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The transition from primary to secondary school: Self-regulated learning and achievement motivation

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The Transition From Primary to Secondary School: Self-Regulated Learning and Achievement Motivation

By

**Denise Kirkpatrick
B. Ed., M. Ed.**

**A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of
Doctor of Philosophy**

at the Faculty of Education, Edith Cowan University

Date of Submission: April 20, 1995

Abstract

This research investigated changes in students' academic performance during the transition from primary to secondary school. Students' perceptions of their experiences during the transition were investigated in an attempt to provide an explanation for any changes that occurred in academic performance. The study was conducted in four feeder primary schools and one senior high school in the Perth metropolitan area.

A review of the literature indicated that previous studies of transition had focused on surface level aspects of the transition. Few studies had investigated students' perceptions of the transition in relation to their academic performance. Specifically, no studies had investigated the experiences of students who had achieved "average" levels of academic performance in their final year of primary school. A case study approach was adopted to investigate students' experiences of the transition.

Academic performance was measured at Years 7 and 8 using the Monitoring Standards in Education tests of mathematics and English which were designed to measure students' performance against the Year 7 syllabus. Measures of students' self-perceptions of performance, attributions for success and failure, use of strategies, and achievement goals were administered during six interviews which spanned the period from the final term of Year 7 to the end of first semester in Year 8. Classroom observations were conducted between the third term of Year 7 and the end of first semester in Year 8. Teachers of Year 7 and 8 students were interviewed to gather information relating to their expectations for students in Years 7 and 8 and their perceptions of the target students' academic performance.

The principal findings of this study showed that students' academic performance remained at the same level in relation to Year 7 syllabus after three terms in secondary school. Analysis of measures of aspects of achievement motivation and interview responses suggested that students' attitude towards schoolwork and general achievement motivation fell after the transition to secondary school. Students adapted quickly to the organisational aspects of the transition. They had little trouble finding their way around the new school setting. However, problems emerged as students attempted to cope with the new instructional context. Students reported that they were not aware of teachers' expectations for work standards and did not know what they had to do in order to achieve high marks. They had interpreted strong messages about the importance of submitting work on time and believed this to be the most important aspect of doing well in secondary school.

Comparison of students' expectations of secondary school with their experiences showed that generally students received less homework at secondary school than in Year 7 and believed Year 8 work to be easier or no more difficult than Year 7 work. The combination of these experiences with their beliefs about the importance of punctual submission led to a reduction in effort directed towards academic tasks. The emphasis on the importance of assessment tasks and submission was reflected by an increase in the number of students who held performance or work avoidance goals. Students accepted less personal responsibility for their achievement outcomes, and adopted external and uncontrollable attributions for success and failure. Students demonstrated less use of adaptive strategies and self-regulatory behaviours at Year 8. This appeared to

be a function of the secondary instructional environment, the nature of the instructional tasks and the increased volume of work.

Consideration of students' experiences and interpretations of these experiences, along with classroom observations and teacher interviews suggests that these average students encountered an academic and instructional environment that encouraged them to be less self-regulatory and to adopt debilitating motivational dispositions. This led to a reduction in effort and decline in attitude towards school work that limited their academic achievement. It may be argued that the secondary school environment served to restrict these students' educational opportunities.

The case studies that resulted from this study provided a rich description of the experiences of the students involved. Their expectations, experiences, perceptions and interpretations combined to form a detailed picture of the transition experience. While each individual perceived and interpreted experiences in their own way the data from this study support the argument that there is much in common among the experiences of these students. It is likely that other students will also experience and interpret the transition in similar ways.

The results of this study have important implications for primary and secondary schools, as well as the students themselves. If these average students adopt negative attitudes to learning and achievement which affects their learning outcomes then there are serious implications for their academic future. Academic discontinuity between primary and secondary school needs to be addressed and the interpretation of curriculum at secondary school should be reconsidered.

Declaration

"I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement 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."

Signature: _____

Date: April 20, 1995

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Chapter One provides background to the study. The purpose and significance of the study are described and the resulting research questions presented. Operational terms used in this study are explained and the chapter concludes with an overview of the study.

Background to the Study

Academic success in the early years of secondary school plays a critical role in establishing the foundations for students' educational and employment future. Academic performance can restrict or expand students' educational opportunities and future prospects. The first year of secondary school would seem to be a critical time for students as they develop beliefs about what is important about education, establish a knowledge base and develop attitudes towards secondary school. Anecdotal evidence from teachers and parents suggests that some students' transition from primary to secondary school is characterised by a decline in academic performance and associated motivation. Most studies of this transition have focused on students' expectations and concerns prior to and after transition (Cotterell, 1981; Garton, 1986; Ward, Rounds, Packer, Mergendoller & Tikunoff, 1982). Recent studies have described general declines in students' achievement related attitudes and performance after the transition from primary to secondary school (Eccles et al., 1993; Fouracre, 1991; Ward, Mergendoller & Tikunoff, 1982; Ward, Tikunoff, Lash, Rounds & Mergendoller, 1982). Some have suggested that declines in attitude or performance are the result of pubertal changes

(Simmons & Blyth, 1987) while others point to the effects of systemic changes in the classroom environment (Feldlaufer, Midgley & Eccles, 1988, Eccles et al. 1993).

Eccles et al. (1993) and Midgley, Feldlaufer and Eccles (1989) suggest that students' mathematics performance declines after transition as a result of a lack of "fit" between the classroom environments experienced by students in primary and secondary school. However, classroom environment is just one aspect of the range of changes that students experience. Explanation of the changes in students' academic performance will be informed by considering not only classroom environment and related aspects, but the effect of these changes on dimensions of students' motivation and the ways in which they affect each other. According to Henderson and Dweck (1990) motivational factors such as students' self perceptions of ability, attributions, achievement goals, strategic behaviours and beliefs about the value of school may predict whether high achievers will remain high achievers and whether previously low achievers will blossom in the new secondary school environment.

Students' experiences in secondary school may be the result of a combination of factors: their past experiences in primary school; their expectations of secondary school; a range of aspects of academic motivation including self-perceptions of ability, attributions, goals, strategies, academic ability; and their experiences and subsequent interpretations of the secondary school environment. Previous studies have been somewhat narrow in focus and have not included the range of factors that may influence learning and motivation. Consideration of the changes in classroom environment that students encounter is insufficient. Students' motivational states are a response to their interpretation of the classroom and school environments which will be influenced by a multitude of personal factors including individual values and expectations of high

school. To understand why students respond to secondary school in the ways they do, it is necessary to explore their expectations of what secondary school will be like and their experiences and interpretations of the situation once they have arrived.

The contextual differences between primary and secondary school are frequently described but there has been little formal investigation of this area. The work of Feldlaufer, Midgley and Eccles (1988) has been notable. At primary school students have usually one teacher for all or most subjects and most lessons are held in the one room, Year 7 students are the "top dogs" in the primary school, are experienced in participating in primary school life and are placed in positions of responsibility. At secondary school these students are confronted by new physical surroundings, including a larger campus with specialised facilities (Dunne, 1989). They must learn to follow a complex timetable, change rooms and teachers for lessons, and move around the school unsupervised. They encounter a larger number of teachers each with differing expectations and must learn the correct behaviour for a large number of discrete subjects (subject specific knowledge and behaviour). Furthermore, the predominant curriculum framework at the time of this study (unit curriculum) resulted in students experiencing regular changes of teachers over the year in most subjects. Thus, the difficulties experienced by students as they identify and adapt to variations in teachers' academic and behavioural expectations are exacerbated. Associated with the unit curriculum is a regular, formal system of assessment which regulates students' academic future. These students are the most junior and inexperienced of the school population and hold positions of little power and responsibility.

In addition to the changes in educational environment that students experience in the transition from primary to secondary school, this

transition occurs at what may be a particularly traumatic time of physical and hormonal change as students enter adolescence. Western society defines adolescence in terms of cultural, rather than biological change. The transition from primary to secondary school has become a convenient developmental marker for the transition from childhood to adolescence which introduces a major change into the lives of students. There is a widely held expectation that when they enter high school students will assume the social role of an adolescent and conform to demands for increased academic and social competence inside and outside school. Thus the transition to secondary school represents a sharp "discontinuity" in students' lives because it occurs at a sensitive time of development.

Most students appear to make the transition to secondary school successfully. However, it seems that some students experience difficulty adjusting to the changed demands of the secondary school setting. Those students who have performed poorly at primary school have generally been identified and where possible, appropriate interventions have been implemented or sustained on entry to high school. However, a number of students who have been performing at a satisfactory level in primary school seem not to make the transition successfully, are not identified and "get lost" in the larger secondary context.

Purpose of the Study

The present study focused on the expectations and experiences of "average" Western Australian students as they made the transition from primary to secondary school. This study sought to extend understanding of the transition experience beyond the existing surface level descriptions in order to provide an appreciation of the reasons why some students did not maintain previous levels of achievement in the secondary context. Measures of student achievement were gathered before and after the

transition in order to assess claims regarding changes in students' achievement. To develop an understanding of the reasons for changes in student achievement, specific dimensions of achievement motivation including students' expectations for success, perceptions of their own performance, attributions for success and failure and use of strategic behaviours were measured and described. Student perceptions of the instructional environment, their values, and interpretations of the messages that they received from teachers and the school system were investigated. Classroom observations in the primary and secondary setting provided evidence of changes in instructional environments, and interviews confirmed students' perceptions and interpretations of these changes.

Exploration and probing of the thoughts of target students during the experience of primary-secondary transition allowed for the construction of a detailed view of the experience through the eyes of key participants. This student understanding of the situation along with student belief systems, lines of reasoning, implicit personal theories, and generic understandings, when combined with observational data, provided the means of developing a "characterisation" of students who were successful and less successful in adjusting to the new academic demands of the secondary school environment.

Significance of the Study

Much of the research that has been conducted into the field of primary-secondary transition has focused on the surface level issue of student perceptions of the transition process (Allen & Mc Kean, 1984; Fouracre, 1991; Garton, 1987; Mc Gee, 1989; Mekos, 1989). Studies such as those by Ward, Mergendoller, Packer, Osaki, Ward and Tikunoff (1982)

have extended this investigation of students' perceptions of the transition by investigating factors such as instructional practices.

Recent research has investigated developmental changes in aspects of motivation such as self esteem (Marsh, 1989), perceptions of competence (Nottelman, 1987), ability beliefs (Blumenfeld, Pintrich, Meece & Wessels, 1981), attributions (Harari & Covington, 1981; Stipek, 1981), and self esteem and ability beliefs (Eccles, Midgley & Adler, 1984). The results of these studies suggest that there are significant differences in the ways that children of various ages view different motivational constructs. These differences are likely to be implicated in explanations of changes in students' academic motivation and achievement in the transition from primary to secondary school. However, it would seem that developmental factors do not fully explain the changes that occur.

There has been little research investigating the reasons why students do not make the transition successfully and their attributions which result from this experience. Consequently, there has been no basis for recommendations for significant change in the transition process. Evidence indicates that from third grade, students' performance in one year predicts their performance in subsequent years (Maruyama, Rubin & Kingsley, 1981; Mason & Stipek, 1989). Students' relative position remains reasonably stable possibly as a result of the skills that they bring with them when they enter a new class. If students are "behind" when they leave one year, they will begin the new year at a disadvantage. As the gap between the students' current level of skills and the demands of the curriculum widen, low levels of achievement may result. In addition to this there are the more subtle influences of factors such as students' beliefs about competence and their attributions which may impede academic progress. Therefore, the early secondary school experiences of students would seem to be critical in confirming the "base" from which they begin their high

school academic career. Students' early experiences of secondary school play an important part in deciding their future success. Research suggests that students rarely improve their grades in the later school years and the best predictor of final secondary school success is provided by assessments of attainments in the first two years of secondary school (Nisbet, Welsh & Entwistle in Fouracre, 1991). The current pressure on increased secondary retention and the resulting student perceptions of their high school future create a timely and appropriate context for more qualitative research into the reasons for success or otherwise of the process of transition to the secondary school system.

The current interest in Australia in the establishment of "middle schools" (Barrett, Cormack & Eysers, 1992; Cumming, 1993; Education Department of Western Australia, 1994; Eysers, Cormack & Barratt, 1992) provides further support for the investigation of the effect of transition on changes in students' motivation and achievement. Identification of the reasons why some students are less successful than others in adapting to secondary school will make it possible to develop appropriate intervention strategies to alleviate the problems arising from unsatisfactory transition experiences. Increased understanding of the complex relationships between primary-secondary transition, student academic motivation and achievement may also provide suggestions for changes to practice in the primary or secondary setting.

The major focus of previous research into the transition of students from primary to secondary school has been the description of the surface level factors of student perceptions of the transition experience and factors that were of concern to students. This study extends and enriches knowledge about how students perceive the transition, placing particular emphasis on the meanings that students ascribe to their experiences, and the ways in which they make sense of the situation. The focus of the study

is the personal beliefs and expectations of students about the transition experience and the reasons why some students are unable to maintain previous standards of academic performance through the transition. This study provides information about primary-secondary transition as it is experienced by the students involved.

Research Questions

1. What changes occur in the academic achievement of average achieving students when they make the transition from primary to secondary school?
2. How do these students perceive the primary-secondary school transition experience?
 - i) What is the nature of these students' affective and cognitive responses in relation to their academic performance during the transition from primary to secondary school?
3. i) What school related factors appear to be implicated in changes in these students' academic performance from primary to secondary school?
 - ii) What student related factors appear to be implicated in changes in these students' academic performance from primary to secondary school?

Description of Terms Used in This Study

Achievement goals are cognitive representations of what individuals are attempting to achieve. Their function is to direct behaviour toward attaining desired outcomes. The study of achievement goals has focused on students' desires to increase or demonstrate levels of competence or ability (Wentzel, 1992). Achievement goals are commonly classified as either learning goals which may be directed towards mastery of the task or understanding, and performance goals which focus on doing better than others or winning approval (Nichols, 1984).

Achievement motivation is a set of conscious beliefs and values that are influenced primarily by recent experiences in achievement situations and variables in the immediate environment. The achievement motive is a pattern of planning, of actions and of feelings connected with striving to achieve some internalised standard of excellence.

Approaches to learning are "consistent ways of going about a particular task or learning/study in general" (Biggs & Moore, 1993 p. 521) and include the sets of motives and strategies that learners bring with them to the learning task. They may describe an orientation to learning in a certain way or the way in which a learner handles a particular task. Approaches to learning may be described as "deep", "surface" and "achieving" and a combination of deep or surface with achieving.

Attribution processes are the processes by which an individual interprets their own or another's actions and makes inferences as to the causes of that behaviour.

Attribution theory in achievement related settings proposes that learners' willingness to engage in an academic task will be affected by the factors to which they attribute previous successes and failures (Weiner, 1987). The four most common factors to which success and failure are attributed are ability, luck, effort and the task.

Learning strategies include the metacognitive and cognitive strategies that learners use in completing academic tasks.

Ministry of Education refers to the central body directing the government education system in Western Australia until 1994 when the title was changed to the Education Department of Western Australia.

Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) refers to a project which was initiated by the Ministry of Education (WA) in 1990 to monitor student progress in key curriculum areas. Student performance was assessed against a series of "benchmarks" of performance which were established collaboratively by educators, curriculum specialists, parents and the business community. The project assessed samples of students in Years 3, 7 and 10 in Government schools throughout Western Australia in English and mathematics (Ministry of Education, 1993).

Self-regulated learning refers to the processes that students use to exercise control over their thinking, affect and behaviour as they acquire knowledge and skills.

Social psychology is the study of the real and imagined effects of one individual upon the behaviour of another. The major focus of such an approach is the individual within the group and the way in which individuals influence one another.

Student perceptions are "thoughts, beliefs, and feelings about persons, situations and events" (Schunk & Meece, 1992, p. xi) and include those understandings that students develop of the events and relationships that occur in the classroom. Students' perceptions of classroom events include their interpretations of behaviours and intra- and inter-personal relationships. On the basis of their perceptions of classroom events students make meaning of and draw inferences from many aspects of classroom life. Student perceptions include the thought processes or cognitions that contribute to the student's experience and understanding of teaching, and which mediate learning and achievement (Wittrock, 1986).

Teacher expectations are inferences which teachers make about the future behaviour or academic achievement of their students, based on what they know about these students.

Teacher expectation effects are effects on student outcomes which occur because of the actions which teachers take in response to their expectations.

Transition is the point in social interaction when contexts change (Doyle 1986). Primary-secondary transition describes the process of change from the primary school setting to the secondary school context. In this study primary-secondary transition is deemed to occur between the final year of primary school (Year 7) and the first year of secondary school (Year 8).

Unit curriculum is the curriculum model in place in Western Australian secondary schools at the time of this study. It is comprised of seven curriculum component areas organised into units. The objectives of each unit would be normally met in 40 hours instructional time. Units in all courses are arranged in sequences representing six stage of progress and there are a number of units offered at each stage. Pathways describe the various sequences of units which are available to students.

Overview of This Study

There is some support for the claim that for certain students the transition from primary to secondary school is accompanied by a decline in academic performance which may negatively affect students' long term academic performance. Using a case study approach this study investigated changes in students' academic performance and describes the transition experience from the students' perspective. By understanding how the students themselves understand and construct their own explanations of the changes that they experience it is possible to posit theoretical explanations of changes in students' academic performance.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This review of related literature and research identifies the pertinent antecedent research areas from which the present study evolved. These areas have made theoretical and methodological contributions which have been incorporated into this study's research design. This chapter begins with an overview of the relevant research findings which relate specifically to the transition of students from a primary to secondary school setting. Relevant studies of student academic motivation, and changes in motivational constructs are then reviewed. Research findings relating to self-regulated learning are presented in the final section of this chapter.

Transition From Primary to Secondary School

Much of the research into the field of primary-secondary transition has focused on student concerns prior to the transition (Garton, 1986; Mitman & Packer, 1982; Power & Cotterel, 1981). This research has reiterated the problems of adjustment and anxiety that occur prior to secondary school entry and presented arguments in favour of making structural and organisational changes to existing educational systems to accommodate such concerns (Garton, 1986; McGee, 1989; Nisbet & Entwistle 1969; Power & Cotterel, 1981).

Although these findings have been accepted by authorities, they have resulted in little structural and organisational change. In Western Australia the Beazley Report (1984) devoted a section to the transition aspect of schooling, making five recommendations related to transition.

None of these suggestions have been implemented. Eyers, Cormack and Barratt (1992) draw attention to the fact that educational reform in Australia has concentrated on the ends of the pre-school to Year 12 system with most emphasis given to the upper end. Despite some variants, schooling in Australia operates in its two original parts: primary (to Year 6 or 7) and secondary (to Year 12). However, recent interest in the role of the middle school (Cumming, 1994) reflected in changes in South Australian school organisation suggest that attention is now being given to this area of schooling.

Student Expectations and Responses to Transition

The literature relating to primary-secondary transition is dominated by works investigating students' thoughts prior to secondary school, focusing on factors that cause concern for students. Consistently these factors fall into the categories of social (such as making new friends, being the target of bullying), academic (such as the amount and difficulty of work, the number of teachers they will have), and structural/organisational (such as reading a timetable or finding their way around new buildings) concerns. Generally, the studies have reported low levels of student concerns regarding high school and positive student feelings towards the move to high school (Garton, 1987; Mitman & Packer, 1982).

While common areas of student concerns have been identified, the emphasis of these has varied across studies. Students' major concerns are generally reported to relate to academic aspects of secondary school such as the amount of homework or the difficulty level of the work (Fouracre, 1991; Mitman & Packer, 1992; Trebilco, Atkinson & Atkinson, 1977).

Another frequently reported concern is related to physical intimidation. This was the major issue which emerged from Cotterrell's (1981) study of transition and was significant for all students but of more

concern to boys than girls. Mertin, Haebich and Lokan (1989) found high levels of anxiety among students prior to the transition which related to feelings of vulnerability and worries about being victimised by older students.

Other studies have investigated students' responses to secondary school post-transition (Garton, 1986; Mertin, Haebich & Lokan, 1989; Trebilco, Atkinson & Atkinson, 1977) and presented conflicting evidence. Mitman and Packer (1982) reported that students' levels of concern about the academic aspects of high school were low prior to transition and that these declined even further five weeks after transition. This was interpreted as evidence that students adjusted quickly to the new academic setting. In contrast to this, Mertin, Haebich and Lokan reported that academic aspects of school became more salient for students, replacing concerns about bullying after six months at high school. Using retrospective student accounts of concerns about primary-secondary transition, Power and Cotterel (1981) found a significant decrease in student concerns from "in the past" to "today". Students reported that they believed that they had adjusted to any problems that may have existed in the first few weeks after transfer. Student concerns after the shift related to academic work rather than to social aspects of the transition, supporting the findings of Mertin, Haebich and Lokan.

Attitude to School

Studies investigating students' attitudes towards school following transition have produced conflicting findings. Trebilco, Atkinson and Akinson (1977) found students' attitudes to learning represented by interest and involvement were higher at secondary school than in primary school. However, a more common finding is that students' attitudes towards school decline over the transition (Power & Cotterel,

1981; Ward et al., 1982). Fouracre (1991) found students' attitudes to school work were lower following the transition to secondary school. Harter, Whitesell and Kowalski (1982) reported that students' attitudes towards school fell between grades six and seven and that the shift to high school was accompanied by the development of negative academic attitudes. Breen (1983) reported emerging discontent with schooling towards the end of the first year of high school.

Academic Performance

There appears to be little empirical evidence to support claims of declines in students' academic performance resulting from transition. Some support is provided by studies which report declines in achievement over time but the link is not clearly made to transition. Fouracre (1991) found that tests of basic skills showed a drop in progress after transition to secondary school. This was particularly significant in some of the language skills. In an earlier study Galton and Willcocks (1983) also found that British students scored lower on tests of basic skills after their first year of secondary school and their average levels of progress were lower in the first year after transfer. However, Galton and Willcocks found only slightly lower levels of motivation and attitudes towards school among those students whose academic performance declined. They suggested that the decline in attitude accompanied, rather than preceded, falls in students' test scores. The question remains as to the extent to which this decline occurs in Australian students' performance and the reasons for changes which may occur.

Classroom Environments and Student Participation

Few studies have addressed the more immediate classroom level teaching-learning environment. Research performed at a classroom level would allow the investigation of student and teacher factors alongside structural changes, providing an understanding of student perceptions of the transition. A recent focus of educational research has been the consideration of classroom teaching and learning from a student participation perspective. There is a growing interest in the ways in which students influence the teaching-learning process. Good and Power (1976) investigated the types of classroom environments in which different types of students functioned most successfully and identified four major types of students who may appear in the typical classroom: *Success*, *Social*, *Dependent* and *Alienate*.

Success students are task oriented and academically successful. *Social* students are person oriented and have the ability to achieve but value friendship more highly than schoolwork. *Dependent* students are always seeking increased direction and help, and are frequently rejected by their peers. *Alienate* students are described as disadvantaged or reluctant learners who reject school and everything it represents. An additional classification of student is the *Phantom*, who are those students who are neither seen nor heard. *Phantom* students are average in all aspects of classroom behaviour, except outward involvement in public settings.

Ward et al. (1982) recognised the importance of investigating teaching and learning at the classroom level and were particularly concerned with examining teaching practices that would assist students in moving successfully from primary to secondary settings. They suggested that a consideration of the types of students described by Good and Power (1976) was an essential component for understanding the classroom factors that support the successful transition of students. Since a vast majority of

instructional settings demand that students communicate with the teacher and with one another in order to obtain instruction, receive feedback and inform others of what they have learned, each student must be an active participant in the teaching and learning process.

Mitman and Packer (1932) found the student participation style described by Good and Power (1976) to be the most significant variable affecting student transition. *Success* students expressed least concern about the difficulty of work that they were expecting to experience while the *Alienate* and *Phantom* groups expressed highest levels of concern. *Dependent* and *Social* groups were in the mid to lower levels of expressed concern over difficulty of academic work. Those students who had made the most successful transition had been described by Grade 7 teachers as *Success*, *Social* or *Success/Social* students. Of the students from these classifications none experienced unsuccessful transitions. Those students who had been described as *Alienate* participants were largely unsuccessful in the transfer while *Dependents*, *Phantoms*, *Dependent/ Phantoms* and *Phantom/Isolates* had transition problems. Certain classifications of student appeared to be more vulnerable in particular instructional settings but *Social* and *Success* students made successful transitions regardless of instructional setting. While these findings suggest that there may be certain individual student characteristics that facilitate successful transition there is little empirical data about the features of classroom instruction that facilitate successful transition.

Eccles et al. (1993) explored the influence of changes in classroom environment on students' motivation in the middle grades. They investigated students' achievement related beliefs, motives, values and behaviours in mathematics classrooms and the relationship between teachers' beliefs, school and classroom environments and student motivation. Teachers in middle grades felt less efficacious, controlled

their students more and provided them with fewer opportunities for decision making. These changes in teacher behaviours were related to decreased student motivation. Eccles et al. (1993) noted the increased use of ability groupings in middle years and the negative consequences of being placed in the low ability mathematics groups. The researchers suggested that the reported declines in young adolescents' academic motivation could be avoided by correctly designing classroom environments.

Power and Cotterel (1981) mapped the changes in school environment that were encountered by students, and the resulting changes in student behaviour, perceptions, achievement and satisfaction. They discovered that despite the rhetoric about bridging the gap between primary and secondary school, it is largely left to individual students to adjust to what may be considered an unnecessary discontinuity in schooling experience. These findings agreed with previous research (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1969), suggesting most students expected and encountered identifiable problems of adjustment at the point of transfer to secondary school. While most children look forward to going to secondary school, and most quickly adjust to the new school environment there remain a number of students for whom the transition is a traumatic and unsuccessful experience. The most frequent and persistent stresses seem to arise from difficulties in adjusting to the academic environment of the secondary school.

Aspects of Motivation

In seeking to explain declines in students' academic achievement the construct of achievement motivation becomes salient. Academic achievement in school is seen to be the result of students' abilities and efforts. As the absolute level of students' academic ability is unlikely to

decline, the explanatory factor in declining achievement would seem to be that of motivation. It is the level of motivation or the student's willingness to engage in, and persist at academic tasks that will affect performance on that task.

Various studies have reported decreases in motivational constructs such as interest in school (Epstein & McPartland, 1986), intrinsic motivation (Harter, 1981), self concept of ability (Marsh, 1989), and self esteem (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). Some of these changes may be developmental, but they are also likely to occur in conjunction with transition. Eccles and Midgley (1989) and Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver, Reuman and Midgley (1991) found transition effects on various motivational measures such as self esteem, ability beliefs, liking of subject, and ratings of importance of school activities. Simmons and Blyth (1987) found clear evidence of the negative effect of transition on self concept and Harter (1981) found a distinct decline in students' preference for independent mastery and challenge (both aspects of intrinsic motivation) between Years 6 and 7.

There are a number of possible explanations for these changes in aspects of motivation. The timing of transition may be a critical factor. The students in the middle years of schooling (that is, between the ages of 10 and 15) comprise a group with particular developmental characteristics. During these years rapid physical, intellectual, social and emotional changes occur. The rapidity of these changes is exceeded only by those occurring in early childhood. Comment has been made of the significance of such major transitions occurring at developmentally sensitive times in a child's life (Paris & Newman, 1990).

Simmons, Blyth, Van Cleave and Bush (1979) suggested that early transition to secondary school is more difficult than late transition and that transition is more difficult for girls than for boys. Simmons and Blyth

(1987) focused on the timing of transition suggesting that it occurs at a time when the need to cope with changes in school environments coincides with the pressure of pubertal changes. They argued that as it is more difficult to deal with multiple change, later transition should alleviate many of the problems of coping with change.

There has been little support for earlier transition (Nottelman, 1987). Investigations of the effect of transition at different year levels (Thornburg & Jones, 1982) found that students who moved to a new school in Year 6 had lower self esteem than students who did not change schools, but at Year 7 there was no difference between groups who did and did not make a transition. Nottelman (1987) also found that earlier transition did not lead to less disturbance and that self esteem was higher in transition students than non-transition students.

Nottelman (1982, 1987) found that across the one year transition period, students' perception of competence remained constant, but that there were significant differences between pre- and post-transition teacher ratings of student competence. This may be the result of different teacher expectations and grading practices at primary and secondary levels. Post transition teacher ratings were lower than pre-transition ratings suggesting that students face increased demands for academic, social and physical competence. Differences between teacher and student ratings of student competence were much greater pre- than post-transition which suggested that students used higher standards than their teachers at primary or elementary level, but used similar standards at secondary level. In all cases it was common for males to overestimate their competence while female students underestimated their competence.

Harter, Whitesell and Kowalski (1982) suggested that changes in the size and structure of high schools may contribute to the reported decline in academic performance and motivation that has been observed in

transition studies. Specifically, they suggested that environmental changes force students to adopt a more extrinsic orientation towards schoolwork, leading to more objective self evaluations and potentially undermining the perceived competence of less competent students.

Similar explanations have been offered by Eccles and Midgley (1989) who suggested that at junior high the school environment becomes more impersonal, formal, competitive and evaluative which results in increasingly negative attitudes towards school. Nicholls (1979) suggested that in the high school setting, teachers cause students to focus on the assessment of their ability rather than on the learning task itself and this change in focus has a negative impact on students' motivation to learn.

Eccles and Midgley (1989) and Eccles et al. (1993) suggested that a lack of "fit" between the school environment and the needs of young people contribute to the documented shift in attitudes typified by more negative self evaluations and attitudes to school learning. They suggested that at a time when adolescents are seeking to become more autonomous they are confronted by a school situation which becomes more controlling. Relationships between teachers and students become more impersonal at a time when adolescents need increasing support from adults other than their parents. This is compounded by increasing social comparison at a time when adolescents are becoming more self conscious. Eccles et al. (1993) stressed that a decline in motivational orientation is not inevitable but that classroom environment factors such as quality of student-teacher relationships can influence students' beliefs and self-perceptions.

Other Factors Influencing Transition

Some studies have suggested that gender differences exist in students' responses to the transition experience. Richards (1980) found that girls expressed greater satisfaction and confidence during the transition than

boys. This finding was supported by Mertin, Haebich and Lokan (1989) who found that boys reported more than twice as many concerns as girls regarding the transition to high school and had higher levels of anxiety about changing schools. In contrast to this Garton (1986) found no major differences in the views expressed by boys and girls.

The previously mentioned research studies have been descriptive in nature and commonly recommend organisational level interventions such as transition programs or orientation programs in which future secondary students visit the new school setting and are given the opportunity to become familiar with operational aspects of secondary school such as room locations and timetables. Breen (1983) investigated students' transition between schools which participated in a formal program and his results suggested that students had more realistic expectations as a result of the transition scheme. However, there was still emerging discontent with schooling towards the end of the first year of high school.

Power and Cotterel (1981) described the nature and intensity of student transfer problems as a function of student social backgrounds, gender, age, ability and personality characteristics. Under the conditions which operate in most schools, transition is likely to create most problems for less able, socially immature children who were low achievers in primary school, those who came from working class families and those who had negative attitudes towards primary schools (Nisbet & Entwistle, 1969). Transfer to secondary school is likely to be a stimulus to able, mature children, particularly those whose parents have post-secondary education. In effect, it would seem that transition is likely to sustain the attitudes and performance of these students from primary school to the secondary context.

To this point, the findings presented in this literature review have suggested that while students have some concerns about the transition to secondary school these are generally short lived, and related to organisational aspects of the change. Of greater concern are the reported declines in academic achievement and various associated motivational constructs such as attitude towards school, self-perceptions of ability and expectancies of success. In order to understand how these changes affect students' academic performance and motivation at secondary school, the relationship between motivation and achievement should be explored.

The literature presented so far has focused on studies that have specifically investigated the process of transition. However, there is much related literature that deals with aspects of motivational behaviour which is relevant to this study. It has previously been acknowledged that transition to secondary school occurs at a time when the individual is undergoing a number of developmental changes. Literature relating to the various motivational constructs which may affect students' responses to transition are presented in the following section.

Achievement motivation is a multi-dimensional phenomenon composed of related constructs including self-perceptions of ability, expectations for success, attributions for success and failure, goals, learning strategies, approaches to learning and theories of schooling. Pintrich and De Groot (1990) have suggested that there is a close relationship between these motivational constructs, self-regulated learning and academic achievement.

Changes in Motivation

Anderman and Maehr (1993) identified a number of studies which have shown changes in motivation among students in the middle years of school. These studies do not focus specifically on the effect of transition

on motivation, but describe aspects of the motivational states of students at the time when transition occurs.

As students get older their attitudes towards school in general, and towards specific academic domains such as mathematics, science and art decline (Haladyna & Thomas, 1979; Harter, 1981; Marsh 1989). Motivation and self concept of ability also decrease, particularly in grades six and seven (Harter, 1981; Marsh 1989). A number of researchers (Marsh 1989; Nicholls, 1979a; Stipek, 1984) have demonstrated that competence and expectancies for success are higher during the primary school years than in secondary school.

Marsh (1989) suggests that there is a general decrease in some of the major components of self concept around the middle secondary school years. Students' general feelings about the quality of their school life have also been shown to decline during the secondary school years (Ainley, Reed & Miller, 1986). Surface approaches to learning are normally associated with perceiving school to be a negative place.

Research shows that declines in motivation in adolescence are associated with environmental contextual factors and that motivation is not merely a function of pubertal change (Eccles & Midgley, 1989). A direct link has been established between changes in classroom learning environments before and after transition to junior high and students' motivation toward and performance in mathematics. The differences between elementary and middle schools are often inappropriate for maintaining motivation and investment of students after the transition (Eccles et al., 1993; Weinstein & Butterworth, 1993).

Ability Perceptions

One of the factors that plays an important role in students' willingness to engage in tasks is the perceptions that they hold of their own ability. Stipek and Tannatt (1984) found clear differences in the ways in which children between the ages of four and eight judged their own, and others' ability. Younger children were more likely to refer to sociability in their ability judgments, and were less likely to base their judgments on social comparison or on the difficulty of the task. Children of all ages frequently explained ability in terms of work habits or efforts although older children placed more emphasis on work habits. By Year 4, children were aware of their academic standing in the classroom. Stipek and Tannat found that students' ratings of their own ability declined by year level. Ratings of the ability of peers were lower than self ratings, and did not decline as a function of year level. There were significant correlations between students' ratings of their own and classmates' ability and teacher ratings of relative student academic standing. It seems that children judge their own performance more critically as they progress through the school system, possibly as a result of basing their judgments on different criteria.

Changes in children's ability judgments may arise as a result of differences in ways in which children make such judgments, and the types of information that they use to evaluate themselves and others in achievement settings. As children move from one year level to the next, the educational environment including task demands and the nature of feedback changes considerably. The most radical changes occur during the transition from preschool to the early primary grades. At the same time there are important changes occurring in children's cognitive processing abilities that should influence how they process and interpret evaluative

feedback. These changes are repeated at the time when students are making the transition from primary to secondary school.

Not only does the nature of feedback change, but there is some evidence that positive academic feedback decreases with school year level. Blumenfeld, Wessels, Pintrich and Meece (1981) found that positive academic feedback constituted a higher proportion of teacher comments to students in Year 2 than in Year 6. It is also likely that social comparisons increase with children's grade in school; both explicitly (teachers' comments directly to the child) and implicitly (grades that are based on normative standards). Teachers' attributions for performance may also change with year level. Teachers of very young children may emphasise lack of effort as an explanation for poor performance more than do teachers of older children. Stipek and Tannatt's (1984) results go beyond those of previous studies by suggesting that the degree to which children's perceptions of their own and their classmates' ability reflects teachers' evaluations is not determined by age or year level alone. Classroom environmental factors must also be considered salient.

Blumenfeld, Pintrich, Meece and Wessels (1981), and Stipek and Tannatt (1984) reported that elementary school age children did not explicitly consider the quality or nature of effort. Strategies such as persisting, applying alternative strategies or seeking help were not identified and "trying" was apparently synonymous with good conduct. Children used reasons like "he fools around" and "mucking around is why kids don't do well" in response to questions about classmates. Blumenfeld et al. (1981) suggested also that children's judgments of ability depend on effort exerted and that judgments of effort rely on conduct. Considering the degree to which procedural issues and conduct are stressed in early elementary classrooms (Blumenfeld, Hamilton, Wessels

& Falkner, 1979), it is perhaps not surprising that children's concepts of ability, effort and conduct are confounded.

Research into children's ability perceptions and the ways in which they form these judgments has consistently found that children's perceptions of competence decline with age. Possible explanations for this decline include classroom environmental factors such as the amount and nature of feedback. Teachers in upper primary school make greater use of objective performance feedback such as marks and number correct, while in secondary school there is greater use of normative standards to apply grades. Students' perceptions of ability have been shown to influence achievement patterns. Individuals who hold a positive perception of their ability report higher performance expectations, greater intrinsic interest and more control over their learning (Covington, 1992). It seems that ability perceptions also guide learners' selection of achievement goals (Meece, 1994) as individuals use different conceptions of ability to judge their competence.

Goal Orientations

From a motivational perspective, students' construction of meaning and purpose in learning is most often represented in terms of goals or belief variables (Maehr & Pintrich, 1991; Wentzel, 1991). Learners' goal orientations, combine with their perception of the learning environment and the nature and demands of the task, to influence both the learning strategies they adopt and their learning outcomes (Ainley, 1992).

Nicholls (1984) identified two major achievement goals: learning or mastery (or task-involved) and performance (or ego-involved). Learning goals are task intrinsic. Students who hold a learning goal want to develop skills or a deeper understanding of an area and value the process

of learning rather than demonstrating ability. These goals represent outcomes which reflect the actual process of learning. Students who hold a performance goal want to demonstrate their ability to others by being successful, particularly by doing well through the expenditure of minimal effort. Performance goals are task extrinsic and are often derived from values associated with the consequences of task performance (Ames & Archer, 1988; Archer, 1992; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Nicholls, Patashnick & Nolen, 1985).

There is a third non-academic goal: work avoidance (Meece, Blumenfeld & Hoyle, 1988, Nolen, 1987) and the student who holds this goal wants to do enough work just to "get by". Orientations to particular goals may be the result of individual differences or induced by situational constraints.

Achievement goals are an important motivational construct and the adoption of a goal has consequences for a range of student factors including beliefs about the nature of achievement (Ames & Archer, 1987; Nicholls, et al., 1985), attributions for and affective response to academic results (Ames & Archer, 1988), behaviours such as choosing tasks (Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Ames & Archer, 1988) and using effective learning strategies (Ames & Archer, 1988; Meece et al. 1988; Schunk, 1991; Wentzel, 1989).

The pursuit of learning goals has been associated with high levels of effort, persistence at finding solutions to problems and the development of new or alternative learning strategies. Regardless of their self-perceptions of ability, students with learning goals seek challenging tasks that provide them with opportunities to develop new competencies (Dweck, 1986). When they encounter difficulties they assume either that their current strategy is inappropriate and should be altered, or that they are not trying hard enough. Their response is to analyse their strategy or increase their effort. Judgments of their own competence are based on the

amount of effort expended and the level of learning or mastery achieved. Students who hold learning goals see their teachers as facilitators, guides or resources in the learning process.

Performance goals have been associated with helplessness, withdrawal from tasks, and negative emotional states which seem to place children at risk of academic failure (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Lepper & Hodell, 1989; Nicholls, 1984). Students who hold performance goals and are confident in their ability choose moderately difficult tasks that allow them to display their competence. Because they are confident of their ability to succeed they engage in effort strategies. Their aim is to look confident and they will frequently engage in short cuts. Students who lack confidence in their ability will choose easy tasks to avoid demonstrating lack of competence. Their response to difficulty is either to engage in self-defeating strategies to avoid being seen as lacking ability, or to give up because they lack belief in their own competence (Dweck, 1986). Students who hold performance goals commonly perceive the role of the teacher to be evaluative or judgmental.

The task related goals that teachers set for students can influence learning (Ames, 1984; Ames & Archer, 1988). Competitive reward structures are those in which evaluation criteria are normative. These structures are most likely to promote performance orientations in students, with a focus on attributions of ability for success and comparison of one's own performance with others. By contrast individualistic reward structures where evaluations are based on individual student progress and self improvement tend to promote mastery goals, a focus on effort as an attribution for success and failure, comparisons of current progress with past performance and the use of self-regulated study and learning strategies (Ames & Archer, 1988; Nolen, 1988). Clear links exist between patterns of learning behaviour and different goals in learning situations

when students set goals for themselves and when the goals are set by teachers.

The achievement goals that students pursue in learning situations play an important role in the regulation of their learning processes. Achievement goals can affect students' use of learning strategies, patterns of attributions (Ames & Archer, 1988), activity choices (Ames & Archer, 1988; Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Nicholls, 1984), help-seeking behaviours (Arbreton & Roesner, 1993), and cognitive processing strategies (Nolen, 1988; Nolen & Haladyna, 1990). Meece (1994) supports Ames, 1990, Corno and Rohrkemper (1985) and Nicholls (1989) in identifying the role of the classroom environment as an important factor influencing students' goal orientations. Teachers' instructional practices are particularly salient influences on students' achievement orientations and there is strong evidence to support the role of the teacher in enhancing students' motivation to engage in self-regulatory processes. Research indicates that students are more likely to engage in self regulatory processes that enhance conceptual learning when the classroom environment encourages them to focus on mastering the task rather than competing with others for grades.

Approaches to Learning

Approaches to learning can refer to both the processes adopted prior to the outcome of learning or to predispositions to adopt particular processes or the way in which students go about their learning (Biggs, 1992). Approaches to learning include the sets of motives and strategies that learners bring with them to the learning task and have been categorised as deep, surface and achieving (Biggs, 1987; Biggs & Moore, 1993). A surface approach is characterised by attention to detail rather than to meaning, and to putting in minimum effort in order to satisfy task

demands. A deep approach is characterised by attention to meaning, and the expenditure of maximum effort required to satisfy a personal need to understand the material. An achieving approach is focused on the outcome, the strategy is aimed at maximising marks or performing well and will involve the type of engagement that is rewarded by the teacher or system.

The extensive literature on approaches to learning and their relationship to learning shows a positive relationship between the deep approach and more complex responses (Biggs, 1989) and higher self estimates of achievement (Watkins & Hattie, 1990) while the achieving approach also relates positively to achievement and self-perceptions (Watkins & Hattie, 1990). Conversely, the surface approach has been shown to be negatively related to achievement (Cantwell & Moore, 1990; Moore & Telfer, 1992). Work avoidance goals (Nichols, Patashnick & Nolen, 1985) are associated with surface achieving approaches.

Many studies have shown that there is an important association between the perceived school environment and student approaches to learning. Some contextual factors which have been shown to be linked with deep, achieving or combined deep-achieving approaches to learning are a positive perception of the school or academic department, (Watkins, 1982), a good relationship with the teacher (Prosser & Trigwell, 1990) and less formal assessment and teaching methods (Selmes, 1986; Watkins, 1982).

Ramsden, Martin and Bowden (1989) found that where students perceived school environments to be offering supportive teaching, coherent structure, an emphasis on autonomy and moderate stress on achievement there was an associated active search for understanding, organisation of study methods and avoidance of superficial approaches. In schools where teaching was characterised by an extreme emphasis on

formal academic achievement students exhibited a tendency towards minimalist, reproductive and very competitive approaches to learning. Ainley and Sheret (1992) found a significant association between increased student achievement and the use of a deep approach to learning.

Students' Theories of Schooling

An important issue for understanding student motivation in learning is to investigate the patterns of relationships between students' general orientations to learning and their perceptions of the quality of school life. The cumulative beliefs, expectations and misconceptions that students hold constitute a "theory of schooling" which directs their intentions, establishes goals and ascribes attributions for actions. These beliefs relate to academic tasks, social cognitions about school, motivation, and self competence and become students' motives for action (Paris & Newman, 1990). By the age of 10 - 12 students have developed their own theories of schooling and these "theories" undergo modification in response to important transitions in schooling (Carey 1985; Paris & Newman, 1990). These theories of schooling are enacted through students' expectations for success, attributions, goals, values and metacognitive activities. The development of students' theories about school and learning can be affected by teachers' instructional practices.

Attributions

Causal attributions refer to those factors to which students attribute their academic successes and failures (Weiner, 1979, 1991). The factors to which successes and failures are most commonly ascribed are ability, effort, task, and luck and these can be classified along three continua: locus (internal/external), controllability and stability (Weiner, 1984). If students are to be successful in academic tasks they must believe that their success is

due to their effort, something over which they can exert control (Gardner, 1983). In situations where students believe that success or failure is the result of an uncontrollable factor they will be unlikely to attempt the task, believing that they will not be successful. Attributional beliefs are the result of interpretations of past successes and failures.

Students who believe that they have control over school successes or failures are likely to have higher expectations of success and are motivated to work hard because they realise that success or failure will depend on their own effort and appropriate use of strategies (Borkowski, Carr, Rellinger & Pressley, 1990).

Self-regulated Learning

Self-regulation of cognition and behaviour is an important aspect of student learning and academic performance in the classroom context. (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985). Self-regulated learning reveals control, reflection and planning and is implicated in the work on attributions, metacognition, self-perceptions, motivational goals and self efficacy. Current models of self-regulated learning build on social and cognitive research to explain the ways that students choose goals, select learning strategies and monitor their behaviour. Self-regulated learning focuses on both the process and outcome or consequence of learning.

There are a number of definitions of self-regulated learning but three components emerge which seem especially important for classroom performance. The first includes students' metacognitive strategies for planning, monitoring and modifying their cognition (Brown, Bransford, Campione & Ferrara, 1983; Corno, 1986). The second is students' management and control of their effort on classroom tasks. This is important since, for example, capable students who persist at a difficult

task or block out distracters maintain their cognitive engagement in the task enabling them to perform better (Corno, 1986; Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985). The third component of self-regulated learning relates to the cognitive strategies that students use to learn, remember and understand the material (Corno & Mandinach, 1983). Different cognitive strategies such as rehearsal, elaboration and organisational strategies have been found to foster active cognitive engagement in learning and result in higher levels of achievement (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). However, knowledge of cognitive strategies is not enough. Students also have to be motivated to use the strategies as well as regulate their cognition and effort.

Classroom situations and tasks can foster motivation (Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985) but there is also evidence that students' perceptions of the classroom as well as their individual motivational orientations and beliefs about learning are relevant to cognitive engagement and classroom performance (Ames & Archer, 1988; Nolen, 1988). Pintrich and De Groot (1990) suggested that there is a relationship between the three components of self-regulated learning and individual differences in motivation which would explain the ways in which personal characteristics affect students' cognitive engagement and academic performance. Pintrich and De Groot proposed three components of self-regulated learning: an expectancy component which includes students' beliefs about their ability to perform a task; a value component which includes students' goals and beliefs about their ability to perform a task, and an affective component which includes students' emotional reactions to the task.

The expectancy component has been conceptualised in a number of ways in the motivational literature (e.g. perceived competence, attributional style, self efficacy and control beliefs), but the basic construct involves students' beliefs that they are able to perform the task and that

they are responsible for their own performance. Different aspects of the expectancy component have been linked to students' metacognition, their use of cognitive strategies and their effort management. In general, the literature suggests that students who believe that they are capable engage in more metacognition, use more cognitive strategies and are more likely to persist at a task (Schunk, 1985).

The value component for student motivation involves students' goals for the task and their beliefs about the importance and interest of the task. This motivational component has been conceptualised in many ways but relates to a student's reasons for doing the task. Research suggests that students with a motivational orientation involving goals of mastery, learning and challenge, as well as beliefs that the task is interesting and important will engage in more metacognitive activity, more cognitive strategy use and more effective effort management (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Elliot, 1983; Eccles, 1983; Nolen, 1988).

The third motivational component concerns students' affective or emotional reactions to the task. The important issue here involves the question "How do I feel about this task?" There are a variety of affective reactions ranging from anger, guilt, pride and anxiety. Positive responses to the task are more likely to result in students being willing to attempt similar tasks in the future. Negative responses will decrease the likelihood that students will be prepared to tackle similar tasks in the future.

The three motivational components are positively related to the three self-regulated learning components. However, Pintrich and De Groot (1990) found that cognitive engagement variables are more directly tied to actual performance. This implies that teaching students about different cognitive and self regulatory mechanisms may be more important for improving actual performance on classroom tasks, but that

improving students' self efficacy beliefs may lead to more use of these cognitive strategies (Schunk, 1985).

Pintrich and De Groot found that intrinsic value was very strongly related to the use of cognitive strategies and self regulation. Students who were motivated to learn the material (not just get good grades) and believed that their schoolwork was interesting and important were more cognitively engaged in trying to learn and comprehend the material. These students were more likely to be self-regulating and to report that they persisted with their academic work. Intrinsic value did not have a significant direct relation to student performance where self regulation or cognitive strategy use was involved. Cognitive variables, particularly self regulation were better predictors of actual academic performance. Students' intrinsic value and motivation to learn are important considerations in models of how students come to use different cognitive strategies and become self-regulating learners. The results imply that it is important for teachers to socialise students' intrinsic value for schoolwork (Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985), not because it will necessarily lead to higher grades or scores on academic assignments directly, but because it may lead to more cognitive engagement in the day to day work of the classroom.

Students who were more actively engaged in trying to learn by employing strategies such as organising and transforming classroom material performed better than students who tended not to use these strategies (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Self-regulation was the best predictor of academic performance on all outcome measures. This suggests that the use of self-regulating strategies such as comprehension monitoring, goal setting, planning and effort management and persistence is essential for academic performance on different types of classroom tasks (Corno, 1986). These findings provide strong support for the importance of teaching students not only the

"what" of cognitive strategies, but also the "how and when" to use strategies appropriately (Brown et al., 1983; Pressley, 1986).

Conclusion

The preceding review of the literature has identified studies which have focused their investigations on students' experiences and perceptions associated with primary-secondary transition. Findings dealing with students' expectations and experiences both prior to and after transition have been discussed. While clear areas representing students' concerns prior to transition have emerged, the findings post-transition are less consistent. Generally, it seems that students' concerns with aspects of the transition such as organisational and social factors diminish quickly after the change to secondary school.

Recent studies have reported decreases in student achievement following transition and declines in levels of student motivation. A number of previous studies of transition and motivation have suggested that classroom and instructional environments are critical factors influencing students' motivation and subsequent performance.

Literature relating to classroom environments and the motivational constructs: goals, attributions, self-perceptions of ability, expectations and approaches to learning was reviewed. In addition, the construct of self-regulated learning was introduced as important since this allows for the self-regulation of cognition and behaviour which is an important aspect of student learning and classroom performance. The ability to self-regulate learning gives students control over their learning and allows them to be active participants in their own learning process.

This literature review has presented findings from relevant studies which informed this study. Relationships between the constructs

presented in this chapter are described in the theoretical and conceptual frameworks presented in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

The Conceptual Framework

Introduction

This chapter describes the theoretical context of the present study within a conceptual framework. The purpose of the conceptual framework is to identify those constructs which will be studied and to describe the relationships between them. The review of literature covering student transition from primary to secondary school has referred to some necessary theoretical domains. Yin (1989) highlighted the necessity of theory building before the collection of data in a case study approach. Such theory development provides not only a sound base and research design for the study but allows for analytic generalisation of the resulting data. This chapter highlights those theoretical domains which underlie this study and the constructs which were investigated.

Theoretical Framework

A number of theoretical domains have emerged as relevant to the attempts of the present study to make sense of the experiences of students as they move from primary to secondary school. Consideration of previous research and related theoretical areas has identified the philosophical beliefs that underlie the research questions. The conduct of the present study was based on certain philosophical assumptions which affected the methodological approach adopted and the perspective from which data were analysed. In essence, the way in which the researcher made sense of the situation was determined by the theoretical framework around which the present study was constructed. The theoretical domains

identified as relevant to this study suggested the key constructs within the conceptual framework and the relationships between those factors.

At one level there is a need to consider those factors which may affect students' ability to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school. These factors include general background factors, individual student characteristics and attributes, and organisational and structural factors at a school and system level. Below these factors lie the domain of general transition theory, the concepts of continuity and discontinuity and specifically the way in which individual students adjust to a new school situation when they move from primary to secondary school. The literature review has identified that previous studies of transition have concentrated on surface level details.

As this study sought to understand the way in which students made sense, and developed meaning during the course of transition, it was important to consider the domain of student perceptions. By discovering both how students perceived the events which occurred and the types of explanation that students made for them, it is possible to generate an explanation as to why certain phenomena occurred.

Events at a classroom level are the results of interactions between teachers and students. To explore the relationships between the key players in relation to student academic achievement, the field of teacher expectations, specifically the teacher expectancy effect and the role of student perceptions suggested itself to be an important area of consideration.

This study was concerned with exploring ways in which students perceived the transition from primary to secondary school and the subsequent effects on their motivation and academic performance. Students in classrooms actively engage in a range of cognitive interpretations of the environment and themselves which in turn affect

the amount and kind of effort that they are prepared to expend on classroom tasks. Corno and Mandinach (1983, p. 89) describe this as a "common measure of motivational behaviour".

Social cognitive explanations of student achievement motivation which focus on these cognitive dimensions and interpretations of the learning environment are used to provide explanations of the ways in which students construe the situation, interpret events and process information about their own learning. Included in the range of learning related cognitions are students' perceptions of their ability and competence, their expectations and attributions for success and failure, achievement goals, approaches to learning, and use of learning strategies. These student expectations are linked to the process of self-regulated learning to form a set of student interpretive processes that are useful for accomplishing a range of academic tasks. Self-regulated learning can be inferred from measures of motivated behaviour and is critical to the onset and maintenance of student motivation in classrooms (Corno & Mandinach, 1983). Those students who are able to adapt their forms of engagement to a range of task situations will function more effectively in learning situations. There is a need to consider the classroom environment, the nature of the learning tasks and students' expectations, goals, perceptions and strategy use in order to understand how they adapt to the new learning environment.

The present study is embedded in the social psychological domain. In order to expose the underlying causal factors it is necessary to consider theories of achievement motivation, attribution theory and social cognition. It is the application of these theoretical perspectives to the study which will assist in explaining why some students experience difficulty in transition. The following sections summarise the study's theoretical foundations.

Social Psychology of Classrooms.

Social psychology can be defined as "the study of the ways in which the behaviour of one individual person is affected by the actual and imagined presence of others, together with the study of the ways in which that individual's behaviour in turn affects the behaviour of others who may or may not be physically present at the time" (Rogers, 1982, p. 3). By studying the cognitions of the individual the social psychologist seeks to explain the behaviour of that person, paying attention to the processes of interpersonal interaction. Emphasis is placed on what actually happens in schools and classrooms and the actual experiences of these contexts by the people in them. Social psychological theory may be used to predict some of the things which happen in the classroom.

Teacher Expectations

Teacher expectations may be viewed as the inferences which teachers make about the future behaviour or academic performance of their students based on what they know about them (Good, 1981; Good & Brophy, 1994). Teacher expectancy effects are those student outcomes which occur because of the actions that teachers take in response to their own expectations. Teachers have been shown to hold expectations about individual students, groups of students and whole classes. These beliefs may be communicated to students through the teacher's classroom behaviour and the nature of assigned work. In general terms teachers may communicate their expectations for students through such things as the allocation of time to various activities, the nature of curriculum materials used, the amount and nature of feedback provided to students, the nature and extent of teacher-student interactions and the opportunities provided for students to interact. The nature of tasks and work assignments may also vary in accordance with teacher expectations as will classroom rules

and norms, and the provision of opportunities for students to learn. These variations may result from conscious and unconscious teacher decision making.

The present study is concerned mainly with teachers' expectations of Year 8 students, and the resulting classroom learning environments. Research has suggested that teachers and the learning environments they create play a critical role in the formation of student self-perceptions of ability, attributions for success and failure, the formation and maintenance of learning goals and the opportunity to develop and use appropriate strategies. Self-regulated learning can be diminished if aspects of the classroom such as the teacher or the instructional task do not allow or require students to engage in planning and monitoring of their cognitive engagement.

Brophy and Good (1970) have suggested a model by which the process of teacher expectancy effect may work. The model begins with the formation of differential behavioural and academic expectations for student performance. On the basis of these expectations the teacher behaves differently toward different students. This treatment informs students about how they are expected behave in the class and how to perform certain academic tasks. If the teacher's treatment is consistent over time and students do not try actively to resist or change it, then such factors as student achievement motivation, self concept, classroom conduct and interactions with the teacher will be affected. Generally, these effects will complement and reinforce the teacher's expectations, so that students come to conform to these expectations more than they may have otherwise. Eventually this will affect student achievement and other outcome measures.

For teachers' expectations to influence students' levels of performance in school a number of things must happen. Among the

more important of these are that teachers must form impressions of students and, on the basis of these impressions, establish expectations for these students' future performance. Whether or not they are aware of it, teachers' behaviour must be influenced by their expectations. There must also be some level of student awareness of those aspects of teacher behaviour related to the teacher's expectations for that particular student. In addition there must be some student response to teacher behaviour, so that the students come to behave in a manner that more closely matches teacher expectations.

To demonstrate the existence of the teacher expectancy effect two things have to be established. The teacher's expectations have to be fairly accurate, and this accuracy must be due to these predictions having a causal effect on student performance rather than the predictive powers of the teacher. While there has been contradictory evidence regarding the validity of the expectancy effect it is possible to describe those conditions under which expectancy effects are more likely to occur. Such effects are more likely with older rather than younger students and when teachers have "social" expectations for their students (Crano & Mellon, 1978; Rist, 1970). Murphy (1974) argued that it was the social aspect of students' classroom behaviour rather than their academic potential that teachers saw as being alterable.

Teacher expectancy effects as presented in Brophy and Good's model would seem to be a significant factor contributing to the changes in the degree of academic success achieved by students as they move from primary to secondary school. If teachers hold generally lower academic expectations for Year 8 students, or for groups within that year and they communicate these through their classroom interactions and instructional behaviours (such as the nature of instructional tasks and assessment

practices), then it is likely that some students will respond to the resulting teacher behaviours with decreased academic performance.

Student Perceptions

Students are active perceivers and mediators of classroom events. During the last decade there has been substantial research documenting the wide variety of student thinking (Weinstein, 1985; Wittrock, 1986). There is evidence that students construct detailed views of the ability and behaviour of themselves and their peers (Blumenfeld, Pintrich & Hamilton, 1986; Rohrkemper, 1985). Recent study of such student thought processes has brought a distinct perspective to the understanding of teachers' effects upon learning and the development, design and analysis of teaching. This perspective emphasises the critical role that a range of factors play in teaching, and in influencing student achievement. These factors include student perceptions of instruction, attention to the teacher, motivation, attributions for learning, affective processes as well as their ability to generate interpretations and understanding of instruction.

Research into student thought processes examines how teaching and teachers influence what students think, feel, believe, say or do that in turn affects their achievement. The central assumption of such research is that teaching influences student thinking and students' thinking mediates their learning and achievement. While it is possible that teaching can directly influence achievement, research on students' cognitive processes suggests that teaching can be better understood by knowing its effects on the learners' thoughts which mediate achievement.

Learning is not automatic, but rather occurs primarily through active information processing by students who must perceive and interpret teachers' actions for them to influence achievement. Those student thought processes that mediate achievement include an awareness or

perception of teaching, attention to it, and the motivation to learn. Therefore, research on students' cognitions and resulting perceptions promises to enhance understanding of teaching and its outcomes by providing information about the learning process as it is experienced by the learners.

Student perceptions research has identified the role that teaching plays in influencing student thinking, and the mediating role of student thinking in learning and achievement. This cognitive dimension is an inherent part of Brophy and Good's model of the teacher expectancy effect, where student perception of differential teacher behaviour is necessary if the expectancy effect is to occur. If some Year 8 students perceive teacher behaviours to communicate a lower level of academic expectations than they have previously experienced, then it seems likely that some students will respond to this by performing at a level below potential academic performance. It is suggested that student perceptions of lower teacher expectations will encourage students to respond by adopting learning goals and approaches which constitute what Henderson and Dweck (1990) have described as "maladaptive" patterns of motivational behaviour. Students demonstrating such behaviour avoid challenge and have low levels of persistence when confronted by difficult learning situations. Henderson and Dweck suggest that this pattern of behaviour can have profound negative effects on cognitive performance.

Theories of Achievement Motivation

Motivational concepts are traditionally used to account for the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of behaviour. Motivation may be seen as that factor which causes or helps to cause something to happen. A large number of factors may affect a student's level of motivation to succeed at an academic task. Most approaches to motivation

fit within Feather's expectancy x value theory (1982). This theory holds that the effort that an individual is prepared to expend on a task is a product of both the extent to which they expect to be able to perform the task successfully if they apply themselves, and the degree to which they value those rewards that will ensue from successful task performance. Such theories of motivation imply that teachers need to help their students appreciate the value of school activities and to allow opportunities for success in these activities when reasonable effort is applied. In a classroom setting, students who are engaged in self-regulated learning activities are able to achieve success because they know how to go about learning, can adapt their strategies if they encounter difficulties and have experienced the rewards of learning for its own sake (Good & Tom, 1985).

Learned Drive Theories

Contemporary achievement motivation theories have their roots in the learned drive model of motivation which posited that students' behaviour will be influenced by a natural desire to succeed and to avoid failure. Learners' levels of motivation towards success would depend upon how they resolved this conflict. They may develop the confidence to work hard toward gaining success (and risk failure) or may direct their energies towards avoiding failure (limiting their chances of achieving success). This would depend on learners' estimates of the chances of gaining some level of accomplishment and the value attached to possible outcomes of the behaviour.

Attribution Theory

The principles of attribution theory (Weiner, 1979) guided a reinterpretation of Atkinson's learned-drive theory (1964). Attribution

theory assumes that individuals' perceptions of the causes of their success or failure influence the quality of their future achievement. According to Weiner (1985) there is a basic human tendency to attribute the causes of success or failure so that the learner can deal effectively with a situation when it next occurs. Success or failure may be attributed to factors such as ability, luck, level of effort, or task difficulty. Weiner's model recognised three dimensions of causality to be controllability, locus of control and stability. Weiner (1985) argues that the underlying dimensions of the attributions are the most important determinant of achievement behaviour. Over time the attributions that learners form for a particular success or failure become cognitions which influence both their willingness to attempt similar tasks and the quality of future achievements. Causal attributions made by students affect their motivation toward future efforts. The more often students meet with failure the more likely it becomes that their confidence and motivation will decrease and the more likely failure becomes. The major focus on achievement dynamics in the attribution model is the role of effort. Because of the widespread belief that effort is modifiable by the actions of teachers, student effort is considered central to achievement.

Causal attributions have significant consequences on students' expectations and emotional reactions. Performance expectations usually rise following success and fall following failure when a stable attribution for past performance is made. Outcomes attributed to unstable causes do not have clear implications for the future performance of similar tasks. Motivational research suggests that effort attributions are the most productive for future learning because of the implications they have for future performance expectations. Effort is the one cause that is under the control of the learner. Students who attribute past negative outcomes to lack of effort may realistically expect to be successful in the future if they

exert effort. When students attribute failure to a lack of ability they are unlikely to expect to be successful at similar future tasks because ability is fixed. It is also important for students to make effort attributions when they are successful so that they realise the importance of effort. If students attribute success to ability only, they may come to believe that effort is not necessary for success risking low achievement on future tasks.

Learned helplessness (Dweck, 1986) is an extreme example of maladaptive behaviour which results from students attributing failure to factors beyond their control. Students who have experienced consistent failure develop a belief that there is nothing that they can do to avoid future failure. They typically attribute failure to lack of ability, exert little effort on academic tasks and give up easily when they experience difficulty. Learned helplessness is not confined to low achieving students and may be exhibited by students performing at a satisfactory level. This suggests that beliefs about the causes of academic performance are relevant to the optimal achievement of all students (Stipek, 1985).

Different causal attributions will also affect learners' emotional responses in achievement situations (Weiner, 1985, 1986). Some emotions may function solely as a result of the outcome (for example students may feel happy when they are successful and sad when unsuccessful). Weiner argues that in other situations, emotions are linked with attributions. Students may feel surprised when they attribute success or failure to luck, grateful when they attribute success to the help of another person and guilty if they attribute failure to lack of effort. Pride and shame are emotional responses to internal attributions. Students who attribute their success to hard work are likely to feel proud when they achieve positive outcomes while students who believe that their success was due to the assistance of someone else are unlikely to feel proud of themselves. When failure is attributed to internal causes such as lack of effort or ability

the most likely emotional response is shame. In contrast the student who attributes lack of success to external factors such as distractions or interference is less likely to experience feelings of shame in response to failure.

The emotional responses to success and failure attributions have important implications for the classroom setting. Anticipation of pride may sustain students' efforts on a difficult task and the anticipation of feeling ashamed may inhibit others' efforts in attempting or persisting with a task (Weiner, 1985). Covington and Omelich (1984) report findings which support the link between attributions, emotional responses and future effort.

Social Cognitive Theories of Motivation

Covington's (1984b) self worth theory of motivation draws heavily on the work of Weiner (1979, 1985, 1986) in the field of attribution theory and adds a cognitive dimension to earlier learned drive theories of motivation. Both theories share the view that achievement behaviour can be most meaningfully conceptualised in terms of self-perceptions of causality but self-worth theory includes a motivational component. According to Covington, student achievement behaviour is best understood in terms of attempts to sustain a reputation of competency and self worth. This assumes that individuals are most motivated by the desire to demonstrate their ability and establish their worth. Individuals will therefore avoid situations where they believe they are unlikely to succeed in an effort to protect their feelings of self-worth. Self-worth theory stresses the importance of learners' perceptions of their ability in developing achievement motivation and the likelihood of success.

Achievement motivation theory has demonstrated that children, especially older children, recognise and value ability as the greatest

determinant of achievement despite teacher reinforcement of effort over ability. If the strongest motive to achieve is to establish and maintain a sense of self worth then the best way for a student to do this is to demonstrate ability and accomplish competence at a given task. Effort is seen to play an important role in the individual's ability to influence performance but there is the danger that an individual who applies a great deal of effort and still fails will have no alternative but to view failure to be the result of a lack of ability. The development of a self-perception of low ability increases feelings of guilt and humiliation and leads to the development of expectation of failure in other related situations and/or tactics to avoid potential failure situations.

Cognitive theories of achievement motivation involve a developmental consideration. Research evidence suggests that there is a progressive shift from an early effort/ability equivalency to a value system that emphasises ability (Stipek, 1993). This would seem to arise from the developing capacity for adultlike reasoning in young children and the introduction of competition into classroom life. Older students and young adults have been shown to perceive ability as the dominant causal factor in achievement (Ames & Ames, 1981). Ability valuation is held to be important in the classroom as a major predictor of who will learn the fastest and hence who will be selected to learn more. For older students being motivated is threatened by the possibility of humiliation should they fail after trying hard on a task. Often this conflict is settled by the use of failure avoiding strategies.

Paton, Walberg and Yeh (1973) found that many minority students in high school felt that they had the ability to learn but believed that luck determined academic achievement. These students believed that although they had the ability to learn, some external factor, usually a person, hindered them from learning in school. A related finding was

reported by Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer and Wisenbaker (1977) who reported that the strongest variable related to the variance in achievement was the belief held by elementary school students that it was futile to pursue success in school. The attributions that students make about their sense of achievement and the control over destiny they experience in school seem to be powerful cognitive processes that mediate school performance.

Motivational thought patterns can differentiate high and low achievers in school and can predict learning from teaching. Not only can motivational factors predict school achievement but importantly, they can suggest ways in which teaching processes influence student thought processes that mediate achievement. Such theories of achievement motivation may be a contributory explanatory factor of student behaviour during the process of transition from primary to secondary school.

Student Perceptions of Teacher Expectations

Students' perceptions about their teachers, teaching processes and differential teaching behaviours seem to mediate their achievement in school, particularly from about the age of seven when students begin to develop more abstract and deeper perceptions of people based on consistent qualities that transcend observable behaviour. Students discriminate differential teacher behaviour in the classroom, in particular differential teacher responses to high and low achievers (Cooper & Good, 1983; Weinstein & Middlestadt, 1979). Cooper and Good reported that students for whom teachers had high expectations described themselves as receiving less frequent criticism and more frequent praise than did students for whom teachers held low expectations.

It is clear that students perceive expectations held by teachers and differentiated classroom treatment given to high and low achievers. The

differential treatments may induce variations in both self concepts of ability and attributional patterns among students. Wittrock (1986) suggested that the teacher expectancy effect would not be found by studying whole classrooms because teachers only produce the effect with those students who perceive differential and inappropriate treatment from teachers. Therefore, the teacher expectancy effect is best investigated by exploring individual student's perceptions of differential teacher treatment.

Relationship between teacher expectations and student perceptions.

There is a weight of evidence to support the existence of the teacher expectancy effect. The relationships between the factors affecting the formation of teacher expectations and the teacher's responses are complex and vary greatly from one teacher to another. However, the consequences of the different expectations that teachers hold for students in terms of learning opportunities and self expectations appear to be the intermediate links between student-teacher interaction patterns and student achievement.

Students' views of themselves compared to their peers are important determinants of their academic performance and motivation (Levine, 1983), and student mediational processes may themselves be affected by various structural and motivational differences among classes and schools (Marshall & Weinstein, 1984; Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984). Marshall and Weinstein suggested that there are six sets of classroom features that communicate differential expectations to students: a) the task structure, b) grouping practices, c) feedback and evaluation procedures and information about ability, d) motivational strategies, e) locus of responsibility for learning (teacher vs student), and f) the quality of teacher-student relationships. Rosenholtz and Simpson emphasise four features that

overlap substantially with those of Marshall and Weinstein. These are task differentiation, student grouping, student autonomy and formal performance evaluations.

