachers and student teachers who have been in school all day. A teacher volunteer is working in the office on the mailing list. The phone rings regularly and whoever is there answers. Henny constantly moves between office and workshop rooms, answering questions, getting materials, talking with visitors. A parent calls about arrangements for the parent breakfast meeting on Friday. Lillian stops a bilingual teacher passing through to share an account of what the Puerto Rican group was involved with, and begins working on the minutes of a recent meeting of the Center's Policy Board. In between, she greets a student, asking her for a copy of a paper she wrote so that it can be shared with Center participants. The office is a swirl of talk and work and movement in-and-out.

The scheduled workshop on movement and math begins in the far room with some discussion about movement words. The workshop has been going on weekly and, though open to all, has a core of *regulars*. As per plan to work with clay, the group moves into the middle room, where others are working independently on their own projects. The movement group finds itself short of clay, so Lillian pulls out a new pack from under a bench. The new pack is so big, so *delicious*, that the group decides to work on it as one big mound together. The mound, by dint of joint pushing and pulling, becomes first a face and gradually an abstract, craggy mountain. The workshop leader records the words the group uses to describe the mountain on some newsprint. Office staff and independent workers join in to admire. Lillian suggests taking a picture, using a raking light to show the cragginess. The group is thrilled with its work and it is unanimously decided to let the piece stand for a few days.

Back to the office, some experienced teachers stop in to say hello on their way to a 6:00 P.M. graduate class and are taken in to see the mountain. Discussion moves on to some new regulations on test-giving that have been announced by a local school district and how the teachers have responded. Lillian mentions some items from a National Consortium on Testing meeting that she has just attended and shares an account of what the Puerto Rican group did earlier.

At 6:00 P.M. a class from the Day Care Training program begins at the Center, but the Center is officially closed and the staff leaves.

#### USES BY DIFFERENT GROUPS

##### *Use by Teachers*

The picture of a *typical day* needs to be balanced with a picture, albeit a partial one, of use over time. During the period of this study, there was an enormous range of use of the Center by teachers--from getting specific activity and material ideas to becoming more reflective about their work through informal interaction, observation, and participation. These uses are discussed and illustrated throughout the subsequent sections of this report. The following excerpts do not do justice to the variety of these uses, but they at least suggest some of the range and specificity:

A day care teacher: *I looked at (the musical instruments) and how they were arranged, too. They were arranged according to how they were related, percussion over here, string over there. I took that idea back and--no one helped me with this . . .--decided I was going to do that. . . . Before they were on different little shelves*

*in the music area, which was not so convenient (for her students) . . . I could not begin to tell you everything I have gotten from here. For instance, I came in one day and saw string painting, just hanging there, somebody must have done it--and I looked at it and I looked at it, and somebody said 'you like that?' and I said 'yes, I like that' and then he showed me a book. From that book I went to other books and from there I went into the classroom and we tried it, and it came out nice . . . Some of the children took the idea further. . . . (I)*

*H, whose prior teaching was at the junior high level, showed me his K-6 classroom. He mentioned that the cooking area, sand table and woodwork area all were ideas he'd gotten from the Workshop Center. He pointed to a mural by the kids decorating one wall as having come from the Summer Institute sessions on big art movements. H has also used the Center for information on animal care, to get ideas for ordering materials for his classroom, to talk--e.g., about reading. (O)*

*An experienced day care teacher came to the Center with all kinds of questions she had built up about her practice: After a while you feel you have enough practical experience. You do something over and over again, and you see your mistakes and you try to improve on that, but I felt a real gap in my knowledge of what was occurring, what was really happening between my interactions with children, the use of materials. And I never really was that observant. I was always in the thick of things . . . Once I found I could do that, step back and do a little more observation and learn from it (she had taken a course on observation at the Center), that really helped a lot. The readings helped. . . . There were questions on organization, on intervention, which to me is a particular concern . . . because I became interested in seeing that children do have particular interests. . . ." (I)*

Teachers working in hard-pressed and isolated situations reported finding opportunities at the Center for relaxed interaction with other teachers, and for confirmation of their insights and ideas:

*I find that I need (someone to talk to) more than anything else, somebody else to share ideas with and to kind of confirm what you're thinking. Again, when you're out there by yourself you do sort of feel like odd-man-out, and you are odd-man-out, and you get the feeling that 'maybe what I'm doing isn't quite the way, or even valid' and you need a kind of confirmation. Now I did it for a long time, not even knowing what it was, but I did it because it felt good to me and I could see the children grow in it. But to know that there's somebody who does it and also to know that there is a tremendous amount of knowledge that backs it up-- . . . (I)*



Casual base-touching use of the Center as a source of confirmation became more important to teachers as a group in 1975, which was the beginning of the budget crises in New York City schools. The cutbacks left many teachers who used the Center temporarily out of work or transferred to very different settings. The urgency of the situation led to the establishment of monthly meetings focusing on ways of coping and helping teachers to reconfirm their basic ideas about what was necessary for children's growth. These sessions, which have continued with changes in content and format and are now on the public calendar, were mentioned by many teachers as typical of the most significant part of their experience at the Center.

Teachers also reported coming to the Center for discussion and interaction on extra-classroom issues in education that impinged on their work and with which they had to deal: testing, mainstreaming, bilingualism, cultural pluralism. This discussion went on in casual exchange around other work as well as in meetings of various sizes and degrees of formality.

#### *Use by staff*

The same aspects of the Center that supported teachers' work also supported the staff's growth beyond the increment of experience attendant on any job. The presence of materials in which a staff member lacked experience inevitably led to experiment:

*Each staff member came in with some particular expertise and most of my background was math and science. Not so much photography. I learned the basics (of photography) elsewhere, but I really developed that part of my own self at the Workshop Center. . . . the accessibility of the darkroom and materials there all the time allowed me to. . . . I also learned quite a bit from (another staff member) who was much more interested in experimenting with the image on the paper inside the darkroom. I was much more interested in the image at the time the picture was taken. . . I think I learned much more about things that might be possible to do in the darkroom. . . and he began to see the images themselves through the camera a little differently. . . . So that when teachers would come in for photography, they could pick up more, have a bigger spectrum to gain experience from. . . (My experience of learning from working with another staff member) was similar with materials in science. (I)*

The possibility of observing each others' styles of working; the contact with teachers and other visitors from many areas of school life; and the books, discussions, speakers--were all reported as part of staff use for their own development.



As budget cuts and other circumstances sent staff back to the classroom or into other education work, they developed other ways of using the Center and used their staff experience as a reference point in their new jobs.

#### *Use by City College faculty*

For faculty, yet another spectrum of possible uses was opened. These uses were not all present at the beginning of the Center, which was established with special funding and thus was not originally an integrated part of the School of Education. Faculty were drawn into using the Center, however, by the constant invitation to join or lead activities, by the organization of special workshops introducing the Center's curricular possibilities, and by other forms of outreach. Faculty began to work alongside staff and as staff. Use by faculty developed enormously so that the Center was a recognized and valued part of the College's education programs, supported largely by the College.

Faculty scheduled many class sessions and whole courses at the Center. Single class sessions were a way for faculty to acquaint students with the possible uses of the Center or to engage in some activity as a group to demonstrate ways of working or uses of some materials. The Department of Elementary Education scheduled student teaching and content seminars at the Center. Publications of the Center were used as class readings. Interviews and observation offered many instances of faculty using the Center as the basis for assignments for students, referring to materials and books that were not otherwise available on campus. They would also ask students to observe workshop sessions and, for example, describe the possibilities for teaching reading. The Center not only enhanced existing coursework, but lent itself to faculty development of new courses and new course formats. Faculty developed mini-courses in reading, for example, based on use of the Center facility. A "Workshop Center independent use" course was offered.

The Center has also been used by faculty for their own development. Faculty members described browsing among materials as other participants did; engaging in independent exploration of materials or, with their classes, pursuing an inquiry which they would not otherwise have undertaken. For example, a professor and her class organized a curriculum on Africa, building a Masai village and exploring other aspects of Masai life, as the context for discovering and learning to use African literature. Faculty observed and interacted with each other and with students in ways they could not do ordinarily, which served as a source of learning for them. They also joined discussions when invited speakers came to the Center, so that it served as part of their connection to the

broader field. In addition, the Center was the site of some doctoral work and independent research by faculty and staff members.

Some faculty were assigned regularly to the Workshop Center as part of the 4-6:00 P.M. workshop staff. With their consultation and consent, they were paired with other faculty or staff, which led to joint planning as well as co-leadership of workshops. Pairing was planned to create new content connections (e.g., between math and movement) and to broaden perspectives on process. In addition, faculty assigned to the Center attended staff meetings at which calendar schedules were determined. These meetings drew on the faculty members' observations of participants' needs, on their expertise, and on ideas they had about what they could do in the setting, and included discussions with other staff about the purposes of the calendar offerings in light of the longer-range directions of the Center. According to faculty members, these kinds of joint planning efforts and reflection were exciting collegial experiences. They said that their work alongside staff, and as staff, had consequences for their use of the Center with classes and for the teaching they did away from the Center. It influenced their approach to materials and curriculum and their understanding of connection with students:

*C has become familiar with new areas of the Center through working together with another faculty-staff member. She had a better idea now of how to use them to support learning in her own area. She has built workshops more spontaneously than she was accustomed to in classes, where she always worked from an outline. This looser style influenced her class work. For the first time, C has scheduled a class to meet regularly at the Center. She thinks this makes a difference in the class. In most classes the students remain oriented to her, even though she wants them to interact with each other. In the Workshop Center class, students relate to each other without looking to her all the time. They bring in their own experience and beliefs. They act like adults rather than just reacting to her. . . . (I)*

*K finds that the same course taught in a classroom and at the Center is different. The difference is not just quantitative, that the Center has more materials to work with. It's that your course goal enlarges to include helping students learn how to use the setting independently. (I)*

#### *Use by students*

Students used the Center for courses--including independent work study--and assignments. They found the Center helpful not only with assignments made specifically to be

carried out at the Center but with their assignments in general. Undergraduates saw ways in which the Center modelled things they were learning in classes about classroom organization, social interaction, curricular inquiry, and observation. Displays of children's and teachers' work were concrete examples that helped with student teaching needs and, again, in visualizing what was possible. Listening and interacting in workshops or in independent work with working teachers and with a broad spectrum of those engaged in education, including foreign visitors, had consequences for their work. The Center allowed students to interact more informally with their professors and with professors they never had in courses, to get a taste in passing of other classes, and to glimpse possibilities for their future professional growth:

*A graduate student: The Workshop Center has been of great help to me in the development of my own ideas and in the practice of them. Not only has the Workshop Center helped me to interchange ideas with City College students but also to interchange ideas with professors and other guests that have lectured in this Center from time to time. These contacts have made my work as a graduate student easier and fruitful. (Q)*

*A graduate student: I found the Center helpful when something in a course was confusing. It offers resources for her to look into something further. Classes in the Center also allow her to know her instructors differently than classes elsewhere "because the instructor is not behind a desk . . . You're able to speak to them before, during or after a class, which I find more adult-like. . . ." (I)*

*Use by parents, principals, administrators,  
and other users*

Parents, principals, administrators, and other users have joined workshops, Summer Institutes, conferences, advisory discussions and most other activities of the Center. Parent use also extended to special parent sessions which focused at times on specific school issues and at other times on the parent role in education:

*A parent: Most important has been the ability to gain perspective and think through the large issues with persons who share values, bring intelligence and insights, before I have to go public 'out there.' (Q)*

Luncheons and other kinds of sessions were organized around principals' issues. These events addressed principals' needs for interaction and mutual support, especially at times of budget crisis in the schools. Some principals also engaged in informal interaction at the

Center. Publications and discussion material from the Center were used back in the school with parents or teaching staff.

