

# Structure and Space

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I'm going to present you with a point of view about structure and a point of view about structures in the open classroom. I think the first thing to keep in mind is that in any situation with people, the situation has to be structured or has a structure to it, no matter what the human beings involved in it try to do. It is a mistake to assume that there is such a thing as an unstructured classroom or an unstructured situation. As teachers, your responsibility is to attempt to isolate the major elements in human living that are structurable and that are in fact present—no matter what we do—and to find ways to build structures or to structure situations which produce a given end.

The point I'm making—the point that we all have to think about and be concerned about—is what the given end is. In other words, you have to be able to say to yourself, "I want this to happen; I'm willing to commit myself to—and I have—a particular point of view when I consider what I want other people to become." I want my children to be a certain kind of person, and I'm not going to sit back and say "Well, I just want them to grow up", or "I just want them to be happy", or "I just want them to be themselves". All the time you're in a situation you are making it clear that you have certain values, that you have certain commitments, that you have statements to make, and you must be—one of a teacher's jobs is to be—as aware as possible of his own values, his own concerns, and his own commitments. And that—our increasing sense of our own values—is, I think, what underlies all the kinds of structures that we create for this kind of classroom. So, in order to talk about structures, you have first to perceive the kinds of values that you are bringing into the classroom.

Now, in my highly theoretical fashion I've decided that three major elements—external elements, anyway—of human existence are: *Space*, which is the most obvious to children and to all of us; *Time*, which is less obvious to children and sometimes less obvious to adults; and *Relationships* with other human beings and, in a lesser sense, the stuff of the world, which is the least obvious and the least available to children, and in many cases the least available to adults. In other words, the kinds of values that you place in your relationships with each other and with children, the kinds of commitments that you ask from them, and the kinds of behavior that teachers often call forth—ethics, in a broad sense—are based on values that are sometimes the least available to children.

What I would like to talk about is how you go about structuring a space to a given end; the different ways of structuring time to specific ends; and the kinds of relationships you attempt to set up, among the children themselves and between yourself and the children. This last thing is probably the trickiest one to even talk about, and it's very hard for me to be articulate about how it is that you go about pulling a group of kids together in a certain way. There is a double level of

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interaction. In effect, you have peer relationships *and* relationships with authority; and the structuring of authority within the classroom is probably the hardest single thing you will have to learn to do this year. It is easy to see but it's very hard to do sometimes.

I don't know what kind of schools you all grew up in, but if you think about the first grade classroom you were in or if you think about the sixth grade classroom you were in—unless you went to progressive schools—I'm sure you could all come up with exactly the same classrooms; that is, the chairs were in rows, you probably had desks, there was a blackboard. If you had any free space it was at the back of the classroom—there might have been a book table. The teacher's desk is at the front, or if not directly in the front of the room, then catty-cornered to the front.

When you walk into a classroom like that, or when a child walks into a classroom like that, all these things are saying very definite things to him about what the expectation is. It's *expected* that he should look at the teacher, that he should look at the blackboard, that he should not communicate with his friends, that he should not look out the window, that he should pay attention to the work that is given to him. And right there the space—with its dynamic expressive quality—is already saying things to him about all those other elements of human existence which I have mentioned; namely, the passage through time and the relationships he has with other people. Even though I talk about these three things (time, space, relationships) as being distinct, in effect, one leads into another all the time. But it is the space that first hits the children—all of us—in the most dynamic way.

The space clearly says to us what other kinds of things are to be expected. If you don't want your kids to run around, then you put your furniture in such a way that they can't run around; if you don't want them to talk to each other, then you give each one a seat of his own; if you don't want them to touch the materials, then you put the materials away in a closet and shut the door; if you want them to look at you and focus on you, you sit yourself in a certain way. During a discussion or a group meeting when I sit in my chair and the children sit on the rug, they know that that is a time to focus on me.