An individual student's belief that success in school is possible is one of the most important factors related to school achievement (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Skinner, Wellborn & Connell, 1990). Additionally, the teacher expectancy effect is dependent on the student's ability to perceive the teacher's expectations and subsequent differential treatment of students in the class (Brophy, 1983; Dusek, 1985; Weinstein, 1983, 1985). When student motivation is considered it has been found that the learner's attributions about the causes for their successes and failures influence their interest and persistence in learning in school (Corno & Mandinach, 1983; Platt, 1988; Weiner, 1985). Success in school enhances motivation primarily when students attribute their results to their own effort, rather than to other people or factors outside their control.

Eder (1981) found that in some classrooms teachers provided less educational opportunity for those students who were believed to be less capable than peers judged to be more capable. Students' academic experiences depend not only on which teacher they have, but on factors such as length of instructional time and quality and quantity of assigned work which may result from the teacher's beliefs about individuals and groups of students. Teachers' actions resulting from their beliefs about students' ability levels may directly affect student academic performance through the provision or restriction of academic opportunities, but students also interpret the behaviour of the teacher towards themselves and other students. Students who perceive and interpret differentiated teacher behaviour demonstrate changes in motivation and effort. Students may experience the instruction that they receive in a way that is different to that intended by the teacher. It is the students' perceptions of

teaching that influence subsequent learning and achievement. According to Wittrock (1986) both teacher behaviour and the interpretation of this behaviour by classroom participants are important determinants of classroom performance.

Good (1981) asserted that certain students will learn to become intellectually passive as a result of differential feedback they receive from the teacher. He found that over time low achieving students ask fewer questions than students operating at other achievement levels. Not all students in a class will experience the same environment, or educational materials that are appropriately different.

Student passivity.

Good (1981) identified a range of teacher behaviours that induced intellectual passivity in certain students. He observed that low achieving students were called on less, received less wait time, were given answers rather than prompts, received less praise for success and received greater criticism for failure. As low achieving students are less likely to answer correctly and more likely to experience public error they have to deal with high levels of ambiguity and risk when responding to teacher questions. As a result of this, these students learn that an effective coping strategy in this situation is to become passive. They become less involved in school work over time and the school environment can be shown to have an effect on student activity and participation rates.

Good, Slavings, Harel and Emerson (1987) found that the number of questions asked by low achieving students increased when the student moved into elementary or high school. These questions were predominantly non-academic, which suggests that these students were "learning the rules of a new academic context". This also suggests that these students have difficulty keeping up with the new academic role that

they are being required to adopt in the transition, and that they have to ask a large number of questions about requirements and procedures of the new context. Good et al. suggested that changes in the school environment, peer group or teachers may have motivated the students to explore different roles or to attempt to achieve new successes. Certain students may be motivated by this new setting but if teachers and other students do not reciprocate their efforts and if reasonable achievement is not forthcoming then these students will give up fairly quickly and regress radically in their classroom participation.

Low achieving students have been seen to elicit a wider variety of teacher expectations than other students. Good et al. (1987) have suggested that teachers may treat low achieving students differently over the course of the school year as they search for an approach that is successful. Similarly, when support structures and interventions are implemented, low achieving students often have an increased number of teachers who may use a variety of teaching approaches. Hence low achieving students are exposed to a variety of teaching approaches and teacher expectations. Student passivity is a likely outcome of such diverse treatment and expectations (Good et al., 1987). Being in a situation where they do not know what to do, or how to behave appropriately, low achieving students may learn to avoid initiations and wait for the teacher to structure their behaviour. To some extent it may be argued that students in secondary school receive similar treatment as they are taught by a number of teachers all of whom may use different teaching approaches.

The findings of Good et al. (1987), Mehan, Hertzwick, Combs & Flynn (1982) and Morine-Dersheimer (1985) support the idea that for some students the situation encountered on entry to secondary school may lead to students adopting passive behaviour patterns as they seek to respond to a variety of teacher expectations and teaching behaviours. The need to

learn new rules and procedures, and often different sets of rules for a number of teaching-learning situations in secondary school may result in some students avoiding initiations and allowing teachers to structure their behaviour in what may be an inferior manner to that previously exhibited in primary school.

It may also be that students respond to the secondary school situation in a way that leads them to reduce their efforts in an attempt to protect their sense of self worth. Researchers have proposed that when students expect a failure that will indicate their incompetence, they intentionally reduce effort so that failure can be attributed to this, rather than low ability (Covington, 1984, 1985; Covington & Beery, 1976; Covington & Omelich, 1979; Frankel & Snyder, 1978). Impaired performance has been found when students anticipate feedback that would indicate incompetence. Jagacinski and Nicholls (1990) suggested that students may reduce their effort because they have withdrawn their commitment to the task. Effort reduction may be one aspect of the process of disengagement from tasks when feedback indicates an individual's incompetence (Carver & Scheier, 1981; Klinger, 1975; Nicholls, 1984). As students become more certain that they are not competent at a given task, their commitment to demonstrating competence at that activity declines. Effort reduction would be accompanied by other indications of disengagement, such as devaluing the activity involved or questioning the validity of the task as an index of competence. Within a personal framework this could be seen as adaptive (Klinger, 1975) because students might protect their self esteem, but would not maintain a perception of high ability in that task situation. Pyszczynski and Greenberg (1983) found that subjects who anticipated failure on an ego-involving task tended to expend less effort on the tasks and were more likely to claim it was a bad day for taking the test than subjects who anticipated success. Wortman, Costanzo and Witt (1973)

found that students who failed reported expending less effort than successful students and indicated that it was less important for them to do well. It seems that students will withdraw or diminish their efforts to protect their own feelings of competence in difficult situations. Not trying and failing, is seen as better than trying and failing. Rather than risk the chance of unsuccessful performance in a situation where they have tried, students in secondary school may distance themselves from the situation and devalue effort and achievement.

Summary

This study proposes that secondary teachers hold certain expectations for the academic performance of incoming Year 8 students and that these expectations may be lower than those held for the same students by the Year 7 primary teachers. Teacher expectation research suggests that teachers may hold expectations for class groups as well as individual students. As a result of these lower academic expectations, teachers of Year 8 students may structure a learning environment that places fewer demands on students including less support for those students who require a high degree of interaction with the teacher to keep them on-task and working to their potential level. This is supported by Brophy (1983b) who suggests that teachers play a key role in determining the curriculum that students actually receive even in situations where there are clear curriculum guidelines and materials in place. If this is the case then it is possible that teachers holding lower expectations for certain students will present them with a different (lower level) curriculum from that officially in place in the school (and lower than that being experienced by other students). This may lead to students performing at a lower than potential academic level. It may be that it is not only the individual teacher who holds lower expectations for Year 8 students, but that the curriculum

encourages such thinking. The teacher's interpretation and implementation of the curriculum may exaggerate decreases in academic expectations from primary to secondary school.

From a motivational perspective teachers' interpretation and implementation of curriculum influenced by their academic expectations of Year 8 students may create classroom environments which cause students to behave in certain ways. Students may perceive aspects of the classroom environment and form subsequent cognitions about the significance of this for their own academic expectations and beliefs. They may also be denied opportunities to develop self-regulated learning processes and learning strategies, and the structure of the classroom may communicate clear achievement goals. All of these have been demonstrated to affect subsequent academic motivation.

In addition, the increased number of teachers with whom high school students have to interact in a classroom setting means that students must deal with a variety of teacher expectations. Raudenbush (1984) reported that teacher expectation effects were strongest at Year 7, the first year of junior high school for most students. It would seem that the effects are stronger when students are new to the institution and those who will be teaching them. Differentiation is likely to be high in secondary school as a result of the quantity of individualised teacher-student interactions. Previous research into teacher expectations (Good et al., 1987) supports this notion.

Many students may be unaware of these lower teacher expectations or may continue to work at their previous level. However, it would seem that certain students notice these lower expectations and respond to them by working at a lower standard than previously. It may be that these are students who exhibit the dependent participation style described by Good and Power (1976) and are especially susceptible in situations where they do

not receive high levels of teacher support and interaction. Research into student perceptions has demonstrated that students are aware of differential teacher expectations and treatment (Brophy, 1983; Dusek, 1985; Rosenthal, 1985; Weinstein, 1983, 1985) so it is likely that these students will notice the type of treatment that is being offered by the teacher and that they will make some sort of judgement regarding the expectations that the teacher holds for them.

On the basis of the findings of research into the effect of teacher expectations (Cooper & Good, 1983; Good et al., 1987; Weinstein & Middlestadt, 1979) if secondary teachers hold lower expectations for students at Year 8, then it is likely that some students will perceive these expectations and will reflect the teacher's expectations in lower academic performance. The effect of teacher expectations has been shown to be strongest when students are new to a situation. Therefore, it is likely that when students are new to the high school situation, teacher expectancy effects will be stronger and particularly salient for those students who take longer to learn the rules and norms of the new situation or who are particularly responsive to teacher actions.

It may also be that lower academic outcomes result from decreased student motivation, reflecting students' efforts to protect their sense of self worth. Students may hold school achievement in lower stead than previously, withdrawing their efforts on academic tasks in an attempt to protect themselves if they believe that they are unlikely to be successful. Students may consciously choose to adopt either performance or work avoidance goals to avoid personally challenging situations. If students lack the capacity to be self-regulating then they will be unable to adapt to the situation and will have few strategies to call upon other than work avoidance.

Conceptual Framework

The review of literature in the area of research into primary-secondary transition suggests that the degree of success of the transition may be affected by a number of factors. Individual student factors such as ability, general self concept, level of physical and social development, amount of knowledge about high school, and attitudes and expectations towards school in general and high school in particular may affect the degree of success with which the student makes the transition. Other student factors including participation style and aspects of motivation, including expectations, learning goals, attributions, self-perceptions of ability, and strategy use may also play a part in the student's resolution of the change in educational setting.

The student's ability to adapt to the new situation may be influenced by additional external factors. The beliefs that a student's family holds regarding the value of schooling along with the level of family support provided will play some part in the success of the transition. Similarly socio-economic status, the prevailing wider social culture, the nature and extent of school and community links and whether the student has siblings who attend the secondary school are likely to have an impact on the transition.

At the school level it seems likely that such organisational factors as transition programs and policies will affect the initial transition experiences of students. On arrival at secondary school, school culture reflected in structural factors including timetabling, assessment policies and practices, unit curriculum operation, staffing levels and policies, student involvement in the school and the provision of support structures seem likely to affect transition.

School contextual factors such as the size of the student and staff population, the size of the school grounds and buildings, the nature of the

surroundings, the degree of interaction with peers, the level of responsibility afforded to students, the academic culture or ethos of the school and the nature of individual subjects may also impact on students' ability to adapt successfully to a new educational environment.

At a classroom level, the expectations and beliefs held by the teacher for individuals and groups of students are likely to affect the nature and extent of feedback provided regarding academic performance and possibility of future success. The level of communication, teaching styles, and grading and assessment practices of individual teachers may also affect students' performance in the classroom. Personal attributes of teachers and the perceptions that teachers have of Year 8 students and their needs and abilities, may also affect the learning experiences that these students encounter and their success at secondary school.

Research into primary-secondary transition has focused on the surface level factors mentioned previously. There would seem to be a need to investigate the phenomenon of the transition experiences of those students who fail to make the change successfully. Evidence suggests the transition experience may be subject to a more sophisticated set of influences than the surface level factors studied by earlier research. A social psychological approach would most appropriately investigate these deeper influences by examining student perceptions. By understanding the students' perceptions of their experiences, and the meanings which they ascribe to the situation, it may be possible to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which students make sense of their experiences and the effects of this on motivation and achievement.

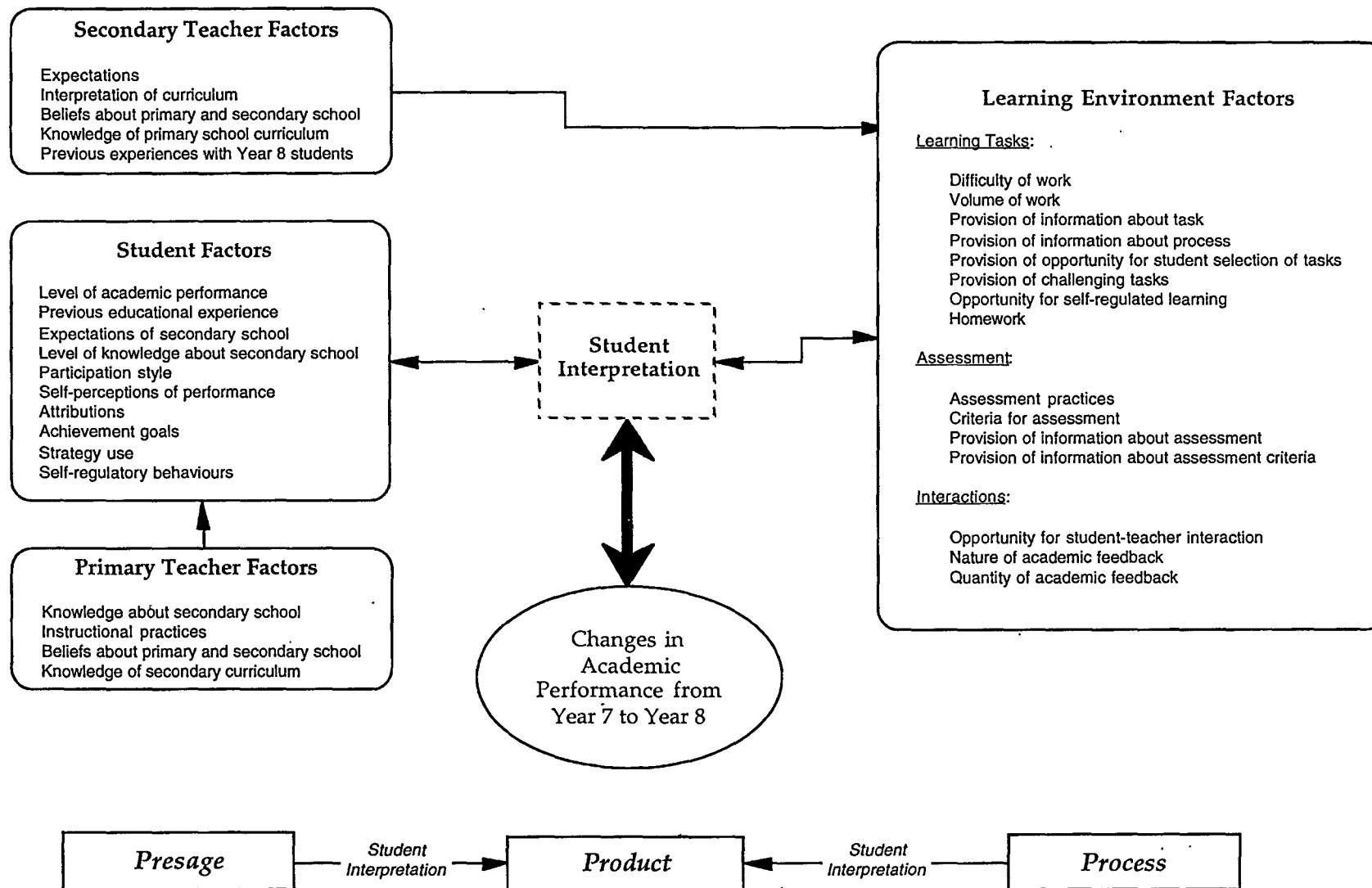
A focus of this study is the teacher expectancy effect (Brophy & Good, 1970), particularly the role played by student perceptions of the teacher behaviours which communicate teacher expectations for Year 8 students' academic performance. Students' interpretations and sense making of

teachers' expectations for their academic achievement were interpreted within a social cognitive motivational framework.

This study investigates student perceptions of the transition process and their experiences in the classroom teaching-learning environment. Students' experiences are described and analysed to discover the ways in which the primary-secondary transition experience affects their academic performance. Personal student factors relating to aspects of motivation are investigated along with the effect of interactions between students and structural, contextual and classroom level factors. The ways in which the student perceived and responded to the various factors and situations was considered to be germane to this study. Figure 1 presents a conceptual model of those factors that the present study investigated in relation to their influence on the academic performance of students during the transition from Year 7 to Year 8.

This study was concerned with exploring the ways in which students made sense of the transition from primary to secondary school, particularly the ways in which they responded in achievement related situations. The construct of achievement motivation including the role of student perceptions is central in explaining the ways in which students responded to the new academic situation. Achievement motivation is closely linked with self-regulated learning. If students are to be able to adapt appropriately to new academic situations then they need to possess the relevant self-regulatory processes that allow them to monitor their task performance and adjust it appropriately for the situation. Aspects of motivation as seen from a social cognitive perspective include self-perceptions of ability, attributions for success and failure, achievement goals, approaches to learning and learning strategies.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework for this study



These factors are all affected by learners' past performances and interpretations of performance situations and outcomes which in turn affect their expectations for future performance in similar situations. If individuals are to engage in a learning task then they must have some expectation that they will be able to achieve success on that task and they must value the task or outcome in some way (Covington, 1984). Learners' past experiences and subsequent attributions will affect the extent to which they expect to be successful on the task (Covington & Omelich, 1984, 1988). Another factor affecting students' expectations of success is their own perceptions of their ability. Again, these perceptions are constructed over time on the basis of experiences in similar learning situations. Individuals who believe that they have little ability are less likely to engage in or persist at a task than those who believe that they possess ability and are likely to be successful. Covington has suggested that in an effort to protect feelings of competence, individuals will choose to hold back effort and not engage in a task if they believe that they do not have the ability to be successful. An important contributing factor to learners' expectations of success is the amount of control they believe they have over their success and failure. This is a function of their attributions, whether they attribute success to controllable factors, their perceptions of ability and the range of learning strategies that they have at their disposal. Learners with a wide repertoire of strategies to tackle learning tasks and monitor their performance have a greater chance of completing the task successfully than learners who possess only a limited number of simple strategies. They are more able to adapt to unusual situations appropriately, and hence increase the likelihood that they will perform the task successfully.

The second dimension of the motivational equation is the extent to which the learner values the task itself, or the outcome of the task. There are obvious considerations here such as the nature of the task, and

whether it is intrinsically interesting or useful to the learner. There are also more subtle influences including the goals that the individual holds for learning. Learners who hold mastery goals are more likely to attempt tasks because they value the process of learning while those holding performance goals will engage in tasks in order to achieve grades. Students motivated to avoid work will simply do the bare minimum to avoid negative consequences. The approaches to learning held by students will also affect their willingness to engage in the task and ability to persist in the face of difficulty.

The relationship between student beliefs and performance is bi-directional. Students' beliefs about themselves as learners and the value of the learning task are the result of previous learning and performance. The beliefs that learners hold about themselves as learners will affect their performance, which will in turn, usually confirm their beliefs about themselves. So, learners who hold little expectation of success because they attribute their past lack of success to low ability are unlikely to be motivated to attempt a learning task. Similarly, students who believe that they have the ability to complete the task successfully but do not see any value in doing so are unlikely to be motivated to engage in the task.

Students' academic achievement may be the result of many factors. The present study proposed that any changes in the academic achievement of students in the study were the result of students' interpretations of the secondary educational environment and their responses to the new situation. It was suggested that students would interpret aspects of the new environment to construct a perception of what was important in secondary school and that some would respond to this perception by altering their achievement related behaviour in some way. Specifically, it was proposed that students would interpret teachers' messages about the nature of work, and standards of performance required at secondary school

in a way that would suggest that teachers would accept work of a lower standard than that which students were either familiar with, or capable of achieving. In addition, dealing with a number of teachers would make it more difficult for students to determine a level of acceptable work related behaviour and some students may withdraw, becoming passive. It was also suggested that this withdrawal of academic effort may be an affective response to situations in which students believe they may not be successful. Students may expend little effort on tasks or may trivialise or devalue the task so that lack of success becomes less of a threat to their self-perception of ability and competence. This situation may arise because teachers do not make their performance expectations clear to students which again may be magnified by students having to cope with different or unclear behavioural expectations and teaching styles from a number of teachers.

It may be that some students view beginning secondary school as a new start, a chance to wipe the slate clean and begin again. They may believe that in a new situation with new teachers who do not know their past performances and a wider range of classmates they have the opportunity to start afresh. These students may decide to try hard, believe that they can be successful if they do so, and adopt more positive learning goals. If they change their goals, expectations, beliefs, and attributions then they may be able to maintain or improve their performance as long as they have the necessary strategies to allow them to do these things. If they do not already have a repertoire of strategies, or if secondary classes are not conducted in a way that facilitates the development of strategies, (using either implicit or explicit instruction) then this will be difficult for them. If teachers hold low expectations for their performance and structure the learning environment and instructional tasks in ways that do not

encourage students to maintain these new goals and expectations, then little progress will be made.

The present study investigated the experiences of 24 "average" students as they moved from primary to secondary school. The focus of the study was the way in which students made sense of their experiences and the effect of these perceptions on changes in the various aspects of their achievement motivation related behaviour.

Conclusion

This chapter presented a description of the theoretical perspective which informed the present study. Social psychological principles guided the way in which the study was conducted, suggesting attention be paid to the interpretations and cognitions of the main participants during the transition from primary to secondary school. The ways in which students interpreted their experiences at secondary school and the resulting effects on their achievement motivation and academic performance were investigated. Analysis and interpretation of the results was informed by social cognitive theories of motivation.

The second part of this chapter presented the conceptual framework suggested for the present study. The factors investigated were derived from the theoretical underpinnings of the study. The social psychology assumptions suggested that the factors affecting the academic performance of students in the transition from primary to secondary school would be best studied from the perspective of the students involved. It was assumed that student perceptions mediate the events that occur in classrooms and subsequent learning. Additionally, the expectations of teachers affect the classroom environment that they create and their interactions with students. Students' perceptions of these will cause them to form expectations of their ability and chances of success, decide what is

important in the classroom, and construe the nature and process of learning that is required.

Social cognitive theories of motivation identify a range of motivational constructs that help to explain the reasons why students choose to engage in and persist at learning tasks and their subsequent achievement. The factors that were identified as salient in the situation were: students' expectations of secondary school; self-perceptions of ability; attributions for success and failure; use of strategies; achievement goal orientations and interpretations of teachers' messages about what was important at school.

CHAPTER FOUR

Method and Procedure

Introduction

This chapter describes the method used in the study, provides details of the sample selection process and includes a description of the primary schools and senior high school in this study. The research involved a twelve month study of Western Australian children in Year 7 of primary school and Year 8 of secondary school. The research design, including procedures for data collection and analysis are also described and justified. Issues of reliability and validity are identified and examined and the chapter concludes with a consideration of the generalisability of the study.

Restatement of the Purpose of the Study

This study sought to answer the following questions which related to the experiences of students as they made the transition from Year 7 of primary school to the first year (Year 8) of secondary school:

1. What changes occur in the academic achievement of average achieving students when they make the transition from primary to secondary school?
2. How do these students perceive the primary-secondary school transition experience?
 - i) What is the nature of these students' affective and cognitive responses in relation to their academic performance during the transition from primary to secondary school?

3. i) What school related factors appear to be implicated in changes in these students' academic performance from primary to secondary school?
- ii) What student related factors appear to be implicated in changes in these students' academic performance from primary to secondary school?

Research Design

The research questions guided the design of the study. Wherever possible the following recommendations from background literature were incorporated in the design of this study (Erickson, 1986; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Yin, 1989). Firstly, that research should use multiple sources of evidence. This should include a combination of subjective and objective data, and a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data which are mainly descriptive. This approach allowed the triangulation of data or corroboration of the same data gathered through different techniques. Secondly, that research should extend the collection of data over a period of time in order to trace operational links, and finally, an emphasis that the study of individual students is a worthwhile direction for educational research.

The study used a naturalistic approach which combined qualitative and quantitative research techniques as the two approaches enrich and complement each other. According to Miles and Huberman (1988):

Qualitative data . . . are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts. Within qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, assess local causality, and derive full explanations. (p. 15)

In the present study a case study approach was used to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena through the use of observation, the formulation of description and the seeking of patterns. These processes allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of reality as perceived by the group under study. Emphasis was placed on exploring student perceptions of the transition process. Student perceptions of transition were deemed important as they served to mediate (at least partially) the impact of the new school environment on student behaviour. Students' own definitions of the situation helped to determine their covert behaviour in that situation.

The epistemological assumptions that underpin the study are important and require explication as the theoretical base of a study will affect the findings that result from it. The theoretical framework of the study was described in Chapter Three and will be summarised here. In the broadest sense the study is informed by social psychology which seeks to "identify and interpret individual and environmental factors involved in interpersonal interaction" (Mc Millan, 1980, p. 2).

Social psychology focuses on individual behaviour and explains this phenomenologically, placing emphasis on the perception of individuals and how they see and interpret situations. Social psychology places emphasis on the affective and motivational aspects of an individual's behaviour. Feelings mediate between cognitive perceptions of events in the environment and behaviour. Social psychology pays attention to the group, particularly group processes and the effect of those in proximity to the individual. Finally, social psychology is concerned with explaining why people behave in similar ways.

The key beliefs underpinning this study reflect the principles of social psychology. The first is that an individual does not have to be physically present in order to influence the thoughts and actions of another. Second,

the focus of social psychology is clearly on the individual, and attention may be directed to the influence of individuals on each other within a group context. Third, social psychology is concerned not only with the behaviour but the cognitions of the individual.

Social psychology may be applied through perspectives, theory and method. It can provide a particular perspective from which an issue may be viewed. This perspective will draw attention to processes of interpersonal interaction. Within social psychology there will be a number of theories which seek to explain various phenomena. Theories can play a similar role to perspectives, directing attention, drawing together and organising information according to some pattern of interpretation. Theories provide the researcher with a means of organising seemingly disparate information into a coherent whole. The use of theories allows the researcher to predict the unknown and interpret what has been studied. The adoption of a particular theoretical system will direct attention towards particular questions and certain types of answers.

The research questions, methodology and analysis adopted in this study have been informed by the beliefs and assumptions described in the previous section.

Sample

Subjects.

According to Leedy (1989) "the population for the study must be carefully chosen, clearly defined, and specifically delimited in order to set precise parameters for ensuring discreteness to the population" (p. 142). The senior high school which was the focus of this study was selected because it represented typical government senior high schools. This study was conducted in an educational district (Education Department of Western Australia classification) in the Perth metropolitan area. Target

students were selected from Year 7 classes in feeder primary schools of one of the senior high schools within the district.

The senior high school selected as the target of this study was a large size school (population 1100), offering the Education Department's Unit Curriculum in lower school and Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) and Non Tertiary Entrance Score studies at post compulsory level (Years 11 and 12, age 15 plus). The student population was drawn from six feeder primary schools, four of which were used in the present study. Two feeder primary schools were not included in this study because these schools fed mainly to a different secondary school and many of the students attending these primary schools did not intend to attend the target secondary school. All of the schools used in the study were located in residential areas, drawing from upper working class and middle class socio-economic areas.

This study was not concerned with establishing generalisability across the state. Its aims were to provide a rich source of information about the experiences of the respective students, which may be used by others to determine the relevance of the findings to their own situation, and to develop a base on which further research could build. It was essentially concerned with exploring the experiences of a group of students and the meanings which they attached to their experiences in the context of primary-secondary transition.

Selection of target student group

In September 1991, the Ministry of Education's Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) tests in English and mathematics were administered to all Year 7 students in the four feeder primary schools. On the basis of the results of these tests a pool of students who were working at or above the appropriate level of the syllabus for Year 7 were identified. This corresponded to Phase 6/7 of the English syllabus (Ministry of Education,

1989) and Stage 7 of the mathematics syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1989). With the assistance of Year 7 teachers, six Year 7 students were selected from each school. A primary criterion for the selection of students in the sample was their intended high school destination. This was important to ensure that all of the students selected in the sample would enter the target senior high school in the following year. Teachers rated the sample students on a three point scale according to the teacher's beliefs about how well each student would adjust to high school. Where possible two students from each adjustment category were selected. Attempts were made to select equal numbers of males and females but the final selection included 15 females and nine males.

Six students were selected from each school although not all classes from each primary school were represented by equal numbers of students. One Year 7 class from a participating primary school was not involved in this study as they had been involved in another unrelated study over the past two years, and the school principal requested that they not participate. The final group of students involved in the study represent eight Year 7 classes from four primary schools. Table 1 presents data relating to selection of students by Year 7 class. Each class has been given an alphanumeric identifier to distinguish individual classes within schools.

Six case study students were selected after the second interview in Year 7. Criteria for selection included membership of the group of students in the study, the level of reflection demonstrated by students, their beliefs about school in general and secondary school in particular, and primary school teachers' predictions about their capacity to adapt successfully to secondary school. Attempts were made to achieve a gender balance in selection and to maintain equal representation from feeder primary schools. The final selection of cases included four girls and two boys representing eight classes from four feeder primary schools.

Table 1

Class of Origin of Target Students

Class	Teacher	Students (Initials)	N = 24	
			Male	Female
1A	M	3 NC FR TQ	1 M	2 F F
1B	F	3 SR RC JN	2 M M	1 F
2A	M	6 MF LH TI DE HJ KT	3 M M M	3 F F F
3A	M	2 JC MI	0	2 F F
3B	F	2 OI OD	1 M	1 F
3C	M	2 MD FN	1 M	1 F
4A	F	4 AD WD EL NI	1 M	3 F F F
4B	F	2 LN OT	0	2 F F

Background information.

Of the 24 target students 23 were Caucasian (six were of Eastern European descent), and one was of Asian descent. Four students came from homes where languages other than English were spoken and one of these was identified as having an ESL (English as a Second Language) problem. The sample remained intact in the second year of the study (1992) when the students were in their first year of high school. All subjects attended the same government senior high school but were in a range of different classes in different combinations, depending on the nature of their timetable. Analyses of the changes that occurred in the measures described below are based on this longitudinal sample.

Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted with the informed consent of the principals, teachers and students involved. Parental permission was obtained for student participation and all students were free to withdraw from the study if they wished. All data were stored securely and reported anonymously. Case study students were given a pseudonym to conceal their identity. Any information which may have allowed for the schools or individuals to be identified was not reported. Schools were provided with a summary of results. Documents relating to confidentiality are presented in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Preparatory investigation.

In the year prior to the commencement of this study preliminary data were gathered in a pilot study conducted in a similar context. Questionnaires (adapted from Garton, 1986) were administered to students prior to, and after the transition to Year 8. The initial questionnaires were

administered to Year 7 students in the last month of primary school and gathered data regarding students' concerns about the transition to secondary school, addressing academic, social and organisational issues. The follow up questionnaires were administered at the end of the first term of high school. Data regarding student perceptions of their remaining concerns about high school and the degree of success that they believed they had achieved in the transition process were collected. Data from the questionnaires were used to construct a description of the way in which students perceived the transition from primary to secondary school and to identify areas requiring further investigation (Kirkpatrick, 1990).

Twenty students were interviewed at the end of Year 7 and the beginning of Year 8 to elicit further information about their perceptions of the transition experience. The nine Year 7 teachers from the feeder primary schools and a sample of fifteen teachers from the secondary school involved in the pilot study met with the researcher to discuss their perceptions of the issues involved in the transition of students from primary to secondary school. The notes that resulted from interviews and discussions were used to guide the re-formulation of the questions for the present study, to guide the design of interview questions, and to identify conceptual areas which would guide data collection.

Procedures

The study began mid way through the sample's final year of primary school (Year 7). The data sets include classroom observations, teacher interviews, teacher ratings of student participation styles, student interviews, student self-ratings, student performance on MSE tests and the administration of a transition questionnaire to all Year 7 and subsequent Year 8 students. Figure 2 presents the research plan and identifies significant data collection methods and dates.

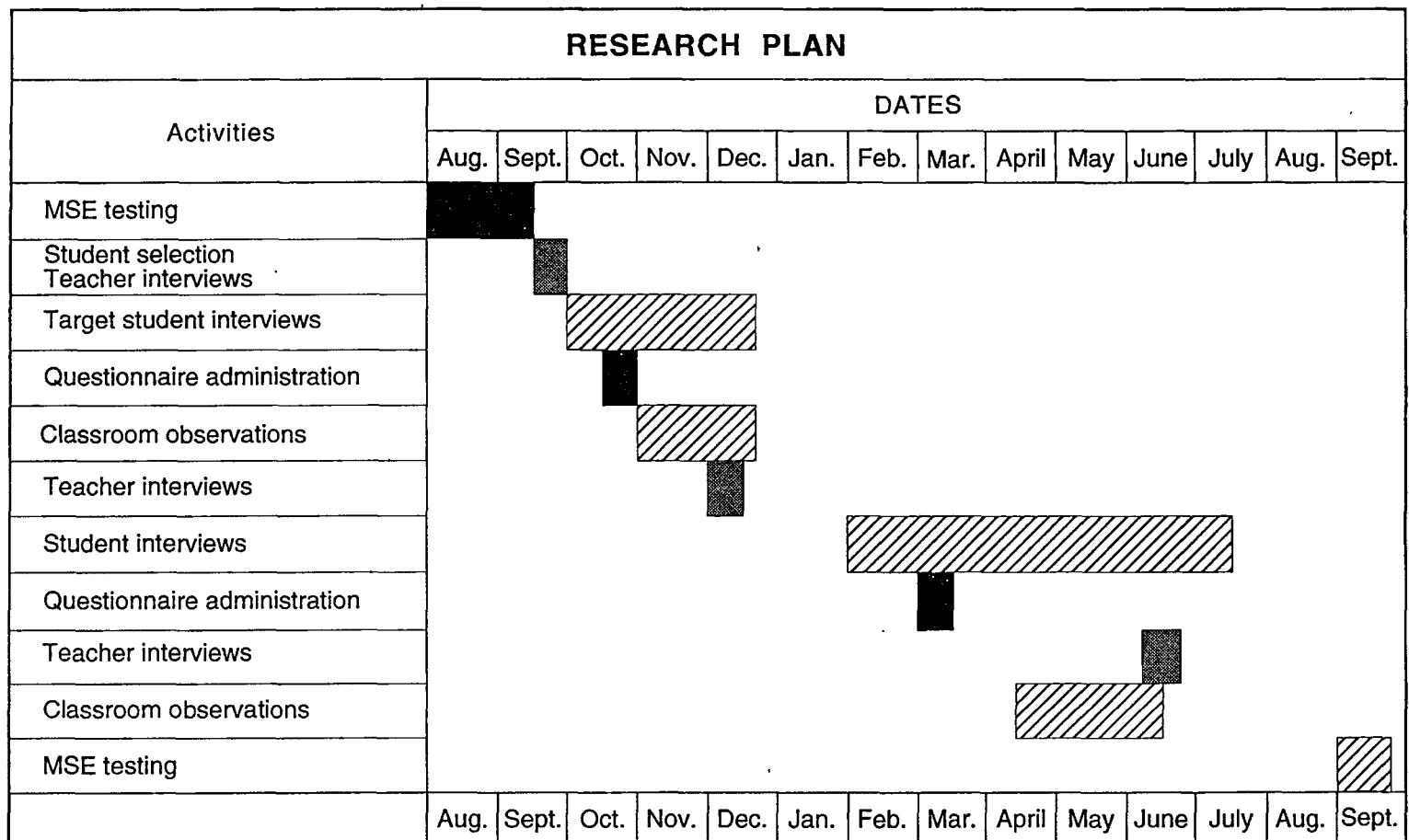


Figure 2: Research Plan

 All students
  Teachers
  Target Students

Year seven.

Monitoring Standards in Education (MSE) tests.

MSE tests in mathematics and English were administered to all Year 7 students to provide information relating to their current performance in relation to the syllabus. The MSE test performance data were used to select students for inclusion in the study and provided empirical data to describe students' academic performance at Year 7, allowing for comparison with Year 8 performance. Copies of the MSE tests for English and mathematics which were administered in Year 7 are presented in Appendix B.

Classroom observations.

Eight Year 7 classes participated in the study. Each class was observed for four half days over the final term of the school year. The observations focused on the nature and organisation of learning tasks and experiences, classroom management and organisation, feedback and instruction. In addition, the target students were observed with respect to student-student interactions, teacher-student and student-teacher interactions, and task engagement. Field notes were made of these observations and a summary is presented in Appendix C. Classroom observations are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Teacher interviews.

In October the teachers with major responsibility for teaching the Year 7 classes were interviewed. These interviews elicited information about the teachers' beliefs about secondary school, and the skills and knowledge that students required in order to be academically successful in the secondary setting. In addition teachers described their own instructional beliefs and practices in the major subject areas. The interview schedule and a summary of responses are presented in Appendix D.

In November Year 7 teachers were asked to complete a checklist identifying participation characteristics of each target student. This was used to classify each student's participation style. Additionally, teachers rated each of the student's academic performance in mathematics, English and general academic performance as well as a rating of social development. Teachers' responses were probed to elicit their reasoning for making decisions and judgments. The checklist of participation characteristics and the student academic performance rating form are presented in Appendix D.

Questionnaires.

Towards the end of fourth term all Year 7 students in the four participating primary schools completed a questionnaire which gathered data concerning students' knowledge of secondary school, their expectations of secondary school and of their performance there, and their beliefs and concerns about student life in secondary school. The main purpose of this questionnaire was to provide general information to the primary and secondary schools about all students' expectations of secondary school. Questionnaire responses were anonymous so it is not possible to report the individual responses of the students involved in this study. Data from this questionnaire were used to guide the formulation of interview questions but do not specifically answer the research questions and hence will not be fully reported in this study. The questionnaire and a summary of responses are presented in Appendix E.

Student interviews.

Target students were interviewed three times between September and December in their final year of primary school. Interview questions reflected conceptual areas from the questionnaire and elicited information

about students' expectations and beliefs about secondary school, their attitude towards school and teachers, their approaches to tasks and their attributions for their own academic performance. During the interview students completed a self-rating of academic performance in English, mathematics, general academic performance and social standing. Attention was paid to their reasons for placing themselves at various positions of the scale and the types and source of information that they used in making their decisions. Interview schedules for the three Year 7 interviews and the self-rating form are presented in Appendix F. Student interview responses are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Year eight.

Student interviews.

Data collection at secondary school level began in the students' first week of high school when all students were interviewed about their initial impressions of high school. Subsequent interviews took place on two other occasions in first semester. These interviews focused on students' perceptions of the demands of secondary school, the nature of instructional tasks, assessment structures and criteria, teachers' roles and criteria for success. Students were asked about their attributions for academic outcomes in real and hypothetical situations, their achievement goals and their use of adaptive learning behaviours. Interview schedules for the three Year 8 interviews are presented in Appendix G. Student interview responses are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Teacher interviews.

In May (second term Year 8) sixteen Year 8 teachers were interviewed. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and all teachers taught at least one of the students in the group. Teachers represented the subjects

mathematics, English, science, social studies, business education, art, and home economics. These interviews elicited information about the teachers' academic expectations and beliefs about Year 8 students, and the skills and knowledge that students required in order to be academically successful in the secondary setting. In addition, teachers described their own instructional beliefs and practices in their subject domains. The interview schedule and a summary of responses are presented in Appendix H. Teacher interview responses are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

At the beginning of second term the English and mathematics teachers of the target students rated each student's academic performance in the respective subject area. Ratings for general and social performance were not sought as teachers in the interviews had suggested that they did not believe that they could make accurate judgments outside their subject domain. Teachers were also asked to note any relevant comments about students' performance or behaviour on the rating form. The Year 8 teacher rating form is presented in Appendix H. Teacher ratings of student performance are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Classroom observations.

Classroom observations were conducted on a number of occasions during first semester. It was not possible to observe all students in a classroom setting for all subjects so preference was given to observing students in classes in the major academic subjects especially mathematics and English. There were instances where more than one target student was in the same class for observation. Observations and descriptions focused on instructional and managerial aspects of the classroom, the nature of the task and teacher-target student interactions. These data were gathered through the use of field notes. A summary of classroom

observations is presented in Appendix I and these observations are discussed in Chapters Five and Six.

Questionnaires.

At the end of first term all Year 8 students completed a questionnaire which measured their perceptions of secondary school and any continuing concerns about high school. Again, the main purpose of the administration of this questionnaire was to provide general information about the transition experience for the primary and secondary schools involved in the study. As they do not specifically answer any of the research questions the results of this questionnaire will not be reported here. Items from this questionnaire were reflected in the interview questions directed to target students. The questionnaire and a summary of results are presented in Appendix J.

Monitoring Standards in Education tests.

In October, fifty Year 8 students, including the target students, completed a parallel version of the Year 7 MSE test in mathematics and the 1990 version of the MSE English tests. These tests provided empirical data about students' academic performance which is discussed in Chapters Five and Six. A copy of the mathematics test used at Year 8 is presented in Appendix K.

Research instruments.

The following research instruments were used to collect data in this study: a) teacher and student interviews, b) MSE tests for mathematics and English, a measure of students' performance against the standards described for Year 7 of the relevant syllabus; c) teacher and student rating scales, a measure of teachers' and target students' perceptions of their own

academic performance; d) a measure of students' attributions for success and failure on academic tasks; e) a measure of students' use of adaptive strategies in problem learning situations; f) a questionnaire measuring students' expectations and knowledge of secondary school administered prior to transition; and g) a questionnaire to measure students' experiences at secondary school. Each of these instruments is described in the following section.

Teacher and student interviews.

Semi-structured individual interviews were used in order to document the perceptions of students and teachers. Interviewing offers important advantages over questionnaires when considering perceptions because it allows for informants to provide open and spontaneous viewpoints (Gay, 1991). "The interview is most appropriate for asking questions of a personal nature." (Gay, p.112) Interviews have the potential to yield higher quality data since they allow the researcher to identify and address informants' misunderstandings and to probe inadequate and vague responses. According to Judd, Smith and Kidder (1991) interviews allow for the context for inquiry and question order to be controlled.

The primary data of in-depth interviews are quotations (Patton, 1980). Audio-tape recording provided a permanent verbatim account of the interview thereby increasing the accuracy of data collection and allowing the researcher to be more attentive to informant's verbal and non-verbal behaviours. The researcher was able to monitor responses for contradictions, ambiguities, inconsistencies or misunderstandings and anticipate follow-up and probing questions.

Both student and teacher interviews were guided by a schedule, developed for the context in which the informant operated. The schedules included questions designed to fulfil descriptive, structural and

contrast functions (Spradley, 1979). Samples of informants' language were collected through descriptive questions, their organisation of knowledge was probed using structural questions and contrast questions provided information relating to the meanings that informants ascribed to the terms they used.

The schedule for the interviews was consistent for all student and teacher informants respectively. Interviews opened with an explanation of the purpose and the format that would be followed. Informants' confidentiality was reinforced and permission to audio-tape record was requested. In the first interview for each informant a number of basic, non-interpretive demographic questions were posed. These served to "warm " the informant to the interview, helping them to feel at ease and to establish rapport between interviewer and subject. In subsequent interviews a number of non-interpretive questions about recent events were posed to fulfil a similar purpose.

Questions throughout the interview were semi-structured and open-ended. Some structuring was imposed to ensure that no areas relevant to the study were omitted (Donaghy, 1984). Throughout the interviews the researcher summarised the facts which had emerged. This provided informants with an opportunity to correct information that may have been unclearly expressed and to elaborate or explain points that may have been unclear. Interviews closed with a reminder about the scheduling of the next interview and thanking informants for their participation.

Interviews were also used to collect information relating to aspects of student and teacher behaviour which had been identified as salient in the literature. Interview questions related to these issues and procedural supports were used to guide subjects through related cognitive activities. Teacher and student perceptions of students' academic performance, students' attributions for success and failure on academic tasks and use of

adaptive strategies in problem learning situations were measured during various interviews. These are described in detail in the following section.

Monitoring Standards in Education tests.

Quantitative data regarding student academic performance were gathered using the Western Australian Ministry of Education's MSE tests in the subjects mathematics and English. These tests were administered in September of Year 7 and October of Year 8. Assessment materials in the MSE program are closely matched to the Ministry of Education's mathematics and language syllabus statements for Year 7.

The English tests measured students' performance in reading and writing and the tasks were assessed at Phase 6-7 of the English Language K-7 Syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1989). In the writing test students were given the option of writing either a report, a letter or a story related to the same stimulus text. Reading was assessed by means of a written retell and cloze assessment task set at an appropriate level of difficulty for Phase 6 - 7 of the syllabus.

Mathematics performance was assessed in relation to Stage 6 of the Learning Mathematics: Pre-primary to Stage 7 syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1989) which is organised into three strands: measurement, space and number. The Year 7 assessment activities were centred around a school's anniversary celebrations. Students solved problems related to various activities which included a fete and a sports carnival (Ministry of Education, 1991, 1993).

A parallel version (1992) of the mathematics test was administered in Year 8. An equating study mapped the 1990 MSE data on to the 1992 scale making it possible to compare student achievement on both tests. However, the parallel version of the English tests for reading and writing were not administered. Significant changes had been made from 1990 to

1992 and the tasks for both reading and writing measured different aspects of performance. Following consultations with the leader of the MSE project and the Ministry's Consultant for English it was decided to re-use the 1990 versions of the English test.

As materials were based on predefined curriculum "benchmarks" which described what the majority of students in the year should be achieving, it was possible to report students' levels of achievement without reference to prior expectations. The assessment materials gave students the opportunity to perform the tasks in a realistic setting, choose their own strategies and approaches to tasks, and to give answers in their own words. Assessments covered not only minimum competency but a range of skills such as higher order thinking.

Participation style checklist.

Year 7 teachers completed a checklist of the characteristics of each of the participation style categories developed by Good and Power (1976) for each of the target students. Frequencies were calculated and the student's participation style was determined on the basis of the category characteristics which appeared most frequently. The checklist is presented in Appendix D.

Student academic performance rating form.

A ten point rating scale was used to collect teachers' and students' perception of target students' ability. Year 7 teachers and each target student marked the point on the scale which they believed best represented that student's performance in relation to his/her peers for English, mathematics, general academic performance (all academic subjects excluding mathematics and English) and social performance. The rating forms were adapted from similar instruments used by Stipek and

Tannat (1984), and Mitman and Lash (1989) to measure students' self perceptions of ability or competence. The rating forms were used in conjunction with students' verbalisations about the reasons why they believed that their level of competence was as they had indicated and the evidence that they had used to reach such conclusions. Wigfield and Harold (1992) suggest that a weakness of much previous research has been its focus on generalised perceptions of ability. The assessment of students' perceptions of their ability in specific subject domains differentiates this study from earlier work in the area.

Each student was also asked to nominate other students whom they believed were performing at the same, higher and lower levels as themselves and to mark those students' performance level on the scale (Marsh, Smith & Barnes, 1983). The rating form functioned as a procedural support guiding subjects through questions similar to those posed by previous researchers (Eccles, 1980; Stipek & Gralinski, 1991). This rating form and supporting questions from the interview schedule are presented in Appendix F.

In Year 8 students again completed a ratings form on which they marked the points at which they believed they were performing in relation to their peers for English and mathematics. The Year 8 English and mathematics teachers of the target students completed the same rating form for each student whom they taught. Appendix G presents the Year 8 version of the student self-perception of performance rating form and the teacher rating form is presented in Appendix H.

Motivational research supports the use of students' ratings of their own perceptions of ability (Stipek, 1993). Children's self perceptions of ability become more accurate as they get older (Marshall, Weinstein & Bratessani, 1984; Newman, 1984; Nicholls, 1978, 1979) and correlate more strongly with external indices. By the time children reach high school they

are more likely to base their judgements on social comparison (Feldlaufer, Midgley & Eccles, 1988), and to place their achievement in a broader social context (Stipek, 1993) rather than comparing their performance with only their classmates.

Attributions for success and failure response form.

Students completed a measure of their attributions for academic success and failure in Year 7 and Year 8. The same form was used in both years. Students were asked to describe an academic situation in which they had been successful and one in which they had been unsuccessful. They then chose from all pairwise combinations of four common performance attributions: ability, task difficulty, luck and effort. Each attribution appeared three times, so scores for each attribution ranged from 0 to 3 depending on the number of times it was selected. This method of assessing attributions has been used by McMahan (1973), Stipek and Hoffman (1980) and Mason and Stipek (1989). The attributions response form is presented in Appendix F. In addition to selecting an attributional explanation for their success or failure, subjects were asked to explain why they thought they had achieved the result they had. Currin and Harich (1993) argue that it is important to elicit the attributor's reasoning for academic outcomes rather than impose the researcher's explanation. In this situation, the collection of data that included the subject's perception of the reasons for academic outcomes and subject selection of attribution from established reasons allowed for confirmation of the salience of the attributions presented in the literature for this group of students.

Use of adaptive strategies form.

Students were asked to describe a situation in which they had been "stuck" or were unable to continue with their work and to describe their

typical response to that situation. They were then presented with a "problem" and asked to select their likely response to "getting stuck" on that problem. Choices were made from paired combinations of: ask for help (from teacher or friend); use a strategy of some type (such as, remember a previous similar example, or break the task down into steps); and give up. Students could score between 0 and 2 for each response depending on how many times it was chosen. They were also asked to state whether their response would be different in different contexts (such as a different type of problem or a different class). Alternate versions of the strategy response form featuring different problems were administered to students in Year 7 and Year 8 and are presented in Appendices F and G.

The strategy response forms were used as procedural supports to guide subjects through a retrospective report of their behaviour when they encountered a problem and a description of their responses in problem situations. The provision of a specific problem which subjects worked through, allowed the use of think aloud protocols (Ericsson & Simon, 1981) which identified specific responses and was used to confirm students' retrospective reports of their responses in problem situations.

Student interviews.

Prior to transition, three interviews were conducted with target Year 7 students to gather data regarding their perceptions of the transition from primary to secondary school and their expectations of potentially making a successful transition. Schedules for interviews conducted at Year 7 are presented in Appendix F.

Follow up interviews were conducted with target students at strategic times after transition (immediately after beginning Year 8, towards the end of first term and at the end of first semester). These interviews gathered data regarding the students' perceptions of the success of their transition

from primary to secondary school. Data were gathered in three major strands: the students' perceptions of the degree of success with which they handled their new academic, social and physical surroundings, the factors that students believed to be responsible for their success and the messages which students had interpreted from various sources regarding factors of importance at secondary school. Interview schedules are presented in Appendix G.

Field notes.

Field notes were kept regarding the school context, particularly organisational aspects and any particular support which was given to assist students with the transition process. Field notes were collected on all visits to the primary and secondary schools. This included visits to discuss the study with administrative and teaching staff and all data collection visits.

Observational records.

All Year 7 classes were observed for four half days each when detailed observational records were maintained. Summaries of classroom observations are presented in Appendix C. Observations focused on the behaviours of the target students, classroom interactions, and instructional practices. These records were intended to provide data to allow the construction of a "picture" of the primary school classroom environment and to provide the researcher with relevant information which could be used in interview situations to probe subjects' responses and to provide personal situations which could be used to explore students' achievement related cognitions.

Classroom observations were also performed in the secondary school, observing a range of classes, particularly in the subjects English and

mathematics. Summaries of these classroom observations are presented in Appendix I. Detailed notes were made of the classroom interactions, instructional practices, target student behaviour and the day to day life of the secondary classroom. These notes provided the basis for further probing in the interview situation and allowed the researcher to refer to specific classroom examples when eliciting information about students' academic performance and achievement related cognitions.

Data Analysis

Analysis of interview data.

With the consent of the students and teachers all interviews were audio tape recorded. The interview tapes were transcribed verbatim on the day of the interview. In the case of student interviews all interviews were transcribed and students' responses to the central questions were separated from the main text and filed together. Emergent response categories were identified by the researcher and tables of frequencies were created to represent the data.

Initial classification was double checked to ensure the adequacy of the assigned categories and to identify quotes that did not align themselves with concepts from the literature. Unclassified segments were assigned new classifications. Theoretical memos recorded the researcher's lines of reasoning as emergent themes appeared (Strauss & Corbin, 1987). The resulting classifications were then compared with the relevant literature. This was followed by discussion of categories and relationships between them with colleagues familiar with the conceptual areas. This process was intended to identify central themes and the relationships between emergent concepts and categories. Through a process of continual refinement and analysis, the emergent concepts were established.

Categories were checked against each other resulting in the collapsing of some, and separation and renaming of others. Those categories considered central to the topic were isolated and the relationships between each of the categories and their properties in relation to the core category were systematically examined.

Students were encouraged to speak about their thoughts and feelings about the transition experience to allow their implicit theories about their academic performance to emerge. By collating comments and causal explanations as identified by the students it was possible to discern consistent components and lines of reasoning in the students' perceptions about the transition experience and their perceptions of the teacher and classroom. Their beliefs about factors affecting their academic performance and lines of reasoning about why things happen the way they did in class emerged. Examination of students' conceptions about the transition experience provided evidence to construct a description of their experiences during the process. This follows the guidelines for the analysis of case study evidence using explanation building suggested by Yin (1989).

Interviews were conducted with eight primary school teachers. In this case the interviews were recorded and transcribed and additional procedural supports were used to collect data. These were later used to structure the response categories of teachers. Interviews with secondary teachers were also audio taped and transcribed and the procedural supports guided categorisation of responses. Additional emergent response categories were identified by the researcher and frequencies of responses in all categories were used to represent these data. Category formation and checking was performed in the same manner as described for student interview data.

Classroom observations.

Classroom observations were analysed to develop a picture of each primary school classroom environment including interactions between students and teachers. As detailed notes had been kept, these were re-read and analysed to develop categories of observation under headings such as teacher-student interactions, student-student interactions, student-teacher interactions, messages about secondary school, instructional practices, managerial practices, classroom physical environment, and level of teacher direction.

Analysis of MSE test performance.

Academic performance data of students were examined at the end of third term in Years 7 and 8 to identify trends in student performance levels and to determine the nature of changes in the academic performance of the target students.

The primary source of information was the performance of students on the MSE tests of English and mathematics. As these tests report students' performance in relation to predetermined "standards" it was possible to report differences in the frequencies of students' performance in relation to those described standards. Students' academic performance was analysed with reference to the differences in frequencies of students performing above, at and below the benchmark performance level for Year 7.

T-tests were performed to determine if differences were significant in test scores between Year 7 and Year 8. In the case of the parallel version of the mathematics tests, scores on the measurement and number strands were standardised to allow for comparison of individual scores.

Attributions for success and failure.

Scores relating to students' attributions for academic success and failure were tabulated and frequencies calculated for each attribution. Contingency tables were constructed and chi square was used to determine whether there were significant differences between the attributions for success and failure of boys and girls at Year 7 and Year 8. Correlation coefficients (Pearson Product moment) were calculated as a measure of stability of students' attributions over the transition period. This test was selected because it was the test applied by Stipek and Mason (1986).

Reliability and Validity

Reliability.

Reliability in qualitative research is concerned with the replicability of findings (Hansen, 1979). External reliability addresses the issue of whether independent researchers would discover the same phenomena or generate the same construct in the same or similar settings. Internal reliability refers to the degree to which other researchers, given a set of previously generated constructs, would match them in the same ways as did the original researcher. Reliability can pose a threat to the credibility of inquiry. Issues of reliability were addressed by following the suggestions of Le Compte and Goetz (1982).

External reliability is affected by the extent to which the researcher handles five major problems: researcher status position, informant choices, social situations, analytic constructs and premises and methods of data collection and analysis.

In the present study the researcher was a non-participant observer who developed no special relationships with members of the group. This role can be easily replicated by other researchers who can adopt a similar role position. The role of the researcher is closely associated with the

identification of the informants who provide data. In the present study subjects were selected because of the group to which they belonged. A conscious decision to include only average performing students was made as these were the group with whom it was proposed transition effects were most likely. The selection process attempted to minimise the possibility that subjects would be atypical of the group under consideration.

It is accepted that the social context in which data are gathered may influence the nature of the data. In the present study data were gathered in the naturalistic setting of the school and included classroom observations. Direct information from participants was collected in interview situations, outside the classroom and away from the presence of teachers or peers who may have influenced the responses provided by participants.

Replication requires that the assumptions that underlie the choice of terminology and methods of analysis are clearly delineated. The theoretical premises and defining constructs that inform the present research have been derived from established theory and are described in Chapter Three.

Internal reliability issues focus on the extent to which multiple observers of the same phenomenon will agree. The present study used low inference descriptors of students' behaviour in the classroom and school as part of the field notes. Field notes were composed of verbatim accounts of what was said and narrative descriptions of the events that occurred. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and high inference interpretive comments were added. Repeated reference was made to the relevant literature during coding and the presentation of summaries to informants allowed for verification of interpretation. Transcription and coding of interview responses were checked by an independent person. It was not possible to employ multiple observers in the classroom situation,

however the inclusion of information from the participants (the teachers and students) allowed for checking that the researcher's observations were viewed consistently by both subject and researcher.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress the importance of detecting and taking into account distortion such as misinformation which may be introduced by the researcher or respondent. This may be caused by problems associated with lack of trust, nervousness and differences in language. The longitudinal nature of this study avoided these problems. A period of familiarisation, extended classroom observations, and multiple interviews allowed the development of familiarity and rapport between the researcher and subjects. The in-depth nature of the interviews combined with interview schedules ensured that attention was focused on the topics for discussion. This ensured maximisation of the richness of data. Contrast questions were used, probing where answers were ambiguous, or the respondent seemed unclear about the meaning of questions. Immediately following the interview, notes were made recording contextual factors associated with the interview ensuring that important details were noted and accounting for any interpretations of the transcript. Audio tape recording allowed continual and repeated access to the original conversations, and provided a permanent reference to the data. analysis. Reliability of the present study was established through the documentation of all procedures to allow for the same procedures to be repeated with similar results (Yin, 1989).

Validity.

Validity in qualitative research is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982). Validity is established when the extent to which the conclusions effectively represent empirical reality is established and the constructs devised by researchers represent or

measure the categories of human experience that occur (Hansen, 1979). Qualitative research theory has developed strategies for the validation of data. The most commonly cited method is the triangulation of data which involves the collection of data from a number of different sources using a variety of methods. Denzin (1978, p. 291) defines triangulation as the "combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon". Data collected from multiple sources can complement each other and triangulation allows researchers to be confident of their results, uncover deviant dimensions of the phenomenon and can lead to enriched explanations of the research phenomenon (Jick, 1979). The data are cross-checked to ensure that the information acquired is not just the result of the researcher's own beliefs or misperceptions, misinformation that they may have acquired, or the result of their own biases, desires or limitations. Catani (1981, p. 213), stresses the need for the qualitative researcher to "objectify and translate into scientific terms, what is in the first instance a human encounter". Denzin (1971) suggests that triangulation forces the researcher to check the validity of causal propositions situationally and the cross checking of data sources provides validity.

It has been argued that the use of case study method takes into consideration the issues of validity and reliability. Construct validity was achieved through the use of multiple sources of data and the creation of a chain of evidence. Pattern matching and explanation building ensured internal validity.

Yin (1989) identified six possible sources of data which may provide evidence for the case study. He stressed the need to use multiple sources of evidence which converge on the same set of facts or findings. Qualitative data in this study were gathered from a number of sources in a variety of ways to allow triangulation and cross checking to be performed. It is also important to draw explicit links between the questions asked, the

data collected and the conclusions. This constitutes the establishment of a chain of evidence.

Interviews.

Interview schedules were trialed with 20 students at both Year 7 and Year 8. When piloting interview schedules it became apparent that some leading questions were being asked. These were reworded before being used in the study and attention was paid throughout the study to avoid this occurring.

Interview transcripts were checked by one other transcriber. For the initial student interviews all transcripts were checked and agreement of 95% was reached between transcribers regarding content. In subsequent interviews 50% of the transcripts were checked and 95% agreement was reached.

Guba (1981) argues that it is important that naturalistic researchers are aware of their own biases and predispositions. Shifting neutrality from researcher to the data by recording and documenting observations and findings, checking of coding and transcription, corroboration of interpretations of findings results in increased confidence that categories came from the data not the researcher's own beliefs. The researcher's personal beliefs about the phenomenon were documented in a reflective statement and referred to throughout in an effort to avoid imposing them on the study.

These personal beliefs about the transition related to students' attributions about the reasons for their academic outcomes and problems that students would experience dealing with different expectations from a large number of teachers. The researcher believed that students would have difficulty accommodating different teacher expectations and would be unable to respond appropriately.

Categories were developed to allow for the analysis of interview responses. A second, independent person familiar with the purpose of the study categorised a sample of 20% of the interview responses and an intercoder reliability of 90% was achieved. Coding and the development of categories was continually checked against the relevant literature and with colleagues who had expert knowledge in the conceptual area.

Attributions response forms.

The primary purpose of the attributions response forms was as a procedural support which guided students through questions relating to achievement attributions. Similar questions have been asked in previous studies (Stipek, 1993; Stipek & Mason, 1986) which have not reported reliability for such instruments. The attributions forms were trialed with 20 Year 7 and 8 students.

Student academic performance rating forms.

Teacher and student self perceptions of performance were collected using a ratings form adapted from those used in previous studies (Mitman & Lash, 1989; Stipek & Tannat, 1984). Previous research has not reported reliability of these instruments. Assor and Connell (1992) note that while the use of self report forms is a common method of collecting data relating to students' use of cognitive strategies and self perceptions, there is a lack of comparative validity studies on the type of scale that should be used. Alternate versions of the student self-ratings forms using different scales were trialed with twenty Year 7 and 8 students, and teacher rating forms were trialed with ten primary school teachers and twelve secondary school teachers. On the basis of the trialing, and subject response to the forms the ten point continuum was selected for use in this study. The purpose of the

ratings forms was to support subjects as they answered questions relating to their perceptions of students' academic performance.

Assor and Connell (1992) argue that self-reported appraisals of competence and efficacy are valid measures of performance affecting self appraisals in the academic domain. In order to maximise the validity of self reports the following guidelines proposed by Assor and Connell were followed. The researcher emphasised to subjects that any response was acceptable as long as subjects reported what they really believed. The researcher demonstrated that subjects' responses were valued by involving them in the research, informing them of the purpose of the research and answering any questions that they may have had. All self report forms and interviews were administered without the presence of a known adult. Finally, subjects were informed of the audience for their responses and were assured that no-one but the researcher and an independent assistant would read or hear responses and that all responses would be kept confidential.

Monitoring Standards in Education tests.

The MSE tests have been extensively trialed (Ministry of Education, 1991, 1993) and reliability and validity established for the tests by the Australian Council for Educational research (ACER). All students' MSE test scripts were double marked, once by the researcher and once by an independent marker who had been trained in marking the tests. An inter-marker reliability of 98% was attained and discussion between the markers resolved any differences.

Generalisability

This study did not seek findings that would be generalisable to the wider population. Instead it sought to develop a rich, descriptive account of the experiences of students as they made the transition from primary to secondary school. The findings are specific to the context of the study. It has been suggested that naturalistic inquiry can "establish at least the 'limiting cases' relevant a given situation . . . each possible generalisation should be regarded only as a working hypothesis, to be tested again in subsequent encounters" (Guba, 1981, p. 70). The establishment of meaning and relevance to other settings is aided by rich description and adequate conceptual density.

Conclusion

Selection procedures for the schools and target students in this study have been described. Data were collected from teachers and students using a variety of techniques including questionnaire, observation, measures of academic performance and rating scales. Interviews were used to collect in-depth information from students regarding their perceptions of secondary school prior to and after the transition. The interviews allowed for probing of students' cognitions about the transition, the messages that they received about school, the ways in which they interpreted these, and about their own academic performance. The collection of data from multiple sources allowed for the corroboration and explication of information from individual sources. The results obtained from the collection of these data are presented and discussed in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five presents and discusses the results for the group and Chapter Six presents and discusses results for six case study students from within the group.

CHAPTER FIVE

Group Data: Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter summarises the data collected from the group of 24 target students and begins with a brief description of the group. Data were analysed using two units of analysis: firstly, data were analysed as a group and secondly, from six individual case study students. This means that in this chapter, statements like "in general" refer to the group, and results from the group will then be used to support this. Generalisations of group data have been obtained through phenomenological analysis as discussed in Chapter Four. Quotations will be used to support these generalisations from all students and the source will be identified by initials which are presented in Table 2.

The group's academic performance at Years 7 and 8 is presented and discussed and this is followed by Year 7 and 8 teachers' and students' ratings of the students' academic performance. Attributions for academic success and failure at Years 7 and 8 are presented, followed by data relating to students' use of strategies in problem situations. Data resulting from interviews conducted at Years 7 and 8 are presented and discussed. The final section of this chapter presents a conclusion. Specific case study data will be presented and discussed in Chapter Six.

The Group

At the beginning of the study all students in the group were in Year 7. One of the students had repeated Year 1 and consequently, was a year older than other children in the year and the group. The 24 students included 15 girls and nine boys who were selected because they had demonstrated

performance at the benchmark level of the Year 7 MSE tests in English and mathematics. Table 2 presents a summary of data relating to the group of students at Year 7 and Table 3 presents data for the same students at Year 8. Data are presented in Tables 2 and 3 in order of the alpha numeric identifier given to each Year 7 class. A summary of MSE performance data for the group is presented in Appendix L. The six students who were used as the basis of individual case study data are identified by their first name.

Table 2

Summary of Data on Group at Year 7

N = 24											
Class		MSE Test Scores				Attributions			Strat	Gender	Name
		English		Mathematics							
		read	write	meas	spac	num	succ	fail			
NC	1A	30	14	6	10	14	E	L	H	F	Neoma
FR	1A	12	5	5	5	14	E	A	S	F	
TQ	1A	27	5	5	7	10	A	L	H	M	
SR	1B	18	6	4	9	19	E	E	H	F	
RC	1B	28	9	6	7	9	E	E	S	M	Robert
JN	1B	24	5	4	6	7	L	L	H	M	
MF	2A	21	10	6	5	16	T	E	H	F	Michelle
LH	2A	28	7	4	8	15	E	L	S	F	
TI	2A	27	7	5	7	13	T	T	H	F	
DE	2A	13	8	2	7	12	E	E	G	M	
HJ	2A	23	5	5	9	8	L	E	G	M	
KT	2A	22	10	6	9	16	L	E	S	M	
JC	3A	24	7	8	13	18	E	A	H	F	Janene
MI	3A	27	7	4	11	12	L	E	S	F	
OI	3B	17	5	4	10	13	L	E	H	F	
OD	3B	29	7	3	7	9	L	A	H	M	
MD	3C	26	6	3	11	19	L	T	H	M	
FN	3C	26	7	3	7	10	E	L	H	F	Felicity
AD	4A	40	6	5	5	17	L	L	H	M	Andrew
WD	4A	34	8	2	5	8	E	E	H	F	
NI	4A	24	9	5	14	14	E	L	H	F	
EL	4A	25	5	1	6	9	T	A	H	F	
LN	4B	25	5	6	7	20	E	E	S	F	
OT	4B	28	10	4	11	14	E	A	S	F	

Note: Attributions: A: ability, T: task, E: effort, L: luck
 Strategy: H: get help from teacher or friend, S: attempt strategy,
 G: give up

Table 3

Summary of Data on Group at Year 8

N = 24											
Class	MSE Test Scores					Attributions		Strat		Gender	Name
	English		Mathematics			num	succ	fail			
	read	write	meas	spac							
NC	34	16	14	12	15	E	L	S	F		Neoma
FR	14	7	9	9	12	E	L	G	F		
TQ	25	5	16	9	12	L	L	H	M		
SR	20	7	11	12	10	E	T	H	F		Robert
RC	28	7	12	9	16	T	E	G	M		
JN	24	5	14	12	9	E	L	S	M		
MF	19	7	10	9	14	T	L	S	F		Michelle
LH	28	9	15	11	11	L	T	H	F		
TI	28	9	11	9	14	T	L	S	F		
DE	14	9	7	7	11	E	E	G	M		
HJ	24	6	12	11	16	A	E	H	M		
KT	22	11	11	8	13	E	L	H	M		
JC	26	7	12	12	16	T	E	H	F		Janene
MI	25	6	9	10	10	L	T	S	F		
OI	20	7	11	10	13	E	A	H	F		
OD	28	7	14	10	14	T	L	H	M		
MD	26	8	3	10	17	L	L	H	M		
FN	27	9	9	7	9	A	A	H	F		
AD	38	4	10	10	13	E	L	G	M		Felicity
WD	36	10	11	9	10	T	L	G	F		Andrew
NI	26	10	11	14	14	E	L	G	F		
EL	26	6	2	7	8	L	A	G	F		
LN	27	5	12	8	17	T	T	S	F		
OT	29	11	14	10	10	L	E	S	F		

Note: Attributions: A: ability, T: task, E: effort, L: luck
 Strategy: H: get help from teacher or friend, S: attempt strategy,
 G: give up

Academic Performance

Introduction

At the beginning of this study the MSE tests in English and mathematics were administered to all students in the Year 7 cohort of the four primary schools involved in the study. Results from these tests were used to select the target students on the basis of their performance at the Year 7 "benchmark" standard in the two subject areas. Parallel versions of the Year 7 tests were administered again the following year to the target students and an additional 25 randomly selected Year 8 students. However, these additional students were not part of this study and their results will not be reported. These tests provided empirical data for the comparison of the group's performance from Year 7 to Year 8. Table 4 summarises the group of target students' performance on the MSE tests at Year 7 and Year 8.

