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AN INVESTIGATION INTO TRANSFER STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN THE TRANSITIONING PROCESS INTO A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL

EDRS 6900: Project Report

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO TRANSFER STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN THE TRANSITIONING PROCESS INTO A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

This phenomenological study explored the transitioning process of students who transferred from one secondary school to another. This study sought to investigate the transitioning experiences of students who appeared to have difficulties adjusting to a new school environment. Using a qualitative research design, the experiences of the students, the strategies they adopted, and the effect of the transitioning process on their experiences were explored by conducting interviews and analyzing documents. Six students and three teachers were purposely selected to participate in this study, with particular focus paid to the students' developmental factors (academic, behavioural, social and emotional). Data were analysed using the Constant Comparative Method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The findings indicated that upon transferring, students encountered various issues which affected them negatively and positively, and their negative experiences diminished as they adjusted and found their niche in the new school environment.

Keywords: transfer, transitioning

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Chapter One

Introduction

The topic of transfer and transition has been investigated by several researchers over the past four decades, as each year, students are transferred to new schools. Transfer occurs at different ages and levels of education and for these students, it is the start of a transitioning period, the experiences of which are critical to their holistic well-being. The nature of these experiences varies widely and is dependent on a myriad of factors which influence, in a significant way, the overall success of the transfer process.

This chapter focuses on transfer and transitioning in the context of Oasis Secondary School, where a background of the study and the school, the problem statement, the research questions, the purpose and the significance of the study will be presented.

Background

Oasis Secondary School was established in the year 1963. It is a co-educational Government Secondary school that produces distinguished citizens who make positive contributions to society. This school is known for its outstanding academic performance, high student discipline and self-motivation, as well as its environment of stability and student-support. This is reflected in the high number of national scholarships awarded annually to the school, despite the numerous challenges of inadequate space, outdated physical infrastructure, and overcrowding.

In 1967, for the first time, students at this institution wrote the Cambridge General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level examination, and subsequently, an Advanced Level examination class was formed in 1987. Presently, with a teaching staff of 52 and a student population of 943 students at Forms One to Six, 25 subjects are offered at the Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC) General and Technical Proficiency, and 15 subjects at the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE) Level. In 1981, one student gained a Top Ten ranking in the island in the GCE Ordinary Level examination. In 1992, there was the first Advanced Level Science class, and in 1997, one student was awarded a scholarship - the first for the school. As the years progressed, the school continued to produce scholarship awardees, eleven being the maximum number awarded in any one year, thus far (The Staff of Oasis Secondary School, 50th Anniversary, 2013).

Students who wrote the 14+ Examination in Junior Secondary schools have been placed in Oasis Secondary from as early as 1972. This national examination was written by Form Three students who attended Junior Secondary Schools at the time. Even though students were required to write the 14+ Examination in Third Form for further continuation of their education, placement was not dependent on this examination result, but on the student’s and parent’s choice of school and the Ministry of Education’s discretion. The 14+ Examinations have been discontinued as the Junior Secondary schools completed the de-shifting process in 2008. After this period, there has been increased interest in attending Oasis Secondary, as parents frequently request transfers for their children into the school.

Transfers from one school to another at both primary and secondary schools are requested for various reasons. Transfer is defined as “the move from one school to another” (Galton, Gray, & Rudduck, 1999, p. 5). Research shows that students who transfer across schools experience adjustment issues which include lower academic achievement levels due to changes of the curriculum between schools, lower self-esteem, difficulty with development of peer relationships, and behavioural problems (Rumberger, Larson, Ream & Palardy, 1999).

All secondary schools are not consistent in offering the same curricula. Some schools offer a greater number of subjects to choose from at the CSEC Examination Level. The subjects offered are based on factors such as the student’s ability, the appointment of subject teachers to the school and available resources. The students who transfer into Oasis Secondary disclosed that they were not introduced to certain subjects such as Geography, History, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Visual and Performing Arts, and Technical Drawing at the Lower Form in their previous schools, and these subjects are on the curriculum at Oasis Secondary from Form One, except for the Sciences which are introduced at the Form Two Level. The students are therefore introduced to unfamiliar subjects and have the task of 'catching up' so that they are on a comparative academic level as the other students. It is a common perception that Oasis Secondary's primary focus is academic excellence and not all students adjust academically to this new environment at the same pace. As researchers purport, youth who experience academic difficulties are more aggressive, experience behavioural issues, are inattentive in the classroom, and are also more likely to experience social difficulties (Farmer et al., 2004;

Khattri et al., 1997; Kindermann, 1993, as cited in Farmer, Irvin, Thompson, Hutchins & Leung, 2006). In contrast, youth who are viewed as academically competent experience positive social relationships as they are "more likely to get along well with peers, engage in prosocial behavior and productive classroom activities, and associate with peers who support academic achievement" (Cairns & Cairns, 1994; Wentzel, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004, as cited in Farmer et.al., 2006, p. 2).

The perception of Oasis Secondary is a positive one, as many seek transfers into the school. Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of students who have been transferred into this school. This is due, in part, to parental satisfaction with the school's environment. In the academic year 2010/2011, 25 students requested transfers into the school, with three being successful. In 2011/2012, 56 students applied and 39 were successful, and in 2012/2013, 59 students applied and 37 students were transferred into the school. The school has exceeded its quota of 35 students per class, as the number of students in each class at the Forms One to Three levels is between 40 and 43. Students rarely seek transfers out of Oasis Secondary; two students transferred out of the school between 2010 and 2013.

Many teachers have voiced their concerns about the large class sizes and the academic, behavioural, and social challenges faced by students who have been transferred to the school. "Various developmental factors (e.g. academic, behavioural, social) operate together as a correlated system and impact each other as they contribute to patterns of adjustment" (Cairns, 2000; Magnusson & Cairns, 1996; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000, as cited in Farmer et al., 2006, p. 2). These developmental factors are

dependent on each other for successful adjustment and if there is disintegration in one area, the other factors may also be negatively affected.

I have been teaching at this school as a Visual and Performing Arts teacher for Forms One to Five for the past nine years so I teach and interact with all the students. I have observed that most of the students who transfer into the school do not smoothly transition into the system; their academic abilities are not on par with the other students' and they experience difficulty in forming friendships with their peers. The nature of my study was initiated by the Acting Principal who was informed by the Guidance Counsellor that most of the students who transfer into the school experience difficulties in this new school environment. Having developed a good rapport with the students, two of the students who transferred into the school approached me within the last term and disclosed their unhappiness at the school. They were unhappy because they were having difficulties coping with the quantity of school work, and they also missed their friends. Discussions with the Acting Principal coupled with the students' disclosure heightened my interest in this area of study.

In addition to the issues previously mentioned, the students also have to face labelling by some teachers and students. The students are referred to as 'the transfer student' from the time they enter the school. They are seen as outsiders and are not given a fair chance to be viewed as part of the school culture. Psychologically, this labelling places added pressure on the students as they do not feel as though they fit in.

According to Thio (2007):

> The perceptions and labels given to an individual from others can be internalized as one's primary identity. Also at this developmental stage, self-judgements about and labels given to the self are also socially influenced at this stage and play a role in identity development as well (as cited in Kokkinakis, 2013, p. 2).

Oasis Secondary can not only boast of not having major discipline issues, and commendable performance from the staff and students, but also of offering stability to the student body. Students do not, for instance, face a locked school gate if the quota of security personnel does not turn up for work, or if the fans in the classrooms malfunction. Generally, alternative arrangements are made to ensure minimum disruption of classes. The school continues to strive for excellence, but in order to benefit all students, it is imperative that parents, teachers, Guidance Counsellors and school administration work together in formulating strategies for the students who transfer into the school in coping with the challenges they face in their new school environment.

Statement of the Problem

Each year, the Ministry of Education assigns 160 students to the school in Form One upon completion of the annual Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) – a total of 40 students per class. Requests for transfers to this school have been increasing yearly. Eight percent of the 943 student population consists of transfer students, thus increasing the

class sizes from 40 to 43 students on average. Some of these students exhibit signs of adjustment difficulties upon transfer and it is crucial that measures are implemented to accommodate them and improve their transitioning experiences.

Presently, there are no concrete systems in place at the school to assist these students after transfer, however, there exists a mentoring programme by the Sixth Form students which include transfer students. This programme was initiated by teachers in one Department who felt that there was a need to assist underperforming students in one subject area. The Deans supported this initiative and included other subjects for tutelage. This programme addresses low academic achievement faced by some students, but not all students benefit from this programme due to many teachers and students being unaware of its existence. Additionally, the Guidance Counsellor whose services were scheduled by the Ministry of Education twice per week for one academic year, has since been permanently reassigned at another school. There is little in place to address the social, personal and emotional issues of the students who have been transferred into the school.

The problematic nature of this issue is that adequate support is not provided for these students immediately after transfer and their overall development seems to be delayed in the new school environment.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the process of transitioning for students who are transferred into Oasis Secondary school. This phenomenological study seeks to

discover their transitioning experiences in this new school environment by conducting investigations on site. Gaining insight from the students' perspectives will highlight the importance of facilitation of students' adoption of coping mechanisms to mitigate the effects of issues associated with transfer and transition and develop support mechanisms to assist students. This is especially crucial since lack of knowledge of such issues and support may have a negative impact on the student's holistic development.

Research Questions

Grand tour question:

- What are the experiences of the transitioning process of students who have transferred into Oasis Secondary school?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the experiences of students who have transferred to Oasis Secondary from 2010 to 2013?
2. What strategies did these students adopt in the transitioning process?
3. How is the transitioning process affecting students' experiences at Oasis Secondary?

Significance of the Study

This study is of significance because the findings will benefit teachers, school Administrators, Ministry personnel, Guidance Counsellors, Safety Officers and parents as they will be more informed of the issues associated with the transfer process. Such

knowledge will hopefully inform the management of transfer students to minimize the effect of any negative consequences associated with transfer and transitioning.

The findings will add to the body of literature concerned with transfer and transitioning in a secondary school. It will supplement in scope and depth the local body of research done in local and regional contexts. Further, it is hoped that the outcome of this study will be a starting point for additional research in this area – the transitioning process at the secondary school level.

This study is also significant because it facilitates the voice of the student. Students should be awarded the opportunity to communicate their perspectives with respect to matters concerning their education to the relevant stakeholders. Vocalising issues related to transfer and transitioning based on personal experiences may foster a better understanding of the issues and also promote a stronger sense of belonging in the institution. The voice of the student is therefore fundamental to this study.

This study also aims to heighten the awareness of the critical issues associated with adjustment after transfer. It is envisaged that comprehensive knowledge of the issues associated with transfer will inform a formal adjustment system, and the development and implementation of school policies to facilitate students with dissimilar strengths. Such policies may include pre- and post-transfer transitioning strategies, counselling and support.

Summary

This introductory chapter presented the background to the topic of transfer and transitioning and a background of the school, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study and the research questions that are being operationalised. The aim of this chapter was to highlight the importance of the topic being investigated while setting the foundation for the study.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter reviews and summarizes the literature on the issues related to student transfer and the transitioning process. This review will provide evidence of such issues and identify any gaps in the existing literature. An investigation into the global, regional and local literature will unearth the issues of transfer and how the process affects the experiences of the student as he/she is moved from one school climate to another during the early adolescent (13-16) years.

The majority of existing literature on transfer and transitioning in schools are particularly referenced to the transferring and transitioning from the primary to the secondary level, with minimal data on transferring from one secondary school to another. Upon careful exploration of the literature, information that is of relevance to this study in terms of the related issues and experiences of the student will be presented in this literature review.

Two theoretical frameworks are used in this study - Bandura's Self-Efficacy theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological theory. They offer explanations into why transfer and transitioning is an issue for students. A phenomenological approach is applied to this study to describe the lived experiences of students who have experienced the phenomenon of transitioning. "Lived experiences, or life experiences, are those in which we are all involved" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 79). It is being "involved in the experience"

(Lichtman, 2010, p. 79). Phenomenology is concerned with describing the experiences of individuals and their interpretation of these experiences. Phenomenology explores the "*essence* of the experience for individuals incorporating "what" they have experienced and "how" they experienced it" (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). This study seeks to gain insight into the experiences of the students who have been uprooted from one secondary school after having spent one or two years at that institution. The methodology used by other researchers will also be reviewed in an attempt to justify the methodological design used in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Merriam (2009) states that the theoretical framework is "derived from the orientation or stance that you bring to your study" (p. 66). It is drawn from the literature and frames the study as "all aspects of the study are affected by its theoretical framework" (p. 67). The two theories supporting this study are used as lenses for examining the issues associated with transfer and transitioning.

Self- Efficacy Theory

According to Bandura (1982), "self-efficacy is concerned with judgements of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (p. 122). In other words, it is how confident one feels in his/her ability to cope with situations. The strength of one's self-efficacy determines his/her attitude, behaviour and cognitive processes. Transferring into a new school may affect a student's self-efficacy level and his/her belief about his/her abilities because "the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the more active the coping" (Bandura & Adams, 1977, p. 288).

Ecological Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory is also applicable as it emphasizes factors within the environment as important indicators in impacting an individual's development. The degree of development is determined by the effect of the one's relationship with the environment. In this study, the student's developmental factors are thus determined by aspects within his/her environment - the school, and the relationship between them. The use of these theories frames the study and is therefore useful in examining the transitioning experiences of students.

Phenomenology

The studies used in this review included those of a phenomenological nature. One such phenomenological study was that of Pereira and Pooley (2007). This study explored the transition experiences of students by using a qualitative research design which "draws from the philosophy of phenomenology in its emphasis on experience and interpretation" (Merriam, 2009, p. 25). Interviews were conducted to gather the essence of the students' experiences. Qualitative methods were used to describe the "meaning and perception of the transition experience from the student's perspective" (Pereira & Pooley, p. 163), allowing the students to "tell it like it is" (p. 163). Another study by Ganeson and Ehrich (2009) also focused on students' experiences of transition. The phenomenological methodology that guided this study was chosen to understand the participants' experiences by producing descriptions of their lived experiences. Review of these and

other studies influenced the researcher's choice of the research design and methodology used in this study.

Denzin and Lincoln (2013) state that qualitative research is one that locates the observer in the world. It focuses on the interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings, where interpretations are derived based on the meanings that are brought by the participants. This study seeks to provide a rich description of the lived experiences, with the purpose of bringing an understanding of the students' experiences, perceptions and the complex issues of transfer and transition to the reader. Various types of data collection methods will be employed to understand the essence of the students' experiences.

Issues associated with transfer and transitioning

Although the terms transfer and transition vary slightly in their meanings, in the literature they are used interchangeably. Transfer is defined as "the move from one school to another" (Galton, Gray & Ruddock, 1999, p. 5) and transition is defined as the movement from "one state of certainty to another with a period of uncertainty in between" (Schilling, Snow & Schinke, 1988, as cited in Berliner, 1993, p. 2). Transition is also described as the "process occurring over the long term, incorporating a range of experiences" (Dockett & Perry, 2007, p. 1).

Researchers state that there has been an increasing interest in educational transfer and transitioning because students' transitioning experiences impact on their academic performance and social development (Galton, Steward, Hargreaves, Page & Pell, 2009).

After transferring, adjustment to the new environment and the length of time it takes to adjust is critical, as this determines how the student progresses in the new school and if his/her experiences are favourable or not. Students' experiences at school determine their rate of development. According to Harter (1999), "a young person's experience at school is thus a powerful developmental factor, given that school is where much socialization and identity development occurs" (as cited in Kokkinakis, 2013, p. 3).

Berliner (1993), states that change in an individual's life is unavoidable. Changes in life can affect individuals positively and negatively, depending on how individuals cope with those changes. Numerous studies recognize school transfers and transitions as stressful which subject youth "to adaptational challenges that tap their coping skills" (Felner, Farber, & Primavera, 1983; Lippitt, 1968; Moos, 1984, as cited in Elias, Gara, & Ubriaco, 1985, p. 112). Researchers identify these coping skills as "shifts in role definition and expected behaviours, shifts in membership in and position within social networks and a need to reorganise personal and social support resources" (Elias, Gara & Ubriaco, 1985, p. 112). According to Safer (1986), adjusting to a new school is problematic due to lack of coping skills. Coping difficulties also arise if the student does not find his/her own niche in the new environment. Transitioning experiences may impact development, as coping abilities are dependent on factors such as personal maturity, coping strategies, availability of social support before and during transitioning and the nature of the new school environment (Rutter, 1981, as cited in Crockett, Peterson, Graber, Schulenberg & Ebata, 1989). It is believed that coping with change in

the new school environment is easier for students if in their lives they have "an arena of comfort" (Simmons, Burgeson, Carlton-Ford, & Blyth, 1987, p. 1231).

Hargreaves and Earl (1990) highlight three areas of concern during transition - student anxiety, adjustment to the new school and discontinuity in the curriculum. Other issues affecting students' adjustment include performance and learning new rules and procedures in the new school (Youngman, 1978; Measor & Woods 1984; Delamont & Galton, 1986; Hargreaves & Galton, 1999). Galton et al., (1999) recognized a number of challenges students are faced with during transfer and the hindrances to successful transition. They identified critical issues associated with transfer – academic, pedagogical, social, personal, and emotional. The issue of transitioning in relation to gender will also be investigated because it is of relevance to this co-educational school.

Academic issues associated with transfer and transitioning

Academic achievement is one indicator that can be used to determine how well a student adapts in the new school environment. The process of transferring from one school to another may have a negative impact on academic achievement, despite the age of the student (The Suffolk Education Department, 1997). As Midgley, Feldlaufer and Eccles (1988) state, differences in the educational environment before and after transfer, contributes to a decline in achievement. Research by Nisbet and Entwistle (1969) shows that those students who transferred from one school to another and experienced adjustment difficulties were less successful in their academic abilities. Those more likely

to experience adjustment difficulties in the new school were those who were less motivated academically (as cited in Galton et al., 1999).

Many students are disenchanted because they do not feel that they are capable of excelling academically as they may be placed in a more competitive environment. Students' attitude towards school and performance declined during transition due to changes in how they viewed themselves and their abilities as learners as they matured (Eccles, Wigfield, Midgley, Reuman, Mac Iver & Feldlaufer, 1993). Students who transferred into schools where considerable value is placed on academic ability, and who believe that they have lesser ability when compared with others in the same environment, may display less effort because of the fear of failure and fear of being labelled incompetent. According to Youngman (1978), "ability is seen as the major determinant of achievement in the secondary school" (p. 281). Eccles, Midgley and Alder (1984) emphasize that as students move into a more competitive school environment, they acquire negative feelings about the school and themselves, hence, they experience academic difficulties. After transfer, because they are unaware of their strengths in relation to their peers, they eventually experience lower self-esteem and detach themselves (Wigfield, Eccles, Mac Iver, Reuman, & Midgley, 1991).