Now if you want your children to run around, if you want the children to talk, if you want them to be busy, involved, and productive because you really want them ultimately to be expressive—you want them to be getting whatever is inner out and you want to give them the chance to explore the outer world and pull it in—then you have to provide the space for that to happen. And through providing this space, I am saying, in effect, what it is that I want for my children. I want them to be able to communicate with each other, to express the way they're feeling to each other; I want them to use materials in as many ways as they can; and I want them to be free in their bodies. In fact, I'm increasingly concerned with body freedom—with the potential for running, for skipping, for rocking, for all those things. And if I am concerned for these things, then I must provide for them. If I am concerned with certain kinds of materials, then I have to set up the classroom so the materials are available and can be used.

In a school like this we can set up suites of rooms to provide certain kinds of activities, and I suspect as you look around it's obvious to you what we've done. Every room has a rug area; every room has a messing area; I happen to have a block area. When you walk into a classroom and you look around at the teacher's arrangement you can see what she's putting most of her energy into; and whatever classroom I have, at least one quarter of the space—if not more—goes for blocks. I really love blocks and I put a lot of my attention to them. I give a lot of chance for them to be used. And you generally can tell that that's an important element to me; I devote a lot of space to it. The out-of-doors—as activity, as part of the classroom—is another whole issue. I guess that that kind of body freedom comes more under the element of time—what kind of time you allow the child. But just talking about space for the moment, it is important to think of all the

different kinds of activities that children are likely to be involved in and for which they will need a special space.

You have to think of the kinds of things children are going to be wanting to do during the course of the day if you give them the option. They'll probably want to paint, draw, and do crafts; they'll want to go outdoors and play games; they also will want to be secluded. They will also want to cook or mess and get involved in dramatic play. They'll need quiet space, secluded space, and game space—which is very different from dramatic-play space, cooking space, or field game space. And you have to think of the different qualities of these spaces: the space which is supposed to be secluded or appropriate for quiet activities or the space which is appropriate for games is a very different space from the space which is appropriate for block play or dramatic play.

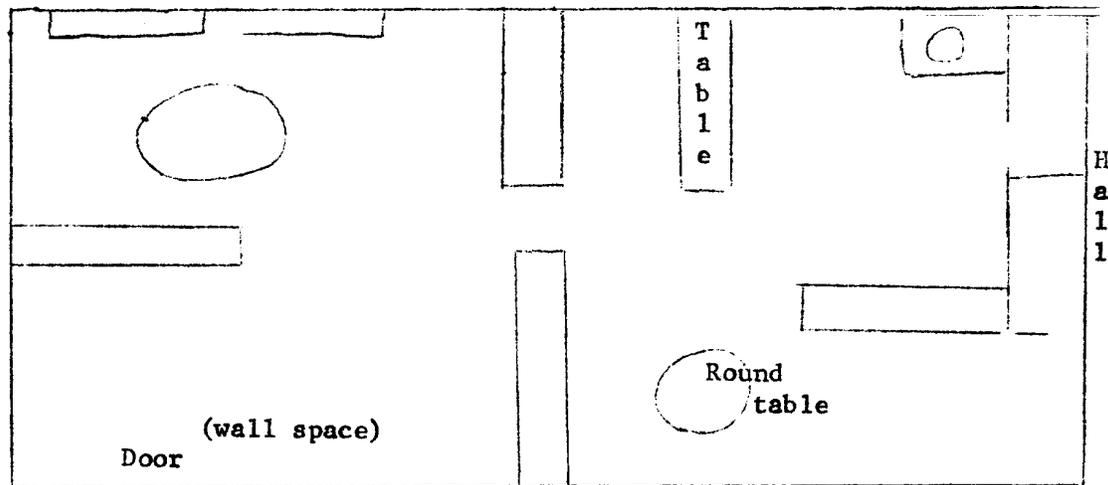
So at a school like this, that is what we try to set up: spaces for people to draw or to be quiet or to play games; spaces for dramatic play; spaces for messy activities; spaces for big construction activities if the children are interested; and also space for them to sit down and be quiet when we've insisted upon it, which is yet another structure.

However, when you're in the classic situation of the public school classroom you have a different kind of space—you have just one room to work with and in which to provide all the activities which we have listed. This is a different kind of situation from The Prospect School and I'd like you to know about it. I'd like to discuss a division, a way of arranging a classroom, that I've worked out. It is, in fact, a very standard way to work things out, but turns out to be very successful. Pat Carini calls it the quadrant system.

