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## Student perceptions of the transition from year 10 to year 11

Tim McDonald  
*Edith Cowan University*

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**STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE TRANSITION FROM  
YEAR 10 TO YEAR 11**

**By**

**Tim McDonald**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of  
Bachelor of Education (Honours)**

**Department of Teaching and Curriculum Studies  
Edith Cowan University**

**Date: 10th of December 1992**

## USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

## **ABSTRACT**

Issues associated with the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 have largely been ignored by researchers. Previous research has predominantly focussed on the primary to secondary transition experience. The existing problem of lower school to upper school transition has been compounded by the increased importance of upper school and the rising retention rates.

This study investigated student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. It explored student concerns encountered in the transition and the differences they perceived between Year 10 and Year 11 after having entered Year 11. A case study approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques, was used to collect data from the student's perspective, on the issues involved in the transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

The data indicated that students' main concern was about their ability to cope with the expected increased workload and academic demands of upper school. According to their academic achievement levels students differed in their perceptions and in their evaluation of the extent to which they had made a successful transition to Year 11.

The findings of this study suggested directions for intervention programmes, teacher actions and areas of further research in this area.

### Declaration

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text."

Signed

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Secondary teaching experience and anecdotal evidence from teachers and students suggest that students' ideals and attitudes about Year 11 change as Year 11 progresses. Year 10 students' perceptions of what Year 11 will be like seem to vary along a continuum from being full of fear and anxiety at one end, to excitement and the thought of a positive challenge at the other. The prospect of more challenging subjects, more responsibility, more autonomy and the perceived increased social sphere of being in upper school motivates some students, scares others and for some, extends the boredom of another year 'stuck' at school (Cornell, 1990, Hemmings & Hill, 1991).

The literature dealing with the phenomenon of transition appears to take for granted a definition of the term transition. Transition is a process (National Association of College Counsellors, 1983) which is a progression from one set of circumstances to another set of circumstances (Fensham, Power, Tripp & Kemmis, 1986). The move from one set of circumstances to another involves the student changing or adapting to the new circumstances. This changing is linked to how students perceive themselves responding to the new set of circumstances. In this study a preferred definition of the term transition is taken from Stoltenpohl and Shipton (1986) who define transition as

a process of continuing and changing reactions over time- for better or for worse - which are linked to the individuals' continuous and changing appraisal of self in-situation.  
(Stoltenpohl and Shipton, 1986, p.638)

The range of student perceptions regarding the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 can partly be explained by the contextual changes that occur in the move towards post-compulsory education. While the contextual differences between primary and secondary school and the transition from kindergarten to primary school are well documented, the contextual differences between upper school and middle school are not. Currently, lower school (years 8-10) are compulsory for all Australian children. An emerging contextual similarity with compulsory lower secondary education, although not legally binding, is the increasing rate of student retention in Year 11 and Year 12. Retention rates in Government schools have tripled in the past twenty years. Since 1967 the national retention rates have more than doubled (including private and denominational systems), with rises being particularly sharp over the past five or six years (Ainley 1985). The combined effects of government policy, a decline in the youth labour market, and rising community expectations have meant that students who were traditionally not considered suitable for tertiary bound courses are continuing with their schooling in this stream. Although changes are occurring in the subjects offered at upper school, most of these students are engaged in a course of study that is geared towards tertiary entrance. This creates a pool of students who are likely to find the transition to the academic demands of Year 11 very difficult if it occurs in the context of courses of study which they perceive to be irrelevant.

In Year 11 the students are confronted with fewer subjects to study, chosen from a greater selection of subjects. Most of these subjects are new for the student. Before Year 11 the students have not studied separate disciplines, for example, Geography or Economics, but rather a more integrated subject such as Social Studies. As well as the new and different content of the subjects, increased academic demands are placed on the students. Students are required to meet pre-

arranged assignment deadlines, and increased homework demands, as well as study for continuous assessment points. Formal exams that are longer than previous 'tests' are also new and exert more external pressure on the student. Another contextual difference is that the size of the classes is likely to be smaller with longer study periods, so that students spend more time with the subject teacher and the members of that class.

In relation to attaining the Tertiary Entrance Score (TES) and Secondary Graduation, Year 11 may be viewed as a 'limbo' year. While Year 11 contributes directly to the student's achievement of Secondary Graduation, most Year 11 subjects are not directly assessable in the Tertiary Entrance Examinations (TEE). Important skills are developed and parts of the Year 11 course form the foundation of Year 12 work, but the student often feels left out or impatient at having to wait until the following year to get 'stuck into the TEE'. This Year 11 'limbo' status is also felt socially. The Year 11's are not the most senior students and have to wait until the following year to receive the perceived privileges of being senior students. However, this does not diminish the increased responsibility with which the students are faced. In Year 11 they are held more accountable for their studies by the school and often at home, and are expected to participate in leadership roles. These leadership roles usually involve sporting events and other extra-curricular activities. For the purpose of these occasions they are referred to as the senior students of the school and are expected to increase their level of participation and demonstrate school spirit.

This transition process from Year 10 to Year 11 takes place in the context of adolescence - a period of tension and uncertainty for young adults. For some students this time of physical change is very traumatic. They are unsure about current and future changes and are often subjected to jibes from their peers as to

the rate of their development. The hormonal changes occur alongside the difficult task of trying to resolve the dependence versus independence conflict (Cornell, 1990). These physical and personal changes are another element that the student deals with when making the transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

Therefore, given the changes students encounter in moving from Year 10 to Year 11, this descriptive study will investigate students' perceptions of the transition. Student perceptions are important as they give a valuable insight into how students construct reality. While there are many different social, academic and institutional changes that the students may experience, this study is primarily concerned with the students' perceptions of the changes of the social, organisational and academic contexts from Year 10 to Year 11.

## 1.2 Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

Transition from Year 10 to Year 11 has not been recognised as a significant or major transition. In most schools little has been done to address issues associated with this transition from Year 10 to Year 11. Increased retention rates have compounded the problem of transition. In essence, rising retention rates have created a new problem for the middle to upper school transition.

The purpose of this study is to investigate student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. This investigation will explore students' concerns encountered in the transition and the differences which they perceive between Year 10 and Year 11 after having entered Year 11.

## 1.3 The Significance of the Study

I think Year 11 is going to be absolute hell for me and I particularly don't really want to go there. The only reason I am is because I am being forced into it by my parents. I am worried about not passing my TEE subjects and failing.  
(Year 10 student, 1991)

The significance of this proposed study is reflected in the concerns voiced by the Year 10 student quoted above. The Year 10 to Year 11 transition has not previously been considered in the literature. The benefits that will derive from research in this area include the identification of some student concerns about the changes that occur in the middle to upper school transition. If educators can have an increased understanding of the way students make sense of the changes that occur at this transition, then it will be possible to address student concerns appropriately by developing strategies or interventions to make the transition simpler and less traumatic for the students, and more effective for the school.

The need to help students make a successful transition is reinforced by the growing importance of the role of upper school studies in attaining a job or an apprenticeship. The heavy intellectual demands of upper school study necessitate students adapting successfully in as short a time as possible. This is made difficult because of the rising post-compulsory retention rates, which mean that more students for whom the existing TEE course is inappropriate are enrolling. Therefore the existing problem of transition is compounded by the increased retention rates which in essence creates a new problem. Educators need to identify where and how they can help students as much as possible.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

The major research question is:

What are student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11?

The following subsidiary questions are:

- a) What are Year 10 students' concerns regarding the transition from Year 10 to Year 11?
- b) To what extent do students classified by teachers as likely candidates for tertiary study and students who are unlikely candidates for tertiary study differ in their perceptions?
- c) What differences do students perceive between Year 10 and Year 11 after having entered Year 11?



## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Literature

In this review of related literature, relevant research areas from which this study evolved are identified. These areas of research have helped to formulate this study's theoretical and methodological framework. Research to date has dealt with the transition from kindergarten to primary school, primary to secondary school and secondary to tertiary situations. Literature on the transition from middle-school to upper-school is extremely limited. For the purpose of this proposal, literature related to students in transition will be referred to in an attempt to identify areas which may be relevant. A research methodology appropriate to this study will be discussed.

#### 2.1 General literature

Research into the area of student transition has mainly dealt with student concerns and anxieties about the transition from primary to secondary school (Garton, 1987; Mitman, 1981). Related research, whether it be about the transition from the kindergarten to primary, from secondary to tertiary level, report the problems students face in the transition and details the need for organisational and structural changes in order to ease student anxiety and to facilitate a smooth transition (Cornell, 1990; Mitman, 1981; National Association of College Admissions Counsellors, 1983).

The literature specifically dealing with primary to secondary and secondary to tertiary transition focuses on student anxieties and concerns before the transition has occurred. Although the concerns are age specific and therefore differ between

the age groups studied, there are similarities when grouped into areas of concerns. The areas of concern that emerge from the literature relate to increased academic demands, the changed physical surroundings, social aspects which include the number of teachers and peer relationships, and the increased level of personal responsibility.

Mitman (1981) introduces the 'Junior High Study' by describing a background against which the process of transition from elementary school to junior high is set. Mitman sees the timing of this transition from elementary to secondary school as a justified cause for concern. One reason for the concern is that 20 per cent of the students find early adolescence a troubled time. Mitman cites American based research from Lipsitz (1980) to illustrate the problems that might occur during adolescence. The experiences encountered by Australian youth do not directly match those of Lipsitz' study. However, given recent events in Western Australian schools e.g. the recent murder of a school girl at a Metropolitan Senior High School, the evidence suggests that the time of adolescence can be a time of trauma and confusion. Lipsitz notes that school violence "reaches its height during high school years" and "the most dangerous place for a seventh-grader to be is in school" (Mitman, 1981, p.8). Other statistics cited by Lipsitz in Mitman (1981) include the fact that the fifteen-year old and younger age group is the only age bracket where the birth rate is not decreasing. In addition, Lipsitz (1980) notes that the abuse of alcohol and drugs "soars" during the middle high school years. Therefore these middle and junior high years are times of many problems for "1 or 2 out of every 10 students at this age level" (Mitman, 1981, p.1).