Kerbow (1996) indicated that students transfer for 'exit' reasons to escape inadequate school environments, 'attraction' reasons so they benefit from the higher standards, or a combination of both. Exit reasons vary from school violence to parental dissatisfaction with teaching staff. On the other hand, attraction reasons include better academic programmes or the availability of extra-curricular programmes in the new

school. Kerbow (1996) noted that students who transferred for attraction reasons "are more likely to move to a school of higher academic achievement" (p. 12).

Hills (1965), uses the term ‘transfer shock’ to describe the transfer students’ transition experiences with a decline in their grades. In some studies, students' academic scores in their new school were compared with scores in their previous schools, and results showed a decline in their grades after transfer. Further research on the transfer shock theory by Keeley and House (1993), found that regardless of age and gender, students experienced this phenomenon. The severity of the transfer shock experience was determined by factors such as the age and sex of the student, as well as the time of transfer. Keeley and House (1993) found that those above the age of 25 and female were not as negatively affected as those who were younger and who were male. Although there are those in agreement with the transfer shock theory, Nickens (1972) claimed that there was a lack of evidence to confirm that transfer shock was caused by transfer and it was "inappropriate to assume that such a relationship exists" (p. 1). Kerbow (1996) posits that after adjusting to the new environment, the student may recover from the effects associated with transfer and return to his/her normal academic achievement levels, indicating that transfer shock is experienced temporarily.

In New Zealand, most children tend to adjust to their new school environment within the first six months (two terms) after transfer, and they may also recover losses in performance by the second year at their new school (Mertin, Haebich & Lokan, 1989; Sebba, 2000, as cited in Mc Gee, Ward, Gibbons & Harlow, 2003). This adjustment period, however, is dependent on the student and factors affecting transitioning

experiences. The adjustment period lasts until the student shows that he/she can cope by "making appropriate responses to the demands of a new environment" (Mc Gee et al., 2003, p. 13).

Galton et al., (1999) discovered that students experience a hiatus in academic performance after they transfer. Later studies by Galton, Gray and Rudduck (2003) found that schools were concentrating more on the academic dimensions of transition rather than the social aspects in order to strengthen academic progress. Galton et al., (1999) revealed that this break in performance was due to not adjusting immediately after transfer in the new academic environment. Therefore, the length of time it takes to adjust to the changes in the curriculum is a contributing factor in determining the progress of the student. Studies supporting the dip in performance are those from Doddington, Flutter, Bearne and Demetriou (2001), who found that reasons for this hiatus in performance were due to increased curricular demands in the new school, new ways of working, lack of parental involvement and the teaching styles of less experienced teachers.

The Observation Research and Classroom Learning Evaluation (ORACLE) study (Galton et al., 1999) was implemented to observe teachers and students. This study's main focus was to evaluate the "impact of classroom practice on pupil progress over the period of transfer" (p. 11). The study also evaluated how teachers delivered the curriculum and the ways in which students responded to teaching methods. After review of the ORACLE study, Hargreaves and Galton (1999) found that most teachers began instruction without asking newly transferred students about the curriculum covered in their previous schools, thus putting the students at a disadvantage.

Eccles et al., (1993) indicated that academic, motivational and behavioural declines during transition were due to the changing nature to the educational environment. The 'stage-environment fit' theory was coined by Eccles et al., (1993), to explain the fit between the educational environment and the developmental needs of the adolescent. Their studies revealed that at the adolescent age, there was a decline in motivation and decreased interest in academics upon transfer. It was revealed that the classroom and school environment, and the relationship between the teacher and student, influenced student performance and his/her perceived abilities. Eccles et al., (1993) noted the importance of investigating the nature of the previous and current school environment in determining students' transitioning experiences. Bronfenbrenner (1994) states that "for outcomes reflecting developmental competence (e.g., mental ability, academic achievement, social skills) proximal processes are posited as having greater impact in more advantaged and stable environments throughout the life course" (p. 38). The relationship between the student and the environment is thus influential in a student's development after transfer.

In Western-Australia, Kirkpatrick (1992) found that there was a decline in academic performance in secondary school because the students felt a lack of control over their own learning. Students felt that the work was not particularly more difficult, but they experienced issues with the increased volume of school work. The ability to cope with the volume of school work at secondary school varies among students, consequently affecting their performance. Student performance is linked to the student’s ability level, and students with low ability levels are more likely to display more

maladaptive patterns of motivation than their peers (Anderman, Maehr & Midgley, 1999; Maehr & Anderman, 1993; Russell, 1994). Some students did not measure academic success with effort, but with their level of ability (Chaplain, 1996, as cited in Galton et al., 1999). Wylie, Thompson and Lythe, (2001) indicated that students saw the importance of applying effort to achieve academic success.

Rumberger, Larson, Ream and Palardy (1999) explain that transferring may negatively affect the student's academic performance upon entry into the new school because of ‘curricular incoherence’. This is when the curriculum in the new school differs from that of the previous school. Further, the students are not academically prepared for the new curriculum after transfer, and they have to immediately blend in with the other students without preparation. Similarly, Kerbow (1996) found that students experienced difficulties after transfer when the curriculum differs from that of the previous school. Having to adjust to the new academic standards and curriculum may be of a challenge for them. As recommended for a successful transfer, there needs to be a 'degree of coherence across the different subject departments' (Galton et al., 2003, p. 108).

While transitioning in the new school, students' main concerns included coping with demanding academics, and balancing academics with non-academic activities (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000). Mc Gee et al., (2003) saw that involvement in extra-curricular activities assisted students with adjusting academically in their new environment as after transfer, students who participated in extra-curricular activities and other school activities progressed academically.

While transitioning, not all students experience academic difficulty (Townsend, 1993). Students sought avenues for coping with higher academic standards in their new educational environment by seeking support from friends and family.

Pedagogical issues associated with transfer and transitioning

The new form of curriculum delivery that students face upon transfer affects their transitioning experiences. Galton et al., (2003) found that the way the curriculum is taught impacts on academic achievement, and schools are paying more attention to pedagogical strategies when students transfer in order to maintain student progress. Midgley et al., (1988) noted that teachers are a very important part of the classroom environment and their teaching styles significantly influences student motivation and achievement.

Mc Gee et al., (2003) state that the strategies that some teachers use in the classroom contribute to transition difficulties because teaching methodology varies due to the diverse learning styles and maturity of the student. When new students were transferred into the classroom, problems arose in instruction and student learning because changes in instruction had to be made to accommodate the new students without sacrificing the learning of the other students in the classroom. In a British study, the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)(1999) noted that student progress was minimal and there was a decline in quality teaching between years six to nine (ages 11 to 14) in secondary school resulting in fluctuating levels of academic achievement. Although the varying teaching methodologies was mentioned as an occurrence in the

secondary school, reasons for this decline in quality teaching were not disclosed. Preparing students for the changes in teaching methods by secondary school teachers was a proposed solution for this issue (Mc Gee et al., 2003).

Kruse (1996) highlighted the concerns pertaining to unsuitable traditional teaching and learning practices, which resulted in a change in the teaching approaches in Australia. The changes in pedagogy were due to inappropriate traditional teaching methods, an absence of active learning, and the assumption that all students learn the same way. Midgley and Maehr (1998) stated that teachers need to reflect on strategies they could adopt in the classroom to "emphasise mastery, understanding, and improvement" such as project-based approaches and integrating the curriculum with the use of thematic approaches (p. 8). Teaching strategies and the resulting academic challenges faced is a contentious issue because not all studies support pedagogical issues as contributing to the lack of progress during transition. Wylie and Chalmers (1999) revealed that students' lack of effort in the classroom resulted in their lack of progress and not necessarily teaching styles. The Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (OFSTED, 2002), recommended that instead of teachers employing various teaching styles, students should prepare themselves for different styles of learning in secondary school. Teaching strategies should complement the emerging cognitive ability of the student.

Apart from the issue of pedagogical concerns, Cocklin (1999) documented that the nature of the teacher also impacted on students' adjustment. Teachers who listened to the students and displayed an interest in their well-being positively impacted on their

transitioning process. Findings also indicated that student performance improved when teachers positively impacted on and made a difference in the lives of their students.

Personal, social and emotional issues associated with transfer and transitioning

While some studies such as Galton et al.., (1999) maintained particular interest in academic issues after transfer, Chedzoy and Burden (2005) highlighted social acceptance as most important to students during transition. The cause for the increasing discrepancies between the social and academic aspects lie in the fact that "school transfer acts like a prism, diffracting the social and academic trajectories of the children as they pass through it" (Noyes, 2006, p. 59).

Wigfield et al., (1991) stated that students experienced changes in their social lives during transition. Immediately after transfer, students' self-concept of ability for social activities declined. The new classroom and school environment was the reason for these social changes experienced by students while transitioning in the new school. Acceptance from peers in the new environment caused students' interest in social activities to increase and their self-concept to improve. Berndt (1999) found that when students encountered new circumstances, establishing a social network positively influenced them.

Hertzog and Morgan (1998) noted that during the first year of transitioning in the new school, students experienced feelings of isolation. Proposed reasons for their feelings of isolation and difficult adjustment experiences are due to the culture of the school, and

the social aspect of leaving their friends in a familiar environment where relationships with peers and teachers have been developed, to one where the student has to form new relationships. In Canada, Walsh (1995) found that feelings of isolation diminished in rural school cultures due to the culture and values of the community. In New Zealand, Mc Gee et al., (2003), also found that the social aspect of transitioning did not negatively students in secondary schools due to "dissemination of information about the school, prior visits to the school by students and parents, orientation on arrival, and peer support programmes" (p. 13). They concluded that "secondary schools appear to handle the social aspects of transition quite well" (p. 13). Although Mc Gee et al., (2003) found that the personal-social issues related to transfer and transitioning are not a cause for major concern due to the transfer process being better organised than it was in the past, other findings are not as promising.

Pereira and Pooley (2007) found that social relationships (peer and teacher-student) greatly influenced the transition experience for students as this theme emerged in the literature for all who transitioned. Similarly, Puschner (2010) noted that as students transferred across secondary schools, peer relationships and social support were of significance to them during the transitioning process. O'Brien (2004) also found that social skills were of vital importance and impacted transition. "The ability to mix with other students and to form relationships with teachers were viewed as more important than high academic ability which alone was not considered sufficient to cope with transfer" (as cited in Irish National Teacher's Organisation., & INTO Consultative Conference on Education, 2008, p. 11).

After transfer, making friends, fitting in, and dealing with bullying were the biggest challenges faced by students (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Another study supporting this finding is that of Galton et al., (1999), who found that some students have difficulty adjusting socially due to various reasons. As Galton et al., (1999) state:

> Some pupils have more difficulty than others in adjusting to the new environment; this may be because they do not want to be parted from friends, because they are anxious about coping with the demands that the new school or phase will make of them, or because they are worried about rumours of bullying in the new setting (p. 19).

Barone, Aguirre-Deandreis and Trickett (1991) report that because friendships and social interactions among young people are crucial, the transfer and transitioning process tends to disrupt friendship networks. At transfer, friendships are seen as an avenue of social support, and Ganeson and Ehrich (2009) found that transitioning students were affected by the discontinuity in peer relationships. Galton et al., (2003), emphasized that the correlation between friendship and academics was significant. Students who had difficulties in coping with competitive teaching styles depended on friends for academic and social support.

Kokkinakis (2013) stated that schools affect students differently because of the different social settings that schools provide, hence, attending one type of school will naturally affect the student differently than if the student is attending another school. As the student acclimatizes to the new school, he/she has to also acclimatize to the new social setting. Laanan (1996) focused on the social aspects of transfer and how they

impact the adjustment process. The social environment of the student, particularly his /her interaction with students in and out of the classroom, determined the success of his/her social adjustment. Laanan (2007) stated that successfully adjusting after transfer was dependent on students' social skills as "possessing the coping mechanisms to deal with the stress, and the extent to which they have the skills to fit in," determined success at social adjustment (p. 41).

In London, students highlighted ten concerns when thinking about the secondary school they wanted to attend (Evangelou, Taggart, Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2008). Staying with their friends was their most important concern (40%). The other nine concerns in order of importance included the distance the school was from home, the school facilities and curriculum, educational and career opportunities, school reputation and exam performance, school ethos atmosphere and culture, the teaching staff, bullying, making new friends, and lastly, their own feelings, worries and impressions. They felt that secondary school should be a social institution where friendships were supposed to be formed and maintained. It was noted that parents saw the distance the school was from home and the school's reputation for its high teaching standards were the most important concerns when choosing a secondary school for their children. This study suggests that the student's personal and social skills (friendships, self-esteem and confidence) must be developed in order for successful transition in secondary school.

Fabian (2002) posits that transitioning in school can be overwhelming even for those who are emotionally stable (as cited in Bulkeley & Fabian, 2006). Those who are

emotionally secure and confident also experience challenges during the transition period because they enter into a new social setting. Roffey and O'Reirdan (2001) and Porter (2003) reveal that students who lack emotional well-being have difficulties in building relationships. Research into early transitions highlight the importance of being emotionally secure, as according to Featherstone (2004), "a lack of emotional well-being can cause worry and stress leading to aggression, fatigue and withdrawal, all of which have the potential to impair learning capacity" (as cited in Bulkeley & Fabian, 2006, p. 19).

Gender issues associated with transfer and transitioning

Transfer and transition affect gender in different ways. Wagemaker (1993) reports that girls may have lower scores and are more negatively affected during transition than boys (as cited in Mc Gee et al., 2003). Wagemaker (1993) also disclosed that the type of school (single-sex and co-educational) may also play a role in achievement levels. When the academic averages of females in single-sex and co-educational schools were compared, those in co-educational schools obtained averages that were minimally lower than those in single-sex schools. Hill and Hawk (2000) report that students belonging to higher social classes are more inclined to attend single-sex schools rather than co-educational schools, but the type of school does not significantly affect achievement (as cited in Mc Gee et al., 2003).

Other studies do not support the fact that females academically score less than males during the transitioning process. Alton-Lee and Praat (2000; 2001) note that

females outnumbering males when it comes to achievement depended on the subject and transition. It was found that females performed better in some subjects whereas males performed better in others, but this was determined by how well the student transitioned in the school. Transition was found to have a positive effect on boys' performances in Mathematics, Science and Physical Education (Mc Gee et al., 2003). Croll (1983) found that girls performed better than boys in the first year of transitioning (as cited in Mc Gee et al., 2003), although they did not always feel as though they were performing better than the boys in subjects like Mathematics. However, Francis (2000) found that after transitioning, girls were generally outperforming the boys in Mathematics, Science, and all other subjects.

According to Fenzel and Blyth (1986), adjusting to a new social environment in school varies for males and females. Girls had more difficulty than boys with leaving their friends and establishing new relationships. Hirsch and Rapkin (1987) affirm that as girls transfer, they are more likely than boys to suffer from low self- esteem, stress and depression, consistent with findings from Eccles et al., (1993), which found that females were more negatively affected than males after transfer, particularly their self-esteem.

It is of the view that the age of the student at time of transfer plays a role in his/her social development, attitude and behaviour. The timing of the transfer, specifically the age of the student, explains why girls may be more likely to exhibit symptoms of depression than boys. They attribute this to the fact that girls reach puberty earlier that boys, and girls experience increased psychological issues when compared to boys of the same age during transition (Hirsch & Rapkin, 1987). In terms of behaviour,

Mc Gee et al., (2003) stated that boys displayed more negative attitudes towards learning and were more disruptive in the classroom, whereas, girls coped with transition better than boys as they were more "attentive to schoolwork requirements" (p. 51).

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on transfer and transitioning in primary and secondary schools. Literature using a phenomenological perspective was reviewed to inform the methodology used in this study. Students' narratives not only support what is featured in the literature, but help to fill the gaps that have not yet been discovered. The body of literature featured positive and negative aspects of transitioning affecting both male and female students. The aspect of these issues impacting male and female students differently is an important feature applicable to the students transferring into Oasis Secondary. Issues were highlighted under the headings -academic, pedagogical, social, personal, emotional, and gender, because they were prominent in the literature.

Review of the literature on what researchers have studied in the phenomenon of transfer offers thought on new aspects that can be added, in an attempt to understand multiple issues associated with transfer and transitioning.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

Pertinent issues that emerged from the literature informed the procedures and processes the researcher utilised in conducting this study. This chapter's discourse provides a detailed account of the methods and procedures that were used in the path towards answering the research questions. These include the research design, philosophical assumptions, the sampling procedure, profiles of the participants, data collection methods, data analysis method, ethical considerations, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. The methods and procedures employed are all presented with relevant justifications.

The Research Design

Qualitative research is described as "an approach used for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human issue or problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). The aim of qualitative research is to "make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 7), while conducting the research in the natural setting where data is collected and analysed. Conducting the research in the natural setting is essential to the qualitative researcher as a deeper understanding of the participant or phenomenon being investigated can be derived. In this context, this phenomenon being analysed is the transitioning process of transferred students.

In this study, the researcher seeks to investigate the experiences of students who have been transferred into a new school and the data will be retrieved in the researcher's and participants' natural environment, the school, where the participants experience the issue that is being investigated, thus enabling the researcher to develop a complex and holistic picture of the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 2014). A phenomenological study can be defined as one that describes the "common meaning for several individuals of their *lived experiences*" (Creswell, 2013, p. 76), so the transitioning experiences are not described from the researcher's viewpoint, but from the way these lived experiences are described by the participants themselves.

Philosophical Assumptions

In qualitative research, Creswell (2013) discusses four assumptions that guide the design of the study. These include the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological, and he states that these beliefs are fundamental in guiding qualitative studies. In this study, the ontological assumption relates to the personal feelings, views and experiences of the students – their reality. Multiple realities will emerge as similar and dissimilar experiences are revealed by the participants. In this regard, it is important to get the participants' or emic perspective in order to truly understand what the students' experiences are, and by exploring multiple viewpoints, conclusions can then be drawn about what it feels like to adapt after transfer as their experiences are dictated by their reality. The epistemological principle is one where the researcher develops a relationship with the participant to establish trustworthiness. The relationship developed between the participant and the researcher allows the participant to be comfortable and freely express

him/herself during the interviewing process. Axiology acknowledges the role of the researcher's and participants' values which are part of the study. It is key to note that the values, views, beliefs and personal experiences of the researcher with respect to the study be set aside by bracketing any prejudged opinions so that the participants' experiences are precisely described, ensuring credibility in the study. Creswell (1998) identifies another assumption, the rhetorical assumption, where the researcher uses qualitative language and employs terms such as "*credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability* and *confirmability*" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, as cited in Creswell, 1998, p. 77) to accurately interpret and construct meaning from the findings. The methodological assumption of this study is "shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing the data" (Creswell, 2013, p. 22), so this is where, as the researcher, the concept of transitioning in a new school environment is formulated based on the above assumptions.