Table 4

Students' Performance on MSE Tests at Year 7 and Year 8

Subject	English					Mathematics				
	N = 24					N = 24				
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
Year	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8	7	8
NC	**30	**34	**14	**16	6	14	10	12	14	15
JC	24	26	7	7	8	12	13	12	18	16
WD	**34	**36	8	10	*2	11	5	9	8	10
MF	21	19	10	7	6	10	5	9	16	14
LH	28	28	7	9	4	15	8	11	15	11
NI	24	26	9	10	5	11	**14	**14	14	14
MI	27	25	7	6	4	9	11	10	12	10
TI	27	28	7	9	5	11	7	9	13	14
OI	17	20	5	7	4	11	10	10	13	13
EL	25	26	5	6	*1	2	6	7	9	8
FN	26	27	7	9	3	9	7	7	10	9
LN	25	27	5	5	6	12	7	8	20	**17
SR	18	20	6	7	4	11	9	12	19	10
FR	12	14	5	7	5	9	5	9	14	12
OT	28	29	10	11	4	14	11	10	14	10
RC	28	28	9	7	6	12	7	9	9	16
MD	26	26	6	8	3	10	11	**14	19	**17
AD	**40	**38	6	*4	5	10	5	10	17	13
OD	29	28	7	7	3	14	7	10	9	14
DE	13	14	8	9	*2	*7	7	7	12	11
HJ	23	24	5	6	5	12	9	11	8	16
JN	24	24	5	5	4	14	6	12	7	9
TQ	27	25	5	5	5	16	7	9	10	12
KT	22	22	10	11	6	11	9	8	16	13

Note. * denotes performance below the Year 7 benchmark

** denotes performance above the Year 7 benchmark

Year Seven

The MSE tests of English were based on the English Language K - 7 Syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1989) and measured reading and writing performance in relation to stage 6/7 (Year 7) of the syllabus. Table 5 presents the group's performance on the MSE English tests for reading and writing.

In the reading dimension of the English tests, all students scored within the range signifying performance at the benchmark level for Year 7 of the English syllabus. Within this range of scores, four students scored in the lower half and 17 students in the upper half of the range.

In the writing tests only one student scored above the range of marks demonstrating performance above the benchmark for Year 7. Within the range of scores at the benchmark level, 20 students scored in the lower half of the range and three students scored in the upper half of the range of benchmark scores. No student scored below the Year 7 benchmark score for reading or writing.

Table 5
Performance on MSE English Tests at Year 7

N = 24			
Reading		Writing	
Score	N	Score	N
*0 - 9	0	*0 - 4	0
10 - 29	21	5 - 13	23
**30 - 38	3	**14 - 18	1
Total	24	24	

Note. * denotes performance below the Year 7 benchmark

** denotes performance above the Year 7 benchmark

The MSE mathematics test was based on stage 6 (Year 7 level) of the Learning Mathematics: Pre-Primary to Stage 7 syllabus (Ministry of Education, 1989). Tasks measured performance on the three syllabus strands of measurement, space and number. Table 6 presents students' performance on the MSE mathematics test in these strands.

Of the 24 students in the group, three students scored below the benchmark level for the measurement strand. All other students performed at the benchmark level. Within this range of scores, 20 students performed within the lower half of the range and one scored in upper half. No student scored above the benchmark for measurement. In the space strand, 23 students scored within the range of marks at the Year 7 benchmark, of these 14 scored in the lower half of the range and nine scored in the upper half. One student performed at a level above the Year 7 benchmark. All 24 students performed at the benchmark for the number strand. Within this range of marks, 10 students scored in the lower half and 14 scored marks which fell in the upper half of the range.

Table 6

Performance on the MSE Mathematics Test at Year 7

N = 24					
Measurement		Space		Number	
Score	N	Score	N	Score	N
*0 - 2	3	*0 - 3	0	*0 - 4	0
3 - 9	21	4 - 13	23	5 - 20	24
**10 - 15	0	**14 - 18	1	**21 - 25	0
Total	24		24		24

Note. * denotes performance below the Year 7 benchmark

** denotes performance above the Year 7 benchmark

Target students were selected because their performance on the MSE tests placed them at the benchmark for Year 7 in English and mathematics. Because of this, the distribution of scores is not surprising. No student consistently scored above or below the benchmark in all tests, although one student (NC) scored above the benchmark for both English tests. Most students scored in the upper range of the benchmark scores for writing and in the lower range for reading. In the mathematics test most students scored in the lower range of benchmark scores for measurement and space and in the upper range for the number strand.

Year Eight

Year 7 level MSE tests were administered to the group towards the end of Year 8. The same English tests measuring performance in reading and writing were administered and an alternate version of the mathematics test measuring performance in five strands of the syllabus was administered. The "scores on the alternative mathematics test have been adapted to correspond to the original benchmarks" (Ministry of Education, 1992, p. 10) and describe the three strands of measurement, space and number. While the range of scores which correspond to the benchmarks for measurement and number vary from Year 7 to Year 8, the behaviours described by the benchmarks are identical from one year to another.

On the reading dimension of the English test, 21 students demonstrated performance at the Year 7 benchmark level and three students scored above the benchmark for Year 7. Of the students who demonstrated performance at the benchmark, three scored in the lower half of the range and 18 scored in the upper half of the range of scores. No students achieved scores below the Year 7 benchmark for reading.

In the writing dimension of the MSE tests, one student scored below the benchmark for Year 7, 22 students demonstrated performance at the Year 7 benchmark and one student scored above the Year 7 benchmark. Within the range of performance at the benchmark level, 18 students scored in the lower half of the range and four scored in the upper part of the range. The results of students' performance on the reading and writing tests are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Performance on MSE English Tests at Year 8

N=24				
Reading		N	Writing	
Score			Score	N
*0 - 9		0	*0 - 4	1
10 - 29		21	5 - 13	22
**30 - 38		3	**14 - 18	1
Total		24		24

Note. * denotes performance below the Year 7 benchmark

** denotes performance above the Year 7 benchmark

The mathematics test measured students' performance in the three mathematics strands: measurement, space and number. Table 8 presents the distribution of scores on the measurement, space and number strands of the MSE mathematics test at Year 8.

At Year 8, two students scored below the Year 7 benchmark on the measurement strand, and 22 demonstrated performance at the benchmark. Within the range of scores at the benchmark level, 17 students scored in the lower half of the range and 5 in the upper part of the range of scores.

In the space strand 22 students performed at the benchmark and 2 students demonstrated performance above the benchmark. Of the students performing at the benchmark level, four performed in the lower half of the range of scores and 18 scored in the upper half.

In the number strand 22 students performed at the benchmark and 2 students scored above the benchmark for Year 7 number strand. Of the 22 students who scored within the range corresponding to the benchmark, 11 scored in the lower half of the range and 11 in the upper part of the range of scores.

Table 8

Performance on MSE Mathematics Test at Year 8

N = 24					
Measurement		Space		Number	
Score	N	Score	N	Score	N
*0 - 8	2	*0 - 3	0	*0 - 7	0
9 - 17	22	4 - 13	22	8 - 16	22
**18 - 20	0	**14 - 16	2	**17 - 22	2
Total	24		24		24

Note. * denotes performance below the Year 7 benchmark

** denotes performance above the Year 7 benchmark

The bands of scores that correspond to benchmarks for Stage 6 (Year 7) mathematics vary from those described in the 1990 version of the test.

Comparison of Year 7 and Year 8 MSE Test Performance

Paired t-tests showed that there was no significant difference between students' performance on the reading tests at Year 7 and Year 8 [$\bar{X} = -0.67$, $SD = 1.63$, $t(24) = -2.00$, $p < .06$]. There was a significant difference between students' performance at Year 7 and Year 8 on the writing test [$\bar{X} = -0.63$, $SD = 1.44$, $t(24) = -2.13$, $p < .04$].

Paired t-tests showed that there was no significant difference between students' performance on the space strand at Year 7 and Year 8 [$\bar{X} = -1.79$, $SD = 2.02$, $t(24) = .66$, $p < .52$].

Because the scores for the 1992 versions of the measurement and number strands did not correspond to the benchmarks scores of the previous test it was not possible to perform t-tests on performance on these strands. The scores for these strands were standardised and the standardised scores are presented in Appendix M. To confirm that data were normally distributed a non-parametric test (Wilcoxon signed ranks) was conducted. In all cases results were identical to t-tests.

Comparison of standardised scores on the measurement strand shows that 13 students' performance decreased to the mean from Year 7 to Year 8. Consideration of the standardised scores for the number strand shows that 12 students' performance decreased to the mean between Year 7 and Year 8.

Discussion of Academic Performance

All students maintained their position in relation to the Year 7 benchmark for reading and one student's position dropped from performance at, to below the benchmark for writing (AD). Only one student (WD) increased her performance to above the benchmark for measurement, one student (MD) improved performance to above the

benchmark for space and two students (MD, LN) improved performance to above the benchmark for number.

One would reasonably expect that after more than one semester's secondary schooling, these students would be demonstrating academic performance at a level above the standard described in the Year 7 syllabus, and above that achieved by the same students in the previous year. The Transition Mathematics unit places emphasis on smoothing the transition from primary to secondary school by repeating work covered in primary school. As the unit of mathematics studied by the students in the first semester duplicates the Year 7 syllabus it is reasonable to expect that students would achieve higher scores after additional instruction.

It may be that the subject matter that students learned in Year 8 was in fact, different from that taught in Year 7 and hence the MSE tests which measure Year 7 content measured students' performance on work that they had not done for six months. This would raise serious questions about the nature of what they had in fact "learned" in that time and would not seem to be a feasible explanation. Mathematics is viewed as a sequential subject where previous learning is built upon so it is unlikely that students would have "forgotten" about what they learned in Year 7 in order to accommodate new and significantly different knowledge in Year 8.

This lack of improvement, and in some cases, decline in student academic achievement between Year 7 and 8 matches that reported by Fouracre (1991) and implied by Harter, Whitesell and Kowalski (1992). Harter et al. referred to negative academic attitudes that accompanied the transition to junior high. Brush (1980) also reported a decline in attitudes and commitment to schoolwork over the transition. Attitudinal changes may well result in negative shifts in academic performance. Data collected from a number of sources will inform this proposition.

Summary

In the twelve month period of schooling covered by this research, no significant increase was seen in students' scores on both the English and mathematics tests. While there was a significant difference in the scores obtained by students in writing when the performance of students is described in relation to the benchmarks, one student's performance (AD) actually declined to below the Year 7 benchmark in Year 8. No student's performance in reading or writing improved to place them above the respective benchmarks.

Performance Ratings

Introduction

In the second interview of Year 7, students were asked to rate their own performance in relation to other members of the class on a continuum with end points 0 and 10 (ten being the highest). Using the same method, Year 7 teachers were also asked to rate the performance of students in the group whom they taught. Ratings were recorded for performance in English (including all aspects of language such as reading and comprehension, writing, spelling and grammar), mathematics, general academic performance and social competence. Students were also asked to describe how they had made decisions about the level of their performance, and to identify other students in their class whom they believed were at the same level as themselves, above them and below them.

At the beginning of second term in Year 8, students were asked to rate their performance in English and mathematics in an identical manner.

Their teachers for these subjects were asked to rate the students' performance in relation to other class members.

Teacher and Student Ratings of Academic Performance at Year 7

Table 9 presents distribution of teacher and student ratings for their academic performance for mathematics, English, general academic and social performance at Year 7. Teachers' ratings of students' performance in mathematics ranged from 2 to 8 ($\bar{X} = 5.8$). As these students had been selected using the MSE tests on the basis of their "average" level of academic performance this distribution confirmed the selection.

Teachers' ratings of the case study students' performance in the area of English included consideration of case study students' performance in reading, comprehension, grammar and writing skills. Teacher ratings ranged from 2 to 8, ($\bar{X} = 5.9$). Again this confirmed that students were within the middle range of academic performance.

Teachers rated students' overall or general academic performance (excluding English and mathematics) against the rest of the class. Ratings ranged from 2 to 9 ($\bar{X} = 5.9$). Teachers' ratings of case study students' social performance ranged between 3 and 10 ($\bar{X} = 7.1$).

Students rated their own mathematics performance in comparison to their classmates using the same rating scale as their teachers. Ratings ranged from 4 to 9 ($\bar{X} = 6.2$). Students' ratings of their own performance in English subjects ranged from 3 to 9 ($\bar{X} = 6.1$). Students' ratings of their own general academic performance ranged from 2 to 9 ($\bar{X} = 6.6$). Students' ratings of their own social performance ranged from 7 to 10 ($\bar{X} = 8.4$).

Table 9

Teacher and Student Performance Ratings at Year 7

Number of students at each level on a scale of 1 - 10 as rated by teachers and students

Rating	N = 24							
	Mathematics		English		General		Social	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
9	0	1	0	2	1	2	1	15
8	4	4	5	4	2	6	6	5
7	4	4	5	5	7	7	6	1
6	6	6	3	4	5	4	4	0
5	5	8	7	4	5	2	4	0
4	4	1	3	3	2	2	1	0
3	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0
2	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Student self ratings were compared with the teacher's rating of their performance. Table 10 presents a comparison of student and teacher ratings of students' performance at Year 7, showing frequencies of students who rated themselves at, below and above the rating given by the teacher. Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 present teachers' and students' self-ratings of individual students' academic and social performance at Year 7.

Table 10

Comparison of Teacher and Student Performance Ratings at Year 7

N = 24				
Performance Ratings	Maths	English	General	Social
Below teacher rating				
Female	4	4	4	0
Male	1	2	1	0
At teacher rating				
Female	5	5	1	4
Male	1	3	4	1
Above teacher rating				
Female	6	6	10	11
Male	7	4	4	7
Total	24	24	24	24

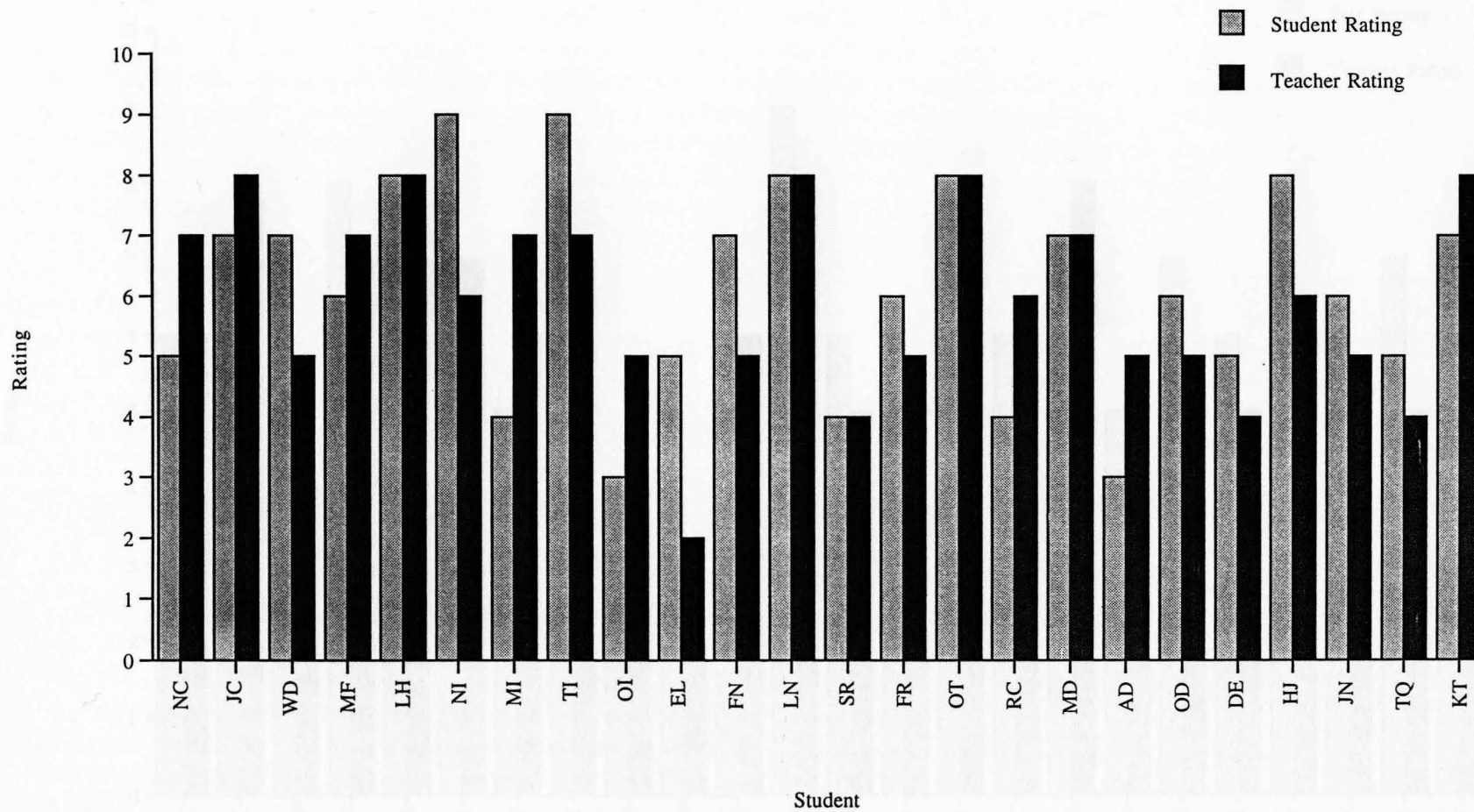


Figure 3: Year 7 English - Teacher and Student Ratings

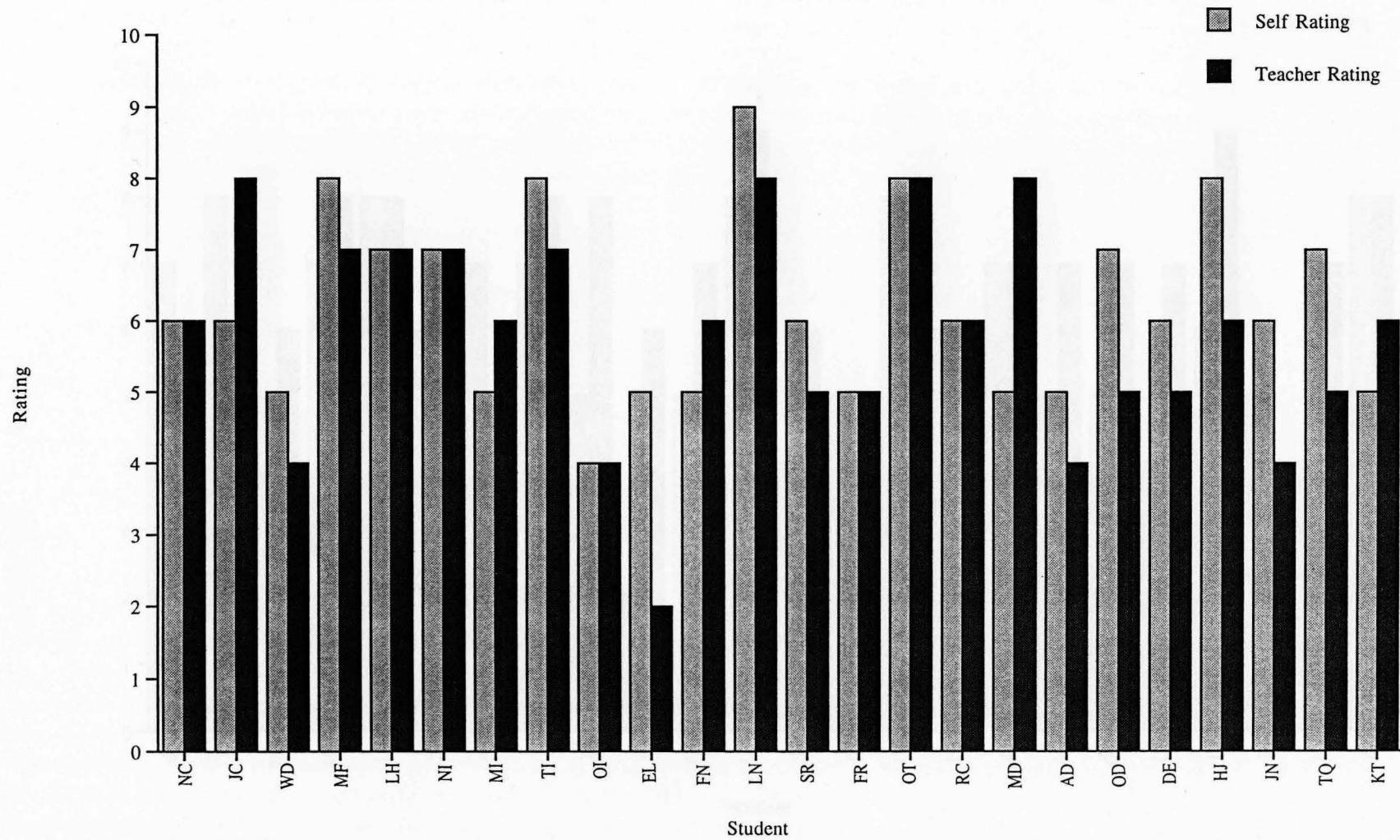


Figure 4: Year 7 Mathematics - Teacher and Student Ratings

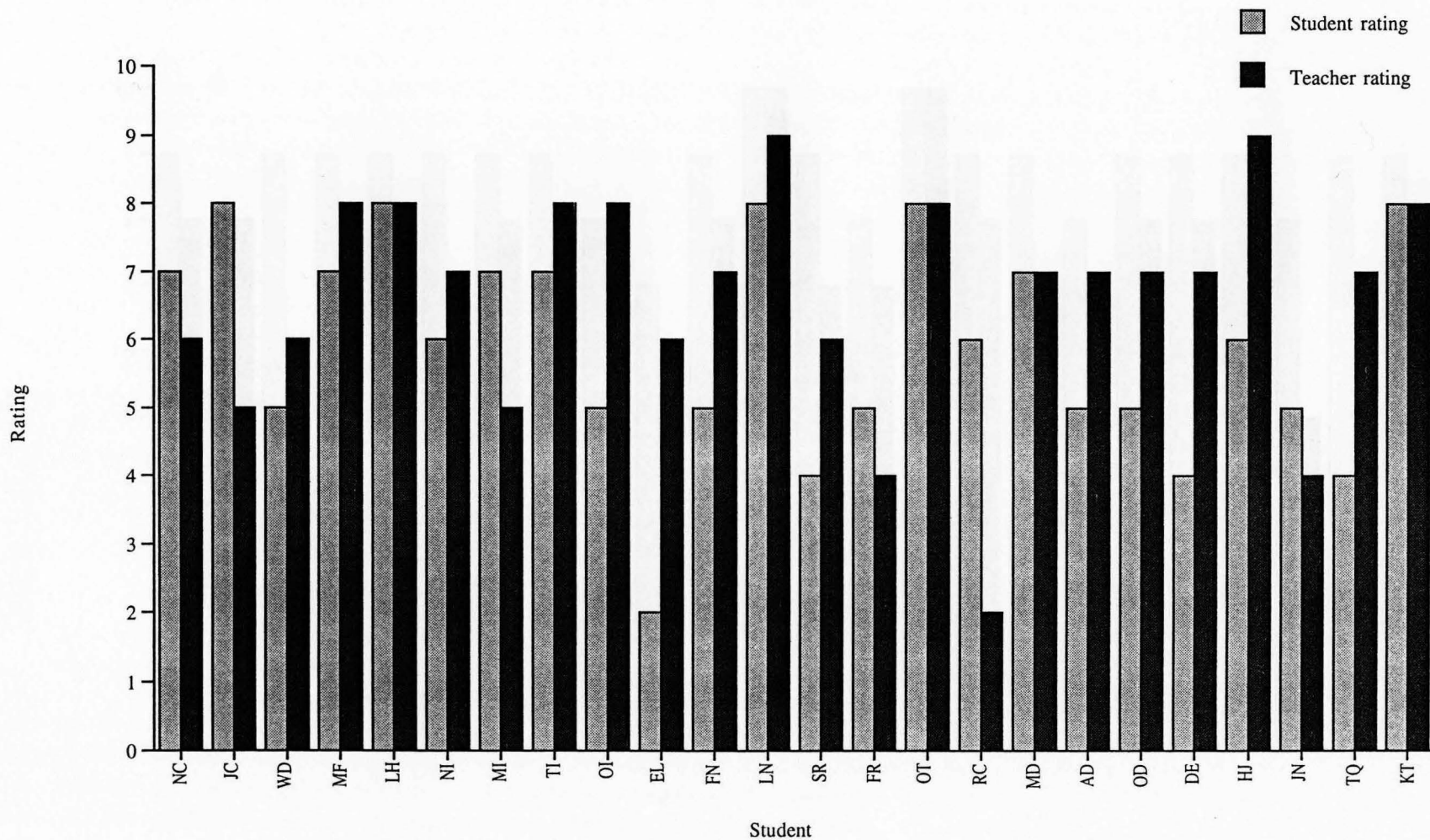


Figure 5: Year 7 General - Teacher and Student Ratings

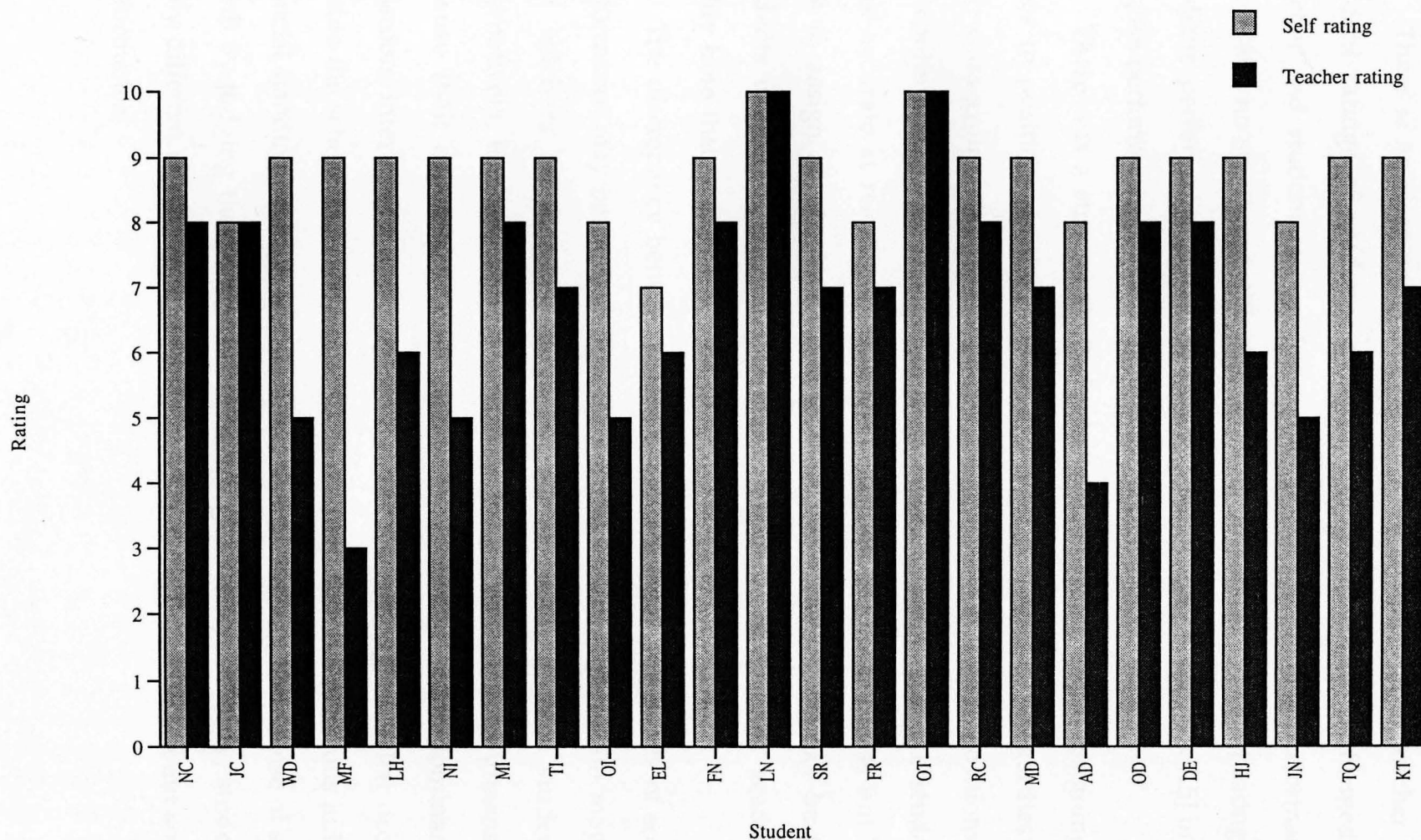


Figure 6: Year 7 Social - Teacher and Student Ratings

Discussion of Academic Performance Ratings

There is no clear pattern emerging from comparison of teacher and student ratings of academic performance. Paired t-tests were performed on teacher and student ratings for mathematics and English performance. There was no significant difference between teacher and student ratings of students' performance in mathematics at Year 7 [$\bar{X} = 0.42$, $SD = 1.38$, $t(24) = 1.48$, $p < .15$] or for English performance at Year 7 [$\bar{X} = 0.21$, $SD = 1.69$, $t(24) = .60$, $p < .55$].

There was a striking similarity between students in the assigning of peers to positions on the continuum for all dimensions. Regardless of their class group, all students placed their peers in the same positions on the continuum and in relation to themselves. It seems that the students were accurate at reading their relative position within the class but less able to assign an absolute value to their performance. It may be that students use different criteria to make judgments of absolute academic ability from that used by teachers.

The discrepancy between teachers' and students' judgments of social performance may be explained in several ways. One explanation may be that teachers are harsher judges of social standing than students. Alternatively, teachers may be inaccurate judges of the social dimension because their experiences with students are limited to predominantly classroom interactions and they have limited knowledge of what occurs outside the school and classroom. Children may be more generous judges of social standing or may seek to protect themselves and their sense of self-worth by judging their social relationships generously. Clearly, students apply different criteria from teachers when making judgments about social performance.

Teacher and Student Ratings of Academic Performance at Year 8

At the beginning of second term in the second year of the study (Year 8), subject teachers of the students in the group rated their academic performance in the subjects English and mathematics using the same scale as used in Year 7. In both of these subjects the students had been streamed into "pathways" and were in classes with other students of similar ability. Teacher ratings were not sought for case study students' general or social performance as no teachers believed they were in a position to rate students' performance outside the single subject for which they were responsible. Table 11 presents distributions of teacher and student self-ratings for their academic performance in mathematics and English at Year 8. Figure 7 presents a comparison of teacher and student self-ratings of performance for English at Year 8, and Figure 8 presents the same data for mathematics at Year 8.

Table 11

Teacher and Student Ratings of Students' Performance at Year 8

Rating	N = 24			
	Mathematics		English	
	Teacher	Student	Teacher	Student
10	0	0	0	1
9	1	5	1	3
8	2	6	1	4
7	4	4	3	9
6	8	3	5	1
5	5	5	8	4
4	4	1	3	2
3	0	0	3	0
2	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0

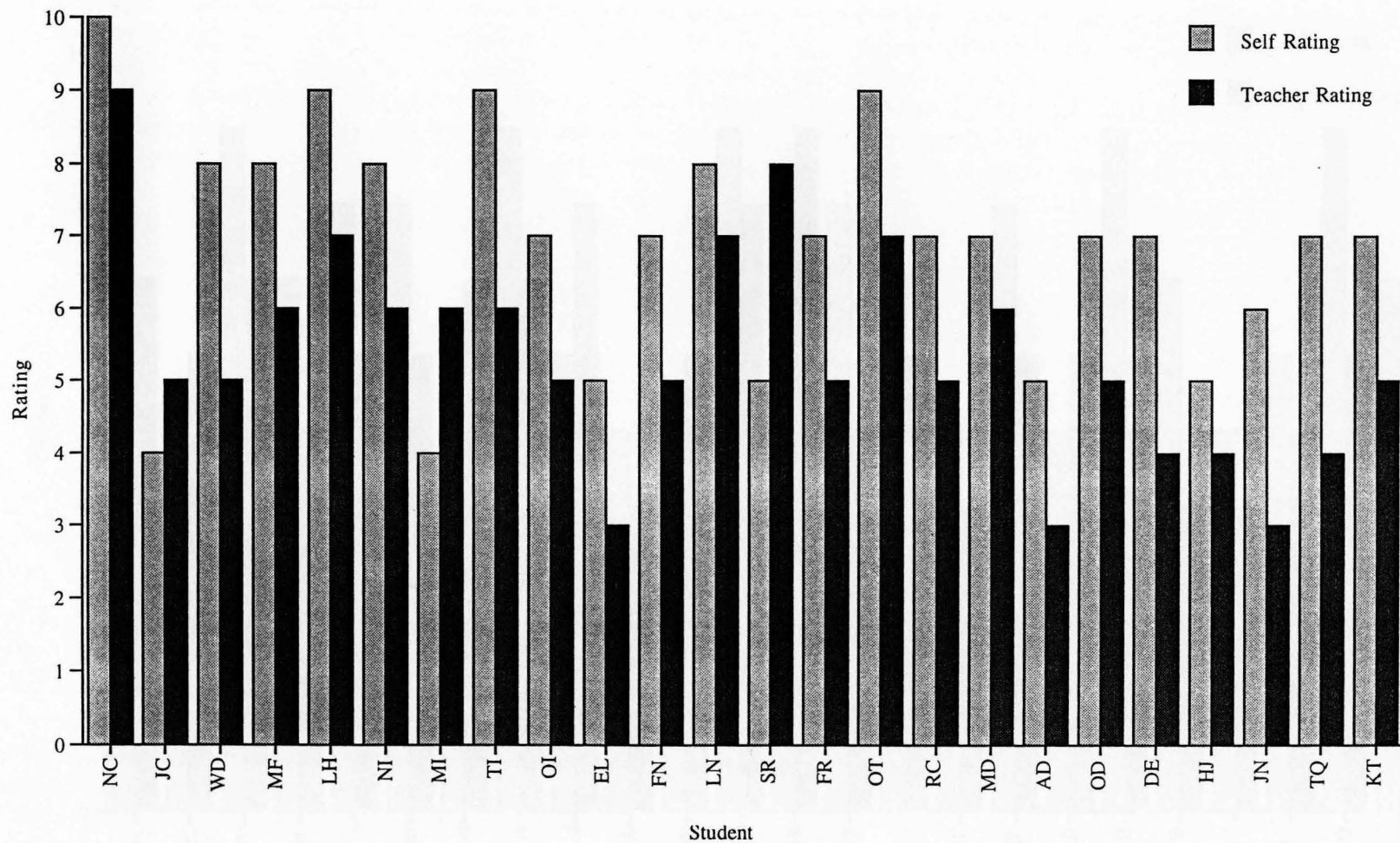


Figure 7: Year 8 English - Teacher and Student Ratings

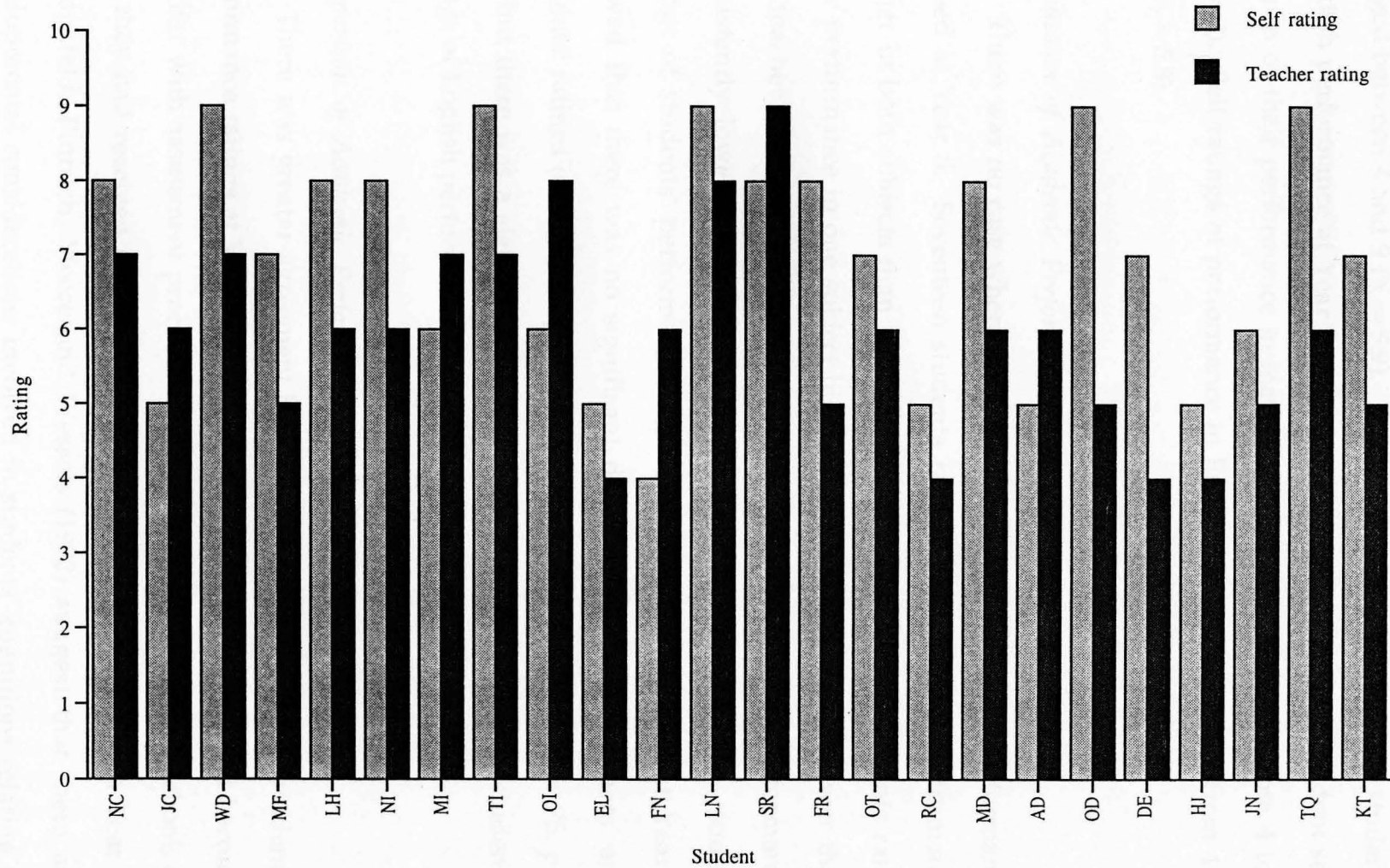


Figure 8: Year 8 Mathematics - Teacher and Student Ratings

Teacher ratings of case study students' performance in mathematics ranged between 4 and 9 ($\bar{X} = 5.9$). Teacher ratings for case study students' English performance at Year 8 ranged from 3 to 9, ($\bar{X} = 5.5$). Student self-ratings of their performance in mathematics at Year 8 ranged from 4 to 9 ($\bar{X} = 7$). Self-ratings of performance in English at Year 8 ranged from 4 to 10 ($\bar{X} = 5.8$).

Discussion of Academic Performance Ratings at Year 8

There was no case where teacher and student ratings of performance agreed at Year 8. Seventeen students rated their academic performance higher in both subjects than their teachers' ratings. Three students rated their performance in one subject higher than their teacher and lower than the teacher in the other subject. Three girls rated their performance consistently lower than their teachers. Paired t-tests of teacher and student ratings of students' performance in mathematics and English at Year 8 showed that there was no significant difference between teachers' and students' ratings of students' performance in mathematics [$\bar{X} = 0.42$, $SD = 1.38$, $t(24) = .75$, $p < .46$] but there was a significant difference between teachers' and students' ratings of English performance [$\bar{X} = 0.21$, $SD = 1.69$, $t(24) = 4.93$, $p < .00$].

Comparison of Academic Performance Ratings at Years 7 and 8

There was greater agreement between teacher and student academic performance ratings at Year 7. It may be that students had not yet become familiar with assessment practices and criteria in the secondary school, or that they had received more consistent and extended feedback in Year 7. Blumenfeld, Pintrich, Meece and Wessels (1982) suggest that there are developmental considerations involved in students' cognitions relating to their academic achievement. They suggest that as students progress

through school they lack the necessary cognitive maps of content and argue that when this is coupled with ambiguity of lesson goals, students find it difficult to identify the purpose of assignments or to know whether they have accomplished the required ends successfully. If this is the case, then when students are confronted with substantially different subjects in secondary school, this lack of an adequate evaluative map, in addition to reported lack of teacher feedback would make it difficult for students to appraise success and failure accurately in relation to teacher and school assigned grades. As the nature of subject English is noticeably different between primary and secondary school (in WA) this would seem to be a likely explanation for the differences between teachers' and students' judgments about students' performance in this subject. The view of the subject held by secondary English teachers may not match that which Year 8 students have brought with them from primary school. It may be that as students learn more about secondary English their ability to judge their performance in a manner similar to that of their teacher improves.

Students' ability to make an accurate judgment of their academic performance may be complicated by the lack of a constant peer group against which to judge their own performance. In the secondary school students change classes for each subject and as a result have fewer opportunities to build up knowledge about the relative performance of their peers. Again, this is possibly complicated by the reduced time which students spend with each teacher compared to Year 7, hence having reduced opportunity to learn about the teacher's goals and assessment criteria. In interviews reported later in this chapter, students reported that they had little knowledge about what marks were awarded for and limited knowledge of grading practices. While teachers were asked to rate the individual student's performance against others in the same class it may

be that they were influenced to an extent by the student's performance in comparison to the year group.

Rosenholtz and Simpson (1984) emphasise four features of the classroom that communicate differential expectations to students: task differentiation, student grouping, student autonomy and formal performance evaluations. These factors all provide students with information which they can interpret to make judgments about their performance. Mitman and Lash (1989) found that greater incidence of these expectation cues was associated with greater differential perceptions. They found that Year Three students' perceptions of academic standing were clearly distinct from standardised student performance indicators and that low achievers viewed themselves as doing less well than higher achievers. The secondary context provides students with less discrete forms of these expectation cues. Students had been placed in pathways which ensured that class groups were relatively homogeneous, students received undifferentiated tasks, few opportunities were provided for student autonomy and students had received little in the way of formal performance evaluations. It may be that the lack of these expectation cues restricted the information available to students and hence, limited their ability to make effective judgments about their performance.

Paired t-tests on students' ratings of their own performance at Year 7 and Year 8 showed that there was a significant difference in students' ratings of their own performance in mathematics [$t(24) = -2.36, p < .03$] and a significant difference between their ratings of their English performance [$t(24) = -2.13, p < .04$]. This supports the suggestion that students' ability to judge their own performance diminishes in (at least) the early stages of secondary school.

It is interesting to note that a number of secondary teachers felt that they were unable to make judgments about students' social performance

despite the fact that they had been teaching them for a term. This, and subsequent teacher comments, highlight a significant feature of the secondary school. All teachers teach four or five classes each semester. Unlike primary school teachers they have to get to know 120 to 150 students compared to about 30. Linked to this is the fact that they see each class for a shorter time than primary school teachers so the opportunities for getting to know students are restricted. During interviews with teachers there were several instances where teachers had difficulty identifying the student in question. These factors suggest that because of a lack of familiarity with students, teachers may have had difficulty making accurate judgments about students' performance.

Summary

At Year 7 the distribution patterns for both teacher and student ratings of the target group's academic performance showed that both teachers and the students themselves, viewed their academic performance as lying in the middle of that of the whole class group. At Year 8 the pattern of distribution for mathematics and English showed that students tended to rate themselves higher than their teachers. There was no case of agreement between teacher and student ratings at Year 8 for mathematics or English performance. There was no significant difference in mathematics ratings given by teachers and students. Comparison of student self ratings between Year 7 and Year 8 showed that there were significant differences between students' ratings for both mathematics and English between Year 7 and Year 8. In both cases students rated their academic performance higher at Year 8.

Attributions

Introduction

Attributions for success and failure were determined by asking students to recall and describe actual situations in which they were doing poorly and in which they were doing very well. They were also asked to think of particular situations in which they had performed differently to their expectations (had performed both better than they expected, and less well than they expected). In each of these situations they were presented with all pairwise combinations of four common performance attributions: ability, luck, task difficulty and effort and asked to choose what they believed was the most important cause of their success or failure in each pair. Each attribution appeared three times, so scores for each attribution ranged from 0 to 3 depending on how many times it was selected.

Students were also encouraged to talk about how they felt when they were successful and unsuccessful in each situation and to describe how they explained this to themselves, the reasons why they thought they achieved the particular result, and any other "personal conversations" they may have had with themselves. This provided explanatory support for their choice. Currin and Harich (1993) support this procedure arguing that it is important to allow respondents to make whatever attribution seems appropriate for them. It is then possible to elicit their perception of the dimension of the attribution. It is the attributor's perception that affects subsequent cognitions and performance not the researcher's perceptions.

The following data represent the students' choice of reason for their success and failure and their own explanations as to why success or failure occurred. Research into students' attributions for academic success and failure (Stipek 1993) suggests that there are differences in the ways that girls and boys attribute success and failure. For this reason data relating to

attributions are reported by group and gender. Table 12 presents students' attributions for success at Years 7 and 8 and Table 13 presents students' attributions for failure at Years 7 and 8.

Table 12

Attributions For Success at Years 7 and 8

N = 24				
Attribution	Year 7 Number	%	Year 8 Number	%
Effort	12	50%	9	38%
Girls 10		5		
Boys 2		4		
Luck	8	33%	7	29%
Girls 2		5		
Boys 6		2		
Task	3	12%	6	25%
Girls 3		4		
Boys 0		2		
Ability	1	5%	2	8%
Girls 0		1		
Boys 1		1		

Attributions for Success

Year seven.

In Year 7, 12 students (50%) attributed their success to effort and provided explanations such as, "I really put the effort in" (NC). Luck was held responsible for success by eight (33%) students who provided reasons such as, "I wasn't really sure but I thought I remembered something similar so I guessed that." (JN). Positive outcomes were seen to be the result of the task by three students (12%), who supported their belief with explanations such as "We didn't really have to do very much in that project to get good marks. I just did what I know what the teacher likes." (TI). Only one student (TQ) attributed academic success to ability, stating

that he believed he was "... pretty good at science because I really like reading about things like animals."

There was a difference in the major factor which boys and girls believed to be responsible for positive academic outcomes. The prime cause to which girls attributed their success was effort (66%), while 20% of the boys held effort to be the cause of their success. Success was attributed to luck by 66% of the boys who gave reasons such as "the teacher marked easy"(HJ), and "someone showed me how to do that yesterday"(OD). Luck was held responsible for success by 12% of the girls. The task was considered to be the reason for success by 20% of the girls and no boys, and no girls attributed positive outcomes to their ability. Only one boy believed that ability was responsible for positive academic outcomes.

Year eight.

At Year 8 success was attributed to effort by 9 (38%) students who supported their decisions with comments such as "I tried hard on that"(NI), and "I've been working." (PR) The task was held responsible for success by 7 (29%) of students who offered the following explanations, "the work is easy"(OD) and "we've done this work before"(MF). Success was attributed to luck by six (25%) students and to ability by two students (8%).

At Year 8 positive outcomes were attributed to effort by 33% of the girls and 44% of the boys. Luck was viewed as the cause of success by 33% of the girls and 22% of the boys while 27% of the girls and 22% of the boys considered the task to be the reason for their success. Only one girl (7%) and one boy (11%) held ability to be responsible for their success at Year 8.

Attributions for Failure

Year seven.

At Year 7, failure was attributed to lack of effort by 10 students (42%), and to bad luck by seven students (29%). Lack of ability was held responsible for poor performance by five students (21%) and the task was the reason given by two students (8%) for their lack of success.

Failure was attributed to effort by 40% of the girls and 44% of the boys, and to the task by only one girl (7%) and one boy (11%). Luck was seen as the cause of negative outcomes by 27% of the girls and 33% of the boys while 27% of the girls and one boy (11%) held ability to be the cause of negative achievement outcomes.

Table 13

Students' Attributions for Failure at Year 7 and 8

N = 24				
Attribution	Year 7 Number	%	Year 8 Number	%
Effort	10	42%	5	21%
Girls 6		2		
Boys 4		3		
Task	2	8%	4	17%
Girls 1		4		
Boys 1		0		
Luck	7	29%	12	50%
Girls 4		6		
Boys 3		6		
Ability	5	21%	3	12%
Girls 4		3		
Boys 1		0		

Year eight.

At Year 8, 12 students (50%) attributed failure to bad luck, "I broke my assignment [a model] and had to re-do it the night before" (MD), "I was away when the teacher told us about the test" (AD). Failure was attributed to lack of effort by five students: "I don't care what I get so I don't try" (MI), "I couldn't be bothered" (MF), "I had an important competition on that weekend so didn't have time to study" (JC) and "I didn't try hard enough." (FN) The task was held responsible for poor performance by four students, "It was hard" (OI) and three students attributed poor performance to a lack of ability.

At Year 8 negative outcomes were seen to be the result of (lack of) effort by 13% of the girls and 33% of the boys. Failure was attributed to the task by 27% of the girls and no boys and to luck by 40% of the girls and 66% of the boys. Ability was believed to be the cause of negative outcomes by 20% of the girls and no boys.

Stability of Attributions

Correlation coefficients for attributions for success and failure from Year 7 to Year 8 are presented in Table 14. Attributing success to luck in Year 7 was associated with attributing success to the task in Year 8. Attributing success to an easy task was also somewhat stable from one year to the next. Attributing failure to luck in Year 7 was correlated with attributing failure to luck in Year 8.

Table 14

Stability of Attributions From Year 7 to Year 8

Attribution	Success (N = 24)	Failure (N = 24)
Ability	0.22	0.24
Effort	0.31	0.32
Task	0.396**	0.324
Luck	0.458*	0.433*

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .10$ *Changes in Individual's Attributions for Success and Failure*

Each student's attributions for success and failure were plotted to create a "picture" of their attributions. Figures 9 and 10 represent each student's attributions for success at Year 7 and 8, and Figures 11 and 12 represent each student's attributions for failure at Year 7 and 8. Students' scores for each attribution (that is, ability, effort, task and luck) were plotted on corresponding axes to develop a "picture" of the pattern of their attributions. The overlay of attributions at Year 7 and Year 8 allow for comparison of the ways in which students' patterns of attributions changed from primary to secondary school. Data are represented in the same order as students' names appear in the summary tables (from left to right). The "patterns" of case study students have been identified.

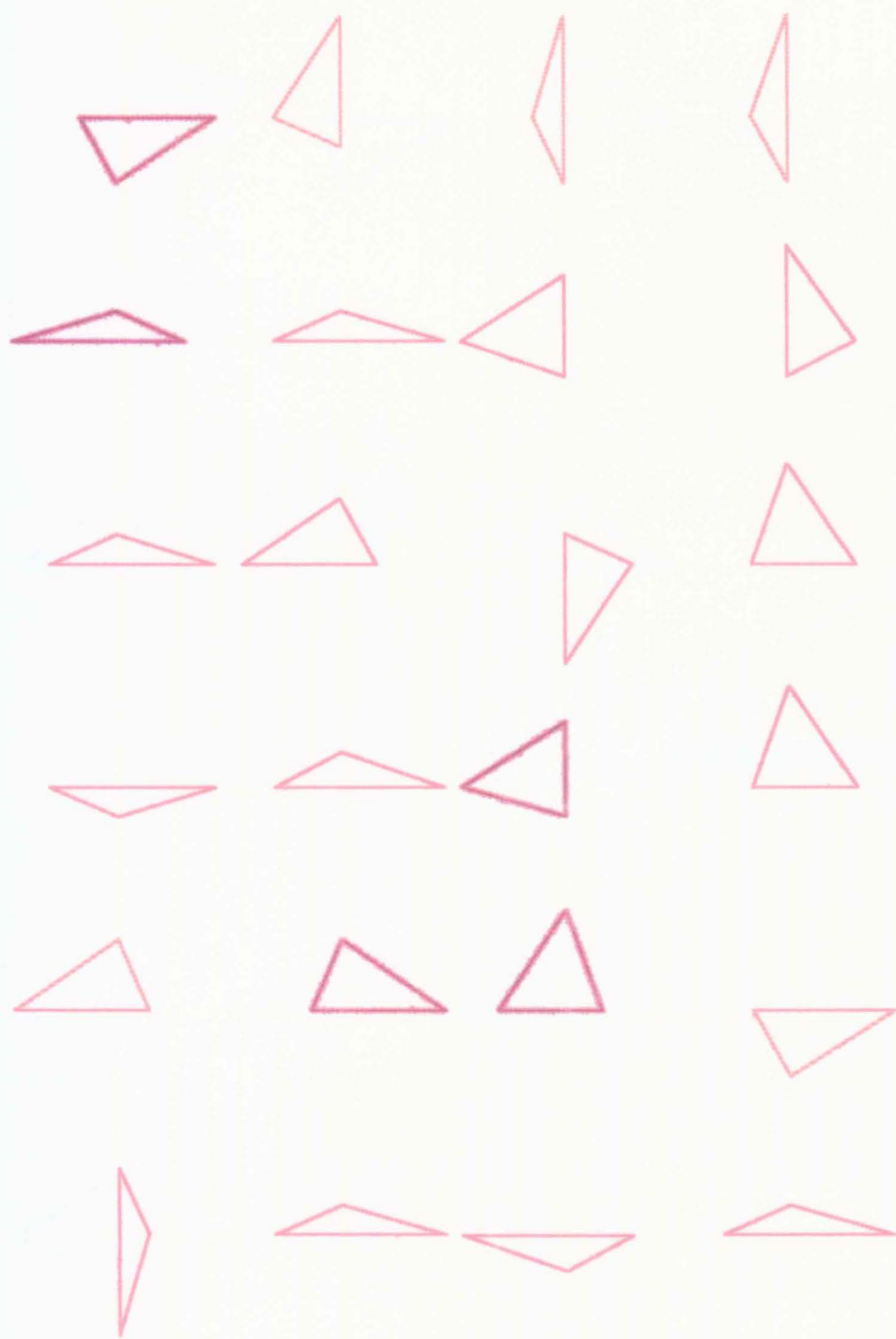
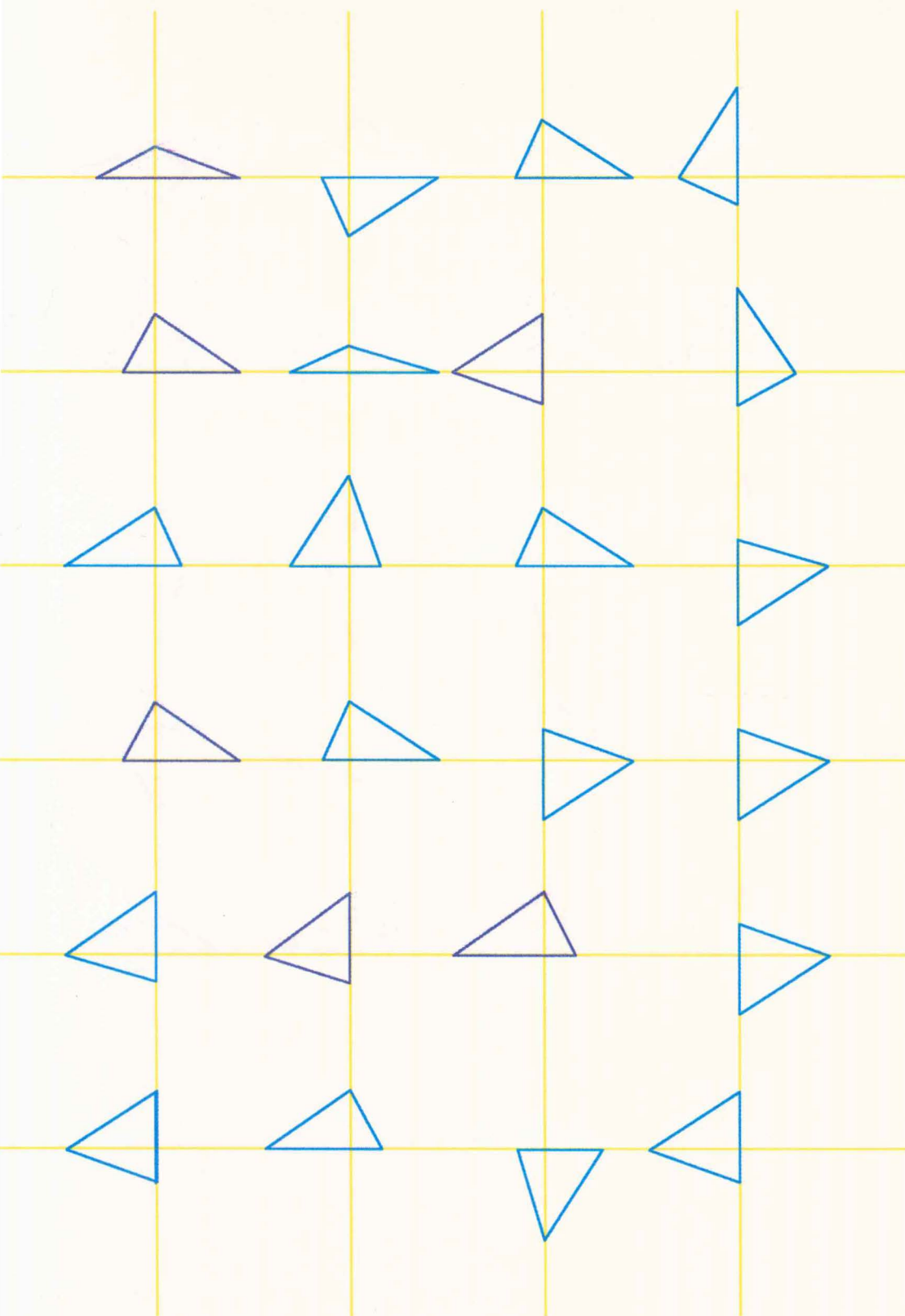


Figure 9: Attributions for success at Year 8

Effort



Ability

Luck

Figure 10: Attributions for success at Year 7

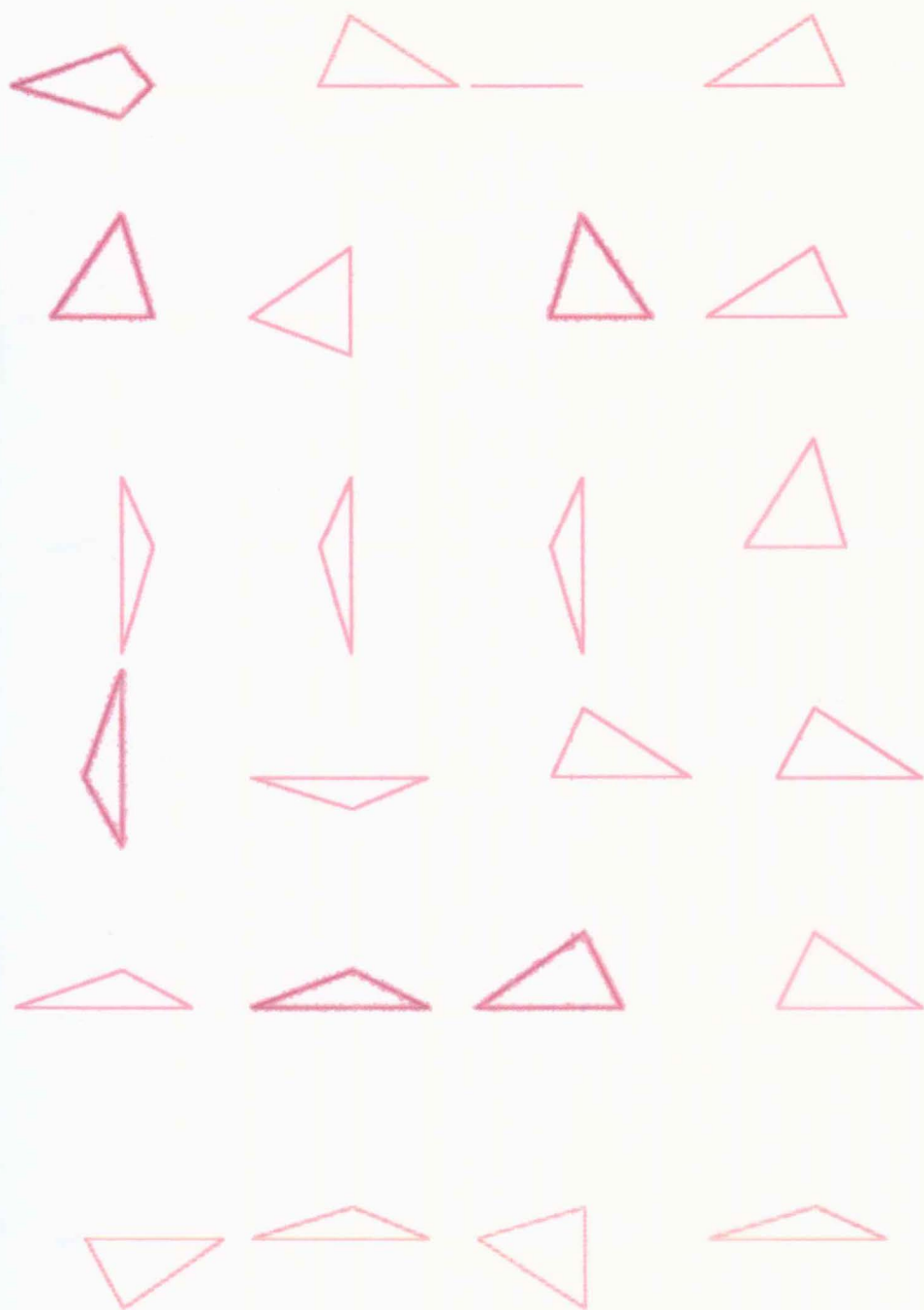


Figure 11: Attributions for failure at Year 8

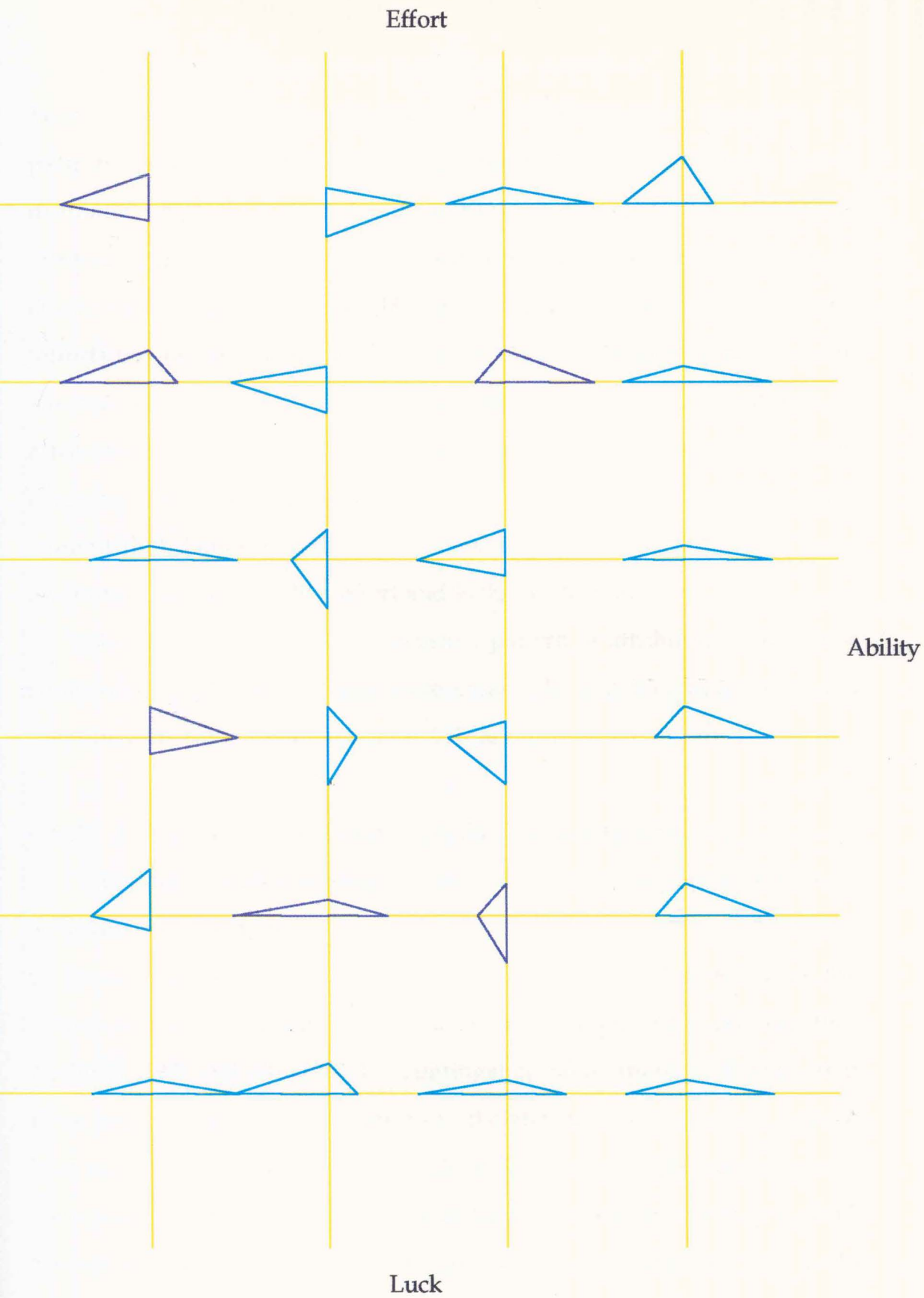


Figure 12: Attributions for failure at Year 7

Three students maintained a consistent pattern of attributions from Year 7 to Year 8. A number of students demonstrated slight changes in the patterns of their attributions for success and there were cases where dramatic changes occurred. Examples of this include NC whose attribution pattern for success changed from effort, luck, task, (3, 2, 1) to effort, ability, luck (3, 2, 1). Her main attribution remained the same (effort) but her secondary attributions changed to become more internal. Another example of a student who demonstrated changed patterns of attributions for success is HJ whose attributions became more internal changing from luck, task, ability (3, 2, 1) to ability, task, effort (3, 2, 1). One student (JC) demonstrated a distinct change in attribution patterns from attributing failure to ability, effort and luck, to effort, luck and task.

No student maintained a consistent pattern of attributions for failure from Year 7 to Year 8. There were cases (SR, LH, KT) where students identified the same three causes for failure but in different ratios.

Gender Differences in Attributions for Success and Failure

Literature relating to students' attributions for success and failure in achievement situations has identified differences in the attributions made by boys and girls. Females are more likely to attribute failure to low ability than males and less likely to attribute success to high ability (Eccles, 1983; Nicholls, 1979; Stipek, 1984c). Contingency table analysis showed that there were no significant differences in the attributions of girls and boys in both success and failure situations at Year 7 and Year 8. [Success at Year 7: chi square = 10.489, $p = .148$; Failure at Year 7: chi square = .899, $p = .8257$; Success at Year 8: chi square = .601, $p = .8962$; and Failure at Year 8: chi square = 6.08, $p = .1078$]. This provides another example of disagreement between the attributions made by the students in this study and those reported in previous studies of students' attributions.

Discussion of Attributions

Poor performance in the early grades leads to negative beliefs which in turn cause maladaptive task behaviour, continued poor performance, and stronger perceptions of incompetence. Dweck (1985) and Schunk (1983, 1984) suggest that children who learn to attribute their successes to high effort and ability and their failures to lack of effort generally perform better than children who attribute their successes to some external cause such as luck, and their failure to low ability. This relationship between beliefs and achievements is probably bi-directional.

Effort was the main source to which students attributed academic success in Year 7, and girls attributed their success to effort more often than did boys who attributed success to luck. This matches the general pattern of attributions described in the literature with boys attributing success to external factors and girls attributing success to internal factors (Stipek, 1993).

Changes in the patterns of attribution emerged in Year 8. While students considered the major source of success to be effort, the number of students who selected this decreased and the role of external factors such as task and luck took on a greater salience in the eyes of the students. In both Year 7 and 8 ability was seldom identified by students as the reason for their academic success. In contrast to this Nicholls (1985) suggests that ability is more frequently viewed as the reason for academic success than any other factor.

At both Year 7 and Year 8, students attributed failure to the factors lack of effort and luck. Attributing failure to these factors is a healthy attributional pattern as it means that students will be willing to attempt similar future tasks expecting success if they try harder or are lucky.

The order of importance of these factors changed from Year 7 to Year 8. At Year 7 failure was attributed to lack of effort by 42% of the group and

to luck by 29% of the group. At Year 8, failure was attributed to lack of effort by 21% of the group and to luck by 50% of the group. This finding is in direct contrast to Mason and Stipek (1989, p. 62) who chose not to analyse luck in their study of stability of attributions because "students do not perceive it as an important cause of academic outcomes." Attributing failure to luck is not very adaptive as it suggests that students do not believe that they have the power to affect their performance.

In general, the literature relating to attributions states that girls are more likely than boys to attribute failure to lack of ability. The small numbers of students who attributed failure to lack of ability in this study does not allow a clear judgment to be made in this area. However, it would seem that the findings of this study support this aspect of the literature.

At Year 7, effort appeared to play a particularly salient role in students' interpretations of academic performance situations. This may be related to the primary school system where much value is placed on participation, and the strength of messages received from teachers about the importance of "trying hard" and "giving it a go". In contrast to this Harter Whitesell and Kowalski (1992) suggest that increased competition in secondary school places greater emphasis on achievement and hence ability. In this situation this was not the case as these students placed greater emphasis on the role of luck, specifying a range of factors outside their control.

