

FOCUS

IMPROVING THE TRANSITION OF ANCHORAGE PARK STUDENTS TO INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

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Sabbatical Report Term 3 2006

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PURPOSES

1. To identify the issues and challenges students from our small, decile 4 urban school face when making the transition to intermediate school.
2. To identify practices we need to change or strengthen in our school to ensure that our students are well prepared to meet the challenges of transition to intermediate school.

The analysis of the information gathered will enable us to identify issues and plan and implement ongoing measures to better prepare our students for intermediate.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

1. Focus group interviews with our Year 6 teachers to determine their perceptions of what skills etc students moving to Intermediate School need in terms of
 - Academic knowledge
 - Social skills
 - Work habits and attitudes
 - Levels of independence
 - Family support
 - School support

2. Focus group interviews with representatives from the Intermediate school Senior Management team and staff to determine their perceptions of what skills etc students moving to Intermediate School need in terms of
 - Academic knowledge
 - Social skills
 - Work habits and attitudes
 - Levels of independence
 - Family support
 - School support

In addition the Intermediate Staff was asked:

- What are the indicators of a successful Year 7 student?
 - What are their general perceptions of students from Anchorage Park School in terms of the above criteria?
 - What can our school and the Intermediate school do / continue to do to help improve the transition to Intermediate?
3. Student survey to determine their perceptions of key areas / issues in relation to their transition to intermediate.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS

Separate focus group sessions were conducted - one with our Year 6 teachers and one with the Intermediate Senior Management Team to determine their perceptions of what skills etc help ease the transition to Intermediate School in terms of

- Academic knowledge
- Work habits and attitudes
- Family support
- Social skills
- Levels of independence
- School support

The Intermediate school staff was also asked to comment on the following:

- What are the characteristics / indicators of successful, current Year 7 students?
- How did the Anchorage Park students present in terms of learning / behaviour etc?
- What can our school and the Intermediate school do / continue to do to help improve the transition to Intermediate?

Summary of Key Responses from Focus Group discussions
What skills etc help ease the transition to Intermediate School in terms of

1. Academic Achievement

Literacy –

Reading, Spelling, Written Language skills at or above chronological age / Curriculum Level 3.

Able to infer, read to learn & for deeper meaning

Able to use a range of Written Language processes effectively – eg. Vocabulary development, knowledge & use of sentence structures

Maths –

Good recall of basic facts & knowledge of number processes

A variety of problem solving strategies

ICT skills / Inquiry Learning Skills / Thinking skills / Research skills

2. Work habits, Attitudes, Levels of Independence

- Have & use listening skills
- Tolerance & acceptance of others
- Effective time management / organisation skills
- Take responsibility for own learning & able to ask for help when needed
- Able to complete tasks, work independently without distracting others or being distracted

Able to identify barriers to their learning /understanding & know when & how to ask for help

- Use initiative; risk taking attitude to learning opportunities
- Personal responsibility – ‘what can I do about the situation I’m in’
- Able to work independently, positive attitude to work
- Self motivation

3. Social Skills

- Respect for self, for others & for property
- Confidence in new situations / roles / responsibilities
- Able to work co-operatively & interact positively with peers & teachers
- Skills to deal effectively with peer pressure, conflict situations & able to take responsibility for own actions
- Tolerance & acceptance of others
- Able to make & maintain new friendships

4. Family Support

- Open communication between home & school
- Ensure regular attendance
- Help child with positive strategies to cope effectively with peer pressure
- Commitment to helping child succeed – encourage / show interest / help with homework, spend quality time with child
- Attend interviews & actively support school activities

5. School Support / Interschool Support

- Ongoing interaction / liaison between schools throughout the year
- School-wide consistency in standards & expectations of behaviour / learning / homework
- Pre enrolment visits
- Academic / Social Skills / Behaviour information passed to new school

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS – PART B

The Intermediate School focus group was then asked to comment on the following areas:

- Identify the characteristics / indicators of successful, current Year 7 students.
- How did the Anchorage Park students present in terms of learning / behaviour etc?
- What can our school and the Intermediate school do / continue to do to help improve the transition to Intermediate?