Other users of the Center included teacher educators from other colleges or teachers' centers, staff of other programs, national and foreign visitors from many areas of education, researchers, etc. On questionnaires, participants in this group tended to list themselves as 'friends,' as 'recipients of publications,' and as using the Center for 'information, materials, ideas' and as a 'point of reference for ideas and positions that support (their) work.' Few in these groups reported heavy use of the physical facility. Some administrators and faculty from other colleges, in fact, had never set foot in it or were at best infrequent visitors. Nevertheless, they affirmed a continuing relationship to the Center based on its publications and its work with teachers:

The head of a threatened program in another city: *It served as a model and as something to hold onto when our situation was retrogressing to a kind of education which saw the child as a statistic and a product. Even though it was too far away for us to drop in for comfort and support, Notes--and just knowing the Center was there helping teachers and that somewhere people still cared about kids--these things helped a great deal . . . and still do. (Q)*

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## *Interpenetration of Use, Density of Setting*

One effect of the centralized setting on the way the Workshop Center was used was the mutual influence and interpenetration of uses that developed, such that different uses, though remaining distinct, were also linked and modified. As the observation of a typical day illustrates, a setting had developed that seemed to defy singular use, that seemed naturally to mingle different experiences, materials, and groups of users. A visit to the Center almost inevitably involved an engagement with more than one aspect of the setting and brought into play more than one process of use. One use led to another; different uses influenced each other in structure and content; over time, individual use was diversified, not in an additive way but as a gradual, evolving process. A person's first use of the Center led to other, different uses and was in turn influenced by these uses. Use cut across a participant's identification as a teacher, student or faculty member; across beginning and experienced users, and across starting points of use. Individuals developed personal configurations of use and these were a major instance of the interpenetration of use. Looking at the development of use across many individuals and over time, what occurred was an interweaving of uses.

Interpenetrating use in the centralized setting revealed and created underlying networks of connection between different aspects of the setting and between uses by different groups. Once made, these connections could be developed further and raised as new possibilities of use for others. The continuity of place and staff meant that preparations for workshops made a permanent contribution to the setting and that work which was completed could be left as a similar contribution to future use. It meant that people could return again and again to add to and extend previous work, leaving with staff and other participants, if not the work itself then the memory of it as another possibility of the setting. Through these and other means, a fabric of possible uses emerged, which was constantly enriched as previous uses were continued and new uses integrated. In other words, the setting became more and more dense with possibility. Density was the reciprocal effect of interpenetrating use.

Interpenetration of use and density of setting are virtually inextricable. The data that describe one also serve to describe the other. It is tempting to do a *Rashomon* presentation--to offer the same data several times adapted appropriately to the differing terms of setting and use. To some extent this has been unavoidable, but to do it fully would be inordinately bulky and impractical. Instead, our discussion will take the perspective of use, focusing on how use of the place becomes interpenetrating in response to the density of the setting.

#### VISIBILITY AND DENSITY

To the participant first coming to the Center, its dense setting was *stunning* and *eye-opening* in its impact:

*I mean there's everything here. It was like walking into a candy store for teachers, and seeing everything that you'd ever wanted to see. It was just such an eye-opening experience because I'd never seen anything like it.* (I)

*The best part of the Center is the feeling that engulfs a person when she first arrives. There is a total eye catching movement from one thing to another which shows the quality of the work being done by students, teachers, and staff. Anyone who loves learning immediately falls in love with the place.* (Q)

Participants reported that the setting itself was one of the things they first came to the Center to see. They came to look around, and to see what the place was about. The setting was the first step in their use:

*As an undergraduate passing the Center on her way to class, F was intrigued by the work from schools shown on the walls. She began coming in to browse for a few minutes before or after her classes. She is now a graduate student and full-time teacher who has had classes at the Center but whose primary use is still for independent exploration and self-selected workshops.* (I)

Other participants came initially with a specific question or signed up, as an introduction, for a workshop or event. But the significance of the first visit for almost all participants we surveyed or interviewed lay in the visible possibilities of the whole setting rather than in the question or the event that brought them:

*I was taken there by my then professor who wanted the class to hear some special speaker. There was so much taking place at the same time, which made me very curious. From time to time I dropped by and became very much involved.* (Q)



The effects of the setting were more than a matter of eliciting curiosity or astonishment. The accumulation of resources, past work, displays,\* the simultaneity and publicly visible nature of Center events; the intermingling of people from different groups of users led to observations and experiences that were additional to the participant's immediate purpose. Even the simplest and most pointed visit--to pick up material for a workshop, to sign up for a conference, to get a course grade--included *seeing* something, *talking* to somebody, *being reminded* of something already done or still meant to be done. A workshop in progress about pattern, where the discussion had turned to printing, brought to the mind of the visiting teacher a child rearranging counters in the classroom that day. There was a new newspaper clipping about the reading tests to read on the bulletin board. A new piece of work caught the eye--or an old one on bees suddenly attracted interest because today the kids had read about bees in a story:

\*The term display has a special reference. Its meaning is important in grasping the way in which the setting supports *active, self-determined, individual* use by participants. It includes charts designed by teachers to organize and share their inquiries, or questions about materials and concrete phenomena. These charts are a form of report on work that also helps teachers think through what they have done. 'Display' also refers to actual work, by children or participants, such as a mural or a sculpture, which is left as a record and evoker of possibilities. Because of their visibility and interest, materials and resources themselves (for example, the animal habitats or books) are also sometimes referred to as displays, particularly in conjunction with browsing activity, though with no implication of the need for keeping 'hands-off.'

In this report, the term *display* does not refer to models of things teachers can make for their class-

*Two teachers came for some books on insects. First they greeted old friends on the staff, looked at the animal habitats, and then browsed among the science books. One of them found an unlooked-for book on patterns in nature, a topic she and her class had pursued last year. The book gave her the idea of picking it up again in the context of her current work on insects. In conversation with the staff, the possibilities of bringing the classes to the Center to see the animals and of getting some of the offspring of the Center's crickets were mentioned.*  
(0)

The setting was such that people reported building their use largely on its possibilities for browsing, observation, and interaction. Though they might sometimes come with a particular aim in mind, they often simply counted on finding something interesting going on, seeing something, or meeting someone to join. They relied on their knowledge of the Center's overall possibilities rather than on a specific plan to ensure a productive use. In these instances, browsing, observation, and interaction were primary uses of the Center. They are, of course, processes of making connections, of linking, in themselves.

*Well, sometimes in passing something catches your eye and if you comment on it the person doesn't seem to be too involved, the person wants to talk, and then it starts. Or the person passes you by. . . .* (1)

*I felt a freedom to go in and touch upon things that I'd be interested in and of course along the way I'd be seeing a lot of other things happening.* (1)

rooms, to comprehensive presentations of what someone thinks is necessary information on weaving or gerbils, or to commercial displays. Displays are not didactic or final statements on a subject. They do not seek to cover a subject but to uncover an aspect of it. They are concrete, specific instances of work organized reflectively.

A teacher's description of the displays at the Workshop Center will perhaps make the distinction more graphically:

*I knew that (the displays) were not just your typical chart out of a book, you know--'how-to' and you sit in a room and make it nice and pretty. The charts seemed to indicate that individual kinds of thought had gone into them, and again because they weren't your pretty, showcase kind of charts, you knew that what someone did was accepted . . . you just get a feeling that the individual is really respected. I could see it from the work. . . .*  
(1)

*There are a number of times when the principal of my school will say 'you want to go to the Center?' (He drives up that way on his way home) and we'll stop and just browse. What d'we browse at? Well, some of the curriculum materials. I will look at bulletin boards, things that have gone on at different workshops previously and I have not attended. Focus in on the environment of the animals. What new things are there. . . .*  
(1)

Things overseen, overheard, or momentarily joined in this way extended, diversified, and modified participants' uses. Participants reported being influenced in further use by their observation of new materials or of familiar materials in unexpected juxtaposition, by seeing teachers or staff doing things they hadn't thought to try or hadn't known they could do at the Center, or by discovering through browsing another event or occasion to come back for, another book to read. Over time, one use linked to another use and individual use became a configuration of many, interrelated uses. These, in turn, were helped to become even deeper sources of connection and thought by the density of the setting. The following excerpt describes the mobilization within the larger setting of resources for a special exploration of natural materials. The exploration used all areas of the Center, went on throughout the year, and involved staff and participants. It was pursued in workshops, classes, independent activity, and informal discussion. The account accurately conveys the impressions of richness, of intense activity, of things to be commented on, of things to be picked up and tried in passing or in greater depth, that capture the density of the setting in general:

*The air was filled with smells of the forest. Whole sections from a forest floor covered one table--a mound of earth dug up without disturbing the layers of fallen leaves and small spring flowers pushing their way through the cording of vine and root and the dank mix of old crumbled leaves, twigs, earthworm casings and rocks. On nearby tables the displays were studies in contrast: a tray of sterilized, combed, clean earth; soil samples from a baseball field and from an empty lot not yet grown over, and loam dug from a natural clay bed. Elsewhere were set out large tubs of sand and stones of various finenesses and colors, and next to these, pieces of cement and bricks. On the other side stood two water tables. In another room, in its way also dramatic, were stories and poetry about natural materials, photographs from natural science magazines; prints of paintings of forest floor, sand, and water; posters of flowers from the Brooklyn and New York Botanical Gardens. (Weber, "An Approach to Natural Materials," 1977, p. 28)\**

\**The Teacher as Learner*, Workshop Center for Open Education, 1977.

Interviews revealed that participants were aware of the presence of much prior activity, exploration, and thought



behind the setting. The work and experiences of others were clearly incorporated into what they saw at any one point. The resources and activities, though representing distinct uses from different times and different people, were not simply a collection of curiosities or 'how-to' directives for participants. They were part of an integrated whole:

*A teacher: Well, I would have to say that the atmosphere was deliberately created, organized and created so that you would get this kind of--I mean I don't think it's a haphazard approach. I think the Center does give you a visual plus a psychological thing when you walk in there. It's not just flung together. You see areas that have been thought through. . . . (I)*

The visibility of the residue of prior use--interpenetrating with current use--gave the setting a self-evident quality for participants that supported their browsing, observation, interaction, and independent use. Things clearly could be done without asking for approval, at the participants' own pace and choice:

*A student and teacher: After I got into courses that were directly involved with education . . . I knew that this would help me from having been in here, just looking at the books, I looked around, anyplace, all over the place, and I saw different things going on . . . I like to come in every day. . . . (I)*

Again, the facts of continuity of place and staff meant that experience in one activity at the Center or questions raised there could be brought back for further exploration in other activities. Participants found they could bring back to the Center confusions induced by a class to pursue individually with staff or other participants. A possibility sparked in a workshop could be pursued independently. A problem posed in the course of independent work could be brought up in class. Moreover, there was interconnection with work outside the Center and the College. Things seen at the Center could be tried in school; questions that arose about how these things worked or did not work could be brought back to explore with people at the Center:\*

\*Obviously questions from school--about curriculum, about the children, about the context of their work--also were brought to the Center. The support of work in school is, of course, the ultimate purpose of the Center. We are dealing with it only incidentally here because our main point is that the links between uses at the Center created a strengthened and enriched base of support for work in schools by encouraging expanded and diversified use of the Center.

