

Directions: For each item below, respond according to the strength of your belief, scoring the item on a scale of 1 through 5. A one (1) indicates strong disagreement, a five (5) strong agreement. Use a separate sheet of paper.

1. Ideal teachers are constant questioners.
2. Schools exist for societal improvement.
3. Teaching should center around the inquiry technique.
4. Demonstration and recitation are essential components for learning.
5. Students should always be permitted to determine their own rules in the educational process.
6. Reality is spiritual and rational.
7. Curriculum should be based on the laws of natural science.
8. The teacher should be a strong authority figure in the classroom.
9. The student is a receiver of knowledge.
10. Ideal teachers interpret knowledge.
11. Lecture-discussion is the most effective teaching technique.
12. Institutions should seek avenues toward self-improvement through an orderly process.
13. Schools are obligated to teach moral truths.
14. School programs should focus on social problems and issues.
15. Institutions exist to preserve and strengthen spiritual and social values.
16. Subjective opinion reveals truth.
17. Teachers are seen as facilitators of learning.
18. Schools should be educational "smorgasbords."
19. Memorization is the key to process skills.
20. Reality consists of objects.
21. Schools exist to foster the intellectual process.
22. Schools foster an orderly means for change.
23. There are essential skills everyone must learn.
24. Teaching by subject area is the most effective approach.
25. Students should play an active part in program design and evaluation.
26. A functioning member of society follows rules of conduct.
27. Reality is rational.
28. Schools should reflect the society they serve.
29. The teacher should set an example for the students.
30. The most effective learning does not take place in a highly structured, strictly disciplined environment.
31. The curriculum should be based on unchanging spiritual truths.
32. The most effective learning is nonstructured.
33. Truth is a constant expressed through ideas.
34. Drill and factual knowledge are important components of any learning environment.
35. Societal consensus determines morality.
36. Knowledge is gained primarily through the senses.

37. There are essential pieces of knowledge that everyone should know.
38. The school exists to facilitate self-awareness.
39. Change is an ever-present process.
40. Truths are best taught through the inquiry process.

FIGURE 2.1 Philosophy Preference Assessment **45**

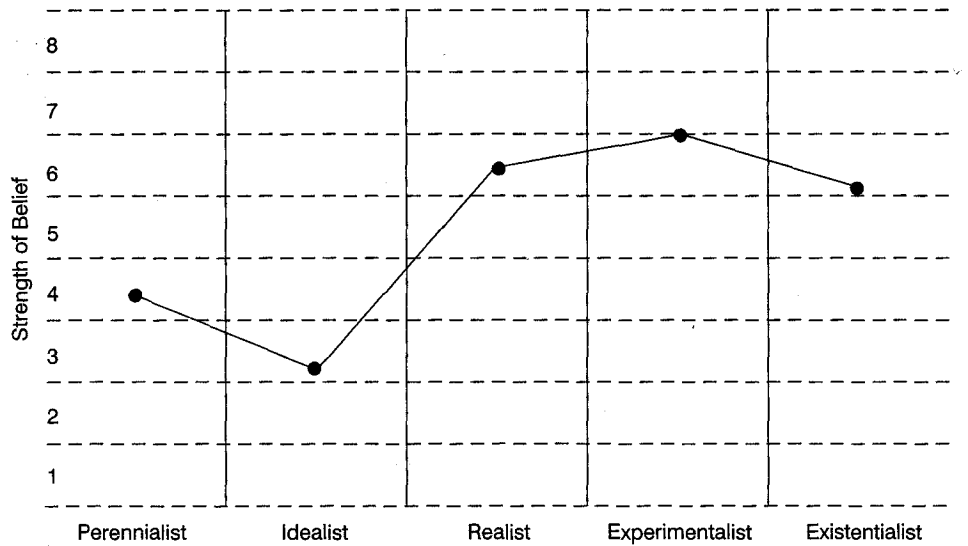


FIGURE 2.2 Composite Graph for Philosophy Preference Assessment

Interpretation of Scoring. Having scored and plotted your responses on the grid provided, you now have a profile distinctive to your own beliefs about schools. It can be noted that some patterns are common and, therefore, subject to interpretation. The pattern already on the grid (Figure 2.2), for instance, is a composite response by over 5000 students, both graduate and undergraduate, at five universities.