Mason and Stipek (1989) found that students' academic performance, task behaviour and a number of achievement related cognitions were stable over one year. In their investigation of students' attributions they found that attributing success to ability was stable from one year to another and attributing success to an easy task was somewhat stable. Attributing failure to low ability was stable from one year to another as was attributing

failure to the task. This study found that students viewed luck as an important cause of achievement outcomes and that attributing success to luck was stable from one year to the next and that attributing success to an easy task was somewhat stable. Attributing failure to luck was also stable from one year to another.

This study found that some aspects of students' attributions for academic success and failure did not match the findings for previous research literature. There are several possible explanations which emerge for this phenomenon. The first, in relation to the factors to which students attribute their success and failure suggests that there are perhaps sociocultural differences which impact on the ways in which Australian students make attributions. There is some support for this in the existing literature (Chan, 1992; Henderson & Dweck, 1990; Stevenson, Lee & Stigler, 1986; Stipek, 1993). The students in this study came from middle class predominantly white, first generation Australian families. Their background was generally one of immigrant families for whom the move to Australia meant the opportunity for success with hard work. It is likely that this cultural belief about the value of effort in achieving success has been internalised by the students.

Alternatively, the sample used in this study was of students performing at an average academic level. These students may view their success and failures differently to students previously surveyed. The existing literature tends to focus on the attributions of high and low performing students showing that differences exist between those two groups of students. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that differences would also emerge when the group is comprised of "average" performers. These findings suggest that there is a need for a larger scale investigation of Australian students' attributions in academic situations. Additional support for the need for further investigation is provided by situations

which emerged when students described their attributions. In many cases while students selected a particular attributional factor to explain their success or failure, the verbal explanation which they provided did not seem to match the meaning which the researcher ascribed to the factor.

Strategy Use

Introduction

Rohrkemper and Corno (1988) argue the importance of adaptive learning, or the ability of the learner to cope with, and modify stressful situations allowing them to take greater control of their own learning. The traditional classroom requires students to perform a range of imposed tasks and the match between the learner and the task is often missing. If students are able to adapt themselves, the task and the learning situation they will be better placed to take advantage of learning opportunities. In the transition from primary to secondary school it would seem likely that students who possess and use adaptive capabilities will be able to adapt more effectively to the new learning situation and respond more appropriately in learning situations.

Data relating to students' adaptive capabilities were collected by asking students to describe how they would respond in hypothetical academic situations where they were unable to continue with a problem or "got stuck" on something. They were then presented with a mathematics problem and asked to select from a range of paired optional responses: ask (the teacher or friend) for help; give up; and use a particular strategy (such as remembering a previous similar problem). Students could score between 0 and 2 for each of the responses, depending on how often they selected a particular response. Students were then asked to indicate whether their response would be different if it was a subject other

than mathematics. Table 15 presents students' responses to problem situations at Year 7 and 8.

Table 15

Students' Use of Strategies at Years 7 and 8

	N = 24			
	Get help	Strategy	Give up	Total
Year 7	15	7	2	24
Year 8	10	7	7	24

Year Seven

At Year 7 the most common response to "getting stuck" on a problem was to seek assistance from the teacher or a friend, and students generally reported that they would get help from the teacher "because [he] knows more than kids" (MF). However, some students reported feeling more comfortable when they sought help from a friend. Seven students reported that they would employ a strategy of some type, either, "I'd think about other things I've done that are like that." (RC), or "break it down into small steps and do it a bit at time." (OT) Two students reported that their general approach was to leave the source of difficulty and go on to other work or questions. Twenty two students reported that their response would be the same regardless of the subject area.

Year Eight

At Year 8 level, 10 students reported that their response to getting stuck on a problem would be to seek help from a teacher or friend. This time more students reported that they would ask a friend for help than the teacher. The most commonly given explanations for this were, "It's too

hard to get the teacher's attention, you have to wait too long." (FN) and "I wouldn't ask the teacher for help, they make you feel bad about it." (JC) The use of strategies similar to those used in Year 7 was reported by seven students. There was an increase in the number of students who reported that they would give up on the problem or task. Reasons provided for this included, "It doesn't really matter, you have to get it finished" (DE) and "If I don't know how to do it why waste time?"(EL). Teacher personalities were given as an explanation for students reporting different responses depending on subject area.

Discussion of Strategy Use

Taking responsibility for dealing with a problem situation is viewed as the most important aspect of being an adaptive learner. The responses which learners may make to a problem include changing the task, changing themselves or changing the situation (Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988). Getting help is classified as changing the situation, and while this is an adaptive response it is not one that empowers the learner. Employing a strategy of some type or changing the task or self is a more empowering approach.

At both Years 7 and 8 students were most likely to ask for assistance from either the teacher or a peer. While this may be a useful short term tactic, the long term effectiveness of it depends on the nature of assistance received, and whether it provides the learner with information that can be used in the future or simply the correct answer.

The number of students who employed some form of strategy remained stable over the transition. However, within this group of students changes occurred in the composition of the group. Only three students who reported that they would employ a strategy at Year 7 reported that they would employ a strategy of some type at Year 8. Of the

students who reported that they had altered their responses in Year 8, two changed from using a strategy to getting assistance and two reported that they would now give up on the task.

The number of students who reported that they would seek help declined as more students reported that they would give up and go on to other work. Of the fifteen students who reported at Year 7 that their response would be to seek assistance, seven reported that their response would be the same at Year 8. The other students changed their behaviour in Year 8 and four reported that they would use a strategy and four reported that they would give up. In most cases this meant that the problem was abandoned rather than put aside and attempted at a later time. Students justified this by calling on the speed and volume of work that was required of them and the emphasis placed on the completion and submission of work. It would seem that the classroom environment, particularly the assessment environment of the secondary school mitigated against the development of adaptive capabilities.

Few of the students in this study demonstrated particularly adaptive behaviours. Those who reported the use of strategies employed lower level responses. Students reported non self-regulated behaviours at Year 8. Their statements suggested a lack of personal initiative and of strategies and demonstrated low levels of awareness of metacognitive processes and strategies. Students were not able to identify or articulate the strategies that they would use, or to explain them in any detail. They exhibited similar behaviour when attempting to talk about their attributions, particularly in relation to explaining what was involved in "trying hard". It seems that students either lacked the declarative knowledge about strategies that would enable them to talk about strategy use, or the procedural knowledge that allowed them to put them strategies in place.

The use of strategies was not the only aspect of their academic lives that students seemed to lack the ability to conceptualise and articulate. Students demonstrated little reflection on their own performance, the reasons for performance and strategies for changing performance. They appeared to have little awareness of themselves as learners. This lack of knowledge and awareness of their cognitive and metacognitive processes limits students' ability to adapt to new learning situations and to respond appropriately.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Introduction

All 24 students were interviewed three times between October and November in their final year of primary school. The initial interviews with students focused on their perceptions of primary school, and their expectations for their secondary school experience. Subsequent interviews explored their knowledge about secondary school, their concerns, anticipations and beliefs about what would be important in the secondary setting.

Attitudes Towards School

Students reported generally positive responses towards school. Ten students liked school "most of the time" and twelve said that they liked it "some of the time". Those who reported that they sometimes liked school explained this in relation to the subject or what was currently happening. All students were resigned to the fact that they had to attend school and some reported that it was a good venue for making and meeting with friends and that it gave them something to do.

There was a commonly expressed sentiment about the importance of doing well in school ($n = 21$). This message had come from parents in

particular, and was related to the need to get a job: "My parents are always telling me how important it is." (OT), and "You hear so much on the news and from your family." (AD) Fourteen students referred to the spectre of unemployment and school performance was seen to be the key to ensuring future employment by twenty students. The three students who expressed contrary views offered personal explanations that related to the state of the economy and lack of employment opportunities regardless of educational qualifications or said that the most important thing was to do their best rather than being academically successful.

Students explained "doing well in school" as getting "good grades" . Good grades were further defined as being more than a pass, but no student was able to describe clearly what this meant. There seemed to be a commonly held view about good grades which could not be clearly articulated. Their responses to specific questions in the interviews suggested that students did not seem to be aware of the fact that different people may hold different views of this "standard". They expressed the belief that everyone would hold the same interpretation, regardless of whether they were students, teachers or parents.

The most frequently cited reasons for being a successful student related to trying hard ($n = 21$), which students described as "doing your best" and "putting in the effort". Factors relating to presentation were mentioned by nineteen students. Students reported that they had been told that presentation and neatness were important if they were to do well. Twelve students reported the belief that well presented work would get higher marks than similar content which was poorly presented. Marks were seen to be gained by trying hard and awarded for neatness and presentation. When questioned further, students were unable to explain what "trying hard" involved or to distinguish between their behaviour in situations when they were putting in effort and situations when they did

not try. Attempts to define effort included personal resolve statements such as spending more time on a task, concentrating harder and "thinking about what I'm doing" (RC). This highlights the previously identified lack of awareness of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Students were unable to describe the processes involved in academic tasks or to use metacognitive knowledge relating to their own task performance.

Beliefs About Academic Performance

The most frequently cited source of information about students' own academic performance was the grade or mark that students received for their work ($n = 23$). These grades came from either teacher-marked work, or from the marks that they had received in self or partner marking situations. Students reported that their teachers provided them with little public or private verbal feedback about their progress or performance. Two female students reported that they reflected on their own performance, their feelings of competence and the amount of trouble that they had performing or completing a task. They used this information in combination with marks and grades to determine their level of academic performance. One male student reported that he compared his performance to others in the class to decide how well he was going. This was done covertly and comparisons were made with others who were seated close to him so that he could unobtrusively gain information about their marks.

Students reported that there was little overt comparison of marks or performance between students. They commented that outside the classroom, conversation was unlikely to be about school work or performance. It seems that not only was there little overt discussion about student performance on the part of the teachers or students but that students gave little thought themselves to their own performance. There

was little evidence of students thinking about their performance in terms of the procedural knowledge that related to appropriate strategies or the conditional knowledge that allowed them to monitor their own performance. The reported behaviour of these students does not agree with the literature that describes students as actively seeking to make sense of the classroom, its instructional practices and climate of assessment. These students appeared to be "naive" learners and their "sense making" appeared to be focused on coping with the procedural demands of the classroom. They appeared to have no sense of what constituted "felt progress", focusing instead on the accountability aspects of learning, (such as results, grades or marks) rather than becoming aware of themselves as learners. This may be because they had not been taught the necessary strategies and had failed to develop them spontaneously, or perhaps have not been in academic situations which have facilitated the development of strategies. Certainly, the reported lack of teacher information about performance expectations and the processes involved in task performance suggest that these aspects of learning had not been made explicit to these students. It may also be that this type of learning behaviour is more typical of "average" performers. Performance may be a function of such behaviour and research suggests that learners who lack the ability to monitor their own progress and adjust their performance appropriately will be disadvantaged (Corno, 1989; Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988).

Students were asked to describe what they thought a "successful" Year 8 student would be like, what types of attributes they would possess and how they would behave. Generally a successful Year 8 student was described as trying hard, listening to the teacher, getting good grades (which were not necessarily A's), completing all homework and being polite in class. Students also suggested that these students would be

popular. Happiness was also frequently cited as a personal attribute. It seems that students had a non specific view of success. While it included academic success, students were not clear about what this would entail, or of particular standards of performance. They were unable to specify what was meant by a student who "tried hard" or to describe specific learning behaviours that would be exhibited by a successful student. The only types of specific behaviours related to personal or classroom behaviours related to being well behaved, polite, listening carefully, not "giving cheek" and being obedient (following rules and teacher directives).

Twenty two students responded that they thought secondary school was important. Their justifications were functional, referring to the need to get good marks in order to gain a job and the importance of school in ensuring functional literacy and numeracy. The two students who did not think that secondary school was important cited relatives or acquaintances who were "self made" and suggested that school marks were not much help in the current economic climate, "It's not what you do in school that's important it's what you do in the real world. Look at all those university students who can't get jobs." (RC) The two students who did not think that secondary school was important had also responded negatively to the question relating to the importance of doing well at secondary school. Their reasons for not valuing school performance were the same as for thinking that academic success was unimportant.

Expectations of Secondary School.

Nineteen students were optimistic about entering secondary school. Eight students saw it as a new start, a chance to work harder and "lift their grades" (FR). The four students who reported being undecided cited both the positive aspects (like a fresh start, making new friends, studying new subjects) and negative features (like leaving old friends and familiar

surroundings) of leaving primary school. The student who reported that she was not looking forward to secondary school did not want to go from being the "top in primary school to the bottom of secondary school" (WD).

Seventeen students believed that secondary school would be better than primary school. Those students who reported that they believed that Year 8 would be better than Year 7 cited the opportunity to make more and new friends, and described secondary school as more fun than primary school. Eight students viewed Year 8 as a chance for a new start, and fourteen students cited specific subjects such as the special dance program and sport. Five students believed that they would be treated as more adult in Year 8 and that this would be better. Two students thought that secondary school would be worse than primary school. Both of them expressed concerns about teasing and bullying, and one was also concerned about no longer being the "top of the school". One student's concerns about bullying resulted from threats made by his brother about what would happen to him at secondary school. The five students who were equivocal about secondary school explained that as they knew little about secondary school, they were not well positioned to make a decision. They expressed some nervousness about being in a new and unfamiliar situation but were reasonably confident that they would cope.

Nineteen students acknowledged that their position as Year 7's made them "top dogs" in the school, gave them access to positions of responsibility such as school council membership and in some cases gave them privileges denied to younger students. While they acknowledged this, and accepted that this position would be reversed next year only two of them were concerned about this. Five students expressed relief at no longer having to be the responsible ones who set the standard and three noted that despite the rhetoric of responsibility they perceived that they were still treated as "babies" by teachers at primary school. All students

believed that they would be treated in a more mature way in secondary school.

The social aspects of secondary school featured strongly in all students' comments, with particular reference to the opportunity to make new friends. Secondary school was viewed as a place where making friends was important and the prospect of making new and more friends was anticipated. Students believed that they would keep their existing friendships particularly those which were long standing and would make new friends among other Year 8's and older students. Bullying was not seen as being of particular concern to this group of students who explained that while it may happen to some students it was most likely to occur among particular groups of students to which they did not belong. This contrasts with the findings of more general studies of transition (Garton, 1986; Mertin, Haebich & Lokan, 1989) where concerns about bullying and intimidation featured strongly.

Knowledge of secondary school.

Generally, students reported that they did not know much about secondary school. Only three students believed that they knew a lot about secondary school. When they discussed what they knew in the interview, their knowledge related to being familiar with the school buildings from previous visits, and having friends in the secondary school, hence "knowing people". They had little information about the subjects that were available or the way in which the school operated. Thirteen students reported that they knew "a bit" about secondary school and eight students didn't know anything about secondary school life. Many of them ($n = 20$) said that they had not really thought about it and had not sought out information.

The nature of sources of students' information about secondary school were investigated. Eighteen students had received information about what secondary school would be like from their Year 7 teachers. This had been in the form of warnings about the difficulty of work that would be experienced next year or exhortations to pay attention because it would be necessary to know material or skills for next year. Those students with older siblings or friends already at the secondary school said that they did not talk to them about school or ask questions about what to expect. Ten of these students reported covert observation of siblings' or relatives' behaviour noting details about the amount of homework, level of difficulty of texts and so on.

Student concerns about secondary school.

Students were asked to explain any concerns that they may have about the transition to secondary school and about the secondary school experience. Generally, students believed that their experiences at primary school had prepared them adequately for dealing with a number of different teachers at secondary school. At primary school while classes were primarily taught by one teacher Year 7 classes are also taught by a number of specialist teachers so that in most cases these students had been taught regularly by five or six different teachers. As a result of this twenty one students were confident that changing teachers would not present them with any major problems, "We change teachers a lot as it is." (JC), "No, all teachers want pretty much the same thing." (MI), "All schools and teachers are the same." (RC)

Three students believed that changing teachers would cause them problems and cited reasons such as "My teacher knows me now." (OI) No boys stated that they believed that they would experience any problems as a result of having a large number of teachers at secondary school. Many

students also expressed a preference for being taught by more than one teacher supporting this with explanations relating to teacher personality rather than teacher expertise or style.

Students believed that the work that they would be doing in secondary school would be substantially harder and the workload heavier, especially the homework demands. Students had little idea of the way in which the classroom environment would operate, how the teacher would behave or learning take place. While they expressed some concern about being able to deal with the work which they believed would be harder, all of the students believed that if they worked hard they would be able to achieve successful grades. There was no significant difference in the concerns of boys and girls. This is in contrast to the research of Garton (1986) and Martin, Haebich and Lokan (1989) who found that these anxieties relating to negative views of academic work were greater for boys than girls.

Summary

The strongest flavour emerging from the interviews with students was one of optimism and the opportunity for a new start. Students were looking forward to all aspects of secondary school. They acknowledged some sorrow at leaving behind old friends and the strength of seven years experience in a school. This was overcome by anticipation at the thought of the improved facilities and resources, opportunities to make new friendships, study new subjects and be treated in a more adult fashion. They expected that the work at secondary school would be harder, more interesting and challenging and that they would receive more homework than in primary school. These are similar to the findings of previous research transition (Fouracre, 1991; Garton, 1986; Power & Cotterell, 1981). However, some differences emerge in relation to this group's responses to

questions about specific aspects of secondary school. The students surveyed by Garton, reported reasonably high levels of concern about bullying, but this was not a concern of the students interviewed in this study.

Students knew little about secondary school and had a number of queries about the nature of subjects and the type of academic work that would be required of them. The major sources of information for Year 7 students were their primary school teachers and their parents. Teachers and parents told them that secondary school was important and that they would be given large amounts of difficult work. Students reported that they received little information about secondary school from siblings or friends because school was not a common conversational topic. The little knowledge students had about secondary school had been provided by sources who were unlikely to have accurate or current knowledge of the secondary school system.

Experiences of Secondary School

Introduction

Students were interviewed three times during their first semester of secondary school. The initial interview focused on their first impressions of the school setting, classes and teachers. Subsequent interviews explored their experiences, their beliefs about what was important in secondary school and the ways in which they interpreted their experiences. This section reports the group's responses to secondary school. Individual case study students' perceptions and interpretations are reported in Chapter Six.

First Impressions

Students were interviewed at the end of their first week in secondary school. Questions focused on their first reactions and responses to the new school setting. Twenty students reported positive responses to the secondary school which focused on everyday routines such as finding their way around larger school grounds, remembering locker combinations and locations, reading a timetable and re-establishing old friendships. Many were pleasantly surprised that organisational aspects of the change such as moving around the school had caused less trouble than anticipated. Students reported that everyone, including older students had been helpful and understanding, showing them the way and providing assistance.

At this stage of the year students had received little formal teaching and had received mainly administrative information about assessment and behavioural expectations from their teachers. Already many ($n = 21$) of them had adopted the external characteristics of the student role, wearing clothing acceptable to the student culture (but not strictly school uniform), carrying the "right sort" of bag and so on. When questioned about how they knew how to behave in situations such as greeting the teacher at the beginning of class and lining up outside the room, ten students reported that they had observed others around the school or hesitated until they could observe what others in the class or around them were doing. These sorts of behavioural rules about the role of a secondary school student had not been made explicit to them but had been adopted by observation of student models around them.

All students reported receiving little homework and little indication of what to expect regarding the level of difficulty and amount of work involved in their subjects. Twenty students reported that teachers had made clear their management expectations regarding submission of work,

and assignment and homework demands. However, no students were aware of the standards of academic performance expected and reported having received little information from teachers about this. It may be that teachers assumed that students would "do their best", but Biggs and Moore (1993) and Brophy (1994) suggest that specifying criteria for task performance reduces the ambiguity of the task and allows students to approach the task more confidently. The communication of such teacher expectations is critical for students who wish to meet the task demands of the situation.

Subsequent Interviews

Subsequent interviews explored academic aspects of secondary school such as homework, difficulty of work, task performance standards and academic performance. Home work was interpreted to include the completion of tasks begun in class, completion of additional similar tasks set specifically as homework or projects and assignments such as mathematics investigations for which no time was provided in class. As the year progressed eighteen students expressed surprise at the level of homework that they were receiving. Despite their expectations that they would have more homework than at primary school, students were discovering that the homework demands being placed on them were lighter than they expected. Initially, eight students suggested that this may have been because the teachers were letting them settle in, but as the year progressed, and the situation remained the same they accepted the fact that little homework was set. In many cases homework consisted of completing unfinished class work, therefore a student who worked in class could avoid much homework.

The only exception to this response came from the six students who had attended primary school 2A where the teacher had adopted a policy of

setting no homework. These students, not surprisingly found that the homework demands now being placed on them caused some difficulty with relation to time management, particularly when extended assignments, or assignments in which no class time was allowed were involved. "We never had homework last year and now it's really hard to make myself sit down and do it." (TI), "We didn't get any (homework) last year so it doesn't have to be much to be more." (HJ)

Students reported that when completion of unfinished class work was set as homework, then the level of homework was higher than in the previous year. However, they noted that in this case they had some control over how much work had to be completed at home because they decided how much work they completed in class, "It's mainly finishing work off from class. If I did more work in class I wouldn't have to finish off at home. I don't really care." (JC) Students expressed surprise that the homework demands were lighter than they had expected, "I'm really surprised." (MF), and "My brother seemed to get more last year." (AD) Students seldom completed work at home or set themselves work to do which was not required by the teacher. Only two students reported that they would complete work that was not going to be collected or assessed, "I know I should do other work but I don't. I only do it if the teacher is going to collect it or if it counts towards grades." (NI) Students commented on the volume of work that they received in class but expressed little concern at being unable to complete all work because only tasks that were used for assessment appeared to be valued.

While the independent setting of personal out of school work was not a formal school expectation, it was an informal expectation of teachers that students would be self-regulating and able to initiate school related work independently. The ability to be a self-regulated learner, monitoring personal performance and putting in place actions that compensate for any

shortcomings is viewed as desirable (Biggs & Moore, 1993). Surface approaches to learning are typified by behaviours which include not reading beyond the work which is set by the teacher and reliance on rote learning of information. Such a surface approach is self limiting and usually adopted by learners who simply want to satisfy the demands of the system. The ability to change tasks to make them more interesting and challenging is a dimension of adaptive learning behaviour which facilitates learners dealing more effectively with new and difficult learning environments. (Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988).

Students who adopt a deep approach to learning are more likely to set their own homework if none is set or to extend the work which is set to include aspects that are of personal interest or which facilitate their own understanding of the topic. The extensive research into approaches to learning and their relationship to learning shows the surface approach is negatively related to performance (Moore & Telfer 1990; Ramsden & Entwistle 1981), while the deep approach leads to more complex response (Biggs, 1989), and achieving approaches are related positively to achievement (Watkins & Hattie, 1990).

Another feature that caused students much initial and subsequent surprise was the level of difficulty of work that they experienced. Twenty two students described class work as being the same as, or easier than Year 7 work. Many students described it as work they had done before. Again, students attempted to explain the situation in terms of teachers letting them settle in or giving the teacher the opportunity to find out what they could do. However, over the course of the year students expressed some disappointment and boredom at doing the same level of work, "I was surprised that the work wasn't harder, this is pretty boring." (AD) These comments are similar to those reported by Fouracre (1991). This is similar to the findings of Powell (1982) who found that Year 8 students regarded

secondary school mathematics as a boring repetition of what had already been covered.

Three students were pleased about repeating previous work as this gave them the opportunity to improve their skills and understanding. They believed that the extra exposure to the work was beneficial, "Doing the same work as last year means it's like a review, that means I can get the work right." (FR)

By the third interview, students who were in the highest pathways described the workload as heavier and pace of instruction as faster than previous work. However, they did not perceive it to be more conceptually difficult, "We do more work and we do it faster. But it isn't harder. Not like the difference between say Year 6 and Year 7." (SR), "Like in maths sometimes when we do new work it seems hard but it really isn't. It's just because it's new. It's keeping up with the work that's hard." (NC). Students viewed new work as more challenging than work with which they were familiar.

Seventeen students suggested that basically all schools were the same, "School's school. They're all the same." (MI). However, they identified a number of differences between primary and secondary school. These included obvious physical differences such as specialist rooms with appropriate facilities for particular subjects such as science, art and dance. Students also acknowledged the wider range of subjects that they were now studying "Well, we get to do different subjects. Especially dance, but there's 'home ec.' and industrial arts that we didn't do." (OT), "We never did any art last year, this year we do." (TI).

Twenty students reported that teacher instructional behaviour was different from that which they had become familiar with at primary school. Again, the speed of instruction and amount of content covered were identified as major differences. Students reported that the teachers

presented work in a way that made it seem "more important", and that there was a greater use of individual work and working from textbooks:

We do much more work on our own. The teacher just tells us what to do and we go on with it."(MF),

"We just work out of our book or worksheets. We do so many worksheets." (AD),

"The teachers here don't seem to talk much to kids. They just tell us what to do."(MI).

Students reported little use of cooperative or group work methods and described most class sessions as comprising some teacher instruction or demonstration followed by students working on individual seatwork activities, "We don't do much group work. Actually we don't really do any here." (FR) Students described the classrooms and instruction as being far more individual "We do more work and more work on our own."(FN). This related to the nature of tasks and work as well as the lack of group reward systems or identity. The group performance of science experiments was the only example provided of situations where students worked cooperatively.

Twenty students believed that most secondary school teachers treated all students in the same way. Students had a generalised view of teachers and teacher behaviour, explained as being "the way that teachers treat kids" (OI) and "Teachers are teachers. They really all expect the same sort of things." (MI) Some teachers were seen as stricter or less fair than others. Students made these decisions on the basis of aspects of teacher behaviour relating to homework and imposition of sanctions and penalties for late or non-submission. Again, the role of assessment was important. Andrew expressed a strongly held view that, "There are some teachers who are really strict and unfair. They pick on kids." However, this view was not widely held.

Twenty students believed that teachers treated them in the same way at secondary school as they had been at primary school and expressed some surprise at this, "I thought we'd be treated more adult but we're not really. . . . just not having to say good morning." (FN). However, nine of these students believed that this was another example of typical teacher behaviour, "We get treated just like teachers treat kids." (DE) Those students who believed that teachers treated them differently suggested that certain teachers were unfair and made personalised judgments, relating to their own experiences, "Some teachers are really mean, Ms C was fair and not mean." (AD)

Beliefs About Secondary School

Students were asked to describe what they believed was important about secondary school, and the types of messages that they had received from teachers, parents and peers. Twenty three students believed that doing well in secondary school was important and again they supported this belief with reference to the economic situation:

It's important to do well if you want to get a job. It's a jungle out there" (TQ),

"You hear so much about unemployment on the TV and from parents that you have to get good marks if you want to have any chance of getting a job at the end."(AD),

"Good marks are important for a job at the end. That's more important than feeling good about what you do."(NI)

Not all students believed that it was important to get good marks. Three students reported that they believed that just getting through and avoiding failure was all that was required, "I don't care about doing really well. I just don't want to fail." (JC)

When asked about the messages that they were receiving about working at secondary school, five students expressed disappointment and said that if they were only being asked to produce last year's work then there was no point in trying. There was also a belief developing that the important thing about doing work at secondary school was to finish it and hand it in. Submitting work on time was seen as more important than doing the best possible job by 21 students. Stipek (1986) suggests that emphasis on submission and the imposition of penalties can have an adverse effect on students' achievement motivation because of the attention focused on submission at the expense of quality work. In addition to this it seems that such an emphasis conveys clear messages to students regarding the aspects of school work that are valued by teachers and the system.

Students were questioned about the standard of work that they were now submitting and their perceptions of the important aspects of working at secondary school. Nineteen students admitted that they had submitted work this year that they would not have handed in at primary school and this was attributed to the pressure to submit work on time. The penalties imposed for late submission were seen to outweigh the benefits derived from spending more time to produce good quality work:

I know that I've handed in work that I wouldn't have handed in to my teacher last year. (WD),

You lose too many marks if you hand it in late. It's not worth taking extra time to do a better job. (NI),

Getting work in on time is important, it's more important than in primary school. And it's more important than doing a good job at the expense of getting it in on time. (NC)

Beliefs About Academic Performance

Students were questioned about various aspects of their perceptions of their academic performance. Questions related to their awareness of their performance, the criteria against which performance was assessed and their interpretations of the academic "culture" of the secondary school.

While the assessment system had been explained to students and they were aware of its importance, they had little understanding of how it operated. Students had a clear knowledge of the hierarchy of grades and equated them to grades awarded in primary school, but there was little understanding of what was involved in achieving each grade. Students did not know what aspects of work marks and grades were awarded for, and despite expressing a desire to improve grades they did not know what to do to achieve higher grades. The common response was a will power statement that involved no strategy. Students said they would "try harder" to get a better grade, but were unable to describe specific behaviours related to this response. They reported receiving little specific feedback from teachers about the strengths and weaknesses of their work, and little information about the aspects of work that were most important. One student stated that she would set her own criteria for task performance. However, this response was not informed or related to the teacher's performance standards, "I wouldn't listen even if they told me what I had to do. I'd do what I wanted." (M1)

Students used various sources of information to make decisions about their progress. In some cases they had received interim reports for certain subjects. Responses varied between students and within students, depending on the subject involved and the amount of feedback that individual teachers provided. In subjects such as home economics, industrial arts, art and business communication where students had

classes only once a week it was common for them to have little idea of their progress. All students frequently mentioned that they found it difficult to approach teachers or to find a convenient time to ask about progress or discuss problems, "It's harder to see the teachers and talk about how we're going." (NI), "Some teachers don't seem to want us to ask what we've done well or badly." (HJ) However, one student identified teacher practices that she found helpful in informing her about the requirements for various grades, "Our English teacher puts 'A' work up on the board. That's really helpful to me. I wish other teachers would do this. We usually just get a mark and we don't know which bits were good." (TI)

Fourteen students reported that they did not understand the assessment process or the meaning of various grades. Similarly seventeen students were unable to name the pathway they were in or the number of the unit that they were studying. Whether this is because they had not been informed, had not paid attention or did not care is not clear. However, generally students in the lower pathways were least aware of their placement so it may be that teachers of these students do not make them aware of the status of the pathway or that the students choose not to acknowledge this fact.

Several students had just experienced changes in their pathways and reported that this had provided them with information about their progress in those subjects:

I got put up to pathway 1 that must mean I'm doing okay. (NC),
I got moved to pathway 2 for English. I'm glad because the work was too hard, there was so much of it that I couldn't do it. This is better. (JC),
I would rather be in pathway 2 and getting A's than getting C's in pathway 1. (WD).

These students based their decisions about their progress on the marks that they received from their teachers. They appeared unable to make their own judgments about their progress through self evaluation and self monitoring of performance and were reliant on information from an external source to inform them of their progress. These students appeared passive, not engaging in any behaviours or strategies to monitor their own performance.

Most of the students were satisfied with the marks and grades that they received, believing them to be fair and to reflect the effort that they had put into the work. Students who believed they were making satisfactory progress accounted for it in a number of ways, all of which related to the level of difficulty of the work or familiarity with the work, "It's been easier than I thought." (KT), "I never thought it would be this easy." (JC), "I've done all this work before. Of course I'm doing well." (MF).

By half way through the first semester several instances had emerged of students who had decided not to work. One of these was a girl who did not like school and was part of a peer group in which academic performance was not valued, "It's not cool to do well in school. I don't want to fail but I don't care about doing well. I'm happy with a C." (JC) Another was a girl who had previously set and achieved secondary standards for herself. She had stopped trying in response to the level of work which she perceived she was being asked to perform, "If they are only going to ask me to do last year's work why should I try?" (MF) The sentiment, "I only really try hard on work that's going to be assessed" (NI) was commonly expressed and is possibly a reflection of the evaluative climate of the secondary school. Students expressed disappointment at a number of the academic aspects of secondary school including lack of challenge and interest in assigned work, but did this in a resigned manner.

There was no sense of outrage that they were not receiving instruction in challenging content or that they were being "cheated" in some way. Rather, they seemed to adopt a passive student role in which they unquestioningly accepted the events that they experienced.

Summary

The students were actively trying to piece together the messages that they were receiving from teachers, peers, school administrators and parents. In addition to this they were attempting to relate their experiences to their expectations and often discovered contradictions and mismatches. While their expectations had focused positively on the academic aspects of secondary school these were not matched by their experiences. Rather than being challenged by their learning tasks they were confronted with work of the same level they had previously done. Their experiences with new subjects had been generally positive but there was a sense of disillusionment with academic aspects of secondary school which had failed to live up to expectations. This was not accompanied by any strength of emotion, rather students accepted their role in a resigned manner. In addition to this was a more serious outcome. Ten students had responded to their perception of the academic demands of secondary school by adopting a more negative attitude to schoolwork. This was magnified by an internalisation of the message about handing work in on time taking precedence over quality and effort.

The actions of these students in trying to make sense of the world of secondary school focused on the "surface" messages and aspects of schooling. They identified and reacted to obvious teacher messages about submission of work but had made little progress in analysing their own performance or identifying the standards of work that were expected of them. Where students identified a work standard it tended to be minimal

and students did not appear to employ strategies that helped them to adapt to secondary school. In many cases they replicated the behaviours of primary school. There was a strong sense of passivity as students did not exert effort to discover what was required of them or to develop an awareness of themselves as learners.

The experiences of these students reflect similar themes to those identified in previous studies (Cotterell, 1979; Cotterell, 1981; Power & Cotterell 1981). It seems that the process of transition from primary to secondary school is simple and untraumatic for those involved. Students believed that they had made the change effectively and within a short time frame, "Really, all schools are the same" (JC). Their major concerns had been with the organisational aspects of the change, dealing with a new physical location and new teachers.

Students had approached the move to secondary school optimistically and their expectations targeted the academic aspects of the new school situation. It is in this area that the greatest disappointment resulted. Students did not believe that they had received more challenging or difficult work, the work and homework loads were no heavier than primary school and some of the messages about performance served to demotivate students. Although this has been reported in previous studies (Fouracre, 1991; Garton, 1986; Powell, 1982) it seems that little has been done to change this situation.

The social side of schooling continued to be viewed positively by students who took the opportunity to make new friendships and continue old ones. There was a generally held belief that other students at all levels of the school had been helpful and supportive. Students reported that older students had been helpful in providing assistance in finding their way around the school in the early days and that there had been no occurrences that communicated messages about the inferiority of Year 8's

in the school structure. No student reported experiences involving intimidation or bullying and this seemed to play no part in their experiences of secondary school.

It would seem from this that the aspects of secondary school where the reality is inferior to the expectation are those instructional features which are most under the control of teachers. These are the areas of concern. If students respond to the new situation by withdrawing or diminishing their efforts and seeing school in a less positive light, then the effect on their future academic performance and opportunity will be detrimental. There is also a lack of knowledge on the part of students who wish to achieve well about exactly what they have to do in order to improve their grades or achieve positive outcomes. Students enter secondary school with inadequate cognitive maps of assessment and content and this is exacerbated by lack of information about the criteria and demands of the new situation.

Those areas of the transition from primary to secondary school where the reality was equal to, or better than students' expectations were those where there was less teacher involvement. Non-academic areas such as socialisation were viewed positively by students. It also seems that the organisational aspects of the transition were effectively handled by the schools involved but the larger issues of teacher expectations and student academic achievement require attention.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the data relating to the group of students as they made the transition from primary to secondary school. Little positive change occurred in students' academic achievement as measured by the MSE tests. Interview data show that students were optimistic about the move to secondary school and expected that academic work in secondary

school would be different, interesting and challenging. Their experiences in the secondary school led them to believe that the work was no more interesting or challenging than in primary school and they interpreted clear messages about the importance of submitting work rather than doing the best job possible. Students described the transition as relatively painless and all expressed initial satisfaction with secondary school. However, for some the "honeymoon period" was brief and by the end of the first term a degree of dissatisfaction had emerged. With the exception of one female student whose academic performance improved students reported dissatisfaction or boredom and negative attitudes towards schoolwork began to manifest themselves. Students believed that they were performing well but many attributed this to the level of difficulty of the work. In addition few students had knowledge of the nature and function of secondary assessment practices and none could describe what was required in task performance. Students' attributions for success and failure became more external suggesting that students felt less control over their performance in achievement related situations.

It would seem that these students interpreted particular messages about the importance of schooling in general and aspects of achievement in particular. These messages, communicated via instructional content, practices and teacher behaviour, suggested to students that the first year of secondary school (at least) was not a time of academic challenge. Students were faced with academic tasks which they believed to be of the same level of difficulty or easier than the previous year and were given little information about assessment criteria. In addition, the emphasis on handing work in on time was interpreted by students to mean that quality of work was of less importance than prompt submission. Students appeared to respond to these messages by developing less positive

attitudes towards learning and school and accepting less responsibility for their academic outcomes.

This chapter has presented the data for the group, and of necessity generalisations have been made. Chapter Six will present case study student data which will allow greater exploration of the relationship between student experiences, cognitions about learning and success, and their affective responses to the situation.

CHAPTER SIX

Case Study Data: Results and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter summarises the results from the case study data collection. The six cases provide examples of the ways in which students experienced and interpreted the shift from primary to secondary school and the resulting changes in dimensions of the constructs of self-regulated learning and motivation. Data on each of these students are presented and discussed under the following headings: Background, expectations and experiences of secondary school, academic performance, teacher and self performance ratings, attributions for success and failure, and use of strategies.

The Cases

Six case studies were selected from the group of 24 target students. Case study students were selected after the second interview in Year 7. Criteria for selection included membership of the group of students in the study, the level of reflection demonstrated by students, their beliefs about school in general and secondary school in particular, and primary school teachers' predictions about their capacity to adapt successfully to secondary school. Attempts were made to achieve a gender balance in selection and to maintain equal representation from feeder primary schools. The final selection of cases included four girls and two boys representing eight classes from four feeder primary schools. Table 16 presents a summary of data relating to cases.

Table 16

Summary of Case Data at Years 7 and 8

Name	Class	MSE Test Scores				Attributions		Strategy	Gender	Risk
		English		Mathematics						
		read	write	meas	space	num	succ	fail		
Year 7										
Neoma	1A **30	**14		6	10	14	E	L	H	F Low
Robert	1B 28	9		6	7	9	E	E	S	M Cope
Michelle	2A 21	10		6	5	16	T	E	H	F High
Janene	3A 24	7		8	13	18	E	A	H	F Low
Felicity	3C 26	7		3	7	10	E	L	H	F Cope/Hi
Andrew	4A **40	6		5	5	17	L	L	H	M Cope/Hi
Year 8										
Neoma	**34	**16		14	12	15	E	L	S	F
Robert	28	7		12	9	16	T	E	G	M
Michelle	19	7		10	9	14	T	L	S	F
Janene	26	7		12	12	16	T	E	H	F
Felicity	27	9		9	7	9	A	A	H	F
Andrew	**38	*4		10	10	13	E	L	G	M

Note: Attributions: A: ability, T: task, E: effort, L: luck

Strategy: H: get help (from teacher or friend), S: attempt strategy, G: give up

** denotes performance above the benchmark

* denotes performance below the benchmark

Teacher Interviews

Year 7 teachers were interviewed about each of the case study student's academic performance, academic behaviours, participation style, and ability to adapt to secondary school. They were also questioned about their own approach to teaching and their beliefs about the academic demands that secondary school was likely to place on students. Year 8 teachers were interviewed about their own beliefs about the skills and capabilities of Year 8 students in general, their expectations for Year 8 students and their approach to teaching. They were also interviewed about each case student's academic performance and in-class behaviours. Teacher interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Student Interviews

In Year 7 students were interviewed about their expectations about secondary school, learning behaviours, beliefs about school and school learning, achievement related goals and knowledge about secondary school. The semi-structured interviews included hypothetical situations in which students encountered problems in learning situations. Students were asked to describe their responses in the situation selecting from *ask for help, use a strategy or give up*. Following this they were asked to explain whether this was their normal response to difficulties and to explain the factors that would affect their choice of action. Students were also asked to rate their own classroom performance in relation to their peers and to describe the information upon which they had based their decision. Information relating to students' attributions was collected by asking students to remember instances where they had received higher and lower marks than they had expected. After describing the particular example they selected the attributional cause that they believed

responsible for the outcome. Following this they were asked if this was usually the reason why they performed well or poorly.

In Year 8 students were interviewed about their immediate and subsequent responses to secondary school, learning behaviours, beliefs about school and school learning, and achievement related goals. In the semi-structured interviews they completed similar activities relating to attributions, self perceptions of achievement and use of adaptive behaviours as they had completed the previous year.

Case One: Neoma

Background

Neoma was in class 1A. Her classroom teacher was a male with twelve years teaching experience. Neoma was the oldest child in her family, she was a student councillor and was described as being well organised and responsible. She was observed to have very good "people skills" interacting comfortably with the researcher, teachers, school visitors and younger members of the school. Her career goals encompassed a desire to be a doctor or physiotherapist.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Expectations of secondary school.

In the first interview Neoma reported that she was looking forward to secondary school because "that means the end of school is closer, I'll get out of school quicker. But I'm not looking forward to being the youngest at high school." She also felt very optimistic about the opportunities that secondary school would present for meeting new people and making new friends but acknowledged the importance of existing friendships, "I hope I keep all my old friends because we've always been friends."

Neoma liked primary school especially "things like maths and spelling. I like most subjects and most teachers." "I like school because it's fun and it's important."

In later interviews Neoma described good secondary school students as people who "practised at schoolwork" and accepted responsibility for their own learning. She reported that she intended to do these things because "I want to get high grades so I can get a good job when I'm older." Neoma described her planned behaviour at secondary school in the following way:

I want to get good grades. To get high grades I'll have to listen to the teacher and take it in, I'll have to ask the teacher questions if I don't know. Presentation is very important so I'll have to spend time on that. There will be more to take in so it will be harder.

Neoma was concerned about finding out about the organisational details of secondary school. "I'd like to know my way around, and get some practice at doing this. I'd also like to know some teachers' names, I think that'd be helpful." Her vision for Year 8 focused on academic achievement, "Getting what I want, that is, good marks", and social aspects of school, "I want to be happy, have fun and get along with everyone."

Experiences of secondary school.

In the first interview at secondary school Neoma reported that she had experienced no difficulty in settling in to the school and coping with some of the things that she had expressed some concern about in Year 7. She had not got lost, and negotiating her way around the school and through the timetable had presented no problems. She reported that she had found other students and staff to be helpful and cognisant of the possible problems experienced by new students.

She was positive about her early experiences of secondary school but expressed surprise that "The work isn't very hard. Lots of it is easier than I thought it'd be, it's easier than last year." In response to questions regarding the difficulty of the work she had encountered, Neoma commented:

It's good when the work isn't too much of a challenge. If it's too hard you concentrate so hard on working it out that you forget the work that's behind you and don't concentrate enough. It's better to know what you've done really well.

Neoma's first experiences with the level of difficulty of academic work provided her with support and reassurance. She viewed the work in a way that allowed her to capitalise on the opportunity to consolidate her previous learning. As the year progressed Neoma continued to report that she was not finding the work much harder than in the previous year. The only exception was in some of the mathematics topics where unfamiliar concepts created "a big jump in the difficulty".

Neoma reported that all her teachers had given clear messages about the importance of assessment and of submitting work on time. Grades were seen to be very important and Neoma responded to teachers' information about the work that counted towards grades by trying much harder in those situations. "We know that we have to put the effort in on those things, the teacher makes that clear." Neoma's own achievement goals appeared to focus on mastery. She believed that getting good grades was important and she wanted to achieve them, but claimed the most important aspect of learning was understanding the subject. She saw school learning as interesting and important.

Neoma related her surprise and pleasure at receiving an A+ grade for an English assignment. She had been particularly surprised at the grade

awarded, "I didn't know that was a possibility. I knew I'd done a good job but didn't know you could get A+'s." Neoma believed she was doing well in all subjects, particularly English, "I know that I'm very good at English." She had based this judgment on the marks and grades she had received so far and reported that apart from graded work, she had received very little written or verbal feedback from her teachers.

While achieving good grades was important to her, Neoma was able to view making mistakes as an important learning experience. In describing a maths test in which she scored a mark of around 70% Neoma explained:

I got a section wrong because I didn't understand it, I think it's good that I didn't get it right because now I'll learn it and the teacher will explain. If I'd got it right then I would have thought that I understood it and I don't.

When discussing the criteria required for achieving good grades Neoma explained the role of presentation "It isn't so important at high school, it's more important to present your work so that it's legible and to show you've used appropriate presentation and layout for the job." She reiterated the importance of getting work done and handed in on time:

That's more important than in primary school and is more important than doing a really good job (at the expense of handing it in on time). You lose more marks for being late than you'll make up by doing a really good job." She was unable to describe clearly any other criteria for particular types of work.

Despite the fact that "everyone" (meaning teachers and parents) had told her that secondary school meant lots of homework, in her experience this had not been the case, "It doesn't seem to. I do a maximum of one hour homework a night. That's often finishing things off from class, it's

not as much as I thought I'd get and isn't often different work (from class)."

By the end of first semester Neoma reported an increased workload in maths "We're getting lots of assignments." She had been receiving high marks for her work but had also experienced some difficulties with certain topics:

I had a bit of trouble on area, I don't know why I had trouble, I got most of it right but I was so good at it last year. That gave me a shock. I had trouble with rates, knowing and remembering the right formula. I've worked out what's causing me problems and tonight I'm going to go home and practise.

She continued:

I'm not sure how I feel, it's unusual for me to have trouble in maths. I'm going to practise and work out how to work it out. It's remembering all the formula. I'm having a bit of trouble with pi, I had trouble with that last year.

Neoma reflected on her learning experiences and the way in which she approached tasks and identified her areas of weakness. She was able to respond appropriately to overcome these weaknesses.

Despite experiencing some difficulties with mathematics Neoma's response to secondary school remained positive, "Things at high school are getting better and better. Apart from pi things are really easy. I find the work easy to do and expect to get a good mark." Neoma had been promoted to a higher "pathway" in maths and expressed frustration at being unable to contact her teacher for assistance:

I was going to go and see him and get him to explain formula to me but I thought I'd try to work it out at home first. It's really hard to get to see teachers at high school. It's much harder to track them down at high school and they have to rush off to next class. It was easier at primary school if you wanted to talk to a teacher about problems.

Neoma also expressed positive responses to science based on the subject content and the greater degree of active involvement, "Science is brilliant. I find it very interesting and am enjoying it. This year we're doing it not just talking about it." On the basis of the marks that she had received Neoma believed that she was good at science.

By the end of first semester Neoma was still unable to describe clearly what she had to do in order to get good grades. Her responses focused on effort and presentation statements. She spoke in general terms about trying hard and described the type of presentation that was required at secondary school but was unable to be more specific in describing the task related demands of each subject or activity:

When I do a piece of work I put my best effort in. I try to put effort into main ideas, the right thing, correct information. This year everything I do is relevant, last year I used to put extra pictures and things in that weren't really relevant. Now if it isn't relevant I don't include it, it's not important for it to look so nice this year."

Neoma acknowledged that she was doing well at secondary school and that she was an intelligent student. She accepted responsibility for her academic performance, attributing it to her ability and effort:

I guess I get good marks because I'm 'quite smart', I also try very hard and put my best effort in. I put all of my effort into my assignments, make my work look nice [but 'worklike']. I also think I have a pretty good memory and that's important to remember formula [sic] and how to do things. You also need to be able to remember work that you've done before.

Neoma identified some of her teachers as "strict" and associated those teachers who were strict and had control as those in whose classes most work was achieved. She noted only one subject which she did not

like and attributed this to the fact that the teacher could not control the class and that very little work got done.

Academic performance.

Table 17 presents Neoma's performance on the Year 7 (stage 6) level MSE mathematics and English tests at Year 7 and Year 8. She scored above the Year 7 benchmark in English at Year 7 and 8, and within the benchmark range of scores for all mathematics strands at Year 7 and 8.

Neoma's performance on the MSE tests in Year 8 resulted in slightly higher scores on the reading and writing strands for English. Standardised scores for the mathematics tests showed a slight decline in her score for measurement and an increase in her scores for space and number. Neoma was one of the few students in the group who demonstrated improved outcomes on most dimensions of the tests.

Table 17

Raw and Standardised Scores on MSE Mathematics and English Tests at Year 7 and 8: Neoma

	English				Mathematics					
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.
Year 7	**30	0	**14	0	6	.998	10	10.000	14	.216
Year 8	**34	0	**16	0	14	.993	12	12.000	15	.865

** denotes performance above the benchmark

Teacher and self-ratings of academic performance.

Neoma's Year 7 teacher rated her mathematics performance at 6, "she's around average." Her performance in the area of English was rated at 7, "She does some good writing, she always tries hard." Neoma's general academic performance was rated at 7, "While she isn't up there with the high fliers, she's a good solid student. She's studious and well organised." Neoma's teacher rated her social performance at 8, "She's on the student council and seems to get on well with most of the students. Neoma is a lively and well liked student by her peers and teachers [*sic*]."

Her Year 7 teacher believed that Neoma was a student with potential, who would handle the transition to secondary school effectively. He saw no risk for her in this area. She was described as well organised, showing the most initiative and best organisational skills of all students in the class. Neoma was essentially a task oriented and academically successful student. Her teacher described her as well behaved and cooperative in class, willing to tackle almost all questions. He said that she was the type of student to whom he was likely to direct difficult questions, sure in the knowledge that she would be likely to answer most of them correctly. Her teacher reported that he liked her as a student and that she was well liked by her peers. On the basis of classroom observations and her teacher's comments, Neoma was classified as a *Success* student.

Neoma rated her own mathematics performance at 6, "I think I'm okay at maths, I didn't use [*sic*] to think I was any good at it." Although she described creative writing as her best subject she rated her English performance at 5 because "there are lots of people who are better at all English things than me. I sometimes make stupid mistakes in spelling." Neoma was one of only two students to score above the Year 7 benchmark in reading and writing so her self-rating of 5 would seem to be to be inaccurate. Neoma rated her overall academic performance at 6 and based

this on the marks that she had been receiving. Her social performance was rated at 9 "I think I get on well with everyone. In this class most people like each other."

In rating her own performance Neoma used her "own performance to judge how I'm going at school, what I'm good at, and things I know I can do." She cited specific examples of tasks that she believed she could do easily and that she thought she was "good at". She also reported that she "also use(d) the sort of marks I get back from the teacher."

"My best subject is creative writing, I always get top marks, stickers and 'excellent work' comments. I really like it and take time with it. I didn't think I was very good at maths and I got a good mark."

Most class work was partner marked, term tests and final copies of writing tasks were the only work marked by the teacher. Neoma believed that she had a good sense of how she was going in class but did not want others to know publicly. She believed that she was doing well, better than many students in the class and did not want to be seen to be better than others or "stuck up". She reported that the teacher informed students of their progress in private conversations and Neoma believed that the teacher provided this information to all students.

Neoma was one of two students who consistently rated her academic performance lower than her teacher. Her explanatory statements suggest that she believed that she was making an accurate judgment, and she reported that her teacher kept her informed of her progress. However, she continued to perceive her academic performance to be lower than did her teacher and peers. It may be that she and her teacher held different conceptions of how her performance should be described. However, as other students in her class reached agreement with the teacher's rating, it seems that Neoma did not share the teacher's view of performance standards in relation to her own performance.

In Year 8 Neoma's mathematics teacher rated her academic performance at 7, "She's quite a good student, she's working well and always tries." Neoma's performance in English was rated 9 by her teacher, "She's produced some very good work, she's one of the best in the class. Excellent."

Neoma rated her own performance in mathematics at Year 8 level at 8, "I got 10 /10 for my last assignment. I had a bit of trouble but I got it right. I think I'm getting better marks than most people. I find it easy to do and I expect to get a good mark." In the following term Neoma was promoted to the highest mathematics pathway. Neoma had received very high marks for work submitted in English and rated her performance in that subject at 10, "I got an A+, that's amazing. I knew I did a good job but I didn't know you could get A+."

Comparison of teacher and student ratings.

At Year 7 there was agreement between Neoma and her teacher in the rating of her performance in mathematics. It may be that she was skilled at reading the messages that her teacher gave about her relative performance within the class or that the marks she received allowed her to make accurate judgments about how her performance compared to her peers. In this situation Neoma and her teacher viewed her position in the class in the same way.

When rating her performance in English Neoma rated herself below her teacher. This may be because of the more complex makeup of the English subject area including components such as spelling, grammar reading and writing. At primary school English is not treated as a discrete subject so perhaps the artificiality of this category made judgments difficult. It may be that Neoma and her teacher used different

combinations of these components when making judgments about her performance.

In rating her general academic performance Neoma rated herself lower than her teacher rating. Again this may be a function of the nature of this category and student difficulties in aggregating performance across subjects.

As was common across all case study students Neoma rated her social performance higher than her teacher. Within the larger group, there were no instances where students rated themselves lower than their teachers. It may be that teachers have limited knowledge of students' social roles and judge students' social performance on classroom observations and limited out of class interactions. It is possible that individual students protected themselves by rating their own performance generously. However, it would seem that this is one area where teachers have less information available to them for making decisions than do students.

In Year 8, Neoma's self-ratings of academic performance were higher than those of her teachers. This is in direct contrast to her self-ratings in Year 7. It may be that in the more diverse heterogeneous primary classroom her judgments were accurate for her, in relation to the rest of the class. In the more homogeneous Year 8 classroom with less diversity of ability she could identify herself as among the best of that particular group. Her promotion to the upper pathway in mathematics suggests that this was an accurate judgment. It seems that for Neoma, the more homogeneous classroom provided her with the opportunity to acknowledge her academic performance and ability. With a narrower range of performance against which to judge herself she was more willing to acknowledge that she was "good at" a subject. Differences in the timing of the collection of data relating to self perceptions of performance may explain some discrepancy. Year 8 ratings were taken at the end of first

term and the Year 7 ratings were taken at the end of Term 3. It may be that Neoma was still learning to read the signs about how her performance compared to that of others in the class.

Attributions for Success and Failure

Attributions for success.

In Year 7 Neoma attributed her academic success to her effort, she perceived "trying hard" to be the primary cause of success. Neoma acknowledged that she was the person responsible for the degree to which she was successful on various academic tasks, and that success was within her control, "If I try harder I'll do better, I get marks depending on how hard I try." She demonstrated reflection on her own performance and ways in which her attributions had changed, "Until I started to get better marks I used to think that other things were responsible for my marks. Now I think they're just giving me what I'm asking for if I try really hard."

She identified trying hard as being an important aspect of being a good student, one that she believed teachers desired and looked for in students:

I always try hard and the teacher would say I try hard, he makes comments that I'm a good student and that I try hard. He thinks that I deserve the marks I get. This feels good, I like getting something out of what I've done. For example if in maths I get a really low score I'm not exactly disappointed in myself but I just think that I've really got to try harder to get what I'm trying to get.

In Year 8 Neoma continued to attribute her academic success to effort, and viewed ability as the next most important factor influencing the extent to which she was successful on academic tasks.

Neoma's attributions for success were generally stable from Year 7 to Year 8. The primary factor to which she attributed success was effort, or trying hard. There was some change in the pattern of attributions as Neoma attributed success in Year 8 to effort and ability compared to a combination of effort and luck in Year 7. Neoma's attributions for success became more internal in Year 8.

Attributions for failure.

In contrast to her attributions for success, at Year 7 Neoma attributed negative academic outcomes to luck, a factor outside her control, "I sometimes think I've done okay but then find out I've made lots of silly mistakes, I guess it's just bad luck." However, this was combined with statements suggesting that in order to do better she had to try harder, "if like in maths I get a really low score I just think I have to try harder to get a good mark." Neoma's reasons for not doing well could be interpreted as being related to effort, remembering to check her work carefully, and taking more care with things over which she had some control. However, she chose to describe these reasons as bad luck, suggesting that she didn't see this as being something that she could or should do something about. It is interesting to note the different emphasis that Neoma placed on effort, allowing her to do better but not being responsible for her lack of success.

Luck was the only factor to which Neoma attributed her failure at Year 8. This demonstrates stability of her primary attribution for failure from Year 7 to Year 8. The pattern of her attributions for failure changed with luck becoming the only salient factor in Year 8. Her attributions for failure remained external and uncontrollable.

Use of Strategies

Use of adaptive strategies is an important aspect of students developing the ability to become independent and self-regulated learners (Biggs & Moore, 1993; Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988). During interviews at Year 7 and 8, Neoma was asked to think of situations in which she had recently encountered problems or "got stuck" and to describe her responses in those situations. In addition to this she was presented with a mathematics problem and asked to select her most likely response if she experienced problems in reaching a solution. She selected from paired combinations of the responses *asking for help, employing a strategy* (such as remembering previous similar problems, dividing the task up into smaller parts, looking for similar problems) or *giving up*. She was also asked to describe what she normally did when she found tasks boring and when she finished early in class.

Neoma reported that when she was working on a problem and could not continue she was most likely to ask the teacher for assistance. This was followed by attempting some sort of strategic approach to deal with the problem. She distinguished between getting stuck on an unfamiliar problem in which case "I like the teacher to explain what we're doing and how to do it", and a problem with which she was familiar, when her response would be more independent and strategic:

If I think I can do a problem I try every way I can think of, use scrap paper because I can't keep it all in my head and I need to keep a record of what I've tried. I think about other problems I've done which are similar. I sometimes ask around, ask for hints, then more clues and get a first answer.

She expressed a strong dislike for being given the solution, "I don't want to be told how to do it." This type of response demonstrates adaptive help seeking behaviour (Newman, 1991). Neoma considered the type of

assistance required and planned her request for help before asking the teacher. She also thought through the problem situation and made decisions regarding when it was appropriate to seek assistance and when it was appropriate to persevere. In these cases the seeking of assistance can be seen to facilitate learning. Neoma's behaviour supports the suggested relationships between intrinsic orientation or mastery goals and help seeking (Newman, 1990).

Neoma demonstrated an awareness of herself as a learner when she described her experiences during Year 7:

At the start of the year my work wasn't very good, now I'm more aware of what has to be done and find it easier. I wasn't good at doing some things and wasn't keen on doing them. Now I know how to do things I have some strategies that I can use to do things correctly.

Neoma reported that she was most likely to finish off other work or make a good copy of work for submission when she found the work boring or she finished early. She seldom created tasks for herself or made simple tasks more challenging, but would independently complete other work that had been set by the teacher.

In Year 8 Neoma reported that when she was "stuck" on a problem or task she was most likely to attempt to solve it herself, implementing particular strategies to problem solve. If this was unsuccessful she would then seek help from a friend. Neoma's approach to dealing with problems changed from seeking teacher assistance in Year 7 to being more independent in Year 8. She explained this shift in the source of assistance by saying:

It's really hard to get the teacher's attention. It's much quicker to ask the person sitting near you. Last year it was easier to catch up with

Mr L and he seemed to looking for kids who wanted help. This year the teachers only seem to look for kids who are mucking around. I'm not worried about asking the teacher for help or saying that I don't understand something. If I don't ask how will I find out? It's most effective if the person explaining to me explains the steps in the procedure but also explains why they are necessary or appropriate. Teachers here explain what has to be done clearly but it's hard to get hold of them to answer your questions. If you don't get them in class then you don't see them.

Neoma's willingness to seek assistance when required may be associated with her increased self perceptions of performance. Newman (1991) suggests that self perceptions of ability may predict help seeking behaviour. Neoma's comments support Ames' (1983) suggestion that it is likely that children who see themselves as academically competent view help seeking as an instrumental strategy for classroom learning and that they are likely to seek help when necessary.

Further evidence of Neoma's adaptive behaviours is provided by her responses in situations when tasks were simple or she finished early (Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988). Neoma reported that she would sometimes extend a task to make it more interesting or challenging but said that there were few instances where she finished work early enough in class to allow her to do additional work:

This year we do lot more work so there isn't often free time. Anything we don't finish in class is homework, so I guess that teachers don't expect us to get through it all in class. I don't often have times when I'm looking for something to do.

Summary

Year 8 had been a positive experience for Neoma. She enjoyed the subjects that she was studying and was doing well in her studies. The organisational aspects of entering secondary school such as finding her way around and learning teachers' names had caused no problems and had been resolved simply and quickly. While she had maintained some friendships from primary school, Neoma was pleased that she had made new friends and had met many new people. Her success at secondary school had confirmed for Neoma that she was a bright student who could achieve good grades if she decided to "put in the effort".

She expressed some surprise at the level of difficulty of the work in secondary school, claiming it was not as hard as she had expected it to be. Neoma also noted that the warnings of parents and primary school teachers about the amount of homework had not been accurate. As the year progressed she commented that the pace and volume of work in class had increased, although the work was generally of the same level of difficulty that she had experienced in the previous year. Neoma had received messages that the important things about studying at secondary school related to achieving good grades and handing work in on time. She was not able to articulate the criteria required to achieve high grades beyond handing it on time and presenting it in an appropriate manner.

Neoma was achieving satisfactory grades at Year 8, was viewed favourably by her teachers and could be seen as having made a satisfactory transition to secondary school. Her attributions for academic success and failure remained stable from Year 7 to Year 8 and she accepted responsibility for her academic successes and was one of the few students who acknowledged that she was "quite smart" or "good at" subjects. Generally, the standard of her academic performance in relation to the Year 7 benchmark improved from Year 7 to Year 8. Neoma maintained an

intrinsic or mastery goal orientation which was reflected in her strategic approach to instructional tasks and willingness to accept responsibility for her own learning. Neoma was able to adapt successfully to the secondary setting and her initial experiences of secondary school remained positive.

Case Two: Robert

Background

Robert was the oldest child in his family, having two younger siblings. He attended school 1 and was in class B with an experienced female teacher. He was very interested in athletics and rugby, both as a participant and spectator. Robert's teacher described him as studious and hard working, although inclined to disengage himself from the class. Robert demonstrated little initiative but was able to work independently. Robert was cooperative in interview situations but demonstrated little reflection or curiosity.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Expectations of secondary school.

Robert knew some students at the secondary school through sporting activities but reported that they did not talk about school. In the first interview he stated that he knew nothing about secondary school and that no-one had told him anything about it. He had not asked any questions about secondary school because he "hadn't really thought about and it didn't worry (him)".

In subsequent interviews he reported that he was looking forward to the sporting facilities at secondary school and to the opportunity to play different sports. The only question that he had about secondary school related to the amount of homework that he was likely to receive. He believed that secondary school would provide a good opportunity to make

many new friends in addition to retaining his existing friendships. In interviews Robert exhibited little interest or curiosity about secondary school.

Robert viewed secondary school as providing the opportunity for a new start if he wished to do so. He stated that if he wanted to he would be able to get higher marks in Year 8, but was unable to describe what he would do to improve his performance.

Experiences of secondary school.

In the first interview of Year 8 Robert reported surprise at the level of difficulty of the work he had experienced, stating that it was easier than he had expected. At this stage he believed that there were few differences between the ways in which things were done in classrooms in primary and secondary schools. He described a school culture and student role that he believed was universal, "We have to line up until the teacher tells us not to, sit in our seats, put our hands up. The teacher's in charge. There are just ways of doing things in school."

He reported that his teachers had made their behavioural expectations clear in the first classes and had described the grading system used at the school. While the type of grades had been described, there had been no information provided about the criteria for grades except, "You get Fs here and that's if you don't hand work in, hand it in late or do nothing." Robert registered the importance of early messages about completing and submitting work by the due date.

In the second interview which took place at the end of first term Robert reported that he believed he was trying as hard as he had in Year 7 "I have to put in time because it's needed. The work isn't hard, but there's lots of it." He believed that if he tried he could achieve A's in mathematics and social studies but that he was not concerned about this as

his priorities were athletics and rugby. He admitted that there were times when he didn't try as sport was more important and came first:

Sometimes I make no effort. To get a better mark in maths I only have to worry about doing presentation and borders and stuff but I can't be bothered. The teachers make it really clear to us that it's important to get the work done and in.

At the end of first semester Robert reviewed his time at secondary school:

Things are pretty much the same as they were at primary school. The work isn't any harder and we do the same sort of activities as last year but we do more work and more work on our own. Science is the most different. I think teachers treat us the same, not more adult. The most important things at high school are the dress code (they tell us about it all the time), grades aren't really important but you can go down a pathway. Handing your work in is important. Sport turned out to be disappointing, they don't seem to think it's very important.

Academic Performance

Robert's performance on the MSE mathematics and English tests at Year 7 and Year 8 is presented in Table 1. In Year 7 Robert scored within the benchmark range for both English strands and the three mathematics strands.

At Year 8 Robert's performance remained within the benchmark for Year 7 performance in English. Robert's performance was within the benchmark range of scores for mathematics but consideration of the standardised scores for mathematics shows that Robert's performance declined on the measurement strand, and improved on both space and number.

Table 18

Raw and Standardised Scores on MSE Mathematics and English Tests at Year 7 and 8: Robert

	English				Mathematics					
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.
Year 7	28	0	9	0	6	.998	7	7.000	9	-.1082
Year 8	28	0	7	0	12	.302	9	9.000	16	1.236

Teacher and Self-ratings of Academic Performance

Robert's Year 7 teacher rated his academic performance in all academic areas at 6. She described Robert as performing at a reasonable level although his performance was uneven. She believed that Robert was capable of achieving higher marks if he continued to work hard but despite this statement described him as studious and hard working. She rated Robert's social performance at 8 stating that he was popular with the boys because he was good at sport. Robert was classified as a *Social* student on the basis of teacher comments and classroom observations.

Robert rated his own Year 7 mathematics performance at 6, "I think I'm about the middle of the class." He based this judgment on the marks that he had received in recent tests and class work. Robert did not believe that he was "as good at English as . . . at maths" and he rated his performance in English at 4. Robert explained his general academic performance rating of 2, "I can't really think of anyone in the class who isn't as smart as me. Maybe one." He believed that he "got on really well" with everyone and rated his social performance at 9.

Robert's Year 8 mathematics teacher rated his performance at 4, "He doesn't get involved in class, does the bare minimum." and he was rated

at 5 in English. Comments from his English teacher were similar to those from his mathematics teacher suggesting that Robert was doing the minimum amount of work. Both teachers referred to what they perceived to be little effort in submitted work and to a reluctance to participate in class. In Year 8 Robert rated his mathematics performance at 5 which was lower than he had in Year 7 and rated his English performance notably higher at 7.

Comparison of teacher and student ratings.

In Year 7 there was a noticeable difference between Robert's and his teacher's ratings of his general academic performance with Robert rating himself much lower than his teacher. Teacher and student ratings were the same for mathematics and Robert rated his English performance lower than his teacher. Robert rated his social performance higher than his teacher.

At Year 8 Robert rated his academic performance higher than both his mathematics and English teachers. This is in contrast to his self-perceptions of performance at Year 7 which were lower than his teacher's rating. It may be that Robert was not yet familiar with the criteria by which his teachers judged his academic performance. Robert's comments as he performed the rating suggest that he believed that his performances in English and mathematics were satisfactory. He described the work as easy and said that he believed that he was doing well. It may be that the more homogeneous nature of his secondary school classes provided a limited range of performance against which he made his judgment, hence causing him to place his performance at a higher level.

Attributions for Success and Failure

Attributions for success.

At Year 7 Robert attributed success to internal factors effort and ability. He reported that he believed that he had worked hard and was good at that subject. In this case his attribution of success to ability, was subject specific. However, in other subject areas he was unlikely to believe that his positive outcomes were the result of ability, selecting effort or luck as the reasons for his success. He demonstrated a lack of reflection and self monitoring stating that he would not normally think about the reasons why he had received a good mark "When I do something well I'm pleased about it but I never think about why I did it well." Subsequent questioning elicited that this behaviour was also typical in non-academic situations. Robert was a keen athlete but said that he had never considered reflecting on favourable performances in an attempt to determine the reasons why so that he could replicate his performance in the future. He accepted positive and negative outcomes without question.

At Year 8 Robert's pattern of attributions for success changed. He attributed his success to the task and his effort rather than to ability and effort or effort and luck ("chance"). He described the work he was doing as "easy, and stuff I've done before" and considered his success to be the result of easy work. He acknowledged that he had been interested in the task in question and had "tried to do a good job". He repeated his comments from the previous year about not normally reflecting on the reasons why he had done well and said that he did not think about past performances when approaching a new task.

Attributions for failure.

In Year 7 Robert attributed failure on academic tasks to the internal, controllable factor, effort. He explained poor outcomes by saying "I could

have got a better mark if I had tried". In this way he accepted responsibility for the outcome but like many of the students in this study this was represented as "I could have done better if I'd tried" rather than "I didn't too well because I didn't try hard enough". It seems that by representing their negative results in this way students make healthy attributions, believing that they are likely to be successful on a similar tasks in the future if they apply the effort but not really accepting responsibility for their outcomes. This type of attributional pattern would seem to serve a face saving purpose for the students involved, excusing rather than explaining their poor performance. The other factors to which Robert attributed lack of success in achievement situations were the task followed by luck, both factors which were outside his control. In Year 7 Robert referred to poor performance on a maths test. Because he believed that he was good at maths, he did not believe his poor performance resulted from lack of ability.

The pattern of Robert's attributions remained stable from Year 7 to Year 8, again he attributed negative outcomes to effort, the task and luck. Robert stated that he believed that he was a "pretty good" student and he did not believe that he lacked the ability to do well. Instead he admitted that because school work was not important to him there were often occasions when he could not be bothered trying. He accepted responsibility for possible low marks but this did not worry him because his goals were related to work avoidance rather than mastery or performance.