*What I do is, if I get something from what I'm listening to (at the Center), I go home and I think about it, and then right away I'll go into the classroom and play with it, so I don't drop it and forget the whole schema of the thing. Like that, I find it interesting and it lasts longer with me, and I find how to develop it further. . . . And I like, if I'm in a course, and I run into a confusion, there are different places I can go to try and satisfy that confusion. For instance, I can go to the books, or to someone who knows about what I'm interested in. Immediate satisfaction! (I)*

Connections between activities resulted in an enrichment of use for other participants as well as the individual because through these connections new aspects and ways of using the setting were brought to their attention. The classmate who heard of an observation made in a workshop learned about workshops as well as benefitting from the observation and the discussion it provoked.

Independent activities and experiences were shaped by the richness of setting. Materials, resources, and examples of work continually were observed to evoke questions-- "What is this for?" "How did they do that?" "Look at that! I wonder if my kids could do that?" These in turn led to inquiries that built on the setting. The participant studied and selected from the possibilities he or she thought would be relevant to the inquiry. Thus, for an inquiry on light, the participant might have been started by bulbs or prisms or shadow puppets but, in the following instance, was inspired by what she found to trace the question back a step:

*A participant in the Summer Institute decided to do something with light and went to the closet for a lightbulb and related paraphernalia. In the closet, she sees a generator near the light materials, and realizes she doesn't know how it works. She spends a few hours figuring it out. (0)*

Exploration of persistent questions--for example, questions about perspective or about size and scale--was supported by the possibilities for overlap between independent work and consultation and the Center's programs in language, math, science, and art. Referring to other occasions of use, participants were often observed to exclaim: "Oh! That's like . . . (what we were doing in blocks last week, or when we looked at the leaves under the microscope with Henny, or what enlarging the mural was about)."

Continuity of staff was part of the support for the extension and connection of participants' exploration in different uses. Staff brought to the participant's question their prior experience with where such questions could go and with how other participants had used the setting to pursue them. They could point to materials which had been accumulated in response to similar inquiries by previous participants and which they knew to be relevant to such inquiries. They pointed out other resources and possibilities to expand uses rather than to model them, knowing that the participant's own inquiry could reveal possibilities and connections previously unseen. Asking further about the participant's work, staff often discovered other aspects of their concerns that led to suggestions for additional materials, to other kinds of approaches to the question, and to activities, occasions, or people related to participants'

concerns. Staff helped bring the prior or simultaneous uses of others to participants' present use, and served as a link to future uses. The staff was part of the density of the setting, fostering the interpenetration of uses.

The visible presence in the setting of more than was required for any one activity was a stimulation for participants and staff alike to expand their thinking about use. In the following interview, a teacher described how workshops at the Center differed from those given in a room only temporarily fitted up by the workshop leader. The passage emphasizes how many directions of thinking the setting could stimulate and thereby implies the role of setting in prompting connections to new uses, as well as in influencing what was done on the immediate occasion. Here again, because the setting integrated past use, it functioned as intermediary between uses by the same individual at different times and between uses by different individuals at different times:

*First of all, a lot of materials around makes you think of possibilities of using them. Whereas if there's only the materials that are on the table, that's all you think about using. So if there are other things around, whether you're using them or not, it impacts on you. I think also the displays of work others have done make a big difference. It makes you think about what you're going to do. It makes you think about what you can do at school. It makes you think about what the room looks like, if this is really just for display or if this is work that kids or teachers or somebody has participated in. All of those things are subtle impacts on how you're going to use it yourself, and how you're going to use it right here. (1)*

The expansion of thinking about use was stimulated by the presence of other participants from different subject areas or grade levels and from different areas of education as well as by materials or examples of work. Observing other people's use of resources, participants found their preconceptions about materials, subject areas, and grade levels becoming more permeable. They began to realize more fundamental qualities of materials and issues of subject matter, which led to different uses, and to more flexible, spontaneous uses of things at hand, reaching for connections previously unthought of:

*A teacher: At first I did think that at times I was working beyond what I was doing in a practical sense in the classroom (i.e., working at the elementary child's level) whereas my day-to-day experience was still in day care with much younger children . . . (When) I began to explore the Center I began to break down that barrier between the older and younger child, because I found*



*materials there that were adaptable. It wasn't such a division any more. (I)*

In the following example, a faculty member reported that giving workshops at the Center, and especially her pairing with other staff members to plan and lead workshops, had influenced her work with classes:

*C finds that she moves better now from her area into other areas. Seeing something in the photography materials or in the science materials, she seizes on them to illustrate her points. She feels freer in her use of interdisciplinary materials. (I)*

Staff and faculty also reported, as described in the section on "Uses by Different Groups," that working with each other had affected their perceptions of what was possible in the setting, as well as the further uses and connections underlying content areas. Pairing with others whose expertise was rooted in different disciplines, having a chance to plan together and to observe each other, required staff and faculty to think differently about their own area, as well as to become more familiar with the possibilities of another.

Over the long term, the presence of more resources than were required by an immediate activity and the intermingling of participants had a significant effect on workshops and classes at the Center. As indicated earlier in the section on the Center's historical framework, there came to be much less emphasis on the one-shot self-contained workshop format that had been inherited from the itinerant workshop set up out of bags and boxes. This change was a result of the interpenetration of use possible in the setting. Staff and faculty who had used the Center more extensively reported, and observations confirmed, that they had evolved a responsive style of organizing workshops and classes that relied more on the participants' input than previous styles:

*A former advisor: The richness at the Center in terms of its environment and the materials there made giving a workshop there not only much easier--I remember being struck by, if I did a single workshop in a school on a certain topic, that was the topic we stayed on. If I gave a workshop at the Center it was much easier and more likely for us to expand and relate the ideas or activities to other ideas because of the setting and because of the richness of the materials. Somebody would get involved in something that was not listed as material to be used for the workshops and we would all start making connections. It was more flexible. (I)*

Workshops or classes were built interactively with the setting. Participants were asked to find materials related to the topic. As their work developed during the

workshop or class, they were encouraged to explore the setting for other materials or evidences of past work that were related to what they were doing. Participants were also invited to raise questions about the work around them:

*A workshop on pattern began with some discussion of what pattern is. People started pointing out things in the setting that were patterns, evolving a description from their discussion of examples. (0)*

*In the course of the workshop, a Summer Institute project, "Investigating Inclines," is brought down for illustration and study. (0)*

Other things going on at the Center were incorporated into workshops or classes being held at the same time, for the enrichment of both:

*The Puerto Ricans were introduced to the Spanish class and briefly became part of the lesson, through an exchange of greetings and inquiries. A few minutes later, one of the Puerto Rican group returned to get milk from the refrigerator for coffee and finding the milk had gone bad, asked the Spanish class (which was having a lesson in the kitchen area) about it, where to get more, etc.*

The Spanish class obviously benefited from interaction with native speakers other than their teacher. The reality of the setting, with its mix of visitors and their interests and problems, broadened the context of support for the class' language learning. At the same time, the Puerto Rican Congress group was introduced to the setting in a way that immediately made them feel at home and participating. They got a glimpse, too, of language teaching supported by context, an aspect of their own concern with bilingual education. The uses of these two groups interpenetrated and expanded the view of the setting for each.

Of course, the setting had been prepared over a long period of time so that it could support inquiry and interaction built on participants' active use of the setting. Preparation of the setting for use in general established the groundwork for response to requests, which further use enriched. The resulting density relieved staff of the burden of fresh preparation of the setting for each new use. Staff were freed to join participants in their active fashioning of particular experiences from the prepared setting. In interaction with the setting, participants' prior experiences, expertise, and questions were also released, and resulted in a broader frame of reference for the topic at hand. In this way, the workshop or class tended to move towards uncovering more fundamental and persistent issues in the content under investigation. The joint development of a topic demonstrated for both

participants and workshop staff the process of connection-making and inquiry:

*A workshop on movement got into work with clay. They found the clay bins mostly empty and asked about more. A whole pack of clay was found, and the group decided spontaneously to work with it all, as a piece. The mound became a face, then an abstract mountain-like shape with craggy sides. The workshop leader was writing impressions of it from the group's comments on big paper. The office staff joined to admire. LW suggested taking a picture, and a camera was fetched. A light was set up, to show off the cragginess. The group was tremendously excited by its work. We decided to let the piece stand for a few days. (O-see "A Typical Day")*

Workshop leaders who were interviewed reported that this way of working enabled them, too, to discover new aspects of the setting and topic at hand, which contributed to their own development and to what they could offer to participants at another time.

*The Summer Institute: an Exemplar*

The annual Summer Institute held at the Center (1979-80) was an exemplar of interpenetration of use at its most intense. The Institute involved some 40 teachers, para-professionals, City College staff, principals, and other teachers' center people in three to four weeks of exploring all aspects of the setting. The program focused on individual inquiry into the common environment and the exploration of various materials. It included seminars on language, curriculum, and other topics; and individual consultation. For many people, it was the first real exposure to the Center. Even for those already somewhat familiar with the Center, the Institute opened up to them the range of materials available, the staff, and the process of inquiry and connection-making around questions of theirs about the concrete phenomena of the world.

Interpenetration of use was multiple. As in Center use generally, Summer Institute participants and visitors came from different spheres of education and brought their different perspectives, as well as their individual interests and experiences. The daily schedule mixed whole group, small group, and individual work and consultation. Activities went on parallel to one another; they were not restricted to *areas* according to *subject* but were arranged fluidly in response to the nature of the activity and the interests of the whole group:

*The kitchen table was occupied first by the pendulum experiments. After a period of use by many of the group, it was set up elsewhere so that a few people who wanted to could continue. The same happened with the bubbles.*



*Then the dyes became very big and stayed at the table for quite a while. (O)*

These arrangements were adjusted to support the continuity of individual work, as well as to make room for everyone's work.

The juxtaposition of activity led to interaction between participants about work, and to sharing of expertise, which was further encouraged by asking participants to identify things they would like to do or share with others. Participants' observations and expertises sparked off others:

*N is studying gears in an old bicycle wheel and mentions in passing that the spokes of the wheel exert pressure in and out (towards the center and towards the rim). G gets curious . . . Later C, who's working on the structures question with a group in the other room, starts talking with N and G about the forces in the wheel. (O)*

Staff served as a pipeline of communication and connection between participants, mentioning what someone else was doing in another room and how it was relevant, pointing out materials that might add to a participant's work, or raising a question about what the participant had done. Each day, the staff reminded people of where things were happening, "reading" the environment for participants. People were made aware of the activities of others as part of *everybody's* use rather than through *reporting* that would take the work a step out of context. Flexible space arrangements and interaction were part of an attitude of respect for work as a contribution to the group rather than only as a piece of private accomplishment. The arrangements suggested that concentration on work meant providing for interest and complexity of activity rather than freedom from distraction. Interruption for comment and interaction was assumed to *further* work, sustaining and extending interest. Previous work and work in progress spoke to those engaged in similar projects, suggesting that their interests were not discrete. Work in progress was stored or displayed in all parts of the Center irrespective of "subject," reflecting the integrated nature of the work.