Pattern 1. If your profile on the response grid is basically flat, reflecting approximately the same score for each set of questions, an inability to discriminate in terms of preference is indicated. See Figure 2.3.

Pattern 2. If your pattern is generally a slanting line across the grid, you show a strong, structured or nonstructured orientation in your reported beliefs about schools. See Figure 2.4.

Pattern 3. If your pattern appears as a bimodal or trimodal distribution (two or three peaks), it indicates indecisiveness on crucial issues and suggests the need for

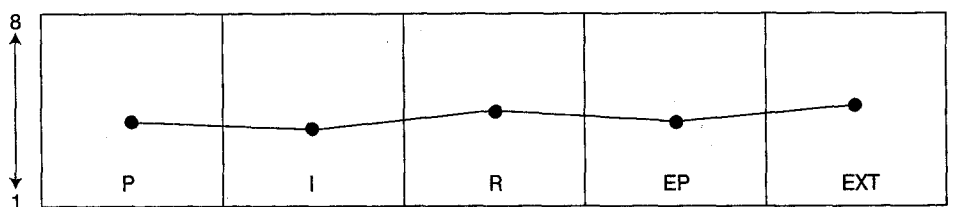


FIGURE 2.3 Pattern 1

FIGURE 2.4 Pattern 2.23

further clarification. The closer the peaks (adjacent sets), the less contradiction in the

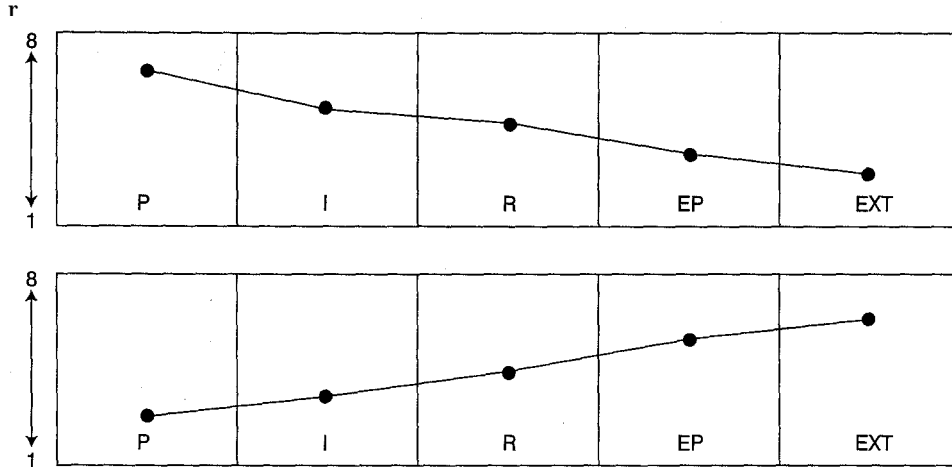


Figure 2.5.

Pattern 4. If the pattern appears U-shaped, as in either of the graphs in Figure 2.6, a significant amount of value inconsistency is indicated. Such a response would suggest strong beliefs in very different and divergent systems.

Pattern 5. Finally, a pattern that is simply a flowing curve without sharp peaks and valleys may suggest either an eclectic philosophy or a person only beginning to study his or her own philosophy. See Figure 2.7.

PHILOSOPHIES AS FOUND IN SCHOOLS

During this century, schools in America have evolved from highly standardized content-focused institutions to more flexible and diverse forms of education. Our understandings of human development and the learning process and the pressures on our rapidly changing society account for these alterations of the schooling form.