Use of Strategies

In Year 7 Robert described the way in which he would attempt to solve a difficult problem, "I'd have a mental conversation with myself, try other ways of doing it, think about similar problems, look at the next one

for hints." If these strategies were unsuccessful he would go on to the next question "but I would always be ready to go back if I got an idea. I don't want to ask someone else. I don't like telling people that I can't do something." His initial comments suggest that he employed strategic behaviour in problem situations and he was conscious of alternative ways of tackling the problem. However, the seeking of help can be viewed as appropriate and adaptive behaviour in a problem situation and Robert was firm that he would not ask for assistance. It seems that the costs associated with asking for help (and being seen to not know) were salient to the extent that Robert would not consider this an alternative strategy for dealing with a problem.

Robert said that when he finished work early he would usually draw pictures or do nothing despite a class rule that early finishers should read or complete other unfinished work. "I can't be bothered going on with other work." Robert described all school work as boring and said that he would never consider making a task more interesting or challenging, "I just do what the teacher tells us we have to." Robert's goals for learning at school were extrinsic and performance oriented. He was not interested in learning for interest or challenge and was motivated to work in order to get satisfactory marks.

At Year 8 Robert's responses to a problem situation were different from his responses in Year 7. Rather than think about other ways in which the problem could be tackled he reported that he would leave the difficult section and go on to the next one. He said he was unlikely to ask for help and definitely would not consider attempting to find other ways of solving the problem. In Year 8 Robert demonstrated less adaptive behaviour than he had the previous year. In Year 7 he had exhibited some reflection about himself as a learner and a strategic approach to unusual or

problem situations but he took no responsibility for dealing with problems in Year 8.

In common with other students in the study Robert reported that the volume of work in Year 8 was such that there were seldom situations in which he finished set work early. "I can't really remember if I've ever finished all of the work in class. I guess I'd talk to my mates if I did." Robert's achievement goals were clearly associated with the avoidance of work. He was not concerned about learning or understanding subject matter or getting good grades, but wanted to pass with minimum effort.

Summary

Robert's expectations about secondary school had focused on increased opportunities to play sport. Consequently, his responses to secondary school excluded all other areas. His experiences relating to sporting opportunities had been disappointing and his responses to school were negative. Whether or not his expectations had been realistic they were powerful influences on his attitude towards school.

Robert continued to accept responsibility for his own performance and his attributions remained stable from Year 7 to Year 8. Robert acknowledged that there were many situations in which he did not try very hard because his priorities were focused on sport. He was less reflective about his performance in Year 8 and his use of strategies to deal with problem or unusual situations became less adaptive in secondary school. This response appeared to be the result of a combination of lack of interest or desire to do well and restricted opportunity to use adaptive behaviours. He was less accurate at describing his own academic performance and there was little agreement between his own and his teachers' ratings of his academic performance. Robert had held

performance goals at Year 7 and expressed work avoidance goals following transition.

Robert did not perceive that secondary school was significantly different from primary school. However, like other students in this study he commented on the volume of work that he had encountered and the importance of submitting work on time. His academic performance showed little improvement. His performance in relation to the standards described in the Year 7 syllabus increased slightly in two strands of mathematics, decreased in writing and the measurement strand, and remained the same in reading. Robert expressed negative attitudes towards school and did not care about doing well. Sporting performance appeared to be the only thing that he valued.

Case Three: Michelle

Background

Michelle was in class 2A. Her Year 7 teacher was a male with twenty years teaching experience. She had been at the primary school for only two years. Michelle had two younger siblings whom she often looked after while her parents were at work or at evening meetings. She was a member of the school band but did not socialise with other children from the school outside school time.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Expectations of secondary school.

Michelle had few expectations of secondary school and little information on which to base judgments. She did not know any students attending the local secondary school because she had not lived in the area for long. Michelle stated that her Year 7 teacher did not talk about, or refer to secondary school and she had not given much thought to the

transition. However, she did not believe that secondary school would be better than primary school because, "I don't want to go from the top of the school to the bottom. I can't think of anything good about going to secondary school."

Michelle expected that the nature of academic work in secondary school would be the same as in primary school, but that the level of difficulty would be greater. She was not looking forward to changing rooms and moving between classes because she was concerned that she would become lost.

The prospect of dealing with a number of teachers did not concern her:

I think teachers have similar standards and rules. The ones I've had so far do. I don't think I'll have any problem getting used to different teachers' standards of behaviour or work. I set my own standards about how I think I should behave.

Following a visit to the secondary school in the final weeks of Year 7 she reported less concern at moving around the school, "I think I know a little bit about finding my way around." She now expressed some concern about her lack of knowledge about the nature of high school work "I still don't know what subjects will be like at secondary school. I'm not sure about that and would like to know."

She thought that secondary teachers would be stricter than teachers at primary school because "They don't need to be, but I think they will because they don't get to know the kids as well."

Michelle believed that she would be different when she was in secondary school in a number of ways. She provided an example related to her academic performance, "I think I'll get lower marks next year because the work will be harder. I still think I'll be the same person, but I'll have to work harder."

She described a successful secondary school student as "not exceptional, someone who accepts responsibility, does their own work, listens to the teacher, does homework." She identified presentation and neatness as factors that she believed would be important if she was to do well at secondary school. Her goal for the following year was to "be successful academically. And motivated."

Michelle placed great importance on personal goal setting and accepting responsibility for performance, "I think it's important to do well in school, it doesn't bother me what marks I get as long as I know I've done a really good job. I think that doing my best is important, trying hard." She defined trying hard as "doing extra homework. (When I try hard) I concentrate and focus on the task, ask for help if I need it."

Michelle was able to describe the process by which she set and monitored her achievement of goals. She espoused mastery learning goals, believing that learning was important, and that the important aspects of learning related to understanding and developing a personal meaning of schoolwork. She demonstrated adaptive behaviours, extending tasks when she finished early, and setting her own homework because her classroom teacher did not set any. She was prepared to ask for assistance from those whom she believed were more expert and who could help her. Asking for help was used strategically and as a means of achieving learning goals.

Experiences of secondary school .

Michelle began Year 8 feeling very confident about herself and her academic ability. She expected to achieve good marks and believed that despite getting lost twice in the first few days "I've sorted myself out", and "I'm already used to different teachers." She believed that settling in to

secondary school would be a simple adjustment process that would not take long.

She reported that at this stage work had been less difficult than she expected, "it's easier than Year 7." She believed that she had been conscientious in class, and had made new friends for in-class time. When questioned about the messages that she had received about what was important at secondary school Michelle identified keeping homework up to date as the key factor, "Doing all your homework. They've made that clear." She believed that all the teachers were "pretty much the same", and had the same sorts of behavioural expectations, "teachers treat us the same way as in Year 7."

At this stage she expected the work would become more difficult, "I'm not sure that the work will remain easy. I expect it to be hard." She also noted that her classes had been given clear directions about the presentation of work, "Especially in English. They've given us lots of information about how to present our work, so presentation must be important."

As the year progressed Michelle reported receiving new messages about the aspects of secondary school that were important. Greater attention was being directed to the importance of completing and submitting work on time and she noted, "Passing the unit is important." This was the first evidence of emphasis on academic achievement and Michelle interpreted the focus on "passing" to mean "not failing" rather than the achievement of high level outcomes. Michelle adopted the view, "It's not so important to do really well, it's most important to get the work done." Her subsequent response was to put less effort into the work, explaining "if teachers accept a minimum standard of work then why try harder?" This reduction in effort was clearly a conscious decision in response to her interpretation of the situation.

As Year 8 progressed Michelle reported feeling very disillusioned with secondary school. The work was easier than she had expected and this had affected her attitude to school:

I'm getting the same sorts of marks as last year. The work is easier than last year and the teachers' standards are lower than primary school. It's all revision. Maybe Year 8's a revision year for next year. Perhaps the teachers see it as getting ready for Year 9.

Michelle identified differences in teacher-student relationships between the primary and secondary school contexts, noting a reduction in the opportunities for teacher-student interaction which she attributed to the teachers, "They [secondary teachers] don't talk to individual students very much." She also commented on the restricted opportunities for students to approach teachers both in and out of class time. She believed that frequently the nature and demands of academic tasks were not made clear and that teachers provided little information about how students were going, "We don't get much feedback from teachers. We just get grades or marks, no comments on our marked work." In addition she expressed some frustration at not knowing the meaning of particular grades, "You just sort of have to work out what you think a C means." She did not believe that teachers had described the criteria for particular grades and found this unsatisfactory, "I don't really know what I have to do to get an A. I did last year. That makes it hard to do a good job."

By the end of first semester Michelle reported that academic work was "getting a little bit harder". She believed that she was performing satisfactorily in all subjects but acknowledged that she was not trying as hard as in Year 7. She justified this by referring to her perception that the work was easy and lack of emphasis on "doing your best". She suggested that her behaviour would change if the situation altered, "I hope things

will change and we'll start doing real work. Work that's interesting. Then I'll start trying."

Michelle expressed the belief, "Teachers don't seem to care what we do as long as we hand it in on time." Messages about the importance of submitting work and passing units had its effect on her, "I definitely put more effort into work that is going to be marked by the teacher and where the marks count. Otherwise there's no point in going to much bother." This approach and involvement only in compulsory work was in contrast to the independence she had demonstrated in Year 7, where she had set her own goals and created work when none had been prescribed.

Michelle's goals changed from being oriented towards mastery in Year 7 to low level performance and work avoidance goals in Year 8. It seems that this is directly attributable to her interpretation of the academic expectations of her teachers. She used cues from the nature of instructional tasks and teachers' demands to decide that her teachers held low expectations for Year 8 students. She had become quite disenchanted with school and expressed sentiments such as "Doing well at school doesn't really matter."

Academic Performance

Table 19 presents Michelle's scores on the MSE English and mathematics tests at Year 7 and Year 8. In Year 7 Michelle scored in the middle of the benchmark range of scores in English and mathematics. There was no improvement in Michelle's academic outcomes between Year 7 and Year 8, in fact her English performance declined. Her performance in Year 8 placed her lower on the Year 7 benchmark for English than her Year 7 performance. Her performance on the mathematics tests placed her in the same position in relation to the benchmark as her previous year's performance. When the standardised

mathematics test scores are considered Michelle demonstrated a decline in performance on the measurement and number strands.

Table 19:

Raw and Standardised Scores on MSE Mathematics and English Tests at Year 7 and 8: Michelle

	English				Mathematics					
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.
Year 7	21	0	10	0	6	.0	5	0.000	16	.0
Year 8	19	0	7	0	10	.0	9	0.000	14	.0

Teacher and Self-ratings of Academic Performance

Michelle's Year 7 teacher rated her academic performance for all areas at 7. He described her current academic performance as "middling", and described Michelle as a well intentioned student who wanted to succeed, "While her academic performance is average she sets high objectives and understands what she has to do to achieve them." He predicted that she would continue to achieve at a satisfactory level as a result of her application. He believed that she had greater ability than was suggested by her current achievement but that she needed a personal support system to enable her to exploit her ability. Her Year 7 teacher suggested that Michelle had poor social skills, few friends and did not relate well to her peers. He expressed some concern that she might experience problems in a larger school population. He classified her as a student who should cope at secondary school but indicated that she may be at risk because of her inability to relate to other students.

Her Year 7 teacher's perception of Michelle's lack of social skills influenced his rating of her social performance at 3. This was the lowest rating assigned to any student in this study. He described her as an isolated child who made no effort to make friends and who was frequently rejected by her peers. While she was cooperative in class she was withdrawn, rarely involved herself in class activities and was frequently ignored by her peers and the teacher. Michelle demonstrated a high degree of independence which her teacher suggested had developed through necessity. Her teacher described his relationship with her as distant, reporting that his efforts to establish rapport had been rejected and viewed as patronising by Michelle. On the basis of classroom observations and teacher comments, Michelle's classroom participation was classified as *Phantom* as she initiated few interactions with teacher or students and attended to instructional tasks with little active involvement.

At Year 7 Michelle rated her own performance in mathematics at 8, in English at 6 and general academic performance at 8, "I think I'm reasonably good at maths, I like it more than English." She had used the marks that she was scoring as the basis on which she rated her own performance. When asked how she could score higher marks for her work Michelle replied that her "work would need to be neater."

She noted that her teacher did not make public or private comments about individual student's academic progress:

Our teacher doesn't usually tell us much about how we're going or what we've done well in our work. Sometimes he makes a comment as he hands things back. I don't mind it when he makes public comments about my work, I don't pay attention to what is said about others.

Michelle's rating of her own social performance was 9. She reported that she had no close friends, and that she believed that within the class

there were other students who did not get on well with each other, "This is not a friendly class, there are groups in the class that don't get on." However, she believed that she got on as well with her peers as did others in the class.

Michelle's Year 8 mathematics teacher rated her performance in that subject at 5, and she was described as being towards the lower end of the class. When rating Michelle's performance her teacher had some difficulty recalling exactly who she was. Michelle's performance in English was rated at 6, and described as "fairly average". Her teacher described her as being "self effacing" and required assistance in identifying her, "It's hard to picture her."

At Year 8 Michelle rated her performance in mathematics at 7:

I'm doing pretty good in maths, getting B's. It's easy. I could get an A if I wanted but I don't care, I've already done it before and I can't see the point of trying. It's a waste of time.

She rated her English performance at 8 saying "I'm doing well in English, getting As and I'm pleased about that. There's lots of reading and work we've already done, I'm good in English".

Comparison of teacher and student ratings.

Michelle's ratings of her academic performance at Year 7 were close to her teacher's. There was some variation in ratings but the differences were not in a consistent direction. She rated her English, general academic and social performance higher than her teacher, but her rating for her mathematics performance was below her teacher's. Michelle talked frequently about setting her own standards and it may be that she used different criteria by which to judge her own performance, or that she ignored messages given by the teacher. With the exception of social

performance the differences between her teacher's and her own ratings were slight and Michelle's performance was rated at an average level.

The greatest disagreement was between Michelle's teacher's and self-rating of her social performance where her teacher rated her social performance at a level significantly lower than Michelle. This may be a function of the teacher knowing less about what happens in the social aspect of school, outside the classroom. However, the teacher had reported concern at Michelle's isolation and lack of social skills. Observations in class and the school grounds support her teacher's observation that Michelle mixed little with other children, neither she nor they made any effort to include her but there was little active rejection or hostility towards her. It would seem that Michelle's high rating of her social performance was inaccurate and functioned as a defence strategy, allowing her to save face by denying her low social status within the group.

At Year 8 Michelle's self-ratings for her academic performance were higher than her teachers'. She expressed greater belief and confidence in her ability and her level of achievement than her teachers and there appeared to be some lack of differentiation between her perception of her own ability and achievement. She acknowledged that she was not really trying hard but still believed that she was achieving at a satisfactory level.

Attributions for Success and Failure

Attributions for success.

At Year 7 Michelle attributed her success on a project to the fact that it was an easy assignment. However, in several interviews when she was talking about work Michelle stated, "The marks I get are the result of things I do and how much work I put in. I'm responsible for what I do and how well I do it." This contrasts with her response to a specific recent

situation in which she had received a good mark and attributed her success to the simplicity of the task.

Michelle's responses to success were those of acceptance, "If I've tried why shouldn't I expect to do well? Good marks is [sic] what I expect." She reported that her parents expected her to do well and she did not experience feelings of happiness when she received good marks because she believed that they were her due. She stated emphatically that her performance was for her, not for her teacher or parents. Michelle reported that she sometimes received special treats from her parents as a reward for good marks but did not believe that the promise of these treats played any role in motivating her.

The pattern of Michelle's attributions for success were similar in Year 8. Again she attributed her success to the task. Michelle believed that she was achieving good marks in Year 8 because the work was easy "The work is still really easy, I've done it all before in primary school. I'm getting high test marks in maths because the work is really easy." She did not see that her success was the result of her effort because "I don't try so hard this year, a minimum standard is acceptable." In subsequent interviews Michelle also stated, "I don't always do my best. I'm a bit slack I don't really try all the time. I'm bored with social studies . . . I'd try harder if I was doing new work." Michelle continued to attribute her success to uncontrollable causes but the role of ability took on greater significance at Year 8.

Michelle's responses to success in Year 8 remained similar to those she described in Year 7. She did not feel pleased when she received good marks and pointed out that if she was receiving good marks because the work was easy or she had done it before then there was no good reason to feel proud. This highlights the inhibitory motivating effect of tasks that are too simple or lack challenge (Rohrkemper & Corno, 1988).

Attributions for failure.

At Year 7 Michelle attributed failure on an academic task to effort, followed by luck. She believed that she was "quite good" at school, always performed well and did not believe that failure resulted from a lack of ability. She suggested that it was rare for her to perform poorly but explained any unexpected poor performance by attributing it to lack of effort. In this way she maintained responsibility for the level of performance. Hence when she approached similar tasks in the future she could reasonably expect to perform well on them. The second factor to which she attributed poor outcomes was luck which allowed her to expect a reasonable chance of being lucky in the future.

Michelle reported that she was not concerned when she received a poor mark because this rarely happened and if it did, then as it was within her control it did not worry her, "I just have to remind myself to go about it the right way next time, put the effort in. If I do that then I'll get good marks."

There was a shift in the pattern of Michelle's attributions for failure at Year 8 where she attributed her failure to factors such as the task and bad luck which were outside her control. She repeated her belief that the work was easy in secondary school, and that it was at a level below that which she had experienced in primary school, and explained her poor performance on a task as the result of that task. She stated that the demands of the task were unclear and that this had happened before. She believed that it was bad luck that her interpretation of the task demands were incorrect. Her attributions for failure had become more external, no longer was she accepting responsibility for her lack of success and the perceived cause of her failure was out of her control.

Her response to failure in Year 8 consisted of anger at the teacher for being unclear, and a feeling of being in some way slighted through the

actions of the teacher who had been responsible for her poor performance. Michelle believed that this was unfair and that this was typical behaviour on the part of teachers.

Use of Strategies

In Year 7 Michelle reported that she would seek assistance from her teacher, or her parents (if she was working at home) if she encountered a problem. She was emphatic that she would not ask a peer for assistance but would seek help from:

Someone who knows. If I have a problem I will ask my parents to help, I might ask the teacher. It's helpful if he reminds me what to do and works out one as an example then gets me to work it out. The teacher knows more than other kids so I'd never ask them.

Michelle also reported that she would consult other sources of information such as encyclopedias but would be reluctant to give up. Her behaviour in these situations represents adaptive help seeking (Newman, 1991). She was conscious and strategic in her choice of source and type of assistance. Again, she referred to the importance of having goals and knowing how to achieve them, emphasising her responsibility for achieving the goals she set.

Michelle reported that when she finished work early she usually went on with other unfinished work, read or drew pictures. Her Year 7 teacher did not set homework and she reported that she set her own homework which included school related reading and exercises from her text books. Michelle said that when she found work simple or boring she adapted the task to make it more challenging or interesting. This type of adaptive behaviour would seem to be associated with the intrinsic, mastery goals that Michelle held for school learning.

Michelle's pattern of dealing with problems changed in Year 8. She reported that she would attempt to solve the problem herself or give up before she would ask for assistance. The situation to which she was responding was a mathematical context and Michelle stated that in a subject other than mathematics she would seek help from her teacher but not in this case "I don't like our maths teacher. She puts us down, she makes people who give the wrong answer feel bad."

In situations other than the mathematics class Michelle's approach to dealing with problems remained the same as her approach in the previous year. Her first response to a problem would be to seek assistance from an "expert", in the class situation this would be the teacher. She reiterated her beliefs about not asking peers for help "because they don't know as much as the teachers." If she could not get assistance from the teacher she would attempt to solve the problem herself. Michelle noted that it was often difficult to attract the teacher's attention in the secondary setting and as a result she was often forced to attempt to solve the problem herself. She stated that she believed that she was well equipped with the necessary skills to do this.

Michelle's behaviour remained adaptive in the sense that she thought about the source of assistance, choosing not to seek help from a teacher whom she believed to be unhelpful, or peers she believed lacked expertise. Her selection of the teacher as expert demonstrates a level of selectiveness but may also be related to her lack of personal interactions with other students. It may be that she was unwilling to approach other students for assistance as there were no students with whom she was comfortable. She may have been inhibited by the negative consequences of seeking peer assistance. Given her comments about the difficulty of getting attention from teachers at secondary school the decision not to seek help elsewhere would seem to be ineffective.

Michelle's response to boring tasks changed in Year 8. She reported that she found all her secondary school work boring and that she simply did the bare essentials of the task. Again she stated that if secondary teachers did not expect much from her then she could see no point in giving them more than they asked for. She reported that she seldom finished the work set in class because she could see no point in pushing herself, "There's no point in doing any more than you're asked to. Just do what you're supposed to and hand it in." This provides support for the importance of the role of student interpretation of teacher expectations in affecting achievement motivation. In Michelle's situation her belief that secondary teachers did not expect much from her was reflected in her attitude towards schoolwork, her goals and her motivation.

Summary

Michelle was forthright in expressing her disappointment with secondary school. She had been surprised by the absence of what she perceived to be stimulating or challenging work and the low level teachers' expectations. She interpreted the messages she had received to inform her that the important things about work in secondary school were getting work completed and submitted on time and "passing" as opposed to doing the best possible job. Her response to this had been to put less effort into her work and to view school in a negative manner. She perceived that teachers in secondary school paid less attention to students and interacted less with them than had her primary school teacher. This was reflected in her academic performance on the MSE tests where her performance on the English tests declined from Year 7 to Year 8 and there was no improvement in her mathematics performance.

Case Four: Janene

Background

Janene was in class 3A. Her teacher was the male deputy principal who had twenty five years teaching experience. Janene was a member of the student council and had a sister in Year 10 at the secondary school which she would be attending. Janene did not like performing in public, and although as a member of the student council she was frequently required to make presentations at assemblies, she found public performances an ordeal. She was involved in sporting clubs outside the school and hence knew a number of students who were already attending secondary school.

Janene's teacher described her as a cooperative student, who created no discipline problems. He stated that he liked her, that she was outgoing, initiated conversations with him and that she was popular with her peers. He described her as having adequate organisational skills, usually completing her work on time, and keeping her files in a reasonable state of organisation. He believed that she had performed well as a student councillor.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Expectations of secondary school.

In Year 7 Janene reported that she believed that it was important to do well in secondary school. These messages had been received from her parents and teachers. Academic performance at secondary school was valued for its role in enabling her to get a good job at the completion of her schooling. Her focus was on the external rewards that would ensue in the long term and she made no mention of the intrinsic value of learning.

Janene was looking forward to Year 8. She expected it to be more challenging than primary school and was optimistic about the

opportunities for meeting new friends. Because she had a sister in Year 10 and knew other children who attended the secondary school she stated that she had no concerns about aspects such as finding her way around the school or following a timetable. Her concerns focused on social aspects of the transition. She was concerned about no longer being the oldest in the school "We'll be at the bottom of the heap. I won't like that. It's good being the oldest, most experienced. We get to do things around the school." She said that she hoped that she would be "more mature and responsible" as a secondary school student.

Janene described herself as an average student who hoped to achieve similar marks next year. Despite having a sister and friends at the secondary school she was not sure what the work would be like because, "We don't talk about school stuff." Because of this she was not sure what sort of marks she would be able to achieve. She suggested that in order to achieve good marks she would need to work harder, do her homework all the time and pay attention in class. In her eyes a good secondary school student would "study, do homework, study for tests and read."

She was not concerned about dealing with a number of teachers and their varying expectations. Because her class teacher was the school deputy principal she had already experienced being taught by a number of teachers. She acknowledged that "Different teachers have different standards and accept different behaviour" but believed that she could cope with this because "it's not hard to adjust to. They are pretty well the same." She stated that she thought that she always tried in class and was not influenced by the personality of her teachers, putting in equal effort for all teachers. Her motivational sources were external. She stated that when she tried in class it was for the teachers, and that she felt good when she did well because "then my parents are proud of me, it makes them happy."

Experiences of secondary school.

During her first week at secondary school Janene believed that she had settled in satisfactorily:

I didn't have any troubles finding my way around. There's a girl I know from swimming in my contact [form class] and she helped me find my way around. There's also some friends of my sister's and they've been helpful too.

Her focus remained on the social aspects of secondary school, the most important messages she had interpreted related to the school's dress code, "What we wear seems to be pretty important. You know school colours, no 'bad' t shirts and stuff." The importance of some aspects of academic behaviour also emerged:

Also maybe grades are important. They've told us lots about that it's important to get good marks at school [sic]. Homework seems to be important they keep telling us about what will happen to us if we don't do it.

In the first interview Janene's initial impression of the level of difficulty of the work focused on the ease of the work, "We've had easy maths. I don't know if it will stay that way. Social studies is the same difficulty as last year. Science is quite different from last year, but it isn't hard." She commented that while she had not known what the work would be like she was surprised to find that it was not harder. In common with a number of the students in this study her initial reaction to science was positive because it was a "different" subject. Few of the students had experienced much science instruction in primary school and they found this an interesting and exciting aspect of secondary school.

Janene reported that all of her teachers had talked about grades, "Just the marks that they give, you know A, B, C etc. They did this in the first

lesson of every class." However, she had not received information about what was required to achieve particular grades, "They don't tell us what we have to do get different grades." At this time Janene had interpreted secondary school grades to equate to the grading system with which she was familiar "I don't think it's different to 1, 2, 3 , but this year they have F. That means you can fail." When talking about how she thought she would perform in Year 8 Janene commented "I'll maybe try a bit harder. I used to get 1's & 2's last year but I don't know if I'll get A's and B's, I don't know enough (about standards) yet." Janene made no comments about the unit curriculum system or the basis on which students had been organised into classes.

While all of her teachers had talked to classes about grading, not all of Janene's teachers had explained classroom rules and behaviour. Janene did not believe that this was necessary, espousing a belief about certain cultural rules that applied in schools, "They have to tell us how to behave in science and industrial arts because of the equipment but otherwise there's just a way you behave in school." She perceived that "all teachers seem to treat kids the same, same as last year, they all have the same rules." Because of this she did not foresee any problems in adapting to the demands of a number of different teachers. She identified lining up outside classrooms as one feature of behavioural expectations which varied between teachers, "That's not a problem because the teacher told us we don't have to line up outside for maths. Other teachers told us to line up, so we know what to do."

Because not all teachers had articulated their behavioural expectations Janene had responded by using behavioural standards practised at primary school. She had identified a social role for students that she applied in the new situation. "I just decided to act the same way as last year, I think that's just the way kids are supposed to act in class".

"Classes in high school are the same as primary school. It's just being in school, I think all schools are the same." Janene's comments about the behaviour of teachers and students suggest that she had clearly defined social roles for the participants in the schooling process.

She reiterated her perception of the importance of homework at secondary school but did not interpret its significance:

There is punishment for not doing homework. This is the same for all teachers. They think it's important. We've had homework from the first day. In some classes we get extra work for home, and in others it's just finishing off work from class.

Janene reported that in the first week of school classes were "pretty quiet, everyone is shy, so there are lots of kids who don't put their hands up." Again her comments focused on social aspects of the new school situation. Despite the fact that teachers asked many questions in class Janene would not volunteer to answer questions because "I won't put my hand up, I'm embarrassed. I don't like talking in public. I still pay attention and have the answer ready in my head but won't answer in class." She did not think that teachers paid much attention to which students in the class volunteered to answer questions but stated that this would not change her behaviour. At this stage she did not attach any instructional function to teacher questioning.

At the end of her first week in school Janene held positive expectations for the future. She had interpreted messages about the importance of academic work and performance and had not experienced any negative situations. She viewed new subjects such as science in a positive light and reported that she wanted to try and to improve her academic performance in secondary school.

Subsequent interviews elicited similar perceptions regarding the level of work and teacher expectations. Janene believed that teachers held similar expectations across subjects and which included features such as, "a high standard of neatness, doing your best." Her perceptions of what was important in work changed to focus on aspects such as presentation rather than quality of ideas. The early emphasis on grades had not continued and Janene was reinterpreting the initial messages in a different way. Rather than interpreting the early information about grades as informing students of the importance of doing well, she now viewed this as simply relating to the provision of information about the grading situation.

She did not believe that individual teachers or the school encouraged competition among students. She reported that in spite of a greater degree of teacher talk, "Subjects are taught in the same way as they were last year. We do seem to do more work on our own now." She noted that students received little information about the way in which they were to go about learning tasks, "We are told what we will be doing but not how we'll do it. I don't know what marks are given for at high school."

Although in the first interview Janene had suggested that she may try harder this year, by the end of first term her attitude towards achieving positive academic outcomes and the amount of effort that she was prepared to exert showed a negative change. Her academic goals were clearly oriented towards work avoidance. She accepted responsibility for her achievement, having made the decision about how hard she was prepared to work and the amount of effort she was prepared to expend, "I don't want to fail but I want to do the minimum amount of work. I'm happy with C's. I just don't want to fail." There is further evidence of the strength of social cues and forces. Janene reported that within her group of friends there was a culture that dictated that "It's not cool to do well in

school." This resulted in Janene decreasing her efforts, "I don't try as hard as I did last year." This is the only example in this study where a student made a conscious decision to limit their academic effort in response to the norms of a peer group. This attitude towards school was not extreme since despite not being prepared to try hard, she did not go out of her way to be unsuccessful. Her primary aim was to avoid failure while doing the minimum amount of work.

In the final interview Janene reported similar motivations. She had not studied for an imminent test because she had "better things to do". She stated that she "[thought she'd hope she could] guess the right answers." She maintained a desire to pass with the minimum of effort and expressed a degree of concern about the possibility of failing, "I guess it'd worry me if I failed, I don't like to fail. I might fail this test, I didn't think it was important enough to worry about studying." Her experiences so far had informed her that it was possible to avoid failure while expending minimal effort so there was little risk involved in withdrawing effort.

Janene reported that she had not received a large amount of homework and that she very seldom completed set homework. Despite the messages about the importance of homework and the consequences of not completing it, her experiences had shown her that teachers seldom checked and that they would accept plausible excuses. Completing homework was not important to Janene as it served no discernible function and there were no sanctions for non-completion.

Prior to the third interview Janene had been informed that she was to remain in Pathway 1 (the top pathway) for mathematics. She believed that she was "not really good at math. The work seems too hard. I was sort of good at math last year." She acknowledged that being in the top pathway should mean that she was good at mathematics but stated that

she did not like maths and could not think of herself as a good maths student, "Maybe I'm a little bit over medium at it. But not good.". She acknowledged that while she found some of the mathematics concepts difficult, she picked it up quickly when shown and suggested that "I guess it just seems hard because it's new."

When asked how she would respond if she was asked to join a challenging math class Janene replied "I wouldn't do it, I'd say no. It'd be too hard." This provided further evidence of her reluctance to expend effort and lack of importance of high level outcomes. She noted that she normally scored B's and C's in maths and that in order to consider herself good she would "need to get A's all the time." She was not prepared to hypothesise about whether she was capable of achieving A's if she worked harder.

She enjoyed social studies, and believed that this was her "best subject" as it had been in Year 7. "I'm . . . getting A's and B's." She reported that she received little homework for this subject and did not complete it when it was set. Again she was able to achieve positive outcomes while expending little effort and could not see why she should work any harder

Janene had just been moved from Pathway 1 to 2 in English. She expressed no surprise at this as she had been experiencing difficulty in keeping up with the amount of work that was required. "We'd get one assignment then another, it was too much for me. I guess it wasn't the work that was too hard but there was just so much of it." She had not been prepared to apply herself to the subject, or spend time on assigned work. Janene identified that the subject nature and academic demands of the subject were different to primary school English, "We have a lot to do, lots of stories and stuff. It's different work to last year when we just did grammar and stuff. This is like a different subject." She was pleased to be

in the lower pathway because this meant that she wouldn't have to work as hard to achieve satisfactory grades. She was accompanied by several of her friends who had also been moved and she was pleased about this.

Janene reported that she and her friends received similar grades, and described everyone in her group of friends as "average":

We don't really care what grades we (or others) get, but we don't want to try hard. We don't talk about the marks or grades we get. We don't talk about schoolwork at all. There are better things to talk about.

She stated that she was "happy" with the marks she had been getting so far and did not want to get higher marks. She reported that her parents were pleased with her marks. "If I go home with a D they say I should try harder but they don't push me to get A's." Pleasing her parents and teachers through her academic achievement assumed less importance than it had in Year 7. This role had been taken by her peer group.

Academic Performance

Generally, Janene's academic performance remained at the same level of the Year 7 benchmark from Year 7 to Year 8. There was some minor shift upwards in reading, and her performance on writing remained the same. Standardised scores for the mathematics strands show that Janene's performance declined in relation to the mean on all three strands. Janene's results on the MSE mathematics and English tests at Year 7 and Year 8 are presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Raw and Standardised Scores on MSE Mathematics and English Tests at Year 7 and 8: Janene

	English				Mathematics					
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.
Year 7	24	0	7	0	8	2.260	13	13.000	18	1.255
Year 8	26	0	7	0	12	.302	9	12.000	16	1.236

Teacher and Self-ratings of Performance

In Year 7 Janene's teacher described her academic achievement as "average" and rated her performance in all academic areas at 8. He described her "as about average on everything. She has the ability to achieve". He could identify no major areas of weakness and described her as achieving "solid" results. He believed that Janene was capable of achieving higher standards than she currently was, if she worked hard. His statement "I believe that she has the potential to work harder" contrasts with Janene's belief that she tried hard all the time, for all teachers.

He classified her as "low risk" student in relation to her ability to cope with the transition to secondary school believing that she would adjust quickly and successfully to secondary school. He described her as a reasonably well organised student who demonstrated initiative in her role as student councillor. He also rated her social performance at 8, describing her as an outgoing and cooperative student. Janene's classroom behaviour did not fit into the participation styles categories. She is possibly best described as a *Social* student despite her reluctance to perform publicly or answer questions. While she reported that she did not often

talk to her teacher, he reported that she frequently initiated interactions with him. In classroom observations she was not observed to initiate student-teacher interactions.

In Year 7 Janene rated her mathematics performance at 6, English at 7 and general academic performance at 5. She thought that her best performance was in social studies. "I think I'm doing best in social studies because I'm getting good marks for this subject. I usually get 2s for social studies." The teacher marked more work in social studies than other subjects so this provided Janene with more information about her performance. She attempted to explain the reasons why she was good at this subject. "I think I'm getting good marks because of the way I do the work. It's the amount of writing that you do and the way that you put the ideas into words. You don't have to make up your own ideas." She did not like the writing dimension of English, "I don't really like it, I'm not interested in it." Despite the fact that she disliked creative writing because she had to "make up (your) own ideas" she rated her English performance at 7 because it included other dimensions such as spelling and reading. Both Janene and her teacher described her academic performance as "average" but assigned different numeric values to that performance.

Janene's Year 8 teachers rated her English performance at 6 and her mathematics performance at 7. Teacher ratings at Year 8 were lower for both academic subjects than her Year 7 teacher's ratings. This may be a function of different teachers valuing the numeric differently or it may in fact reflect the fact that Janene's performance was lower in Year 8 than it had been in Year 7. Her MSE test performance would suggest that she had shown little or no improvement in academic outcomes in mathematics and English. Comments from Janene's Year 8 teachers were less positive than in Year 7 and teachers commented on her lack of commitment to school, "She puts in minimum effort."

At Year 8 Janene rated her performance in mathematics at 6 the same level as her Year 7 performance. "I don't think I'm really good at maths, I'm getting Bs, but I didn't get put down a pathway." Her rating for her performance in English was 4, significantly lower than her rating in the previous year. "I'm not doing very well in English, the work is really hard because there's so much of it. I can't keep up with it." Following this interview Janene was changed to a lower pathway for English so it would seem that her judgment of her rating in the initial class group was fairly accurate.

Comparison of teacher and self-ratings.

In Year 7 Janene rated her own performance in all academic areas lower than the rating allocated by her teacher. The difference was greatest in the area of general academic performance where Janene rated her performance at 5 and the teacher rating was 8. As this category included social studies the subject which Janene identified as her best subject it would seem that Janene may not have been effective at combining various subjects to produce a composite picture of her performance. Janene and her teacher agreed on a social rating of 8.

At Year 8 there was reasonable agreement between Janene's rating for her performance in mathematics and English and that of her teachers. However, as in the previous year Janene rated herself lower than her teacher's rating in both subjects. This would suggest that her expectations for success in those subjects would be low. However, Janene expressed confidence that she could be successful and purposely avoided failure. It may be that she rated herself lower than her teachers because she was aware of the effort that she was withholding and made her judgments in relation to her beliefs about the standard of performance of which she was capable if she tried.

Attributions For Success and Failure

Attributions for success

At Year 7 Janene attributed her success to the internal factors, effort and ability and accepted responsibility for her level of achievement. She acknowledged that she received good marks when she tried hard and believed that she was responsible for her success. Effort was something which she could control and hence her opportunities for academic success were within her control. "I deserve the marks I get." While she believes that her successes are due to her effort she will be willing to tackle similar tasks in the future as long as she makes an effort on them.

She demonstrated little reflection on her own performance "When I get a good mark I don't think about it. I don't wonder why and I don't really care what other kids get." Comments such as "I try hard to make my teachers happy." and "I feel proud when I get good marks because my parents will be pleased." suggest that the sources of her motivation were external and that she found success a pleasurable experience.

At Year 8 her attributions for academic success had become externalised as she held the task and luck, uncontrollable factors, responsible for her success. She suggested that academic success was the result of simple tasks, "These are things that are on stuff we've done before." Janene's comments about the effect of the peer group on her efforts "In my group it's not cool to do well in school. Or to seem to want to." suggest that the sources of her motivation were still external, and that she was unwilling to acknowledge the role of personal effort.

Attributions for failure.

In Year 7 Janene attributed academic failure to a lack of personal effort, "If I get a low mark it's because I didn't try hard enough. If I tried harder I'd get better marks." and "When I can't be bothered and don't try I

expect to get a low mark." The pattern of her attributions for failure suggest that she holds internal attributions for failure as ability is the next factor held responsible. "I get low marks in science because I'm no good at it. And I'm no good at writing stories because I can't think of things to put on the page." Although Janene saw that some of her academic performance was within her control via her effort, by selecting ability as the second influence she suggested that in some areas she believed there was little that she could do to avoid future negative academic outcomes.

She reported that she sometimes felt disappointed when she received a low mark but if it was in a situation where she hadn't tried hard then she didn't feel bad for long, "I know I can try and do better next time. Mr P is always telling us how important it is to 'give it a go'."

At Year 8 Janene's primary source of attributions for failure was effort but the pattern of her attributions changed to show the task as the second factor responsible for failure. Her attributions for failure moved from internal origins to a combination of internal and external. She accepted that she was responsible for the amount of effort that she put in and that sometimes she didn't really try because "I don't care what mark I get. I don't try as much as I did last year.", "I just don't want to fail." and "It's not cool to do really well." She identified times when she had not performed well on tasks because she had "studied the wrong thing", or "I guess I wasn't listening. That's my fault."

Janene was prepared to accept responsibility for her failure and viewed failure as a function of something within her control. She could choose whether or not to try on a task, or listen to instructions. However, there was little that she could do to affect the nature of the task so while she viewed the primary cause of her poor performance to be controllable, the next cause was not.

Janene reported that she didn't care when she received poor results in Year 8. "As long as I don't really fail then I don't care. Good marks don't matter. I guess even if I get a D I wouldn't be really upset, but I don't want an F. That's really serious." As long as Janene believed that she was in control of the effort which she put into each task and that her results were dependent on her efforts then she could cope with the marks that resulted. While she was in control of the degree of success that she achieved (through her effort) then she could still approach each new task confidently.

Use of Strategies

When faced with a problem situation where she could not continue Janene reported that she would ask a specific friend for assistance. She was emphatic that she would not ask the teacher:

I don't ask the teacher for help. The teacher goes around the room checking over shoulders and doesn't help. I think he does this to check that we are working, not to help us. I don't like asking the teacher because I don't understand their explanations, he just says the same thing he said before which I didn't understand. I feel wrong.

Her explanation suggested that this may have been a response to a particular teacher and his way of dealing with children. However, as she reported that her response would be the same in subjects other than mathematics, her response would seem to be generalisable to other teachers and situations.

Janene reported that giving up and going on would be her final action, "If my friend can't help me, I do the bits I can then try to work it out.". She reported that her responses to problems would be the same in all subject areas, "I don't like giving up and usually my friend can explain

what to do." When gaining assistance Janene reported that she found it most helpful when she was told what to do or how to solve the problem, rather than being provided with the correct answer.

Janene's behaviour suggested that she was able to employ adaptive strategies, she would seek assistance, although from a limited range of sources, and she would attempt to discover effective ways of completing the task.

Janene's responses to situations in which she had no set work suggested minimal elements of adaptive behaviour. She stated that in some cases the teacher provided work for early finishers but in the situations where there was no set work to continue with, she would complete other work that was due in that day. However, she only completed work if it was required of her, "I don't complete unfinished work unless I have to." She would not create tasks for herself or make simple tasks more challenging.

Janene's pattern of responding to problem situations did not change in Year 8. A friend was her first source of assistance, followed by attempting to complete the parts of the problem that she could. She repeated a resistance to asking the teacher for assistance. This was not a function of individual teachers but was applied across all subject areas, "Teachers make you feel dumb, and it's really hard to get their attention. My friend is right next to me and can help me straight away."

Janene's behaviour became less adaptive in Year 8. She reported that in the unlikely event that she finished early she would not continue with any other work or seek something to occupy herself but would chat to friends. Like Michelle and Neoma she noted that the volume of work presented to students in secondary school meant that there were seldom situations where students finished all of their work in class. The nature of the instructional tasks and the manner in which classes were taught in the

secondary school also seemed to mitigate against the employment of adaptive strategies as all students in the class were given the same task at the same time with little or no scope for variation or self selection of tasks.

Summary

On reflection over her first semester Janene judged that secondary school had been as she expected it to be. In some cases she reported that the work had been more difficult than in Year 7 because of the volume of the work required but she was also able to identify situations where she had repeated work from the previous year. The volume of work had increased and in those situations where she was learning new work Janene had experienced some difficulty with it. In those subjects where she was not in the top pathway Janene reported that the work was at a level similar to the previous year, and in these situations she was able to maintain satisfactory performance with minimum effort. Janene had adopted a negative attitude to schoolwork, embracing an ethos that doing well was undesirable. She operated in manner that allowed her to minimise her chances of failure while expending minimum effort.

Her performance on the MSE tests in Year 8 showed that her academic performance had not improved since Year 7. While her attributions suggested that she viewed success and failure to be within her control. Hence if she chose to put effort into her work she should be able to achieve academic success. There is a real danger that if she maintains her negative attitude then her chances of being academically successful at secondary school will be severely limited. By the end of term one she had been moved into a lower pathway for English. She summarised her high school experiences in the following way, "There's nothing different about high school, school's school." Janene's academic performance in Year 8 would suggest that her transition to secondary school had been less

successful than would have been expected and her case perhaps most closely resembles anecdotal explanations as to what happens to adolescents when they enter secondary school.

Case Five: Felicity

Background

Felicity attended primary school 4B where her teacher was a male with fourteen years teaching experience. Her class was a combined Year 6/7. Her teacher described her as a quiet and cooperative student who rarely asked for help. She was described as having "average" academic potential and a specific learning problem with spelling. In class she was polite and compliant, her teacher expressed concern at her ability to become "invisible". Felicity was friendly towards other students but had no other students whom she had identified as her friends. Felicity was involved in national dancing which occupied much of her time outside school. Felicity was physically small and immature and her teacher expressed concern about Felicity's tendency to withdraw and "disappear" in the class. Despite her work occasionally being untidy, she was described as being well organised and having good personal management skills.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Expectations of secondary school.

Felicity was looking forward to going to secondary school. She had some acquaintances through dancing who were at other high schools and she believed that she would enjoy the experience. She expressed some concern at dealing with the logistics of changing schools such as finding her way around a new environment. She was also concerned about the amount of work that she would have to deal with. Her dancing commitments already placed a great deal of pressure on her and she was

concerned that secondary school would be accompanied by an increased work load that she would not have enough time for.

Experiences of secondary school.

In the first interview conducted in the first week of secondary school Felicity reported that while she found secondary school very different from primary school in a physical sense, once inside the classroom the two were very similar, "What happens in the class isn't much different to primary school. There are some little differences, I think the teachers treat us a bit more like adults, we have 'dress code' not uniforms." She had not experienced any problems adjusting to having a number of different teachers because "all treat us pretty much the same, there are one or two who are a bit stricter but there was a difference at primary school."

She described the work in the first weeks of school as "about as hard as at the end of last year. It's just lots of revision. I'm not surprised, I expected them to revise at the beginning. We seem to do a lot of working on our own." She reported that all of her teachers had explained about the grades that would be awarded but that she did not have any idea of the standards required to achieve particular grades. "I do know that doing homework is very important. All of my teachers have made that very clear."

By the end of first semester Felicity reported that she had made new friends but had maintained her friendship with her "best friend" from the previous year. She identified that at secondary school there were some subjects that seemed to be more important than others "maths, English, science and social studies, I don't know why. They just seem to be treated more seriously." She felt reasonably positive about secondary school because "it gives me something to do, gives me the chance to see my friends, socialising is the most important thing."

Secondary school had been different to her expectations in a number of ways. Felicity identified areas relating to organisational and social features of the school, expressing surprise that the year groups remained so separate and that moving around the school had been fairly simple.

She believed that she was achieving well and that she was trying hard "I think- harder than last year." The grades that she had received for work provided the basis for her judgment and she was frustrated at receiving little information about her progress in science. She perceived that the work that she was currently doing was a repetition of work that she had previously done in Year 7, "It's like revision still" and expressed a desire to be promoted to higher pathway. She had interpreted messages about the type of work that was required and stressed the importance of submitting work for assessment. She admitted that she "sometimes handed in work that I wouldn't have handed in to Mr L last year but it's really important to hand it in. It's worse to be late than sloppy or incomplete."

Academic Performance

At Year 7 Felicity scored within the benchmark range of the MSE English tests for reading and writing. At Year 8 her English test scores were higher than the previous years but her position in relation to the benchmark for Year 7 performance remained the same.

At Year 7 she scored at the low end of the range for all strands on the mathematics test. Standardised scores of her Year 8 performance showed a decline in performance on the number strand but her position in relation to the Year 7 benchmark remained the same. Table 21 presents Felicity's performance on the MSE tests for English and mathematics at Year 7 and Year 8.

Table 21

Raw and Standardised Scores on MSE Mathematics and English Tests at Year 7 and 8: Felicity

	English				Mathematics					
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.
Year 7	26	0	7	0	3	-.893	7	7.000	10	-.822
Year 8	27	0	9	0	9	-.734	7	7.000	9	-1.359

Teacher and Self-ratings of Academic Performance

Felicity's Year 7 teacher rated her mathematics performance at 6, "she's a hard working student and maybe a bit above average." Her English performance was rated at 5, "she's a fairly average performer, but does have a problem with spelling." Her general academic performance was rated at 6 and this was supported by teacher comments about her being a "hard working student, who tried hard [sic]." Felicity's teacher rated her social performance at 8, "She doesn't have any enemies, gets on well with others but doesn't seem to have any friends. She's shy and retiring." Felicity's Year 7 teacher predicted that she would probably cope with the transition from primary to secondary school but expressed some concerns suggesting that her shyness and ability to "disappear" may put her in the high risk category.

In Year 7 Felicity rated her own mathematics performance at 5, "I think I'm okay but not really good, about halfway through the class." She experienced some difficulty placing herself on the basis of her English performance because she was aware that her poor spelling had a detrimental effect on her performance. After a great deal of consideration

she placed herself at 7 for English. She rated her general academic performance at 7 and social performance at 9.

Teacher ratings for Felicity's mathematics and English performance at Year 8 matched Year 7 ratings. She was rated a 6 in mathematics and it took some time and thought for her teacher to identify her. The teacher commented on Felicity's ability to "disappear" in the class, "I hardly notice her." Felicity's performance in English was rated 5, "she's really very average."

In Year 8 Felicity rated her academic performance lower than she had in Year 7, placing herself at 4 "I seem to be having lots of trouble." She rated her performance in English at 7, the same position she had selected in the previous year, "I think I'm going pretty well."

Comparison of teacher and self-ratings.

Felicity rated her own performance higher than her Year 7 teacher in all areas except mathematics. This pattern was repeated in Year 8 when Felicity's rating of her own performance in mathematics was below her rating of her own performance in Year 7, and below that of her Year 8 teacher. Her rating of her performance in English (7) was the same as her own Year 7 rating and again above that of her Year 8 teacher.

Attributions for Success and Failure

Attributions for success.

In Year 7 Felicity attributed academic success to effort and the task. Her primary attribution was to effort "When I do well it's because I've tried really hard." Felicity stated that she usually received the sort of marks that she expected and was pleased when she received high marks as she saw this as a reward for her hard work. She said that she felt good when she did well because this pleased her parents who encouraged her to

try hard and "do her best". She also noted that her Year 7 teacher and primary school principal gave students repeated messages about the importance of trying hard and "giving it a go".

In Year 8 the pattern of Felicity's attributions for her success changed to reflect the internal causes, ability and effort. "I got good marks because of things that I did. I'm good at thinking of ideas for stories and I try hard to do a good job." By viewing positive outcomes as the result of factors over which she had control Felicity was more likely to expect to be successful on similar tasks in the future.

In Year 8 Felicity reported that she still felt pleased when she achieved good results "It's nice to do well. It makes me and my parents happy." She also commented on the fact that this year she felt that she was able to achieve better results and that she "felt smarter". It may be that being in a more homogeneous group allowed Felicity to achieve better relative to other students. If students are more similar in achievement levels the variation between high and low achieving students is less extreme.

Attributions for failure.

In Year 7 Felicity attributed failure to the external, uncontrollable factors luck and the task. Felicity referred to particular instances where she had received poor marks for work because "It was bad luck, I wasn't sure what to do and I guessed and it wasn't right. The teacher asked us to do something that was really hard and I'd never done it before. I didn't really know what he wanted. It wasn't my fault."

Felicity did not like being unsuccessful on tasks and said that it made her feel "dumb". She had already identified that she had a specific learning disability which made things difficult for her and she also frequently commented on the fact that she believed that she had a poor

memory which made learning things difficult for her. However, she did not attribute failure to lack of ability which meant that she would be likely to approach similar future tasks with some expectation of success.

At Year 8 she attributed failure to the uncontrollable causes, ability and the task. This was related specifically to performance in science which Felicity described as "a hard subject that I don't understand. I try to learn it but it doesn't stay in my head. It's like spelling. I can't remember it." The pattern of Felicity's attributions for failure had changed to become more internal but still uncontrollable. As long as she continues to view negative outcomes to be the result of something over which she has no control, Felicity is unlikely to expect to be successful on similar future tasks.

Felicity's response to failure at Year 8 was disappointment that she could not master the subject area or the task. When asked to explain the reason why she may not be successful in other subject areas Felicity suggested that it was probably because she could not do some of the things (such as remembering) that were expected of her as a learner.

The pattern of Felicity's attributions for both success and failure changed from Year 7 to Year 8. Her attributions for success became more internal and her attributions for failure became more internal and less controllable.

Use of Strategies

In Year 7 Felicity reported that when she became "stuck" on a problem her first response was to ask a friend for assistance, "I'll usually ask the person sitting next to me because it's quickest." Her alternative action was to think about ways in which she had solved other similar problems.

Felicity reported that when she finished set class work early she would read or complete other unfinished work. Her teacher had reported that she showed initiative in her personal work and was effective at setting and achieving goals. She reported that occasionally she had added additional aspects to set work if she finished it early or thought that it was too simple. "I sometimes add other things to make it more interesting. I did that in my project and Mr L thought it was really good." This was not her normal behaviour because she said that usually she was too short of time to make tasks more complex.

In Year 8 Felicity reported that her immediate response was to ask another student for help because "it's too hard to get the teacher's attention. They're usually worried about the kids who muck around." However, she reported that her next action would be to give up rather than to attempt to implement a strategy of some type which demonstrates non-adaptive strategy use.

Like other students in this study Felicity reported that since arriving at secondary school she had not yet encountered a class situation where she had completed all class work before the end of the period. She also reported that she would not consider adding to assigned tasks in order to make them more interesting or challenging, referring to the importance of completing and submitting work.

Summary

Felicity appeared to settle in to secondary school. The transition had not presented her with any major problems. She appeared to be constructing a view of secondary school that included the things that the school considered important (such as submitting work) and the things that she considered important (such as socialising). She believed that she was coping adequately with secondary school and identified some students

from her primary school whom she described as experiencing major difficulties because "they weren't very good last year. They don't finish their work or hand it in," reiterating her perception of the importance of the completing and submitting work. She had been surprised, and to some extent disappointed that the academic work had not been more challenging but as she viewed herself as an "average" student she acknowledged that this worked to her advantage. "Because the work isn't really hard I can do okay on it. Just so long as I hand it in." Her experiences showed to her that it was possible to achieve at a satisfactory level with little effort. This may have significant implications for her future effort.

Case Six: Andrew

Background

Andrew was in class 4A. His Year 7 teacher was the deputy principal female with twenty years teaching experience. He had an older brother who was in Year 8 at the secondary school and a younger sister who received much of the family's attention. His parents were of central European descent and his mother spoke very little English. English was not the language spoken at home.

Andrew was classified as a *Social* student. His teacher described him as a cooperative student who would tackle almost all problems. She reported that she frequently had to call on him to help him become involved in class. She identified that she believed he had the potential to achieve but that this may be restricted by his difficulties with written language as well as his short temper. Andrew did not respond well to reprimands and discipline and his teacher reported that she had to work hard to keep him "on side". His organisational skills were described as

poor and his teacher reported that he frequently lost books and worksheets and often had to search for required materials.

While his teacher described him as independent and demonstrating initiative she also noted that she had to monitor his behaviour because he could become easily distracted and off-task if she was working with other students. He was reliant on her to monitor his on-task behaviour apparently lacking the skills to do so himself.

Expectations and Experiences of Secondary School

Expectations of secondary school.

Andrew stated that his brother had told him little about secondary school because, "We don't talk to each other much, and then we don't talk about school." However, his brother had told him that "high school is more fun than primary school. It's hard work but not that bad when you get used to it." Andrew said that he had no idea what secondary school would be like but was looking forward to it. Apart from avoiding unemployment he had no idea about what he wanted to do in the future.

Andrew did not expect to maintain old friendships at secondary school, and believed that high school was a new situation where he would make new friends. He thought that secondary school would provide him with the opportunity to make a new start. Andrew believed that he could take advantage of this opportunity, "I'd like to do better next year. I can do this if I work harder and do my homework."

Andrew expressed positive functional attitudes towards the value of schooling. He had received strong messages about the importance of doing well at school from his family, teachers and the media, "I know it's important to do well to get a good job. You're more likely to get a good job if you've got good marks. The job situation seems pretty real because we hear so much about it." Andrew's family had migrated to Australia from

central Europe and it is likely that this attitude was to some extent socio-culturally influenced.

Andrew's vision of himself as a Year 8 student focused on good academic performance which was represented by "a good report card". He described a good Year 8 student as a "hard worker who tries hard and studies hard." Andrew stated that he thought that studying and trying hard were important if a student was to do well at school. He commented that he had read textbooks about how to study but did not use the information that he had read.

Andrew admitted that he often did not try at primary school. This was an emotional response to situations where he believed that he was being unfairly treated. He said that he was aware that he stopped trying when he thought that a teacher was "picking on" him. He admitted that his effort was inconsistent and related to his affective state, "I try hard when I'm in a good mood", and that he tried harder for teachers he liked. He liked his regular Year 7 teacher more than any other teacher and consequently worked "better for her" than for specialist teachers who also taught him. When asked to elaborate on what he meant by trying hard, Andrew described it as "... put in the effort and give things a go." He was unable to describe the processes involved in working or trying hard and did not mention persevering or repeating tasks.

Andrew's sources of motivation were external, and his goals related to performance. His reasons for performing academic tasks related to external rewards that accompanied the task. He reported, "I feel better and proud when I get good marks. My parents give me rewards when I get good marks. I feel good when I make them happy." When he liked a teacher, and believed the feeling to be mutual, he was more likely to apply effort in his work and behave in class. Andrew saw school as important

for future employment reasons and also because "it gives me something to do."

Experiences of secondary school.

Andrew's initial impressions of secondary school were positive. He had experienced few problems finding rooms or moving around the school. He was finding the new subjects interesting and liked changing classes and moving around the school because it "made the day go fast". He reported surprise at finding the work to be the same level of difficulty as the previous year. He believed that he was working hard and stated that he had made a decision to try hard in Year 8, "it's my opportunity for a new start." The level of the work that he had experienced so far led him to believe that it would be possible for him to do well at secondary school and he found this reassuring.

In a subsequent interview Andrew stated that he was still trying hard, studying for tests and achieving good marks. He did not perceive the work to be harder and noted that he had received A's which he had not previously received at primary school. He expressed some disappointment at science as a subject. While he found it interesting to conduct experiments in science, he was disappointed that opportunities for the students to perform experiments were limited and that most class time was spent copying notes or watching the teacher perform experiments. Generally, he described the work as boring.

He found the nature and content of Year 8 social studies different from the social studies with which he was familiar. He described this as new and interesting "but a bit hard because it's new." This comment reflects the responses of a number of students in this study. Work that students perceived to be new was held to be interesting, challenging or hard. On the other hand, work with which students were familiar was

seen to be easy, boring and old. Andrew reported that he was required to perform more independent work in Year 8 social studies than he had been accustomed to, "We do most of it on our own. Last year social studies was lots of discussion with the whole class and the teacher."

Andrew's problems with written language possibly played a significant role in his responses to subjects at secondary school. His well developed oral language skills allowed him to function successfully in situations which were based around discussion and verbal instruction. In the secondary school there was little opportunity for group work or discussion and he was required to engage in mainly independent, print-based learning activities. This situation placed Andrew at a disadvantage of which he was aware. He expressed feelings of frustration and powerlessness in these situations and felt unfairly treated because he believed he was disadvantaged and made to appear "dumb". His lack of appropriate strategies for dealing with this meant that his only responses were emotional outbursts which achieved nothing. His responses consisted of anger which attracted sanctions from his teachers, and the withdrawal of effort which had an adverse effect on his learning.

Andrew described his performance as satisfactory, "In general I think I'm pretty good at school." He was emphatic that he would not publicly admit that he did not know something and would not raise his hand to ask the teacher for assistance. He also expressed a reluctance to volunteer answers to teacher questions and said that he would only volunteer if he was sure that he had the correct answer, "I don't want to be wrong in public." His increased reluctance to ask questions and seek help support Newman's assertion (1991) that by the middle years of schooling students' attitudes and beliefs about the costs of seeking help have a negative effect on their interactions and behaviour (Newman & Goldin, 1990; Newman & Schwager, 1992; van der Meij, 1988, 1990).

Andrew believed that presentation was an important criterion of quality work at Year 8 and identified a difference between the nature of presentation that he believed was required at primary and secondary school, "At primary school you have to use colours and pictures, now it just has to be neat and so you can read it." Andrew had interpreted teacher messages about the importance of completing work and handing it in. The deduction of marks which was a consequence of late submission reinforced this message and Andrew admitted that this year he had submitted work of a standard which his Year 7 teacher would have found unacceptable. At the end of first term he still found the work to be easier than he expected but believed that it would begin to get harder.

In the final interview which occurred at the end of second term, Andrew expressed disillusionment at the level of the work in which he was currently engaged, "This is really boring because we've done it all before." He reported that he was not spending much time on homework and that he believed that he had spent more time on homework in Year 7:

Last year our teacher gave us lots of homework to get us ready for Year 8 but we didn't need it because we don't get very much now. Last year my brother seemed to get much more homework than I do. Sometimes we seem to get a lot because sometimes all teachers give you homework at the same time. But it's not new work it's just finishing stuff off.

Andrew described all subjects as 'boring, "especially in social studies where we just copy notes down." This is in contrast to his response in the first weeks of school when he had described social studies as new, interesting and different. His description of the nature of class work in most subjects was:

We do more worksheets, lots of worksheets. The teacher hands them out, explains what to do and we work on them. I don't mind

doing them but it's more fun when you get to do real things - you know, write things yourself.

Andrew felt that some of the teachers treated students unfairly, and described their behaviour as "changing the rules to make themselves right". He commented, "it's different to primary school. There the teachers seemed to care about kids, here they don't." Andrew was aware of his responses when he believed that he was being treated unfairly, "I get angry, I don't do any work. I just sit in my seat." He was aware that this was counterproductive but he did not have alternative responses in such situations.

Andrew expressed frustration at his lack of awareness of progress:

I don't know how I'm going this year. I thought I was trying hard in science but my teacher told me to work harder. The teachers don't tell me much about how I'm going. Last year Ms C used to give me lots of feedback but this year I don't get much information about what's good and bad.

He reported that he believed that he tried on some occasions, but admitted that he didn't study when tests were coming up because "I can't be bothered and I don't know what to study." It seems that despite talking about the importance of the value of school achievement Andrew was beginning to lose sight of the value of academic tasks which adversely affected his achievement motivation. Lack of information about task requirements and lack of a clear reason for learning were the reasons for this change.

Academic Performance

There was wide variation in Andrew's scores on the two English tests at Year 7. His score for reading was well above the Year 7 benchmark but his score for writing was at the bottom of the range of benchmark scores. Andrew was well aware of his strengths and weaknesses in this area. In Year 8 Andrew's performance remained the same. While his position in relation to the benchmark remained stable from Year 7 to Year 8 the raw score was lower in Year 8 than in the previous year.

In Year 7 Andrew scored in the lower range of the benchmark scores for the MSE mathematics tests in measurement and space, and at the upper end of the range for number. At Year 8 Andrew scored within the range of benchmark scores for all strands of the mathematics tests. Standardised mathematics scores show that Andrew's performance on the measurement and number strands declined from Year 7 to Year 8. Table 22 presents Andrew's raw and standardised scores on the MSE test at Year 7 and 8.

Table 22

Raw and Standardised Scores on MSE Mathematics and English Tests at Year 7 and 8: Andrew

	English				Mathematics					
	Reading		Writing		Measurement		Space		Number	
	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.	Raw	Stand.
Year 7	**40	0	6	0	5	.368	5	5.000	17	.995
Year 8	**38	0	*4	0	140	-.389	10	10.000	13	.124

** denotes performance above the benchmark

* denotes performance below the benchmark

Teacher and Self-ratings of Academic Performance

Andrew's Year 7 mathematics teacher's rating of his performance in that subject (3) placed him towards the bottom end of the class, "He's not a strong maths student." This judgment does not correspond to Andrew's performance on the MSE mathematics test where he performed within the benchmark range of scores. Andrew expressed negative attitudes towards this teacher and it may be that her judgment was influenced by his classroom behaviour.

When rating his performance in English, Andrew's regular class teacher commented on the effect of his ESL background and noted the relative strength of his reading comprehension and oral language skills .

His general academic performance was rated at 6. His teacher commented that again, his lack of written language skills limited his academic performance but that he had a wide general knowledge and was willing to offer an informed opinion. His social performance was rated at 4. His teacher described him as a *Social* student in class, but noted that he did not mix well, and had a limited number of friends. She suggested that Andrew's short temper hindered his development of friendships.

Andrew's Year 7 teacher was reluctant to predict his performance at Year 8, stating that while she believed that Andrew had the potential to succeed, his capacity for misbehaviour, willingness to join others misbehaving and his short temper may adversely affect his adjustment to secondary school and subsequent academic performance. She suggested that he had the capacity to cope with secondary school but feared that he would be a high risk student because of his behaviour.

In Year 7 Andrew rated his mathematics performance at 5, "I think I'm okay at maths, I'm not the best . . . not the worst." He repeated his teacher's comments about variations in his performance in English and rated his overall English performance at 3. He acknowledged that his

reading and speaking skills were above average but he rated his spelling and grammar below most of his peers. His final decision was based on what he saw to be the salient aspects in the classroom setting, "We get most of our marks for written work and I know that I'm not good, I also get bad marks in spelling." Andrew rated his general academic performance at 7 and his social performance at 8, "I think I get on with everyone okay."

At Year 8 Andrew's rating for his mathematics performance was the same as in Year 7 (5) but he had increased his rating for English to 5 based on what he believed what was rewarded at secondary school, "This year in English we get marks for different things. We don't get marks for grammar and spelling so I think I'm doing better."

Andrew's Year 8 mathematics teacher rated his performance at 4 and his English teacher also rated his English performance at 4. Both teachers described his performance as barely adequate, commenting on his negative attitude towards school and surly behaviour in class. The increased reliance on written work, which was Andrew's weakness may have influenced teacher judgments of his performance. In addition, teachers may have been influenced by Andrew's classroom behaviour. Neither teacher described his performance or potential in positive terms.

Comparison of teacher and self-ratings.

In Year 7 there was variation between Andrew's rating of his performance and his teacher's ratings. In mathematics Andrew rated his performance higher than his teacher rating, and this was closer to the description of his mathematics performance offered by the MSE test. In English, Andrew and his teacher agreed on areas of strengths and weakness and agreed on the ratings for both oral and written dimensions. However, when deciding on an overall rating for English Andrew rated

his performance lower than his teacher. Teacher and self-ratings for general academic performance were close: Andrew's rating was slightly higher than that of his teacher. In common with most subjects there was significant difference between Andrew's and his teacher's ratings of his social performance. Again the teacher rating was lower than the student's self-rating.

There was a reasonable similarity between the ratings assigned by Andrew and his teachers to his performance at Year 8. However, comments made by Andrew and his teachers about their reasons for assigning the ratings were conflicting. Andrew believed that 5 was a "good" rating that signified that he was doing well and his teachers used 5 to describe adequate performance. It seems that while Andrew and his teacher assigned the same relative rating to his performance, the value which they attached to that rating was different.

Attributions For Success and Failure

Attributions for success.

In Year 7 Andrew attributed his academic success to luck. Positive outcomes were attributed to the external factors luck and the task, causes over which he had no control. When discussing a situation in which he had received a very high mark for a piece of work Andrew expressed surprise that he had achieved that mark and could not explain why he got the mark except, "I guess I was just lucky. I don't know what it was about it. I didn't think it was that good. I don't often get a very high mark." Andrew was not confident of achieving high marks in academic situations.

Andrew commented that he felt good and proud of himself when he received good marks and that this also pleased his parents. He said that he felt particularly good because doing well made his parents happy.

Andrew's goal orientations were external and related to wanting to do well in order to please other people. However, he was not confident of performing well and wanted to apply minimal effort. This may have been a self protective response to his lack of confidence in academic performance situations.

At Year 8 the pattern of Andrew's attributions for success changed substantially. Success was attributed to effort, an internal cause which was within Andrew's control. He also held the task responsible for some successes, recalling certain specific examples. Andrew believed that he had greater control over his performance in the secondary setting comment that he expected to be successful on academic tasks because the work was familiar.

At Year 8 Andrew said that he felt pleased when he did well because it showed him that he could do the work. However, he commented that he had experienced very few situations at secondary school when he had been particularly successful. While he believed that there were numerous instances where he had produced good quality work he had seldom received high marks. This would seem to conflict with his expectations for success.

Andrew's attributions for success and his increased self perceptions of performance suggest that the homogeneous secondary classroom environment and the perceived familiarity of work may have caused him to develop an unrealistically positive view of his ability and performance. In a streamed secondary class it was possible for him to achieve A grades, something which had never occurred before. It seems that he was unable to resolve differences between his expectations and experiences.

Attributions for failure.

Andrew attributed negative outcomes externally to luck. With reference to a project for which he had received a low mark Andrew stated, "It wasn't my fault. We were given marks for things that I didn't know were going to be marked." Andrew acknowledged that there were occasions when he had not performed very well because he had not put the effort in, "If I don't like the teacher I won't try hard, I don't really like my maths teacher. I don't try if I'm in a bad mood." Andrew said that when he did badly he was angry at the teacher because he believed that it was their fault that he had not tried hard enough.

Andrew's attributions for failure remained stable from Year 7 to Year 8. Lack of success was attributed to luck and effort. In this case he suggested that he often received poor marks because, "some of the teachers are unfair, they pick on me. This year there aren't any teachers I like so I don't try." Although he was prepared to accept the responsibility for the amount of effort which he expended on a task, Andrew continued to hold someone else (the teacher) responsible for his lack of success, "It's the teacher's fault that I don't try." Again, Andrew's affective response to failure was one of anger at the teachers for making him perform badly.

Use of Strategies

In Year 7 Andrew's response to a problem situation was to ask for help from the teacher. He reported that he wouldn't ask other students for help because he didn't think that they would help him and he didn't want them to know that he could not do the work. He described teacher actions that were helpful to him, "If the teacher helps she explains it so I can understand what I have to do, she shows how to do it, spends some time with me." His responses to problem situations were limited. His help seeking behaviour did little to assist his learning, he did not consider

alternative sources of assistance, referring automatically to the teacher. Andrew also said that he would only ask teachers if he liked them since the costs of asking for help from certain teachers or peers outweighed any benefits that may have resulted. If he was unable to get the teacher's attention Andrew would give up on the task. Andrew stated that he seldom tried to work things out for himself and could describe no strategies for tackling problems independently, "If I can't do it I give up." Andrew had a limited repertoire of behavioural responses and was unable to approach learning tasks in a strategic manner.

Andrew said that he very seldom finished class work early so had few opportunities to employ other strategies, "I just never seem to get everything finished." He also stated that he would not do anything to make a boring task more interesting, "I just probably wouldn't finish it unless I had to."