Curricular areas were interpenetrated through content as well as through arrangements for space and the shared use of materials:

*Weaving was introduced as the process of making a single strand into something that is stronger. This process was described as underlying not only weaving of threads and yarns into clothes of various kinds, but weaving of grasses into baskets and the intertwining of curling vines into a veil for a bower or a rope. Line was also looked at as drawings, folding into letters or other forms, the*

*unfolding of arms and legs into expressive movements. The weaving of a single strand as it is carried further was connected and contrasted with the discussion of structures emerging from work with clay considered as mass. (O)*

Participants reported that their Summer Institute experience affected their subsequent use of the Center. It considerably increased participants' flexibility and independence in using the Center, giving them additional knowledge of its materials and additional familiarity with its staff. Participants also reported that the Summer Institute gave them a sense of ownership even stronger than the sense of belonging that most participants reported:

*A teacher: The intensity of the Summer Institute experience set it apart from other workshop experiences. However, the enthusiasm generated by the Summer Institute carried over in my subsequent use of the Center. The Summer Institute also gave me an opportunity to explore the resources of the Center in depth. This allowed me to use the Center more independently, which I did. (Q)*

*A teacher: It made one feel that you were an integral part of the Center, a part of a family, and I used the Center much more after the Summer Institute. I knew where things were and who people were and I felt at home. (Q)*

Interviews with staff and observation of two successive Summer Institutes indicated that interpenetration also occurred between one Summer Institute and the next. The new Summer Institute began where the last one left off and not from the same point each year. The setting--through staff continuity through work left behind, through rearrangements of material--carried the experience forward so that new participants began at a further point:

*The 1979 Summer Institute had a lot of work on structures and stress-polyhedron structures, bent-dowel stresses, paper columns supporting a heavy platform tested with body weight, a bridge model, etc. The starting point had been some experiments with sand, during which someone observed how damp sand seemed to be able to stand up by itself. The 1980 Summer Institute began with work in clay and string that introduced them in the context of the structural properties of the single strand and of mass. Slides of last year's work were shown to illustrate some of the kinds of projects that had been done. Work then went off in different directions--a model building on inclined surface, weaving of all kinds, structural aspects of the bicycle, etc. (O)*

*A staff member: (Moving things to a new level) came, certainly for most of us, after the first Summer Institute*

held at the Center, when really what we did was to make the fall thing an extension of that. The students had worked to a three-week level and they presented. Then we had a richer beginning for the fall as a result of that intensive work for three weeks, vis-a-vis the work we had done all year. The incredible thing that I'm trying to say to you is that even the second Summer Institute was at a higher level than the one preceding, with totally different people. I think it had to do with our constant reference to questioning and verbalizing it, and therefore the problem one would set at the beginning of a workshop gave people clues to a higher kind of thinking. . . . (I)

The Summer Institute also exerted an influence on workshops and other arrangements of the setting. In turn, the Summer Institute was influenced by other experiences in the setting. Staff members functioned as mediaries carrying experiences from one use to another.

#### *A Note on Reciprocity*

Interpenetration of use and density of setting mirrored and contributed to each other through processes and characteristics peculiar to each. Our analysis suggests that the centralized setting, having continuity of place and staff, created a situation in which browsing, observation, and interaction became perhaps the fundamental processes of interpenetrating use. This setting was one in which accumulation, juxtaposition, visibility, accessibility, and simultaneity were possible.

Centralization and continuity of place and staff meant that a rich assortment of materials, books, films, work in progress, work completed and organized for sharing, could be gathered in one place. These resources could be thoughtfully juxtaposed, emphasizing their connections and possibilities in conjunction with one another, in visible, accessible arrangements for use. A rich set of activities could be assembled too, and allowed to go on parallel or overlapping with each other. All activities could be public and visible. The fact of a place also allowed for the co-existence of things that happened in different times--work could be left from previous activities to enrich current ones; preparations and announcements could prefigure coming activities. Displays and semi-permanent installations could help convey the fuller meaning and possibilities of a subject, such as planting, which could not be developed in a single visit.

The development of these possibilities was not inevitable from the fact of having a place. We have already mentioned that density of setting referred to the integration of resources, to their interconnection and mutual suggestiveness brought about and fostered by participants



and staff. The Workshop Center was not an attractive storage room or a museum of resources whose collections and programs were simply additive. Density referred to the setting where accumulation, juxtaposition, visibility, accessibility, and simultaneity had not only been *allowed* by continuity and centralization but deliberately *developed* through a structured process of observation, assessment, and reflection.

The dense setting offered participants much to see, to hear, to connect with, to talk about; it offered participants many people, from diverse realms of education, to talk and work with. In such a situation, browsing, observation and interaction became rich uses in themselves. They also underlay many other activities, structured and unstructured, at the Workshop Center. They were by nature connection-making processes, and resulted in the linking of things, ideas, and people according to the user's decision. They invoked the user's prior experiences as his or her guide to use. They were active processes, engaging participants' interests, needs, and purposes. Their exercise extended participants' use. Browsing, observation, and interaction wove together many resources, activities, occasions, and individual perceptions into patterns of use that were individual and also intersected and joined with the uses of others. When shared with others directly or through work that could be observed and discussed, participants' browsing, observation, and interaction contributed to the fabric of use possibilities that constituted the density of the setting.

The circle of interpenetration of use to density of setting and around to further interpenetration of use is illustrated in a small way in the following excerpt from an interview with a former staff member:

*(My pre-school son) used to come with me here (when I couldn't get childcare) and he'd always do this work while I was doing mine and Lillian or I said, "Wouldn't it be great if we had parents and kids come a lot." This is the truth, so when I see it all over, it's just amazing. I'm going to tell you, that's what happened. And I thought, "Oh my goodness now, I'd love to do that." So we started having parent-child workshops on Saturdays. . . . Invariably we got down to talk about some parent things (in these workshops), like "Gee, I wish I could make more time to do things with my kids like this at home." Then that gave us some clue as to handouts we could prepare, things to do with your kids at home. . . . And I would always say to them "When you try it just tell me some funny things that happened" or "Try to remember some of the questions your kid asks." And there was always that coming back and sharing. (I)*

Here a staff member integrated her uses of the Center as staff member and parent. By the public nature of the setting, this was visible, observed, and commented on by another staff member. The use as parent suggested a whole new range of possible uses of the setting, and some were made formally available to others through calendar events. Once available as part of the setting, these events were elaborated further by the participants and the parent-staff member. In interaction, parent participants spoke of their desire for an extension of the activity at home. The staff member heard this and responded. She added handouts to the possibilities at the Center for all parents. However, the handouts were not left simply as a service. In offering them, the staff member invited participants to use them observantly and to bring back their observations. These observations, shared on another occasion and with other participants, would become part of the setting, suggesting uses for still others. In so doing, they became a way of joining with other participants in the use of the Center.

#### PERSONAL CONFIGURATIONS OF USE

There was nothing in the interpenetration of use that occurred in the setting to require everyone's use to become the same or to preclude the emergence of new possibilities for use. On the contrary, our information suggested that an effect of the setting on use was the development of personal configurations of use characterized by unique rhythms and intensities, sequences and ranges, needs and interests. As participants diversified their use--adding classes or workshops to independent work; exploring the science of cooking in addition to reading books about language; helping others as well as being helped--the result added up to more than a total common to all participants. Analysis of participants' accounts brought out that *interpenetration of use was the means by which individualization of use took place*. The personal configuration of use was a major instance of this interpenetration.

It proved impossible to reduce participants' accounts of their use to a few characteristic patterns of use that would subsume individual patterns. We were struck with the extent to which individuals clearly were able to shape their own use according to individual needs, interests, circumstances.

Patterns of use cut across such variables as *group of user, teaching experience, length of contact, context of first contact, and orientation to teaching and learning*. They were individual. Participants entered into use at different points, with different reasons, and in different ways. Their concentration on areas of inquiry and types of activity varied. The kinds of questions they

raised as important for them were different. For some, use had remained constant in intensity and format. Others had made extensive and varied use of the Center. The following excerpts from the data illustrate individual histories of use:

*B, a day care teacher with some years of experience, heard of the Center through "the interactions, discussions, of co-workers at my day care center, who were then actively involved at the Center." Further connection came gradually--first through publications, then a visit and some workshops, then a course. She came with many questions, surrounding a central issue: "I felt a real gap in my knowledge of what was occurring, what was really happening in my interactions with children, in the use of materials. . . . There were questions on organization, on intervention, which to me is a particular concern. . . ." Though her teaching schedule prevented B from joining after-school workshops on a regular basis, she began taking courses at night. Then she took the Summer Institute and enrolled in the master's program.*

(I)

*N is a bilingual elementary teacher and City College graduate student in social studies. She got to know the Center through its hall displays. She read about the Summer Institute and decided to take it last year. This has led to drop-in use and to participation in a series of special day-time workshops.* (Q)

*J was an undergraduate student when fellow students and Prof. Weber told her about the Center. Her student teaching courses were held there. She then took the master's program, the Summer Institute, and attended workshops regularly. Her interests were in materials, curriculum themes, and in what was going on in education as related by special speakers.* (Q)

*F, a graduate student and full-time day care teacher, came upon the Center through its hall displays and began using it independently (she was still an undergraduate), mostly for browsing or for occasional workshops. As her courses became more advanced they involved the Center more directly, but her independent work has also continued. She values the Center as a place where she can try things, make a mistake, and find that she learns from it; and where she can learn things for her teaching and straighten out confusions arising from her classes. She is still exploring what's in the Center, most recently the animal environments. She also likes discussion sessions.* (I)

*C is an experienced junior high teacher specialized in social studies. He knew of the Center through community school district activities which included a talk by Lillian Weber and contact in his school with some*



advisors (he was not in Open Corridor, however). When asked to try a different kind of program in his school, a program involving integrated studies, he took the Summer Institute. He was questioning the way his social studies specialty was taught in cycles through the grades and trying to develop a more thematic approach. C is now on the Center's Policy Board. He has come to many after-school events, experienced teacher meetings, Saturday math workshops, etc. He also does a lot of drop-in independent work, looking for help in specific areas. Last time he came he brought some of his students to look, one of whom went back to school with some serious new ideas for a construction project in which he was engaged. (I)

H is also an experienced junior high teacher. She knew the Center first as a parent (her child was in an Open Corridor school), then visited once as a teacher who was trying to open her classroom. Several years after that she returned to take the Summer Institute and begin graduate work. She has come up this year for several special events, reads the publications, and just drops in to keep in touch. She sees the Center as valuable to her for its curricular ideas, many of which she gets just from looking around. The visual aspect of the Center is significant for her because, she says, her style is to get things by looking as well as doing. (I)

M is a faculty member who of course knew of the Center from its founding. Her use has gradually increased, especially since she has been assigned to do workshops and be "on duty" at the Center one day a week. She has always felt comfortable at the Center and used it not only as a resource for her courses but for browsing herself. She loves the fact that the Center's books include things like *Foxfire* or "care and feeding of gerbils," things that are interesting in themselves apart from teaching. (I)

The head of a program in another state, D first knew of the Center when Lillian Weber wrote to her inquiring about her work. Recognition of similar interests and concerns led to sharing of ideas, though contact has been at a distance and intermittent. The Center's publications have been important in this contact. (Q)

O is a teacher who originally came to the Center for paraprofessional workshops that were part of her work in an Open Corridor. Her relationship has been very close at times, including attendance at workshops, advisory sessions, special events, and use as a curricular resource. She has given workshops in bilingual education. (Q)

T was part of a group of teachers who started an Open Corridor in their school. She took the Summer Institute to help her in this new way of teaching (she was already



*quite experienced). I felt the advisors in her school offered what she needed and did not use the Center really until she was reassigned to another grade, and then to another school. During this period she came to the Center frequently, both to use materials and to engage in talk. I later became an advisor in the schools herself, and then returned to the schools as a teacher and then an administrator. She took administrative courses at the Center, and currently visits on a drop-in basis around her coursework or for a conference. (I)*

The people who returned questionnaires and were interviewed were fairly representative of those who used the Center. They were *not* selected by the Center for participation in its programs, and this was one thing they had in common among many other variations. They had relationships with the Center varying in length from months to more than 10 years. They also came from many different groups--teachers, parents, students, and others. Some had been students at City College; others had not. Most of those who responded continued to consider themselves users of the Center.