Sampling Procedure

This study focuses on transfers into the school from the period 2010 to 2013, so the students are presently in Forms Two, Three and Four. A total of 79 students have been transferred into the school during the period under investigation. Purposive, also called purposeful sampling, was utilised to select the students and teachers to participate in this study because of their experiences, their ability to provide rich thick data, and to help the researcher understand about transfer and transitioning in the school. The students were at different stages of transitioning (first year, second year, and third year), and were willing to talk about their experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). The teachers who were purposely selected had years of teaching experience in the school so they were also

knowledgeable about the issue of transfer and transitioning. They also teach the selected students. In purposeful sampling, researchers "intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 206). A total of six students were selected, one male and one female from Form Two, Three and Four, to communicate experiences based on time spent in the school thus far, and to also gain the perspective of both the male and female gender. Three of their teachers, two Form teachers and one Dean, were also selected for interviewing to provide additional relevant data on these students and the transitioning process.

Participants

Pseudonyms were used in this study to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. All the participants and their parents/guardians were informed about the nature of the study and were told that interviews conducted would be recorded due to the necessity of transcribing the data. Before interviewing the participants, they were reminded about the purpose of the study and the assured protection of their personal identity. Although six students were selected and consent was obtained from all of the students and their parents, only five of them were interviewed. During the scheduled period for conducting interviews, one of the male participants (Form Two) left the country for two weeks due to a family emergency. Creswell (2014) notes that for a phenomenological study, the sample size may range from three to ten participants, so the researcher made the decision to omit him from the study as sufficient data was obtained from the other five students to answer the research questions. Four of the five student interviews were conducted in the Music Room. This specialised room was chosen due to its availability, comfort and privacy -

free from interruption. The other interview, which began in the Music Room, took place in the Safety Officers' Office due to a cricket match that was held on the school grounds at the same time as this interview. The room is in close proximity to the grounds, so to avoid further disturbances from the match, an alternative venue was chosen. The three teachers were interviewed in the Heads of Department and Deans' Room.

Profiles of Participants

Form Three Male Student - Roger

Roger is an outgoing 15 year old who lives with his parents approximately fifteen minutes walking distance away from the school. His recently deceased grandmother took responsibility in tutoring him in his school work, and since her demise, he divulged his difficulty in keeping up with his academics. After spending one year at his previous school, he was transferred into Oasis Secondary in Form Two. The Composite Standard Score from the Secondary Entrance Assessment (SEA) is an aggregate of the raw scores that were converted statically to rank and place the students in Secondary School. The lowest Composite Standard Score assigned to Oasis Secondary is 226.720 and Roger's Score was 190.530. He is one of the students who is enrolled in the programme in school where the Sixth Form students assist those students experiencing academic difficulties. He goes for tutoring daily from Monday to Thursday in the library.

He does not participate in any extra-curricular activities in the school because the sporting activities that are of interest to him are not available in the school.

Form Four Male Student - Anthony

Anthony is 15 years of age and lives with his two siblings and parents. He was transferred into the school in the second term of Form Two. He is an aspiring sportsman and is passionate about cricket, which is his favourite sport. He is a member of a Cricket Club and avidly plays cricket as a member of the school's cricket team. Anthony experienced difficulties in his former school because he found that the school was too strict in terms of academics and he felt pressured. There was also an absence of extra-curricular activities in the school, so he was unable to develop his non-academic skills.

Form Two Female Student - Nadia

Nadia is a 13 year old with a bubbly personality who resides with her parents and one younger sibling. She was transferred from an all-girls school at the beginning of Form Two. Of all the participants, she has spent the shortest time in Oasis Secondary as she had only two term's experience in her new environment. One day of the week she occupies her time during the lunch period playing netball in school.

Form Three Female Student - Sharon

Sharon is 15 years of age and lives with both of her parents and two siblings. Sharon is the only student who spent more than two years in her previous school before being transferred. Her Composite Standard Score at SEA was 215.250, a score that did not qualify her for placement into Oasis Secondary after SEA. She was in Form Three in her previous school and was transferred during the second term of the academic year. She

was placed in Form Two due to preparations of the National Certificate of Secondary Education (NCSE) examination already taking place with the Form Three students in Oasis Secondary. Sharon enjoys anything involving music, dance and drama because to her they are fun and relaxing. She always involves herself in any activity related to Visual and Performing Arts.

Form Four Female Student - Donna

Donna was transferred into the school in the second term of Form Two. She is 16 years of age and lives with her parents and one older sibling a short distance away from the school. Her Composite Standard Score of her SEA was 208.297, a score which did not earn her a place in Oasis Secondary after SEA. She wrote the entrance exam to qualify for placement into the school at the end of her first year in Secondary School and was successful based on her results. She loves Visual and Performing Arts because to her they are exciting and encourages her to express herself.

Form Three Female Dean - Miss Gibson

Miss Gibson is a Science teacher and has been teaching in the school for the past 17 years. She teaches Forms One to Six and was appointed Dean in 2008. She was acting in the post of Forms One Dean and Form Two Dean prior to her appointment. She is currently the Dean for the Form Three Level in the school. Miss Gibson teaches all the students and closely interacts with those in Form Three. Her knowledge about the Form Three students' academic progress and discipline record from when they were transferred into the school made her a suitable candidate for interviewing.

Form Three Male Teacher - Mr. Fraser

Mr. Fraser is a Foreign Languages and Communication Studies teacher. He teaches Forms One to Six and has been teaching in the school for 16 years. His Form Level has received four students who were transferred into the school from 2010 to 2013. He teaches all the participants so he was also able to shed light on aspects of the students' transitioning process.

Form Four Female Teacher - Miss Charles

Miss Charles has been teaching for 11 years and is a Technical Education teacher. She teaches Forms One to Five and presently has a Form Four as her Form class which she had from when they were in Form One. This class has received five students transferring into the school from the time they were in Form One to present. As she teaches all the students, her contribution to the study was valuable.

Interview Protocol

An interview protocol was developed to outline the procedures used during the interviewing process. "The interview protocol is a form designed by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and space to take notes of responses from the interviewee" (Creswell, 2012, p. 225).

In this study, details such as the interview questions, the date, time, place, and duration of interview were listed to ensure that the interview process flowed smoothly. Questions were prepared to elicit data on the students' experiences in their former and

present school to understand their transitioning process (see Appendix C). Probing questions were asked to obtain additional details and to clarify responses from the participants. Participants were informed about the structure of the interviewing process before they were interviewed.

Details of Interviews

Roger

Roger's interview was conducted on 5th February, 2014 at 1:15pm for a duration of 29 minutes and 57seconds. Roger's interview was the longest and he appeared to be the most comfortable out of all the interviewees. He kept eye contact during the process and seemed eager to discuss his experiences and responded freely, as though he was accustomed to being interviewed. He seemed to be content with sharing his experiences as he elaborated in his responses and spoke as though the memories were fresh in his head. He spoke slowly and audibly and was gesticulating to express himself.

Anthony

Anthony's interview began in the Music Room, and within the first thirty seconds, the interview had to be paused due to the high noise levels from the cricket match on the field. Another venue, the Safety Officers' Office, was then chosen and the interview resumed after five minutes. This interview took place on the 11th February 2014 and began at 9:55am and lasted for 19 minutes and 45 seconds. Anthony naturally speaks very softly and quickly so he was briefed prior to the interview on the necessity of slowing down his speech and speaking loudly enough to be heard by the researcher, and

also for the recorder to capture all his responses. In the end, he was clearly heard and understood by the interviewer.

Nadia

Nadia's interview was conducted in the Music Room on11th February, 11:20 am. Although nervousness was not detected during her interview, she did not elaborate as much in her responses as the other students, making her interview the shortest. She is the youngest of all the participants and her recent entry into the school may explain her brief responses.

Sharon

At the beginning of the interview, Sharon appeared nervous as she kept playing with a rag and was constantly folding it into triangles, unfolding it, then repeating the process. Although she did this for the duration of the entire interview, as the interview progressed, her nervousness seemed to decrease as she seemed to be more comfortable. She responded calmly and kept a smile on her face. Her interview took place on 5th February 2014 at 2:00 pm in the Music Room, and lasted for a duration of 22 minutes and 15 seconds.

Donna

Donna's interview was conducted on the 6th February, 2014 in the privacy of the Music Room and lasted for 27 minutes and 02 seconds. Although Donna was aware that her interview session would have been recorded, she looked at the digital recorder as it was placed on the table and then sheepishly smiled at me as her body language expressed

discomfort with being recorded. This was surprising because she is a brave student who is very candid about discussing home and school issues whenever she approaches me. It was quite clear that she felt intimidated by the presence of the digital recorder. After asking if she was comfortable with being recorded and reminded her that her name and any identifying features would not be disclosed, she revealed that she did not have a problem with being recorded during the interview, and as the interview began, she did not glance at the recorder again. At some points during the interview she responded shyly while at other times she responded comfortably.

Miss Gibson - Interviewed on the 18th February 2014 at 8:45am.

Mr. Fraser - Interviewed on 25th February 2014 at 9:55am.

Miss Charles - Interviewed on 25th February 2014 at 11:00am

The profiles of the participants can be seen in the Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1

Profile of Students at Oasis Secondary School

Name	**Gender**	**Age**	**Current Form Level**	**Number of Terms in Oasis Secondary School**
Roger	Male	15	Three	Five
Anthony	Male	15	Four	Seven
Nadia	Female	13	Two	Two
Sharon	Female	15	Three	Four
Donna	Female	16	Four	Seven

Table 2

Profile of Teachers at Oasis Secondary School

Name	**Gender**	**Years of Teaching Experience at Oasis Secondary**	**Current Appointment at Oasis Secondary**
Miss Gibson	Female	17	Form Three Dean
Mr. Fraser	Male	16	Form Three Form Teacher
Miss Charles	Female	11	Form Four Form Teacher

Data Collection Methods

The phenomenological approach that is being used in this study seeks to interpret the lived experiences of the students who were transferred into the new school setting, so by conducting interviews with them, their feelings and experiences as they relate to transferring will emerge. Semi-structured interview questions were prepared in advance to be used as a guide for the researcher. Examples of the types of semi-structured interview questions included the reasons for transfer into the school, expectations they held of attending a new school, and their coping strategies. These questions were open-ended to allow the participants the opportunity to freely express themselves and elaborate in their responses. Face-to-face interviewing permitted the recording of both verbal and non-verbal data which is governed by the epistemological assumption in qualitative research. A digital recorder was used to record the interviews in order to preserve the verbal aspect of the interview, while field notes were taken to record the non-verbal features during the interview such as facial expressions and body language. To preserve confidentiality, after the data collection process is completed, the data will be in the possession of the researcher for the duration of conducting the study, after which, it will be destroyed.

Trustworthiness of Data

In order to enhance as well as ensure that the findings are authentic, triangulation was utilised. Triangulation involves "corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective" (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). Conducting interviews

with the students, teachers, and examining the students' academic and behavioural records were the multiple data sources that were used to gain a greater understanding of the phenomenon under study. Employing multiple sources allowed the researcher to produce findings that are both accurate and credible (Creswell, 2012).

To ensure accuracy and credibility in this study, member-checking and peer-reviewing were also employed. The interview transcripts were given to the participants to ensure that the information given by them was accurate. The male teacher who was interviewed was the only participant who asked to listen to the recording in addition to reviewing the transcript. Peer-reviewing was used in the data analysis method where codes and themes were formulated to produce findings from the data.

Data Analysis Method

The Constant Comparative Method was the technique used to analyse the data. This method emanated from the Grounded Theory Methodology which was developed by researchers Glaser and Strauss (1967) (as cited in Punch, 2009). For this method, the researcher "engages in a process of gathering data, sorting it into categories, collecting additional information, and comparing the new information with emerging categories" (Creswell, 2012, p. 434). The Constant Comparative Method requires implementing systematic steps in order in order to analyse the text data and then produce findings.

In qualitative research, data analysis is "inductive and iterative" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 188). In analyzing the data, the researcher started with interpreting and sorting the raw data before leading to the main themes or ideas. The inductive approach was used to "(1) condense extensive and varied data into a brief, summary format; (2) to establish

clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and (3) to develop a model about the underlying structure of experiences which are evident in the raw data" (Thomas, 2003, p. 1).

Eight interviews were conducted and recorded using a digital recorder, and then transcribed manually. Two participants were re-interviewed to clarify data that emerged following their interviews. The transcription process was time-consuming due to the length and number of interviews. Although the recordings were of good quality and the researcher and participants were clearly heard on the recording device, a few words from two interviews that were not discernible during the first listening were detected during the repeated listening. The transcriptions were amended so that none of the content was intentionally excluded. The interviews were transcribed verbatim on the computer, and each one was listened to numerous times while transcribing to ensure accuracy. After all the interviews were transcribed, the text was read multiple times for the purpose of becoming familiar with the data while trying to conceptualise what the participants revealed. Themes were developed by assigning codes to lines or sections of the text where applicable during the analysis, in order to organise the data. Coding is defined as "a first step in data analysis in which text is sorted and organised to identify recurrent themes and concepts" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 243). According to Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), coding is "a *data condensation* task that enables you to retrieve the most meaningful material, to assemble chunks of data that go together, and to further condense the bulk into readily analyzable units" (p. 73). A margin on the right side of the text was formed to record the codes. 'In vivo' codes, which are the exact words of the participant,

were identified in order to affirm the participants' language. The coding process was laborious as it involved going back and forth multiple times through the text ensuring important data was not omitted. After coding was initially done, the researcher left the analysis process for a short period, then resumed analysis to find additional codes emerging. This was done to subdue the challenging and iterative process involved in data analysis in qualitative research. When codes were assigned, and the transcripts were re-read, additional codes were discovered. Similar codes were aggregated to form categories, after which themes were identified. The emergent categories which emerged from the data were continued to be built until there were no new themes being identified, therefore, saturation occurred (Creswell, 2012). After this, patterns were found within and among the themes. These themes were then examined after which meaning of themes were interpreted and the findings were reported (Creswell, 2014). Samples of coded interview transcripts can be viewed in the Appendices (see Appendix D).

Figure 1 shows the steps that were taken in analyzing the data.

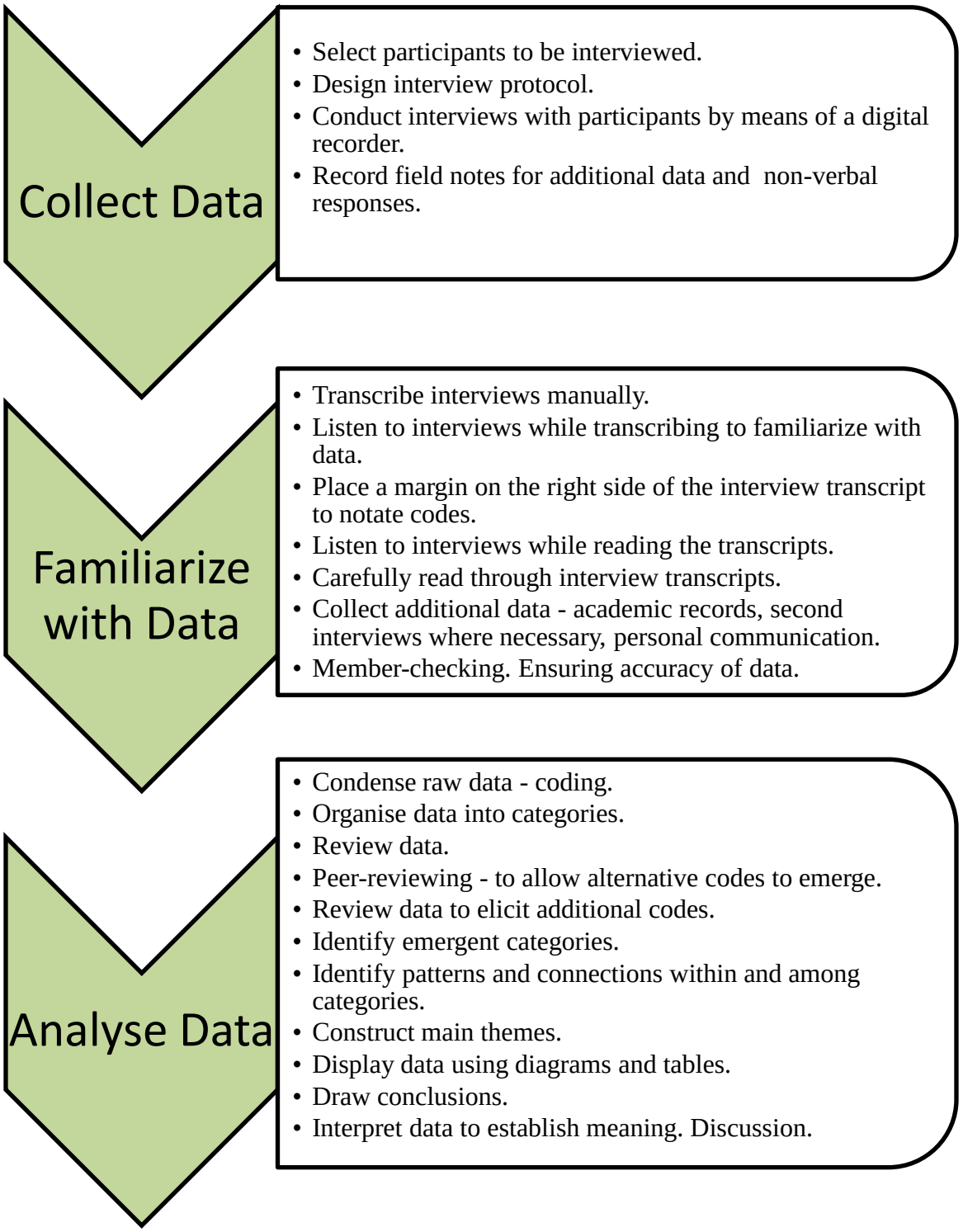


Figure 1. Phases in the Data Analysis Process

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles must be taken into consideration before beginning any research study because it is imperative that participants' rights are honoured and they are free from harm. Permission was sought to conduct research in Oasis Secondary from the Ministry of Education. The parents/guardians of all six participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the study. Informed consent was obtained from the Principal of Oasis Secondary (see Appendix A) before beginning the research and verbal consent was obtained from the teachers. Informed consent was also obtained from the parents/guardians before initiating data collection (see Appendix B). The participants were cognizant of the fact that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from participation if so desired. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants involved in the study were ensured as pseudonyms were assigned to the student participants, the names of their previous schools, the names of other students mentioned during the interview process, the names of the teachers, as well as this school. Measures were taken to preserve the privacy of the research participants and the institution.