Suppose you have a square classroom and let's say that you have at least one door, probably in the corner. Unfortunately, you will most likely have a lot of other doors. But in the case I am thinking of (see figure 1), I had a door here, leading outside. I also had a door leading to the hall. There was a kind of cloakroom and a bathroom, and I had a sink and another door leading into another classroom but it was never used so I could count it as a wall—which is very important since wall space is very important.

I cut the room into four spaces, using my shelves as dividers—that's a very important practical piece of information: use your shelf space as dividers and put your tables against the wall if possible. I had a rug which was a quiet area—with the tables pushed against the wall and books in the shelves dividing that section. There was also a long table which created, in effect, a drawing-collage kind of area. Then I had a large area for blocks. This was a big room, incidentally, so I could put a round table and linoleum here. But this was my one problem area. With a sink, a bathroom and a door all in the same area there is an incredible amount of traffic and, in effect, no matter how I arranged the space there was still traffic going through. I tried to have painting on this side, protected by a cabinet, and I put cooking over here where there was more traffic. Here is another principle, incidentally: you can put cooking anywhere because people will do it no matter how much they are disturbed. The things they won't do if they are disturbed are things like painting. So the things that you know the kids are going to do regardless of interference, you put where the traffic is worst.

I tried to provide a fairly quiet space for people who were working on games and writing; I provided a lot of space for blocks—because it was important to me; I provided a space for crafts such as clay and papier maché or things like that; and then, the block area turned into a dramatic play area—that is, they used the blocks in a way I've seldom seen kids use them, with very intensive kinds of hospitals, offices, housekeeping things. Also we had the option (and sometimes you can do this, depending on the school you are in) of using the hallway space.



(Figure 1)

What I did not have was a place for everybody to sit down at once; I had cubbies for them to keep their work in and they were scattered around the room. I also did not have music. You see, if you want to put music in your program, you have to think about noise. That's one of those things you have to talk about and decide. Oh, and woodworking was another one I did not have—for the very obvious reason that the noise would have been too much to accommodate.

Now sometimes you have to make choices. I had a trainee this summer who decided that he was going to tolerate the noise of woodworking because he thought it was such an important activity, and he arranged to put it into his room at a specific time in his program. That's what I mean when I say you have to figure out what you think is important. Other teachers can't understand how I can have blocks in my room because blocks fall down and they make the most incredible noise you've ever heard; but that noise I was willing to tolerate because I felt the activity was so important.

I'm offering you this notion of the quadrant construction for a classroom as a fairly simple one. It allows you to divide up the space in terms of the kinds of things you want to have in it—quiet, noisy, active, messy kinds of things. It also allows you a traffic pattern which is very clear. The traffic all goes to the center of the room, the activities all go to the corners. Somebody once came to take pictures of the classroom, and he said it was incredible: he could never get a shot of the whole room at once; he could never stand anywhere and see what was going on unless he took a whole wall off and stood up. This was because all the activities were in the corners and were, in effect, protected.