Additionally, most participants belonged to more than one group of users or had in the past belonged to other groups. Graduate students were working teachers; faculty used the Center as parents; students went on to become teachers; teachers went on to become faculty; staff came from and returned to teaching or to school administrative positions. Thus, current use was informed--interpenetrated--by the multiple perspectives of the participant.

Another factor disinclined people from use of the Center within a fixed professional framework: As described in a previous section, the almost inevitable multiple engagement of any one visit to the Center cut through a visitor's identification within one or another group of users. Faculty, teachers, students, staff--all browsed, observed, interacted. These were self-directed processes, dependent on the participants' experiences, interests, needs. The setting evoked things that were of interest or concern to the *individual*, to the whole person rather than to his or her role in education:

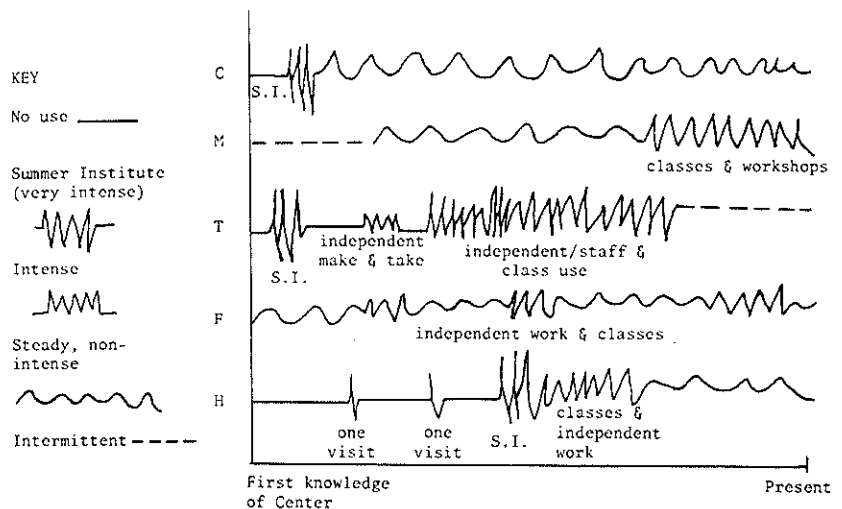
*A faculty member: "I just went there a lot, with students, to learn, to look at materials. I had questions." She became very interested in math, in Nuffield curriculum guides . . . not necessarily for her courses (most of which were in reading) but for her own interest. "I browsed. I would just wander up and down. I thought of it as goodies." (I)*

Personal configurations of use began even prior to the first use. People knew of the Center in many different ways, and their decisions about when to visit it initially, and for what purpose, were very different. Our

information suggests, however, that within the context of interpenetrated use already discussed the *substance* of first visits was similar. The variety of ways in which people heard of the Center reflected its longevity and the embeddedness of its program in the schools, in City College, and in certain national forums. New users found the Center through its presence in all these institutions.

The Center's continuity made it possible for people to approach it in their own time and gradually. Many participants' accounts (e.g., *H*, *B*, *C*, *M*, etc., cited above) suggested that use did not follow immediately upon people hearing of the Center. It was a presence for them before they used it, so the impetus to make first contact was another matter of personal choice or circumstance. However, the dominant theme in accounts of first use was *familiarization*. Browsing, observation and informal interaction prepared participants for future use. Familiarization was the ground from which people began to differentiate and specify what the Center's usefulness to them could be. Even if people first came with specific purposes in mind or to fulfill external arrangements (e.g., *O*), these purposes gave them a chance to look around and see what was there, and to get a feeling for what the place offered.

After first familiarization, participants either tiptoed or plunged into use of the Center. Like *B*, some participants came first just to look, then to take a workshop, then a course. Others, like *H* or *C* engaged in the most intense experience the Center offered, the Summer Institute, when they finally decided to engage. Such differences in the timing, rhythm, and intensity of first and subsequent use of the Center described in the histories cited earlier can be suggested graphically as follows:



What people knew and used of materials and curricular areas in the Center varied similarly. Almost everyone who was interviewed alluded to the books and to the animals as at least points of reference. Otherwise, people differed considerably in what areas had engaged them:

*D, an experienced teacher, used the library of material on open education and child development, and the science library. She has her own books and expertise in math and social studies. But she has picked up information about math materials by seeing other people work with them in passing. The Summer Institute in particular made her aware of how much material there was at the Center. She focused on science, but explored things she hadn't before, such as darkroom photography. (I)*

*Of the things she's used or areas she's been interested in, B, also an experienced teacher, remembers music activities, cooking (which she researched on her own at the Center), the MacDonald books on science, some books on black history, displays on graphing. (I)*

*Q teaches nursery school and her schedule hasn't always allowed her to make much use of after-school offerings. She expressed interest in talks, for example, on testing. She comes annually to the Martin Luther King memorial and likes multi-cultural things. She is sitting in on a science course now to get additional insight into inquiry. She has gotten "good stuff" from the music corner, and in workshops has used clay and done cooking, math, geography, fall leaves. She considers her own curricular expertises to lie in music and movement. (I)*

*M, a faculty member, has used every part of the Center by her account, or at least "lots of them." "I used it very assertively. I would go over and say 'how can I use this or that?' . . . But I also browsed." Her activity extended from her own curricular specialization into other areas, by virtue of her own explorations and the choices her students made in classes held at the Center. (I)*

Though exploration and use of the setting tended to be in areas where people were not experienced, there were several instances of people with specialist training for the upper grades using the Center to find ways of adapting their specialty for younger children:

*W, formerly a science teacher, got help on science centers at the Workshop Center when she started to teach elementary school. "I had to start from the very beginning. But science--I had science. I had laboratories and all of that. I knew it. But then, I found that I had everything up here (points to her head) but I didn't know how to put everything out for the kids to work with. (I)*



People differed in what aspect of the Center was significant for them in general. Interaction with other participants and staff was what sustained some, while others were more intrigued by possibilities for observation. Some of these differences reflected what might be called, loosely, personal styles. If for some observation was the primary mode of taking-in, others tended to busy themselves with hands-on work. Equally, what roused questions for participants was different from one participant to the next. In their comments, some teachers focused on how the setting itself suggested questions for them about classroom organization, the role of displays, the relationships between activities. The physical set-up was more of a background to activity for others, whose questions arose in the context of classes or workshops and were only then referred back to the physical setting.

By implication there were differences in how the Center was conceived as a resource. For some the Center was primarily a place to get materials and ideas for activities, and perhaps some ideas of how to make classroom implementations with these. Others also saw it as a curricular resource, but what they valued was the overall view of curriculum as connected inquiry, a view which they saw in the setting, and it was for this as much as for particular materials and activities that they referred to the Center. For many the Center embodied an approach with which they identified or which they at least wanted to explore as an option. However, for most beginning users, the Center was a service, a facility with certain obvious uses and potentials for use that did not carry for them a prerequisite point of view.

Obviously the configuration of use was shaped by external circumstances as well as by the "style" or needs of participants. Changes in work or life circumstances affected timing, intensity, and focus of use: people moved; had children; etc. Configurations of use were also different because of changes in the Center program itself:

*T took the Summer Institute before the Center opened. She did not become a regular Center user for some time after it opened, despite being engaged in the master's program at City College. At that time the Center's possibilities for use with classes were not as well established as they are now. In contrast, F, whose first use was around workshops, browsing, and independent work, has had more intense use of the Center as part of her master's work. (I)*

Differences in patterns of use did not fully describe personal configurations of use, but they did help establish their existence. Our purpose was not to document the differences in detail nor to identify their connection with some specific aspect of setting or user. The information gathered confirmed what we thought could be

expected to happen in a dense, flexible, open setting: people developed individual patterns of use. The existence and extent of personal configurations was an important impact of *setting* on *use*.

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## *The Reality of Persons and Setting*

An underlying theme in participants' accounts of their use of the Center was their sense that, in the Center setting, they were real, whole people with capacities for purpose, decision, interest, and action. They made references, for example, to the many ways in which they felt *adult-like* in using it, especially in interaction with others. Teachers described bringing their own ideas and interacting as peers with other participants and staff. Students and faculty reported that in the context of the Center, relationships with each other modified towards greater respect and interest. Faculty were stimulated by rarely-experienced collegial discussions about substantive interests of theirs that the Center allowed them to explore, as well as by the many provisions for these interests. Parents valued being included as part of the educational community. Principals had a chance to meet with teachers and with each other outside the immediate school framework and were gratified to express their long-range concerns and assess the underlying commitment of their work:

A teacher and graduate student: *Classes in the Center, she says, are different from classes elsewhere because "the instructor is not behind a desk . . . You're able to speak to them before, during, or after class, which I find more adult-like. . . ." (I)*

A faculty member describes how a course that she taught wholly at the Center for the first time included something previous classes had not developed: *The students began to speak up to each other, to challenge and discuss with each other, without looking to her all the time for direction. They brought in their own experiences and beliefs. They acted "like people, like adults. They didn't just wait to react to me as the teacher." (I)*

Another faculty member has been terribly excited by the unprecedented possibilities she has had to work with other faculty and staff. *The teaming and joint planning "allow for creativity you wouldn't have in planning an individual class." As a result of her work at the Center, she also relates to her students now more like people: "You begin to listen and to hear differently." (I)*



A teacher: *I feel all of my experiences at the Center have been as learner, teacher, participant, peer--sometimes more one than another but all often available and important to me. (Q)*

A parent: *It was a wonderful opportunity to meet other parents from other schools, finding out they had similar problems and talking through possible solutions. I so enjoyed listening to educators talk about their experiences. . . . (Q)*

A paraprofessional described what made her return to the Center: *The way I was treated. I was wanted. I was given an opportunity to speak and I felt I had something to give and that made me feel good. (Q)*

A colleague who worked with teachers in schools: *I've found peers and intellectual stimulation at the Center--more through informal conversation than through workshop or materials. (Q)*

A teacher: *Just to reiterate--the feeling of being cared about/treated as a total person, not fragmented as I had so often been in other so-called educational experiences. (Q)*

Observation showed that talk at the Center was indeed constant, and that it was easy and included whoever was around. Conversation intermixed discussion of work at hand, classroom issues raised by work, circumstances of work, children, a range of content interests, and personal things. The pervasiveness of conversation and the range of subjects were themselves indications that people did not feel restricted to a narrow definition of purpose at the Center, that they could be *themselves*. The importance of *interaction* to participants' sense of being accepted as people was more specifically clear in their descriptions of how differences became occasions for exploring their own ideas:

*A teacher describes an instance of the Center's helpfulness when she was learning about trees and leaves: "I know nothing about trees and leaves and this was a really good resource center for me . . . you know how kids bring in leaves in the fall and I was able to say 'oh, that's a maple!' . . . and we did collages and I was able to talk about each leaf. . . ." She goes on, however, to say that she still disagrees with the idea that you should leave the fall leaves up through the spring, an idea which had been discussed at the Center. Her own inclination is to change the leaves with the season. (I)*