Limitations

A major limitation of this study is that the participants had to rely on memory to retrieve retrospective data from one and two years in the past, so the data collection and analysis may be affected due to issues related to poor recollection of information. Although there was an established rapport between the participants and the researcher,

there exists the possibility that information may be withheld given the fact that the researcher is a figure of authority to the students and a colleague to the staff, thus limiting the research data. Additionally, scheduling convenient times to conduct the interviews with all the participants was also a limitation due to unforeseen conditions that arose concerning school activities.

Delimitations

Conducting the research in one secondary school is a delimitation, as the results are limited to the experiences of the students in this institution and educational district. The experiences of only one male and one female from each of the three selected Form Levels were explored, and not all the students who were transferred into the school, hence, delimiting the study.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methods used in this study by providing a detailed description of the procedures that were used in obtaining and analyzing data, along with issues that may affect these processes. In this section of the study, it is crucial that the researcher applies careful thought into appropriate procedures as they work together to ensure authenticity of the study.

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Presentation of Findings

Introduction

In this study, the researcher is operationalizing all the research questions to discover the experiences of the transitioning process of students who have transferred into Oasis Secondary School, the strategies they adopted in the transitioning process and the effect of the transitioning process on their experiences at the school. Five students and three teachers were interviewed to elicit data on the transitioning process. Another data source that supplemented this study was the students' academic records. Their SEA scores, as well as termly academic records at their previous schools and Oasis Secondary were examined. The teachers' interviews serve the purpose of corroborating the data revealed by the students. The students' and teachers' interviews will be analyzed separately. In addition, the students' academic records will be analysed, after which, the findings will be presented under the emerged themes. Analysis of the data in relation to the research questions will be presented.

Development of Themes

Three procedures were used to analyze the data and produce themes. They were "(1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification" (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña 2014, p. 12). In data condensation, the interview transcripts were condensed by coding the data. Miles et al., (2014) suggested avoiding the term 'data reduction' (Miles & Huberman, 1994) because of the implication of "weakening or losing

something in the process" (p. 12). During this data condensation process, it is important to not lose any information given by the participants. In data display, figures and tables were used to display the data graphically. The final step was drawing conclusions based on the analysis and then verifying these conclusions.

Participants' perceptions are highly interpretive, so the researcher repeatedly reviewed the data, allowed the data to be peer-reviewed to highlight codes undiscovered by the researcher, and then reviewed the data again. The researcher was mindful to not misinterpret what the participants revealed through her interpretation.

The themes that were constructed from the findings for each research question are:

- Mixed Feelings Throughout The Transitioning Process
- School Ethos
- Peer and Teacher Relationships
- Implemented Coping Strategies
- Developmental Competencies
- Recommendations For Easing The Transitioning Process

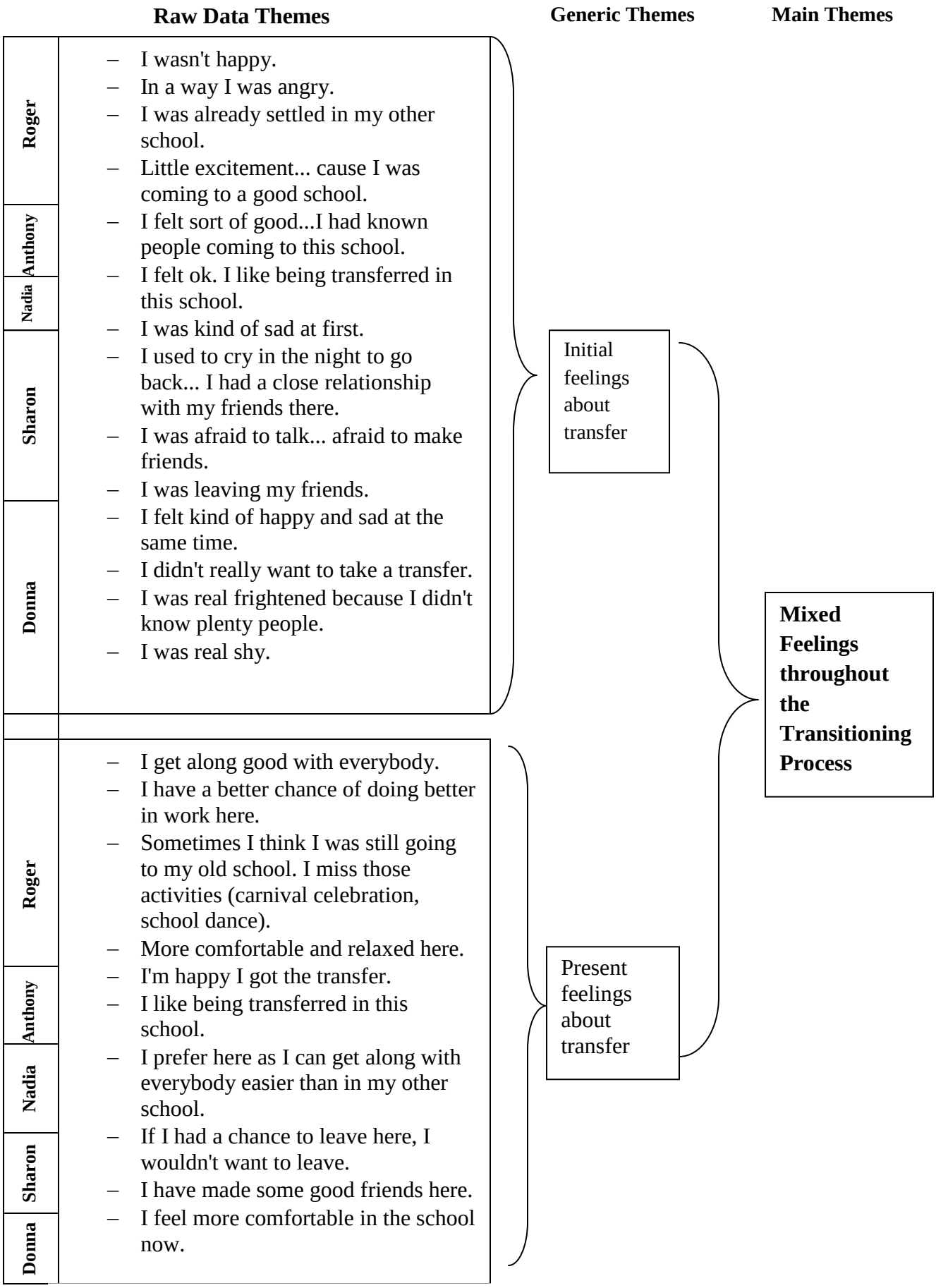


Figure 2. Development of Theme - Mixed Feelings throughout the Transitioning Process

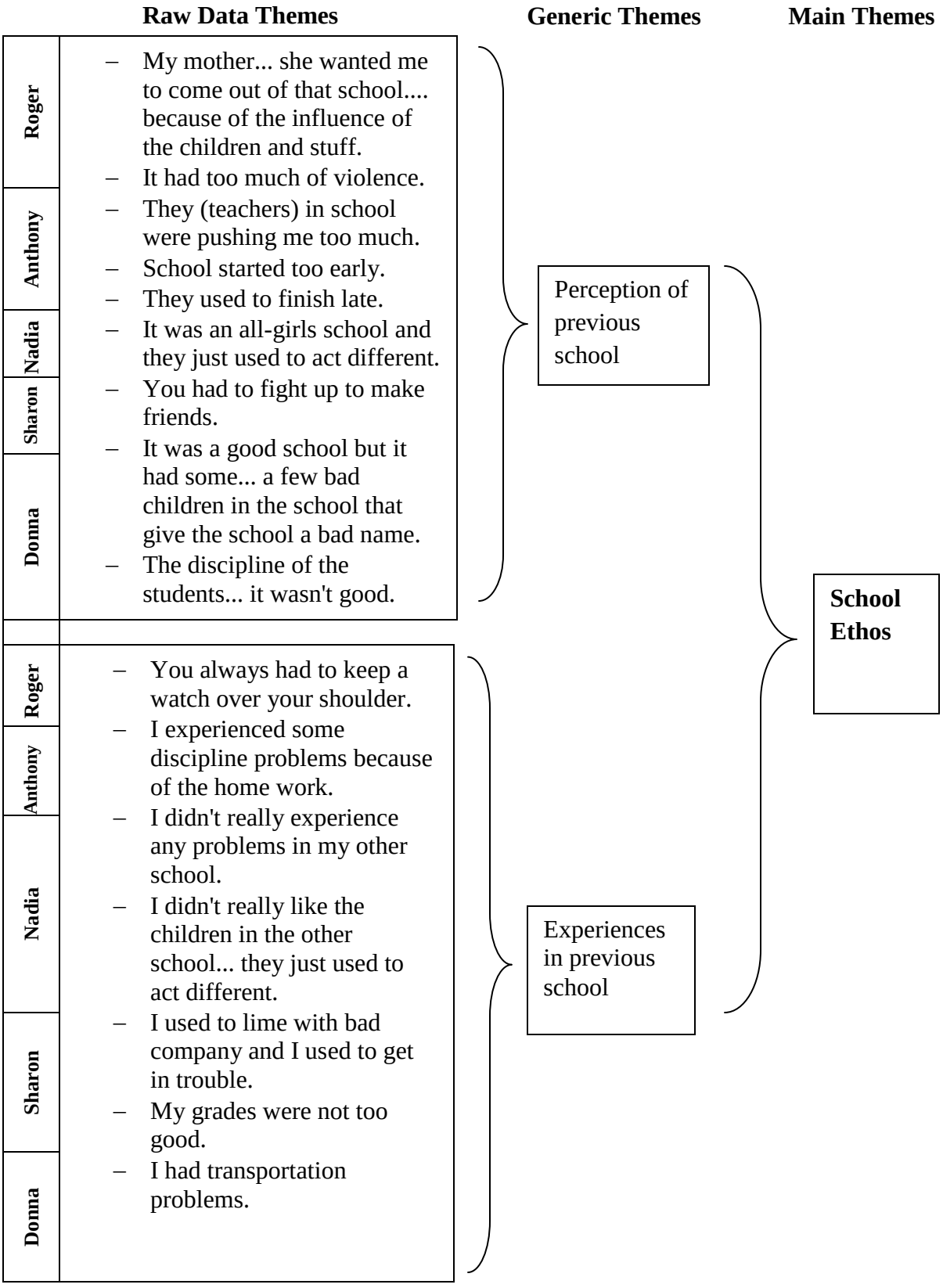


Figure 3. Development of Theme - School Ethos (Previous School)

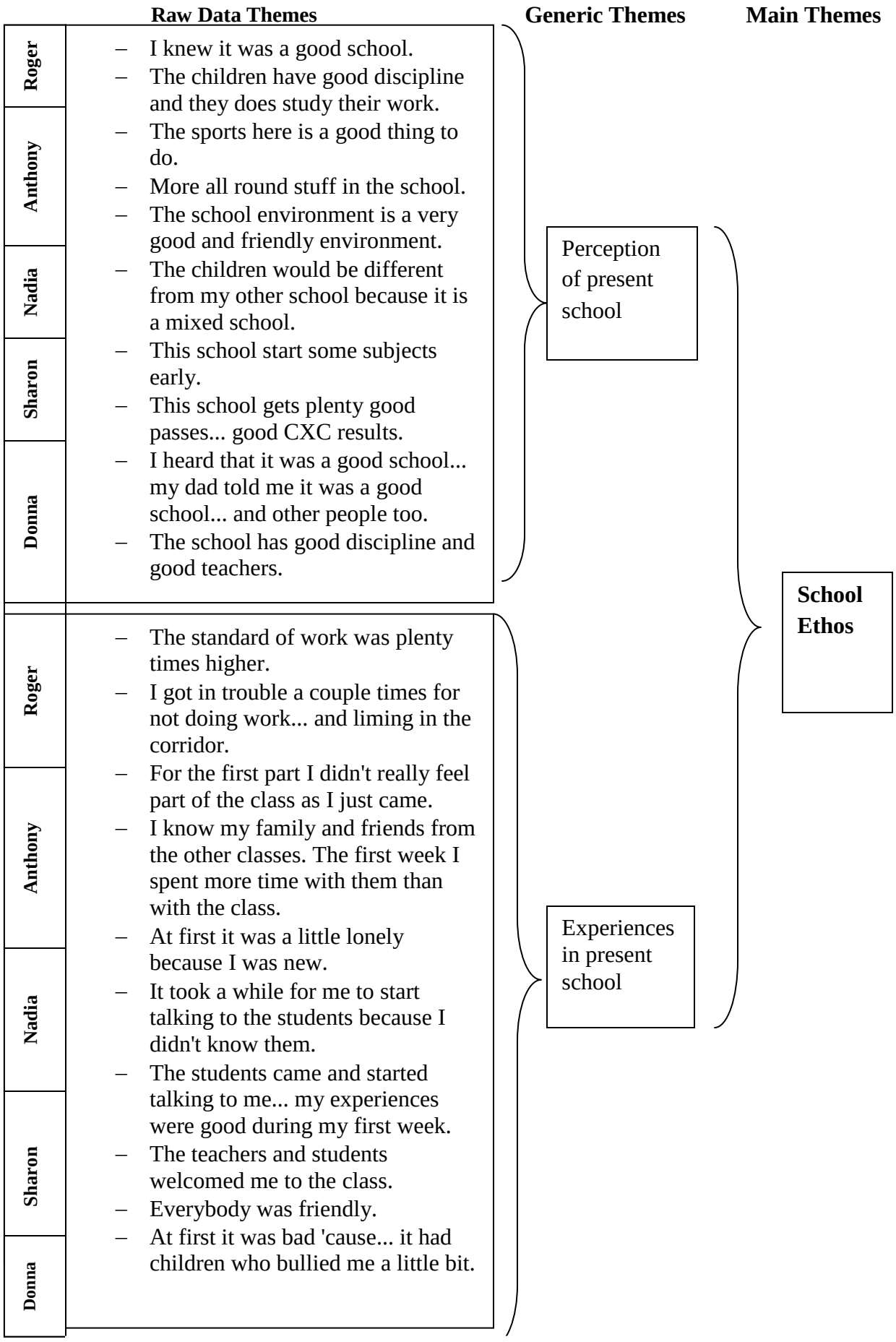


Figure 4. Development of Theme - School Ethos (Present School)