At Year 8 Andrew reported that he would not ask the teacher for assistance and that he was most likely to leave the problem and go on to the next question or task. He also said that there was no situation in class where he would ask a question of the teacher. Andrew said that asking and answering questions was embarrassing and related it particularly to the potential for public demonstration of lack of knowledge. His reluctance to ask for assistance was related to his beliefs about teachers who "picked on" students. He believed that teachers were unwilling to help students and he did not want others to know if he could not do the work. These responses match the negative consequences associated with asking for assistance described by Newman (1991). In Year 8 Andrew reported that he may seek help from a friend, but stressed that it would have to be a friend not just a peer. Again, the threat of being seen to be experiencing problems with the learning task limited Andrew's help seeking behaviour.

Again, in Year 8 Andrew would not extend or alter tasks to make them more interesting or challenging, "If they're boring then I just won't do them." He could not imagine altering a task to make it more interesting or challenging. As he never finished all assigned work in class time, Andrew could not describe what he would do if he finished work early. He could not imagine such a situation occurring. Classroom observation showed that he was often off-task and distracted. He was not observed to demonstrate initiative or independence in individual seatwork.

Andrew demonstrated minimal adaptive capabilities at Year 7 and Year 8. He did not set tasks for himself or adapt existing tasks to make them more interesting or challenging. He was heavily reliant on his teacher to keep him on task and his only response when he encountered problems was to ask someone to show him what to do.

Summary

As his first year of secondary school progressed Andrew became more disappointed and disillusioned. His response to his perception of the level of the work that he was doing was to decrease his effort because he perceived the teacher's demands to be low. He voiced frustration at his lack of knowledge about the evaluative criteria and process at secondary level. It seems that Andrew had few personal resources on which to draw and when faced with a difficult situation his response was to withdraw. Andrew's goal orientations changed from performance related goals (to get good marks to satisfy others) in Year 7, to focus on the avoidance of work in Year 8. To a large extent this was caused by his affective responses to teachers whom he believed "picked on" him but the increased emphasis on individual written work meant that he had fewer opportunities to be successful. The protection of his public image was

important and rather than be seen to be unsuccessful, Andrew consciously withdrew effort so that he could use this to explain possible poor performance. This provides evidence for the suggestion that some students consciously withdraw their efforts on classroom tasks in order to protect their sense of self worth (Covington, 1979).

Andrew's academic performance as measured by the MSE tests showed a general decline from Year 7 to Year 8. His response to academic tasks was negative, and this seemed to be a combination of his affective responses to the teachers whom he did not like, and to what he perceived to be boring tasks. Andrew disengaged himself from school and the classroom, and he acknowledged this when he said, "If I don't like the teacher then I just don't do anything." It seems that Andrew had decided that teachers did not like students, and in response he did not like them and consequently did little work. Although he had begun the year with good intentions stating that he wanted to make a "fresh start", by the end of first semester his attitude had changed and his deteriorating academic performance reflected these changes.

Conclusion

The data collected from the case studies have provided additional information to help explain the complex area of students' academic adjustment to secondary school. It is clear from the findings that students behave in quite different ways in response to their interpretation of messages that they have received. However, there is also similarity in the ways in which students interpreted messages about their secondary school experiences. Of the six case studies, four were actively looking forward to entering secondary school, one was equivocal and one did not want to go to secondary school. By the end of the first semester of secondary school only one student (Neoma) still viewed secondary school in a positive

light. She had been academically successful and found the academic environment stimulating and interesting. The other students expressed disappointment that secondary school had not met their expectations and for various reasons four of the students had developed negative attitudes towards school, and had reported that they had reduced their efforts in academic situations.

These students had reported common perceptions relating to the academic work that they encountered in secondary school. They all reported that they had found the work easier than they had expected and in many cases believed it was repetition of work they had previously done in primary school. All students reported that the volume of work increased and that they interpreted that the most important things about academic work in secondary school were completing work and submitting it on time. This increased volume of work and emphasis on submission combined with the lack of intellectual challenge led some students to focus only on work that was to be assessed and to reduce their effort on academic tasks.

It would seem that the capacity of students to make a successful adjustment to secondary school is a combination of academic and personal factors. Despite previous findings of Ward et al. (1982) and Good and Power (1976) the participation style of students appeared to have little effect on their adjustment to the secondary school environment. Unlike Ward et al. (1982) who found that students' classroom behaviour and participation was related to the classroom setting created by the teacher, this study found that students' classroom behaviour was consistent across settings. It may be that the classroom settings created by teachers in this study were more similar than those in Ward et al.'s study. However, it would seem that students maintained their classroom behaviours regardless of teacher. There were some similarities between students'

classroom behaviours at primary and secondary school but a major difference which emerged related to diminished classroom engagement and decreased interaction between students and teachers. The latter point would seem to be a result of both student and teacher behaviour.

Andrew provides the clearest example of the importance of students possessing a repertoire of strategies that they can implement in a range of situations. His lack of appropriate responses and strategies for dealing with problem situations had a debilitating effect on all aspects of his school life. Less extreme examples resulted from other students' limited range of learning strategies and adaptive responses. Although students had limited opportunities for independent selection of work they were frequently required to work on their own and all students reported difficulties associated with gaining the teacher's attention. In these situations those students who had a wide range of strategies and responses and could employ them effectively were placed in a more advantageous position.

The classroom and instructional environment would seem to be critical in relation to students' learning and the development of their attitudes towards schoolwork, learning and themselves as learners. A common observation from students was that secondary school teachers interacted less with them, were less available when they needed to seek assistance and appeared to be more concerned with students who may present behavioural problems. Hence, if students were well behaved they could escape the teachers' attention but they also found it difficult to gain attention when they needed it. The increased amount of individual seat work meant that students had fewer opportunities for interaction and to hear other students' answers and views. This possibly also served to limit the amount of covert information which was available to students about

their place in the classroom and opportunities for informal learning from others.

Students appeared to enter secondary school with cognitive maps which were inadequate or inappropriate for the secondary school curriculum. This related to the new subjects which they encountered. Obvious examples of this are new subjects such as business principles and practices, but also the subject English which becomes a subject in its own right at secondary school. At primary school English is more commonly treated as language and includes explicit instruction in reading, creative writing, grammar, spelling, and punctuation as well as "language across the curriculum". Secondary school English focuses on the elements composing and comprehending and includes the formal study of novels something which is unfamiliar to students at the beginning of Year 8. Students commented on the unfamiliarity with the subject and coming to terms with this new way of dealing with the language area posed problems for some students.

The students in this study had done little work in science at primary school despite the existence of a primary science curriculum. This is not an uncommon situation in Western Australian primary schools where many schools are poorly equipped, or primary teachers lack the interest or knowledge to take science lessons. These students were looking forward to the opportunity to study science and their initial reactions to science classes were positive and optimistic. However, they soon reported disappointment at the nature of science classes in which they personally performed few experiments, observed few teacher conducted experiments and learned scientific procedures and behaviours and theory. Their response to this was to develop a negative opinion of the subject and to describe it as "boring". Even if the nature of content changed in subsequent science units it is likely that for some students the damage has

already been done the challenge of changing their attitudes towards the subject would be daunting. This suggests that curriculum continuity plays an important role in facilitating an effective transition from primary to secondary school. Related to this is the needs to show students the relationships between past and present work and identify new but related learning.

When these students' adjustment to secondary school is judged according to their reported attitudes towards school and academic tasks then only Neoma and Felicity could be judged to have made a successful transition. These were the two students who reported positive responses to secondary school and the associated instructional tasks. When the students' scores on the MSE tests are used to judge the extent of changes in academic performance little improvement was seen. Because the MSE tests measure students' performance in relation to the Year 7 syllabus documents it would be expected that over the period of one year a noticeable increase in students' performance would occur. This did not occur and several students demonstrated decreased academic performance.

At Year 8 students appeared to take less responsibility for their academic successes and failures becoming more external in their attributions. It was common for those students who were less enamoured with school to accept responsibility for their lack of academic success as they were prepared to admit that they were not interested in doing well and did not try on tasks. Students appeared to use less adaptive strategies and this appeared to be a function of both the instructional environment in which they had no opportunities to set their own tasks, and the volume of class work which gave them few opportunities to extend tasks, or opportunities to work in their free time.

Students' goals became more oriented towards performance and work avoidance only. Students did not describe orientations towards learning or mastery goals at Year 8.

The findings of this study suggest that there is variation in the extent to which these students made a successful adjustment to the academic demands of secondary school. However, it would seem that generally these students dealt effectively with the organisational aspects of the transition but did not adjust effectively to the changed academic and instructional environment of the secondary school. It seems that students' perceptions of the difficulty of work and teachers' expectations were such that they respond in a way that diminished both their attitudes towards schoolwork, their goals and their academic performance.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is on the implications of the findings of this study for theory, practice and future research. The findings of the study in relation to the case study and the target students will be summarised and generalisations drawn about the group. The research questions, purpose and limitations of this study are also summarised.

Overview of the Study

This study investigated the experiences of students as they made the transition from the final year of primary school through the first year of secondary school. This longitudinal study gathered both qualitative and quantitative data from 24 Western Australian school children selected on the basis of their scores on the Year 7 Monitoring Standards in Education tests in English and mathematics. These tests were administered in both the first and second phase of the study. Teachers rated the selected students' academic performance and classified students' participation styles using statements from the Good and Power inventory (1982). Students rated their own academic performance and scores were gathered relating to children's attributions for success and failure in Year 7 and Year 8. Additional information relating to the strategies that students used when faced with problems or unusual situations was collected.

Qualitative data were gathered from interviews conducted with the students prior to their transition to secondary school and following the move. These interviews provided data relating to the students' experiences, their expectations, reflections and interpretations of events.

In addition, case study data were analysed from interviews and classroom observations of six cases. These observations, taken over eighteen months in both the primary and secondary setting provided data on the classroom environments and students' classroom behaviours. Interviews elicited students' perceptions of their educational settings and personal beliefs relating to the academic aspects of primary and secondary school.

Research Questions

This study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What changes occur in the academic achievement of average achieving students when they make the transition from primary to secondary school?
2. How do these students perceive the primary - secondary school transition experience?
 - i) What is the nature of these students' affective and cognitive responses in relation to their academic performance during the transition from primary to secondary school?
3.
 - i) What school related factors appear to be implicated in changes in these students' academic performance from primary to secondary school?
 - ii) What student related factors appear to be implicated in changes in these students' academic performance from primary to secondary school?

Investigations focused on students' expectations of secondary school, their perceptions of the academic and instructional environment, their attributions for academic success and failure and their use of strategies in dealing with instructional tasks. The collection and interpretation of data relating to these aspects of students' experiences in the transition from primary to secondary school allowed the researcher to investigate relationships between the various dimensions and to describe students' experiences and beliefs in this situation.

It was posited that there are a number of features of the secondary school that may influence students' attitudes and motivation and hence their academic performance (Eccles et al., 1993; Feldlaufer, Midgley & Eccles, 1988). Achievement motivation includes the effect of students' achievement goals, beliefs about the value of schooling, self-perceptions of achievement and attributions for academic outcomes. These are interrelated with the use of self-regulatory learning processes. This study investigated changes in these aspects of achievement motivation and sought to explain why these changes occurred.

The relationships between the various constructs are complex and it was argued that they would be best explored by asking students to describe their experiences and the ways in which they interpreted them. This study investigated students' views of their experiences in the school and the classroom at both primary and secondary school and the resulting data were used to construct a picture of a group of "average" students' experiences in the transition from primary to secondary school and the ways in which they made sense of the events that they experienced. At all times it must be remembered that these are the *students'* perceptions of their own experiences and even if other evidence suggests that these perceptions are inaccurate, if students believe them to be true and act

accordingly then for those students those perceptions are real (Weinstein, 1983, 1985; Wittrock, 1986).

Findings

Research Question One

The success of students' transition to secondary school was judged according to their academic achievement as measured by the MSE tests. There was little overall improvement in the MSE test scores for students from Year 7 to Year 8. In both cases a version of Year 7 level MSE tests were administered. There were no significant differences in students' performance in reading and the space strand of mathematics. There was a significant difference in students' performance in writing and it was not possible to test significance of difference in performance on measurement and number. It is realistic to assume that in the space of twelve months some improvement in students' performance in relation to Year 7 standards would be observed. With two exceptions there was little increase in scores with 22 students still performing at the Year 7 benchmark standard at the end of their third term in secondary school.

Research Question Two

This study also sought to describe students' perceptions of their experiences during transition. Data relating to students' perceptions of their experiences during the transition from primary to secondary school including attributions for success and failure, use of strategies and their achievement related emotions and cognitions were gathered using interviews over a twelve month period. These data allowed the construction of a view of the ways in which students made sense of their experiences. Classroom observations over a twelve month period

provided additional data which elaborated and confirmed students' descriptions of their experiences.

Generally, students were disappointed with secondary school. They had expected to experience challenging classes, interesting subjects and that the work would be more difficult than previous work. Their experiences did not confirm these expectations and students reported that they found Year 8 work to be repetitive and boring. Many students responded to Year 8 by reducing their effort and adopting less positive attitudes towards academic work.

The findings of this study showed important differences in aspects of students' academic motivation between Year 7 and Year 8. Differences were found in students' attributions for success and failure, use of adaptive learning behaviours, self-perceptions of academic performance and achievement goal orientation. Findings on student perceptions and reactions to the transition yielded a rich body of knowledge which provided some insight into factors that help to explain aspects of student behaviour in different educational contexts. Students' responses will be discussed in relation to question three in the following section.

Research Question Three

This question attempted to identify the school and student related factors that influenced students' academic performance. Analysis of interview data and measures of aspects of self-regulated learning and motivation provided information which allowed the researcher to construct a theory which explained the reasons for changes in students' academic performance. This identified the key contextual factors which appeared to be salient in the transition experiences of these students.

Key findings are discussed in the following section. This discussion begins with a consideration of general findings. Since the findings of this

study showed important differences between components of students' academic motivation between Year 7 and Year 8 an attempt to provide an explanatory framework for findings is provided.

General Findings

The findings of this study suggest that for these "average" primary school students the experience of moving from primary to secondary school had a generally negative effect on academic performance. Attempts to explain why this occurred include consideration of aspects of students' motivation which may be affected by the physical, social and instructional changes they encounter. In social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1991), motivation is viewed as goal directed behaviour instigated and sustained by learners' expectations about the anticipated outcomes of their actions, self efficacy for performing those actions, and self evaluation of goal progress. Learners note their progress as they work towards achieving their goal, and it is their perceptions of progress towards goal achievement that sustains motivation and self efficacy. Perceived negative discrepancies between an individual's goal and present performance result in change.

Two major sets of achievement related beliefs are central to achievement motivation. The first is learners' beliefs about their abilities and their expectations for success ("Can I succeed on this task?", Eccles & Wigfield, 1985) and the second is their beliefs about the value of particular tasks and their motivational orientation ("Do I want to succeed on this task?", Eccles & Wigfield, 1985). Reciprocal relationships exist between an individual's behaviour, environmental variables, cognitions and other personal factors. Individuals view and interpret their experiences differently, and these different perspectives are reflected in subsequent behaviour. Hence the ways in which individuals within a group of

students interpret the transition from primary to secondary school will vary and their responses to achievement related situations will result from each one's interpretation of their own experiences.

Self-regulated Learning

Self-regulated learners view learning as a systematic and controllable process and accept responsibility for learning outcomes (Paris & Newman, 1990; Zimmerman, 1990). These learners combine cognitive activity with personal beliefs about self efficacy and control. Self-regulated learners engage in the metacognitive processes of goal setting, planning, organising, self monitoring and evaluating their own performance. They demonstrate adaptive learning behaviours using appropriate strategies and regulating their own behaviour at all stages of the learning process. They are "metacognitively, motivationally and behaviourally active participants in their own learning process" (Zimmerman, 1989, p. 4). Self-regulated learners appear to be self motivated and report high self efficacy, positive self attributions and intrinsic task interest.

Paris and Newman (1990) challenge educators and researchers to discover the social and cognitive conditions that enhance self-regulated learning. This study investigated the components of self-regulated learning in students, mapping changes that occurred in students' learning behaviour and classroom environments in an attempt to explain the nature and causes of changes in self-regulated learning behaviour. The findings of this study suggest that students engaged in little self-regulated learning behaviour and that following the transition to secondary school self-regulation of learning became less common. Students' use of individual components of self-regulated learning will be discussed later.

The construct of self-regulated learning includes students' metacognitive strategies for planning, monitoring and controlling their

cognition; management and control of their own effort on classroom tasks and the cognitive strategies that students use to learn, remember and understand. However, successful learners do more than know about these strategies. They actually use them. The components of self-regulated learning are linked with aspects of students' motivation: their expectations of success on a task, their goals and beliefs about the importance or interest of the task and their emotional reactions to the task. The following section presents a summary of findings relating to various components of self-regulated learning and motivation.

Attributions

The patterns of students' attributions for success and failure changed from primary to secondary school and in both years the nature of their attributions for academic outcomes differed from previous research findings.

Fewer students attributed academic success to effort in Year 8 and there was an increase in the number of students who attributed success to the task. Overall, there was an increase in students' attributing success to external factors and a decrease in the attribution of success to internal factors. Attributing success to ability was not widely reported by students in this study. Students were less likely to attribute negative academic outcomes to the internal factors effort and ability at Year 8 than at Year 7 and were more likely to hold the external factors luck and the task responsible for lack of academic success at Year 8.

Literature relating to students' attributions of success and failure suggests that ability is seen as a major cause of success or failure (Dweck, 1986; Stipek, 1994; Weiner, 1987). The findings of this study do not support this assertion. Related to this is the emphasis which the students in this study placed on luck as a factor which influenced their success and failure

on academic tasks. Mason and Stipek (1989) argued that luck was the least influential factor in students' attributions for achievement outcomes. The findings of this study suggest that for these students luck was thought to be an important determinant of academic outcomes.

It seems likely that these differences may result from socio-cultural differences between Australia and America. Those things valued by American society may be different to those valued by Australian society. Stevenson, Lee and Stigler (1986) found that in general, Asian (Chinese and Japanese) children performed better than American children and the parents of Asian children believed that success was due to effort whereas American parents believed that success was due to ability. These beliefs reflect broader cultural beliefs about the nature and role of intelligence which are communicated to students implicitly and explicitly. Henderson and Dweck (1990) suggest that Americans tend to value individual achievement and success while Japanese society values the smooth functioning of the social unit and personal modesty. American society places high value on academic achievement. Henderson and Dweck describe America as traditionally a nation of the "best and brightest" and a "nation in search of excellence" (Henderson & Dweck, 1990, p. 329). It is these cultural values which support the development of attributions for academic outcomes which focus on ability.

Holloway (1988) and Stevenson, Lee and Stigler (1986) demonstrated that cultural differences were responsible for contrasting attributional theories in Japan and the USA, and Kurtz and Schneider (1990) revealed systematic differences in the attributional beliefs and strategic behaviours of West German and American students. These differences may emerge as a result of differential teacher practices including instructional practices, curriculum and school organisational features. Recent Australian studies (Fairbairn, Moore & Chan, 1994; Mc Callum, 1994; Rodwell & Moore, 1994;

Youlden & Chan, 1994) have found similar differences in the patterns of attributions of Australian students.

Source of attributional feedback.

The findings of this study support the suggestions of Fennema (1985) that students receive little feedback in classrooms that fulfils an attributional function. Teachers in secondary classes provided little academic feedback to students and almost no feedback that overtly attributed causes of success or failure during instruction. Students reported receiving no feedback that informed them of teachers' explanations of the causes of their academic outcomes. The students involved in this study made attributions about their academic performance based on information they received from marks and grades, their own explanations of their performance and some comparison with peer grades rather than on the basis of teacher feedback or differential treatment within the class.

Self-Perceptions of Academic Performance

Students' self-perceptions of ability and effort have been shown to influence their achievement related behaviour (Nicholls, 1983; Weiner, 1979). Self perceptions of ability and effort are influenced by student characteristics such as developmental stage (Nicholls, 1978), past performance (Stipek & Hoffman, 1980) and own behaviour, and classroom characteristics such as differential teacher treatment (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1984; Weinstein, 1983). Attributional studies highlight the importance of performance, teacher feedback and feedback obtained from peer comparison (Weiner, 1979). Brophy (1983) suggests that other aspects of teacher behaviour such as providing assistance, monitoring work and showing personal interest are influential in the development of self-

perceptions of ability. Ability self-perceptions and expectations for future success are influenced by a range of classroom and student related factors and it seems that different factors will be more salient for certain students. Self perceptions of ability will affect students' beliefs in their self efficacy or ability to perform certain tasks successfully, which in turn affects their motivation to engage in academic tasks.

In this study students rated their own performance in English and mathematics lower in Year 8 than in Year 7. This contrasts with the findings of Nottelman (1982, 1987) who reported that students' self-ratings of performance were constant pre- and post-transition. Students had made their judgments on the basis of the marks that they had received for their work and assignments and on how difficult they personally found the work to be. They had received little feedback about their performance or areas of strength or weakness. These lowered judgments of ability should have a detrimental effect on students' sense of self efficacy and willingness to engage in academic tasks.

Differences in agreement between teacher and student ratings of student performance at Year 7 and 8 suggest that students had a clearer understanding of the way in which teachers would judge academic performance in Year 7. Again, these findings contrast with Nottelman's finding that there was a greater difference between teacher and student self-rating pre-transition (1982, 1987). There are a number of possible explanations for this. Year 7 teachers may have made their expectations and standards more explicit, students may have developed a greater understanding of teachers' standards due to the increased time which they spent with their Year 7 teacher, students may have lacked the cognitive maps to judge their own performance in the subjects at Year 8, or there may have been less information available for students to make judgments at Year 8.

According to Rosenholtz and Simpson (1984a; 1984b) classrooms in which task structures are undifferentiated produce stable, highly unequal perceptions of ability. In these unidimensional classrooms where all students work on the same task at the same time it becomes clear when bright students finish tasks early or less able students have difficulty completing tasks. Where the task structure is differentiated and students work on several different kinds of tasks social comparison is more difficult and results in less consistency in students' relative performance from day to day. It may be that the secondary context functions as a multidimensional setting, restricting students' opportunities for comparison. Classroom observations and students' comments suggest this not to be the case as within each classroom tasks were undifferentiated and differentiation occurred only between classes. Certainly, the secondary school context with multiple classes and teachers complicates the simple picture of achievement related beliefs that can be derived from studying primary school classrooms.

The results of this study suggest that the most salient factors affecting students' inability to judge their performance in the same way as their teachers were a lack of information about the standards against which performance was to be judged, unclear achievement goals and absence of informative feedback.

Achievement Goals

Learning outcomes are affected by learners' perceptions of the learning environment, the nature and demands of the task and the achievement goals they hold. Students' reasons for working on a task will affect the benefits of working on the task. Learners may hold a learning or mastery goal, a performance or ego goal or a work avoidance goal (Nicholls, 1983). The goal held by a learner will influence the way in

which the task is approached, a learner's beliefs about the nature of achievement, attributions for academic outcomes, affective responses to academic results, task selection and use of learning strategies.

The classroom environment plays an important role affecting the type of learning goals that students adopt (Ames, 1990; Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985; Meece, 1994). Teachers' instructional practices are salient in influencing students' achievement orientations and a classroom learning environment that encourages mastery rather than performance goals will result in greater use of self-regulatory learning processes.

In Year 8 students' stated achievement goals reflected a greater emphasis on performance orientation than mastery goals. These changes appeared to result from the changed instructional environment and associated increased emphasis on the role of assessment and importance of submission. According to Nicholls (1983) students with mastery goals focus on the process of completing the task rather than external evaluation of the self which is the attention of those with performance goals. Classrooms that emphasise external evaluation encourage the development of performance goals whereas instructional environments that emphasise process encourage mastery goals. Penalties for late assessment and repeated warnings to students about the need to submit work for assessment communicated to students the importance of assessment and focused their attention on external sources of evaluation rather than the process of learning. There was an increase in the number of students who expressed work avoidance goals. Students had no clear reasons for wanting to achieve high marks. Few of them were able to provide explanation as to why good marks may be important. This lack of a valid reason for achievement problematised the setting of achievement goals for some students. Because they could not think of a good reason to understand and master academic content, an external source, marks,

provided an impetus and students focused on assessment as the reason for attempting tasks.

Work avoidance goals emerged in response to students' affective responses to being asked to repeat work that they believed they had learned the previous year. In these situations they could not see any benefit in working on tasks that they believed they had previously done. Students also received messages about the importance of submitting work, and there were no clear messages about the importance of achieving high level outcomes. Students' attention was directed towards completing the task. In some cases students reported that the volume of work that they faced caused them to choose to do as little as possible to get through. Because the students in this study had demonstrated average levels of achievement they could reduce their effort without failing.

These changes in achievement related goals appeared to result from the changed instructional environments and the increased emphasis on the role of assessment and importance of submission of work. The increased volume of work and pressure on completion provided additional encouragement for students to adopt performance or work avoidance goals.

Strategy Use

The ability of learners to adapt their learning behaviours to the varying demands they encounter plays an important role in determining learning outcomes and in enabling learners to respond appropriately in new or unusual situations. In order to be adaptive learners, students must have a repertoire of strategies, must know when and how to use them and to monitor their use of strategies. They need to be flexible and able to select the most appropriate response for particular learning situations. Rohrkemper and Corno (1988) suggest that the development of strategic

learning behaviours can be facilitated by classroom environments that encourage students to work independently, provide opportunities for choice and challenge students.

The findings of this study show that students became less strategic in their use of learning behaviours at secondary school. One of the most important aspects of being an adaptive learner is taking responsibility for dealing with a problem. Getting assistance is a low level adaptive response which may solve the problem but does not usually empower the learner. Fewer students reported that they would seek assistance at secondary school and their reasons for this related to the difficulty of getting the teacher's attention or a reluctance to admit that they could not do the work. Rather than developing more adaptive responses such as employing problem solving strategies an increased number of students responded to problem situations by giving up. The most common response to problems did not involve students accepting responsibility for dealing with the problem. Responses to problem situations were commonly non-self-regulated, "reactive" or "personal resolve" statements which suggest a lack of self-regulatory initiative demonstrating the type of responses commonly made by students in lower achievement tracks (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986).

The secondary classroom context was not conducive to the development or employment of strategic behaviours. There was little opportunity for students to take responsibility for their own learning. Tasks were set by the teacher and were not negotiable and the amount of work that was presented to students meant that they seldom had time available to make tasks more interesting or challenging. The emphasis in classrooms was on completing the work.

Participation Style

Ward et. al (1982) argue that different classroom settings require different sets of behaviours. Maximisation of instruction may demand that a variety of student participation as well as learning needs to be considered and accommodated, or that students be taught to decode, understand, and respond to classroom participation requirements in the same way that they are taught content. Since secondary school settings nearly always require students to work successfully in multiple classroom settings, the match between students' participation characteristics and classroom participation demands may increase several fold in complexity and importance at this level. Ward et al. argue that attention to the participation requirements of instruction, students' ways of participating and the outcomes that result appears to be pertinent to obtaining greater understanding of the school, classroom and instructional features that are related to students' successful transition from primary to secondary school.

Across the 24 target students more of the students were successful or moderately successful in their transition to the secondary school setting. The initial categories of participation style described by Good and Power (1982) did not match with those behaviours described by Year 7 teachers and observed in classroom observations. However, using a process of "best fit", teacher descriptions of student behaviour were matched with participation style categories. Students who were described by their Year 7 teacher as *success*, *social* or *social/success* students were most successful. In contrast students who were described as *alienate* participants were least successful.

Students who were described as *dependents* or *dependent/phantoms* also appeared to have problems with the transition. The classes in which these students were successful were those in which the teacher established

a set of rules and norms that was flexible and where students were allowed to interact with one another and to initiate interaction with the teacher so long as the conversations did not disturb others. Apparently these students needed to be able to interact with the teacher and other students in order to remain on task and complete work successfully. In this study students had few opportunities to initiate interaction with the teacher but were free to interact with peers as long as these did not interfere with the rest of the class.

The students in this study demonstrated consistent classroom behaviours across the multiple secondary class settings. More importantly, the classroom behaviours of students in this study were observed to change at secondary school to become less actively engaged. The consistency of students' behaviour across settings may mean that these students were generally unable to adapt their behaviours appropriately to the demands of different classroom environments or it may be that they interpreted the similarities between classes to be such that they saw no need to change their behaviours. Student comments suggest this to be the case as there were numerous statements about the similarity between classes, and the general types of behaviours required by teachers and school. Classroom observations confirm the similarity in classroom structures between teachers and most subject areas. It would seem that the consistency of students' classroom behaviours is appropriate in the situation although it may be argued that the nature of their behaviour is not desirable if effective learning is to occur.

Role of Peers

There is conflicting evidence regarding the effect of peer influence on adolescents' achievement motivation. Bishop (1989) and Goodlad (1984) have argued that lack of effort and interest in schooling results from the

influence of peers. However, adolescents have reported that their peers were more likely to encourage them to work hard and attempt to achieve good grades (Brown, Clasen & Eicher, 1986). It is most likely that individuals will adopt the attitudes of their peers whether they be negative or positive. If this is the case then the wider influence on students' attitudes towards academic achievement would play a more salient role in the development of positive attitudes towards school achievement. An important distinction can be made between the effect of peers in general and the effect of friends on students' achievement motivation.

The findings of this study suggest that the role of peers and friends had little negative effect on students' motivation when they entered secondary school. With one exception, the students in this study reported that their positive beliefs about the value of doing well in school were supported by friends. Students also reported little discussion about schoolwork or academic performance and grades among their social group. There was little overt comparison of marks and students admitted to little covert comparison of academic performance. Everhart (1983) also reported that schoolwork and the academic dimensions of school life are not salient issues for many adolescents. There was a widely reported culture among the students which discouraged boasting about high grades or "showing off" but students' attitudes towards school performance were generally positive.

Berndt and Keefe (1992) have questioned the accuracy or validity of students' reports that they do not compare marks, suggesting that while students do not admit to talking to peers about schoolwork, they do in fact, discuss school. They have suggested that it is the less academically successful students who deny talking about school and that this response actually means that they denigrate school saying that it is not important.

This position is not supported by evidence from classroom and general school observational data collected in this study. While the students in this study were not "high achieving" they expressed positive attitudes towards academic achievement and the value of schooling. Drawing attention to academic success or boasting about high performance was viewed negatively.

These findings and evidence from previous research (Berndt, Laychak & Park, 1990; Brown et al., 1986) suggest that the fears about the negative effect of peers on adolescents' motivation is exaggerated. Rather, it seems that peers, especially friends, reinforce the existing attitude towards schoolwork and academic achievement. If students bring with them positive attitudes towards the value of schooling and the school establishes a culture which genuinely values academic achievement then students will reinforce these values among themselves. In this situation the challenge for schools is to foster positive attitudes towards school achievement in a way that does not depend upon public recognition of achievement since this is counterproductive in the eyes of students.

Teacher Expectations

Teachers' expectations about their students influence student achievement (Brophy & Good, 1970). The model of the teacher expectancy effect shows that teachers form differential expectations about their students and treat students in ways that communicate these beliefs. Teachers may create different socio-emotional climates, provide different amounts and quality of feedback, provide different opportunities for students to learn and to interact in the classroom setting. As a result of teacher behaviour students learn what the teacher expects from them and behave accordingly. These expectations may relate to classroom behaviour

or academic performance and may be held for individual students or the group.

An important question relates to how teachers communicate their beliefs to students and the ways this influences student achievement. Students' interpretations of teacher behaviour play an important role in mediating the expectancy effect (Brophy & Good, 1970; Cooper & Good, 1983; Weinstein, 1983, 1985). "It is the students' perception-cognition that is ultimately the influential element on achievement." (Weinstein, 1989, p. 192). Clearly, relationships exist between teachers' beliefs about students' ability and students' academic performance.

Good and Brophy (1993) suggest that the way in which teachers talk about students in their classes is an indication of how they think about them. Teachers who continually talk about the group to the exclusion of individual students may have begun to lose sight of individual differences and to overemphasise variation between groups. The comments of the teachers of Year 8 students in this study focussed on the group (both class and year group) rather than individual students within classes. In contrast to this Year 7 teachers talked about individual students and seldom referred to their class group or Year 7 students collectively. This suggests that secondary teachers were more likely to view students as a group and to hold expectations for the group rather than individuals.

The effect of this group expectation was magnified by streaming practices in which students were assigned to unit curriculum pathways. Evertson (1982) reported that not only did students in low track classes slow down pacing of lessons and shift the teacher's attention to procedural and behavioural matters but that teachers taught their high and low track classes differently. Teachers of low track classes stress more structured assignments (Borko, Shavelson & Stern, 1981), were less well prepared (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer & Wisenbaker, 1979; Gamoran &

Berends, 1986) while teachers of high track classes assign more independent projects and introduce more high level and integrative concepts (Oakes, 1985). To some extent it may be argued that differential teacher behaviour is appropriate instructional practice. However, the findings of this study suggest that differential teacher behaviour directed towards "average" Year 8 students is not appropriate and serves to limit their opportunities to learn and engage in self-regulatory practices.

Teachers' beliefs about what these students were capable of learning were reflected in their selection of learning tasks, instructional practices and provision of learning environment. Teachers' interpretations of the curriculum also play an important role in the creation of an instructional environment however, the direction of influence between teachers' beliefs about Year 8 students and their curriculum interpretation is not clear.

The teachers of the Year 8 students in this study created learning environments that were different from those that students had experienced in Year 7. Skinner and Belmont (1993) argue that the teacher is central to students' classroom learning experiences and that the levels autonomy control and optimal structure in classrooms can predict students' motivation across the school year. There was a higher degree of teacher control of what was learned and how it was learned, few opportunities for group work, greater use of whole class instruction followed by worksheet or text book activities and little discussion among the class. There was little provision for focus on the process of learning and little information provided about teachers' academic performance expectations or feedback relating to task performance. Emphasis was on completing the required content, achieving the objectives of the unit and completion of assessment tasks. These findings confirm previous description of the changes that students encounter as they progress through the years of schooling (Eccles et al., 1993).

Summary

Following the transition from primary to secondary school there was no increase in the level of students' academic performance in English and mathematics and this was accompanied by a negative shift in students' attitudes towards academic work and reported achievement motivation. Investigation of constructs which have been shown to play an important role in achievement motivation revealed that negative changes also occurred in dimensions of motivation including self-perceptions of ability, achievement related attributions, use of strategic behaviours and learning goals.

Students' attributions for success played a less salient role in their willingness to engage in task and their expectations of success and failure in future tasks. Where attributions were important they seemed to strengthen the links which have emerged between teacher behaviour and student motivation. It seems that teacher behaviour, has a strong direct and indirect effect on students' expectations for success or failure on academic tasks, their goals and beliefs about learning and their approaches to learning tasks.

Biggs and Moore (1993) suggest that learning outcomes are affected by interactions between teachers, students and the learning process. Teachers are responsible for the provision of a learning environment and learning activities that encourage students to engage in appropriate learning processes. In this study the emphasis was on the classroom level, the interactions between student characteristics and the teaching context which acted on how students went about their learning and subsequent outcomes. Students' interpretations of the teaching context will be made in the light of their own predispositions and will affect the learning process. Metalearning, where students apply the knowledge of their own cognitive processes to their learning will mediate students' perceptions of

the demands of the teaching context so that students will approach learning tasks in different ways. Most importantly, it is the effect of the range of factors under the control of the teacher that interact with individual student factors to bring about learning outcomes. According to Biggs and Moore an important part of teaching is to optimise the chances that the most adaptive approaches to learning are used.

Figure 13 represents those factors that appear to be most salient in affecting the motivational and academic responses of the students in this study. The links between teacher behaviour and student motivation are centred on the messages that students received from teachers and the school and the ways in which students interpreted and acted upon these messages. Teachers' actual classroom practices influence students' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours which subsequently influence students' learning in the classroom. Particularly important were messages relating to the formation of achievement goals. These included a range of messages which informed students about what was considered to be important about school work. Specifically, messages were communicated by the nature of academic tasks, lack of academic challenge, the role and frequency of assessment, and penalties for late submission. Additionally there was a lack of information or feedback relating to assessment criteria and student performance in relation to criteria. In general, feedback consisted of a mark or grade and a general comment. There was little evidence of informative feedback or reflection on performance. Students were provided few opportunities to discuss work with their teachers. The structure of the school timetable and teachers' classroom practices made it difficult for students to approach teachers for personal consultations. The implementation of the unit curriculum and the school's practice of placing students in pathways should have given students a clear message

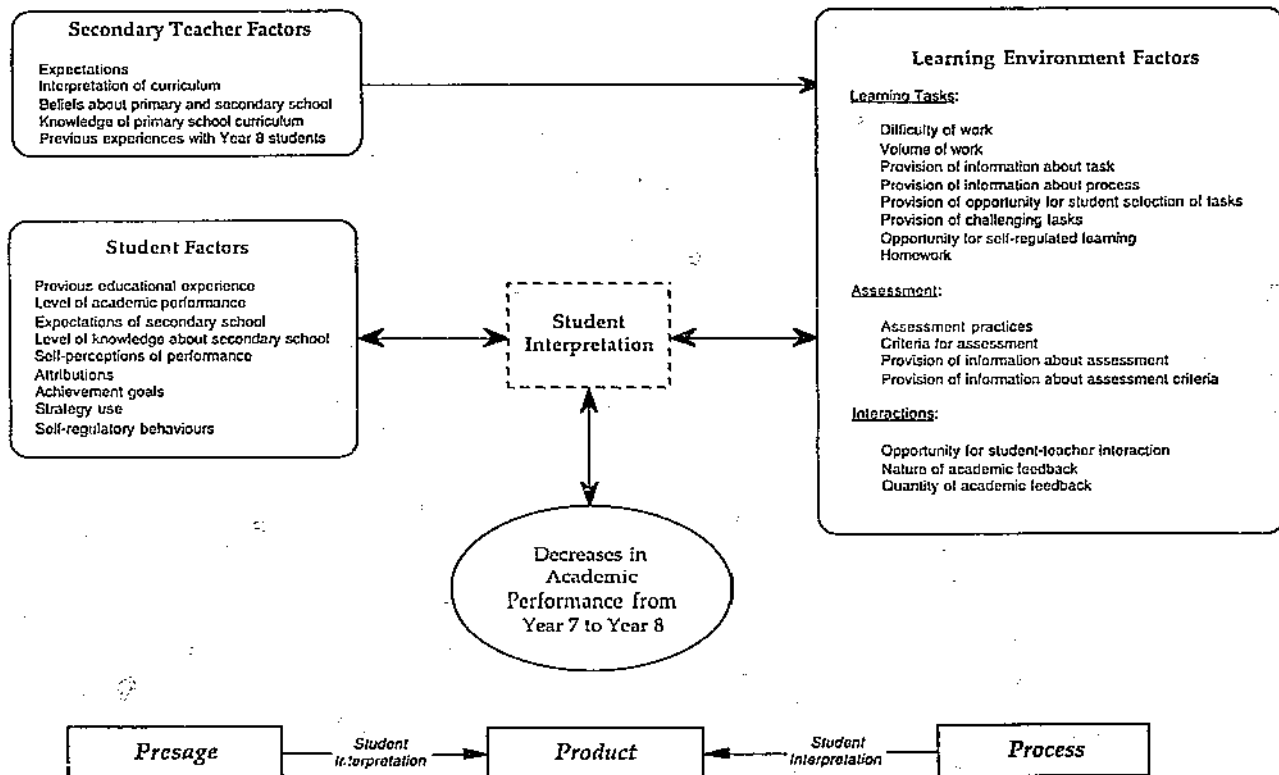
about their relative academic standing. However, many students were unaware of the level of the pathway in which they were working.

Pathways achieved significance only when students' attention was attracted to them when they were promoted or demoted. More important was the teacher's interpretation of the requirements of the pathway and the capabilities of the students.

Covertly, students learned about the nature of secondary school learning through the nature of instructional activities, in particular the lack of opportunity for individual work, self monitoring, or to adapt tasks. These features of the instructional context inhibited students' capacity to develop adaptive learning behaviours and engage in self-regulated learning practices.

The effect of these changes in classroom context was to encourage the development of a belief among students that the work they were experiencing at Year 8 was "the same as" the previous year's work. No clear distinction had been made for students between the level of last year's work and the work that they were currently engaged in. This lack of differentiation led the students to believe that as they were doing the same work as last year, the work was not very important and that it was not necessary to try hard because "I've done this before".

Figure 13: Summary of Findings



Additionally, many students commented on the volume of work that was presented to them in Year 8. This was supported by teachers' comments about the pressure on them to cover the required objectives for the unit. This emphasis on covering the unit encouraged students to adopt a surface approach to their work, their primary concern was to complete the required work by the due date.

It was these contextual changes that played the most important role in the changes in students' beliefs about the importance of schoolwork and dimensions of their academic motivation. Although students were encountering a number of different teachers each day the educational settings created by the secondary teachers were remarkably similar. The various aspects of achievement related motivational behaviour were affected by events which were within the control of the teachers or the school. Teachers' beliefs about the level and nature of work that they could expect of Year 8 students of this ability level were reflected in their instructional practices and the resulting instructional environment.

In some senses the inaccuracy of information provided to students prior to the transition exacerbated the problem. Students had been led to believe that work would be challenging, difficult, "new", and that they would receive "more" homework. When this did not eventuate many students were disappointed and felt somehow "cheated".

It seems that the most salient factor influencing the success of these students' academic transition from primary to secondary school is the instructional environment created by the teacher and the school. Teachers' interpretations of the curriculum and their beliefs and resultant expectations of Year 8 students are reflected in the learning environments that they provide for Year 8 students. In this study students encountered teacher-centred classrooms in which they had few opportunities to engage in or develop self-regulatory learning practices. They received little

information about academic performance expectations and no informative feedback. Teacher information related to behavioural and procedural expectations and feedback focused on procedural and administrative aspects of work.

In addition, students experienced work presented at a level of difficulty that they equated to Year 7 work. This was interpreted by many students to suggest that they did not have to expend a great deal of effort because they had "done the work before". Administrative requirements and penalties for late submission of work were interpreted to signify that submission was more important than attempting the best possible outcome. Lack of information about grading practices and assessment combined with limited evaluative feedback resulted in students having little idea about how to achieve positive outcomes or ways in which they could improve their work. The secondary classes reflected a non-informative emphasis on performance goals. Students were aware that assessment was important and in many cases classes seemed to be assessment driven but students did not know how to do well on assessment tasks.

Students interpreted the messages that reflected their teachers' expectations for them as Year 8 students. These interpretations were reflected in their beliefs about the value of schoolwork, what was important in doing well at school, their learning goals, self efficacy beliefs, use of self-regulatory processes and general motivational orientations. Generally, these student interpretations were negative. Students were disillusioned with the low level of work and lack of academic challenge. The rapid pace at which content was covered limited students' opportunities to extend tasks or their own efforts and encouraged surface approaches to learning accompanied by work avoidance goals. There were few opportunities for students to engage in self-regulatory behaviours and

no evidence that teachers were attempting to facilitate the development of such behaviours.

The findings of this study suggest that students interpreted the overt and covert messages communicated by teachers about their academic expectations for that group. These teacher beliefs, reflected in the classroom and instructional environment were interpreted by students to mean that secondary school work was not challenging, and that little was expected of them by way of effort or performance standards. Administrative and behavioural matters were seen to be more important than academic performance. Students' responses included diminished achievement motivation, including less healthy attributions, lower self-perceptions of performance, and less strategic learning behaviour. Students became more reactive and reliant on the teacher to provide direction and motivation for work and accepted less responsibility for their own learning. These findings support Weiner's (1990) conclusion that "school motivation cannot be divorced from the social fabric in which it is embedded." (p. 621).

It is acknowledged that the students involved in this study represented a particular group of students, "average performers" and that their experiences and interpretations may not represent those of high and low achieving students. In some areas there was also a wide range of responses among individuals within the group. However, the explanations of their experiences were consistent across the group suggesting that students within this group perceived their experiences in the same way.

Implications

The changing emphases in the educational environment, of which students seem to be aware, have complicated academic outcomes. Generally, the students in this study showed little increase in academic performance. Such absence of academic improvement may be the result of internal or developmental factors but for most students in this study the experience of going to secondary school was accompanied by a negative shift in aspects of achievement motivation and self-regulated learning. The possible long term effects of such changes and the resulting decrease in academic achievement are cause for concern. If these students develop negative attitudes towards academic achievement not only will this affect their own learning but that of other students around them. The reversal of negative beliefs about school learning is a difficult task and it would be more beneficial to prevent the necessity for this rather than attempting to develop remedies for the situation.

If students develop negative attitudes towards school achievement and do not value school work they are likely to withdraw their efforts which will inhibit their learning. This has the long term effect of restricting their educational options as they miss out on the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge that form the foundation of future learning. Since these students had been average achievers then it would seem that rather than limit the achievement of their academic potential secondary schools should be encouraging its realisation. It appears that the factors responsible for changes in these students' motivation and subsequent achievement are within the control of the school and individual teachers. Cumming (1994b) reports that teacher effectiveness is the key to improved educational outcomes for adolescents. He argues that if current inequities in learning outcomes are to be addressed there is a

need for changes to traditional teaching practices and attitudes. The results of this study suggest a number of implications for practice.

There would seem to be a need for reflection and reconsideration of the type of messages which are communicated by secondary school teachers and systems about what is important. The emphasis on assessment and the submission of work should be decreased with greater provision of information regarding how to go about tasks, the expectations and specific information about the role of effort and what this means. The requirements of the tasks and assessment criteria need to be more clearly articulated and this would be enhanced by the provision of specific examples of work showing standards.

Associated with the provision of more information about the processes involved in learning tasks is the need for instruction in strategies for dealing with novel situations and problems as general learning strategies which would allow students to operate more independently and strategically. There is also the need for the provision of opportunities within the class for students to engage in self-regulatory learning activities.

The teacher-centredness and expository nature of secondary classrooms would seem to militate against the development of independent learners and adaptive behaviours. The provision of greater opportunity for individual work would facilitate the development of more adaptive behaviours in students.

If the intention of Year 8 is that the first year of secondary school consolidates students' previous learning then it seems that this goal is not being achieved because of the mediating effect of students' perceptions and beliefs about what they are learning. On the other hand, if teachers believe that the purpose of Year 8 is to re-teach previous content to provide a foundation for future learning then this is not being achieved either.

Again, the perceptions and subsequent actions of the students mediate teachers' intentions and actions to result in outcomes that may differ from those intended by teachers and the system.

The motivational process model is based on the assumption that the student values achievement. If students do not believe that achievement is important they will not actively pursue achievement outcomes. There seemed to be few clear messages about the importance of school achievement. Within the guidelines recommended by the literature there is a need for greater school and classroom emphasis on the value of achievement, demonstrating the value of school learning and that it is valued in the school.

There are important consequences of student perceptions that new work equates to challenging and interesting, and familiar work is old and equated with easy and boring. When students see current academic work to be a repetition of previous work they place little value on it and invest little effort in related learning tasks. There would seem to be value in making explicit to students the differences between past and present work. Students' affective and cognitive responses to work that they perceive to be old, support the argument for the clear identification of differences and unique features. This has significant implications for the development of greater curriculum continuity and for this to be more clearly articulated.

In the period prior to transition, and in the early days of secondary school there is a need for provision of information about the nature of the subjects that students will study in secondary school. This would allow students to develop a more accurate cognitive map of the content of the secondary school curriculum.

There is also a need for more accurate and greater knowledge on the part of primary school teachers about what secondary school is like so that preparation can be more appropriate. Associated with this is the need for

the secondary school to take greater cognisance of students' previous learnings and to place greater value on this .

There would seem to be a strong case for the development of more specific teacher knowledge about the standards involved in the various units and the criteria associated with grades. It may be that teachers lack the ability to make explicit their tacit knowledge relating to the criteria associated with assessment and performance.

Limitations of the Study

The consideration of target students from one educational institution creates a small number of students. This does not necessarily reduce the validity of the data or the conclusions arrived at after data analysis. Delamont and Hamilton (1976) argued that it is still possible to clarify relationships, pinpoint critical processes and identify common phenomena through the detailed study of one particular context. The resultant abstracted summaries and general concepts which can be formulated, may, upon further investigation be found to be germane to wider variety of settings. Case studies therefore, are not necessarily restricted in scope. The richness of the data which may be gathered using the case study method in such a situation justifies the use of a small sample size. Yin (1989) stressed that the use of multiple sources of evidence in the case study makes the findings derived from case studies likely to be more convincing and accurate. The findings of case studies may be generalisable to theoretical propositions.

This study deliberately focused on students achieving at an "average" level because previous research has investigated high and low achieving students' behaviours. The differences which have emerged in the findings of this study suggest that these "average" students experience classroom environments that are different from high achieving students

and that their experiences and perceptions may not be representative of all students.

For the purposes of this study successful transition was defined within the boundaries of academic success. It may be argued that social and extra-curricular aspects of students' lives are equally important and should have been considered.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study suggest several areas which would benefit from further research. An important area that has emerged is the socio-cultural nature of attributions, particularly attributions in an Australian context. This study has suggested that there may be differences in the patterns of attributions for Australian students. As the majority of research studies into attributions have been situated in the North American context there is a need for more Australian studies of students' attributions for achievement outcomes.

It seems that one of the reasons why secondary teachers in particular do not provide students with clear information about assessment criteria and standards is that they themselves do not have this knowledge. Anecdotal evidence in relation to the unit curriculum suggests that this is the case. There is a need for a study which either confirms or refutes this idea. If it is correct that teachers are not able to apply criteria to students' performance within the unit curriculum then there is need for the system to address this through both the process of curriculum renewal and teacher professional development. Further research into the field of teacher knowledge relating to assessment within unit curriculum and the explicit description of assessment criteria is suggested. It may be that teachers are aware of the criteria for assessment and the processes involved but do not have the means by which to communicate this tacit

knowledge to students. Investigation of teacher knowledge in this area would provide relevant information.

This study followed students through the first three terms of Year 8. A longer study would provide more information about the permanence of the changes identified in this study.

Postscript

During the progress of this study there has been increased attention paid to the role of transition and the middle school in children's academic progress. The Education Department of Western Australia has responded by establishing a two new schools: Ballajura and Warnboro community schools (due to open in 1995) which will seek to address some of the issues of transition identified here. However, unless the transition from Year 6 to the new community schools is carefully considered then there is the likelihood that the problems described in this study will simply be shifted to another year level. Unless other steps are taken within the classroom it is likely that this type of phenomenon will continue to occur in the secondary setting.

APPENDIX A

May 20, 1991

Dear

I am working on a research project investigating students' perceptions and experiences of the transition from primary to secondary school. I am particularly interested in investigating the transition as experienced by students who are performing at an acceptable academic level at Year 7. The project is mainly qualitative in nature gathering most of the data from interviews with a number of target students over an extended time prior to, and after transition to secondary school. I am interested in discovering the ways in which students make sense of the transition and strategies adopted by various students in their attempts to adapt to a new learning situation.

I have attached a summary of the project and would like to discuss this project with you and the Year 7 teachers who may be involved, with a view to your school participating in the project.

If you wish to contact me to discuss this my telephone number is *****. I am willing to visit your school and discuss this project with the staff concerned if they wish. I hope that you will view this research in a favourable manner and look forward to talking with you.

Yours faithfully

Denise Kirkpatrick

Lecturer, Department of Education Studies

AIMS OF THE PROJECT

1. To determine whether some students who are performing at a satisfactory academic standard fail to maintain this level of performance in secondary school.
2. To explore student perceptions of the process of transition from primary to secondary school, with particular emphasis on the factors that students perceive to influence their success.
3. To identify those strategies which allow students to adapt more successfully to the demands of secondary school.

STAGES IN DATA COLLECTION

Year 7

Identification of target students

Target students will be identified using the Monitoring Standards in Education mathematics and English tests. In line with recommendations from MSE these will be administered in week 7 or 8 of Term Three. The marking of the MSE tests will be performed by the researcher and the school will receive performance information on all Year 7 students.

From the pool of students identified to be working at Phase 6/7 of the syllabus six target students will be selected with the assistance of Year 7 teachers. This assistance will take the form of informal consultation during which teachers' expectations of student success will be ascertained.

Interviews with target students

Target students will be interviewed three times during Term Four at approximately weeks 1/2, 4/5 and 8/9. Interviews will be informal, and confidential. Times for interviews will be arranged to meet the needs of teachers and students.

Observations of classroom learning environment

Students will be observed in a normal classroom environment two or three times during Term Four at times to be decided in consultation with the Year 7 teacher.

Student academic performance

Access to the final Year 7 report of target students will be requested.

DATA COLLECTION

Year 8

Interviews with target students

Target students will be interviewed three times during Term One with one follow up interview in Term Two. The interviews will be conducted at times convenient to teachers and students.

Observations of classroom learning environment

Students will be observed in a normal classroom environment two or three times during Semester One at times to be decided in consultation with the Year 8 teachers.

Student academic performance

The MSE tests in mathematics and English will be administered to Year 8 students during Semester Two. The MSE tests will be administered and marked by the researcher, performance results for all students will be made available to the school. Access to target students' unit curriculum grades will be requested.

Information from teachers

Teachers of target students will be requested to provide some information regarding their expectations of student performance to the researcher in an informal situation.

CONDITIONS OF RESEARCH

All relevant information from this study will be provided to the schools involved. Conditions of confidentiality and anonymity will apply and the permission of all teachers, students and parents will be obtained regarding participation in the project. Any participant may withdraw from the project if he or she so wishes. A copy of the final research report will be provided to all participating schools.

I am not requesting that teachers do anything different in their classes or that they gather any data on my behalf. The time commitment from teachers is minimal and the research is designed to be non intrusive. Once the results become available the offer of relevant professional development activities will be made to participating teachers.

DENISE KIRKPATRICK

May 20, 1991



Dear

I am working on a research project investigating students' perceptions and experiences of the transition from primary to secondary school. I am particularly interested in investigating the transition as experienced by students who are performing at an acceptable academic level at Year 7. The project is mainly qualitative in nature gathering most of the data from interviews with a number of target students over an extended time prior to and after transition to secondary school. I am particularly interested in discovering the ways in which students make sense of the transition and the strategies adopted by various students in their attempts to adapt to a new learning situation.

I have attached a summary of the project and would like to discuss this project with you with a view to your school participating in the project. I hope that you will view this research in a favourable manner and look forward to talking with you.

Yours faithfully

Denise Kirkpatrick

Lecturer, Department of Education Studies

December 9, 1991

Dear

Thank you very much for your co-operation and assistance in my research project. I have enclosed a copy of the results of the student questionnaires.

Again, thank you for your participation and have an enjoyable vacation.

Yours sincerely

Denise Kirkpatrick.

February 19, 1992

Dear

Please find enclosed the results of the questionnaire which was administered to Year 7 students from ***** primary schools. I would like to administer a follow up questionnaire early in Term Two. I have also attached a summary of responses to the first round of student interviews. At this stage the responses from the sample are very positive about the high school. I believe that the data from the subsequent interviews will become more informative as students become accustomed to the new school setting.

I would like to begin the second round of interviews on Tuesday, March 10. I hope that this new time frame is not inconvenient.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this project.

Yours sincerely

Denise Kirkpatrick

May 6, 1992

Dear

Thank you for your continued cooperation with my research project. I would like to begin the third and final round of interviews next week on Tuesday, May 12. Again the interviews will be conducted over a number of days. In addition to the interviews I would like to observe six of the students in classroom situations. These observations would take place towards the end of this term and I would seek the consent of teachers involved and discuss my research with them. At the conclusion of the interviews and observations I will have enough data to analyse and develop a picture of the transition experience of these students.

As you are aware I administered a questionnaire to all Year 7 students last year and would like to follow this with a post transition questionnaire later this term. I would like your permission to administer this and would like to discuss a means of doing so. The results of this should be available to the school very soon after administration. The final data will come from tests to be administered in Term Three. Again this is a matter that I wish to discuss with you. Last year I used the MSE tests in English and maths and intend to do so again. I will administer and mark the tests if I am able to get access to the students. In the light of the current industrial situation relating to MSE it may be simpler for me to administer the tests to only the 24 target students plus 26 randomly selected students making a total of 50 students.

Thank you again for your cooperation in this project, I hope to see you on Tuesday.

Yours sincerely

Denise Kirkpatrick

Date

Dear Parent

I am researching children's experiences of the transition from primary to secondary school in your child's class room at ***** Primary School during Terms Three and Four, 1991 and at ***** Senior High in Terms One and Two, 1992. This research has the approval of the school principals.

As part of my research students may be interviewed about their ideas about primary and secondary school and recorded on audio cassette tape. I request your permission for your child to take part in the research.

I assure you that all interview information will be used for research purposes only and that your child's identity will always remain anonymous. If you have any questions about the research you may contact me on *****.

Would you please complete and sign the slip below and return it to ***** by the end of this week.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Denise Kirkpatrick
Lecturer
Edith Cowan University

Please indicate whether or not you give your approval, insert your child's name and sign in the space provided.

I approve /do not approve my child _____, to take part in the research.

Parent's signature: _____

Date: _____

This study will investigate students' experiences of the transition from Year 7 to Year 8.

Students identified as target students in this study will be interviewed five times over a twelve month period to gain their views of the changes from primary to secondary school. Interviews will be confidential and informal and last approximately twenty to thirty minutes. Target students will be requested to complete three self rating forms over the period of the study. These forms will require them to rate their perception of their own academic performance. Some teachers of Year 7 and Year 8 students will be interviewed confidentially to gather data about their perceptions of the transition from primary to secondary school and specific perceptions of the manner in which target students will manage the transition. Students and teachers will also be observed in a normal classroom learning situation.

Benefits of the Study

An understanding of the factors that assist students in making a successful transition will allow school administrative staff to develop relevant transition programs. Information from students will be particularly useful in this area. The identification of strategies that are employed by students who adapt easily to secondary school will make it possible for these to be shared with other students, assisting in the transition.

Participation is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the project whenever they wish. Any participant who wishes to withdraw will not be affected in any way as a result of their decision.

Any questions concerning the project entitled Student Perceptions of the Transition From Year 7 to Year 8 can be directed to Ms Denise Kirkpatrick of the Education Studies Department of Edith Cowan University on *****.

I _____ have read the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realising I may withdraw at any time.

I agree that the research data gathered for this study may be published provided that my name is not used.

Participant or authorised representative

Date

Investigator

Date

APPENDIX B

Monitoring Standards in Education Tests

MONITORING STANDARDS

*in
Education*



MATHEMATICS

NAME _____

GROUP _____

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MSE M7 AT 90

EQUIPMENT

To complete this task you will need:

pen or pencil

ruler

eraser and sharpener

calculator



INTRODUCTION

Wongaroo Primary School is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

In order to celebrate, the principal, staff and parents decide to hold a special week of celebration starting on the 27th of August.

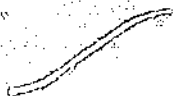
A fete will be held and the school's sports carnival will be part of the celebrations.

WALK TO SCHOOL

- 1** Bethwyn's mother tells her that their house is one kilometre from the school. Bethwyn decides to walk to the fete, and *estimates* she will take about 750 paces to get there.

Do you think Bethwyn's *estimate* is reasonable?

Why?



THE MAP

- 2** Visitors to the carnival are given a map of the school to help them find their way about.

On the map, 1 centimetre represents 10 metres.

One of the school buildings is 2.5 cm long on the map. What is the actual length of the building?

How did you get your answer?

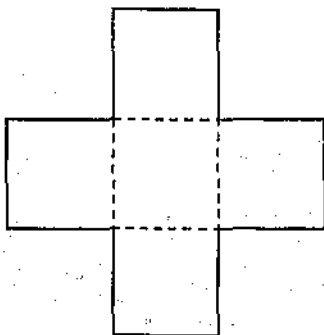
GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TENT

- 3 Bethwyn and some friends decide to start at the games and activities tent. Bethwyn decides to make a cube. There are several different nets there and she has to select the correct one.

Which net drawn below should Bethwyn choose to make a cube?

Circle the correct answer: A B C

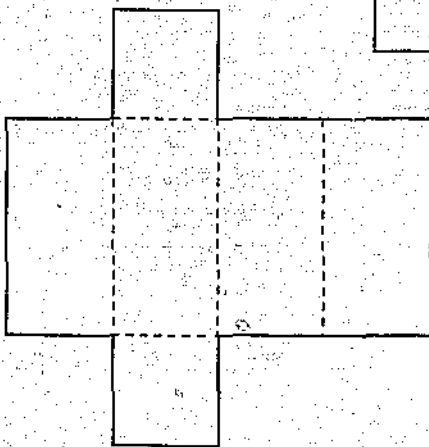
A



B

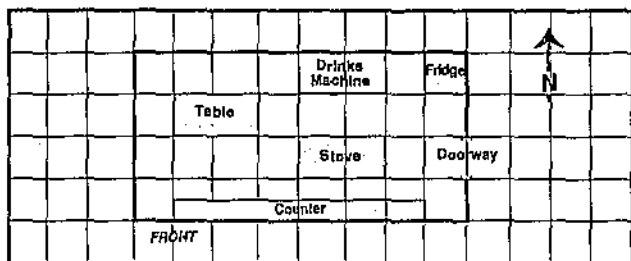


C



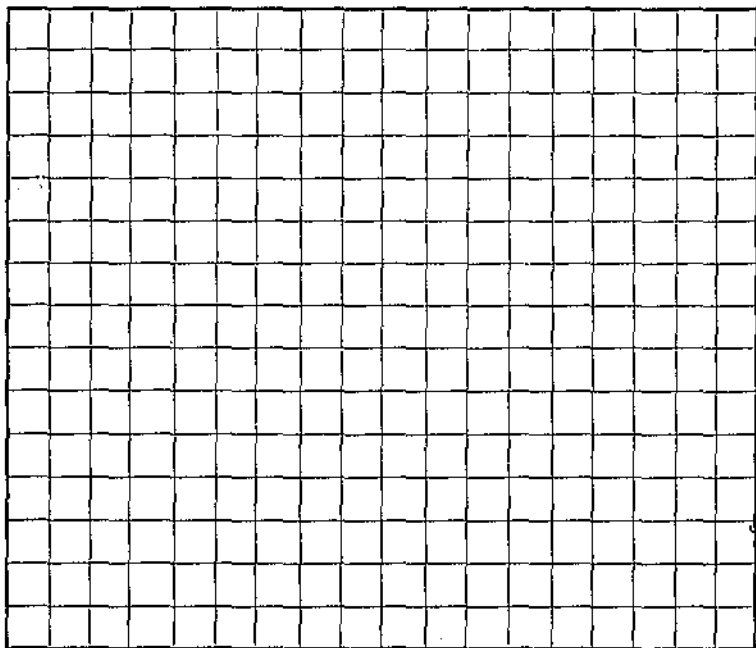
THE HAMBURGER STALL

4 The children are given a proposed map of the hamburger stall for their school fete.



The teacher explains that it is too small to use. He asks the children to draw a map with dimensions that are twice the size of the original map.

Draw the enlarged map below, using the grid lines.

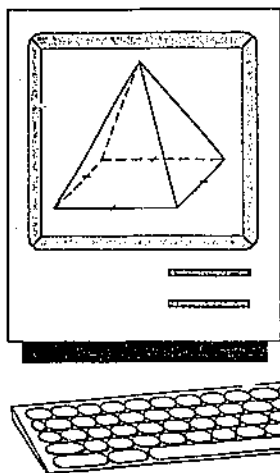


THE COMPUTER STALL

- 5** As part of the school fete day the Year 6 class set up a computer stall. Parents and students can have a turn at using a computer.

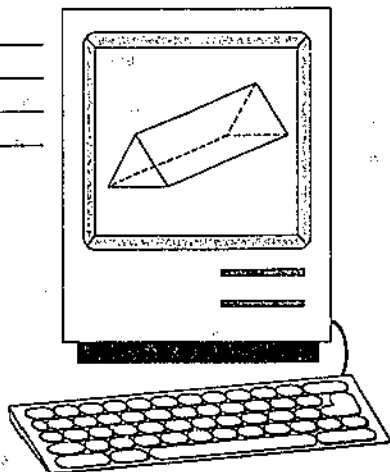
For one activity the computer shows shapes. The operator has to name each shape and fill in its attributes.

Here are two of the shapes shown. Fill in the information for both of them.



- (i) Name of shape: _____
Number of vertices: _____
Number of edges: _____
Number of faces: _____

- (ii) Name of shape: _____
Number of vertices: _____
Number of edges: _____
Number of faces: _____



YEAR 4 LUCKY DIP



When Vanh opens her ticket it is a 12.

When Bethwyn opens her ticket it is a 15.

When Gene opens his ticket it is a 24.

When Erin opens his ticket it is a 7.

- (i) Do any of these four children win a prize?

Circle answer. Yes No

If yes, who? _____

- (ii) Which children pick a ticket that has an odd number on it?

- (iii) The numbers on Vanh's, Bethwyn's and Gene's tickets are all multiples of which number?

YEAR SEVEN SURVEY

7. As part of the celebrations the Year 7 students conduct a survey to find out how many students have never attended another school. They discover an interesting pattern.

Below is a table of their findings.

Year level	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	Yr 6	Yr 7
Number of children	40	32	25	19			7

Use the pattern to fill in the gaps.

How did you get your answer?

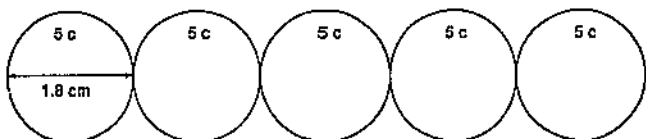
THE ESTIMATED CROWD

8. The number of people who attend the fete is recorded hourly. The figures for the five hours are 390, 462, 450, 545 and 424. If you had to *estimate* the total attendance for the five hours, how would you do it?

What would your *estimate* be?

THE MONEY CHAIN

- 9 To raise money on the fete day, the P & C organises a money chain using 5 cent pieces. Each person who wants to donate money puts 5 cent coins in a line as shown below.



- (i) At lunchtime \$21.20 is raised. How many 5 cent coins are in the line?

How did you get your answer?

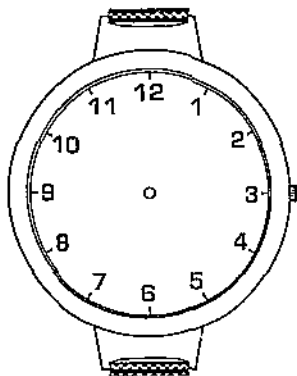
- (ii) If each coin has a diameter of 1.8 cm and at the end of the day there are 618 coins, how long is the line?

How did you get your answer?

LUNCHTIME

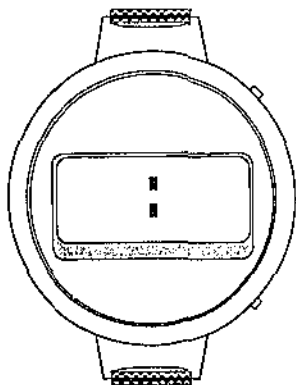
- 10** On the school fete day Bethwyn's grandparents eat their lunch at one thirty-five. Bethwyn's grandmother has a watch with hands.

Draw the time of one thirty-five on her watch.



Her grandfather has a brand new digital watch.

Show the same time on his watch.



THE CRACKED CLOCK

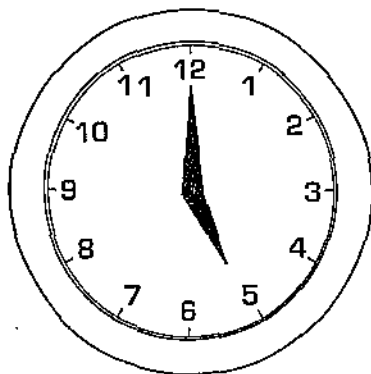
11 Dion wins a clock on the chocolate wheel.

On the way home he drops it and the glass cracks into *two equal parts*.

Dion notices that the total of the numbers on one side of the crack adds up to the same total as the numbers on the other side.

The crack does not pass over any number.

Show where the crack is on the picture of the clock below.



THE DUNKING MACHINE LINE

12 At the Dunking machine, there is a line of children waiting to have their turn. Some children have two tennis balls to throw while others have three.

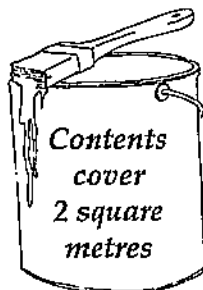
They were lined up as shown below:

Child	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Number of balls	2 balls	3 balls	2 balls	3 balls

Altogether the children in the line have a total of 22 tennis balls. How many children are there in the line?

THE SIGN

- 13** A week before the fete four students are asked to paint a sign to advertise the celebration.



- (i) To begin they need to paint a sheet of tin with white paint. The sheet of tin measures 2.25 metres by 2.75 metres.

What is the area of the sign?

Explain how to find the area of the sign.

- (ii) On the label of each tin of paint it said that the contents would cover 2.0 square metres.

How many tins of white paint do they need to buy? _____

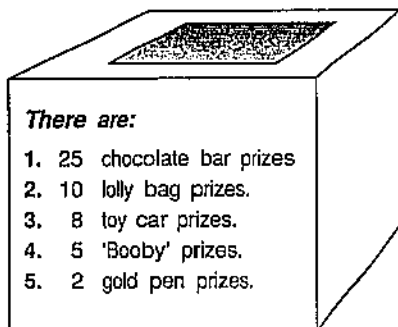
Why? _____

- (iii) The gardener has to make a frame for the edge of the sign. How long will the timber need to be?

Show your working

LUCKY DIPS

- 14** In one Lucky Dips Box there are 50 prizes, all in containers the same shape and size.