*A teacher who values most the interaction at the Center with staff and other participants: "I think there are a lot of very strong opinions there, very, very strong. I find they're very provocative . . . I don't have to*

*agree, but as long as they make me think-- . . . and the reasoning is--and I think Lillian has said this--we are grownups and we do have to take some kind of responsibility for what we do. (The strong opinions) give the rest of us timid souls something to go on. . . ." (I)*

The sense of person-ness came through also in some teachers' descriptions of changes in their use of the Center towards things that interested them *personally* rather than what met an immediate classroom need. Others referred to their involvement in the Center as "personal as well as professional":

*A teacher: As I developed both teaching skills and confidence in those skills I began using the Center more as a meeting place than as a place to make teaching materials. I also shifted my choices of workshops to those which appealed to me as a person rather than those which appealed to me as a teacher. (Q)*

Here *personal* was taken to signal the integration of professional and personal goals, the mobilization of participants' intelligence and interests in relationship to their work. As one participant put it, "I can't separate the Center from everything I do." Or, for example, a high school science teacher spoke of his renewed sense of the excitement of his *own* learning, an excitement he then tried to bring to his students:

*In the summer I explored media which I have not indulged in since elementary school . . . I rediscovered/recaptured a great exuberance/excitement which I didn't realize still existed in me. All of the participants I am sure shared this feeling. We all got close very fast. I carry this into the classroom everyday inside me, and try to stir this feeling in my students, though it may be a conventional setting. . . . (Q)*

Staff also spoke of their experiences at the Center in ways that suggested their sense of *personal* realization in the work. Former staff credited the Center with being one of the greatest work experiences they had ever had, in part because of the colleagues they found there and in part because the work itself engaged them in their own learning, not as tangential to what they did but as its very heart. The opportunities to experiment within their own expertise and in less familiar areas, the contact with people from many places and many realms of education, and the chance to participate in seminars and discussions were valued as being real expressions of respect for their personal capacities for expanded thought:

*It was the most human place I've ever worked at . . . I felt that we were free to be imaginative, thoughtful, and had a lot to learn--to presume to teach others . . . An intricate team setting not without conflict, but with the*

*understanding to live through it--tolerate and appreciate one another. Not to be forgotten. (Q)*

*I commented on how much he learned from observing a fellow staff member and contrasting their personal ways with participants: "We had at one level quite different styles of actually relating and talking with a teacher . . . (but) we both often saw the same teacher respond just as intensely to her as to me, but to two different styles, so it went beyond the old cliché of 'well some teachers will respond to x and some will respond to y.' That's true sometimes, but I think it's more the case that the same people will respond equally positively to more than one way of approaching." (I)*

Participants and staff had not been asked to comment directly on their sense of themselves in the setting nor, indeed, on anything more personal than their "first impressions" of the place. That their descriptions should remark on this sense of themselves as real people was thus all the more striking. Their experience seemed to give body to the observation described earlier on how the setting supported the construction of truly individual configurations of use. It also served to highlight perceptions of the setting as authentic, real, and genuine. For participants, the setting had a presence transcending its resources. Their perceptions of its authenticity were a prevailing theme in interviews and questionnaires and seemed to correspond to their experience of their own reality in the setting.

Participants referred to the authenticity and reality of the setting in a variety of aspects. They remarked on the *real* knowledge about children expressed by staff and evident in the actual hand-made work of children and teachers that was displayed. They commented on the sense of partnership with staff, that staff will "get in there and do it with you." They were relieved and stimulated to find connections with the *real* world and *real* issues: testing, heterogeneity, etc. Invited speakers were characterized as "big thinkers," "real thinkers." (We heard not far beneath these comments participants' weariness with textbooks that predigested content; with programs in which the teacher was reduced to mechanical implementor; with tinkering that avoided the urgency of children's needs.) Cited, too, were the concreteness of the experiences offered and the real valuing of making mistakes. People said they *counted* on a staff member, or on finding what they needed, confident that there *really* would be a response. They pointed to the spontaneity of response, taking advantage of what was there or who was there or what was on one's mind to guide what happened next. Staff remarked on the stimulating and consistently supportive work environment:

A teacher: *I knew that it was not just your typical chart*

out of a book, you know--'how-to' and you sit in a room and make it nice and pretty. The charts seemed to indicate that individual kinds of thought had gone into them, and again because they weren't your pretty, showcase kind of charts, you knew that what someone did was accepted and if you can accept that kind of a thing from grownups of course you can accept it from children. Again, you just get a feeling that the individual is really respected. I could see it from the work--and (it was) in order, but not the kind of order--it's ordered. (I)

A teacher said he returned to the Center because the place was intensely involved in education. It was obvious that these were not people who were just going to tell me how to do it . . . These were people who were going to do it with me and to me that was very important. I had had my fill of higher education people who were removed from the classroom, and I didn't find people here were removed from the classroom. They knew what was happening in the classroom. (I)

A faculty member appreciated the fact that the Workshop Center had the Foxfire books and 1001 Facts About Hurricanes--books that were not texts and were not just aimed at teachers. (I)

A teacher and former student likes the Center because it's "up-to date. It's with what's happening now." (I)

A former faculty member describes the Center as a "quality" institution. The books were good books, the materials were there for doing a high level of work. The art was real art. Publications, lectures--"everything was a high level professional undertaking." (I)

The authenticity of the setting went beyond the concreteness and quality of materials and programs or the reality of staff experience with children; it also went beyond the dense, interpenetrated quality of the setting, which visibly integrated many real uses by other participants and staff. The authenticity of the setting derived in an important way from the fact that the setting represented a full range of content, a universe, whose materials and resources amounted to more than could be exhausted in one visit or in one series of uses. It represented the variety of disciplines through which the everyday materials and experiences of the world could be studied. It represented these disciplines regardless of the fact that only some were being engaged by participants at any given period. Though the art materials lacked users for a while, this was not taken to mean there was no need for art materials. Though attendance lagged at one or another workshop, workshops on that subject remained on the program. The setting maintained a commitment to a rounded, full view of curriculum content that went beyond token coverage. Moreover, participants



attested to seeing what the Center offered not just as a method of "how to do," say, a curriculum on black history but as part of a living reality that teachers, as citizens and adults, were naturally involved in:

*The Martin Luther King and Holocaust memorials were really that--with reminiscence, discussion, reflection. A teacher recalled: "I remember one (on King) that was so especially good, I think it was about three years ago-- 'Memories of the Jim Crow South'--and a lot of people got together and talked about things they could still remember that were just so incredible that you couldn't believe it was still going on in the '50s and early '60s, but yet it was. That's the kind of thing that's really good and really puts you in touch. . . ." (I)*

In maintaining a rounded and real view of curriculum, the setting was not simply a passive recipient of participants' questions. Just as the setting actively contributed to participants' use and inquiry by its richness of materials, it interacted with participants in asserting the universe of content.

The assertion of a universe of content was one way in which the setting stood visibly *outside* any individual participant or staff member. The density of setting, the self-evident presence of many possibilities of use, contributed to participants' sense that the setting did not have to be reorganized around their every use, that there was no hovering over their every request. There was more to the setting than response to a participant's request. As we have described, the setting was open to participants' own self-directed browsing, observation, and interaction, and to selection, combination, and connection-making according to their individual needs and interests. The public nature of the setting meant that other uses were visible, including uses by staff. Staff work went on alongside that of participants. It was clear that staff were still learning in the setting and that they did not have all the answers. There was a collegial interaction between staff and participants quite different from that possible in an empty or temporary setting, where staff's first concern would have to be the establishment of something for participants to engage with.

Standing a little apart from participants and staff both, the setting relied on participants' capacities as people to assess the resources and their own needs and to formulate uses of the resources that would be responsive to their interests. It encouraged participants to *create* responses to their needs in the context of a prepared setting. As described earlier in this report, this preparation involved the accumulation of a variety of resources related to the questions that teachers typically asked and to the concerns they typically expressed. The resources, as described, were varied and neither packaged

nor presented as models. Participants with specific requests were referred to the resources that appeared to address those requests. Whenever it was appropriate and possible, staff engaged with participants in conversation, bringing out participants' actual circumstances and the goals behind the request. Staff might suggest other kinds of things that would be helpful for these purposes and that participants might want to explore. Staff stood back from the setting, assumed a collegial role, helped participants think about their choices, and perhaps helped them broaden the context of their request so as to facilitate connection with what the setting offered. Underlying this collegial activity of staff and setting was an assumption that participants were really interested and serious about understanding the content they were offering to children, the ranges of connection possible within the content, and the possible differences in approach to it. Thus, the setting engaged with participants' intelligence about their needs and requests. Far from inhibiting them, the fact that the setting might not match a specific request exactly prompted participants' enhanced activity in their own behalf:

M, a veteran teacher returning to the classroom after some years away, teaches in a reading lab. She recalls a session she came to on language arts and reading a story: *I thought "if I have to go through this number again and put myself in the position of a child--." I've been in this a long time . . . The workshop leader said, "I'm going to read a story" and I said, "I'm going to die." Well, she read the story and we all did a collage project. And I thought, "You must never close your mind" because it was very interesting and very different to see how every adult chose, got the main idea, put it down on a paper in a collage and that everyone's was different and everybody had some sense they knew what the story was. So what I thought was going to be such a repetition was not, and now I thought I could bring it back to the junior high . . . (though it was really more appropriate for the elementary school). Now I'm doing a little bit of art work in the reading lab. . . . (I)*

*A faculty member remembers that the Workshop Center had the whole faculty over for workshops early on. She was then just getting interested in language and wanted to use the Center and talk to Lillian to learn about it. But Lillian didn't really want her to just look at Break-through and other language programs, but to do something. So M talked to the workshop leader and he asked what she would want to have in the classroom to stimulate language, and she ended up making a telephone in woodwork. She had never done anything like it before, and thoroughly enjoyed it. . . . (I)*

*A junior high teacher came to the specially-arranged workshops and what he said he wanted didn't even faintly*



correspond to what the Center offered (his district had mandated certain "skills" for teachers, which he wanted to get out of the way). Since the arrangements for the workshops had involved District permission for released-time, the staff said the thing to do was to try this session and see what he got out of it and then if he still didn't think it would work for him, he could arrange for someone else to take his place. After all, his attendance was voluntary. He agreed somewhat reluctantly, but by the end of the day he was certain he would come back--he'd gotten interested. (0)

Because the setting was comfortable and not directed exclusively at them, participants were easy about raising their doubts and celebrating their accomplishments. They felt free, also, to take a critical stance towards what the setting offered:

A teacher: (The Center) was something to help me feel confident in what I was doing. I knew I could mess around and if I made a mistake I could go to somebody and they'd say, "okay, try it another way" or "it's not really a mistake" . . . and then I'd sit back and re-think it . . . I got a feeling from people that "okay, it's okay" and that it's okay to make a mistake too, because you learn from them. Someone could say, "well, you should have known that." Well, I did know you learn from your mistakes. But when you're teaching children and it's a whole new setting . . . and you have an administrative staff over you and they're not coming to you telling you "it's okay," then you got to find from somewhere else that it's okay. If you're the sort of person who's conscious about it. And watching other people make mistakes here too. I came in once and they were doing canning and I saw people make mistakes . . . and people doing it wrong, and they'd talk to the ones who were making mistakes, showing them, and I thought that was nice. (1)