All schools are designed to promote an education, but the designs of school curriculums differ just as philosophies differ. Schools represent a blueprint, or plan, to promote learning; because the ends sought by planners differ, all schools are not

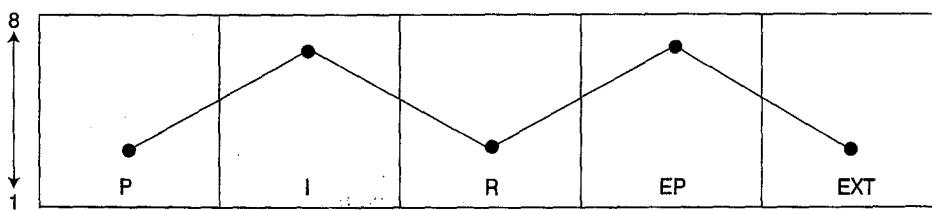


FIGURE 2.5 Pattern 3

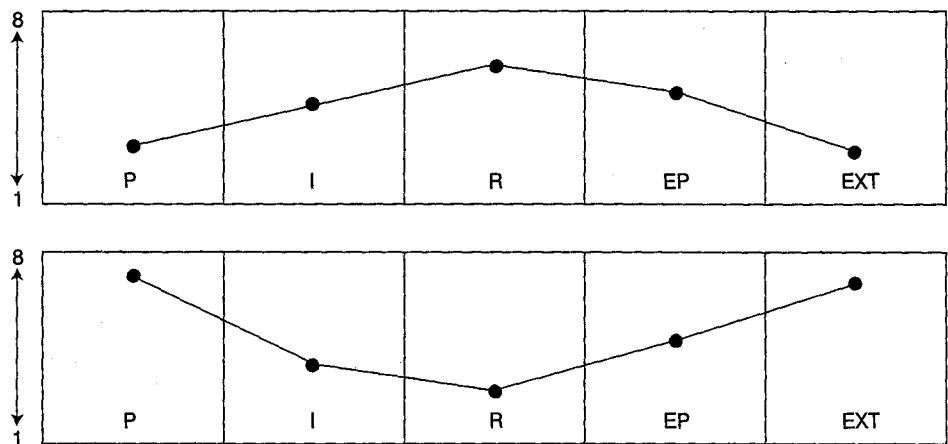


FIGURE 2.6 Pattern 4

alike. This section introduces the fifteen dimensions of school design, dimensions by which schools can be compared and contrasted. Each dimension has been prepared to illuminate the various philosophic continuums within schools. Although these continuums do not match our five philosophies precisely, you can begin to see a rough parallel between these philosophies and the various dimensions of the school setting. Questions for planners are highlighted for your consideration.

The intentions of schooling might be thought of as a continuum of choices. On one end of such a continuum is the belief that education is the process of shaping raw human talent into something definitive and useful to society. This classic view of education sees schools shaping and refining human thought and behavior through an increasingly controlled program of study. Such control, in the legitimate sense of the word, is accomplished by structuring the learning environment to facilitate highly predictable ends.

On the other end of that same choice continuum is the belief that human talents are best managed by allowing the natural capacities of individuals to develop through the removal of growth barriers. This definition of education would have schools acting to release the student from behaviors and perceptions that limit personal development. Thus, the institution of the school would formally seek the expansion of human potential in the process of learning by promoting flexibility in the learning environment.

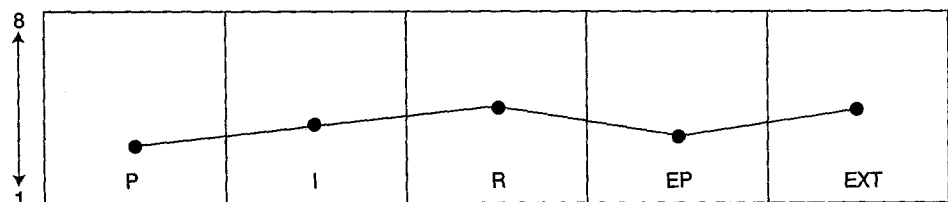


FIGURE 2.7 Pattern 5

Strong arguments can be made for either of these positions, as well as for the many intermediate stances on such a continuum. The crucial concept to be understood is that schools are institutions created by society to accomplish certain ends. Because there are many possible goals for the institution of the school, there are many legitimate forms of schooling. To the degree that the organization of the school corresponds with the objectives of the school, the school can effectively educate students.

