



Master of Architecture Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN IN THE
ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
SCHOOLS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Education in South Australia and overseas is changing in many fundamental ways.
- 1.2 Some of the past practices of teacher imposed discipline upon the child are being replaced by the teacher providing opportunities for the pupil to discover and experience facts by his own activity. The students can progress at their own pace.
- 1.3 There is, because of this, a need to make available specialist knowledge and techniques possessed by individual teachers to the larger school community rather than restrict it to a relatively smaller group - the class.
- 1.4 This different approach has made it necessary to modify current classroom practices, e.g. Team Teaching is a growing practice as this allows larger class grouping for specialty teaching where required.
- 1.5 Although learning cannot be directly produced through design, design of facilities can create a happy environment for effective learning. It has been observed by educationalists and researchers from pupil and teacher reaction that, when motivated and given adequate facilities, children are able to pursue their interests and activities to deeper levels and for longer periods of time than previously thought possible. The timetable has become more flexible as children tend to subdivide into small activity groups or form into large groups for different activities with personal involvement as the keynote for their work.
The teacher's approach is such that they act as guides for the individual's learning process, working as a team, moving along the smaller groups or perhaps taking as many as a hundred for a specially prepared

lesson using audio-visual material or demonstration techniques.

i.e. The aspects of schooling with the most obvious implications for facilities are the logistical elements, the parts you can kick with your foot, or photograph, or time with a stopwatch, places, people, resources and time.

1.6 These conditions require schools with a different design concept from the traditional which were suitable so long as each teacher remained isolated with a single group of 35 or 45 children in a 'formalised' teacher dominated situation.

1.7 Architectural design has become increasingly important in South Australian education. Since 1956 architects and educators have collaborated in an attempt to design schools which provide an environment that stimulates growth of the pupils' interests and activities. In a school environment useful and usable 'space' is always priority - appropriate space for appropriate activity - space to write, to draw, to paint, to read, to experiment, to build, to measure, to dance, to make music, to hammer and saw. Space for children to project their own slides, listen to portable tape recorders, collate their gathered materials for science, model with clay or cook. Thus school building design, rather than dictating any particular instructional pattern or technological system, should be highly adaptable to the educational needs of the particular people who will use them; the school must provide spaces that can form large spaces and small bays, places to be quiet and places to be noisy. Hard surfaced floors unaffected by water and clay, soft comfortable floors for sprawling with a book - whoever saw a child engrossed in a book on an uncompromising hard upright chair?

- 1.8 Designers must attempt to improve the spaces they create acoustically by absorbing unwanted sound.
- 1.9 Furniture - light, portable, strong and versatile is an integral part of the design of such a school, for what good is building flexibility if the desks need two strong men to shift them?
- 1.10 New schools designs should be appropriately developed to assist teachers in their new approach to education. For the school of traditional design makes difficult the changes that must occur in teaching methods to give effect to a different approach to curricula and to a new conception of what aims of education are necessary,