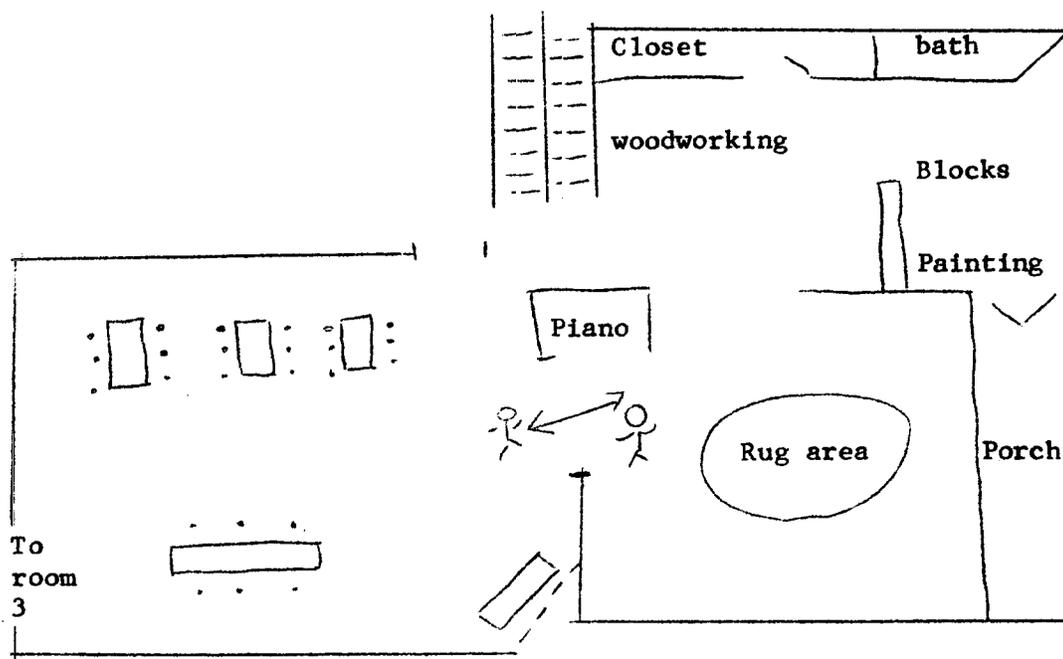
There was one thing I couldn't provide those kids. We did have a little music on occasion, and we sang almost every day; and we did have a little woodworking on occasion; but I was not allowed to let the children go outside. They went outside for a recess, but the yard was badly structured and there was nothing we could do about it. It was very much frowned upon by the school to let the kids go outside at will—especially unsupervised. They had to have an adult with them and so I could not provide that outdoor activity which has become so important to my program. The more you look at the kids, the more you realize how unjust it is to keep them still. I'm astounded when I see the number of children who spend hours running around or spend hours playing kickball. The more you allow, the more they do it. It's as if they never get enough of that kind of activity.

Another thing you have to think about when you are structuring a space—what things you want available and what things you don't want available. For example, some closets in this school

are out of bounds; there are some things I don't want the kids into unless they ask me. On the other hand, everything that is out *is* available and low enough for them to reach. That seems like a common place to me and it probably seems so to you, but it is not always a common place. That is, things are put on shelves so high that people cannot reach them, or things are put in places where children never notice them. One year I kept the crayons in a basket and I kept the basket on the shelf, which struck me as a very obvious and available place for them. However, the kids never used them until I put them on the tables where they could be kept perfectly easily by being pushed against the wall. And yet I just didn't know why they never bothered to go get the carry-ons off of the shelf, I just know they didn't; and when I put them on the table, they used them. And that's another reason for pushing your tables against the wall. You can store things against the wall and they don't have to be put away, which is a thing you can't do when the tables are in the middle of the room.

That principle of tables against the wall is something that an English teacher taught me. The room which is now the block area used to have long tables (see figure 2) throughout; and, you see, that really destroys all the available space. What it does provide is a maze to go through—which is a damn nuisance when your kids are running around after one another. And it provides a place to sit down. What happened was the children would pull their chairs in and start to work at the construction table, or the collage table, or the paint table, and as the traffic flowed around the tables these chairs then became intolerable situations—because you were always getting knocked. Also we didn't put anything up to block the opening between that room and the rug room and this made a bad traffic situation because people were always running around and around, either coming this way or going that way.

That same year I tried to have painting and blocks in the room which leads to the bathroom—but painting and blocks do not mix. The block room was a tricky situation because of the traffic to the bathroom but I thought it would be better than the front room since I thought there would be a lot more traffic between classrooms than to the bathroom. You can see that we've arranged and arranged this room to make the most amount of space with the least amount of traffic interference. The old arrangement was a disastrous way to set up a room because all it provided for a child was a sitting-down space and a running-around space.