Mitman's study highlights the personal and emotional traumas that are prevalent among adolescents in the 15-16 year old group. An area of rising concern is teenage suicide. Currently, depending on the source of data, "suicide is the first,

second, or third leading cause of adolescent death in the United States" (Allberg & Chu, 1990, p.343). In Western Australia rates for males and females in the 15-19 year age group have increased between 1980-1987 : "from 6.8 to 12.1 per 100,000 for males and from 1.8 to 9.5 for females" (Jones, 1989, p.1). Jones goes on to state that in Western Australia "suicide is the second highest cause of death in the 15-19 age groups" (Jones, 1989, p.1). These recent figures highlight the significance of this proposed study in viewing the middle to upper school transition from the student's perspective to help educators understand the concerns aroused in the transition phase and to implement effective intervention strategies.

Mitman (1981) identifies five areas of student concern: i) the shift from a self contained classroom to a multiple classroom environment; ii) the school environment being socially and structurally more complex; iii) the students experience a greater number of teachers; iv) the students go from being the oldest to the youngest students on campus; and v) the students being presented with greater social pressures concerning drugs and alcohol. Garton's (1987) study of Western Australian primary school children notes similar concerns in the primary to secondary transition about the school structure (buildings) and the change of the number of teachers. Garton's research also highlights students' concern about being bullied by the older students (mainly a male concern), the work being more difficult and the rules and discipline being something to fear. These findings fit into the existing areas of student concerns that relate to physical surroundings, social aspects and increased academic demands.

Within the contextual differences noted in any transition is the important element of student perceptions. Mekos (1989) reinforces the importance of finding out how the students perceive the transition: "students' perceptions represent an insider's

view of the challenges adolescents face as they make the transition to junior high" (1989, p.1). Mekos (1989) cites previous research and notes that students often feared a disruption to friendships (Mitman & Packer 1982) and were concerned about the increased academic demands (Eccles, Midgely & Adler, 1984).

Cornell (1990) used interview data to discover how students perceived the transition from secondary school to college. The findings regarding student concerns were similar to previously mentioned studies on the elementary to junior high school transition. Cornell's data indicated that students perceived college as a "difficult place where they won't be looked after and where they will have to do their work on their own" (Cornell, 1990, p.1). Student responses identified the challenge of "surviving the freedom from constraints long enough to mature into the freedom to choose responsibility" (Cornell, 1990, p.1). Cornell's naturalistic inquiry cited anecdotal evidence from students' experiences. A relevant piece of evidence cited was that some tertiary students did not know how to 'be' tertiary students. The students in Cornell's study were not previously socialised into the role of tertiary student.

These research studies were descriptive in nature and identified that there was the need for transition programmes and other organisational interventions to be instituted. In order to institute appropriate interventions it is necessary not only to highlight areas of student concern and anxieties but to follow the students through the transition phase and to identify how they make sense of the changes. While some studies (Cornell, 1990, Hemmings & Hill, 1991) have focussed on how students perceive the transition and indeed how they make sense of the transition none has been conducted in the context of middle to upper school transition proposed in this study.

From this review of literature it is clear that only a limited amount of research has been undertaken into areas of senior student perceptions in the transition process. Little of the research reviewed focussed on the student's perception of the transition phase. For this reason it would appear that this study may offer some valuable insights into student perceptions of the transition phase. Cornell's findings (1990) were very useful in attempting to view the transition from the student's perspective. Mekos (1989) identified the advantage of student perceptions in giving educators an insider's view of the challenges faced in the transition process. Therefore in the context of rising retention rates and the possible traumas encountered in adolescence it is important that a) research be conducted into the important transition from Year 10 to Year 11; and b) that research use a student's perspective to view and analyse this transition. For these reasons it would appear that this study will offer some valuable insights into students' perceptions of the transition phase by identifying areas of concern.

## 2.2 Methodology

There are various methods of data collection. This section will examine the use and relevance of a qualitative approach to this proposed study. A case study approach has been identified as the most appropriate to this project to collect data and, therefore, literature on the use of a case study is reviewed to highlight areas of strength, appropriateness and ways by which weaknesses of this approach can be avoided.

### Qualitative Research Methods

Qualitative research methods of inquiry have emerged as significant approaches to educational research since the 1960s and 1970s (Erickson, 1986). Qualitative

research assumes that systematic inquiry will occur in a natural setting.

Naturalistic inquiry attempts to study individuals in their natural setting to see how they attribute meaning in their social setting. Marshal and Rossman (1989, p.11) describe the process of qualitative research as entailing:

immersion in the everyday life of the setting chosen for study, that values participants' perspectives... actively seeks to discover them, ... views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and participants, and that is primarily descriptive and relies on peoples words as the primary data

There are a number of methods subsumed under the qualitative umbrella. Jacob (cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1989) identifies six ways of categorising some of these qualitative research approaches: human ethnography, ecological psychology, holistic ethnography, cognitive anthropology, ethnography of communication and symbolic interactionism. Erickson (1986) uses the term 'interpretive' to refer to the whole family of approaches to qualitative research. He explains that the term is more inclusive than case study or ethnography and bypasses the traditional bias of qualitative research being essentially non-quantitative. Erickson suggests that the strength of the interpretive approach to research is its identification of issues of content rather than issues of procedure. The significance for education is that the interpretive approach assesses the central issue of the teacher being only one aspect of the learning environment. The interpretive approach also addresses the nature of the interactions between teacher and learner as well as the meaning ascribed in these interactions. The case study and participant observation are appropriate interpretive methods for the study of student perspectives.

## The Case Study

Gay (1990, p. 207) states that a case study "is the in-depth investigation of an individual, group, or institution". The essential element of these education case studies is to determine the 'why' and 'how' of the phenomenon studied. A case study is preferred in examining contemporary events in their natural setting when the behaviours under study cannot be manipulated. Yin (1989, p.23) defines the case study as:

an empirical enquiry that:

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which
- multiple sources of evidence are used

The case study, as a specific strategy, has a distinct advantage over other strategies when a "how" and "why" question is being asked about a contemporary event.

The type of research questions will determine the appropriate use of a descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory case study in preference to other research strategies.

Although there are large areas of overlap between these types of case study the guiding principles in determining the appropriate use of the various types of case study are the research questions, role of the investigator and the proposed focus on contemporary or historical events.

The case study as a strategy for research must address the questions of validity and reliability. How well a study answers these questions is usually equated to the quality of the design and findings. Yin (1989) identified four criteria for judging

the quality of research designs. These criteria are important factors in case study research. Construct validity deals with establishing correct operational measures for the objectives under study. Internal validity refers to the establishment of causal links whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions. External validity is the degree to which the study can be generalised. Reliability is the degree to which the study can be replicated with the same results.

Construct validity is problematic in case study research. The researcher must demonstrate clearly that the study has a correct set of operational measures for the concepts being studied. Often case studies are accused of using 'subjective' methods as the only source of data collection. Construct validity can be increased by the use of multiple sources of evidence, and a demonstration that the measures selected are appropriate by having drafts reviewed by key informants.

External validity deals with the generalizability of a study's findings. Critics state that it is difficult to generalise from a single case study. This is true if the case study was a 'sample' selected for the purpose of creating a set of generalisations. However, Yin (1989, p.43) sees this criticism of case studies as incorrect: "this is because survey research relies on statistical generalisations, whereas case studies rely on analytical generalisation". Jacobs (cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1989) states that an analyst should try to generalise findings to 'theory' as a scientist generalises from experimental results to theory.

In relation to reliability, an earlier criticism of naturalistic inquiry was that it was not replicable because of 'poor' record keeping of the operation undertaken in the study. Later audits of the research books did not facilitate the same procedures being followed and hence the same results were unable to be found. Case study research can address the issue of reliability by careful documentation of the



procedures step by step as they occur in the research. This careful approach will enable an auditor to inspect the books and arrive at the same results. In reality, careful documenting of procedures tries to ensure that subsequent research following the described design will come to similar conclusions.

A strength of the case study is the use of multiple sources of data. Case studies may use existing documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation and physical artefacts as sources of evidence. Yin (1989) states the benefit from these sources of evidence are maximised if multiple sources are used, a data base is kept, and a chain of evidence is documented. The use of multiple sources of data collection makes the investigation process as explicit as possible and hence the results demonstrate validity and reliability and are therefore worthy of further analysis. Careful construction and execution of the case study will also minimise traditional criticism of the method.

#### Interview Technique

Interviews are essential sources of case study information. The style of interview may vary from a formal survey style to an open-ended style. The middle-ground on this interview style continuum is a focussed interview. Focussed interviews are open-ended and conversational in nature with the interviewer loosely following a certain set of questions pertinent to the aim of the research. The preferred option for this proposed study is the focussed interview. This style of interview allows the interviewer to word the question carefully so as to appear naive and allow the respondent to provide 'new' insights into the topic under study. Focussed questions centre the respondent on the topic and minimise the possibility of student responses being off track as can happen in purely open ended questioning. As such, interviews are an important source of information as most case studies are about human affairs.

As a verbal report, interviews may be subject to bias and poor recall due to underdeveloped listening skills of the interviewer. Yin (1989) suggests that these problems of bias can be overcome through collaborative interview data and with information from other sources.

