

ABSTRACT

Journey from Pre-Primary to Primary School:
An Examination of Schooling and
Adjustment of Four and Five Year Olds

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Making the transition from preprimary settings to primary school is a huge step for most students. The primary purpose of this qualitative case study sought to investigate the perceptions of key stakeholders in primary education, 12 young children aged four to five and followed at age eight. It also explored the perceived factors, which caused or contributed to a student's successful transition from early childhood to primary school.

Data collected through interviews, observations as well as children's drawings were triangulated in order to identify emerging themes and patterns that assisted in exploring the perceived factors influencing the smooth transition from preprimary to primary school of the 12 five-year-old children. It examined their adjustment in the context of their individual circumstances and their own perceptions of the move to primary school as they constructed their reality. The 12 young children of this study anticipated this transition with a mixture of excitement, hesitation, and anxiety. The findings also included the process of transforming and conforming to the new environment as well as the tensions perceived by the children. Four of the children were also followed at standard two, and the consequences of their initial reactions as well as perceptions were more vivid. Thirteen findings emerged from this study. Key factors perceived to have contributed to a successful transition were friendship, competence, significance of informants, and similarities of roles from the old to the new environments.

Recommendations made included workshops for teachers on the dialect and including children's language, and teachers of both pre-primary and primary schools to become transition specialists. This would facilitate networking with others and enhance the alignment of curriculum in the movement from pre-primary to primary schools, which increase connectedness of young children to the new environment and culture.

Keywords: Charlene Ross-Quamina; transition; adjustment; early childhood; pre-primary.