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"Feminist Education at the Feminist Studio Workshop, The Woman's Building in Los Angeles" by Ruth Iskin, 1976

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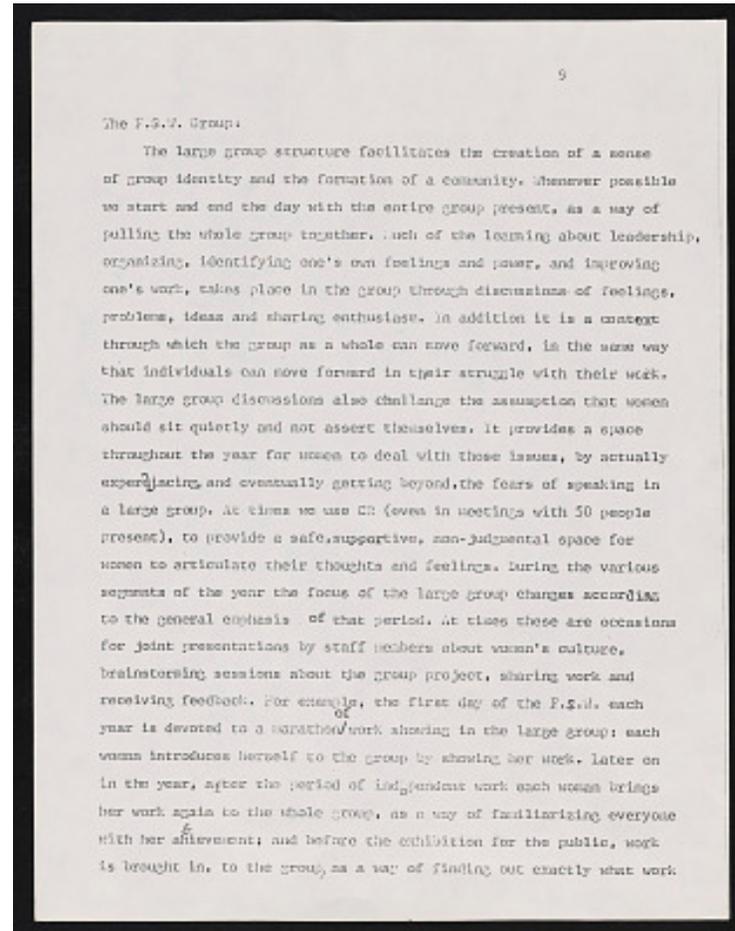
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The F.S.W. Group:

The large group structure facilitates the creation of a sense of group identity and the formation of a community. Whenever possible we start and end the day with the entire group present, as a way of pulling the whole group together. Much of the learning about leadership, organizing, identifying one's own feelings and power, and improving one's work, takes place in the group through discussions of feelings, problems, ideas and sharing enthusiasm. In addition it is a context through which the group as a whole can move forward, in the same way that individuals can move forward in their struggle with their work. The large group discussions also challenge the assumption that women should sit quietly and not assert themselves. It provides a space throughout the year for women to deal with those issues, by actually experiencing, and eventually getting beyond, the fears of speaking in a large group. At times we use CR (even in meetings with 50 people present), to provide a safe, supportive, non-judgemental space for women to articulate their thoughts and feelings. During the various segments of the year the focus of the large group changes according to the general emphasis of that period. At times these are occasions for joint presentations by staff members about women's culture, brainstorming sessions about the group project, sharing work and receiving feedback. For example, the first day of the F.S.W. each year is devoted to a marathon of work showing in the large groups; each woman introduces herself to the group by showing her work. Later on in the year, after the period of independent work each woman brings her work again to the whole group, as a way of familiarizing everyone with her achievement; and before the exhibition for the public, work is brought in, to the group, as a way of finding out exactly what work



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