In summary, the case study allows a holistic approach by which to describe student perceptions. By incorporating appropriate methodologies the case study becomes flexible, adaptable and a means from which to generalise case study results. This methodology section highlights the appropriateness of a case study method for the descriptive nature of this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

#### 3.1 Conceptual Framework

The review of literature related to student transition identified areas that impact upon the students' ability to make the transition smoothly and successfully. These variables can be grouped under the headings the 'individual student', 'background of the student' and the 'school'. These areas identify the conceptual framework in which the study is located. However, not all these factors will be considered in this research. This study will primarily focus on the student's identification of areas of concern in the transition.

Individual student factors including academic performance, past success and failure, physical development, and level of knowledge about upper school will affect the student's self perception of whether success is achievable or not in the upper school. Covington's self-worth theory of motivation (1984) highlights that individual factors which include beliefs about school, self-esteem, locus of control, aims, goals, expectation, learning style, personality, culture and sense of autonomy are important and may play a part in the student's smooth transition into upper school.

A smooth transition into upper school may also be affected by a range of student family background factors. These family background factors will often determine the level of support and help the student will receive with his/her upper school study. Other factors include the importance that the family places on education,

level of support at home and motivation towards education, whether other siblings have completed upper school and the socio-economic status of the family will contribute to a successful transition.

As documented in previous research (Garton, 1987) the organisation of the school can be a concern for students entering into secondary or college education. School factors include the teachers' expectations, style, experience, gender, beliefs, assessment and grading practices and the classroom climate. Organisational factors that directly impinge on the student are the school's timetable, subject selection process, ethos and the physical size and nature of the school surroundings.

External factors may also cause the student some concern in entering post-compulsory schooling. These external factors might include unemployment rates, tertiary acceptance levels, availability of post-compulsory education positions within schools and TAFE.

Figure 1 describes the four general groups of factors which may affect the process of transition from Year 10 to Year 11. While there are many other factors which may influence the transition process this study will focus on a limited number of characteristics that directly relate to the research questions.

### 3.2 Theoretical Framework

The review of literature related to student transition has acknowledged some necessary and useful theoretical domains. This section of the literature review will highlight the background and importance of using student perceptions as the lens through which to view student's transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

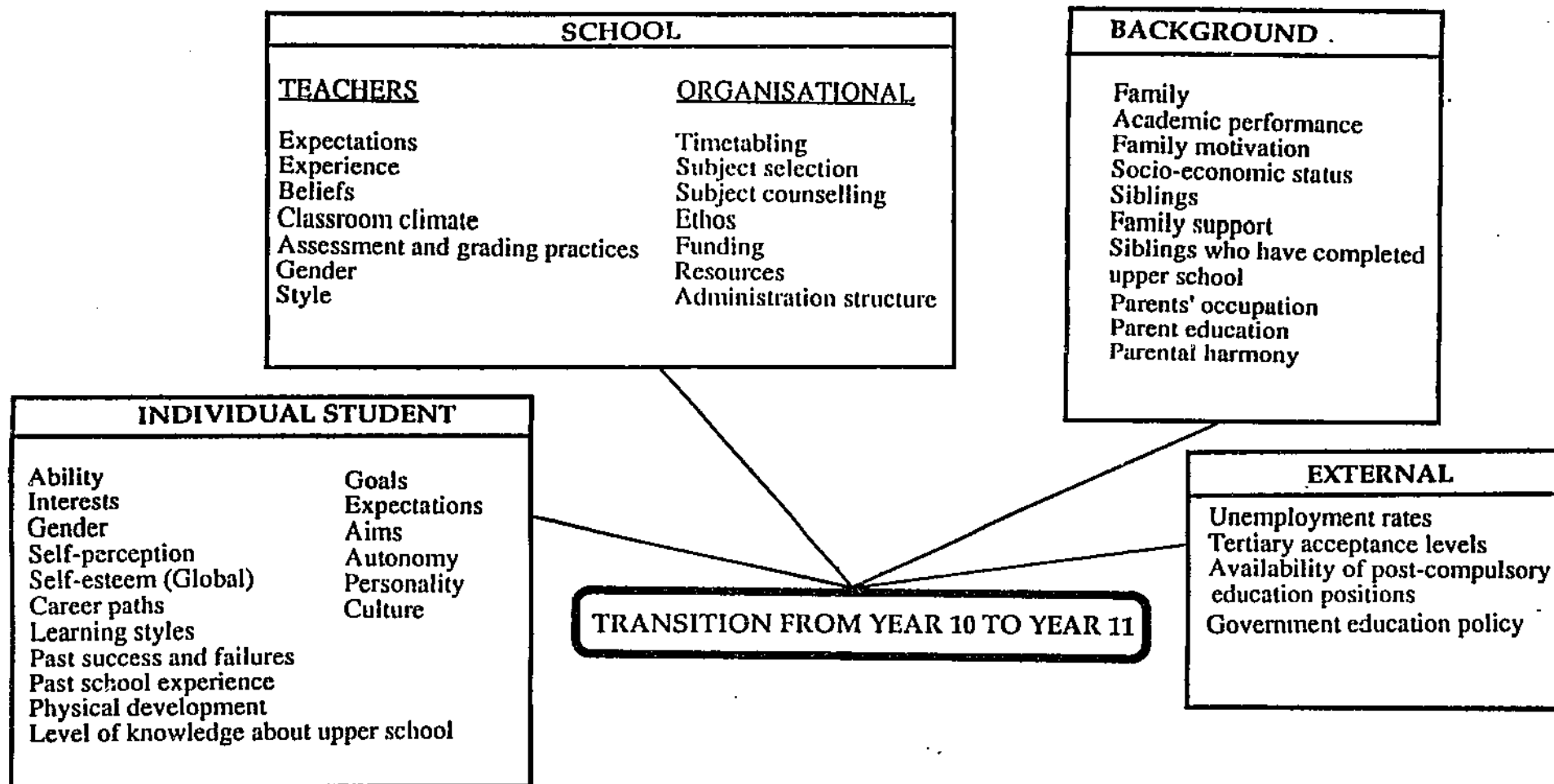


FIGURE 1.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Factors affecting student transition from Year 10 to Year 11

Lindgren states that the role of social psychology as a viable theoretical domain for research has increased in recent years (cited in Miles & Huberman, 1989). The interest in social psychology of education has increased because of a growing awareness "that attention must be given to 'social' factors in order to advance our understanding of the nature of any child's educational career" (Rogers, 1982, p.1). Rogers defines social psychology as:

...the study of the ways in which the behaviour of one individual person is affected by the actual or imagined presence of others, together with a study of the ways in which that individual's behaviour in turn affects the behaviour of others who may not be physically present at the time  
(Rogers, 1982, p.3)

Social psychology emphasises what actually happens within the school and the classroom setting, and the actual experience of school by those within it. This study is based in the social psychological domain. It is from this theoretical perspective that student perceptions are seen as an appropriate position from which to view the transition process.

### Student perceptions

"Students are active perceivers and mediators of classroom events" (Mitman & Lash, 1989, p.55). The social psychological phenomenon of students being active interpreters of the classroom reality is a recent research phenomenon. Historically the study of teaching and learning environments has been "documented by simple input-output models of instructional effects" (Weinstein, 1983, p.288). In this model the students are seen or considered passive recipients of instruction. Berliner and Doyle (cited in Weinstein, 1983) note that the interest in student thought processes emerged out of the dissatisfaction with the process-product paradigm and the increasing awareness that students influence the educational process as much as teachers do.

Berliner and Doyle argue for a mediating-process paradigm in the study of teaching. The need for this paradigm highlights the significance of the role students have to play in responding to instructional stimuli. As Berliner suggests, "researchers do not know how much of what is called skilled teaching is even perceived by the learner" (cited in Weinstein, 1983, p.288). Much of the research since the early seventies has focussed on student thinking (Weinstein, 1983; Wittrock, 1986). The literature on student thought processes suggests that children are active interpreters of the classroom reality and that they draw inference about the causes and effects of behaviour (Weinstein, 1983). Hamilton's (1983, p.315) ecological approach to research reinforces the mediating role of students in the learning process. Ecological studies treat the attitudes and perceptions of the students as "important data about schools and classrooms". Hamilton's (1983, p.315) ecological research "treats teaching and learning as continuously interactive process rather than as a cause and effect" (1983, p.315).

The study of student thought processes has re-focussed the research perspective to an understanding of "teachers' effect upon learning, the development of theories on teaching, and the design and analysing of teaching" (Wittrock, 1986, p.297).

The critical elements that this perspective emphasises are the roles

...that students' background knowledge, perceptions of instruction, attention to the teacher, motivation and attribution for learning, affective processes, and the ability to generate interpretations and understandings in instruction play in the teaching and in influencing student achievement  
(Wittrock, 1986, p. 297)

The process-product paradigm focuses on how teachers or instructional processes directly affect student achievement. Research on student thought processes encompasses a broader perspective that examines how teachers or teaching influences "what students think, feel, believe, say or do that affects their

achievement" (Wittrock, 1986, p.297). Nuthall and Alton-Lee (1990) document this change in research emphasis saying that the important shift of recent research is "primarily concerned with student's learning and how teachers affect that learning" (p.547). The critical element of research into student thought processes is that teaching does influence student thinking and students' thinking does mediate learning (Wittrock, 1986). Therefore, the importance of research on students' cognitive processes lies in the belief that the science of teaching can better be understood and improved by an increased knowledge of the mediating element of student thought processes.

Walberg's (1976) 'perceptual model of learning' emphasises how the student's conscious perception of both internal and external stimuli and the resulting choices they make are the mediating determinant of learning. The students stand at a superior vantage point from which to view and understand the complexities of the learning environment (Walberg, 1976). Walberg (1976, p.159) describes the students' "perceptions, as partaker of classroom social transaction, are of great value, and it is easy enough (and incrementally valid) to ask him for them". What the student takes in makes the difference in learning. Students are able to perceive and juggle stimuli and predict valid judgements of the cohesiveness, goal direction and other psychological characteristics of the social environment of their class. Walberg's (1976) assumptions are supported by Weinstein (1983) whose research supports the notion that students are reliable and sophisticated judges of their learning environment.