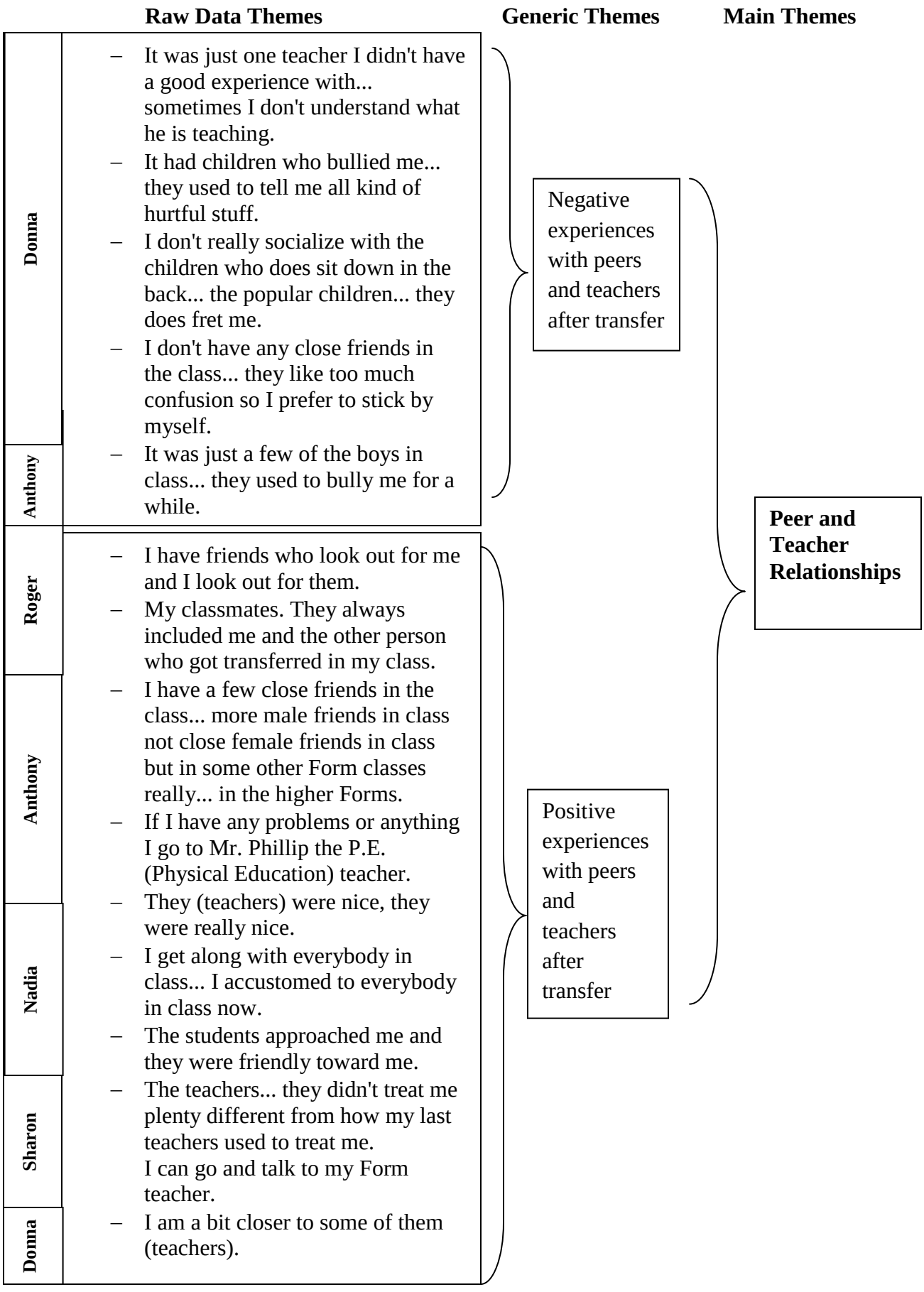


Figure 5. Development of Theme - Peer and Teacher Relationships

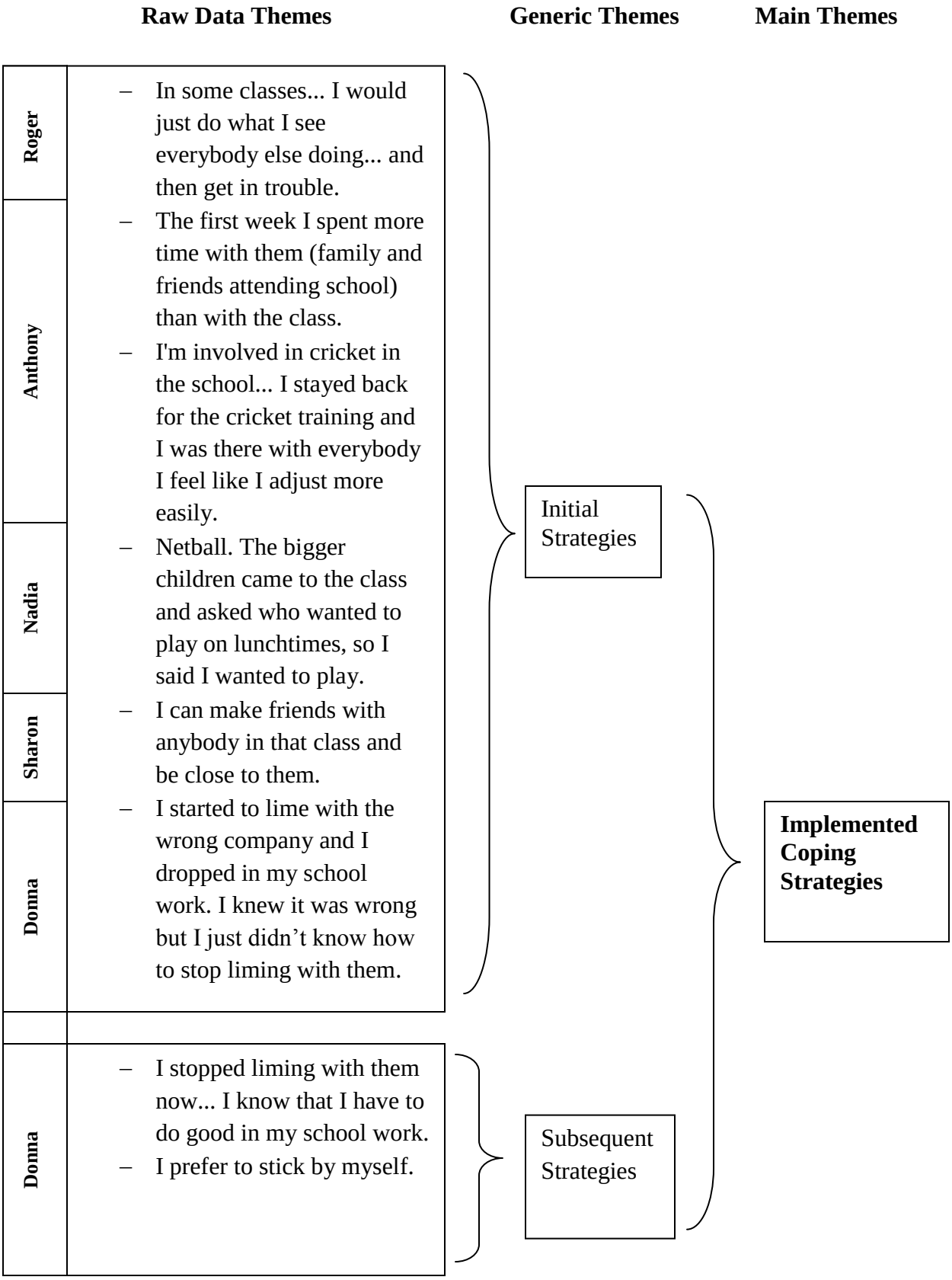


Figure 6. Development of Theme - Implemented Coping Strategies

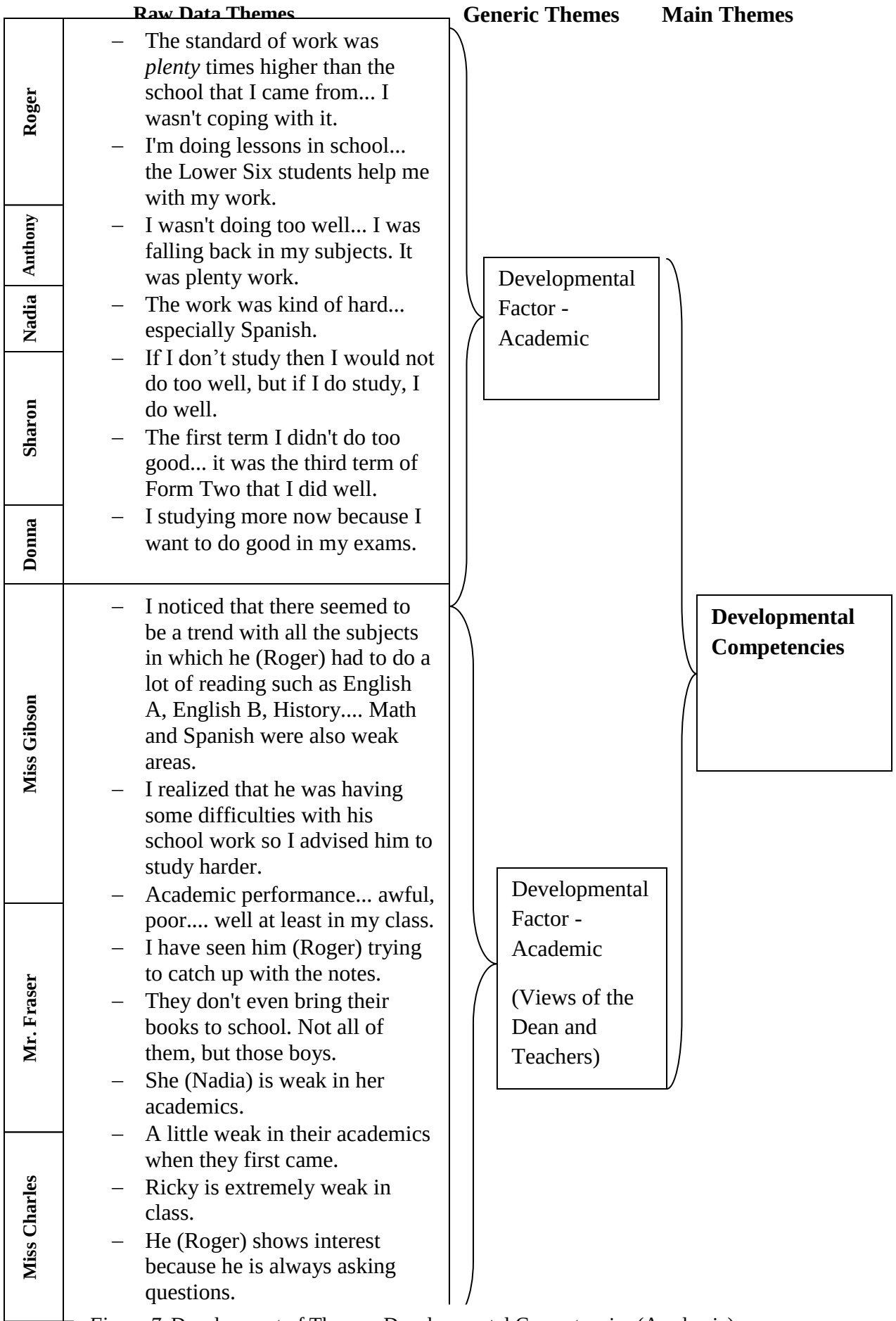


Figure 7. Development of Theme - Developmental Competencies (Academic)

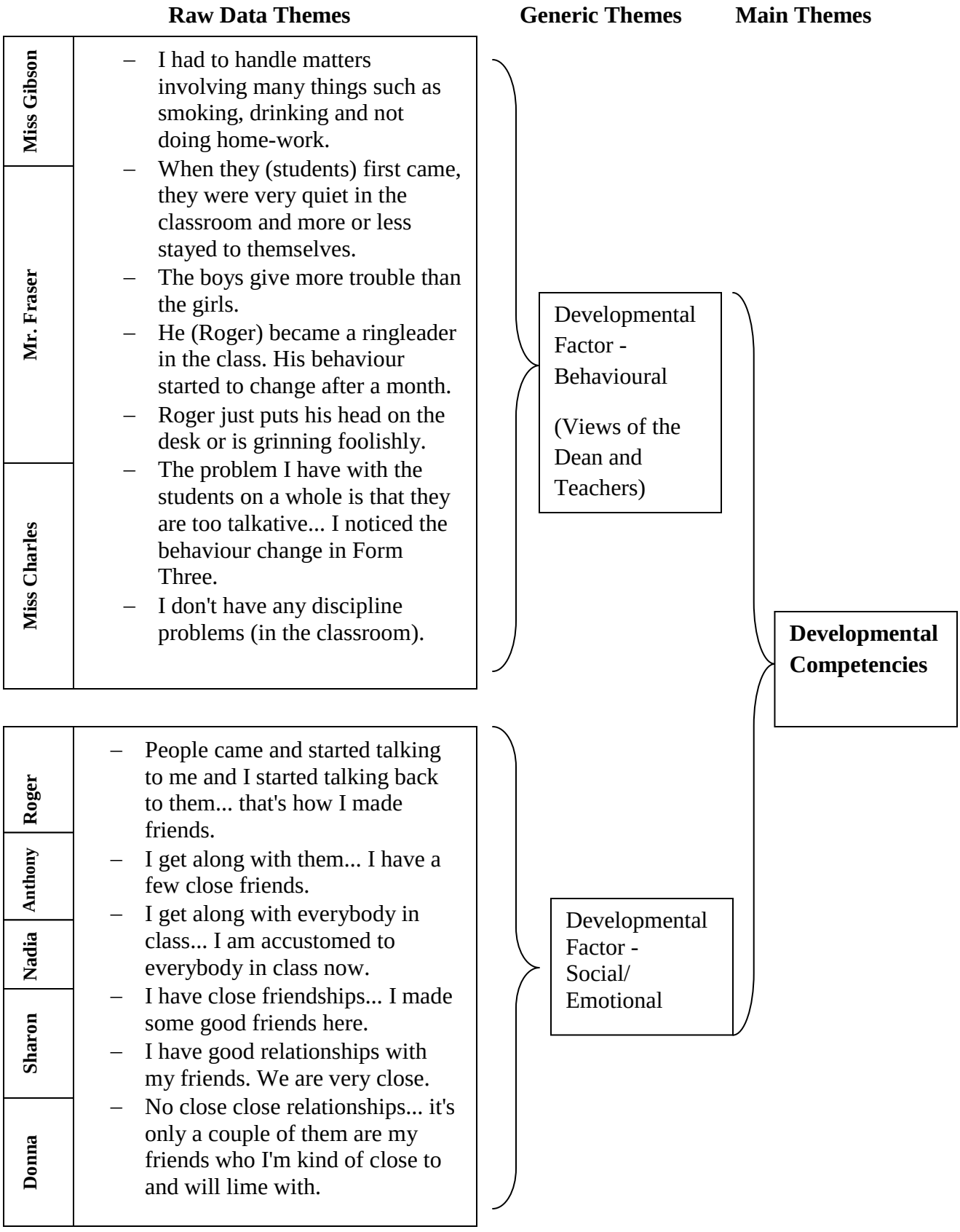


Figure 8. Development of Theme - Developmental Competencies (Behavioural and Social)

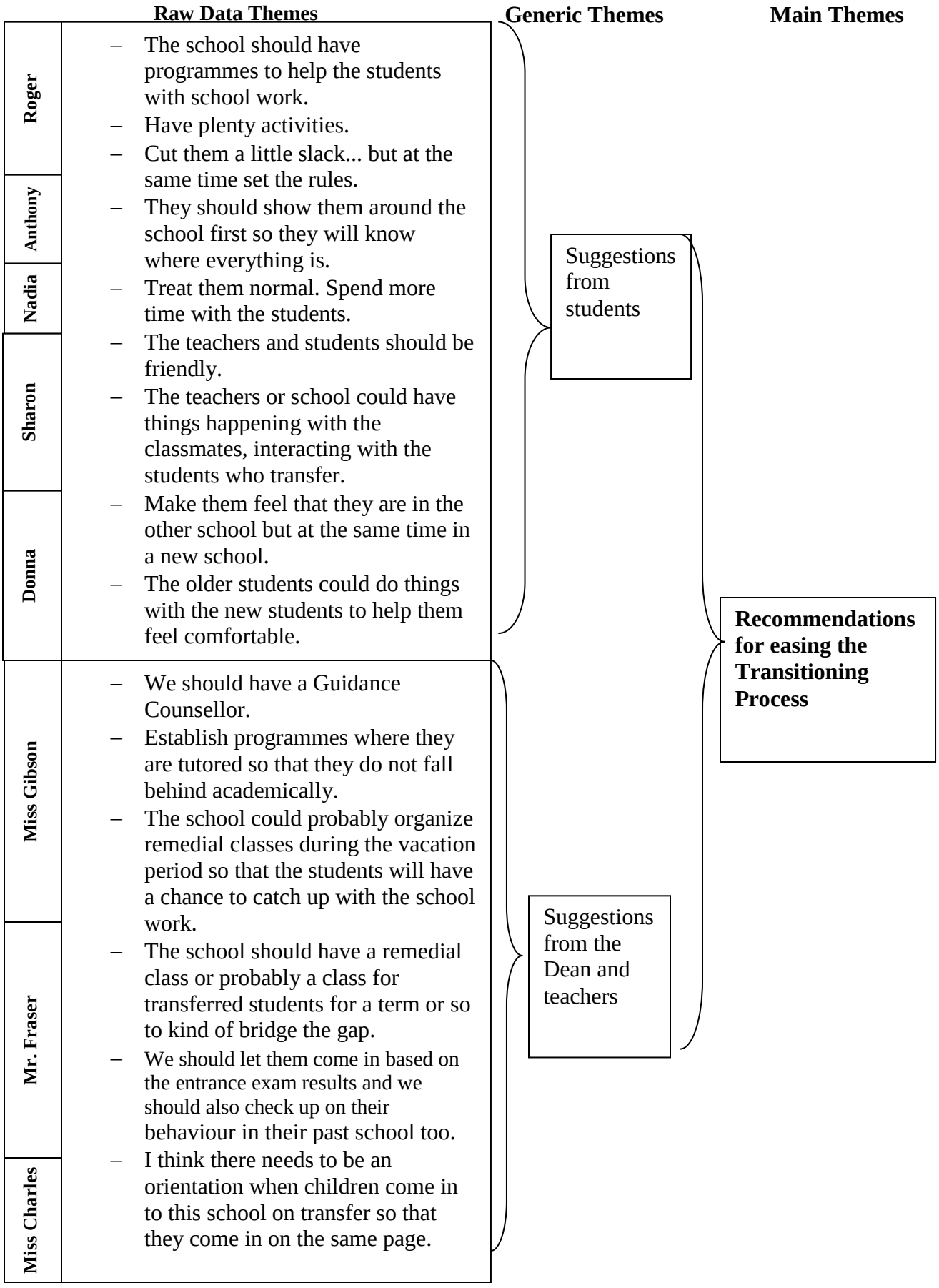


Figure 9. Development of Theme - Recommendations for easing the Transitioning Process

Analysis of data in relation to the research questions

What are the experiences of students who have transferred to Oasis Secondary from 2010 to 2013?

THEME: Mixed Feelings Throughout Transitioning Process

Initial Feelings

To gather a sense of the experiences of the students, it was necessary to acquire data on the type of environment the student came from and how the student felt about leaving that environment and coming to a new one. All of the students stated how they felt when they were transferred along with justifications.

Roger, Sharon and Donna all disclosed that initially they were unhappy with being transferred from their previous school because they were already settled there. According to Roger, "I wasn't happy 'cause I already made friends and whatever down there Miss". He continued by saying, "In a way I was angry Miss" while in the same breath, "I still had a little excitement in meh Miss 'cause I was coming to a good school", revealing mixed feelings during the transitioning process.

Sharon and Donna both mentioned that initially they were sad because they were leaving their friends. In the early stages of the transitioning process, Sharon cried to return to her previous school and to her friends. Donna revealed that she did not want the transfer and had mixed emotions. In addition to being sad, she was also happy because she was "going to a better school". They also felt fear when they first started attending Oasis Secondary because they were new and did not know the students as yet. "I was

afraid to talk... afraid to make friends", said Sharon. Donna's statement, "I was real frightened because I didn't know plenty people" indicated that being in a new environment generated fear.

Anthony and Nadia, did not experience sadness in the early stages of their transfer, their feelings gravitated towards happiness. "I felt sort of good being transferring into this school" and ″I like being transferred in this school" were their responses respectively. Their negative experiences and unhappiness in their former schools were responsible for their positive views about transferring into Oasis Secondary. Anthony was unable to cope with the 'strictness' of the school and Donna felt as though she did not fit in. Their positive views about transferring into Oasis Secondary communicated content feelings.

Present Feelings

After spending two years in the new school and admitted to being in a "good school" and forming new friendships, Roger mentioned that he sometimes thinks about attending his former school because he missed some of the school activities. This is clearly revealed in his statement:

> Sometimes I still think something will happen... and you know... sometimes I think I was still going to my old school. When I think about it... you know... I have a better chance of doing better in work here than there because what I really feel is that, down there it have more distractions nah… than here Miss. The Carnival celebration Miss. Down there we had an auditorium and the first year I

> went there... they told us they raising money for the school. For the school dance, you pay a certain amount of money Miss and you get to go into the dance. And... they had a religious session too nah Miss. They had all religions. My feelings... Miss I more comfortable and relaxed here... but I miss those activities in the other school that we had in the auditorium.

Although he felt this way sometimes, he is currently happy in his new school. He feels that he has a better opportunity to excel in Oasis Secondary due to the school culture and has formed good friendships with his classmates. Anthony, Nadia, Sharon and Donna are currently all happy with their transfers, although Donna experienced discomfort with some peers in the first term in Form Four. She was unhappy during this period and felt as though she wanted to return to her previous school, after spending five terms in Oasis Secondary. She has resolved her issues and is "more comfortable in the school now".