The range of possible intentions for a school program, bordered on one end by a school seeking maximum control and on the other by a school promoting maximum freedom, can be translated into the universal variables of structure versus flexibility. These two variables—structure and flexibility—are used to facilitate the analysis of fifteen major dimensions of schooling. These fifteen dimensions can all be readily observed by a visitor to a school:

1. Community involvement
2. School buildings and grounds
3. Classroom spaces
4. Organization of knowledge
5. Uses of learning materials
6. Philosophy of education
7. Teaching strategies
8. Staffing patterns
9. Organization of students
10. Rules and regulations
11. Disciplinary measures
12. Reporting student progress
13. Administrative attitudes
14. Teacher roles
15. Student roles

Examining the school by such criteria, in a systematic manner, will help you see a school in its totality. The underlying beliefs about educating will become more obvious, and the program congruence or inconsistencies will be more visible. In short, you will be able to analyze the dimensions of a school setting in a selective and regular way and to understand the philosophic intent of the curriculum. The numbered rating scales in the following sections refer to this list.

The Learning Environment

It is clear that environments, both real and perceived, set a tone for learning. What people feel about the spaces that they occupy or in which they interact causes them to behave in certain ways. For instance, churches call for discreet behavior; stadiums elicit a different behavior.

Traditionally, schools have been solitary, sedate, and ordered environments. This atmosphere was the result of many forces: a narrow definition of formal education, a limited public access to knowledge, a didactic (telling–listening) format for learning.

In contrast, many innovative schools seem to be the organizational opposite of the traditional, structured school. They are often open, noisy, and sometimes seemingly chaotic activity centers. These changes in schools are the result of both a changing definition of education and a new understanding of the environmental conditions that enhance learning.

Three measures of the learning environments of schools are the relationship of the school and the surrounding community, the construction and use of buildings and grounds, and the organization of learning spaces within buildings. Within each of these three areas, selected dimensions have been identified that may help you to understand the learning environment of the school.

Community Involvement. Individual schools differ according to the degree and type of interaction that they enjoy with the immediate community. Schools that perceive their role as shaping the behavior and thoughts of students into acceptable patterns normally seek to limit community access and involvement in the school program. By limiting community access, the school also limits community influence on the school program and thus ensures more predictable outcomes for students.

Conversely, schools intent on expanding student responses to the educational process generally encourage community access and involvement in school activities. By encouraging community access, the school encourages community influence, thus ensuring the divergent input characteristic of most communities.

Measures of community access and involvement with a school are plentiful. A simple measure readily available to the observer is to note how many and what kinds of nonschool personnel are in a school building on a given day. Perhaps a more analytic approach to the assessment of involvement, however, is to observe the school operation in terms of physical, legal, participatory, and intellectual access.

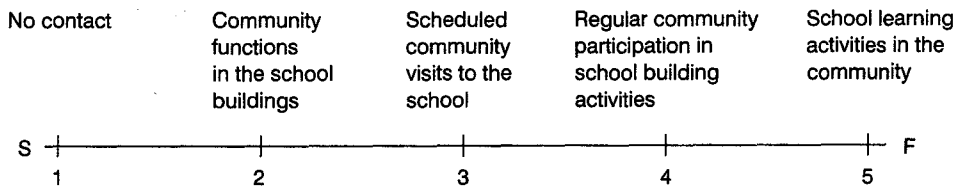
The descriptive continuums in Figure 2.8 suggest the potential range of alternatives present in schools.

Physical access. In a physical sense, community involvement can be measured by the amount of quasi-school-related activity occurring in the school building. Activities such as school-sponsored visits to the building, community-sponsored functions in the building, parental participation in school-sponsored activities, and school programs being conducted in the community are indicative of interchange and involvement.