Through this understanding of students mediating the level at which they learn, the use of student perspectives in understanding the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 will enable a more accurate and detailed assessment of how students make the transition and how they make sense of this. Therefore research on student



perceptions of transition will not only enhance understanding of teaching and its outcomes but also increase sensitivity to the multiple challenges that classroom and school life pose for students particularly in this transition phase from Year 10 to Year 11.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Method of Investigation

#### 4.1 Research Design

The present study utilised a descriptive case study method to collect data. This study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative research techniques which helped enrich and validate the research data and findings.

This descriptive case study allowed a holistic approach to describe accurately the perceptions students have of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 while not manipulating their responses in any way.

#### 4.2 Sample

The research was conducted in a new secondary school, which has only been operating for four years and is located in an economically depressed region with chronic unemployment. Unemployment rates in this region are 30-40% and many of these are long time unemployed with little hope of finding jobs in the near future (Government paper, 1991, p.1). The school currently has 530 students in Years 8-11. In 1993 the school will progress into Year 12 with a full enrolment of 660 students. The nature of the school's development makes it unique for this study as there were no role models or prior socialisation agents for the present year 11 group, when they were in Year 10, to glean insights into the life of a senior student. Therefore this study does not attempt to give a picture of a traditional Year 11 group. The study focuses on the transition and the Year 11 students' perceptions of this transition.

The target students were studying at Year 11 level. At this level there is distinction between the types of subjects studied. The students can choose to study subjects that count towards their Tertiary Entrance Score (TES). These subjects are externally examined in the Tertiary Entrance Examinations (TEE). The score from these examinations is added to the school assessment score to give the student a TES, which determines whether the student is successful in gaining tertiary entrance.

A group of 130 Year 10 students completed the questionnaire. From this group six (6) target students were selected based on teacher selection. The nature of this study was explained to teachers who predominantly taught at Year 10 level. These teachers were then asked to identify three students whom they thought would easily handle all of the aspects of Year 11 and three students whom they thought would find the transition into Year 11 very difficult. Those students most frequently identified by teachers were selected as target students. Teachers reported that academic achievement was an important criterion for the selection of target students. This was a case study and as such the sample was unique.

#### 4.3 Data Collection

Preliminary data collection occurred through a questionnaire (Appendix 1) administered to all 130 Year 10 students at the end of the academic year. The questionnaire was adapted from questionnaires developed by Garton (1987), and Hemmings and Hill (1991). A pilot questionnaire was administered to a group of Year 10 students in a different school to help assess appropriateness of the questions and to confirm face validity. Data from the questionnaire were analysed and used to identify major themes or areas of concern that formed the basis for the interview schedule.

Preliminary interview schedules were developed for the initial and follow up interview (Appendix 2 ). Both schedules reflect the central issues of this study. The initial interview focused on exploring Year 10 students' perceptions about Year 11, their expectations and the attitudes that they held regarding study in upper school. The follow up interviews, when students were in Year 11, explored students' perceptions of the differences between Year 10 and Year 11 according to the major themes which emerged from the questionnaire data and issues arising from the previous interviews.

Target students were interviewed at the end of Year 10 to gather information regarding their perceptions of Year 11 and any concerns they had about the transition. Follow up interviews were conducted with target students at the beginning of Year 11, towards the end of first term, early second term and at the end of semester one.

A design checklist that shows the data collection technique used for each subsidiary research question is shown in Figure 2.

A timeline for the operation of the project is outlined in Figure 3.

#### 4.4 Data Analysis

The questionnaire was administered to 130 Year 10 students at the end of the academic year. The nature of the responses included dichotomous YES/NO answers (questions 1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,16,17,18,20,21,23 & 26), open questions that required student generated responses (questions 6,9,22,24 & 25) and questions that required the students to select the most appropriate responses from a list of possible answers (questions 7,13 & 19). The responses to the questionnaire were coded 0 for no response, 1 for 'yes' and 2 for 'no'.

Where questions required multiple responses, each response was coded as an individual item to create a new item. A number of questions required subjects to generate original responses (questions 6,9,22,24 & 25). Responses to these questions were read, recorded and similar types of responses were grouped together and tallied. The most frequently occurring areas of response were identified and compared with salient areas which had been identified in the literature. Titles were created and applied to the most frequently reported areas and these titles and examples were checked with a number of teachers and students to confirm their validity as descriptors of subject responses. The categories of responses were then coded using the 0,1,2 code.

Questionnaire data were entered into the computer. Using, the software package, 'Statview' frequencies of responses to questions were calculated and those areas of concern which were most frequently identified by students were highlighted.

#### Analysis of interview data

The interview at the beginning of the school year was semi-structured. The interview schedule was constructed from the areas of student concern identified in responses to the questionnaire. The interviews were analysed inductively. The inductive analysis involved the formulation of generalisations about student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. These generalisations were formulated by considering individual subject's responses to the first interview. Using these generalisations as a guide individual subject's responses were analysed. Individual student responses were aggregated to form clusters of responses for the higher and lower achieving students. The responses of those students identified as higher and lower achieving students were grouped together

and analysed as a group response. This analysis identified areas of similarity in response. Areas of similarity and difference which emerged from this analysis of individual and group responses were combined with issues which had been identified in the literature to provide the basis of subsequent interviews.

## DESIGN CHECKLIST

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

	QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEW
a) <i>What are Year 10 students' concerns regarding the transition from Year 10 to Year 11?</i>	✓	✓
b) <i>To what extent do students classified by teachers as at risk and tertiary bound differ in their concerns?</i>	✓	✓
c) <i>What differences do students perceive between Year 10 and Year 11 after having entered Year 11?</i>		✓

**FIGURE 2. DESIGN MANAGEMENT**

	DESIGN-PROJECT MANAGEMENT																											
	Year 10														1992 Year 11													
	NOV				DEC				FEB				MAR				APR				MAY				JUN			
	Weeks				Weeks				Weeks				Weeks				Weeks				Weeks				Weeks			
STRATEGIES	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Questionnaire Design																												
Adapting appropriate questions																												
Determining construct/face validity																												
Pilot																												
Analyse Pilot & Review																												
Administer																												
Data Entry & Analysis																												
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE																												
Construct Schedule																												
Review																												
Determine Validity																												
Interview																												
Analysis of Data																												

FIGURE 3. MANAGEMENT TIMELINE



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Results and Discussion

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter will present the data gathered from the questionnaire administered to all Year 10s and interviews with the target students. The first part of this chapter (section 5.1) contains descriptive information about the students interviewed. In section 5.2 the frequencies of response to specific questions from the questionnaire are presented.

In section 5.3 interview data are presented under the headings of academic, teachers and transition. Academic incorporates students' perceptions of the workload, level of difficulty of the course and features that characterise a successful Year 11 student. Also included in academic are the reasons for student subject selection and their perception of the function of Year 11. The area of teachers refers to the students' perceptions of the role of teachers and specific teacher behaviours. The area of transition includes a description of the features that inform students when they have successfully adapted to the role and responsibility of being a Year 11 student.

In section 5.4 the questionnaire data and interview data are combined to highlight common views of the transition experience. The chapter concludes with a summary.

## 5.1 Student profiles

In this section each of the target students will be described. Students A, B and C were identified by their Year 10 teachers as potentially successful and likely to gain tertiary entrance. Students D, E and F were classified by their Year 10 teachers as being unlikely TEE candidates whose academic performance rated them in the lower section of the Year 10 group.

Student A is a male student who is studying six TES subjects. His stated career goal is to work in the field of science. He is a member of the student council and is involved in many extra-curricular activities, including swimming and athletics.

Student B is a female student who is studying six TES subjects. Her stated career goal is to be a surgeon or paediatrician. Student B has a very high profile in the school through her involvement in the life of the school, particularly the student council. She has recently won an exchange scholarship to Italy for three months at the end of the year.

Student C is a male student who is studying six TES subjects. His stated career goal is to be an architect. Student C is a member of the student council, plays in the school band and has won the school's public speaking award for the past two years.

Student D is a female student who is studying six non-TES subjects at Year 11 level. Her stated career goal is to be a cake decorator and she has no extra-curricular involvement with the school.

Student E is a male student who is studying six non-TES subjects at Year 11 level. His stated career goal is to be a chef and he is not involved in any extra-curricular activities.

Student F is a female student who is studying six TES subjects. Her stated career goal is to be a secondary school teacher. Student F is involved in the student council.

These student profiles indicate a number of differences between the two groups of students. The students differed in the nature of the subjects selected. Students D and E, who had been identified as unlikely TEE candidates, had selected only non-TES subjects and students A, B and C had selected six TES subjects. However student F who had been identified as an unlikely TEE candidate had selected six TES subjects and expressed a desire to enter a tertiary institution. Career goals and involvement in extra-curricular activities were other areas where the two groups of students differed.

For ease of reference the students identified as likely candidates for tertiary entrance are referred to as higher achieving students and the students identified as unlikely tertiary candidates are referred to as lower achieving students.

## 5.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered to 130 Year 10 students. The following tables present frequencies of response to specific questions from the questionnaire which relate to themes explored in the interviews.

Table 1 presents responses from the questions in the questionnaire which relate to the area of academic.