THEME: School Ethos

It must be mentioned that all five students came from different neighbouring schools, so it was interesting to note their reasons for transferring from those schools. The purpose was to shed light on the nature of those schools, thus evincing their experiences. Parental dissatisfaction with the school's environment stood out as major reasons Roger, Sharon and Donna transferred out of their schools. Anthony's mother and Donna's father attended Oasis Secondary, and they felt that it was a better institution based on their experiences when they attended the school. Their parents were also satisfied that Oasis Secondary continued to uphold its desirable characteristics. The schools that Roger,

Sharon and Donna transferred from, are all known for high levels of student indiscipline. According to Roger:

> You always had to keep a watch over your shoulder nah Miss, because it was that type of school. The children in my old school used to get weapons from anywhere in the class..... they used to mash up chair and thing Miss.

Other than parental dissatisfaction, Donna revealed that her teachers suggested that she transfer out of the school because the school was not suitable to her needs. According to her:

> My daddy didn't like the other school because of the discipline of the students. It wasn't good. It had some... a few bad children in the school that give the school a bad name. And then my teachers too, they were saying that I should take a transfer because I don't suit the school that I in.

All three students mentioned that their parents were uncomfortable with them being surrounded by such violence and thus requested the transfers. Anthony and Nadia did not reveal their previous schools being violent in nature, but their major reasons involved teacher and student relationships. Anthony felt that he could not cope with the academic aspect of the school as he felt pressured. "I experienced some discipline problems because of the home work.... I never used to finish it because of the amount as it was due the next day or day after". Nadia simply felt that she could not relate to the

students there because of how they acted. "I didn't really like the children in the other school"....."It was an all-girls school and they just used to act different". They also both shared experiences of their previous schools' call and dismissal time, which were not compatible with their parents' schedules. As the literature suggests, Kerbow (1996) indicated that students transfer for 'exit' and 'attraction' reasons. It was clear from the students' responses that they transferred for 'exit' reasons which were coupled with 'attraction' reasons as they disclosed the desirable characteristics of Oasis Secondary.

The students all revealed that they knew that they were transferring into a "good school" that has "good discipline and good teachers" and receives "good CXC results". Anthony's description of the school when he said "the school environment is a very good and friendly environment", suggests that the ethos of the school impacts one's experiences. Anthony expected the school to be more all-rounded, with a balance of academics and extra-curricular activities. In his words, "I knew it was a good school and an all-round school with the sports and stuff". He was satisfied with the ethos of the school, as his expectations and the reality of having sports enhanced his transitioning experiences. The students held these perceptions of the school because of what was told to them by family members and friends who attended the school. Producing well-disciplined students, obtaining exemplary examination results, and an overall friendly atmosphere are some aspects of the school ethos describe by the students. They expected favourable attributes in their new school. Based on their description of their experiences in the early stages of transfer in the new school environment, in addition to the school ethos, the experiences with their peers and teachers played a major role in their

transitioning experiences.

THEME: Peer and Teacher Relationships

All students unanimously stated that they made friends when students approached them and they all, with the exception of Sharon, knew at least one person, either family member or friend, who was going to the school at the time of transfer, thus making their experiences more comfortable. Roger, Anthony, Nadia and Sharon described their experiences with their peers and teachers in their new school as being positive. Donna expressed some negative experiences with peers and one teacher. Through personal communication with Anthony's mother, it was revealed that when he transferred, his initial experiences with some peers were not positive.

Donna does not socialise with some of her peers because she is of the opinion that "they like too much confusion". She does state though that there are only a few students she considers her friends. Donna suffered from verbal abuse from her peers as she says "at first it was bad ‘cause... you know... it had children who bullied me a little bit”. She also said that she was verbally bullied but could not recall all the things that were said to her. "I can’t really remember all the stuff they used to tell me nah, but it was hurtful stuff”. Not intentionally on the part of the students, the reliance on memory to retrieve retrospective data as well as the possibility of information being withheld are two limitations that were encountered. After all the interviews were completed, Anthony's mother, Mrs. Diaz (personal communication, March 24, 2014) revealed that Anthony was being bullied for a short period when he was transferred into the school in Form Two. Anthony did not reveal this information during his interview, so when he was asked

about this during a second interview, he said that he did not remember when interviewed initially, he remembered when he went home and then mentioned it to his mother. He disclosed that he only experienced this verbal abuse from some of the boys in his class for a short time in Form Two when he first came, and it discontinued after that period. In his interview, he did say that at first he "didn't really feel part of the class" and although he says that presently he gets along with his peers, he spends a lot of time with students in other classes, specifically the higher Forms.

Donna revealed that for one teacher, his teaching strategies were difficult to comprehend and her experiences with him were not favourable. "It was just one teacher I didn't have a good experience with, Mr. John, he's just different"... "sometimes I don't understand what he is teaching". When hesitance was sensed in her response, probing was not done as she seemed uncomfortable discussing this teacher. In Roger's case, he said that he did not have any problems with any of his teachers, but some of his responses and those of two teachers did not support his statement. Through his statement of ..."they treat me kind of normal but they think I should be doing more work... they moving at a pace and I trying to catch up, but they find I not doing enough work", indicates that his experiences with them are not totally positive. He also disclosed that he had to be disciplined for not doing home-work and for loitering in the corridor. His lack of behaviour in the classroom (mentioned by the male teacher), and not bringing his book to school were matters that required the meeting of the male teacher with Roger's parent. The disciplinary issues the Dean had to address, the male teacher's statement, and Roger's description of his treatment by his teachers as "kind of normal" along with his view that

teachers could assist students if they "cut them a little slack", indicates that he did experience minor issues with some teachers. He admitted that as he reflected on his circumstances, he realised that the teachers were really helping him. At present, Anthony, Donna and Nadia are all satisfied with the bonds they have developed with their teachers and peers. The perception of teachers being "really nice", and developing a closer relationship to teachers are some positive experiences that assisted students in the transitioning process.

What strategies did these students adopt in the transitioning process?

THEME: Implemented Coping Strategies

The Form Three Dean, Miss Gibson, was the Dean intentionally selected to be interviewed because of the behavioural/disciplinary aspect and also because Roger mentioned her during his interview as the Dean who placed him in the remedial programme. Her participation in the study was therefore significant in understanding the experiences of the students. The other two teachers' views were also crucial because of their interaction with the students - being their Form and Subject Teachers. The researcher acquired a sense of the varying strategies that the students adopted during the transitioning process.

Miss Gibson revealed that Roger had some behavioural and academic issues upon transferring. According to her, she had to "handle matters involving many things such as smoking, drinking and not doing homework". She felt that he was liming with the wrong company and was unsure if he was the ringleader or if he was being influenced by some of the boys who were always getting into trouble. Mr. Fraser, the male teacher who was

interviewed, noticed that the students in class try to speak like Roger and even follow him as he was seen as being "popular" and "cool". In his view, Roger seemed to have an effect on the students. "I think that the students are afraid of Roger... because they see him as being popular", he said. According to Mr. Fraser, he was quiet when he was first transferred and then his behaviour negatively changed as he is portrayed as the ringleader in the class. For Sharon, the friendliness of the students made it easy for her feelings to change from sadness and fear to happiness. Her strategy included taking full advantage of forming close-knit relationships and seeking social support from the students in her class. One strategy Donna adopted was associating herself with the wrong company which negatively affected her grades. Upon realising that this was not benefitting her, she made the decision to isolate herself and minimize the time she spent with the students in her class as, to her, some of them are somewhat distracting. "I really prefer to stick by myself". Anthony adopted two strategies. He alienated himself from his classmates due to initially not feeling as part of the class in Form Two, and although two years have passed, this approach seems to satisfy him. He formed a bond with the Physical Education teacher and he also, along with Nadia, sought involvement extra-curricular activities as a strategy for transitioning to the school by participating in cricket and netball respectively.

How is the transitioning process affecting students' experiences at Oasis Secondary?

THEME: Developmental Competencies

1) Academic

The SEA scores of Roger, Sharon and Donna were obtained. Anthony's and Nadia's were unavailable. At SEA, all three students' scores were below the required

scores applicable for entry into Oasis Secondary. The academic records of all students were obtained from their previous schools to understand how they were performing academically before being transferred. Four of the five students experienced a decline in their grades (the other student remained at the same level) after the first term in their previous school (see Table 3). A similar pattern was found upon entry into Oasis Secondary where there was a decline in academic performance in the first term after being transferred into the school (see Table 4).

Common to all students were the levels of difficulty adjusting to the academic aspect of transitioning, with varying degrees. In Roger's view, "the standard of work was *plenty* times higher than the school that I came from Miss"..... "anytime I get the hang of it Miss, the work just keeps getting harder", indicating difficulty coping with the academics at Oasis Secondary ". All the students experienced adjustment difficulties because to them "it was plenty work" and "the work was kind of hard". They were also introduced to unfamiliar subjects upon transfer.

Difficulty coping with the academic aspect of transferring affected the students' experiences. They realised that they had to apply extra effort in order to reach the same academic standards as their peers. "If I don't study I would not do well, but if I do study, I do well", Sharon confessed. Anthony's effort came in the form of seeking assistance in English and Mathematics from his sister and cousin who are both attending University. He acknowledged that he was not performing well as he said "I wasn't doing too well... I was falling back in my subjects. It was plenty work". Donna made the decision to apply

more time to her studies because she wanted to succeed in her CSEC examinations, and Roger is willingly accepting assistance from Form Six students in Oasis Secondary.

Miss Gibson saw a need for an intervention upon noticing Roger's academic and behavioural issues. She noticed that he was having literacy and numeracy issues and the transitioning process was negatively affecting his experiences, as his academic and behavioural developmental factors seemed to deteriorate. She stated:

> This past year his progress seemed to deteriorate and his name kept being called involving matters with other boys in the class who were always getting into trouble... I realized that he was having some difficulties with his school work so I advised him to study harder.

Mr. Fraser found that Roger's performance was "awful... poor" when he first transferred into the school, but has seen a slight improvement in his attitude towards his work by "trying to catch up". However, Mr. Fraser found that he still struggles in the classroom. Anthony and Nadia were also mentioned as being academically weak by the Mr. Fraser and Miss Charles.

The academic percentages for Roger and Anthony from the time they were transferred into the school to now have remained below 50% (see Table 4). Nadia, Sharon and Donna have succeeded in maintaining an average above 50%, except in their first term in the school where they were below 50%, which shows that they did not academically adjust in the first term (see Table 4). Donna mistakenly said that her school work dropped in the second term when she transferred, but her records show that it was

in her third term that there was a decline in her overall percentage. Sharon's academic records confirm her statement of improving after the first term when she said "I went up real plenty".

Table 3 shows the percentages of the students obtained from their previous schools and Table 4 shows the percentages from the term they were transferred into Oasis Secondary to present (Term Two, 2013/2014).

Table 3

Students' Academic Performance at Previous School

Name of Student	**Gender**	**Present Form Level**	**Academic Performance (%)**			
			Form 1			Form 2
			Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1
Roger	Male	3	40.0	34.5	39.1	
Anthony	Male	4	60.5	37.4	35.0	51.0
Nadia	Female	2	56.1	53.0	54.2	
Sharon	Female	3	62.0	44.4	50.0	40.1
Donna	Female	4	63.0	63.1	58.6	68.0

Table 4

Students' Academic Performance at Oasis Secondary

Name of Student	**Gender**	**Year of Transfer into school**	**Present Form Level**	**Academic Performance (%)**							
				Form 2			Form 3			Form 4	
				Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 1	Term 2
Roger	Male	2012	3	38.0	38.2	43.4	36.5	40.1	-	-	-
Anthony	Male	2012	4	-	34.1	30.4	35.0	32.0	*	30.5	28.2
Nadia	Female	2013	2	48.1	50.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sharon	Female	2013	3	-	36.5	60.0	61.2	60.5	-	-	-
Donna	Female	2012	4	-	47.0	56.5	50.4	55.0	*	60.0	52.5

* No grade. National Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (NCSE).

Figure 10 shows the students' percentages from their previous schools to present at Oasis Secondary. The marks as documented in Tables 3 and 4, are displayed in Figure 10 to show the contour of academic performance, showing continuity of grades from Form One to their present Form (Term Two, 2013/2014).

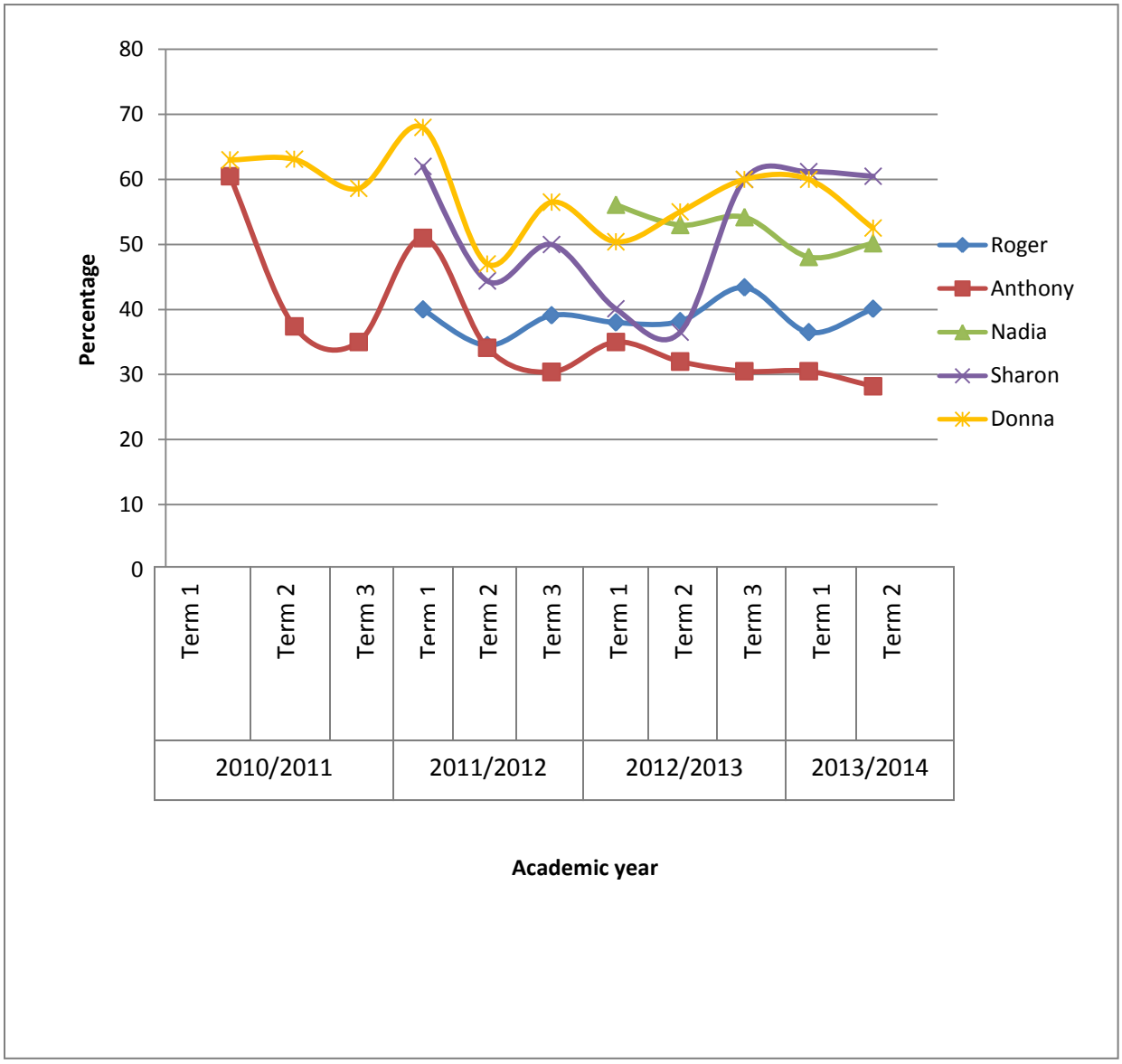


Figure 10. Contour of academic performance of students from 2010 to 2014.

2) Behavioural

Although Miss Charles and Mr. Fraser gave similar statements about the students being academically weak, they gave contradictory statements on Roger's behaviour in the classroom. Mr. Fraser lamented that in the classroom, Roger does not walk with his books for his class and "just puts his head on the desk or grinning foolishly". From Mr. Fraser' estimation, Roger's behaviour changed from being quiet to being a ringleader within one month. Miss Charles found that Roger's behaviour was commendable as she disclosed that in her class "he shows interest because he is always asking questions, especially if he doesn't understand something". It was as though these teachers were not discussing the same individual. These differing behavioural patterns may be his way of showing the impact his teachers had on him and how the strategies they used in the classroom affected him and his experiences at the school. Miss Gibson did disclose that he confided his dislike for some teachers to her, which is an indication that his behaviour in the classroom is based on his feelings towards his teachers and the subject area. Although Miss Gibson found that Roger's progress seemed to deteriorate during the year of transfer, she did commend his efforts to improve in his academic abilities. She noted that his delinquent friends "tease him, but he is focused and does not care about what they say". Hopefully, his behavioural issues will subsequently commensurate with the effort he is putting forth toward his academic progress.

Miss Charles also observed that Anthony's behaviour changed from when he was first transferred. He reaches to class late and is more talkative in the classroom. His transitioning process from Form Two to Four - difficulty bonding with classmates and

academic issues - has led to noticeable behavioural changes. Consultation with the teachers on behavioural aspects of the students' transitioning process revealed that the male students had more behavioural issues than the female. The female students were found to be better behaved in the classroom. This was corroborated by statements from the teachers. "Sharon was never in any disciplinary problems. She is well-behaved", said Miss Gibson. Mr. Fraser admitted that "Nadia doesn't give any trouble in terms of behaviour, she is quiet in class... the girls are quieter in the class than the boys".

3) Social and Emotional

Of all the students, the transitioning experiences for Donna adversely affected her social experiences in the new school. Being verbally bullied from when she was first transferred, to as recently as last term (Term One, 2013/2014), impeded the progress of the social aspect of her transitioning progress. Although Anthony suffered the same verbal abuse from some male classmates in Form Two, his social life at the school was not hampered to the same degree as Donna's. Her emotional abuse lasted for a longer period than his and had a greater effect on her. Luckily for Sharon, Nadia and Roger, they experienced favourable social experiences upon transitioning and they stated that they were satisfied with the friendships they developed and maintained. The transitioning process for them, therefore, positively affected their social experiences.