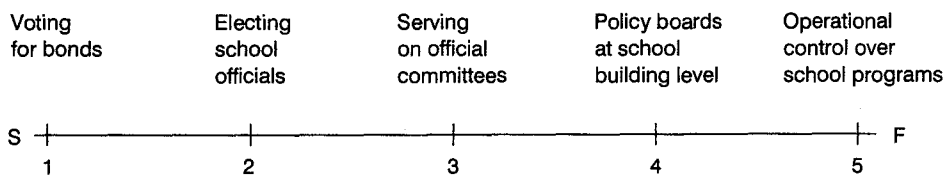
On the other hand, schools where the public is never invited to visit, where classes never leave the building, where the public is fenced out or locked out, held at the office when visiting, not welcome after school hours, or discouraged from mobility within the spaces of the school indicate limited access and involvement.

Legal access. Legally, the community is allowed to become involved with the school at varying levels. In a tightly structured or closed school, legal access is normally restricted to setting limits and voting on school bonds. Increasing participation is measured by electing school officials and the chief administrative officer of the school district. Further access is indicated by school-building-level committees (such as a textbook selection committee) that allow community members to play an

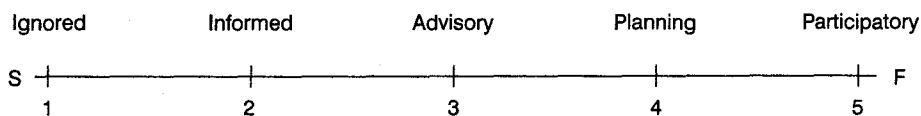
Physical Access



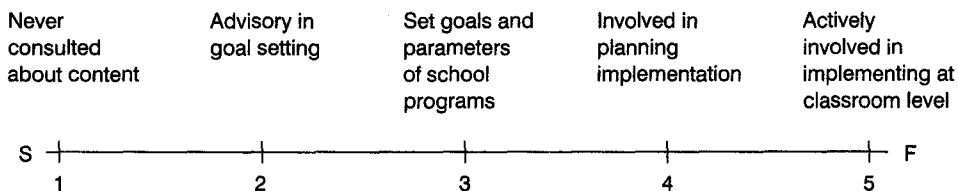
Legal Access



Participatory Access



Intellectual Access



General Access

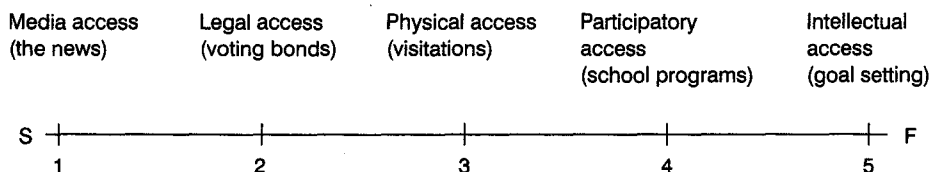


FIGURE 2.8 Types of Community Access to Schools

active role in policy formation. Not surprisingly, so-called community schools allow the ultimate access; parents and the community-at-large serve in governance roles over school operation and activity.

Participatory access. In terms of participation in the daily operation of the school program, the community can be ignored, informed, included at an advisory level, or asked

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to participate wholly. Whether a school chooses to include the community in the type of school program that is being experienced by the students depends on whether such participation is seen as contributing to or detracting from the mission of the school.

Intellectual access. Finally, there is an intellectual dimension to community involvement with the school that is indicated by access to goal setting, resource allocation, and program development. To the degree that the community is excluded from thinking about the substance of what is taught and the method of instruction, the school is characterized by limited intellectual access or high structures (S). If the school encourages programmatic and instructional participation from parents and members of the community, access or high flexibility (F) is evidenced.

There are great differences in the degree of access and community involvement with individual school buildings. As such, community involvement represents one salient dimension of the learning environment.

Questions. What is the relationship of the school to the community? What rights do the tax-paying public have in school governance? How much autonomy should professionals have in operating public schools?

School Buildings and Grounds. The physical nature of school buildings and school grounds may be subtle indicators of the school's perceived mission and, therefore, useful measures for a visitor or interested observer. Features such as access points, building warmth, traffic control inside the building, and space priorities may reflect the intended program of the school.