Table 1. Response to questions relating to the area of academic.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Do you think you will have to work harder in Year 11?	98.1%	1.9%
Do you think you will be able to keep up with the work in Year 11?	76.4%	22.6%
Compared to lower school do you think the work in Year 11 will be?		
Easy	1.9%	
Interesting	63.2%	
Challenging	88.7%	
Do you think you will receive more homework than you did this year?	98.1%	0.9%
Do you think the work covered in your subjects will be harder?	94.3%	4.7%
Do you think you will have problems adjusting to Year 11?	45.3%	54.7%

The area of academic in the questionnaire included student perceptions of the workload and level of difficulty of the course. Nearly all the students (98%) identified that they expected the work in Year 11 to be harder with more assigned homework (98%). The students expected that the subject material would be more difficult (94%) and more challenging (89%) than Year 10 work. The majority of students (76%) believed that they would be able to keep up with the work in Year 11, while 45% of the students thought that they would have problems adapting to Year 11.

Table 2 presents responses from the questions in the questionnaire which relate to the area of teachers. The area of teachers in the questionnaire referred to the student perceptions of the role of teachers and the identification of specific teacher behaviours.

Table 2. Response to question relating to the area of teachers.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Do you think that teachers will treat you differently?	75.5%	23.6%
If you think the teachers will be different, how do you think they will be different?		
Stricter	37.7%	
More helpful	62.3%	
Treat me like an adult	58.1%	
Give me more responsibility	66.7%	
Do you think other teachers in the school will treat you differently when you are in Year 11?	71.4%	24.8%

The majority of students (76%) thought that the teachers would treat them differently in Year 11 from the way in which they were treated in Year 10. Students thought the teachers would be more helpful (62%), treat them like adults (58%) and give them more responsibility (67%).

Table 3 presents responses to the questions in the questionnaire which related to the students' intentions for present and future study. Student intentions refers to the students' ownership of the decision to study in Year 11 and their intentions for future tertiary study or work related study.

Table 3. Response to questions relating to the area of student intentions.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Is it your decision to go to Year 11?	93%	6.6%
Do you intend to go on to tertiary study after Year 12?	68.9%	29.2%
What job would you like to go to when you leave school?		
Further study	49.1%	
No further study	1.9%	

Ninety three percent of the students (93%) accepted personal responsibility for the decision to continue on to Year 11 level, and 69% of the students expressed an intention to study at tertiary level. Approximately half of the students (49%) wanted employment in jobs that required further study, while 1.9% of the students wanted a job that did not require any further study.

Table 4 presents responses from the questions in the questionnaire which relate to the area of the students' attitudes to school.

Table 4. Response to questions relating to the area of students' attitudes to school.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Do you like school?	59.4%	39.6%
Do you think you will like Year 11?	63.2%	34.9%

The percentage of students who were looking forward to Year 11 (63%) was greater than the percentage of students who liked school in Year 10 (59%)

### Summary of Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire data identified that students expected that the workload in Year 11 would be heavier, more difficult and challenging. The students expected that the teachers would be more helpful and give them more responsibility. Nearly all the students had made their own decision to continue studying in Year 11, with a majority wishing to go on to tertiary study. The questionnaire data shows that a number of students who had a negative attitude towards school in Year 10, were looking forward to school in Year 11.

### 5.3 Interview

#### Overview

The six target students were interviewed four times over a period of seven to eight months. Interviews took place at the end of Year 10, the beginning of term one, then again at the end of term one (10 weeks), after fifteen weeks, and at the end of semester one (20 weeks).

This section presents the analyses of interview data. Firstly the student perceptions of the academic area are described. Secondly student perceptions of teachers are presented and finally student perceptions of the transition process are detailed.

Each section is headed by a table which summarises the main perceptions of the students at each of the interview sessions. Following the tables, the high achieving students' perceptions are outlined, followed by the low achieving students' perceptions. The perceptions of the two groups are then compared and contrasted.

# ACADEMIC

		End of Year 10	Start of Year 11	Week 10 Year 11	Week 15 Year 11	Week 20 Year 11
Workload	Higher Achieving Students	Workload heavier	Workload heavier	Workload heavier	Workload heavier	Workload heavier
	Lower Achieving Students	Workload heavier	Workload heavier	Not as heavy	Not as heavy	Not as hard
Level of Difficulty	Higher Achieving Students	Subjects harder	Subjects harder	Subjects harder	Subjects harder	Subjects more complex
	Lower Achieving Students	Subjects harder	Subjects harder	Similar in content	Similar in content  Not as hard	Similar in content  Not as hard
Successful Student	Higher Achieving Students		Complete all set work	Complete all set work	Revision  Set goals	Self evaluation  Use learning strategies
	Lower Achieving Students		Complete all set work  Assignments in on time	Complete all set work  Assignments in on time	Use of memory	
Subject Selection	Higher Achieving Students	Enjoyed freedom of choice  Subjects are in area of interest				
	Lower Achieving Students	Enjoyed freedom of choice  Selection helped avoid certain subjects and teachers				
Role of Year 11	Higher Achieving Students			Means to an end  Assist in getting high T.E.S.		
	Lower Achieving Students			Means to an end  Increase employment opportunities  Chance to improve grades		



## Academic

### Workload

In Year 10 the higher achieving students expected that Year 11 would be harder both in the amount of work to be completed and the increased complexity of the new subjects. In the first few weeks of Year 11 the higher achieving students perceived that the work being presented in the unit outlines and assessment structures was much harder, and more demanding than they had experienced in previous years of school. At this stage of Year 11 the higher achieving students had not started any new work or significant amounts of work. Yet when questioned about the workload all students believed that the workload in Year 11 would be harder than Year 10.

Some things had not changed for the students since Year 10. Their classes were timetabled around the same daily cycle, the layout of the school was the same, and their assessment experiences were similar. After 10 weeks of Year 11, the students had not experienced formal exams having had only minor tests and assignment work. However, the higher achieving students described the work as more difficult and the work load heavier than Year 10.

Well the work is a lot harder, ..  
Well it is really hard  
(Student B)

The workload is a lot stronger  
I feel that the amount of work is a lot more ...  
(Student A)

In the final interview at the end of semester one, the higher achieving students identified the reasons which explain their perceptions that the workload had

increased and the subjects were more difficult. The students identified the increased complexity of the subject material as a major cause of the increased workload. They had not studied subjects previously which were as complex and difficult as the subjects they were now studying. An associated element of the increased level of difficulty for the students was the need to engage in study activities. The higher achieving students felt that they needed to study harder to understand and to retain the material taught. Comments from the higher achieving students demonstrate their belief that the increased workload was due to the nature of the subjects and the perceived need to study harder:

There was more work and there was more of it and the content was more complex ... you start to go into more depth, and it is heaps more complex, heaps more stuff to understand.  
(Student A)

I'd say the study. The work load comes in with the study. If you don't know what you are studying, you can't handle the work load ... it's mainly the study.  
(Student C)

The lower achieving students expected that Year 11 would be harder and would involve an increase in the amount of work. In the first few weeks of Year 11 the lower achieving students perceived that the work being presented in the unit outlines and assessment structures was much harder and more demanding than they had experienced in previous years of school. When questioned about the workload they all responded that the workload was or would be harder than Year 10. Two students commented

I think the workload will be heavier  
(Student D)

Well I think it is going to be hard  
(Student E)

The lower achieving students' initial expectations of the increased workload, however, had not matched their experience at the end of 10 weeks. At this time they identified the work load as less difficult or demanding than they had previously thought. Some of the lower achieving students commented that they found the work similar in content and workload to previous years of school.

...some of the classes are fairly similar, the same sort of thing, especially English, doing the same as last year, so it isn't that hard really  
(Student D)

Some of the subjects are the same and a lot of the work is building on Year 10 work ....  
I don't really mind the work load ...  
(Student F)

In the initial interview, at the end of Year 10, both higher and lower achieving students identified concerns over the workload associated with being in Year 11. All students expected that Year 11 would be harder both in the amount of work to be completed and the increased complexity of the new subjects. In the first few weeks of Year 11 all the students perceived that the work presented in unit outlines and assessment structures was a lot harder and more demanding than they had previously experienced.

After 10 weeks in Year 11 the perception of the two groups of students differed. The higher achieving students identified the workload as being more difficult and the workload heavier. The lower achieving students identified the work to be less difficult and the workload less demanding than they had previously thought. These different perceptions were evident in the final interview at the end of semester one. The higher achieving students clearly identified that the complexity of the subjects necessitated more time being spent on study with a heavier

workload. The lower achieving students perceived the work and the workload of Year 11 to be similar to that of Year 10 and hence different to their expectations and initial perceptions.

### Successful Student

Students were asked to identify the things that they thought were important in order to be a successful Year 11 student. The higher achieving students were confident that they knew what was needed to be successful and appeared realistic in their self-appraisal. When asked the question about being a successful student two students responded:

Studying, that is pretty important ... By the same token, you must also make sure that you have a break, otherwise you end up stressing out ...  
(Student C)

Homework. If you do the homework you won't find it difficult at all to study.  
(Student A)

The higher achieving students were aware of strategies that they had previously employed and were using in Year 11. Strategies that they used included goal setting, constant revision and honest appraisal of the amount of work and the quality of time spent on study. For one of the higher achieving students, goal setting was important:

I think it is important that you are doing what you want to do and like you don't set yourself really high goals if you are not going to reach them you know, something realistic to aim for, otherwise you are constantly being disappointed in what you are getting.

...and I think you have to have something to aim for otherwise you just get lost along the way, ...  
(Student C)

Revision as a learning strategy was seen by one higher achieving student as the key to success: "Well plenty of revision". This same student felt that to be successful, students have to honestly appraise their studying habits in the light of exam results and grades. He believed that self-appraisal would lead to the refining of study-techniques that would hopefully result in academic success.