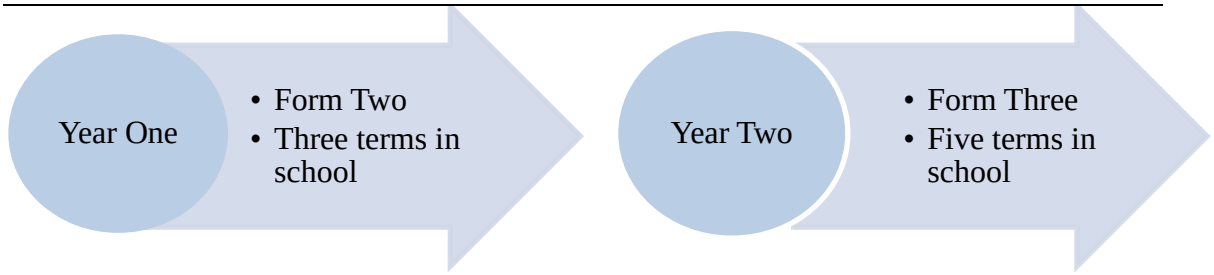
THEME: Recommendations for Easing the Transitioning Process

Students and teachers gave recommendations to help ease the transitioning process for students who transfer. Their advice ranged from adopting programmes to assist students with academic difficulty to simply treating them "normal" by spending more time with the students. Roger gave his views on making the transitioning process easier for students. He spoke from experience as he explained that sometimes a teacher may ask a question about a topic that was covered in Form One and expect all the students to have knowledge about the topic - even the students who transferred into the school. According to him, this embarrasses the student, so he recommends that the teacher should "cut them a little slack" but at the same time "set the rules" because the students are in a new school and have to adjust to the new rules. Sharon also spoke from experience and felt that if teachers and students are friendly, students would adjust easier. This advice given by her was one that assisted her in adjusting socially and emotionally to the school. The recommendations given covered the academic, behavioural and social developmental factors of the students.

In Tables 5 to 9, the transitioning process is listed for each student according to terms. These tables show how the students felt, the strategies they adopted, and the effect of the transitioning process on their experiences from their first term of transfer. The changes in their feelings, academic progress, behaviour, and strategies can be viewed to understand how the transitioning process differed or were similar for each student.

Table 5

Process of Transitioning for Roger



• Unhappy with transfer. • Feelings of anger about leaving previous school. • Feelings of minor excitement in attending a "good school".	• Happy with transfer. Feelings of satisfaction in new school. • Occasional feeling of nostalgia - missing some school activities in previous school. • "Comfortable and relaxed" in new school.
• Reserved - "wasn't much of a talker" Did not want to associate with students in new school due to reluctance to transfer from previous school.	• Became a ringleader. • Classmates played a major role in assisting in the adjustment process. Formed friendships.
• Academic difficulty. Percentage below 50%. • Not receiving assistance with academics.	• Percentage increased in Term One, then increased slightly in Term Two. Percentage remains below 50%. • Tutored by Sixth Form students four days per week.
Male teacher's perspective: • Poor academic performance. • Does not bring subject text to school. • No interest shown in the classroom.	Male teacher's perspective: • Brings subject text to school. Trying to catch up but still struggling. • No observed improvement in academic performance.

Female teacher's perspective: • Academically weak when first transferred into school.	Female teacher's perspective: • Shows interest in the classroom.
Dean's perspective: • Behavioural issues - smoking and consuming alcohol. • Associating with clique of troublesome boys.	Dean's perspective: • More focused. • Displays confidence in the classroom.

Table 6

Process of Transitioning for Anthony

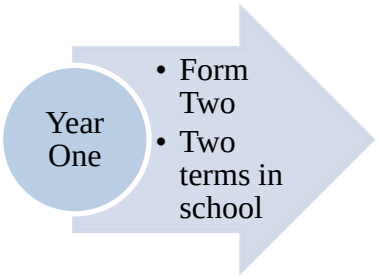
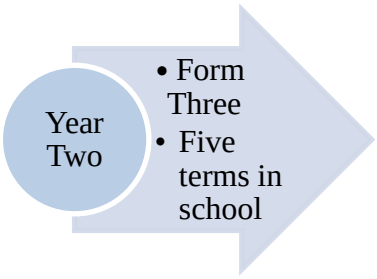
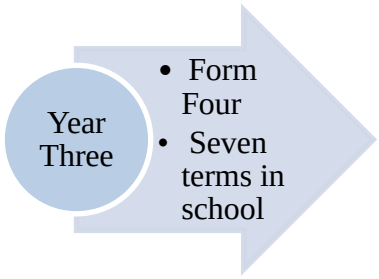
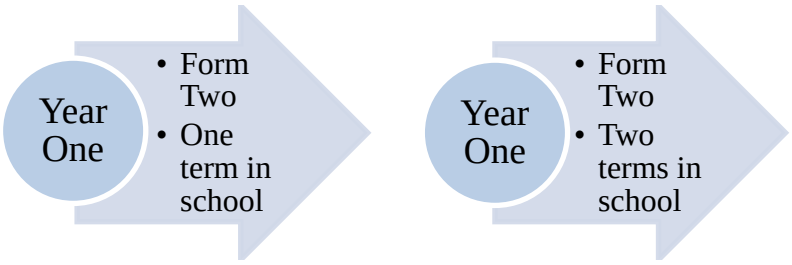
		
• Unhappy in previous school. • Happy with transfer.	• Happy with transfer.	• Happy with transfer.
• Experienced verbal bullying from male students.	• Verbal bullying discontinued.	• Does not experience bullying.
• Did not feel as part of the class. Spent more time with students already known than with classmates in new school.	• Associating with students in the higher Form classes.	• Continues to socialize with students in the higher Form classes than with classmates.
• Experienced academic difficulty. Overall percentage below 50%.	• Slight increase in Term Three and declined in Term Four. NCSE exam written in Term Five. Overall percentage below 50%.	• Percentage declined in Term Six and declined again in Term Seven. Overall percentage below 50%.
• Joined the school cricket team.	• Member of school cricket team.	• Continues to be a member of the school cricket team.

Table 7

Process of Transitioning for Nadia



• Unhappy in previous school. Happy about transferring from former school.	• Happy about transferring into new school.
• Scared about being a new student and meeting new students.	• Accustomed to classmates, comfortable in class. Formed friendships with classmates.
• Felt lonely.	• Not lonely.
• Academic difficulty Overall percentage just below 50%.	• Slight improvement in percentage. Overall percentage 50.2%.
• Not involved in extra-curricular activities in school.	• Involved in extra-curricular activity.

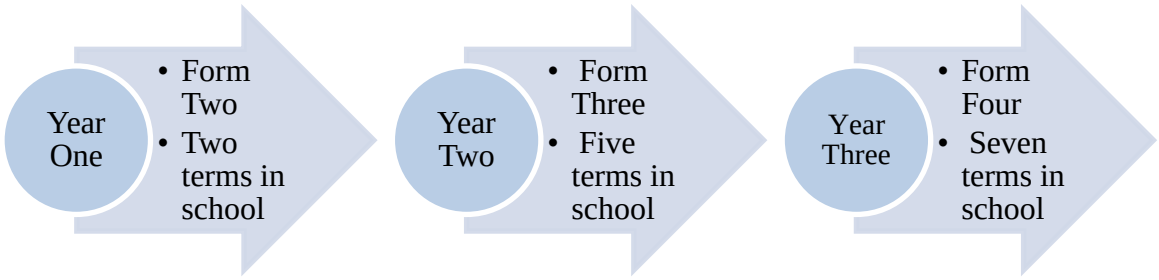
Table 8

Process of Transitioning for Sharon

Year One •Form Two •Two terms in school	Year Two •Form Three • Four terms in school
• Unwilling to transfer.	• Happy about transfer.
• Feelings of sadness. • Wanted to return to previous school. • Missed friends in previous school. • Afraid to talk and make friends.	• Feelings of satisfaction in new environment. • Formed new friends. • Established good relationships in new school.
• Percentage below 50% at the end of first term in the school. • Percentage significantly increased at the end of second term in school. Overall percentage above 50%.	• Percentage increases slightly then decreases slightly. Overall percentage remains above 50%.

Table 9

Process of Transitioning for Donna



• Feelings of both happiness and sadness about transferring to a new school. • Frightened • Shy • Scared about coming to a new school.	• "Not frightened and sad anymore". • Feels more comfortable in school.	• Comfortable in school.
• Experienced verbal bullying from female students.	• Verbal bullying ceased. • Formed friendships with students.	• Verbal bullying resumed in Term Six and stopped in Term Seven. • Does not socialize with the popular students. • Socializing with a few students in class.
• Associating with two students who were a negative influence.	• Continues to associate with students.	• Stopped associating with students.

• Percentage below 50% at the end of first term in school. • At the end of the second term, percentage significantly increases. • Percentage above 50%.	• Percentage decreases in Term Three and increases in Term Four. • NCSE exam written in Term Five. • Percentage above 50%.	• Percentage increases in Term Six and decreases in Term Seven. • Percentage above 50%.

Summary

An analysis of the experiences of the transitioning process of students who were transferred into Oasis Secondary between 2010 and 2013 have been analysed in this Chapter. Their experiences, the strategies they adopted and how the transitioning process is affecting their experiences in their new school, are all dependent on factors such as their feelings and experiences before and after they transferred, how they coped after transfer and what measures were taken by them. The amount of time spent in the school was also a factor.

Generally, leaving a school where friendships were already developed generated unhappy feelings, which were short-lived as they became more familiar with the new school and eventually formed new friends. All students had prior knowledge about their new school, so they knew to an extent what to expect. The school lived up to their expectations of being a "good school" with "good teachers" so this perception of the school having a welcoming atmosphere influenced their experiences. Their experiences with their peers and teachers influenced how they felt in the school as those who offered support enhanced favourable experiences, thus making the transitioning experience easier. Overall, there was a general sense of satisfaction in attending a school with an environment that lived up to their expectations and facilitated them.

In the process of adjusting to the new school, particular strategies were adopted to feel a sense of belonging. Strategies ranged from participation in extra-curricular activities to associating with students who were a negative influence. Appropriate strategies were adopted for some students to make the transitioning process easier, which

worked for them. Those whose strategies did not work in their favour, alternative ones were employed.

The transitioning process is a difficult one for some as there exists some academic, behavioural, emotional and social challenges. The connection between these factors is crucial and this was realised when one student associated herself with individuals who negatively influenced her social life, resulting in a decline in her academic performance. For another student, as the academic aspect in transitioning was weak, his behaviour eventually started to deteriorate. The essence of these developmental factors involved in the transitioning process determined whether the students' experiences were challenging or not.

These students who experienced transitioning gave noteworthy advice on how to make the transitioning process easier for students who transfer. Their recommendations, along with those of the teachers, are significant to this study because they spoke from their lived experiences.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter reprises the findings in view of the literature. The literature mainly focused on transferring from the primary to the secondary school with emphasis on the negative impacts and minimal documentation on the positive aspects of transferring and the transitioning process. While some of the findings concur with emerging issues from the literature, there were other components that unfolded during the transitioning process at Oasis Secondary. These will be discussed in this chapter. Recommendations that are linked to the findings that emerged from the study to help ease the transitioning process for students will also be presented.

Discussion

The transitioning process of the students who transferred into Oasis Secondary was explored in this study. Various factors that influence transitioning were seen in the literature - academic, pedagogical, personal, social, emotional, and gender issues. In this discussion, the findings that emerged from this study will be examined to corroborate or refute the findings in the literature review.

Immediately after transferring, the students who transferred in Oasis Secondary experienced feelings of isolation (Hertzog & Morgan, 1998) and anxiety (Galton et al., 1999), supporting findings in the literature. Although some of them were familiar with

students attending the school, this did not dismiss the fact that transferring generates feelings of isolation and anxiety because of moving from the known to the unknown (Mc Gee et al., 2003).

Currently, they are all at different stages of the transitioning process, ranging from two terms to seven terms. They all experienced a decline in their performance in the first term after transfer. To verify the decline in academic performance upon transfer, their academic documents from their previous schools were reviewed. This corroborates the literature (Galton et al., 1999), which states that students experience a decline in academic achievement immediately after they transfer into a new school. This dip in performance, however, was temporary (Kerbow, 1996) and (Galton et al., 1999), because the students who transferred into Oasis Secondary had not yet adjusted to the school. Four students' grades improved in the second term after transfer.

The ages of the students who transferred into the school are 13 to 16 years old and they all experienced the decline, supporting the finding from the Suffolk Education Department (1997) that transitioning has a negative impact on achievement despite the age of the student.

The students at Oasis Secondary experienced this dip in performance due to the change in the educational environment in terms of higher academic standards and curricular incoherence (Rumberger et al., 1999). The findings also corroborate the transfer shock theory, Hills (1965), because the students were in an unfamiliar environment and did not adjust to the new procedures (Youngman, 1978; Measor & Woods 1984; Delamont & Galton, 1986; Hargreaves & Galton, 1999). The students also

experienced curriculum incoherence (Rumberger et al., 1999) at Oasis Secondary as they all expressed that some of the subjects in the school were new to them as they had not been introduced to them in their previous schools. They were disadvantaged in that aspect.

The average time period suggested for students to adjust to the new school environment is within six months (two terms), and up to one year to improve in academic performance (three terms) (Mertin, Haebich & Lokan, 1989; Sebba, 2000, as cited in Mc Gee et al., 2003). This finding was not discovered at Oasis Secondary, because after the decline in performance in the first term, the students' grades have continued to fluctuate at the end of every term. This proves that time varies for each student depending on the relationship between other contributing factors of transitioning and the rate of adjustment.

The differences in transitioning for gender were highlighted in the literature. After the first term in their new school, all the female students performed better academically than the male students, thus supporting findings from Keeley and House (1993). Although all the students' grades did fluctuate, the female students have somewhat adjusted academically because they have maintained grades above 50% from the second term after transferring to now. The two male students, however, have not yet adjusted academically, as their grades have remained below 50% since transferring. It must be noted that in this study, three female and two male students participated, so the data is female-dominated and not balanced in terms of gender.

Mc Gee et al., (2003) indicated that female students coped better than male students during transitioning. At Oasis Secondary, the girls coped better academically

and were also better behaved than the boys in the classroom (as confirmed by the teachers). The literature gave reasons such as the boys having "negative attitudes towards learning", while the girls were more "attentive to school requirements" (Mc Gee et al., 2003, p. 51). The link between the attitude of the boys and learning, particularly Roger, had to do with the class and the teacher, and not particularly having a negative attitude towards learning. It was found that he applied effort in certain classes, as he favoured some teachers more than others. Galton and Hargreaves (2003) found that the association with liking a teacher and subject determined how well a student progressed. The challenges Roger experienced in some classes were probably due to the nature of the teacher, as the literature found that relationship between the teacher and the student influenced performance and the student's perceived abilities (Eccles et al., 1993). The personal, social and emotional aspect of transitioning in relation to gender need further investigation because missing friends, or particular characteristics in the previous school, and facing bullying were experienced by both male and female gender. The students disclosed that the social element of transferring negatively affected them in the initial stages.

A finding that disconfirmed the literature on extra-curricular activities was from Anthony's performance. Mc Gee et al., (2003) found that students who were involved in extra-curricular and other school activities were more likely to progress academically during transition. This was not so for Anthony. Out of all the students, he is the one most involved in extra-curricular activities. He has been involved in and excels in sports from the initial stages of transferring, but his academic performance has been declining after

his first term in Form Three, having spent three terms in the school. When reviewing his 'Process of Transitioning' Table (see Table 6) in an attempt to ascertain what factors caused this decline during this period of transitioning, he indicated that he had adjusted to the school, so it was unclear what caused this low performance. He associates with students in higher Forms, but it was uncertain if this behaviour had any negative impact on his achievement. These findings prove that Anthony's strength was not in academics, but in non-academic areas.

All the students experienced some form of dissatisfaction in their previous school environment which initiated the transfer. Even though challenges were faced in their new school, the students' prior knowledge of and positive overall perspectives of Oasis Secondary accounted for their feelings of comfort and satisfaction in their present school environment. This therefore supports the literature which states that more advantaged and stable environments fosters developmental competence (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

The students' feelings changed as they transitioned into the school. Initially there were feelings of isolation, anxiety, sadness, anger and fear, but those feelings gradually diminished as they became more familiar with the students, teachers and school. The feelings of the three students who had mixed feelings about the transfer have changed to positive feelings, dismissing the negative. The two students who were unhappy in their previous schools and were happy about transferring out of those schools, remained with the same feelings of satisfaction about the transfer.

Two important findings emerged from this study that were not found in the literature. The first one pertained to parents choosing their alma mater as their school of

choice for their children. Those parents who sought transfers for their children into a school that they also attended shows that they were/are satisfied with the school environment and wanted their children to experience the same quality of education they received. This aspect of parents choosing their past schools for their children could be investigated to determine how this affects students' feelings about attending the same school as their parents, and whether this impacted their experiences. This data will add to the body of research.

The second finding that emerged from the study that was not found in the literature was the perceptions of the students who initially passed for Oasis Secondary after writing SEA. Without being interviewed, these students' perceptions emerged in this study based on the how they treated the students who transferred into the school, both positively and negatively. This was an issue for two students who were verbally bullied when they started attending Oasis Secondary. On the other hand, there were those who warmly welcomed and were friendly towards the students who were transferred into their classes. It would be interesting to explore how students feel about new students, and what justifies their attitudes and behaviours toward them. Investigating how students feel about new students transferring into 'their school' would also add to the body of research on transfer and transitioning.

Recommendations

These are recommendations that are linked to the findings that emerged from the study to help ease the transitioning process for students. The administration should request the students' academic and behavioural records from their previous schools so that teachers will have knowledge of the students' background and be apprised about the student that is coming into the school. These documents should be examined prior to the student's acceptance so that the school is better prepared for the incoming student.

To address the academic issues experienced by the students who transfer, the administration should adopt a policy where the students are accepted at the beginning of the first term and not in the second and third terms. This should minimise the loss of components of the curriculum that are introduced at the start of the academic year, and allow the student to cover the full three terms' work. The school should also organise tutoring programmes during the July/August vacation so that the students are academically prepared and are attuned to the curriculum before they enter their new school. Organisation of remedial classes in all subject areas should also be available to the students during the term. These remedial classes can be administered by the teachers, students in Sixth Form, or specialised tutors.

