

THE EFFECTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT ON THE
LEARNING AND BEHAVIORAL TENDENCIES OF THE SECONDARY STUDENT
IN THE OPEN SPACE CONCEPT SCHOOL

by 4589

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The enrollment at Salina High School has long exceeded the maximum capacity for which the building was erected. The administration has for several years recognized the need for additional classroom space long before a new high school became a reality. Several years ago plans were made to construct a dressing room facility to complement the high school stadium. A logical solution to the urgent need for classroom space seemed to be the construction of the dressing room facility and fitting it as a temporary classroom complex.¹

Since the Salina school administrators and school board recognized the acute problem of needed facilities, they presented the problem to the citizens of Salina Unified District #305 who approved the additional secondary structure. Initial planning for the construction of a new secondary building took into consideration the need for an innovative building to house a progressive curriculum. In cooperation with school personnel, the architect designed a building that permitted change in teaching techniques during the life of the building.

The age of space is upon us and if secondary education doesn't take on "the new look," it may find itself preparing citizens for yesterday rather than today and the fast developments of the future.²

¹The Salina Public School Unified School District 305, "New High School Facility," Staff Bulletin, (November, 1968), p. 4.

²Paul E. Coble, "Looking Ahead in Secondary Education," Peabody Journal of Education, XLVI (September, 1968), p. 90.

Revolution has erupted in the nation's schools, but it is not the kind of revolution caused by student activists, dissident teachers, or desegregation orders. The revolution is in the ranks of school architects and is the result of studies, evaluations, and architects' ideas of the perfect educational environment.

Gone are the chairs set in neat rows in four-walled classrooms. Gone are the windows. And gone are the walls. Open space schools are the new look, and Salina will have its own example of the new trend in school buildings when Salina High School--South opens its doors in the fall.³

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. This project was initiated to study selected factors related to the control of the physical environment in the open space secondary school and to investigate by an opinionaire whether parents, teachers, and administrators felt that open space classrooms facilitated innovative teaching.

Limitations and delimitations. The survey was limited by the factors below:

1. Environmental factors included were:
 - a. temperature
 - b. lighting
 - c. color
 - d. sound
 - e. furniture and equipment

³Barbara Phillips, "Architects Join Classroom Revolt," Salina Journal, April 19, 1970, p. 36.

f. space

2. Application was limited to the three open space schools that were compared.

3. The role of teachers and counselors was limited to their effectiveness in such an environment.

4. An opinionaire on innovative teaching practices was limited to a random sample of twenty teachers-administrators now teaching in the Salina Senior High School and twenty parents of students now enrolled in the home economics program at Salina Senior High School. The students surveyed will be enrolled in Salina's open space high school in the fall, 1970.

5. Since the open space concept has been a fairly recent innovation, the review of literature had to be limited to recent magazine and newspaper articles, interviews, school brochures, reports, and profiles.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Open space concept school. This is a building structure where classrooms are constructed in various sizes. Most rooms are large enough to seat seventy-five students easily; however, space adapted to small groups and independent study can be obtained by the use of moveable wall dividers and study carrels. Large commons areas containing circular tables can be used for small groups, for testing or for instructing up to 150 students.

This type school is usually divided into two parts: one part contains rooms used for academic activities and administration, while the other part contains physical education, music, drama, home economics, and vocational shops.

Environmental factors. Factors which become involved with physical facilities of the open space building are those variables which contribute to opportunities for learning and behavior modification. These are:

- a. temperature
- b. lighting
- c. color
- d. sound
- e. furniture and equipment
- f. space