...look at the way you study and to really be honest with themselves and say to themselves whether they are going to be a success if they carry on studying the way they do, it's just being honest with yourself and knowing that if you go out too often or don't study enough, or have trouble with your studies and you are not asking for help, then you have just to be honest with yourself and really say to yourself I you want to be good and successful at school then you have to look at yourself and how you study...  
(Student A)

The lower achieving students interpreted 'study' to mean the completion of homework and 'real' study to be an activity which occurred at exam time. This study at exam time was the 'learning off' of material by reading over notes and 'memorising' them. In response to the question that asked about important aspects of studying in Year 11 two of the lower achieving students replied:

You have to have a good memory and just learn it all.  
(Student E)

...do your homework and get your assignments in on time.  
(Student D)

The lower achieving students did not identify the use of, or the need to use, any learning strategies other than 'just learning off material'.

Although both the higher and lower achieving students acknowledged the importance of studying and the completion of work, the two groups of students

did not share the same meaning of 'study'. The higher achieving students perceived study as an ongoing process that incorporated revision of material covered in daily lessons while lower achieving students perceived study to be the learning of material in preparation for examinations.

The conscious employment of study strategies was a significant difference between the higher achieving and lower achieving students' perceptions of what makes a successful Year 11 student.

### Reasons for Subject Selections

The higher achieving students appreciated the responsibility and freedom of choice involved in selecting the subjects that they would study in Year 11. They saw this as their first real opportunity to exercise responsibility for the composition of their academic life.

The higher achieving students selected subjects of personal interest that would lead them into a preferred career path:

I have chosen all the ones that I like doing... to lead me into a particular field... something in the computer science area.  
(Student C)

...because I have got the subjects that I want to do and I am pretty interested in those subjects...Most of the subjects I am doing are mainly in the field of Science...So they will give me the marks that I need to get to whatever career I want to do.  
(Student A)

The lower achieving students also appreciated the responsibility and freedom of selecting their subjects of study in Year 11. These students thought that the subject selection process had enabled them to have some direct input into the

course of study that they would undertake while still at school. The lower achieving students saw subject selection as a way of avoiding subjects and teachers that they disliked.

... to choose the subjects I want to do and not to do Social Studies because I can't stand that, and being able to do Applied Art and more sort of options like Drama and that instead of doing Science and Maths and that ...  
(Student D)

You can choose whatever subjects you want to do, you don't have to do Social Studies and Science and you can choose as much as you want, like with your options ...  
(Student E)

A noticeable difference between the two groups was the identification of underlying reasons for their subject selections. The reasons behind their subject selection ranged from long term career planning, for the higher achieving group, to the avoidance of certain subjects and teachers, for the lower achieving group.

### Role of Year 11

The higher achieving students viewed Year 11 as a necessary hurdle that had to be cleared before they could start to 'get on with' their TEE. The higher achieving students viewed gaining tertiary entrance as being very important. Evidence of the motivation to gain a successful TEE was provided by the actions of one of the higher achieving students who contacted various university personnel to ensure that her subject selections were appropriate for her intended career path.

Well I got a lot of advice and information about what Year 11 and 12 would be about, especially the subjects I would need to choose and everything to get in to university - I spoke to a few teachers and a few people at University of WA and different lecturers and they basically said ... it is very important what you choose and everything instead of just doing Science.  
(Student B)

Another higher achieving student saw Year 11 as an adjustment and fine tuning year in preparation for Year 12 and the TEE:

I want to prepare so that in Year 11 I get my study skills put right. I don't want to be in Year 12 still trying to organise my time properly and being in a real panic, no I just want to get settled in and then look forward to Year 12.  
(Student A)

In an interview before the end of Year 10, one higher achieving student questioned the relevance of Year 11 if the labour market did not improve. This student's perception of Year 11 was that the year of study was only a means to finishing school, further study and ultimately gaining 'meaningful' employment. Year 11 was seen as a stepping stone to achieving employment:

.... even though you are going to do all this study, is there going to be a job for you after all this ... There are plenty of people who are going through school and going to Uni, a bit of a whiz, and they still finish up without having a job.

Well you know what is going on, and you need a job if you want to progress in life, and knowledge before you can go into the work force, so you have got to go to school and learn I suppose.  
(Student C)

The importance of the TEE and of achieving a high TES was identified by the higher achieving students as a concern. The inevitability of the TEE, and perceived importance of the TEE in determining the direction of their lives, was seen as a source of anxiety from day one of Year 11. One higher achieving student described the pressure and anxiety felt at the prospect of the TEE:

... deep down you are anxious about whether you are going to get the score you need to get into university, even in Year 11, because it seems to put a bit more pressure on you.  
(Student B)



The lower achieving students viewed Year 11 as a way of enhancing their employment and further study opportunities. Because these students will not sit for their TEE they did not share the same perception of the importance of the TEE. The lower achieving students shared the belief that staying at school would enhance their opportunities for gaining employment or a place in post secondary education.

.... hopefully I will try and get better grades in Year 11... to be a chef or plumber.  
(Student E)

I want to go to university or tech to further my tertiary studies and I can't really do it if I just finish Year 10... Well you need to go to Year 11 to get to uni...  
(Student F)

... it's (Year 11) more important because it's going to help you get a better job!  
(Student D)

Both higher and lower achieving students perceived Year 11 as a transition year. The higher achieving students viewed Year 11 as preliminary to Year 12 and the TEE. The perceived importance of the TEE for the higher achieving students was a cause for concern and anxiety. The lower achieving students did not share the same anxiety over the TEE. These students did however share the view that staying onto Year 11 increased the possibility for employment and acceptance in to TAFE.

### TEACHERS

		End of Year 10	Start of Year 11	Week 10 Year 11	Week 15 Year 11	Week 20 Year 11
<b>Role of Teachers</b>	<i>Higher Achieving Students</i>	More helpful  Friendlier	More helpful  Friendlier	More helpful  Genuinely interested in academic progress	More helpful  Genuinely interested in academic progress	Approachable  More respect from teachers  More responsibility on students
	<i>Lower Achieving Students</i>	Make students study  Stricter  Treat students better	Make students study  Push students through upper school	Outside of class -friendlier	No different from Year 10	No different from Year 10

## Teachers

### Role of Teachers

The higher achieving students interpreted their teachers' encouragement as an expression of concern for their academic success. In the first interview of Year 11, one student suggested that the staff were:

... going to spend a lot more time to get the message across as to what they are trying to do.  
(Student C)

Another higher achieving student identified and described the ways that the teachers structured their lessons to make sure that students understood the material previously covered. This practice was viewed positively by one student, who observed:

...and then the following day they will either catch up with you, like they will ask you about the homework... like if there is a lot of problems with the homework they trust you that you are not just trying to stall them to keep up with the new subjects, and they will spend the whole lesson on the previous night's homework, and they will just do whatever you need help with.  
(Student B)

The higher achieving students appeared to understand the reason for the teachers' insistence that students study. They perceived teachers as genuine in their attempts to help students, explaining how teachers offered out of class assistance and were available for student consultation.

The higher achieving students perceived the teachers to be supportive and respectful of them. All the higher achieving students appreciated the 'new

teaching style' of the Year 11 teachers, compared to the style of teaching that they experienced in Year 10. After sampling life in upper school for one week, the students viewed the teachers as:

... a lot better than in Year 10 because they do spend a lot more time with you.  
(Student C)

The higher achieving students identified specific teaching behaviours that contributed to their appreciation of the new upper school teaching style. These teaching behaviours centred around the students assuming more responsibility for their learning, feeling they had the teachers' trust and respect, and a certain amount of freedom within the classroom.

It is a lot more free to flow and then actually help you when you need help.  
(Student B)

... like in all of the classes that I have had, whenever you have wanted to ask something in class you just say, you don't have to stick up your hand and wait for the right time, because they are there to help you... like before exams they gave you a copy of their timetables so you could go and see them whenever you had not got an exam and they hadn't got a class...  
(Student B)

I think it's just their general manner. They are more open, more friendly...  
(Student A)

After a term (10 weeks) in Year 11 one student encapsulated the feeling of the higher achieving group when she stated:

"I like the way the teaching is now."  
(Student B)

The lower achieving students identified that the teachers encouraged them to study, but did not perceive this encouragement to be the result of a concern for them, rather that it resulted from a sense of duty as teachers. The lower achieving students did not accept responsibility for their own study and expected the teachers to be responsible for their successful completion of academic work at Year 11 level. They believed that the teachers should be responsible for getting them through the academic demands of upper school.

The belief that teachers fulfilled an enforcing role was clear when, at the end of Year 10, the lower achieving students commented:

My teachers will make it a lot harder.  
(Student D)

By giving you more work, more homework, telling you what happens if you don't study, what will happen to you.  
(Student E)

Well, they will push us a lot to do the work, and if you don't do it, that's when they start being stricter.  
(Student F)

After six months in Year 11 the lower achieving students still perceived that the teachers 'made' them complete work. When asked if the teachers treated them differently from Year 10 students two of the students replied:

Not much different, they are still the same ...  
(Student E)

It's just the same, they talk to you the same, but because you are older, they expect more from you, you know, but it's similar.  
(Student D)

However, the lower achieving students appeared to have the capacity to divorce

the teachers' enforcing role in the classroom from their general behaviour around the school. Some of the lower achieving students saw a human side to their teachers and noted that some at least were:

More friendlier and more concerned about us ...  
(Student D)

More concerned about us, like our pastoral care teachers...be there for us if we are not doing well to help us through and things like that.  
(Student F)

In summary, the higher and lower achieving students described the role of the teacher very differently. The higher achieving students viewed the teacher as a person who was genuinely interested in their academic performance and concerned about them personally. The lower achieving students perceived the teachers to be responsible for the workload and academic demands placed on them as Year 11 students. The higher achieving students saw the classroom environment as more relaxed and friendly. Both groups of students perceived the teachers to be more friendly toward them in Year 11 compared to Year 10. However the higher achieving students did not perceive a marked difference with the teachers' in-class and out-of-class behaviour. This was in contrast to the lower achieving students who found the teachers marginally more friendly outside the classroom in the classroom.