(Figure 2)

Another point that I want to make about space is that you arrange it one way—for instance, to provide a sitting-down space—and the children perceive it in an entirely different way. That is, tables are not only to sit at, they're to sit under. I think it is important to realize that spaces are perceived in very different ways by the people who are using them. There is a beautiful study that somebody has done<sup>1</sup> about the psychological difference between people in terms of exactly the same physical space. She uses the example of a wharf—a loading zone—with a couple of pathways leading down to it and a couple of grassy slopes with a railing. The study was an attempt to discover, through the way in which the space was used, what parts of the space were important to people of different ages. There were five year olds, there were seven, eight, and nine year olds, and there were adults. For the five year olds, the only important part of the space was the fence—because they could hang on it and watch what was going on and that was the part which was invested with the most meaning. The seven through nine year olds used the grassy slopes as a battle ground. They completely ignored the adults who were walking up and down the ramps. And the ramps were the only part of the space which had any meaning for the adults.

The same thing will be true when you arrange your classrooms. I know, for instance, that one of the reasons the kids like that table is because they can get under it. That's one of the things that I don't know whether I should allow them to do. I also know that they like that table because they like to sit in that corner and feel very secluded. That table is practically the prize table of the whole classroom. People grab it all the time. I heard someone say yesterday, "The best places are all taken". They like to sit in the book corner, too, because it means then they are out of it; and they like to sit on the porch because it's away from things. We have had kids who liked to sit in trash cans and it struck some of the teachers are being a bit bizarre; but if you're small enough, those big trash cans provide a really nice inner space that's very different from the way you approach it as adults. You ought to think about that. If you put a big box in the classroom to be used for something specific, it's going to hit the kids with a different affect. It's going to be something to play in, so you better watch out.

Another thing to consider is that instead of structuring the space to provide for different opportunities for different activities, you maintain the same space and structure the time. This structuring of time as opposed to structuring space is the next issue. I feel very strongly that in a school like this we should structure time as little as possible but that we structure space as much as we can. I try to provide spaces that have easy traffic flow and that provide different opportunities for different kinds of activity. I like to have movement—a lot of big muscle activity—and in order to provide that I don't really structure a space. But, in a sense, I do structure a time—that is, I *don't* structure it, I *give* them the option of going out. The kids can go outside whenever they like in the morning.

Usually a teacher in a traditional classroom would behave in exactly the reverse fashion and would structure the time throughout the whole day and not structure the space at all—except possibly to emphasize the authority quality in the classroom. This gives you a sense of the different, the relative, values in the situation. What's really important in the traditional classrooms—and why they were set up to begin with—is to teach an authoritative, time-oriented, scheduled approach to life. The value being communicated by such a structure is hierarchy; that is to say, the person up front is the person in charge and the person on whom you focus all your attention. That person will structure time and will permit you to do certain kinds of activities at certain periods. This is not to say that within an open situation you might not structure a woodworking time from nine to ten—because after that you want to hear people read and there's

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<sup>1</sup> Study by Martha Muchow cited in Werner, H., *Comparative Psychology of Mental Development*, New York International Universities Press, Inc, 1948, pp. 387-389.

too much noise. It's a slightly different value set because you're structuring time according to the appropriateness of the activity.

There are lots of traditional classrooms in which some painting goes on. You all remember, I'm sure, having art once a week or music once a week. But the primary focus in the traditional classroom is on the conceptual or highly symbolic academic activity. In an open situation like this, the focus is on interaction with materials and interaction with people. That is not so much a value of ours as it is a conviction in terms of how we think people learn. We don't think people learn by being sat down at a desk and going through a workbook, so we try to provide the opportunity for interaction with the world—with the stuff of the world—and with each other.

My feeling is that we structure our space considerably more than we structure our time. We do, however, structure time—partly because when you're involved with a group of twenty-five people the group won't run smoothly if you don't do certain things at certain times. This has to do with another value which is important to us: the ethical question of relationships with each other. For instance, if we just let the kids have lunch any old time, we would never have a chance to take a break. That's a little hard on us, and that's what I say to the kids. When I don't have any help here I really push the kids to be out of the building by twelve o'clock because, and I say this to them, we need a quick cup of coffee, too. They can go outside and give us a half hour of quiet—and they appreciate that.