Architects have observed that buildings are a physical expression of content. A dull, drab, unexciting building may reflect a dull, drab, unexciting educational process. An exciting, stimulating, dynamic building may reflect an active, creative learning center. A building not only expresses its interior activity but may also reflect, and even control, the success of these functions. If school corridors, for example, are colorful, well lighted, and visually expansive, this excitement and stimulation direct the individual in such a space. It is for this reason that most new airports have extremely wide and brightly colored corridors. The environment "sets up" the participant dispositionally.

School buildings have changed a great deal during this century, and those changes in architecture and construction reflect more subtle changes in the programs of schools. A stereotypic evolution of school buildings in the United States would show a progression from a cellular lecture hall (many one-room school houses together) to an open and largely unstructured space, as illustrated in Figure 2.9.*

Although many of these changes might be explained by evolutions in architecture and cost-effectiveness demands, a primary force behind the diminishing structure in school buildings has been the dissemination of knowledge through other mediums. As the essential curriculum of the turn of the century gave way to

*In the 1990s, districts are opting to use site-constructed additions (portable) to expand capacity at school sites rather than construct totally new buildings. This modular strategy reflects an awareness of the ups and downs of school populations caused by mobility and birth rate.

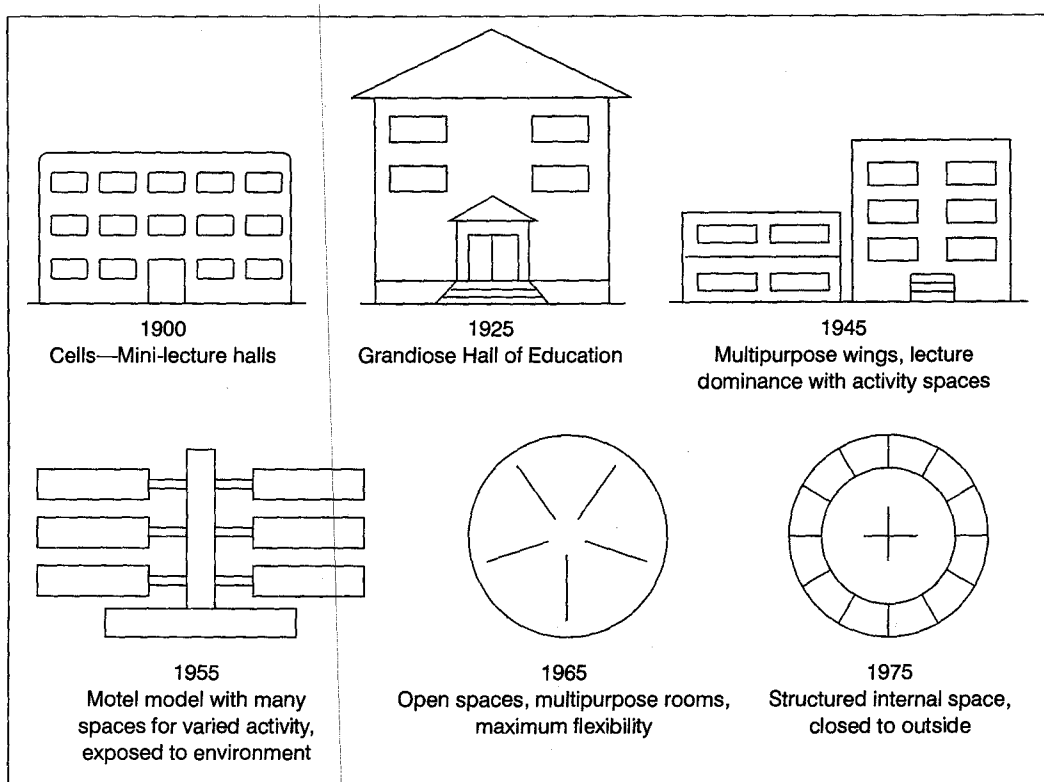