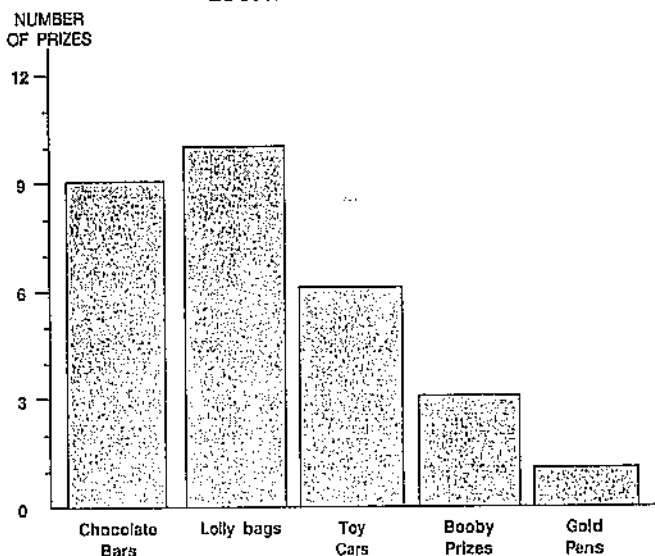
- (i) Kyle has the first go. Does he have a better chance of getting a toy car or a lolly bag?

Why?

14 Lucky Dips continued

Below is a graph for the Lucky Dips Stall, showing what the first 30 children get from the Lucky Dips Box.

LUCKY DIPS STALL

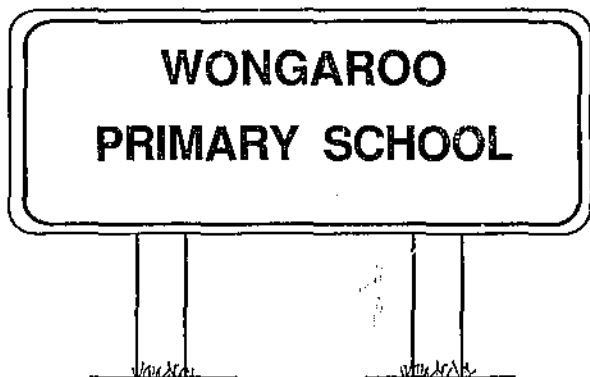


(ii) Is this what you think would have happened?

Why?

THE SCHOOL SIGN

- 15 After lunch Vanh and Bethwyn are standing next to the school sign giving maps to the people entering the fete.



- They notice that some letters on the sign have line symmetry.

List 5 different letters from the sign that have line symmetry.

AIRLINE ROUTES (throughout Australia)

16 Bethwyn's grandmother is coming to visit at the same time as the celebration week.

Using the map (below) which shows airline routes, answer the following questions.

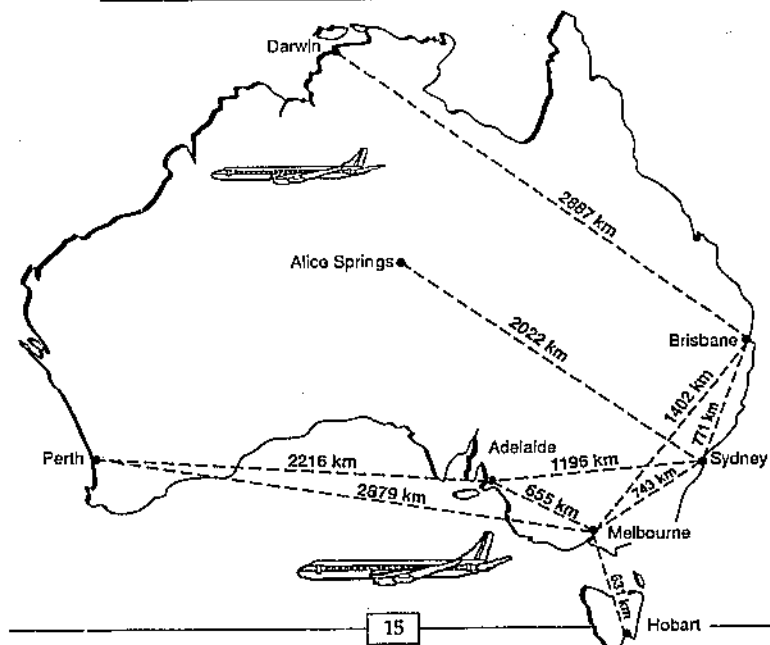
- (i) Estimate how far Bethwyn's grandmother will travel if she flies:

Darwin → Brisbane → Sydney → Adelaide → Perth

Answer _____

How did you make your estimate?

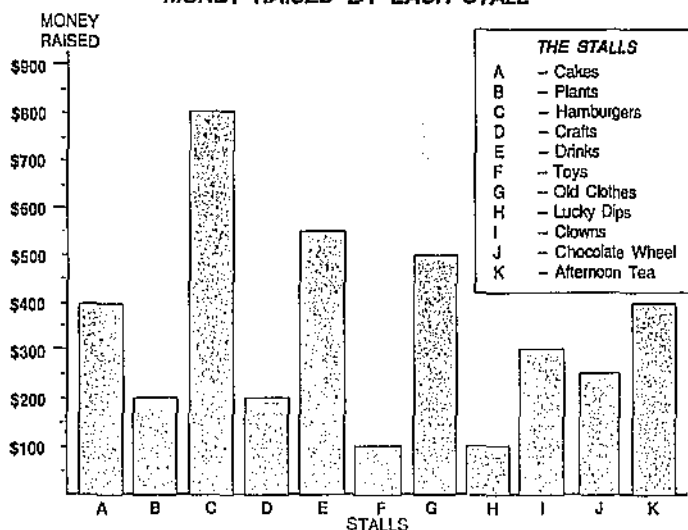
- (ii) If a jet can carry 456 passengers and is full each trip, how many passengers will it carry between Perth and Sydney if it makes the journey 12 times?



MONEY RAISED

- 17** At the end of the fete, the organisers draw up a bar graph showing the money raised by each stall.

MONEY RAISED BY EACH STALL



To plan for next year's fete, the organisers need the following information:

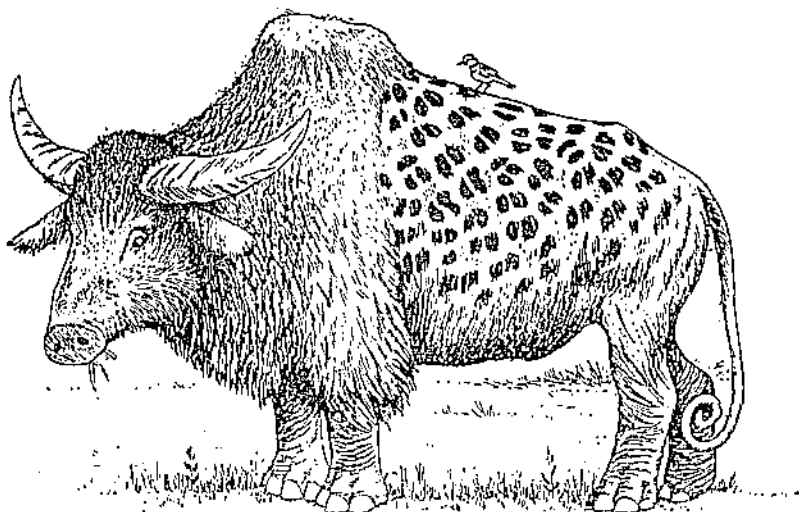
- (i) Which two stalls are the most successful?
-
- (ii) If two stalls need to be left out of next year's fete, which would they most likely be?

Why?

- (iii) What is the total amount of money raised by all the stalls as shown on the graph?

MONITORING STANDARDS

in Education



PIG BUFFALO STUDENT BOOKLET

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MSE E7 SB 90

PIG BUFFALO

FACTS IN BRIEF

Height: 92 - 155 cm

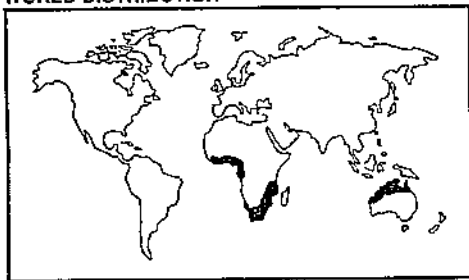
Weight: 250 - 690 kg

Habitat: Grasslands and swamps in Australia and Africa

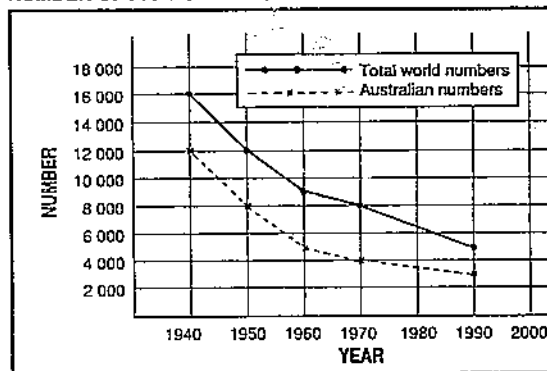
Food: Grass and leaves of small bushes

Lifespan: 15 to 19 years in the wild

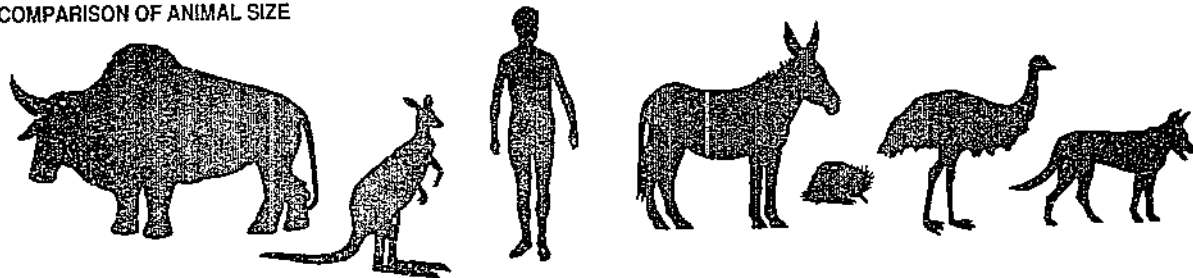
WORLD DISTRIBUTION



NUMBER OF PIG BUFFALO



COMPARISON OF ANIMAL SIZE



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letter to the Editor 17 September 1989

A RESOURCE TO BE USED

In the last two decades, the number of pig buffalo worldwide has decreased at an alarming rate. In Australia this has resulted from a combination of drought conditions and excessive killing of the pig buffalo by licensed hunters. If the current trend continues then the pig buffalo will become extinct.

Recent clashes among cattle station owners, hunters conservationists and tour organisers over the future of the pig buffalo have received a great deal of media coverage. We know that valuable station waterholes are becoming useless for normal cattle because of the pig buffalo's habit of wading into the water and stirring it up into mud. This lack of suitable drinking water has resulted in the death of a large number of cattle.

We have read also, of the devastating erosion being caused by pig buffalo overgrazing in large herds. If calls for the killing of large numbers of these beasts are heeded, then extinction looms even sooner.

Our proposal for farming the animal in selected areas would ensure the continued existence of the pig buffalo. Our company is currently seeking government approval to farm these animals. A considerable amount of time and energy has been used to develop a successful breeding program that will ensure that the number of pig buffaloes increases during the next five years. Initially we will require a stock of one thousand animals. This number of animals would be returned to the wild at a later date.

Finally, let us not ignore what pig buffalo farming can do for the economy of Australia. Many millions of valuable export dollars are waiting to be earned from the hide, the ivory and the meat. The unique hide has the potential to create a huge fashion industry, similar to that now being enjoyed by emu and crocodile farms in this state. There will be a large number of employment opportunities, as further industries spring up around this new and exciting venture. Pig buffalo farming will benefit everyone.

MS G. JONSTEN
Public Relations Officer
PIG BUFFALO INDUSTRIES

Letter to the Editor 24 September 1989

NO PIG BUFFALO FARMING

Ms Jonsten presents a wonderful case for farming the pig buffalo. She would have us believe that her company is only really interested in saving the pig buffalo. She paints a wonderful picture of how her company aims to increase the number of pig buffalo in Australia. This is not really true. Her company is planning to kill pig buffaloes for their ivory, meat and hide. Farming is not the way to ensure the survival of the pig buffalo.

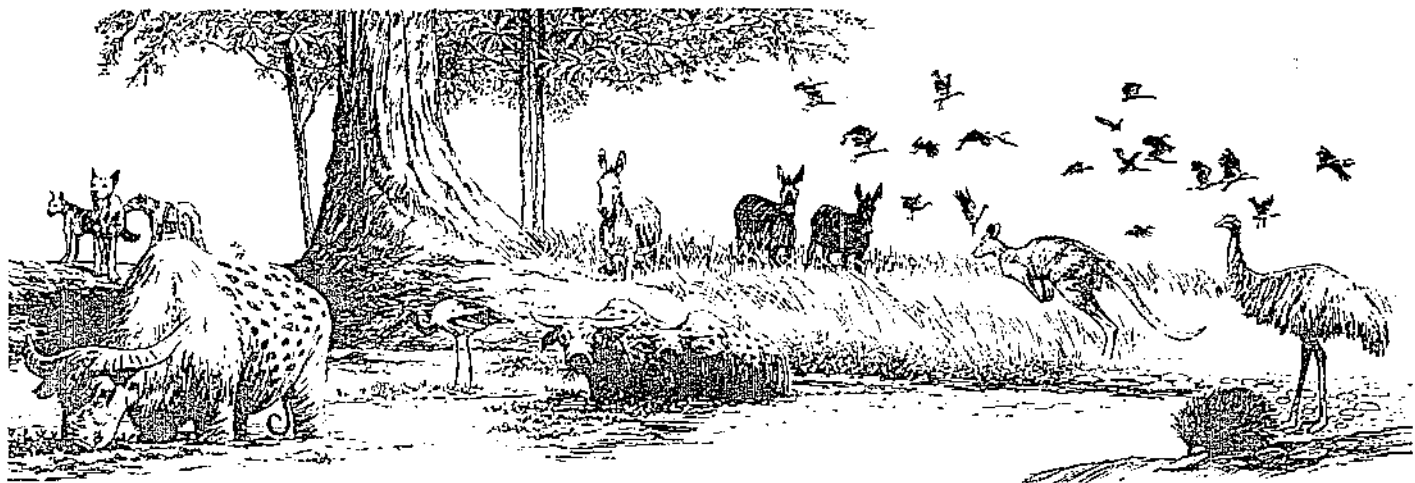
If money is so important then we need to remember that the pig buffalo, like the kangaroo and the koala, is an animal that tourists in their thousands come to see. They want to see the pig buffalo as a wild animal, not on farms or in cages.

Other animals such as the stilted piper are dependent on pig buffaloes. The stilted piper feeds on the grubs and ticks found on the pig buffalo's hide. The bird also feeds on small insects and keeps their number in check. If the pig buffalo was to be reduced in number or to disappear completely, so would the stilted piper. This would lead to a population explosion of these insects - with unknown consequences.

Our government should be protecting pig buffaloes. We could move herds onto protected areas to prevent excessive killing by hunters and avoid the destruction of water holes used by station cattle.

There is an urgent need for our government to declare the pig buffalo a protected species. We need to live with nature, not use it to our own advantage. Save the pig buffalo!

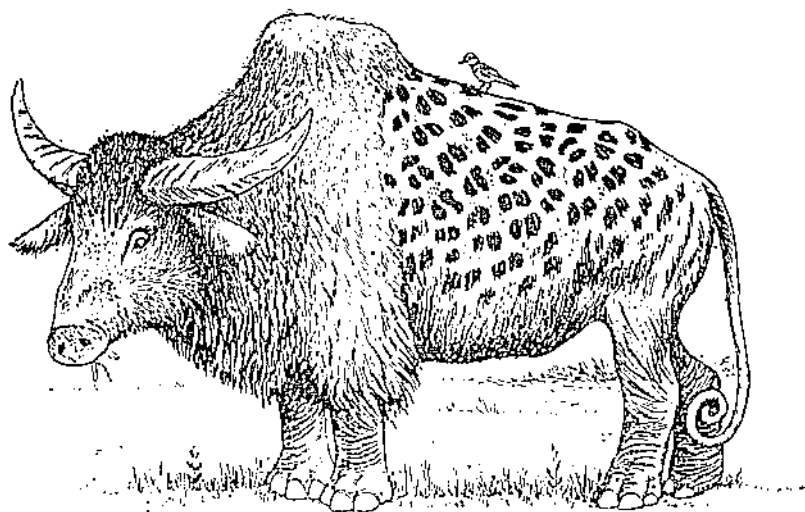
MR R. BALER
PIG BUFFALO PROTECTION SOCIETY



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MONITORING STANDARDS

in Education



PIG BUFFALO

Name _____

Class _____

STUDENT BOOKLET

Written Retell

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MSE E7 WR 90

WRITTEN RETELL

This test activity will take you about 25 minutes to complete and will involve you writing the letter "No Pig Buffalo Farming" in your own words. Your teacher will read the letter to you and then allow you 5 minutes to read the letter again for yourself. After this you will be asked to write the letter in your own words without looking back at the original letter.

The space for planning should only be used once you have completely read the letter and the Information Booklet has been closed ready for the teacher to collect.

SPACE FOR PLANNING

MONITORING STANDARDS

*in
Education*

CLOZE ANSWER SHEET

Instructions:

This test should take you about 30 minutes to complete. On the reverse of this page you will find a passage that has spaces where some words have been left out. You will need to read *all* the information about pig buffaloes before you can complete the spaces with the word or words you think are missing.

- Use your own words for the answers when you can't find the words you want in the text.
- If you get stuck on an answer - leave it and come back to it later if you have time.
- Check your work carefully when you have finished.

Practice Example:

Alexander Tolly was only happy when he was the focus of attention. He found it very upsetting at school when his teacher attended to the needs of other students before giving him the attention he so earnestly craved. Sometimes, when he desperately wanted the teacher and the rest of the class to notice him, he would stand up from his desk, limp to Ms Young, and complain about some mysterious pain.

The passage is about a boy called who was only happy
when he His teacher thought
that he was

Notice that some of the answers for the practice example need more than one word. Sometimes you will need to use your own words for the answers because the words you want may not be in the story.

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021197/8/91-704-51062



MSE E7 CL 90

NAME:

CLASS:

THE PIG BUFFALO

The pig buffalo is an animal found in only a few places throughout the world. Pictures of the buffalo show it to be a large grazing animal that is bigger than most other animals. It is found living in both throughout parts of Australia and Africa.

The shows that since 1940 the world population of pig buffaloes has steadily from to

This has been caused by and If the current trend continues then the pig buffalo will..... .

Ms Jonsten, who works..... , says that pig buffaloes should be farmed. She believes that this would help Australia's economy by from the sale of the buffalo's hide, ivory and meat. Ms Jonsten's company to farm pig buffaloes in selected areas. This proposal has been researched.

Mr Baler writes his letter to in an effort to people about the pig buffalo problem. He believes that pig buffaloes should Mr Baler thinks that the buffalo is best left as a animal.

The Australian government needs to be aware of the problems associated with the pig buffalo because it will be responsible for

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<input type="checkbox"/>	2
<input type="checkbox"/>	3
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APPENDIX C

Year Seven Classroom Observations

The classroom observations focused on the target students as they interacted with the teacher and other students. The observation sessions also allowed the development of a picture of the way in which each classroom operated including aspects such as the nature of instructional tasks and teacher-student interactions.

Each primary school class was observed three times during the last term of Year 7. Observations took place across subjects allowing the observer to see students working in different situations. A narrative description of the classroom observation was prepared at the end of each classroom visit. While there were a number of similarities in the ways in which each Year 7 class operated, each class was distinctive.

Primary Classrooms

Target students came from eight different primary school classroom environments and class groups. For the most part the classes were reasonably traditional. A variety of ability of levels was represented in all classes. Most instruction was carried out in whole class format with some small group work and individualised approaches. All classes had a daily timetable which allowed for specified times for all covering curriculum areas. None of the classrooms or schools in the study was organised according to the open classroom model. As is common in Western Australian primary schools most of the Year 7 classes were taught by teachers who held an administrative position in the school (Deputy Principal). As a result of this the classes were often taught by other teachers, either curriculum specialists or teachers providing support for the regular teacher to fulfil administrative duties. None of the classes

were taught in a team teaching mode. Teachers in these classrooms used reward structures which could best be described as a combination of "individualistic" and "competitive" (Ames & Ames, 1984). In one class the teacher had recently implemented a group reward structure. In most of the classes the students were homogeneously grouped for instruction in mathematics and reading, and in two classes individual students were withdrawn from class for remedial instruction in these areas. Characteristics of the classes are presented below.

1A

This classroom was arranged with all desks in continuous rows facing the front of the room. Each row constituted a group which was used as part of the class behaviour management plan and groups earned points for good behaviour. All walls around the room were covered with examples of marked student work and it appeared that all students' work was represented. It was easy for students to move between desks to reach all parts of the room and there were clearly identified places for major resources and equipment.

Each day began with fifteen minutes of daily fitness supervised by the classroom teacher. When students returned to the classroom the teacher checked that students had completed homework from the previous day by calling students' names and checking their responses. Mathematics homework was swapped and partner marked. This was conducted briskly and in a routine manner. Materials and resources were handled according to routine procedures and where students forgot, the teacher reminded them in a low key manner. There were a number of occasions during the day when groups of students left the class to receive specialist instruction in subjects such as spelling, reading and mathematics. In situations such as this the teacher reminded students to take materials with them.

Lessons in this class were teacher centred but often required students to work in small groups. For all tasks the teacher provided clear instructions and checked that students understood instructions. Instructional sessions were broken down into segments where students worked independently for approximately ten minutes and then returned to whole class instructions for checking and further instruction. Students were interested and enthusiastic, learning activities were presented in an interesting manner, often with a gamelike dimensions and students were eager to participate. The teacher frequently provided students with detailed and explicit verbal instructions relating to how to complete the task and provided many opportunities for students to ask questions. A low level of student-student interaction was allowed without teacher sanction, with teacher reminders that talk should be work related. No behaviour problems were manifested while the class was being observed and the classroom climate appeared positive and supportive.

1B

Desks were arranged in spaced rows facing the front of the room. The seating arrangements had been decided using a lottery system run by the teacher. There was some student work displayed on the walls and resources were distributed around the room. Because resources and equipment were not clearly organised movement around the room was difficult. Homework was displayed on the board at the front of the room.

The teacher controlled learning tasks, and instruction was characterised by a large proportion of teacher talk. Teacher talk was not always task related and often strayed from the point. It appeared that children frequently 'tuned out', in many cases the teacher continued to talk when students were ready to begin a task and this both delayed the task and inhibited students' motivation to work on the task. There was

much teacher talk about process but this was repetitive and not always clear. While instruction was predominantly teacher centred and all students worked on the same tasks at the same time, students were working on a contract system for the language area. A "buddy system" was operating between this class and the Year 1 class and there was much excitement about working with the Year 1 students and particularly about making gifts for buddies.

Little student-student talk was allowed in this class, and students were frequently sanctioned for talking to each other. Students did not appear to work as cooperatively as in class 1A and there was a greater amount of teacher intervention.

2A

This class was located in a transportable classroom, on the perimeter of the school buildings at the end of the playground and surrounded by black sand. Desks were arranged in pairs at various angles around the room. No student work was displayed around the room and walls were bare. Equipment and resources were scattered around the room and it was difficult to move easily around the room.

There appeared to be few established routines in the classroom which was teacher dominated. Instruction was characterised by a large amount of teacher talk, frequently about himself and his experiences. During a news session students were reluctant to offer information and when a student did volunteer a news item the teacher took control of this and interrupted the student to complete the presentation. The teacher had a 'matey' manner and appeared to relate more positively to the boys in the class. A number of boys were loud and noisy and this was sanctioned by the teacher. There was no clear system of classroom behaviour management. Teacher imposition of sanctions was not observed to be consistent.

Homework was never set, and the teacher was observed to change the deadline and rules for the submission of a set task. There was little attention given to the processes involved in completing a task, the teacher explained what was required and talked about this before students began work on the task.

3A

Desks were arranged in rows facing the front of the room with children sitting in pairs, generally the seating pattern was of alternate boys and girls. There were samples of student art work on the walls and posters comprising photographs from a school camp and excursions but no other work. The class was organised, movement around was unimpeded and materials were stored in labelled locations.

The classroom teacher was also the school deputy principal and as a result of this the class was taught by a different teacher for language activities. In these classes students were observed to be engaged in mainly independent work, the teacher issued instructions checked for understanding and children continued with the task on their own. Instruction related to the content of the task with some direction as to how to proceed with the task. Children talked to others frequently and were regularly sanctioned for doing so. The teacher stayed at the front of the room, and students approached the teacher at her desk if they were experiencing difficulty.

The regular classroom teacher maintained a more relaxed classroom climate, students appeared to talk to peers less frequently but were sanctioned less frequently. This teacher moved around the room supervising and marking students engaged in seatwork, often redirecting students to the task. Classroom instruction was teacher-centred, all students were engaged in the same task at the same time with little

opportunity for individual activities. For most subjects the teacher issued instructions relating to the task, discussed a relevant example, reminded students of correct procedure and set students to work independently. The teacher would call the students after about fifteen minutes work to check progress, remind of procedure, work and example. This review was predominantly a teacher statement of points with minimal student involvement. At the end of the allocated time for the task the teacher would proceed with instruction without ensuring that all students had completed the task. In this class students were not sanctioned for discussing work with their peers or sharing answers. There appeared to be established classroom routines relating to the distribution of materials, and organisational procedures. There was little formal setting of homework but students were required to complete unfinished work at home. This was not observed to be checked by the teacher. The class was frequently interrupted by visitors to the room with messages for the teacher or class and by students being withdrawn to perform non-academic tasks around the school.

Desks were arranged in groups of four and six with cluster of desks arranged at angles to each other. Seating positions were randomly allocated by the teacher. Student work was displayed around the room as well as commercial posters and classroom rules. There was a calm, working atmosphere in the room. There were minimal behavioural disruptions and these were handled in a low key manner. Students were reminded of classroom rules and a low level of working noise was tolerated by the teacher. Reminders about standards for academic work and behaviour were issued frequently and spontaneously by the teacher. The teacher controlled what occurred in the room, instruction was teacher directed. The teacher issued instruction and students worked individually on tasks. Students who experienced problems were reminded of appropriate strategy and instructed to perform it. Students moved freely around the room, using resources as necessary. Neatness and presentation were highlighted by the teacher and students received frequent reminders about standards in this area. The teacher moved around the room supervising students' work and assisting where necessary, and students appeared to be willing to ask for assistance or clarification. A number of students were observed to be off task but did not attract the teacher's attention because they were not disruptive. There was a clearly established routine to be followed by early finishers and the teacher issued regular reminders about this to students. Work was collected for marking by the teacher regardless of whether or not it was finished. In this class a high level of independent seatwork was observed and there was little teacher student interaction. The class was managed quietly and efficiently by the teacher.

This class comprised equal numbers of Year 6 and Year 7 students. Desks were arranged in rows around three edges of the room. Students were seated according to year group. The arrangement of desks was such that student movement around the room was difficult and frequently caused problems as students knocked desks as they moved. Samples of student work were displayed on boards around the room and equipment and materials were well organised. The teacher's desk was at the front of the room and students approached the teacher if they required assistance.

Instruction in this class was characterised by teacher talk which was task related and provided students with information relating to the task content and procedure. Learning tasks and activities were selected by the teacher and most work was performed individually. It was common for the teacher to set one year group individual seat work while he instructed the other year group. Some subjects were taught to the whole class group but in general instruction was directed at individual year groups. Each group was left to work on their own with minimal teacher interruption while they were engaged in seat work.

Homework was regularly set and frequently involved the completion of class work or specifically designed activities. The teacher supervised students as they recorded homework from the board and the completion of homework was irregularly checked by the teacher. Much class work was partner marked with marking led by the teacher.

Students appeared to be generally on task and there was minimal student-student talk. Students were sanctioned for talking only when this interfered with the rest of the class or when they were obviously off-task. There appeared to be well established classroom routines for the distribution and collection of materials and for student behaviour.

This classroom was tidy and well organised. Equipment and materials were neatly stored and storage areas were clearly labelled. All students sat at clustered desks with the exception of one of the case study students who was seated at a desk situated away from the rest of the class. This class was taught by the school's deputy principal (female) for most subjects and had specialist teachers for mathematics, library and physical education. The regular classroom teacher was frequently called away from the room to deal with school administrative matters and the class was instructed to work on their own. The school was designed as clusters of rooms with folding dividing panels between classes so it was easy for teachers in adjoining rooms to monitor the behaviour of the class when it was left unattended.

Most instruction was teacher-directed and the teacher made all decisions relating to the selection of instructional tasks and activities. The teacher did not always wait for all students to complete classroom tasks before proceeding with the next activity. She provide detailed instructions about the processes involved in learning tasks and was observed to remind students of procedures when they requested assistance. Some cooperative group work was observed. The use of whole class discussion and instruction was an important feature of this teacher's instructional style.

Homework was regularly set and the teacher supervised the recording of homework details. Homework was usually checked by the teacher the following day and penalties imposed for non-completion. These included the completion of homework during recess or lunchtime. The classroom teacher frequently made work-related comments that focused on the demands of secondary school. The teacher was observed to speak individually to students about work by calling them to her desk after all

work had been returned. She appeared to speak to all students and her comments appeared to be of a general nature.

The classroom environment appeared to be positive and task focused. The teacher appeared to have good rapport with all students and there were no major incidents observed where students misbehaved or required sanctioning. One of the case study students was frequently sanctioned for being off-task.

4B

This classroom was well organised and tidy. All materials were neatly stored away in marked locations. A regular schedule of instruction and activities was followed. A class timetable was clearly displayed and there were well established classroom procedures. There were established guidelines for classroom behaviour and students were frequently reminded of correct procedure for learning tasks and classroom behaviour.

All learning activities were teacher-directed and involved teacher demonstration and explanation followed by student practice. There was much whole class discussion of activities and examples and the teacher regularly circulated the room monitoring students' individual work. There was some use of cooperative group work and this was always followed by whole class discussion of the activity. Little reference was made to secondary school.

Homework was set when students had not completed all work and students were reminded to record details from the chalkboard at the front of the room. This was checked at the start of the following day. This class had a clear focus on academic work and the teacher communicated performance goals to the students. Records of student performance were

displayed on the walls around the room along with marked exemplars of student work.

Case Study Classroom Observations

Neoma

Neoma was in class 1A. She was observed to be on-task at all times, participating in group and whole class activities. She was seen to initiate task-related student-teacher interactions and worked cooperatively in small group situations. She frequently volunteered answers to teacher questions and her responses were usually correct. The teacher called on Neoma to perform various school related administrative tasks and she demonstrated sound organisational skills in her role as student councillor. There were no instances observed where Neoma was disciplined by the teacher. In this class homework was set and checked routinely by the teacher at the start of each day.

Robert

Robert was in class 1B. He was observed to involve himself minimally in the class. He was not actively involved and was not observed to initiate any interactions with the teacher. However, he began work on tasks as instructed and was observed to be work intermittently, alternating between working on tasks and interacting with other students. There were situations in which he was observed to chat with his neighbours and it was not possible to ascertain whether or not these conversations were task-related. The only teacher-student interactions which were observed related to managerial aspects of the classroom such as instructions to change seats to complete a task. In this class homework was set but there appeared to be no procedure for checking the completion of homework.

Michelle

Michelle was in class 4A. She was observed to work quietly on her own rarely interacting with peers or the teacher. She was a reluctant group member and participated in group activities as little as possible, appearing to avoid involvement with other group members. Despite her statements about working on her own if there was no set task she was observed to sit and do nothing when set work was completed. No homework was set in this class.

Janene

Janene was in class 3A. She appeared to be task-oriented and was observed to work quietly and independently. On several occasions she entered the class late or left to perform activities related to her role on the student council. She was not observed to initiate interactions with her teacher and those teacher-student interactions which were observed related to organisational matters. Janene was frequently called upon to distribute materials and perform organisational tasks in the classroom. There were no examples of group work situations observed. Homework was frequently set in this class but was not observed to be routinely checked.

When the class was taken by a specialist teacher for language (English) Janene was observed to disengage from classroom activities, becoming off-task but not disruptive. She admitted that she disliked the teacher involved and did not want to participate in class activities for that teacher.

Felicity

Felicity was in class 3C. She was observed to work quietly and independently in class. She caused no discipline problems and was not observed to initiate any student-teacher interactions. There was little opportunity for students to work on activities of their own choice in class.

Felicity was in a split class (Year 6/7) and it was common for one year level to be set individual seatwork while the teacher instructed the other year group. In this sense, this class varied from all other classes observed and because of this there was less whole class instruction by the teacher. However, all Year 7s in the class worked on the same tasks at the same time. There was little student choice of activities. The teacher made reference to skills that students would need at high school. Homework was set and written on the board and students were supervised as they recorded this information in their diaries. Students were expected to file their work unsupervised. Homework was not routinely checked.

Andrew

Andrew was in class 4A. His Year 7 teacher was the school deputy principal, which meant that she was often out of the class. The class was taken by specialist teachers for mathematics, physical education and library. In the classroom while some students worked at clustered tables Anthony was isolated from the other students and was seated at a desk on his own. This was done in an effort to minimise distractions and prevent Anthony from distracting other students. "I don't mind sitting on my own, it means I've got more space but it's harder to talk to other kids. I would rather sit with someone."

He was observed to be frequently off-task, but did not disturb the rest of the class. He engaged in frequent interactions with his classroom teacher which appeared to be mainly of a procedural or task related nature.

In turn, his teacher frequently approached Andrew, checking that he was working in the assigned task and the teacher frequently reminded Andrew of the task or of appropriate classroom behaviour.

With the exception of streamed reading groups, everyone in the class worked on the same task at the same time. There was no choice of tasks or activities and the teacher made all decisions relating to topics and duration of activities. While much of the instruction took place in a whole class context there was some use of group work. Andrew was observed to make little contribution to the group, and appeared to disrupt other students who were on-task.

In this class, homework was set four days a week and usually involved the completion of class work. It was usually checked at the beginning of the day. Penalties were imposed for the non completion of homework and included being made to sit outside the office during recess or lunchtime. Mathematics homework was given regularly twice a week and a similar penalty was imposed for non submission. During classroom observations Andrew appeared to meet the demands for homework completion.

In this class students were frequently required to submit work to the teacher for marking. This was returned with a mark and sometimes a comment. Andrew stated that the teacher usually explained errors to students through private discussions at her desk. Most of the informative feedback was delivered verbally.

APPENDIX D

Year 7 Teacher Interview Schedules

General biographical and demographic questions relating to years of teaching experience, years at the school, previous teaching experience.

What are your beliefs about teaching? How do you see your role as a Year 7 teacher?

How important do you believe the transition to high school is for students?

Do you think that some children have difficulty adapting to high school?

What factors do you think influence a child's ability to adjust successfully to high school?

(curricula, instructional materials, teacher style/attitude, social adjustment)

Are there particular "types" of students whom you believe are likely to adjust more or less successfully to high school?

Do you do anything that you think is specifically directed at preparing your Year 7 students for high school?

Does the school have a transition program of any sort?

Please describe.

Do you believe this is successful?

Do you favour a specific orientation program to help Year 7 students make the transition to high school?

What would an effective orientation program look like?

What type of things do you think schools and teachers can do to prepare students for the move to high school?

Whose responsibility is it to assist students in making a successful transition to high school?

Have you been to the high school?

Have you spoken to any of the teachers from the high school?

What do you know about the way in which the high school is organised (this includes day to day running of the school and from an instructional and curriculum perspective)?

Year 7 Teacher Interview Responses

General biographical and demographic questions relating to years of teaching experience, years at the school, previous teaching experience.

What are your beliefs about teaching? How do you see your role as a Year 7 teacher?

Teachers' responses reflected a common theme relating to their role as a facilitator of learning. Learning was described as mastering a body of knowledge and skills that would enable students to learn more difficult and complex knowledge and skills in the future. Teachers saw that they had a crucial role in students' learning because they were the ones who selected the learning experiences and interpreted the curriculum for the students. Only one teacher saw the role of a Year 7 teacher as preparing students for high school.

How important do you believe the transition to high school is for students?

All teachers responded that transition was extremely important and supported this belief by saying that this was a critical time for students' academic life and a poor start would jeopardise their future academic careers as they would miss out on essential knowledge and skills. Some teachers suggested that students may "block themselves out of potential career paths" if they did not work well in Year 8.

Do you think that some children have difficulty adjusting to high school?

Seven teachers could identify past students who had failed to adjust to high school and had in their eyes, "got lost" at the high school. One teacher believed that children were very flexible and that all students managed to fit in in some way.

Generally, teachers' views of successful adjustment related to maintaining or improving academic performance. Student behaviour both within and outside the classroom was included in their definition of successful adjustment by two teachers. All teachers believed that some students would experience problems adjusting socially due to factors such as lack of maturity or poorly developed social skills. Year 7 teachers also identified changing teachers and rooms and different teacher expectations as potential problems for students in Year 8.

What factors do you think influence a child's ability to adjust successfully to high school?

Are there particular "types" of students whom you believe are likely to adjust more or less successfully to high school?

Teachers' responses focused on attributes of the individual student such as maturity, level of academic achievement, organisational skills and ability to work independently. Five teachers suggested that lower ability students would have greatest difficulty adjusting to secondary school.

Do you do anything that is specifically directed at preparing your Year 7 students for high school?

The most commonly reported activities included teaching students to use homework diaries, assigning homework, teaching students to read a timetable and encouraging the development of personal organisational skills such as maintaining files and books. One teacher reported that he did not give Year 7 students homework because he believed that they would receive a lot of homework in Year 8 and they should not be overwhelmed. All teachers reported that they referred to high school during their teaching often with reference to homework, pre-requisite knowledge or work loads.

Does the school have a transition program of any sort? Please describe.

All of the schools involved in this study participated in a half day orientation program with the high school. In this students were taken to the high school where they were shown around the school, and were given information about the procedure for the first day, school uniform or dress code, text book purchase and appropriate school behaviour.

Do you believe this is successful?

Teachers expressed varying levels of support for the success of the program. All agreed that it was better than nothing but several suggested that they believed that students needed more than a guided tour of the school to help them prepare for the shift. Four teachers suggested that the opportunity for students to spend a day or two at the high school experiencing the timetable and moving around the school from one class to another. Two suggested that receiving instruction in Year 8 subjects in a "high school" way of teaching" would be beneficial to students. They did not believe that it would be beneficial for Year 7 teachers to experience this.

Do you favour a specific orientation program to help Year 7 students make the transition to high school? What would an effective orientation program look like?

Five teachers believed that the current program was sufficient. Two of these referred to previous attempts which had involved numerous meetings between primary and secondary teachers at which they (the primary teachers) felt that their work was not valued and that criticism had been directed at the primary school for inadequately preparing students for high school. These teachers felt that their time had been wasted because they did not believe that they had been listened to by the secondary school staff.

The remainder supported a longer program which included discussion between primary and secondary teachers, including sharing of

information about curricula, teaching practices and performance expectations.

What type of things do you think schools and teachers can do to prepare students for the move to high school?

Responses focused on developing students' personal management skills so that they could organise time and resources effectively. Teachers also believed that it was very important to teach students to read a timetable, find their way around the school and keep track of homework and assignments.

Whose responsibility is it to assist students in making a successful transition to high school?

Opinions were mixed. Six teachers believed that Year 7 teachers, parents, high school teachers and the students themselves were responsible to varying degrees. Of these three believed that high school administrative staff and Year 8 teachers had most responsibility for creating a supportive environment that assisted students in adjusting to the new situation. Two teachers believed that the prime responsibility lay with the students and that the success of transition would depend on individual students' characteristics, skills and knowledge.

What do you know about the way in which the high school is organised (this includes day to day running of the school and from an instructional and curriculum perspective)?

No teachers had a clear idea of how the school functioned but all made suggestions based on their own high school experiences or those of their own children. All teachers were aware of the unit curriculum but were not clear about how it was structured or of the organisation of units within the curriculum. Similarly there was little knowledge of the range or content of the various subjects that students would be studying at high school.

I'd now like you to think about those students whom I've selected for inclusion in my study (***) and answer the following questions about them.

Think about how well X is currently performing in relation to his/her peers. I'd like you to do that for the subjects mathematics, English (including all aspects of language including spelling and grammar), overall academic performance and socially. The continua have end points 1 and 10, 10 being the highest or best. Please mark the place on the continuum that you think represents the students' relative performance. Please assign a numerical value to the position that you select. If you want to talk aloud about the reasons why you made such a decision, or to explain the factors that you considered that's fine. It may also be useful to name other students who are performing at a similar level.

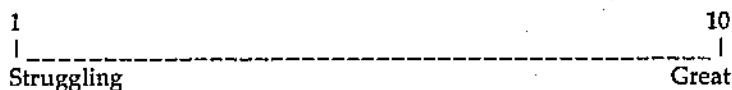
Now I'd like to you to think about how well you expect X to do next year in high school and complete the same sort of rating scale.

Can you explain the reasons why you expect X to perform at that level?

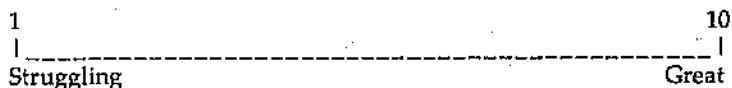
Student Performance Rating Form
Year 7

Name of student: _____

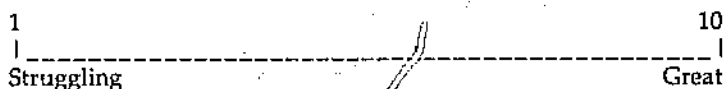
In mathematics



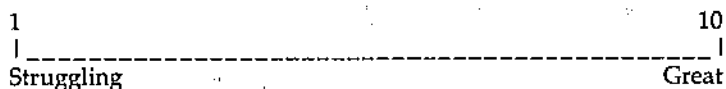
In English



General Academic Performance



Social Development



Student Performance Rating Form
Year 8

Please indicate the level at which you expect _____ to perform in Year 8.

In mathematics

1	10

Struggling	Great

In English

1	10

Struggling	Great

General Academic Performance

1	10

Struggling	Great

Social Development

1	10

Struggling	Great

Please give a brief description of _____.

Academic performance:

Academic potential:

Teacher- student relationship:

Personal organisational skills:

Initiative and independence:

Please indicate the statement that most closely matches the way in which you expect _____ to adjust to the demands of high school.

Low risk: Will adapt quickly and appropriately. A successful student.

Cope: Will experience some minor difficulty but will be generally successful.

High risk: Will have significant problems adjusting socially, academically, behaviourally or organisationally. Unsuccessful.

Participation Style Checklist

Please check those statements which you feel apply to this student's classroom participation.

1. Is essentially task oriented and academically successful
2. Is cooperative in class
3. Will tackle almost all questions
4. Creates no discipline problems
5. I am likely to direct difficult questions to them and they are likely to answer most correctly
6. Likes school
7. Is well liked by peers
8. I like this student
9. Is more person than task oriented
10. Has the ability to achieve
11. Values friendship more than schoolwork
12. I call on this student to help him/her become involved in the learning task
13. Is usually able to answer easy questions
14. Some answers to complex questions may be incorrect or irrelevant
15. Is likely to be criticised by me
16. Is fairly popular with peers
17. Is always looking for my help or direction
18. Frequently raises hand in response to questions but is likely to guess or make mistakes
19. Makes extensive task related demands on me
20. Requires frequent assistance and feedback from me in order to complete assigned tasks successfully
21. Is rejected by peers
22. I am concerned about this student
23. Rejects school
24. Is openly hostile
25. Is withdrawn
26. Is a serious behaviour problem
27. Withdraws to the fringes of the class
28. I tend to ignore this student
29. Is ignored by peers
30. I don't really notice this student in my class
31. About average on everything
32. Is shy
33. Is a quiet independent worker
34. Is rarely actively involved in class group activities
35. Never volunteers
36. Never creates problems
37. Peers are indifferent to this student
38. I tend to forget this student

APPENDIX E
YEAR 7 QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire requires you to answer some questions about going to high school next year.

You do not need to put your name on the questionnaire, so your answers will be anonymous.

Please answer as honestly and accurately as you can. Answer all the questions.

For **most** questions there are boxes next to the question. Please tick (3) the box or boxes that best describe your answers. For some questions you are asked to write in your answer.

Thank you for helping me by filling in this questionnaire.

Office Use Only

1. Sex
- | | | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|---|-----|
| Male | <input type="text" value="52"/> | 1 | (1) |
| Female | <input type="text" value="48"/> | 2 | |
2. Date of Birth Day Month Year
- | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----|
| | <input type="text"/> | (2) |
| | <input type="text"/> | (3) |
3. Country of Birth
- (4)
4. Which high school are you going to next year?
-
- (5)
5. Is this the high school you want to go to?
- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| Yes | <input type="text" value="82.5"/> | 1 | (6) |
| No | <input type="text" value="10.5"/> | 2 | |
6. If not, which one did you want to go to?
-
- (7)
7. Do you like high school?
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|-----|
| Yes | <input type="text" value="76"/> | 1 | (8) |
| No | <input type="text" value="21"/> | 2 | |
8. Are you looking forward to going to high school?
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|-----|
| Yes | <input type="text" value="84"/> | 1 | (9) |
| No | <input type="text" value="14"/> | 2 | |
9. Do you think you will like high school?
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|------|
| Yes | <input type="text" value="80"/> | 1 | (10) |
| No | <input type="text" value="15"/> | 2 | |
10. What do you want to do when you leave school?
-
- (11)
(12)
11. Do you want to stay on to Year 12 at high school?
- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|------|
| Yes | <input type="text" value="83"/> | 1 | (13) |
| No | <input type="text" value="13"/> | 2 | |

12. Have any of the following people talked to you about high school? (Tick those who have.)

Grade 7 Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(14)
Other Primary Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(15)
Primary School Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(16)
Primary School Deputy Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(17)
High School Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(18)
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(19)
Older brothers and sisters	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(20)
Older friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(21)
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	(22)

13. Have you visited the high school you will be going to? Yes ☐ 56 1 (23)

No ☐ 44 2

14. Do you think you will have problems adjusting to high school? Yes ☐ 52 1 (24)

No ☐ 46 2

15. How long do you think it will take you to get used to high school? (Tick only one.)

A day	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	
A few days	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	
A week	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	(25)
Two weeks	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
A month	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
A term	<input type="checkbox"/>	6	
A year	<input type="checkbox"/>	7	

Office Use Only

16. How does the high school building seem to you? (Tick the words that best describe it.)

Big	76	1	(26)
Modern	20	1	(27)
Tidy	12	1	(28)
Busy	24	1	(29)
Unfamiliar	29	1	(30)
Crowded	27	1	(31)

17. Do you think you might get lost going from one classroom to another at high school?

Yes	72	1	
No	25	2	(32)

Office Use Only

18. Which of the following will have good facilities at high school?

Sports	74	1	(33)
Specialist Interest Clubs	23	1	(34)
Music	37	1	(35)
Technical Activities	42	1	(36)
Homecraft Activities	41	1	(37)
Cooking	47	1	(38)

19. Do you think there will be more rules at high school than primary school?

Yes	71	1	
No	26.5	2	(39)

20. Will it be difficult to accept and keep the high school rules?

Yes	29.5	1	
No	68	2	(40)

21. Do you think the discipline at high school will be -

Harsh	58	1	
Easy	36	2	(41)

22. Do you think you will have to work harder at high school?

Yes	99	1	
No	1	2	(42)

23. Do you think you will be able to keep up with high school work?

Yes	72	1	
No	24	2	(43)

Office Use Only

24. Compared to primary school work, do you think the work at high school will be more -
(tick as many words as you want)

Easy	6	1	(44)
Boring	18	1	(45)
Interesting	58	1	(46)
Useless	5	1	(47)
Difficult	64	1	(48)
Challenging	72	1	(49)
Irrelevant	10	1	(50)
Organised	40	1	(51)

25. Are you looking forward to studying new subjects at high school?

Yes	85	1	(52)
No	15	2	

26. Do you think you will receive more homework at high school than you do now?

Yes	98.5	1	(53)
No	1.5	2	

27. Do you think that the tests will be more difficult in high school than primary school?

Yes	97	1	(54)
No	3	2	

28. Do you think that following a timetable in high school will be -

Easy	67	1	(55)
Difficult	33	2	

29. Do you think the teachers at high school will be different to those at primary school?

Yes	91	1	(56)
No	9	2	

Office Use Only

30. If you think the teachers will be different, then do you think the high school teachers will be more - (tick as many as you want)

Strict	61	1	(57)
Helpful	45	1	(58)
Patient	17	1	(59)
Concerned	31	1	(60)
Critical	14	1	(61)
Friendly	38	1	(62)
Demanding	39	1	(63)
Interesting	31	1	(64)
Understanding	35	1	(65)
Involved	27	1	(66)
Boring	20	1	(67)
Mean	30	1	(68)
Detached	20	1	(69)
Slack	27	1	(70)

31. Do you think it will be a problem dealing with many different subject teachers rather than one classroom teacher?

Yes	56	1	
No	44	2	(71)

32. Do you think that high school teachers have too much authority?

Yes	50	1	
No	47	2	(72)

33. Are most of your friends going to the same high school as you?

Yes	76	1	
No	24	2	(73)

34. Do you think that you will make new friends at high school?

Yes

93

No

5

Office Use Only

1

(74)

2

35. Do you think the older students at high school will - (tick as many as you wish)

Bully you

50

1

(75)

Protect you

24

1

(76)

Help you

24

1

(77)

Be friendly

36

1

(78)

Be bossy

49

1

(79)

Tease you

50

1

(80)

Be smart alecs

44

1

(81)

Ignore you

32

1

(82)

Act superior

14

1

(83)

Be clever

16

1

(84)

Be unfriendly

36

1

(85)

Be aggressive

23

1

(86)

Pick on you

55

1

(87)

Be considerate

19

1

(68)

36. What do you think will be good about high school?

Making new friends

27

(89)

New, interesting subjects

26

(90)

Facilities and equipment

11

(91)

37. What do you think will be bad about high school?

Nothing

31

(92)

Lots of homework

17

(93)

Getting lost

17

(94)

Office Use Only

38. Would you like to have been told more about high school before you go?	Yes	64	1	(95)
	No	34	2	
39. If yes, what would you like to know about high school?				
1			54	96
3			21	97

APPENDIX F

Year 7 Student Interview Schedules

Interview One

Welcome and introduction of self and research. Stress voluntary nature of participation and confidentiality. Request permission to tape. Any questions?

General biographical questions (siblings, career aspirations, time at school, interests/hobbies).

Which high school will you be going to next year?

Are your friends going to the same high school?

Are you looking forward to going to high school next year?

Do you know very much about what it will be like there? What sorts of things do you know about high school or about *****?

Do you know anyone who goes to *****?

Have you talked to them about high school, what it's like and so on?

What sorts of things have they told you?

Do you think that it's important to do well at high school?

Why?

What's it like being a Year 7? Do you like it?

Do you think that being a Year 8 at high school will be any different? In what ways?

Do you like school?

Explore reasons for response.

How many different teachers do you have in Year 7?

In high school you'll have different teachers for each subject. Do you think that will be easy or hard to adjust to? Explain?

Think about the subjects that you are doing well in at school. Which subject do you think you are doing best in?

What things or information make you think you are doing best in this subject?

Why do you think you are doing best in this subject?

Is it something about the subject or what you do in it that helps you do well in it?

Completion of Academic Performance Self-Rating Forms

I'd like you to think about how well you're doing in school at the moment in comparison to other kids in your class. This form has a line with end points marked on it. Point 1 means you're not doing very well at all, that you're finding things harder than other kids and 10 means that you're doing great, better than anyone else. I want you to mark whereabouts on the line you think you fit when you think about how well other kids are doing too. Can you put a number to that position? Remember the beginning is 1 and the end is 10.

Complete the first example.

When you did that what sort of things did you think about to help you make a decision? What sort of information did you use?

Now, can you tell me some other kids who are about as good as you? What about kids who are doing the best in the class? The worst in the class?

Repeat for subsequent examples.

Now I'd like you to think about how well you think you'll do next year at high school. Can you do the same thing and mark the place on the line that represents how well you think you'll do.

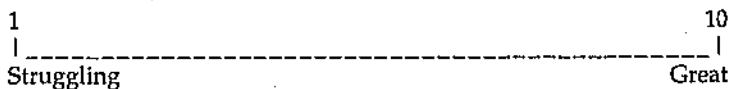
Thanks for helping me and answering my questions. Instructions about the next interview.

Year 7 Student Academic Performance Self-Rating Forms

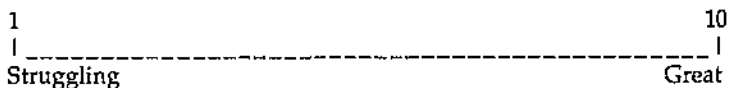
Name: _____

Please mark the point on the line that best describes how **you** think you are doing in school at the moment.

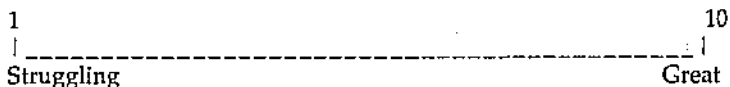
In mathematics



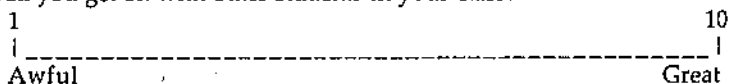
In English



General Academic Performance

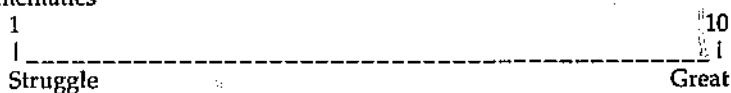


How well you get on with other students in your class?

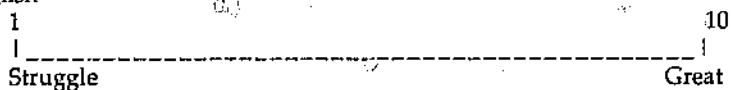


Please mark the point on the line that best describes how you think you will do next year when you are in Year 8.

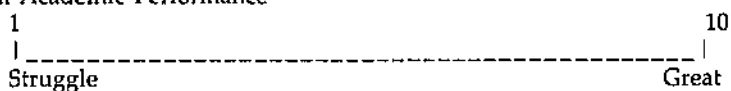
In mathematics



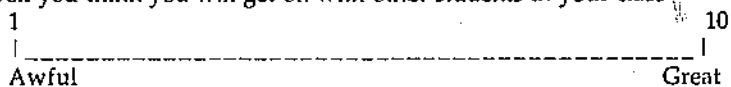
In English



General Academic Performance



How well you think you will get on with other students in your class



Interview Two

Greeting. General chat about school and recent events. Review of previous interview.

We've been talking about high school and what you think it will be like. Has your teacher talked much about high school? What things has s/he said?

What sort of things do you think will be good about high school?
Explore

What sort of things do you think will be bad about high school?
Explore

Are there any things about high school that you'd like to know about?

Is it important to do well at high school?

What sorts of things do you think a "good" high school student would do?

In primary school, what are the important things about doing well in school? What do you have to do if you want to be a good student?

Are there things that teachers do that make it easy for you to learn? What are they?

Completion of Attributions Response Form

Think of time when you received a better mark than you expected for some work that you did.

What sort of work was it?

What mark did you think you'd get? What did you actually get?

Now I want you to select from each of these pairs of reasons the one that you think was the most important in explaining why you got that mark. Now I want you to think of time when you received a lower mark than you expected for some work that you did.

What sort of work was it?

What mark did you think you'd get? _____

What did you actually get? _____

Now I want you to select the reason from each of these pairs that you think was the most important reason why you got that mark.

Completion of Strategy Response Form

When you are working on a task such as a math problem and you get stuck or you don't know what to do next, what do you do?

Think about times when you are working on something, it may be a math problem or an assignment where you don't know what to do next. Read these statements and choose the one that describes what you are most likely to do.

Now look at this maths problem. What would you do if you got stuck on it? Again choose one from each pair that describes what you'd do.

Would it be any different if it was a subject other than maths?

Thanks. Reminder about next interview.

Attributions Response Form

NAME: _____

YEAR: _____

Choose the statement that gives the best reason why you got a better mark than you thought you would.

Because I'm smart at that subject

It was an easy assignment

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

It was an easy assignment

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

Because I'm smart at that subject

Because I'm smart at that subject

It was an easy assignment

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

Choose the statement that gives the best reason why you didn't do as well as you expected.

Because I'm dumb at that subject

It was a hard assignment

I didn't try on that piece of work

I was unlucky/ it's the teacher

It was a hard assignment

I didn't try on that piece of work

I was unlucky/ it's the teacher

Because I'm dumb at that subject

Because I'm dumb at that subject

It was a hard assignment

I didn't try on that piece of work

I was unlucky/ it's the teacher

Strategy Use Response Form

NAME: _____

YEAR: _____

If I get stuck on a piece or work or problem I:

ask my teacher or a friend for help

give up and go on to the next one

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

give up and go on to the next one

ask my teacher or a friend for help

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

Problem

Nine balls all weigh the same except for one which weighs slightly less than the others. If you were given a balance scale and were allowed to weigh only two different times could you find the ball which weighs less? How?

If I got stuck on this problem I would:

ask my teacher or a friend for help

give up and go on to the next one

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

give up and go on to the next one

ask my teacher or a friend for help

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

Interview Three

Greeting. General chat. Review of previous interview.

Have you been to the high school yet?

If not. When is the visit? What do you want to find out about? What do you think they'll do?

What was it like? What sort of things did you do? Do you have any questions about high school now? Did the visit answer your questions? Is there anything about going to high school that worries you?

Are you looking forward to going to high school now?

How do you think it will be different to primary school?

What will you miss about primary school?

What do you think will be the positive things about high school?

What about negative things about high school?

If you had a crystal ball and could see yourself next year what would you like to see?

Close

Thanks.

APPENDIX G

Year 8 Student Interview Schedules

Interview One

Welcome. Discussion about holidays etc.

Reminder about research. Repeat request to tape record.

What is your first response to high school?

Have you had any problems finding your way around? Reading the timetable?

Are you in classes with any kids who were at **** primary school?

At this stage how does high school compare with what you thought it would be like?

What subjects are you doing?

Do you know your teachers' names yet?

What sort of things happened on the first day?

What things have you been doing in class?

Have you started doing much work in class?

What sort of work is it?

Is it as hard as the work you were doing last year?

Now that you've been here for a few days do you think you're going to like high school?

What do you think you'll like?

Is there anything you think that you might not like?

Have the teachers told you much about what they expect you to do in class and in your school work? What sorts of things have they told you?

What about behaviour?

What sorts of things do you think high school teachers think are important?

Explore reasons why.

How well do you think you've done the work that you've had so far?

So, how do you think you'll do this year? What do you want this year to be like for you?

Thanks. Reminder about next interview.

Interview Two

You've been at high school for a few weeks now, how are things going?

Do you think you've settled in?

Are there any things that are still causing problems of any sort?

What sort of work have you been doing (in each subject)?

How does this compare to the work you did last year?

Are you surprised?

Can you think of any reasons why?

Have you been getting much homework?

Are you surprised? How much did you think you'd get?

Do you do your homework? What happens if you don't do homework?

We've talked about the work that you've been doing so far. How well do you think you're going?

Completion of Academic Performance Self-Rating Forms

I'd like you to think about how well you're doing in school at the moment in comparison to other kids in your class. This form has a line with end points marked on it. Point 1 means you're not doing very well at all, that you're finding things harder than other kids and 10 means that you're doing great, better than anyone else. I want you to mark whereabouts on the line you think you fit when you think about how well other kids are doing too. Can you put a number to that position? Remember the best is 1 and the worst is 10.

Complete the first example.

When you did that what sort of things did you think about to help you make a decision? What sort of information did you use?

Now, can you tell me some other kids who are about as good as you?

What about kids who are doing the best in the class? The worst in the class?

Repeat for subsequent examples.

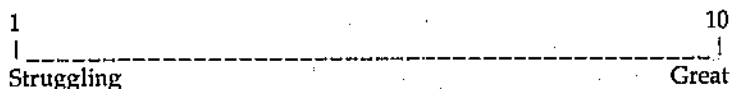
Last year this is how you thought you were going. How does that compare to how you think you're going now? Can you think of any reasons why?

Year 8 Student Academic Performance Self-Rating Forms

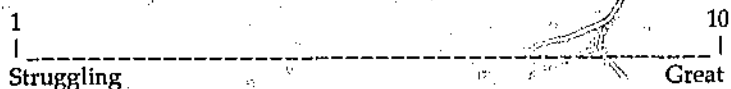
Name: _____

Please mark the point on the line that best describes how **you** think you are doing in school at the moment.

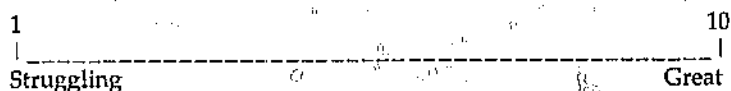
In mathematics



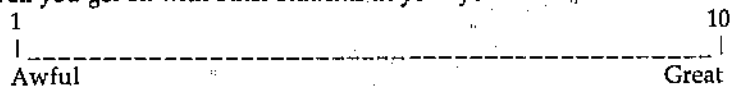
In English



General Academic Performance



How well you get on with other students in your year?



Last year you said that this year you wanted to be a ***** student.
What do you think your teachers would say about you this year ?

Do you think they would say that you were trying hard?

Do you think that teachers take much notice of what students do in class?
What sort of things? Do you think they notice stuff like who answers
questions and puts their hand up?

Do you answer questions in class?
Probe

What are your teachers like?
What makes a "good teacher"?
What things can teachers do that make it easy for you to learn?

What are the main differences between this year and last year (in the
classroom)?

Now you've been here for a while what things do you think are important
about doing well at high school? Is it important to do well? Probe

What do you think teachers think is important about high school?

Thanks. Remind about next interview.

Interview Three

Welcome. Review previous interviews. Discuss what's currently happening in the school.

Now you've been here for more than a term how do you think you're going? Has this changed from last time we talked? Probe.

Last time we talked you said that the work this year was *****. Is this still the case? Has it changed? In what ways?

What is your response to this?

If you think about what happens on the classroom how similar is it to what happened in Year 7?

Discuss each subject referring to student's responses from previous interview relating to dis/likes, difficulty, interest, homework.

Completion of Strategy Response Form

When you are working on a task such as a math problem and you get stuck or you don't know what to do next, what do you do?

Think about times when you are working on something, it may be a math problem or an assignment where you don't know what to do next. Read these statements and choose the one that describes what you are most likely to do.

Now look at this maths problem. What would you do if you got stuck on it? Again choose one from each pair that describes what you'd do.

Would it be any different if it was a subject other than maths?

Strategy Use Response Form

NAME: _____

YEAR: _____

If I get stuck on a piece or work or problem I:

ask my teacher or a friend for help

give up and go on to the next one

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

give up and go on to the next one

ask my teacher or a friend for help

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

Problem

A person goes to a well with a 5 litre bucket and a 3 litre jar, but wants to get 7 litres of water. How can they get 7 litres by using only the 5 litre and 3 litre containers and no other measuring device?

If I got stuck on this problem I would:

ask my teacher or a friend for help

give up and go on to the next one

think about how I solved other similar next problems, try some more and go back

give up and go on to the one

ask my teacher or a friend for help

think about how I solved other similar problems, try some more and go back

Last time we met you had just handed in an assignment for ****. You said you thought you'd get an *. What mark did you get? What was your response to this? Why do you think you got that mark?

Completion of Attributions Response Form

Think of time when you received a better mark than you expected for some work that you did.

What sort of work was it?

What mark did you think you'd get? What did you actually get?

Now I want you to select from each of these pairs of reasons the one that you think was the most important in explaining why you got that mark. Now I want you to think of time when you received a lower mark than you expected for some work that you did.

What sort of work was it?

What mark did you think you'd get? _____

What did you actually get? _____

Now I want you to select the reason from each of these pairs that you think was the most important reason why you got that mark.

Attributions Response Form

NAME: _____

YEAR: _____

Choose the statement that gives the best reason why you got a better mark than you thought you would.

Because I'm smart at that subject

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

It was an easy assignment

Because I'm smart at that subject

I tried really hard on that piece of work

Because I'm smart at that subject

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

It was an easy assignment

It was an easy assignment

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

Choose the statement that gives the best reason why you didn't do as well as you expected.

Because I'm smart at that subject

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

It was an easy assignment

Because I'm smart at that subject

I tried really hard on that piece of work

Because I'm smart at that subject

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

It was an easy assignment

It was an easy assignment

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I tried really hard on that piece of work

I was lucky/teacher liked what I did

Do you do much work that is marked by your teacher? How does this compare to last year? When you get your work back does the teacher give you much feedback on how you went? Why you got the mark you did? Do you think that you have a good idea of what you have to do in order to get a particular mark, say, an A?

How do you feel when you get a good mark?

Do you tell your friends? How do your friends feel about getting good marks? Do they think it's important to do well? What sort of marks mean that you're doing well?

Do you think some teachers mark harder than others? Are teachers fair in the way they mark and treat students?

Do you think that some teachers have "favourites"?

Over the last year we've talked quite a bit about high school and how you thought you'd go, what it would be like and so on. Now that you've been here for a while are there any things that you wish someone had told you before you came?

What are your impressions of high school at this stage?

What do you think of high school?

Thankyou very much for helping me with my research.

APPENDIX H

Year 8 Teacher Interview Schedules

Introduce self, explain research and format of interview. Request permission to tape interview. General biographical information relating to teaching experiences etc.

I'd like to talk to you first about particular students whom you teach.

For each student:

What are your impressions of this student? What can you tell me about them in terms of:

classroom behaviour?

academic ability?

academic performance?

the way they relate to other students in the class and their social adjustment?

Do you think that ***** is settling in to high school? Probe

Complete academic performance rating form. Probe for reasons for selection of rating, comparison to others, criteria.

Do you think that the transition from primary to secondary school is particularly significant in children's school lives?

What criteria would you use to judge the success of transition?

Do you believe that certain types of students have difficulty with transition?

What sort of things do you believe play an important role in the success or otherwise of transition?

Do you believe that this school's approach to transition and the orientation program are effective in facilitating students' move to high school? Probe.

Is there anything else that you believe constitutes appropriate action?

How effectively do you believe students are prepared for high school?

What do you see to be the role of Year 8?

What do you know about primary school?

Teaching practices, assessment, curriculum?

What do you believe are the most important things that facilitate students' learning?

What do students need to be able to do in order to be successful at high school?

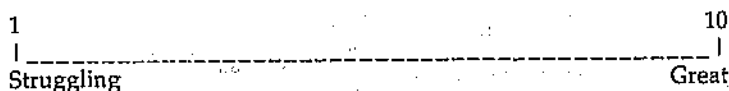
What does this school value about school performance?

Year 8 Student Academic Performance Self-Rating Forms

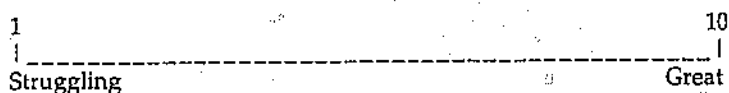
Name: _____

Please mark the point on the line that best describes how you think this student is doing in comparison to others in the class at the moment.

In mathematics (Teacher _____)



In English (Teacher _____)



How well does this student get on with others in the class?
(Teacher _____)



Year 8 Teacher Interview Responses

All Year 8 teachers described the success of transition as relating primarily to academic performance. Social adjustment was also mentioned by four teachers.

Teachers had little knowledge of primary school instructional practices, referring to their own experiences as student teachers in primary schools, or visits to the primary school as parents on which to base their decisions. Their attention was focused on the secondary curriculum and most (n = 15) stated that there was little need to know what students had been taught in primary school. The reasons they gave to support this point of view included teaching subjects in which the curriculum was K - 10 and hence would be related or teaching subject which were not taught in the primary school (e.g. industrial arts). Six teachers reported that their subject areas (English and mathematics) administered school developed tests to Year 7 students and that this provided them with information about the types of things that these students could do.

Teachers' views of the role of Year 8 varied. Some saw Year 8 as a year of consolidation before moving students on to more difficult or sophisticated work while others viewed it in the same way as any other year of schooling.

"It's better for us to go over the work again, to make sure it's taught properly."

"It think it's important to let them settle before you give them new work. It's also good to find out what they can and can't do."

"We really focus on easing the transition by devoting the first unit to revision of concepts from the primary syllabus. I think it's good consolidation."

"If you wanted me to say what should be done at primary school to prepare (students) for high school I'd say just leave it up to us (secondary teachers)."

Secondary teachers reported that their main teaching strategies related to teacher explanation or demonstration followed by student individual work on related tasks. All expressed frustration at the unit curriculum structure and the need to achieve set objectives. Most reported that the marking loads associated with unit curriculum and secondary teaching in general were heavy and that this influenced their teaching approach and organisational procedures.

"The unit curriculum puts so many demands on us to ensure that we get through the objectives that you can't spend too long on any one topic. There's too much to get through. You don't have the opportunity to go back over work that's been covered."

"We really focus on easing the transition by devoting the first unit to revision of concepts from the primary syllabus. I think it's good consolidation".

"We haven't got time to go over what we've done before. That plus the fact that I have so much marking to do means that there isn't much point in putting lots of feedback on kids' work."

"Our marking loads are so heavy that I haven't got time to put lots of information on kid's work. Anyway they're only interested in the mark they get."