The way we structure the day here is to put activities first. It's the most important thing to us, so we have it occur the first thing in the morning. Children come in and they are free to choose at 8:30 or so what it is they want to do until about 11:00 or 11:10. If you were all experienced public school classroom teachers you would wonder why we don't have reading in the morning because it's the children's best time of the day. It's true that it is, and that's why we have activities first—what I really want is for them to be involved with materials. I'm not so concerned about whether or not they learn to read. I'm much more concerned with whether or not they learn to have an interest—learn to get involved with materials, learn to know what they like, know who they are.

I always get that question about what do we do first. It's a classic question and people are always a little surprised because it's true; in most traditional situations the most important thing, reading, comes first; and so you do reading from nine to ten o'clock. As a matter of fact, you often do reading from nine to ten and then again from twelve to one—twice a day.

Incidentally, in a school like this, as far as I'm concerned, I hear my established readers once a week. This shows you not only the relative importance of reading in our minds, but it also shows you that the kids learn to read just as well by hearing them once a week as they do by hearing them twice a day. That's quite a shock.

Anyway, we structure our time with activities first because that is what's most important to us. The other time that we structure is discussion time, which we insist on—and this is a case where the kids themselves are not always so pleased. I have three group meetings a day. This is a case where I have decided as an adult that this is an important activity for children and that I'm going to insist on it. I'm willing to take that stand and say "Yes, I'm sorry, it's good for you; I know better than you do." I feel very strongly about the importance of discussion. I have the initial discussions in the morning from about 11:15–11:30 and sometimes it's tough. The children don't want to sit still for twenty minutes and sometimes someone will say "Twenty minutes is up Jessica—let me up now." Sometimes I pick the wrong topic and they're not interested in what we're talking about.

I have another group meeting after lunch. Sometimes we sing—I find singing is another one of those things that goes well in a group; and we do number games. That's a real leftover of habit.

When I first started teaching here we had another time organization and part of the organization was numbers after lunch, and so even though I've changed my whole time structure around radically, I still do number discussions after lunch. It seems to work out better; and if I do a number discussion with the kids in a group, they seem to enjoy it. I don't do any reading work with the group as a whole, (except reading aloud, that's done with the group) but they seem to enjoy number work as a group.

In the afternoon I begin to structure my time a little more. My expectations (and expectations are another structure) in regard to them in the afternoon are: once a week everybody will do some number work, some reading activity or read to me, and some writing. After that they are free to use the games, draw, to use the books, but, in effect, to keep the noise level down, to keep the activity down—to be a little quieter. Then at two o'clock we read aloud. That's really the pattern for the whole school activity in the morning, a group meeting before lunch, a quieter afternoon and reading aloud right at the end of the day. I'm sure you're all familiar with the traditional kind of time structure, that is, every 40 — 45 minutes you switch and you do a different thing; that is another way to approach the structure of time. It doesn't make any sense to me to do it that way, obviously.

I structure time in another sense by making certain demands in terms of content: that once a week something will happen; that once a week the children will work on their reading. I think if I tell you my reasons for the quiet afternoon it will give you an idea why one structures time at all. If I'm going to teach children to read—and in effect I have not only made it a personal decision but have been forced to that decision by the culture—(there's no getting away from it—everyone has to read before the age of ten and usually before the age of seven or they get a tremendous stigma attached to them) then you must have a period of quiet in which to do it, or at least I must. I can't sit down and hear somebody read when I want to go outside and watch everybody play kickball. That's what it comes down to. And I can't—especially during maple sugaring—sit down in my chair and hear somebody read when the sugaring is going on outside. I find it easiest for me in terms of the attention that I can give to the children and in terms of their perception of what they've done—which is crucial to them—to have a special time for it. So I have an hour in the afternoon when everybody has to be relatively quiet.

I hope I have given you a clear example of how I structure time. I would like to move now into the study of relationships. I think that it's the most important; it's the kind of thing that I'm very concerned about—I just am very concerned about my children's responses to each other and to themselves as members of the group. One of the reasons I like to have a group meeting—and why I insist upon it—is because it begins to develop a sense of a group; and I'm very willing to say to you that one of the most important things a person can learn is a responsibility to a living situation; and I see this school as living situation. I often say to the children that we all live here and they say "We don't live here." Then I explain that we all have to work and stay in the school all day long and we all have to accept the responsibility as a group for the situation.