Sensitization programmes for the teachers must also be addressed. Teachers often overlook the fact that the students who have transferred into the school are coming from the known to the unknown. Particular attention must be paid to the students' needs upon transfer. If teachers are sensitized to issues related to transfer, they may adopt a more welcoming and caring attitude toward the students and foster positive teacher-student

relationships. Teachers would also be cognizant of the impact they have on the student and his/her life. Students should also be sensitized to those who are transferring into the school to promote positive peer relationships.

The behavioural aspect can be addressed by reducing the number of students in the classroom. Forty-three students is a large number for one teacher to effectively control because it requires vast class management skills. The Ministry of Education should reconsider allocating more than thirty-five or forty students per class. The appointment of a Guidance Counsellor to the school will also aid in addressing the behavioural aspect of the student.

In terms of social and emotional factors, the Guidance Officer should conduct sessions with the students immediately after transferring into the school to offer guidance and support. The Guidance Counsellor can offer assistance in and enhance the all-round (academic, personal, social) development of the students. Sessions can be conducted with the students on adopting proper study skills and how to manage social issues. Orientation programmes for the students who have transferred are also recommended to relieve any feelings of anxiety. This will include social activities to alleviate the social and emotional issues while assisting with adjustment to the school.

The school can also initiate a mentoring programme to promote the all-round development of the student. The mentors could be role models in the form of a 'big brother' or a 'big sister' in the school. These mentors can have weekly sessions with the students as often as the need arises. This programme would assist students whose

strengths may be non-academic, to help balance both academic and non-academic pursuits.

Reflection

This project report would not be complete without my reflection. Choosing a topic on which to investigate was a challenge as I probed many topics before a decision was made. I consulted with the Vice-Principal of the school (who was the Acting Principal at the time) and another esteemed colleague on what topic I should pursue. As my concentration is in Youth Guidance, I already knew that I wanted my focus to be the students of the school. I wanted to research a topic that would assist them in some meaningful way, and one that was of interest to me, especially as I would be conducting the study for months. Upon meeting my supervisor and communicating my ideas to her, she immediately guided me on procedures for successful completion of my project.

I was fortunate in that the students selected to participate were all eager to share their views. Though I am an authority figure to the students, they are comfortable with me, and as expected, I acquired a wealth of information from them. Their parents/guardians were very supportive when they promptly signed and returned the consent letters the day after they were given to them, thus enabling a quick start to data collection. After the enjoyment I felt in collecting the data by conversing with the participants and hearing their views, then came the laborious part of analyzing the data which took a considerable amount of time, proving that qualitative research is indeed time-consuming.

My experience of transitioning came in the form of transferring from the Ministry of Culture to pursue teaching at the Ministry of Education - two different environments. I left my friends and colleagues to enter an environment where everyone and everything was new. Luckily for me, my new colleagues warmly welcomed me on my first day, so my feelings of isolation were short-lived. Everyone's experiences are not the same, as some individuals adjust immediately, while for others, the transitioning experience adversely affects them. The major factor facilitating my transition was the accommodating nature of the teachers and the administration.

I believe that I have developed as a researcher during this journey. Having read the vast literature on the topic, I have been enlightened. As a teacher, I am more aware of the feelings and issues of the students and how I can provide support for them. This topic was essential, because the relevant stakeholders can now be privy to the experiences of the students who transfer into Oasis Secondary. The necessary procedures, such as a formal adjustment system, can now be implemented to assist the students. Since the study was conducted in one school in Trinidad and Tobago, it is suggested that further research of this nature be done, both regionally and locally.

Conclusion

This study provided insight into the experiences of students who were transferred into Oasis Secondary over the past three years. Both the positive and negative aspects of their transitioning process have been uncovered to support and supplement the literature. As a result of the findings from this study, recommendations have been made for the purpose of ensuring a smooth transition into the school upon transfer and thereafter.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to the Principal Requesting Permission to Conduct Research in the School

20/01/14

The Principal

_____
_____
_____

Dear _____

I am currently pursuing my Masters in Education at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. I am conducting research on the issue of student transfers and the transitioning process. Prior to your appointment as the Principal of this school, I consulted with the past Acting Principal on a suitable research study that would benefit the school and the participants involved. We both recognised the importance of conducting this study, as the students who were transferred into the school often appeared to experience adjustment difficulties. This research project is a requirement for successful completion of my Masters Degree and will be conducted under the supervision of Ms. Shahiba Ali, School of Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

I am informing you of my intention to conduct interviews with a total of six students from the Forms Two, Three and Four Levels who were transferred into this school from 2010 to 2013. Letters will be sent to the parents/guardians of these students

for their permission to allow their children/wards to participate in this study. In order to acquire additional information, two Form teachers and one Dean will also be interviewed. These interview sessions will be conducted during regular school hours, at a time that is convenient for all persons involved such that there will be interruption or suspension of tuition time and other school activities.

All the necessary steps will be taken to ensure that ethical considerations are observed. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the students, teachers and the school, pseudonyms will be used in the study. Any information presented will not identify the participants and the institution.

The findings of this study will be shared with all relevant stakeholders of Oasis Secondary with the view to improve the general standards of the school.

If you require additional information or have any questions, you can contact me at my mobile number _____, or my email address _____.

Thank you for your support.

Respectfully,

SHARLA ANTOINE

Teaching Registration # 51554

APPENDIX B

Letter to Parents/Guardians Requesting Permission to Interview their Children/Wards

20/01/2014

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am currently pursuing my Masters in Education at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine and am conducting research on the issue of student transfers and the transitioning process. This research project is a requirement for successful completion of my Masters Degree and will be conducted under the supervision of Ms. Shahiba Ali, School of Education, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine.

I am asking your permission to interview your child/ward for a maximum time period of thirty (30) minutes where he/she will be asked questions on his/her experiences at his/her previous school as well as this school. The interview will be conducted during regular school hours at a day and time that is convenient for your child/ward so that there will be no interference with his/her class schedule and other school activities.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the name of the schools as well as your child/ward's name will not be used in the study; pseudonyms will be used. Any information presented will not be linked to his/her personal information which may identify him/her. All the necessary steps will be taken to ensure that ethical considerations are observed.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and your child/ward may withdraw from participation at any point during the interview.

If you require additional information or have any questions, you can contact me at my mobile number _____, or my email address _____.

Please sign below and return to me indicating whether or not you give permission for your child/ward to be interviewed and be a participant of this research study.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Respectfully,

SHARLA ANTOINE

Teaching Registration # 51554

☐ I give permission for my son/daughter to be interviewed.

☐ I do not give permission for my son/daughter to be interviewed.

Child's Name (name in block letters)	
Parent/Guardian (name in block letters)	
Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

INTRODUCTION:

Inform the Interviewee about:

1) The Purpose of the Study

2) Confidentiality of the data obtained

3) Duration of the Interview

BODY:

Date of Interview:

Time of Interview:

Duration of Interview:

Place of Interview:

Interviewee:

Interviewer:

Interview Questions for Students

1. You were transferred into this school, how did you feel about being transferred here?
2. What sort of problems, if any, did you experience in your previous school?
3. What do you think are the reasons you were transferred into this school?
4. How much did you know about this school before being transferred here?
5. What were your expectations when you started coming to this school?
6. How will you describe your feelings when you first started coming to this school?

7. What were your experiences when you entered this school during your first week?
8. How were you coping with your school work when you first came here?
9. How were you treated by your peers during the first month?
10. Describe how you made friends during your first month at school.
11. Tell me about your experiences with your teachers during your first month.
12. How are you coping with your school work now?
13. Presently, how do you get along with your peers?
14. Give me a description of your relationships with your friends, right now.
15. How would you describe the way you are treated by your teachers?
16. What is your relationship like with your teachers?
17. To assist you in adjusting to this school, did you participate in any extra-curricular activities in the school?
18. In what ways do you think that this school is different from your previous school?
19. How much have your feelings changed from when you were first transferred to your feelings now?
20. In what ways would you say that this school has assisted you in the adjustment process?
21. What would you recommend that the teachers/school should do to help students smoothly transition into a new school environment?

Interview Questions for Teachers

1. When (name of student) was first transferred here, what did you observe about his/her behaviour?
2. How would you describe his/her academic performance when he/she was first transferred?
3. Have you noticed an improvement in his/her grades from the first term of transfer to the third term?
4. How would you describe his/her attitude towards his/her school work since entering the school?
5. How would you describe his/her behaviour in the classroom since entering the school?
6. Would you say that he/she has any disciplinary issues that need addressing?
7. From your observations, how does he/she get along with his/her classmates?
8. How would you describe your relationship with this student?
9. In what ways have you assisted him/her in adjusting to this school?
10. What would you recommend that the teachers/school should do to help students smoothly transition into a new school environment?

Interview Questions for Dean

1. How would you describe (name's) behaviour within the first term he/she was transferred into this school?
2. Have you noticed any changes in his/her behaviour within his/her first year in the school?
3. Would you say that he/she has any disciplinary issues that need addressing?
4. How would you describe his/her behaviour in the classroom?
5. From your observations, how does she get along with her peers?
6. In what ways have you assisted him/her in adjusting to this school?
7. What would you recommend that the teachers/school should do to help students smoothly transition into a new school environment?

CONCLUSION:

Thank the participant for participating in the study.

APPENDIX D

Sample of Roger's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	5th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	1:15pm
Duration of Interview:	29 minutes 57 seconds
Place of Interview:	Music Room
Interviewee:	Form Three Male Student, Roger - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good afternoon Roger. You were transferred into this school, how did you feel about being transferred here?

Good afternoon Miss. How did I feel about the transfer? I was settled in my other school. I came here at the beginning of Form Two. I wasn't happy 'cause I wanted to come to this school from the start……

Unhappy.

You mean after you wrote your SEA exams?

Yeah…..I wanted to come here…….but then I went to that school and it took me a whole lot of time to settle down, so when I do settle down and got comfortable then I realize that I got the transfer. I wasn't happy 'cause I already made friends and whatever down there Miss.

Difficulty adjusting.

Unhappy about leaving friends.

What sort of problems, if any, did you experience in your previous school?

No. I didn't have any problems, not really. It just took me long to settle down there. I didn't want to go to that school.

Difficulty adjusting. Did not want to attend school initially.

APPENDIX E

Sample of Anthony's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	11th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	9:55am
Duration of Interview:	19 minutes 45 seconds
Place of Interview:	Safety Officers' Office
Interviewee:	Form Four Male Student, Anthony - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good Morning Anthony. Let's begin. When were you transferred into this school?

Morning Miss. Hmm..... I was transferred into this school in Form Two. In the second term.

How did you feel about being transferred here?

I felt sort of good being transferring into this school because I had known people coming to this school, but some of the people I had known….. my cousins used to come this school…… [loud clapping in the background]. [Interview paused to locate another venue].

"Sort of good". Mixed feelings.

[Interview continues after five minutes]

Yes..... you were saying that your cousins came to this school..... were your cousins in this school when you were transferred here?

Yeah, one of my cousins. She was in this school. She was in Form Five.

Family member attending school. Familiarity with student.

APPENDIX F

Sample of Nadia's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	11th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	11:20am
Duration of Interview:	17 minutes 10 seconds
Place of Interview:	Music Room
Interviewee:	Form Two Female Student, Nadia - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good Morning Nadia. When were you transferred into this school?

At the beginning of Form Two Miss.

How did you feel about being transferred here?

I felt ok. I like being transferred in this school. I find it better, it have more people that I could relate to. I didn't really like the children in the other school.

Dislike for students in previous school.

Happy about transfer.

Why didn't you like the children in the other school?

I don't know. I just didn't really like them. It was an all-girls school and they just used to act different. I like it here, I am comfortable here.

Reason. Difficulty with interpersonal relationships.

Why do you think you were transferred into this school?

I think the other school was too far. My mummy have to drop my sister in Rainbow Primary and then go down there and we have to wake up really early to go there because the school starts twenty-five past seven and finish two o'clock.

Distance /Location issues.

Timing issues.

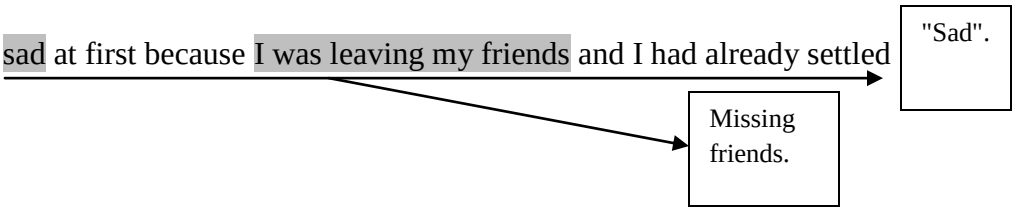
APPENDIX G

Sample of Sharon's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	5th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	2:00pm
Duration of Interview:	22 minutes 15 seconds
Place of Interview:	Music Room
Interviewee:	Form Three Female Student, Sharon - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

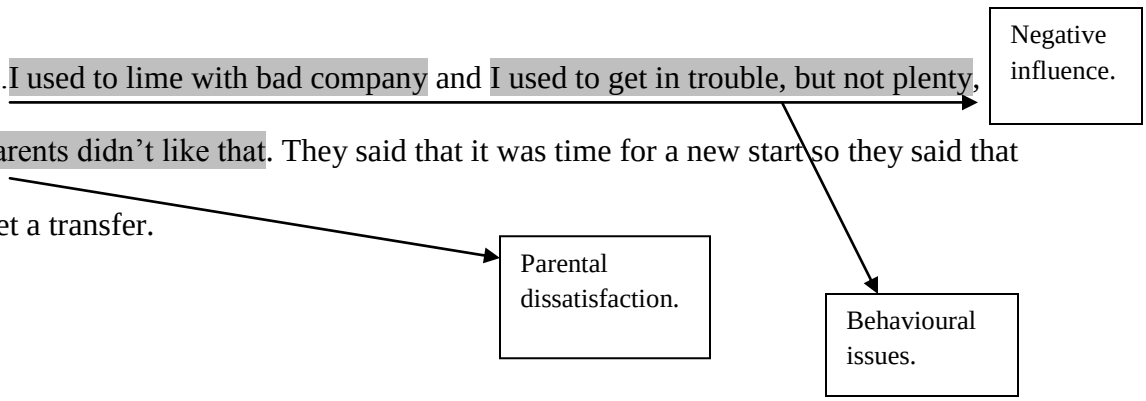
Good afternoon Sharon. You were transferred into this school, how did you feel about being transferred here?

Well I was kind of sad at first because I was leaving my friends and I had already settled down.



What sort of problems, if any, did you experience in your previous school?

Well…….I used to lime with bad company and I used to get in trouble, but not plenty, and my parents didn't like that. They said that it was time for a new start so they said that I had to get a transfer.



Was that when you were in Form One or Form Two?

No, Form Three.

APPENDIX H

Sample of Donna's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	6th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	2:00pm
Duration of Interview:	27 minutes 02seconds
Place of Interview:	Music Room
Interviewee:	Form Four Female Student, Donna - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good afternoon Donna. When were you were transferred into this school and how did you feel about being transferred here?

I came here in Form Two. Well, I feel kind of happy and sad at the same time, because I didn't really want to take a transfer. Because I was done getting... like... attached to the school already, but then I had transportation problems right, so my parents wanted me closer to home. I was happy because I was going to a better school and sad because I was leaving my friends.

"Happy" and "Sad" / Mixed feelings.

Reluctant to be transferred.

"Happy" and "Sad"/ Mixed feelings.

Problems with transportation.

So the transportation problem is one of the reasons you were transferred? What are other reasons you think you were transferred into this school?

Well, my previous school... it was... I don't know how to put it. It was a good school but it had some... a few bad children in the school that give the school a bad name, and well you know that in all schools things go wrong right? My daddy didn't like the other school too... because of the discipline of the students. It wasn't good.

Negative image.

Parental dissatisfaction.

Undisciplined students.

APPENDIX I

Sample of Dean's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	18th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	8:45am
Duration of Interview:	15 minutes 04seconds
Place of Interview:	Heads and Deans Room
Interviewee:	Form Three Dean, Miss Gibson - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good Morning Miss. You are the Form Three Dean and you also teach the students who are participating in my study. I want to ask you a few questions about them.

Good Morning to you. Ok, no problem.

As the Form Three Dean, how would you describe Roger's and Sharon's behaviour when they were first transferred into this school?

Sharon was never in any disciplinary problems. She is well-behaved. Roger had some issues. He was transferred into this school at the beginning of Form two, over one year ago. He was moved to Oasis Secondary from Coral High School, because his parents felt that he was hanging out with the wrong company. Within a short time of being his Dean, I had to handle matters involving many things such as smoking, drinking and not doing homework were among them. He had once more found his way to the wrong crowd or vice versa.

Well-disciplined.

Behavioural issues.

Behavioural and Academic issues.

Reason for transfer/Parental dissatisfaction.

APPENDIX J

Sample of Male Teacher's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	25th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	9:55pm
Duration of Interview:	19 minutes 30seconds
Place of Interview:	Heads and Deans Room
Interviewee:	Form Three Teacher, Mr. Fraser - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good Morning Sir. Since you teach the students who are participating in my study, and you are the Form teacher of two of those students, I want to ask you a few questions about them.

Good Morning. Sure. Sure. No problem.

What did you observe about the behaviour of the students who were transferred in your class when they were first transferred in this school?

Initially, they were a bit quiet and sort of out of their element. Roger eventually became a leader for the wrong reason. Students started to get his wayward ways. When he first came, he was quiet.....the first month.....and then he became a ringleader in the class. His behaviour started to change after a month.

"A bit quiet".

Negative influence.

Negative behaviour.

APPENDIX K

Sample of Female Teacher's Interview Transcript

Date of Interview:	25th February, 2014
Time of Interview:	11:00am
Duration of Interview:	16 minutes 12seconds
Place of Interview:	Heads and Deans Room
Interviewee:	Form Four Teacher, Miss Charles - Regular Roman Text
Interviewer:	**Researcher - Bold Roman Text**

Good Morning Miss. I just have a few questions to ask concerning a few of the students who were transferred here, the ones participating in my study.

Good Morning. Ok.

The students in Forms Two, Three and Four such as Roger, Sharon, Donna..... the ones in my study that you teach, what did you observe about their behaviour when they first transferred here?

Well when they first came, they were very quiet in the classroom and more or less stayed to themselves as they were new. They did not give any trouble or anything like that.

"Very quiet".

Isolation.

How would you describe their academic performance? How did they perform in your subject and overall in their academics?

Oh I have to check my Mark Book... just now... look here, in my subject they mostly have group work to do so the groups are allocated the same mark unless someone doesn't contribute at all. I have to look in the report book for the averages.