C, a faculty member, noticed that in the classes she holds at the Center the students interact with each other, not only with her. She feels this atmosphere and exchange is due to the Workshop Center setting--it's a warmer feeling, the small group and independent work can go on (during the class). It feels human. Also, it's clear the Center isn't simply hers, so if she asks the students to critique the books, they know she hasn't pre-selected the books and they were freer to be more reflective and assessing. (1)

Two teachers who were depressed about their teaching came with a group for pre-arranged workshops. They got involved in printing, and began to enjoy it. They ended by glorying over their results, having even found ways of incorporating their mistakes and messy prints into a final composition. (0)

The setting also offered participants a background against which to observe the ways in which their selections and patterns of use reflected individual concerns, approaches, and interests. It enabled them to mark their own growth in relationship to a setting, both because the Center continued and because it could hold for them the memory of their prior uses. The setting also made visible to them what they could still learn, and reasserted that what they knew remained unfinished:

*F, a day care teacher who has used the Center extensively for independent as well as class work, has noticed that she tends to stay away from things at the Center that would get her dirty. She notices this in the classroom, too, where she tries to steer the girls over to the clay--cause they have the same tendency. (I)*

*A former student, now a bilingual teacher: (The Center) means more to me now than at first because now I look back and see how I've grown professionally. And now to my future goals it is an ideal resource for me and the people I come in contact with (student teachers). (Q)*

*Q, a teacher, says of course there are things she still wants to do at the Center: Oh, yes! Just because I've done clay once--every time I see Henny's got some new clay idea going or a photography (idea)--I just did two things with photography and there are probably a million things you could do. . . . (I)*

In releasing participants to engage as whole persons, the setting seemed to ensure their continued relationship to it. Participants described the Center as a place where they felt at home, where people were *like family*.

*A teacher and student: It's like a family, you know. . . . (I)*

*A bilingual teacher: It is a place where you are welcome and can have a coffee, a piece of cake. Someone to listen to you, to offer to help you, to direct you where you can find what you need. A place where you can use materials, experience the arts, crafts, cooking, learning how to develop pictures. Share your knowledge with others. A place where you can contribute and doing so you become aware that you too have something that others didn't know and . . . others want to learn from you. To me it is a marvelous place, I feel at home there. (Q)*

*A teacher: I was in one of those binds where I had to take summer credits and (the Summer Institute) looked interesting. I sent for the brochure and as I read what was going to be done it looked like it was going to be more than 6 credits worth. So I came up (to see what the Center was like) but after I got here (that first visit) was like a homecoming. . . . (I)*

Participants described their continuing relationship to the Center with a sense of possession and community, accompanied by spontaneous expressions of obligation and responsibility to the Center, to other participants, to students. Perhaps no other statements convey so vividly the reality of the setting and its users:

A teacher recalled his experience of the Summer Institute: *I really was thrown into the whole place, was introduced to all the rooms and really felt like it was me, it was part of me, and I was going to help it grow and it was going to help me grow--(that) type of thing.* (I)

A teacher described helping a new participant who wanted to write a reading unit. Having talked with the new participant about what he wanted and what the Center offered, the teacher offered to send the new participant additional materials himself. (I)

A faculty member suggests his sense of responsibility for the Center when he says that teaching courses at the Center changes his course goals--that his goal becomes partly to help students be able to use the place independently. (I)

A teacher: *I feel this is a place that I will continue to use. As a matter of fact, it's occurred to me that I might spend some time here after I finish my course and learn a little bit from Lillian and the people who work here. I know she needs volunteers, it's just that I haven't had time, because this is a place I feel I could make some impact and get a lot for myself.* (I)

The imagery of home and family has stayed with us as a way of understanding some of the interlocking relationships between setting and use and the different levels of this relationship. In speaking of the Center as *home* or *family*, participants referred to the Center's complexity of organization and interaction--its interpenetrating uses and dense setting; to its permeability to individual patterns of participation--the personal configuration of use; to its acceptance of person and stimulation of memory, experience, idea, activity, implication--the reality of persons, inextricable from the reality of setting. They referred as well, of course, to familiarity, itself a support for their learning. For both new and more familiar participants, the Center seemed to have a *character*, a *personality* of its own, much like a house acquires after many years of occupancy. It existed apart from them, but included them in its community. It was a convergence of people and content, a *center*.

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## *The Center's Rationale and Participants' Decisionmaking*

In proposing to study setting and use, we were aware obviously that the Workshop Center was known for a particular point of view about learning and the circumstances that support learning. The Center was based on ideas from the Summer Institute, the Open Corridor program, the City College master's program in "The Child and the Individualized Curriculum," and other staff experiences. They formed an initial framework of practical experience and rationale for the establishment of a setting that would foster inquiry and decisionmaking by teachers and other educators in line with their use and curricular development.

This initial framework had been called *open education* and it was in terms of an *open education* orientation that we queried participants about the relationship of their use to the Center's rationale. In fact, however, people from Open Corridors--those identified with an *open education* orientation--have tended to use the Center *less* than others because of the possibilities for interaction and development offered by their in-school circumstances.

Moreover, the Center's idea from the beginning was that it would broaden participation by offering access to people who did not call themselves *open educators*. Thus participants' responses to the *open education* questions indicated that what they identified as the Center's *open education* orientation (and this varied) was not really important to them nor particularly a factor in their use.\*

The phrasing, *open education* orientation, was inappropriate for another reason. From its beginning, the Center included in its rationale the idea that improvements in schools could only be made as teachers, administrators, and parents themselves saw the necessity for improvement, defined what was needed, and decided on ways of implementing it. In short, the rationale precluded a fixed model. Nevertheless, the phrasing, *open education* orientation, was taken by participants to refer to a model, though they had different ideas of what the model was. Simultaneously, participants reported that they valued the Center greatly as a place to hammer out their ideas about practice or as a touchstone for their basic

\*These responses are presented and discussed in the full report of the study.

commitments to children and teaching. That is, participants showed that, though indifferent to *open education*, as they defined it, they recognized as significant for them the Center's engagement with, and commitment to, underlying understandings about learning and what supports learning.

Thus, though the questions were misphrased in inquiring about the role of the Center's rationale in participants' use, the responses resulted in greater clarity about the distinctions between *essentials* of rationale, their place in people's use, and the trappings of a model. Though the phrase *open education* continued to be functional in provoking discussion, the Center's rationale and practices had come to fruition not around a fixed abstraction--a fixed form postulated as essential, but around the actual essentials of its rationale. This evolution was one of the major effects *on the setting* of use by a great diversity of participants. In turn, participants' understanding of the connection of their immediate needs with their more continuing concerns and purposes was expanded by their interaction, *through the setting*, with these evolving ideas and commitments.

Participants came with specific needs and purposes. A teacher wanted a book on gerbils and perhaps some advice on gerbil environments. Another needed to find some math games. A student teacher needed help planning a cooking project to dovetail with her class's social studies work. A faculty member needed to look up bibliography for her course. A parent wanted suggestions about afterschool reading activities for her child. People plunged into use of the Center because of changes in their school, grade level, or in the type of program they were planning. They wanted help with materials, but also they felt the need to rethink or to reintegrate what they already knew in light of new experiences or circumstances. They sometimes needed to reaffirm their capacities to face new challenges:

*W came to the Center because she was about to start teaching elementary school after being trained for high school. "I was very interested in developing materials, like games, that I could use in the different areas because since I didn't have experience at all in what was individualized instruction and I wanted to do it, I thought that through games I could manage to do it." She had priorities for the Summer Institute that year: "I tried to reach as much as I could that summer, since I didn't know a thing about materials. . . . (Q)*

An experienced Open Corridor teacher: *When I was ex-  
cessed, I think I lived at the Center that first six  
months. It was absolutely necessary and it was the first*



*time it was absolutely necessary . . . I needed to talk with people. I needed to have that connection, because there was nobody (at her new school) . . . it was needing support--the ambiance, the setting, the people, needing intellectual stimulation, needing to know internally, even though I thought I had totally integrated what I was doing and that it was right . . . there were many days where by the end of the day I needed to go someplace to reaffirm what I was doing, and myself. (I)*

Regardless of changes in their immediate circumstances, participants also came with generalized needs for "new ideas" to reinvigorate or enrich what they were doing:

*N chose the special workshop sessions because she's been teaching a long time and wanted to get some new ideas. When I talked to her she had gotten interested in the African-style paper designs, the paper straw mobiles, and the hexagon sculpture made of construction paper. She is also interested in building the current transit strike into some look at transportation and was looking at some of the displays on this and asking about books. (O)*

*A man who used to come to the Center when he was teaching a regular 4th-5th grade dropped by again because he needed something to do with his class of "trainable adolescents." He joined the workshop on movement and math. (O)*

Though circumstances sometimes gave urgency to participants' needs, as in some of the examples cited, more often participants came to the Center with a nagging dissatisfaction or some budding questions about their own or school practice in general. They were unhappy with what they were doing or had begun to think more critically about some aspect of it:

*C had come to the Center in the context of needing to develop ways of integrating curriculum for a new program he was starting in his junior high. For a long time he had been questioning the way social studies curriculum was taught in cycles--a topic got taught in third grade and not again until seventh grade. He wondered how we could let kids "postpone" their questions, wait a little longer for depth. Also, he'd have kids say, "Ah, we don't have to study Indians cause we covered that before." "Everything was divided in such a way that the kids never got the idea that there was any depth and that they are capable of learning something and enjoying it." (I)*

A number of participants, especially questionnaire respondents, expressed more drastic needs for a renewed sense of the value and do-ability of teaching as a profession:

*My second year as a teacher--I had decided to quit*

*teaching. It was then that I discovered the Center. Had it not been for the Center and the people associated with it, I would have left what I considered a moribund, anti-intellectual profession--teaching. As of now I am utterly committed to that profession . . . and intellectually I can only say that I am interested and stimulated.* (Q)

None of these needs, summarized from questionnaires and interviews, was unusual or unexpected in the context of teacher education. None was specific to the Workshop Center. The range of needs expressed, from specific to general, from urgent to nagging to more drastic, was characteristic of teaching. Throughout this report we have described a setting designed to respond to these needs and developed in response to their particular expression in participants' use. We have described its origins and preparation on the basis of prior experiences with teachers' continuing development. We have described how participants' use of the setting was diversified, expanded, and interpenetrated, creating a setting dense with use possibilities, a setting in which individuals shaped personal configurations of use in accordance with their own interests, needs, purposes, approaches, and circumstances. We have described how specific needs were provided for, but also how the setting might not match participants' requests exactly and that participants were encouraged through browsing and interaction to extend, redefine, and create their own responses using the setting. We have emphasized participants' active, shaping role, supported by the setting in many particular ways that represented a development of the possibilities inherent in continuity of place and staff, and in centralization. In short, a setting had developed that invited a process of needs *enactment* by which participants' specific requests were responded to within a context that simultaneously drew them into extending, reformulating, and connecting their needs with their deeper purposes.

In this context, the process of meeting needs--defining and stating needs, creating a response, assessing and modifying the response--occurred through and simultaneously with use. Continuity and density of setting provided the time and the context for participants to recognize the longer-range picture of their purposes. Able to confront the fact that they had concerns, interests, and needs other than those immediately facing them, participants could begin to distinguish what they wanted to pursue. The setting did not require them to circumscribe and fully articulate their needs as a set or sequence of *it's* which could be met by one or another specific activity or material. It allowed them to recognize and reformulate their needs in an active and interactive relationship with the setting; that is, through their use.