I have one basic major rule which I lay on the children—and that is the inviolate sanctity of the individual. That is, translated down into every day terms: "You don't go around hitting people; you don't go around punching them; you don't go around pulling their hair; you don't go around hurting their work."

I would like the children to begin to get a sense that the things which are produced—the things which come of their expressiveness—are a part of living and should be as sacred to them as their bodies. That's very hard for them to understand so I just have to say it to them as much and as often as I can, insisting and reinforcing it. In effect, I'm playing the policeman—stopping people from hitting people on the head; stopping people from hurting their work; suggesting

they put it away so it doesn't get hurt. I try to make it very clear that their work is important by displaying it in a certain way and by using it as the basis of discussions whenever I can. In this way I'm suggesting to them that their productivity is really important to me. I say to them every year that this is one of the three major rules in the classroom.

Another value which I'm suggesting constantly to them is that the individual is sacrosanct. I don't state it overtly because I think they're a little young for that. I state it constantly, however, in these terms, "Don't interfere with the privacy of another human being; don't force yourself on them; you don't have to play with them, they don't have to play with you; you don't have to share. If something is yours, you don't have to share it." I think if you force sharing you never get anything shared; you never get a shared being; but when sharing comes out of a sense of self you *can* be spontaneous, you *can* be generous.

On the other hand, I point out that we all have a responsibility to the group. This is how I say it to them: "We all live in this space, we all help clean it up—everybody takes care of this space because we're all members of this group and we all need the space." The same thing goes for the time structure, and what I say is: "When it's time to stop, it's time to stop. I'm sorry, I know you don't always want to, but the structure is there for a reason. It's there for us to operate in a certain way. If we didn't have it we wouldn't have other things, so you must abide by it."

What I've really said to you then, is that there are three some rules that I consider the ethical structure—the ethical moral structure of the classroom—the space rule, the time rules, and the rule about their relationships to each other. Underneath all of that and on a second level—is some sort of group feeling, but I don't think an overt issue of group because I think they're too young. But I do make it a kind of implied issue by having the group in a circle; by insisting that they all take responsibility for cleaning up; in effect, by doing things with them as a group.

Now we get to the final structure—and I don't whether it is the crown or the base—which is their relationship to me. In other words, what is it about their relationship to me or about my projection that allows me to say, "Yes, you must all clean up" and *know*, in effect, that in the end they will all clean up; or "No, you can't hit so-and-so on the head", and have the child stop; or "Yes, I want you to sit down and do that now because you need to", and he will—or alternatively, to have a child come and say "I want to do something, help me—I need help, I need to do this, I want to do this, you help me." And I said to you earlier, that's really a question of authority and that, I think, is absolutely the trickiest issue in the whole game. In a traditional classroom the authority is laid out clearly in terms of space and in terms of the whole hierarchical structure of the school. It's very obvious who is in charge and they are in charge by virtue of their positions as teachers. That is, you look at the teacher, you don't talk to your friends, you're not given the opportunity to move around; you're given very little choice in any sense—your time is structured, your space is confined.

In an open classroom the teachers are authorities, in fact even more so. They function very much as the persons who make the structure, Yet they are also people whom you call by their first names, people who joke, people you get angry with, people that you make suggestions to. One of my greatest thrills is when my kids say, "Hey how about that we do...", I really like to have them say that to me. When we took the kids on a trip to the Welters this spring, they went way up into the woods and a lot of boys found forts. They went far away from the grownups and they found forts, which is a very exciting thing for them to do; and one of the most exciting things is that you've excluded the adults. You've left the adults well behind and you've gone away and they aren't bothering you. But they came back and said, "Jessica, we found some forts" and I said that was really neat and they said, "Would you like to come and see them?" and that really made me feel good because then I knew no matter how much of an authority I am they were not also

sensing me as some kind of a threat. They were willing to let me see their secret forts and I felt good about that. The gist of the question then is: what are the qualities of a teacher—and they're manifold; that is, they vary from teacher to teacher.