FIGURE 2.9 Evolution of School Buildings

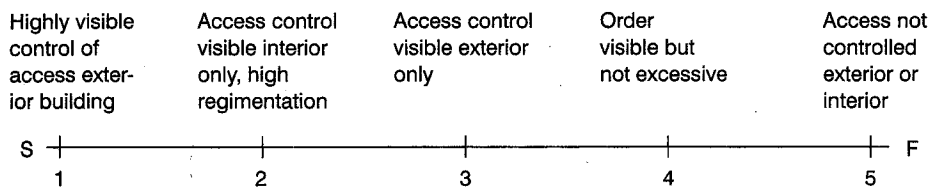
a more broadly focused academic preparation, buildings were designed to incorporate diversity. Because spaces had multiple uses, the construction was necessarily flexible in design. With the advent of interactive computers and a universe of possible knowledge, the role of buildings is becoming less clear as this book is written. Storefronts may serve learning as well as traditional schools if "home schooling" and learning networks structure the curriculum.

Just because a school building is traditional or open-space in design, however, tells the visitor little about the current philosophy of the school. Many flexible programs are found in old "egg crate" buildings, and highly structured programs are sometimes found in modern open-space schools. Returning to our analytic tools—the degree of access, the warmth of the building, traffic control patterns inside the building, and space priorities—we can begin to know the real program in the building.

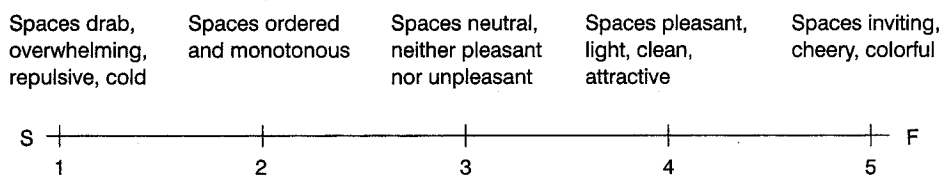
The descriptive continuums in Figure 2.10 suggest the potential range of alternatives present in schools.

Degree of access. Many schools, because of genuine danger in the immediate neighborhood, limit the number of access points to the school building. Other schools deliberately limit public access as a means of controlling the environment and per-

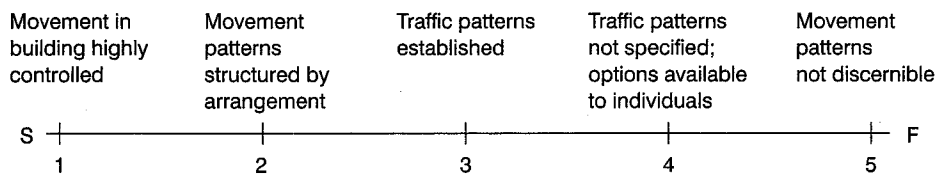
Degree of Access



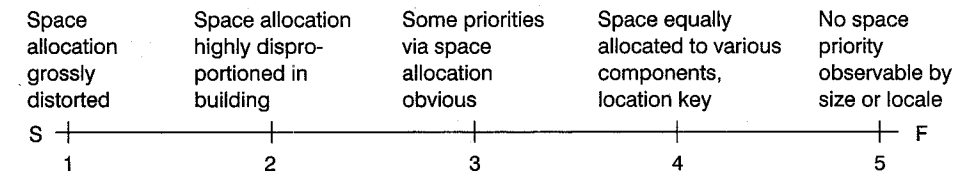
Building Warmth



Traffic Control Patterns



Space Priorities



Grounds

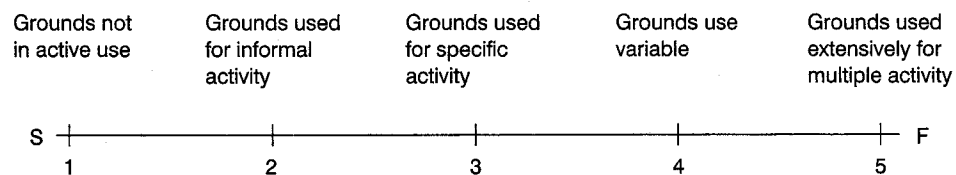


FIGURE 2.10 Alternative Uses of School Buildings and Grounds