### TRANSITION

		End of Year 10	Start of Year 11	Week 10 Year 11	Week 15 Year 11	Week 20 Year 11
<b>Transition</b>	<i>Higher Achieving Students</i>					Beginning of term 2  After first semester exams
	<i>Lower Achieving Students</i>					Still did not feel like a Year 11  Term 3

## Transition

At the end of the first semester, the students were asked to describe what events or factors had informed them that they had 'become' Year 11 students.

The higher achieving students felt that they had completed the transition into Year 11. They all identified significant events in the school year as reference points for having completed the transition into Year 11. Some of the higher achieving students referred to the receiving of the first term report as a significant reference point. One of the higher achieving students felt that it was not until the first semester exams were over and her results known that she felt the transition into Year 11 was complete. The exams and reporting were seen as confirmation that the students were successful or at least on the way to being successful upper school students. For these students it was as though public recognition, in the form of a report card or exam result, signalled to them and others (family and peers) that they were on target in attaining the previously set goal of a high TES.

Well, I felt uncomfortable right up until the start of the exams... it wasn't until I actually sat down and studied... it wasn't until then that I really thought that I would do all right and that I was settled into Year 11... because it wasn't until then that I actually realised what I was doing.  
(Student B)

I think it is the day when you feel comfortable with Year 11 and the transition into it is the day when you achieve a very good goal, when you achieve that goal with confidence.  
(Student A)

The higher achieving students identified specific times at which they believed that they had made the transition into Year 11

I'm settled in now and I think it would have come about at the beginning of Term 2. (*After Term One reports had been received*)  
(Student C)



...but get into some sort of routine, so I think it took about a term.  
(Student B)

After one semester in Year 11, the lower achieving students felt that they had not yet completed the transition into Year 11. The experience of the school exams and their exam results had caused them to review their reasons for being in Year 11 and whether their employment goal was achievable. One of the lower achieving students could not comprehend the fact that she was a Year 11 student:

I don't feel like an upper school student - it seems so old and you've hardly got any time left at school and then you'll be out in the work industry.

I do not feel like a Year 11 student, no.  
(Student D)

One lower achieving student had difficulty matching her experience of Year 11 with her expectations of what Year 11 was going to be like. This student had been told by significant others that Year 11 was going to be a difficult year of study and that the subjects would be very different from Year 10. However her perceptions of what Year 11 would be like did not match her present experience. This caused her some confusion:

It doesn't feel like Year 11 because everyone thinks Year 11's so hard, you won't be able to do it and all that, but the subjects I am doing it's real easy. It's like being back in primary school with the easy subjects.  
(Student D)

Another of the lower achieving students still felt unsettled after six months in Year 11. "I'm still up in the air a bit, but I'm settling in a bit more this term."  
(Student F)

However this student felt the transition into Year 11 would be successfully completed in third term:

Probably next term I think, because we have had our first exams and we know what Year 11's about, so probably next term.  
(Student F)

The responses from the higher and lower achieving students varied dramatically. While the higher achieving students felt that they had completed the transition into Year 11 by the end of semester one, the lower achieving students thought they would not complete the transition until later in the year, if at all. Completing the transition into Year 11 was interpreted by both groups as understanding the academic expectations and structural organisation of Year 11. Once the higher achieving students had received feedback about their progress as Year 11 students, they felt comfortable in having made the transition into Year 11. The lower achieving students believed they had not received enough feedback as to their progress as Year 11 students.

#### 5.4 Questionnaire and Interview

The interview data supplements the questionnaire data in a number of the areas of concern identified by the target students. This is especially evident in the areas of workload and teachers.

In the questionnaire the majority of students (98%) thought that Year 11 would require more work than Year 10. Students also believed that the work in Year 11 would be challenging (88%) and harder (94%) than the work in Year 10.

As the school year progressed the lower achieving students perceived that Year 11

would involve a heavier workload and more difficult subject material. By the end of semester one these students described Year 11 work as being similar in content and having a workload equal to that of previous years. While the initial beliefs of these students matched that of the Year 10 cohort it seems that their experiences in semester one resulted in a changed opinion about these two factors. However, the higher achieving students' responses at the end of semester one demonstrated that their initial expectations were sustained. The differences between the perceptions of the two groups of students may be explained by the subjects being studied. It is possible that non-TES subjects are more similar to Year 10 subjects in content and academic level than TEE subjects. The TEE encourages students studying TES subjects to work harder and to learn as much as possible in a limited amount of time

The questionnaire data identified that 75% of the students expected that the teachers would treat them differently, with 62% of the students thinking that the teachers would be more helpful than they had experienced them to be in Year 10. The lower achieving students identified that the teachers were responsible for getting them to complete the work. In the questionnaire responses two out of the three lower achieving students identified that the teachers in Year 11 would be more strict. None of the higher achieving students indicated that they thought that the teachers would be more strict.

This section described how the questionnaire data was supplemented by the interview data particularly in the areas of workload and teachers.

### Summary of the Chapter

This chapter described students' perceptions of salient issues in the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 in the area of academic, teachers and transition. The higher achieving and lower achieving students initially perceived Year 11 work to be more academically difficult than Year 10 work. They expected that there would be an increase in the workload as a result of more difficult and complex subjects. The presence of the TEE for the higher achieving students added pressure for the need to study. The lower achieving students did not perceive Year 11 work to be different from work covered in Year 10. The lower achieving students not only thought the work was the same level of difficulty but that teachers treated them the same way. This perception of the teachers differed from the higher achieving students who perceived the teachers to be more friendly and helpful. The higher achieving students enjoyed the more relaxed manner in which the teachers taught them. Outside the classroom, the lower achieving students perceived the teachers to behave in a more friendly manner than they had experienced in Year 10. The higher achieving students felt that they had made the transition into Year 11 by the end of semester one. The lower achieving students thought they would complete the transition later in the year and one student thought she would never 'feel' like a Year 11 student.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusions

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter summarises the main findings of the present study which are used to answer the research questions. Limitations of the present study are acknowledged and implications of the findings for teachers, intervention programmes and for further research are suggested.

The purpose of this study was to investigate student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. The study explored student perceptions of the differences between Year 10 and Year 11 after having entered Year 11. This study also investigated the similarities and differences in the perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 between those students identified by teachers as likely tertiary candidates (higher achievers) and those students who were identified as unlikely tertiary candidates (lower achievers).

Research in the area of transition has dealt with the transition from kindergarten to primary school, primary to secondary school and secondary to tertiary situations. As there was little literature on the transition from middle school to upper school the literature that related to transition in other educational contexts was surveyed. The areas of academic, teachers, and transition emerged as potential salient areas for students in the Year 10 to Year 11 transition.

The major research question was:

What are student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11?

This study documented that student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 were focussed on academic success. Student perceptions in the three salient areas; academic, teachers and transition, focussed on a common desire to pass Year 11. In the area of academic the students' perceptions were centred on their ability to cope with the workload and on being academically successful.

They described a successful student as one who studied hard, completed all work and passed major exams. The students' perceptions of teachers were centred on their classroom role of helping or making students complete work and understand the material in order for them to pass their exams. Completing the transition into Year 11 was determined by the amount and nature of teacher feedback on the students' academic progress. Although other areas of success such as cultural achievements were acknowledged in the school the students paid greater attention to the academic aspects of Year 11.

The students' preoccupation with academic success is not supported in transition literature. Previous studies suggest that students are concerned about an increase in the academic demands and workload of a new school or college environment (; Garton, 1987; Cornell 1990 & Mitman 1981). The focus on academic success reported in this study has not been identified in previous studies of transition. It may be explained by the general emphasis on academic performance which has resulted from increased unemployment and increased competition for places in post secondary educational institutions. It is likely that students have responded to this increased competition for scarce opportunities and unemployment by placing greater emphasis on the need to achieve at a high standard. Messages from

teachers, family and the media would reinforce this perceived need for improved academic performance. Both the higher and lower achieving students reported the need for good grades and TEE results.

The main research question is answered in more detail by the findings that relate to the subsidiary questions.

Subsidiary questions;

- a) What are Year 10 students' concerns regarding the transition from Year 10 to Year 11?

The students' main concern was about their ability to handle the expected increased workload and academic demands of upper school. The students expected the workload to increase with more homework, assignments and harder material covered in their selected subjects.

The students' concerns related to the increased workload and academic demands experienced in Year 11 is supported by research conducted by Eccles, Midgely and Adler (1984) who identified that students were concerned about the increased academic demands associated with the transition to Junior High. Although Year 10 students expressed concerns about the possibility of increased workloads this occurred prior to the transition to upper school. Once students had made the change to Year 11 this was no longer identified as a critical issue for students.

The lower achieving students perceived the teachers as enforcers who were the cause of the increased work and study time.

The higher and lower achieving students were only mildly concerned about the

intrusion Year 11 would make on their social life. Some of the students thought there would be a conflict of interests between studying and social outings. In general the students expected that their social life would change, for the better, from the social life they were experiencing as a Year 10 student.

- b) To what extent do students classified by teachers as likely candidates for tertiary study and students who are unlikely candidates for tertiary study differ in their perceptions?

Likely tertiary candidates were described as higher achieving students and the unlikely tertiary candidates were referred to as lower achieving students. The higher achieving and lower achieving students differed in their perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. The higher achieving students identified a concern over the amount of study that was required in Year 11. The lower achieving students did not share the same concern, perceiving the work demands to be the same as in previous years. This study suggested that the higher achieving students employed study strategies that helped them achieve success in their studies. These higher achieving students used goal setting, honest appraisal of the amount of work attempted and revision as specific strategies in an attempt to gain academic success. The lower achieving students did not identify any strategic approaches to study but rather used day-to-day coping strategies to get work done.