I really think that one of the things that allows authority to happen is the very thing I was saying to you at the beginning of this lecture, which is, that you have to know what you want to have happen and you have to have a conviction about what you think is right. If I say no and I really don't think no, the kids know it and then I get a big argument. But if I set something on the line and say that I know that I'm right about it, then I rarely get an argument—except in the case of the special child, which is another whole issue. But over all, a sense on the child's part that you really have thought about this, and that you really have conviction about it, is basic—and furthermore you have the unfair advantage of being an adult. And I don't mean that the child feels it an unfair advantage but that I feel it's an unfair advantage.

That is, adults are probably the single most important element in a child's life. You are *it* as far as they are concerned; you are the person who nurtures, the person who chastises, the person who also cares for, the person who protects, the person who understands what's going on around them. They're living in a world that really is not too clear. Things are still rocky; they don't always understand what's happening. They don't have a time sense—it's a very important function of the teacher to provide the time sense. So you have the advantage of being the adult and being, in a sense, the be-all-and-end-all—in a funny sort of way. And if you couple that up with a conviction about what you're doing, the child will be able to respond. You also have to couple it with a certain amount of consistency; and hopefully, you will couple it with a certain amount of friendship.

However, along with these convictions there must also be a willingness to let certain things be options if you really don't care. For example, if you really don't care if someone gets dirty, let them get dirty. We went for a walk the other day down the river and the kids were really struck because the river was very low. There was a mass of stones showing and they wanted to wade out to the stones. And my first response, as a kind of mother-hen type of adult, was to say no—because it's a little dangerous and the kids would get wet and their clothes would get wet and they might get dirty. But I really thought it was a neat thing to do and I knew that they really wanted to. What I'm saying is, I knew everybody wanted to do it so I overcame that initial mother-hen "No" and went out and did it myself—because I like to do it too—and it's fun to do, but you really have to think about the things you really don't care about. That's where you start clarifying your options and where you start making your structures.

We could go on talking about adult relationships to children and how you structure them forever—and we probably will spend a lot of time doing just that this year—but I would like to mention one more thing. We've talked about space and we said you have to structure it for the things you care about; we talked about time and again you structure for what you care about; and we talked about relationships with other people and I told you what I think is important—that is, what I want my children to learn more than anything. We talked about the adult relationship to the child which is another kind of structure. I've implied to you that I also have expectations—which is really another kind of structure. I have academic expectations that the children should do certain kinds of things once a week, and I have another expectation—it's not hard and fast because it's not something you can force—yet I expect that they will be involved and productive; and they know that. If I see children drifting around too much, I'm likely to say "What are you going to do today?" Just the very way I start the day off, saying "Who knows what he's going to do this morning" implied that I expected people to do things, that is I expected them to get involved with materials or whatever there is. The fact that you offer them the wax or leaf dripping or cooking or

say “David’s\* going to go for a walk” or “Bob’s\* going to make oatmeal, makes a clear suggestion to them that we’re expecting them to do those things. And that’s part of it—that is a part of the structure of the classroom.

There are two or three structures I’m not going to spend any time on but I’m going to mention them to you. They are in your head. They’re all the structures of what you know: what you know about children and what you know about materials, and what you know about things like reading and math. If you know something about the development of children and if you know something about the process of reading then you have a way of putting them together. That is, you decide where a child is in terms of his development and, therefore, that it’s inappropriate for you to ask him to do a certain kind of thing in reading. And those really are structure—and, in a sense, I suppose they’re the most important structures you have. It is out of them that you can construct any of the other situations that you need. I’m not going to launch into a discussion of development or on reading and math or materials. The materials themselves have their own structures, their own uses, their own potential—those are things which we will talk about at great lengths in the course of this year. I just want to reiterate to you that the beginning and the end—the core of teaching—is what you know about yourself. You have to know what you care about and if you don’t know what you care about, the kids will know and the classrooms will really not operate very well.

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NOTE: The Prospect School is one of the first institutions in the country to have been authorized to certify teachers independently of any university affiliation.

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\* Teacher trainees