"If they don't get penalised for handing work in late then it becomes a habit. I can't let them get away with it. They just need to be more organised."

"The amount of marking we have to do means that I can't give extensions - I'd never keep my marking load under control."

"Unit curriculum means assess, assess, assess."

Those teachers who taught in subjects which were timetabled weekly acknowledged the difficulty in getting to know students and two found it very difficult to complete ratings of students' performance.

"I only see these kids once a week for one semester. I'm lucky if I've learned half the class's names by the end of it. Don't know much about any of them, (except the ones who really make an impact for whatever reason.)"

Teachers saw the ability to work independently, set personal goals and maintain motivation as the important skills for students to be successful at secondary school. Academic performance was viewed as critical for students' future success.

"To be able to succeed at high school kids need to be able to be motivated and to get on with work on their own."

"At the moment it's really important for all kids to do well at school. All employers are interested in is a TEE score even if it's irrelevant."

Responses relating to how well prepared students were when they entered secondary school varied. Teachers who taught those subjects which had not been studied at primary school believed that as long as students possessed the ability to work independently then they had the potential to be successful. However, other teachers suggested that they believed that in some subjects students entered secondary school with an inadequate

knowledge or skills base. Others believed that while students came with adequate academic knowledge and skills this was not "rigorous" enough and that students placed too great an emphasis on non-academic aspects of work such as presentation.

"Kids come from primary school and they think that doing a good assignment means drawing a pretty cover sheet and decorating each page. What's that got to do with [my subject]?"

13

APPENDIX I

Year 8 Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were more difficult to arrange in Year 8. Students changed teachers and rooms and classes for each subject and there were few instances where more than one case study student was in the same class. For this reason each target student was observed twice in mathematics and English classes and where convenient four additional classroom observations were conducted with randomly selected case study students. Again the focus of the observations was teacher-student interactions and the nature of instructional tasks.

Secondary Classes

An obvious difference between the secondary school and the primary schools in the study was the larger size of the senior high school grounds and the range of specialist facilities such as gymnasium, performing arts theatre and swimming pool. There was great variation from one part of the school to the next in the physical environment of the secondary classrooms. The school was built following a traditional design around a central quadrangle and there were no open areas for instruction. There were purpose built areas for curriculum areas such Business Education, Computing, Science, Home Economics, Industrial Arts, Art, Physical Education, Dance and Theatre. Those subjects which did not require specialist facilities were taught in conventional classrooms and while there was some effort to concentrate subject areas in particular rooms there were no specially designated areas. Students changed classrooms and teachers regularly each day often moving long distances around the school from one class to another.

The secondary school had a pastoral care system based on a house system incorporating year level coordinators, and all students were assigned to "contact" or form classes related to the house system. These contact groups were designed vertically so that they contained students from all year levels. There were only two instances where target students were in a common contact group and in both of these cases the students had not come from the same primary school class so they did not know each other.

In addition to the differences in the physical classroom environment there was much variation between individual teachers and teaching approaches used in particular subject disciplines. Despite these individual differences the general approach observed was the same in all classes. Classes were teacher dominated, most of the teaching was expository with small amounts of whole class work, much individual student seatwork and little group or cooperative work. There was less evidence of reward structures in the secondary classes but there were structures operating through the house system within the school. The school issued merit and award certificates for academic performance and had a whole school mechanism for further rewarding academic performance.

Generally, classes operated in the same way regardless of teacher or subject area. Exceptions to this occurred in science where the teacher performed an experiment at the front of the class and students observed then recorded relevant details. This type of lesson was teacher-centred and students worked individually on recording observations. Occasionally students performed experiments themselves after observing the teacher perform the experiment either in a previous lesson or at the beginning of the lesson. Experiments were conducted in small groups and there was a high level of student student interaction and off task behaviour.

In other subjects the most common form of instruction followed this pattern: the teacher spent the opening ten minutes explaining or demonstrating the topic for the lesson then students worked individually on worksheets, from their text, or the blackboard. In some cases teachers circulated, supervising students as they were engaged in seat work but frequently they remained at the front of the room. Teacher-student interactions were minimal and less frequent than had been observed in primary classrooms. Teacher student interactions were predominantly related to behaviour management interactions and there was minimal student initiated interaction.

Case Study Classroom Observations

Neoma

Classroom observations in multiple settings identified that Neoma's classroom behaviour was consistent across different settings. She was seen to be essentially task oriented, a willing participant in any whole class discussion or recitation type activities. In some circumstances she was observed to talk to peers but this appeared to be task related and initiated by the other students. She was never observed to be reprimanded by her teachers. When called upon, she answered teachers' questions correctly and was observed to volunteer to respond to teacher questions. She appeared to listen to the teachers' instructions and to begin work on the task immediately. She demonstrated outward signs of interest and enthusiasm in the class and was observed to actively seek assistance from the teacher where required.

Robert

Robert was observed to select a seat towards the back of the classroom in all subjects. Where the same group of students were in the class he was observed to seat himself as part of a group. While he caused no major disruptions, his involvement and participation in the class were minimal. He did not begin tasks immediately but did not attract the teacher's attention for not doing so. He was not observed to volunteer answers to teacher questions and his engagement in assigned seat work tasks was sporadic and he was frequently observed to do little formal work.

Michelle

Michelle's behaviour was observed to be consistent across different classroom settings. In those situations where students were allowed to choose their seats she chose a seat on the outside edges of the class and was not observed to choose to sit near any particular students. She initiated no interactions with the teachers, did not volunteer to answer any questions and was never selected to answer teacher questions. Her engagement in tasks was sporadic, she gazed around the room, fiddled with her books and pens but did not disturb others. She did not appear to be cognitively engaged in the instruction taking place.

Janene

Janene was observed to seat herself at the back of the room as often as possible. In several classes she seated herself with the same group of girls (whenever they were in the same class they sat together). She frequently arrived late to class accompanied by a group of girls. They were not often sanctioned for this but the teachers made comments which acknowledged their late arrival.

She was never observed to raise her hand in response to teacher questions and did not initiate any student-teacher interactions. On those occasions where the teacher was observed to initiate an interaction with Janene it was related to reminding her about on-task behaviour or to reprimand her "group" for lack of task application. She was observed to complete minimal work in class appearing to be off task, writing notes to friends, chatting or not paying attention.

Felicity

Felicity's behaviour was consistent across multiple classroom settings. She was observed to work quietly and appeared to be on-task at all times. She rarely spoke to other students and was not observed to initiate student-teacher interactions. She was not observed to volunteer answers to teacher questions and the teacher seldom directed questions to her. Overall she engaged in little interaction with any member of the class. She did not appear to consistently seat herself near particular students and she selected a seat towards the side of the room. Felicity appeared to avoid attracting attention to herself and was a quiet and inoffensive student.

Andrew

Andrew's behaviour was observed to be consistent in a variety of class settings in secondary school. He did not appear to seat himself regularly with the same group of students but always attempted to sit at the back of the room. When this was not possible he sat on the edge of the room as close to the back as possible. He frequently arrived late and often did not have all necessary materials. He was sometimes sanctioned by the teacher for this but in other situations managed to borrow materials from other students or avoid attracting the teacher's attention. He was not

observed to volunteer to answer teacher questions and frequently did not appear to be attending to teacher talk. His engagement on tasks was sporadic and he appeared to be off task more often than on task. Andrew presented an outward appearance of being a reluctant student.

Summary

There were important differences observed between primary and secondary classroom environments. Some of these have been documented in previous research dealing with transition and include such surface factors as number of teachers, changing classrooms and moving around the school. In relation to students' perceptions of the academic environment differences in instruction, task and assessment would seem to be particularly salient. Previous reference has been made to the need for students to understand the cognitive map of assessment and instruction. In high school students encounter a number of new subjects and even familiar subjects take on a different appearance (e.g. the subject English takes on a new guise).

Instruction was more individualised with students performing a great deal of independent seat work. Not only were students taught by a larger number of teachers, and spent less time with each teacher, but there were fewer opportunities provided for teacher-student, student-teacher, and student-student interactions.

Students encountered a different assessment system, different nomenclature and criteria for the assignment of grades. In many cases students were not aware of the meaning of grades or the criteria for assessment. Students had been "streamed" into pathways but were often unaware of the pathway or its significance.

The classrooms themselves differed. Secondary classrooms generally lacked displays of student work or decoration of any type. In a few specialist rooms there were subject related posters but on the whole secondary classrooms were typified by bare walls and there was no sense of class ownership of rooms. For students changing classes meant not only changing teachers, but changing peers so the opportunity to develop relationships with peers was also restricted. The frequent changes of class also restricted the opportunities for students to build a reliable cognitive map of their relative academic standing.

APPENDIX J
YEAR 8 QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire requires you to answer some questions about your experiences at High School.

You do not need to put your name on the questionnaire, so your answers will be anonymous.

Please answer as honestly and accurately as you can. Answer all the questions.

For most questions there are boxes next to the questions. Please tick (3) the box or boxes that best describe your answers. For some questions you are asked to write in your answer.

Thank you for helping me by filling in this questionnaire.

Denise Kirkpatrick

Office Use Only

1. Sex

Male

48

1

(1)

Female

52

2

2. Date of Birth

Day

Month

Year

(2)

(3)

3. Which primary school did you go to last year?

N/A

(4)

4. Did you like primary school?

Yes

77

1

(5)

No

22

2

5. Do you like high school?

Yes

87

1

(6)

No

13

2

6. Did you think you would like high school?

Yes

56

1

(7)

No

44

2

7. Is this the high school you wanted to go to?

Yes

83

1

(8)

No

17

2

8. If not, which one did you want to go to?

--

(9)

9. What do you want to do when you leave school?

--

(10)

10. Do you want to stay on to Year 12 at high school?

Yes

84

1

(11)

No

13

2

Office Use Only

11. Do your parents want you to stay on to Year 12 at high school

Yes

94

1

(12)

No

2

2

12. Before you came to high school had any of the following people talked to you about high school? (Tick those who had.)

Year 7 Teacher

92

1

(13)

Other Primary Teachers

34

1

(14)

Primary School Principal

69

1

(15)

Primary School Deputy

52

1

(16)

High School Teacher

68

1

(17)

Parent

65

1

(18)

Older brothers and sisters

53

1

(19)

Older friends

53

1

(20)

Other (describe) _____

1

(21)

13. Had you visited the high school before you started school this year?

Yes

96

1

(22)

No

4

2

14. Did you have any concerns about starting high school?

Yes

48

1

(23)

No

50

2

Describe: Timetable, finding way around
teachers

(24)

Office Use Only

15. How long has it taken you to get used to high school? (Tick only one.)

A day

9

1

A few days

39

2

A week

27

3

Two weeks

16

4

(25)

A month

9

5

I'm not used to high school yet

2

6

16. If you are still not used to high school how much longer do you think it will take?

Of those who said no

A term

75

1

(26)

A semester

25

1

A year

1

17. Did you get lost going from one classroom to another?

Yes

54

1

No

45

2

(27)

18. Is the work at high school harder than the work at primary school?

Yes

70

1

No

26

2

(28)

Office Use Only

19. Which of these things were you worried about before you came to high school?

Being bullied/picked on by older students

2

1 (29)

The amount of homework

44

2 (30)

Getting lost going from one class to another

71

3 (31)

Making new friends

56

4 (32)

Having a number of teachers

42

5 (33)

Following a timetable

22

6 (34)

Difficulty of work

20

7 (35)

Not knowing other students

42

8 (36)

More difficult tests

42

9 (37)

Stricter teachers

40

10 (38)

Anything else (describe) _____

47

11 (39)

Office Use Only

20. Which of these things concern you now about high school?

Being bullied/picked on by older students	13	1	(42)
The amount of homework	44	2	(43)
Getting lost going from one class to another	4	3	(44)
Making new friends	8	4	(45)
Having a number of teachers	5	5	(46)
Following a timetable	6	6	(47)
Difficulty of work	15	7	(48)
Not knowing other students	8	8	(49)
More difficult tests	24	9	(50)
Getting good grades	66	10	(51)
More difficult work	11	11	(52)
Anything else (describe)	-	12	(53)

21. Do you think you had been told enough about high school before coming here?

Yes	98	1	(54)
No	2	2	

22. If no, what else would you have liked to have been told?

(55)

APPENDIX K

Monitoring Standards in Education Mathematics Test

MONITORING STANDARDS

*in
Education*



Mathematics

Name _____

Class _____

School _____

INSTRUCTIONS

- Do not begin until instructed to do so
- Show ALL your working and answers in the booklet
- If you have trouble with a question, leave it and come back to it later
- When you have finished, check your work carefully
- No calculators may be used

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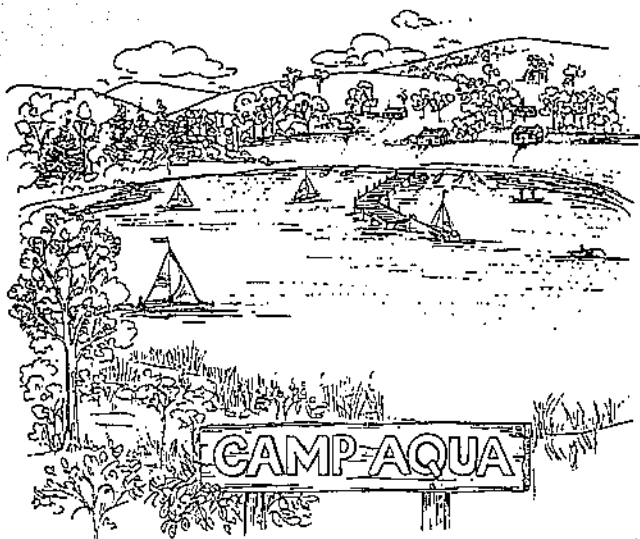


Prepared by the Australian Council for Educational Research in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Western Australia

ACER

MSE—M7S—92

Camp Aqua



EQUIPMENT

To complete this task you will need:

pen or pencil and eraser

ruler

compass

20 cm of string

forty cubes with 2 cm edges

Note: a calculator should not be used.



Getting ready for camp

You are going on a camp.

You look at this calendar to plan for the camp.

SEPTEMBER						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

- (a) Your birthday is on 16 September. What day of the week will this be?

- (b) You leave for camp a fortnight after your birthday.
What date will this be?

2.

It is time to leave for camp.

This is your clock.



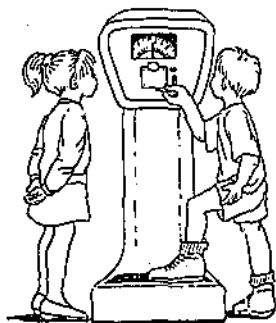
What is the time shown on your clock? _____

3.

Weights

At the bus stop two of your friends, Jeff and Jill, weigh themselves on a weighing machine. Jeff has a mass of 45.15 kilograms and Jill a mass of 35.90 kilograms.

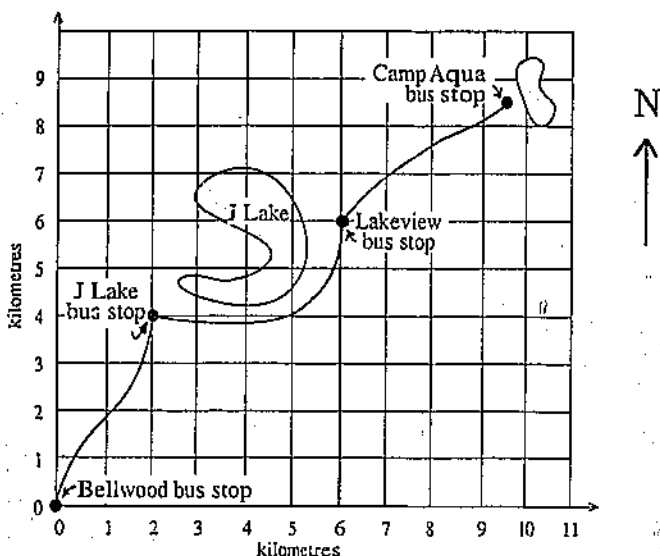
How much more is Jeff's mass than Jill's? _____



4.

Bus route

At the Bellwood bus stop, you see this map of the bus route:



- (a) In what direction is Camp Aqua bus stop from Bellwood bus stop?

- (b) On the map mark with an X the position of a place which is 8 kilometres east and 4 kilometres north of Bellwood bus stop.

- (c) Work out the actual distance by road between the bus stop at Bellwood and the bus stop at Camp Aqua. (You can use the string provided.)

_____ kilometers

- (d) How could you estimate the area of J Lake?

- (e) Estimate the area of J Lake. _____

5.

At the camp entrance

You arrive at Camp Aqua.



List the letters on the sign which have more than one line of symmetry.



6.

Camp duties

When people arrive they are put on a camp duties roster.

Here is a roster for 6 boys:

duty	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI
breakfast	TIAN	DOUG	JEFF		
wash-up					
clean bathroom	CHRIS	TIAN	DOUG		
lunch	EVAN	CHRIS	TIAN		
wash-up					
prepare dinner	CARLO	EVAN			
dinner					
wash-up	JEFF	CARLO			

- (a) What duty does Tian do on Wednesday?

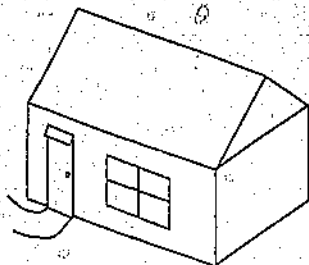
Work out the pattern in this roster.

- (b) Fill the missing spaces for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

7.

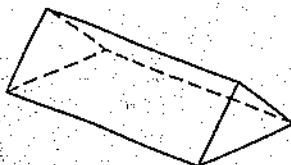
Your cabin

Here is a drawing you made of your cabin.



- (a) On the drawing the length of the window is: _____

Here is a drawing of the roof.



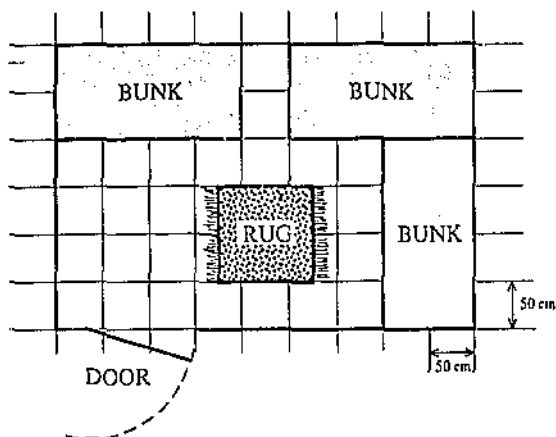
- (b) Name the shape. _____

- (c) How many faces does this shape have? _____ faces

- (d) How many vertices does this shape have? _____ vertices

8.

Here is a plan of the cabin:



- (a) How long is the shorter side of the real cabin?

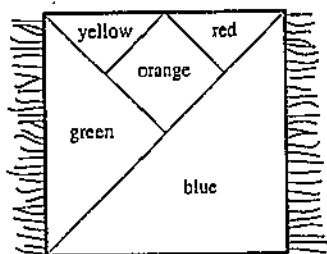
_____ metres

- (b) What is the area of the real rug (without fringe)?
Show units in your answer.

- (c) How many more bunks could be stored on the floor of the cabin?
On the plan, outline and shade where you would put them.

The number of bunks is:

You look carefully at the rug on the floor.



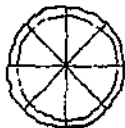
- (d) What shape is the rug without the fringe? _____
- (e) Divide the blue section of the rug into quarters.
Show your answer below.

9

Pies

The cook has made some apple pies. All the pies are the same size. You help cut them up.

- (a) Shade $\frac{1}{4}$ of this apple pie.

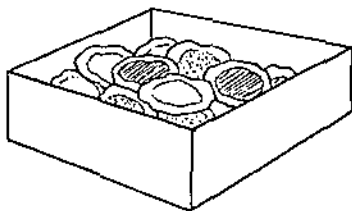


- (b) Which is greater, 25% of a pie or $\frac{1}{2}$ of a pie? _____

10

Biscuits

Free biscuits are available. 12 biscuits are left in a box and 12 children are in a queue to get one each. There are 6 biscuits with red icing, 3 biscuits with blue icing and 3 biscuits with yellow icing.



- (a) You pick the first biscuit. What are the chances that you choose a biscuit with red icing? _____
- (b) The first two biscuits chosen have blue icing. Your friend is next to pick up a biscuit. What are the chances that your friend will choose a biscuit with blue icing on it? _____

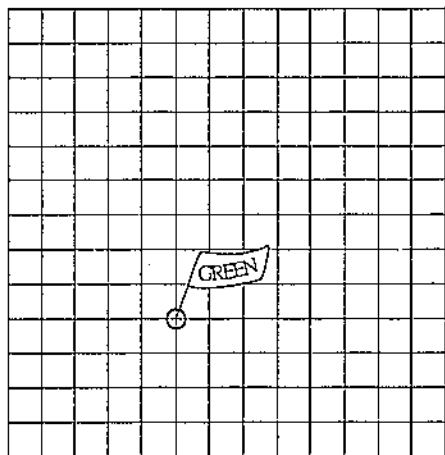
Kayak orienteering

In the afternoon some children go kayaking.

Kate is in a kayak at the green marker.
Carlo is calling out instructions to Kate.

- (a) Follow Carlo's instructions, and mark on the chart below the course taken by Kate.

Start at the circle.
Paddle 50 m North, then
paddle 50 m East, then
paddle 30 m South, then
paddle 50 m West.



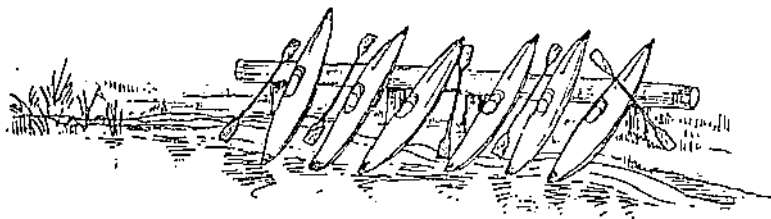
The side of each square is 10 m long.

- (b) Joe paddles 120 metres in one minute.
At this rate, how far would he paddle in 6 minutes?

_____ metres

- (c) Each kayak weighs 15.5 kg.
How much would 20 kayaks weigh altogether?

_____ kg



12.

Bike rides

Two people hire out bikes.



- (a) If you want a half-hour ride and you must also hire a helmet, how much would it cost from Bart's Bikes? _____

- (b) Complete this table:

Cost of hiring a bike

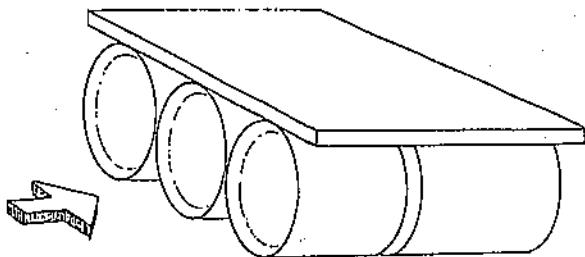
	30 (min)	60 (min)	90 (min)	120 (min)	150 (min)
Bart's Bikes	\$4	\$6			
Claire's Cycles	\$2.50				



13.

Rafting

After lunch you go to the river with some friends to build the raft shown in the sketch.

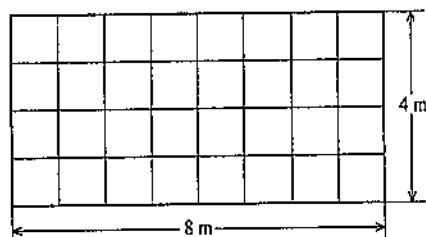


Sketch a diagram of the raft as seen exactly side on from where the arrow is.

14.

Observing animals

The camp has some animals. This is a plan of the floor of a cage.



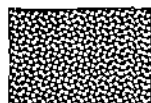
What is the area of the floor of the cage?



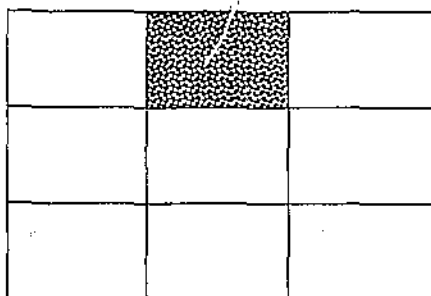
15.

Fish pond

In a fish pond there are 78 fish in an area this size:



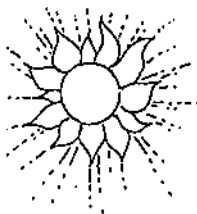
The whole pond is this large:



How could you estimate the total number of fish in the pond?



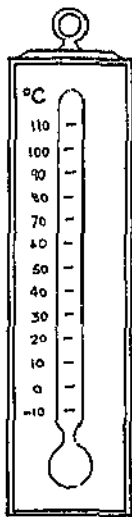
Temperature



The weather report says that it will be a hot day tomorrow.
Your friend says, 'That means that the temperature will be over 60°C .'

- (a) Is she giving a reasonable estimate of the temperature on a hot day?

- (b) Mark on this thermometer what you believe is a reasonable estimate of the temperature on a hot day.



River cruise

At Camp Aqua you can take a river cruise.
The cost of tickets is shown on this sign.

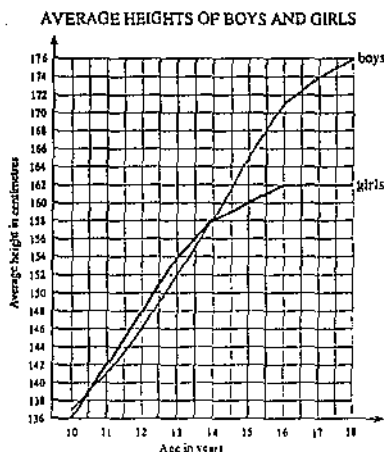
ADULTS :	_____	\$12.50
CHILDREN:	_____	\$ 7.50
FAMILIES:	2 adults, 1 child	\$28
	2 adults, 2 children	\$33
* \$5 for each additional child.		

- (a) You buy the entrance tickets for you and 11 friends with \$120.00.
You pay children's prices. How much money do you have left?
- _____
- (b) A family of two adults and four children wants to take the cruise.
How much money will they save if they buy tickets in the cheapest
way rather than in the most expensive way?
- _____



On the cruise you look at a book.

You see this graph:



- (a) What is the height difference between average 18 year old boys and average 18 year old girls?
- _____
- (b) At which age(s) do boys and girls have the same average height?
- _____
- (c) Describe what happens to the average heights of the girls and the boys after the age of 14.
- _____
- _____
- _____

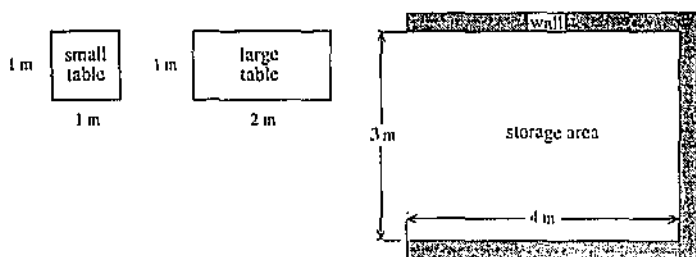
Dining Room

You return to camp.

You watch two workmen fitting some tables into a storage area without stacking the tables on top of each other.

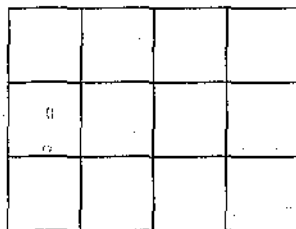
The workmen show you this sketch.

There are 5 large tables and 2 small tables to fit into the area.

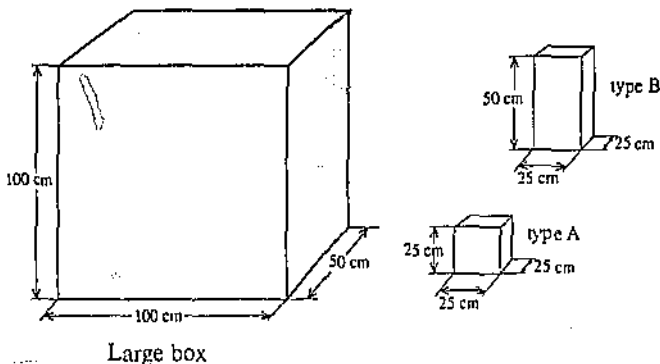


Show how they could fit the tables into the storage area.

Outline and shade the tables on this grid.



To earn some pocket money you work in the storage area of the camp. You see large boxes packed with small boxes of food. The caretaker tells you that each large box comes packed with either type A boxes or type B boxes. The sizes of the boxes are as follows:



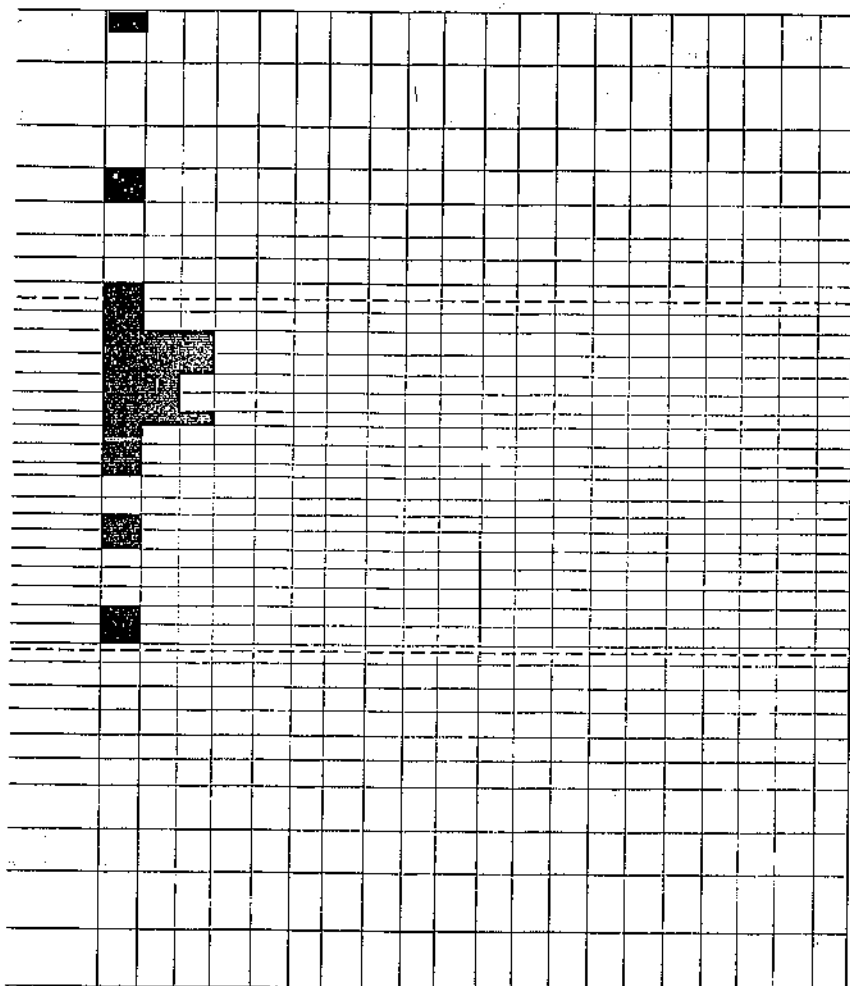
(Note: Use the blocks to help you answer the questions.)

- (a) How many type A boxes fit into a large box? _____
- (b) How many type B boxes will fit into a different box whose edges are half those of the large box? _____

APPENDIX L

Summary of Students' Performance on MSE Tests

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR READING

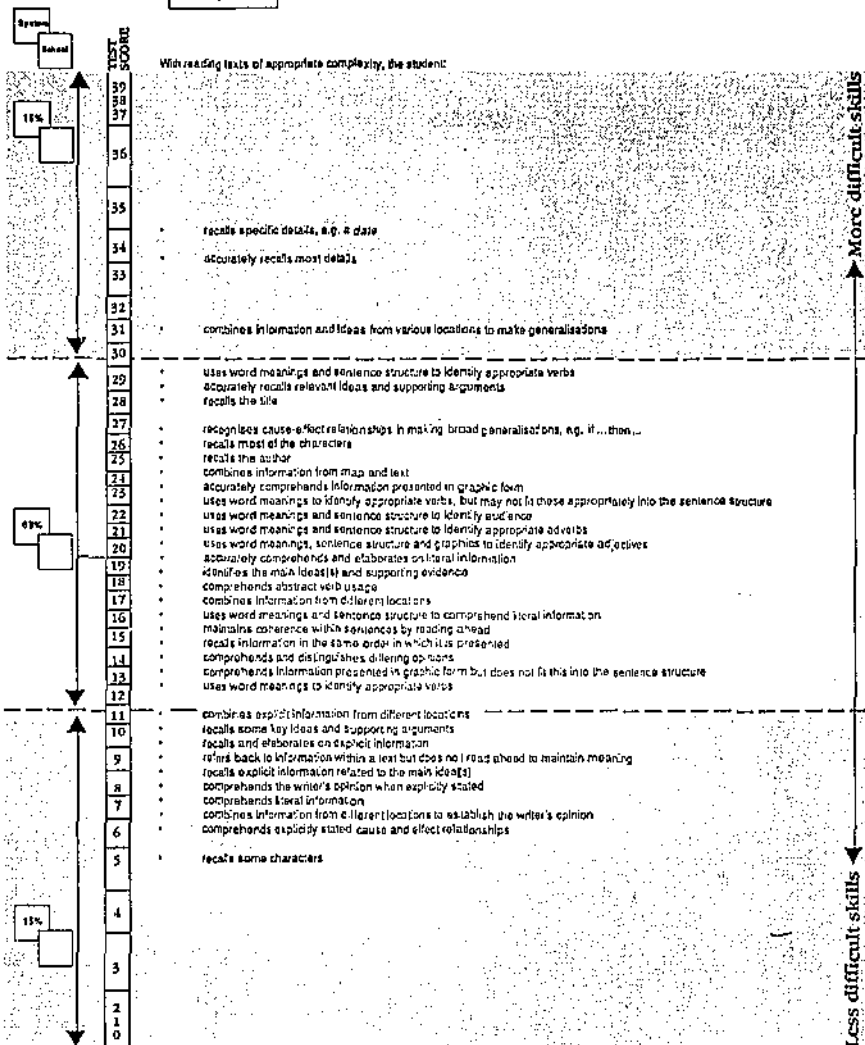


Number of students		
Above level	01	%
At level	91	%
Below level		%
Total		%

YEAR 7

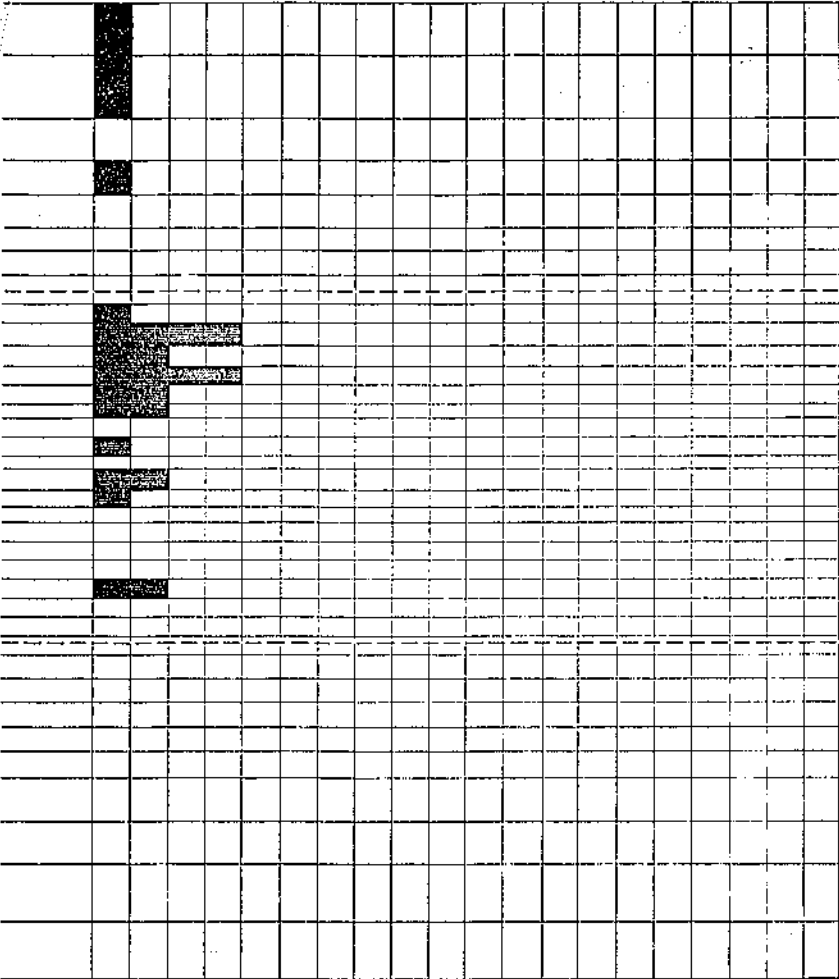
Place your
school logo
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR READING

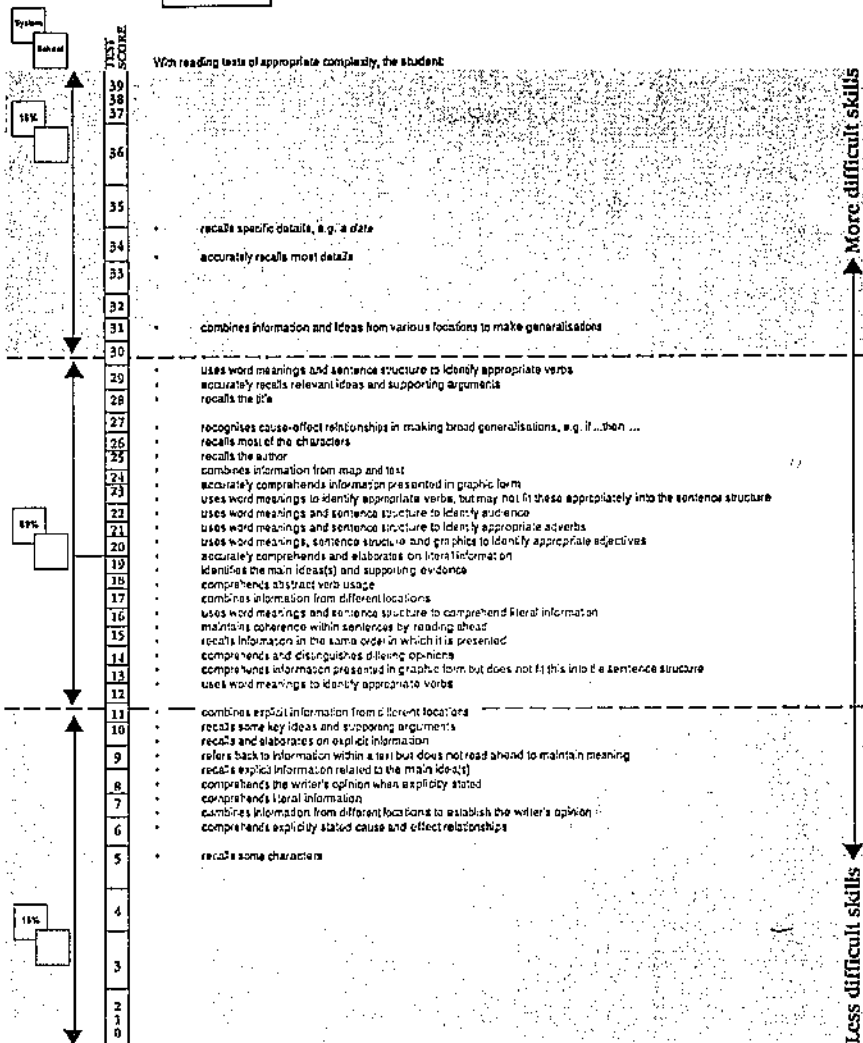


Number of students		
Above level	12	%
At level	38	%
Below level		%
Total		%

YEAR 8

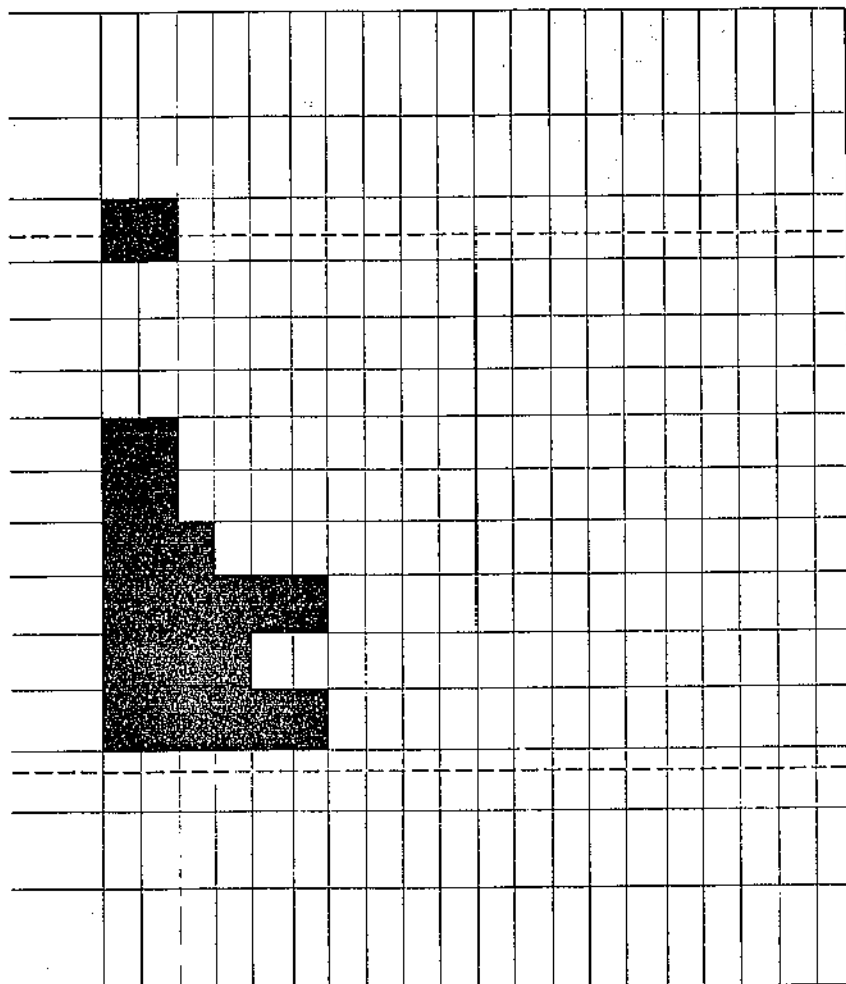
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school logo
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR WRITING

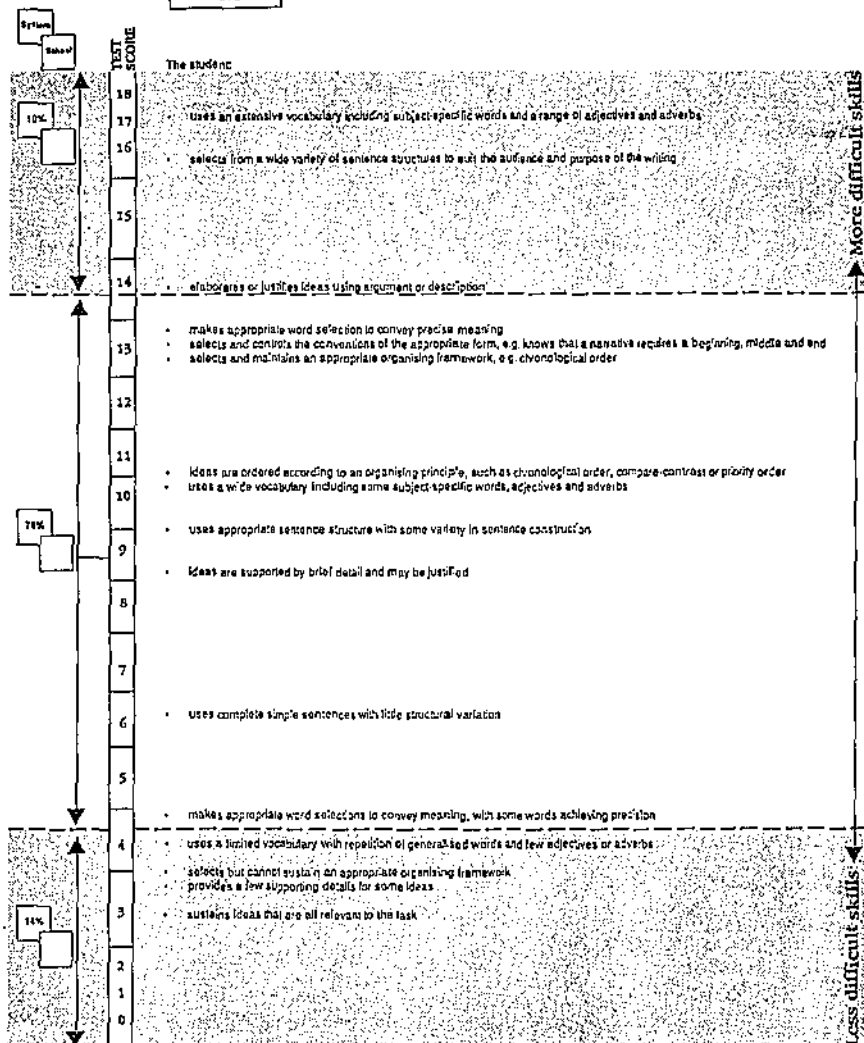


Number of students		
Above level	9	%
At level	91	%
Below level		%
Total		%

YEAR 7

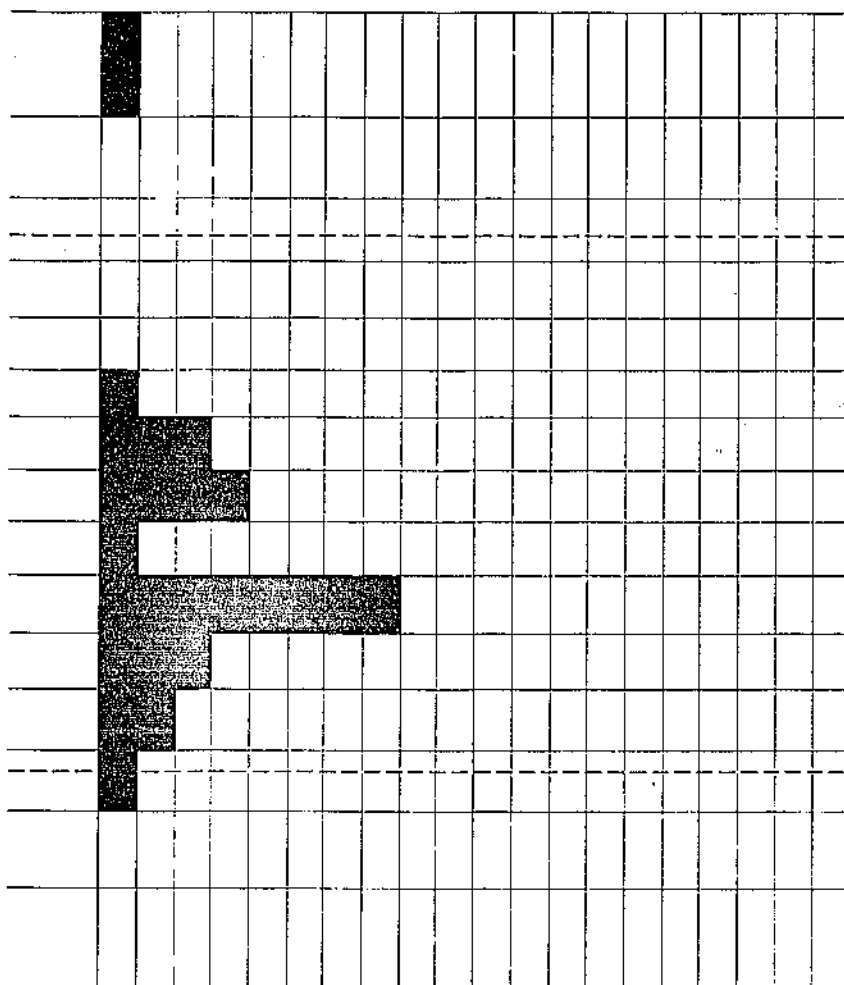
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school logo
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR WRITING

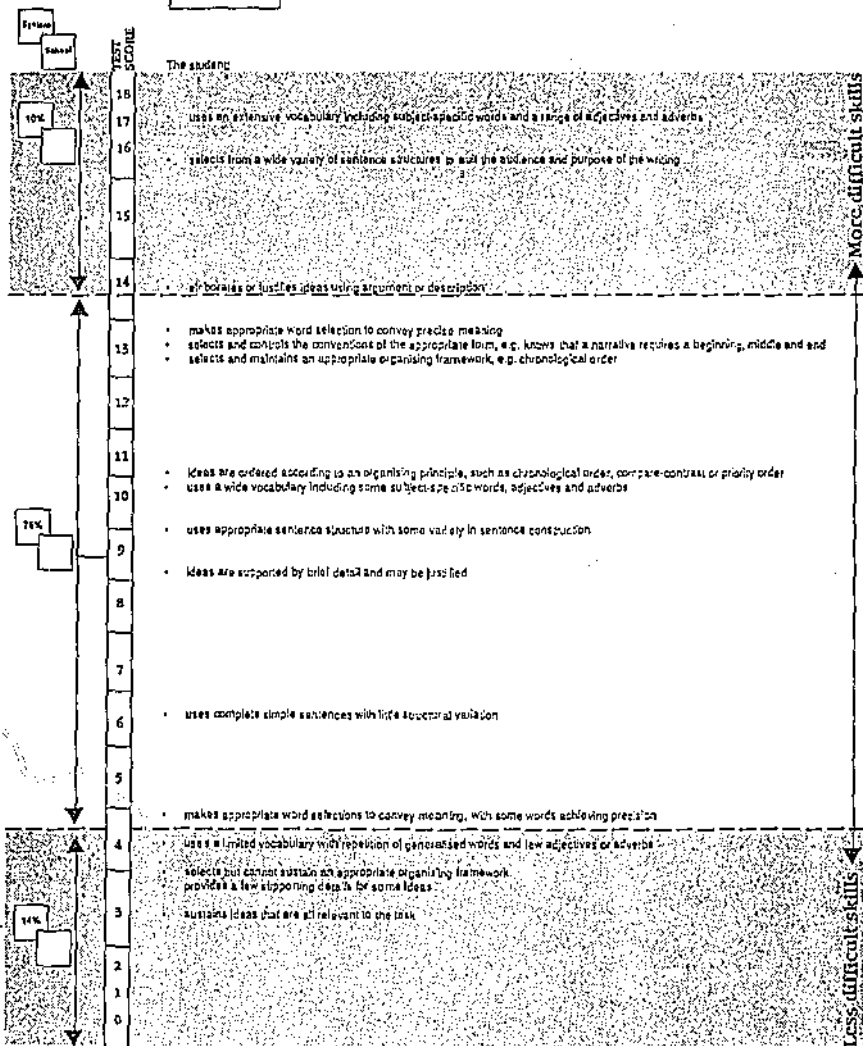


Number of students		
Above level	4	%
At level	92	%
Below level	4	%
Total		%

YEAR 8

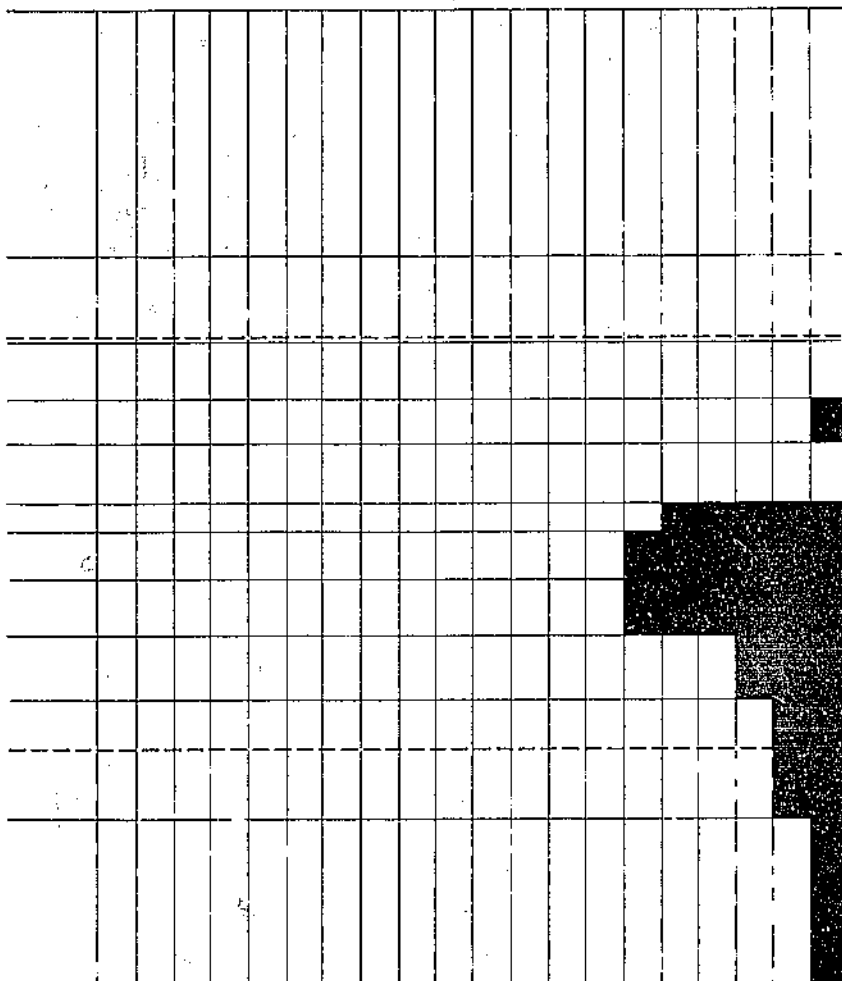
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school logo
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR MEASUREMENT

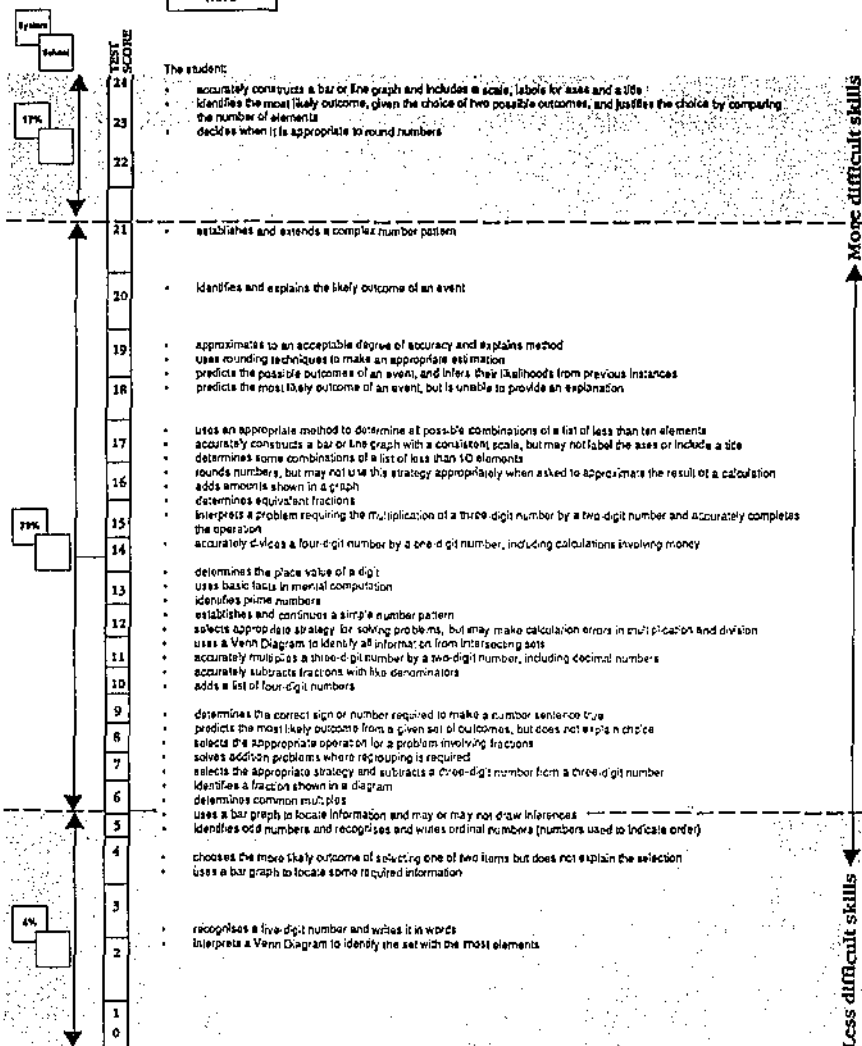


Number of students		
Above level		%
At level	87.5	%
Below level	12.5	%
Total		%

YEAR 7

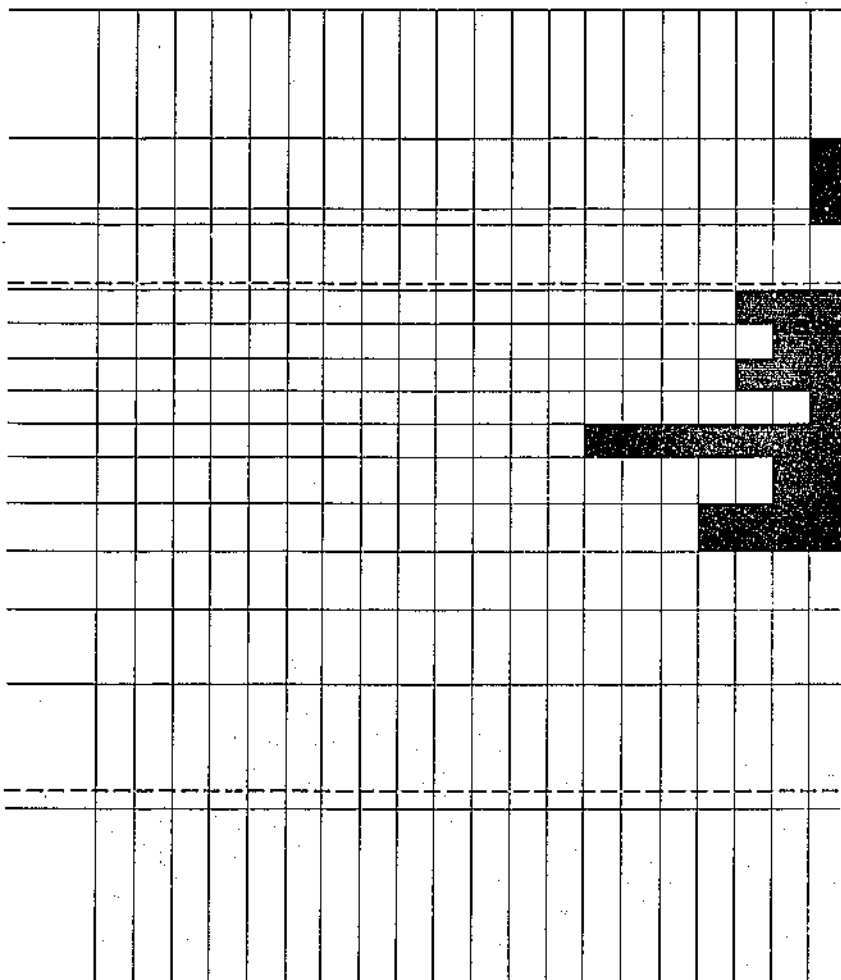
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school logo
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR SPACE

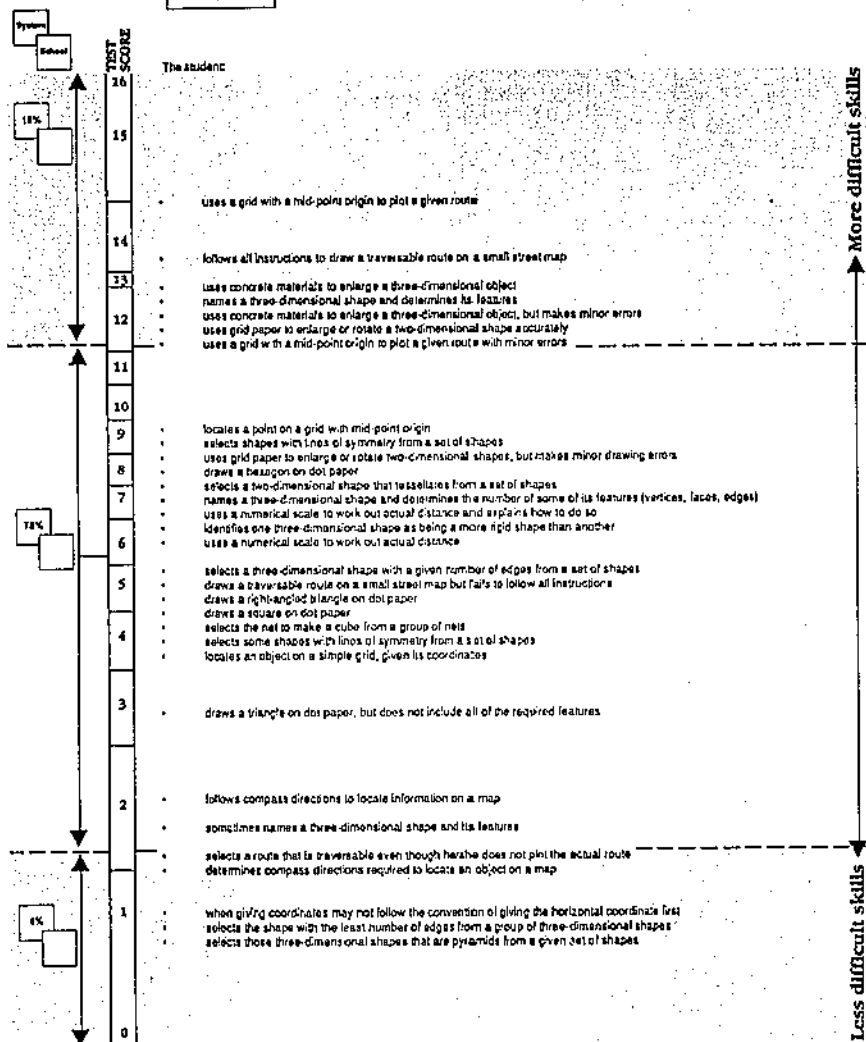


Number of students		
Above level	9	%
At level	91	%
Below level		%
Total		%

YEAR 7

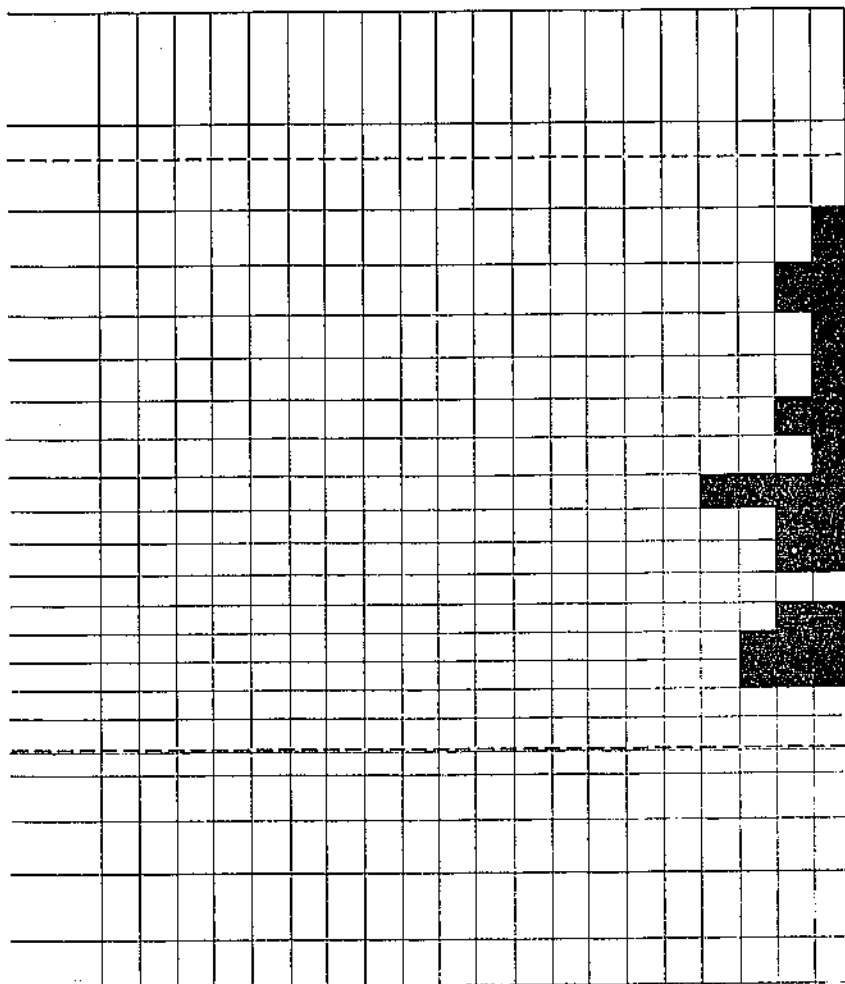
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

PERFORMANCE PROFILE FOR NUMBER

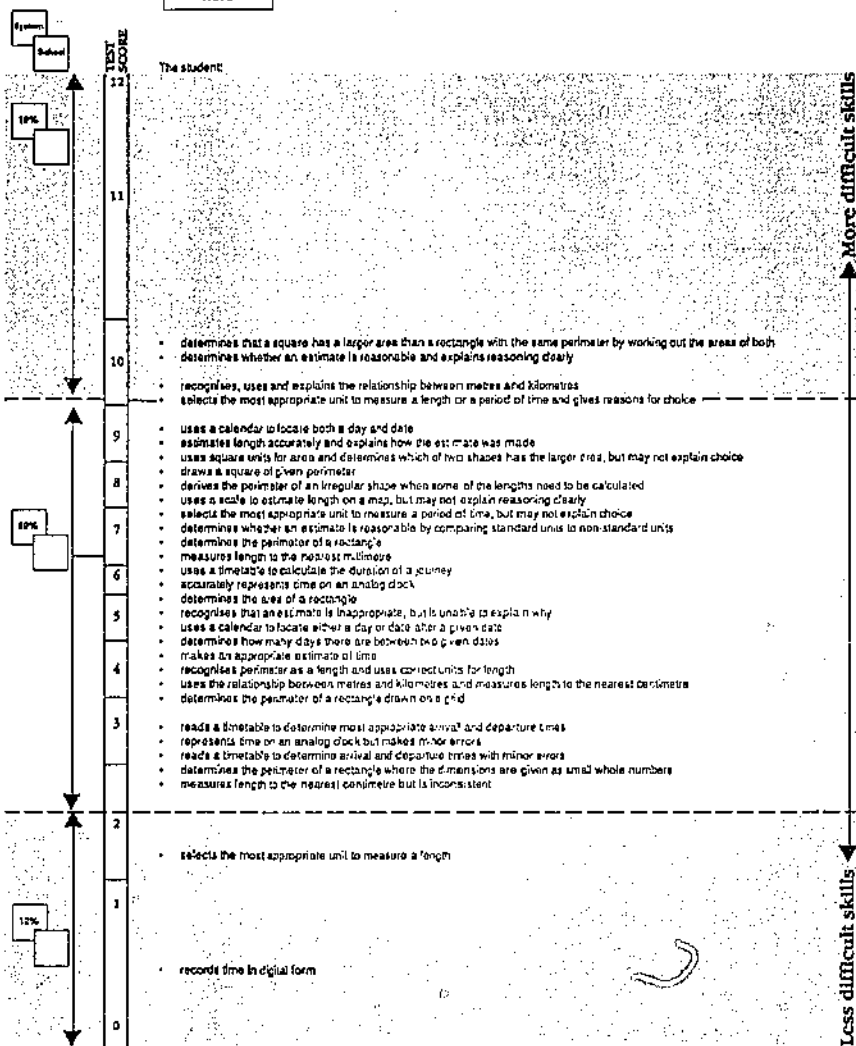


Number of students		
Above level		%
At level	100	%
Below level		%
Total		%

YEAR 7

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school logo
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SCHOOL _____



Comments/Notes _____

APPENDIX M

Standardised Scores for Mathematics at Year 8

Student	Measurement		Number	
	Year 7	Year 8	Year 7	Year 8
NC	.998	.993	.216	.865
FR	2.260	.302	1.255	1.236
TQ	-1.524	-.043	-1.341	-.989
SR	.998	-.389	.735	.494
RC	-.263	1.339	.476	-.618
JN	.368	-.043	.216	.494
MF	-.263	-.734	-.303	-.989
LH	.368	-.043	-.043	.494
TI	-.263	-.043	-.043	.124
DE	-2.155	-3.153	-1.082	-1.730
HJ	-.893	-.734	-.822	-1.359
KT	.998	.302	1.774	1.607
JC	-.263	-.043	1.514	-.989
MI	.368	-.734	.216	-.247
OI	-.263	.003	.216	-.989
OD	.998	.302	-1.082	1.236
MD	-.893	-.389	1.514	1.607
FN	.368	-.389	.995	.124
AD	-.893	.993	-1.082	.494
WD	-1.524	-1.425	-.303	-.618
NI	.368	.302	-1.341	1.236
EL	-.263	.993	-1.601	-1.359
LN	.368	1.685	-.822	-.247
OT	.998	-.043	.735	.124

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