In this study all of the students interviewed appreciated being able to select the subjects which they would study at Year 11. The reasons behind the appreciation of the subject choice differed between the higher achieving and the lower achieving students. Higher achieving students selected subjects that were of personal interest and which were related to their expected career paths, while lower achieving students selected subjects that allowed them to avoid subjects and



teachers that they disliked. Interview data revealed that the lower achieving students perceived little difference between new subjects and those studied in Year 10. All of the students interviewed, perceived Year 11 to be important. For the higher achieving students the TEE was of paramount importance for directing their future and was the main source of their anxiety about upper school study. The lower achieving students who were not going to sit the TEE did not perceive it to be important. However, they perceived Year 11 to be important as it provided the opportunity to improve their grades which they believed would assist them in gaining employment or entry into TAFE.

This study demonstrated that higher achieving students and lower achieving students perceived the role of the classroom teacher differently. The higher achieving students enjoyed the more relaxed environment of the classroom that they experienced in Year 11. They perceived the teachers to be more willing to help them and concerned about them personally and their academic progress. The increased academic encouragement was perceived as genuine concern for their academic progress and well being. The higher achieving students perceived their teachers in a facilitating or guiding role. The lower achieving students perceived their teachers to have a more enforcing role and to be the cause of them having to do assignments and complete homework. The lower achieving students did not perceive their teachers' classroom behaviour to be any different from that exhibited toward them in Year 10. However, the lower achieving students perceived teachers' behaviour, outside the classroom, to be more friendly and supportive.

The two groups of students perceived their adaptation to the role of a Year 11 student differently. The higher achieving group felt that they had made the transition into Year 11 by the end of the first semester but the lower achieving students did not feel that they had made the transition by this time. One of the

lower achieving students felt that she would not make the transition before the end of the year. The higher achieving students used feedback provided by school reports after the first term and first semester exams as an indicator of the success of their transition. The use of this information highlights the students' need for regular feedback on their progress. Frequent feedback may provide lower achieving students with information which will assist them in adjusting to Year 11.

- c) What differences do students perceive between Year 10 and Year 11 after having entered Year 11?

This study clearly identified that the main difference between Year 10 and Year 11 was the students' perception of the important nature of Year 11. The students perceived that Year 11 would shape their future study path and contribute to their employment opportunities.

The present study identified a student perception that teachers were friendlier toward them as Year 11s than they had been toward them as Year 10s. The higher achieving students viewed the teachers in Year 11 to be more interested in their academic progress than teachers in Year 10. These students also experienced that the teachers gave them more responsibility and treated them with greater respect than they had received in Year 10.

The lower achieving students experienced the teachers to be the same in Year 11 as they had experienced in Year 10.

The higher achieving students experienced the workload in Year 11 to be heavier

than Year 10. These students also identified that the subjects they were studying were more difficult and more complex than the subjects studied in Year 10. The lower achieving students experienced the workload and content of the subjects studied in Year 11 to be similar to the workload and content of subjects studied in Year 10.

### Implications of the Study

The review of literature identified that the transition into upper school, which occurs during adolescence, can be traumatic and confusing for some students. American studies (Mitman, 1981 & Lipsitz, 1980) highlight that 20 per cent of students find adolescence a troubled time. The pilot study identified that students were anxious and concerned about the transition into upper school.

With this in mind, this study investigated student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. This study recognised that student perceptions are important as they help students construct their reality.

The study did not find that students perceived the transition process to be as traumatic or difficult as identified in the literature or the pilot study. The one exception was Student F who experienced some anxiety and concern resulting from inappropriate subject selections. Therefore, despite the fact that the transition process was not as traumatic as previously identified, this study has

highlighted the possibility that educators can make the transition easier and smoother for students through relevant intervention programmes and an increased awareness of teacher actions.

The implications of the present study are described under the headings of intervention programmes and teachers actions.

### Intervention Programmes

The data from this study suggest areas that could be addressed by an intervention programme to assist Year 10 students in making a smooth transition into Year 11. This study suggests that intervention programmes could include the teaching of learning and study strategies. The necessity of learning strategies was highlighted by the higher achieving students who used learning strategies to gain academic success. The programme should include formal and informal provision of extensive information about Year 11. Informally, current Year 11 students could explain to the Year 10 students, the differences in timetables, class sizes, classroom environment and study expectations of Year 11 compared to Year 10. This information needs to target non-TES and TES students. Formally, the students could receive information in class groups about the workings of the timetable and subject selection. The findings of this study suggest that counselling oriented toward appropriate subject selection is necessary to minimise anxiety and feelings of failure in Year 11.

The findings of the present study also show that higher achieving students differed in their perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 from the lower achieving students. Therefore, intervention programmes should target the expectations of both of these groups of students. Intervention programmes for the

higher achieving students could focus on extending study skills, options for tertiary study and career pathways. Intervention programmes for the lower

achieving students need to emphasise the development of learning strategies and reasonable study habits, and focus on employment opportunities and appropriate subject selections relevant to them.

### Teacher Actions

This study identified specific teacher actions that upper school students respond to in a positive way.

Teachers need to be aware of the information that students use to help them make sense of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11. This study illustrates the necessity for frequent teacher feedback on student progress in Year 11. Teacher feedback could be provided by written reports, informal interactions with students and through detailed evaluation and analysis of submitted student work. Teacher feedback was important because the students were using this information to evaluate their progress as a Year 11 student.

Teachers need to be aware and sensitive to Year 11 students' desire to be treated with more respect and in an adult manner. This has implications for the way teachers talk to, address, and approach students in and out of the classroom environment.

The findings of this present study have identified specific areas that need to be addressed in transition programmes by teachers.

### Recommendations for Further Research

There is clearly a need for further research into student perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

1. This study could be replicated using a larger sample.
2. Samples could be drawn from;
  - i) Catholic, Independent and Government schools.
  - ii) High socio-economic areas as well as areas that have a significant percentage of unemployment.

Comparisons could be drawn between students from different areas and backgrounds to identify how they differ in their perceptions of the transition from Year 10 to Year 11.

3. The findings of this study highlight the need for appropriate intervention programmes. Further research could lead to the development of practical intervention programmes that target particular student groups and evaluate the success of such programmes. This further study could incorporate an evaluation of the effectiveness of these programmes
4. This study showed that higher and lower achieving students employ different learning strategies. The different learning strategies used by higher and lower achieving students in managing upper school study could be investigated and appropriate intervention programmes developed and trailed.

### Summary of the Chapter

The major findings from the study were presented. The research questions were answered by the study's findings. Implications of the study were outlined and recommendations for further research were detailed.

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## **APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX 1

### Questionnaire

NAME: .....

Circle your response

1. GENDER: Male Female

2. Is it your decision to go to Year 11 next year? Yes No

Whose decision was it? .....

3. Do you intend staying on to Year 12? Yes No

4. Do you intend to go on to tertiary study after year 12? Yes No

5. Do you like school? Yes No

6. What job would you like to go to when you leave school? .....

7. Have any of the following talked to you about what it will be like in Upper School?  
(Tick those who had)

Year 10 teachers .....

Deputy Principal .....

Principal .....

Parents .....

Older brothers and sisters .....

Older friends .....

Other (specify) .....

8. Do you think you will like Year 11? Yes No

9. Do you think that Year 11 will be different from Year 10? Yes No

In what ways?

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10. Do you think you will have problems adjusting to Year 11? Yes No
11. Do you think you will have to work harder in Year 11? Yes No
12. Do you think you will be able to keep up with the work in Year 11? Yes No
13. Compared to lower school do you think that the work in Year 11 will be?  
(tick as many as you want)

Easy .....

Boring .....

Interesting .....

Useless .....

Difficult .....

Challenging .....

Waste of time .....

Organised .....

14. Are you looking forward to studying new subjects in upper school? Yes No

15. What subjects will you be studying?

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16. Do you think you will receive more homework than you did this year? Yes No
17. Do you think the work covered in your subjects will be harder? Yes No

18. Do you think the teachers will treat you differently? Yes No

19. If you think the teachers will be different, how do you think they will be different? (tick as many words as possible)

Stricter .....

More helpful .....

More patient .....

More concerned .....

More demanding .....

More friendly .....

Treat me like an adult .....

Give me more responsibility .....

More involved with me .....

Detached from me .....

Slack .....

Boring .....

Other \_\_\_\_\_

20. Are most of your friends going on to Year 11? Yes No

21. Do you think the other students in school at the moment (Yrs 8-10) will treat you differently when you are in Year 11? Yes No

22. In what way?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you think other teachers in the school will treat you differently when you are in Year 11? Yes No

24. In what way?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. What do you think will be good and bad about Year 11?

GOOD: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

BAD: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

26. Would you like to know more about being an upper school student?

Yes    No

27. What would you like to know? *(Use the rest of the page for your answer)*

## APPENDIX 2

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1

Do you think that Year 11 will be different from Year 10?

In what ways?

Are you looking forward to being a Year 11 student?

For what reasons?

Is it your choice to continue on to Year 11?

Why?/Why not?

Have you been told much about Year 11?

By whom?

What have you been told about?

What things do you think will be important in being a successful upper school student?

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2

In what ways do you think that Year 11 is the same as Year 10?

In what ways do you think it is different?

What things do you like about being in Year 11?

What things don't you like about being in Year 11?

What sort of things do you think are important about studying at Year 11?

What sort of things do you think that teachers consider are important about studying at Year 11?

What sort of things do you think that parents consider are important about studying at Year 11?