The active, shaping character of participants' use has implications for understanding the role of the setting

and rationale in supporting participants' exploration of needs and purposes. We have described how, in many ways, the context related actively and interactively with participants, helping along the process of their formulation of needs, and the process of responses to those needs. In parallel fashion, the ideas or rationale of the Center were subject to extension, reformulation, and broader connection by virtue of their embodiment in a setting that was open to the active, diverse, interpenetrating use by participants. The active character of participants' use--its reality--continually challenged and uncovered new aspects of the setting. Since the setting itself was based on and intended to enact the rationale, there could be no fixed formulation of rationale.

The network of ideas and commitments we are calling rationale was invested in the development of the concrete arrangements, programs, and interactions of the setting. The predominance of natural materials and of primary, everyday materials and resources rather than *education* materials, publishers' texts, or manufactured non-everyday materials reflected a view of curriculum as *making sense* of the real things of the world. Along with all the possibilities for individual work, the selection of materials and organization of programs suggested an inquiry approach to *making sense* in which numerous starting points could be used to explore and connect things. In turn, this reflected an understanding that content was diverse but interconnected around basic questions (e.g., size and scale; pattern; continuity and transformation). This understanding was made further evident by the presence of work in progress and the kinds of displays of past work that have been described. A valuing of people's own activity came through these arrangements and was inherent in the inclusion of people's actual work and in the support for independent work. The diversity of programs and accessibility of materials suggested respect for different interests and choices. The permeation of the setting with talk, with charts, with books, with language and reading in all forms emphasized the fundamental importance of language and the variety of its manifestations. The mingling of people from many different realms of education, from many different groups, and the support for constant interaction among them over and around concrete activity specified a commitment to heterogeneity and openness. The entire setting articulated an approach to learning and to the support of learning. The rationale was thus invested in action as well as in words.

Even if the rationale and prior experience had dictated every detail of practice, a fixed formulation of rationale was precluded by the fact that the Center began and continued to exist in the midst of use by people with very different ideas and experiences. From the beginning

there were uses of the setting by staff, faculty, and other participants that did not originate from a single rationale. If anything, this diversity increased over time. Gradually, participants came from an even broader range of schools, grade levels, specialties, than they had initially. Student use increased, and students generally had only marginal awareness of interest in educational rationale. Faculty had their own ideas about practice and philosophy. Staff members were largely new to each other and had different prior experiences and interests. They continued to have different concerns, things that their experience in the setting had made particularly real to them.

This diverse participation brought to the setting needs, questions, approaches that challenged existing arrangements. Participants' inquiries brought out aspects of materials and content that stretched both their own and the staff's awareness of the implications and possibilities in a given material or activity. In observing and interacting on these implications and possibilities, staff were essentially reflecting on the rationale underlying the setting.

To support and extend this reflection, the Center included in its program weekly advisory meetings for the staff and a variety of development and assessment processes that have been described in detail in the Center's documentation.\* In the context of these processes, modifications and additions to the setting represented elaborations and sometimes reformulations of the rationale. Thus, in a very real way, use of the setting resulted in the evolution of the rationale. Though heterogeneity had been explicitly part of the rationale,\*\* use of the Center by many groups made the significance of heterogeneity clearer and, of course, led to joint reflection on how to broaden participation, on how to make the most of the possibilities for intermingling that existed, and how to increase the possibilities generally. The valuing of activity was a given, but development of use in the setting led to a greater recognition of the primacy of connections across activities as opposed to the development of separate "learning centers."

Thus an explicit rationale did not equate with a static rationale. A major effect of use on setting was to make possible an expansion and elaboration of the explicit rationale, bringing it closer to the reality of participants; and staff experience. Participants' active use of the setting and the reflection this engendered led to an expanding base for connecting with the range, variety, and depth of participants' purposes and needs. There was a deepening and broadening of rationale, increasing still further the flexibility and permeability of the setting to evermore diverse uses, without loss of conviction.

\*An annotated list of pertinent documentation appears in the full report.

\*\*See L. Weber, *The English Infant School and Informal Education*, Prentice-Hall, 1971.

In turn, the explicitness of the rationale, both in the thoughtfulness of arrangements and provisions of the Center, and in the constant discussion around activity, was offered to participants as support for the process of exploring their needs. Thus an effect of setting on use was to release and expand participants' thinking about the implications of their work. Participants' accounts indicated many ways in which encountering ideas and commitments at the Center had allowed them to meet immediate needs, but also to uncover the relationship between these needs, their practice more generally, and their deeper interests in helping children learn in the best way they could. The explicit, public statement of these views--discussed openly in publications, on ceremonial occasions (open houses, conferences), and in the many informal interactions and conversations around activity--asserted that teaching was a serious activity requiring people's intelligence. (This assertion was, of course, what participants perceived as the authenticity of the setting, inasmuch as such a setting is never neutral whether its rationale is acknowledged or not.) In calling forth participants' own thoughts in response, the views embodied by the Center confirmed the seriousness of their own purposes and seemed to release their thinking:

*A teacher and former advisor: Through the Center I was able to meet and maintain contact with highly dedicated and skillful teachers . . . Working for the Center helped me to grow and appreciate myself as a teacher. It reinforced the feeling that teaching is indeed a challenging and skillful profession. (Q)*

*A former faculty member: The Center has been an integral part of my development as a professional with a clear, articulated philosophy of education. The personnel, the activities, and the resources have provided me with opportunities to learn, to think through, to share and shape and refine ideas. It has been and remains an example of high quality professional commitment. (Q)*

*A teacher says that in her experience the Center is open enough to explore, to reject, to make certain decisions around what you want. . . . I just felt an open feeling about the atmosphere there, that nobody was looking over my shoulder and saying, "well that's what we're about." I felt a freedom to go in and touch upon things I'd be interested in and of course along the way I'd be seeing a lot of other things happening. (I)*

*A graduate student: The Workshop Center has been of great help to me in the development of my own ideas and in the practice of them. Not only has the Workshop Center helped me to interchange ideas with CCNY students but also to interchange ideas with professors, students, and other guests that have lectured from time to tome. These*



*contacts have made my work as a graduate student easier and fruitful. (Q)*

A junior high teacher, responding to a question about being an *open educator* in order to use the Center: *No, and as a matter of fact that's one of the things I was concerned about because I don't operate in an open education setting at all, but I feel that it's open for me to use whatever I can get out of it and really for my own growth and that's why I thought it was so good. (I)*

Participants identified not with the specifics of the Center's rationale or the ideas but with the effort--visible and public in the setting--to find better ways of educating children:

Asked if a person would have to be interested in open education to use the Center, F said: *I think they would have to be interested in children to use the Workshop Center. It shouldn't be categorized . . . I mean it's education, and if you're interested in children, I think you should be interested in the Workshop Center. (I)*

The Center was a touchstone of their own searching. It was a backup for using their own judgment, for trying something new. It was a demonstration of, and standard for, practices based on concern and study of children's learning and content. Participants from many different groups of users, and with commitments to many educational *options*, emphasized their perception that the Center practiced the best it understood about good education, considered as support for children's and teachers' learning. In this capacity, the Center offered participants a bulwark against pressures moving them to act against their sense of what was good for children; it reconfirmed essentials. The mix of users gave them access to a network of effort that asserted, "It can be done," and "It is still important to do."

A teacher: *I needed, used, and enjoyed (the Center) for professional and social purposes fully. I found easy rapport with people I met. I learned new and pertinent information constantly. I felt abreast of the movements in education that interested and affected my work and interests. It was a network center for people and ideas to make a difference for the better in schools and in children's lives there as learners. (Q)*

A principal: *In addition to having helped our school through your advisors and having conducted so many workshops for our paraprofessionals, you have served as a beacon for ideas, humanness and sensible and vital teaching practices. (Q)*

A student: *I was impressed by the new methods, because of the benefits that children can derive through "open*

education." It changed my way of viewing the system of teaching and treating children. I consider this a very important event, since I am very interested to acquire the best to teach children. (Q)

A teacher and graduate student: It was my gaining insight on how to teach children through multiple ways. If a child is turned off to learning in one way, and if you only have that one way of teaching, then you are going to lose that child. A loss of a child is crucial. (Q)

A teacher: For me, the Workshop Center is unlike any other place. It has done more for my professional development than anything else. The Center, by which I mean staff, other participants, materials, workshops offered, provided an environment in which I could question, discover, find support, give support, relax, learn, make mistakes. In short, it is a role model for the kind of setting I believe every learning environment should be. (Q)

A superintendent: It is difficult for me to imagine our community school district without the Workshop Center, which has so greatly contributed to our educational policies. Many of the principles of the Workshop Center have become the foundation of our humanistic approach to education. (Q)

A teacher: The Center is a place to go as a counterpoint to the overwhelming emphasis on rules and curriculum that precede (and have little to do with) children's real needs, which is what we're bombarded with in school . . . The Center broadens and deepens understanding. (Q)

An out-of-town program head: Although I never have visited the Center, I have kept in touch with its work and felt supported by its existence as a demonstration of my own philosophical stance . . . Those of us who work from a philosophical base which supports an educational approach focusing on the individual child have need of a network of demonstrated commitment to combat the increasing emphasis on computer-oriented techniques and goals which place value only on what can be measured statistically. (Q)

A teacher who works too far away to make much use of the Center now: But I know it's there and it's a comfortable feeling that the ideas and . . . I can always go to a place and say, "oh, the flame is still ignited and I can still do it." (Q)

The study of setting and use at the Workshop Center sharpened, extended, and in some ways modified our awareness of how a setting that is continuous and centralized affects participants' uses, especially for their self-defined development. It led us from the expectation that this setting would result in diversification of use

to the articulate recognition that use had become interpenetrating, and itself contributed to the increased density of setting. Density of setting affected further use in various ways. It was the context within which participants actively constructed personal configurations of use in accordance with their needs. We found that, in constructing the configurations of their use, participants experienced themselves as whole, active, real people truly engaged with a setting they perceived as authentic and interpenetrating of people, action, reflection. As part of this authenticity, the explicitness of a network of ideas and commitments in the setting made it possible for participants to experience and discuss, to challenge in their use and interactions, to find differences and commonalities in thinking and practice. Their own ideas and definitions of need were expanded through the connection of immediate requests or needs with their own broader, underlying concerns and purposes. Reciprocally, participants' use expanded the rationale of the setting, without diffusing the direction of its basic commitments, broadening its possibilities for connection with a diversity of people with different interests, needs, and ideas. Participants described this setting as "home-like." It had coherence and presence; a content as well as a style. It offered participants something real to grow from, and reciprocally was permeable to their real interests and concerns.

There are several directions in which the questionnaires, interviews, and observations assembled for this report lend themselves to further study. We have evidence that the Summer Institute was affected in its program and intent by being conducted in a setting that had continuity through the year. Since summer work has been a significant part of inservice education generally and of teachers' center work particularly, these effects would be well worth a closer examination. The account of the evolution of workshop format offered here represents only broadly the information that was available. This long-term change in the program's response to use has been a less-discussed aspect of teachers' center development than change in participants' use. The study of the mutual effects of use and setting has also brought forward an approach to the question of the institutionalization of the Center. The many ways in which the Center has become part of the life and purposes of City College faculty, staff, and students would allow a fine examination of the possibilities and limitations of institutionalization raised by the innovative program whose function takes on great reality and extension over time but continues to require outside funding by virtue of its character as innovation and service dependent on public policy.

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