Characteristics / Indicators of a Successful Year 7 Student

- is achieving academically at or above chronological age esp. in Literacy & Numeracy
- confidence in new situations, able to make & maintain new friendships
- able to work effectively & positively with others
- demonstrates tolerance & acceptance of differences
- Is a self motivated learner & able to work independently without distracting others or being distracted
- shows respect for self & others
- has or is developing good time management / organisation skills

Anchorage Park Students at Intermediate are generally found to be....

- Independent
- Very settled in class
- Use inquiry learning skills
- Use a range of learning & behaviour strategies
- Creative writers
- Have no obvious learning gaps

How can Anchorage Park help improve the transition of our students to Intermediate?

- Continue to develop
 - independence:
 - thinking (making choices)
 - managing own behaviour (being responsible for own actions, awareness of consequences)
 - self motivation (intrinsic)
 - organization skills
 - initiative, confidence to take risks
 - confidence in speaking in front of the class / discussions
- Continue pre visits & make opportunities for staff to meet with Intermediate teachers
- Continue to provide the Intermediate with information about achievement levels, background etc, previous areas of study e.g. Numeracy project content stages, topic studies

How can the Intermediate School help the transition?

- continue to give students opportunities and encouragement to make choices
- continue to encourage and further develop the skills necessary to interact socially and responsibly
- help students accept and work through the fact that people are different and that teachers have different teaching styles
- help students with strategies to cope with the more formalised structure & organisation of Intermediate in preparation for college
- continue pre enrolment visits for students
- continue to discuss student achievement, needs etc with contributing schools
- Intermediate students to meet with Year 6 students from own school
- Continue to provide opportunities esp. for Yr 5 & 6 students to work with different teachers while at our school

YEAR 7 STUDENT SURVEY

(28 students surveyed)

All except one student stated they found it easy to settle into Intermediate school.

All stated they had made new friends with 20/27* stating it was easy to do this. 6 students stated it was not very easy and 1 student stated they had found it hard to make new friends.

(*one student did not respond to this question)

What were the unexpected things about Intermediate?

Key Responses

- The amount / level of work seen as being easier or not as hard as expected
- The need to get used to different organization systems – changing classes, different break times
- The need to get used to being around more people

What do you like most about Intermediate?

Key Responses

- Technology
- Phys Ed
- The teachers
- Making new friends

What do you like least about Intermediate?

Key Responses

- Lack of lunchtime activities compared with primary school
- People being mean
- (8/28 stated ‘nothing’ or left this question blank)

Which subjects have you felt most comfortable with (not difficult)?

Technology, PE / Health and Social Studies were clearly the preferred subjects followed closely by English. Maths, Science and the Arts did not rate as highly.

Curriculum Area	%
Technology	71%
PE / Health	61%
Social Studies	50%
English	46%
Maths	32%
The Arts	14%
Science	11%
Not stated	2%

Which subjects have you found difficult?

Curriculum Area	%
English	43%
Maths	39%
Social Studies	7%
PE / Health	-
Technology	-
Science	-
The Arts	-
None/not stated	25%

- During the group discussion session with our students following the survey, there was general agreement that –

The areas of difficulty in Maths were long division, fractions, percentages and decimals. When one student commented ‘but it’s the way we do Maths here that’s different’ – 25/28 indicated that they agreed with this comment – (all students have now had several years of ENP & ANP approach to teaching and learning in Maths whereas the Intermediate does not yet use this approach)

The areas of difficulty in English were audience reading and making speeches.

What is the work like compared to last year at primary school?

- Is it harder / easier / about the same?

Harder	28.5%
About the Same	53.5%
Easier	11%
No Response	7%

- Is it more challenging / less challenging / about the same?

More challenging	39.5%
About the Same	39.5%
Less challenging	14%
No Response	7%

What is the homework like compared to last year at primary school?

- Is it more / less / about the same amount?

More	36%
About the Same	39%
Less	18%
No Response	7%

- **Is it more challenging / less challenging / about the same?**

More challenging	33%
About the Same	39%
Less challenging	21%
No Response	7%

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Our Yr 6 teachers to meet with Yr 7 teachers early in Term 1 to exchange information about achievement, behaviour, social skills, family background etc of the students in their Yr 7 class & continue contact during year if needed. (In addition to the data gathering done in Term 4 by the Intermediate Senior Management Team)
- Survey our Yr 7 students at the end of Term 1 each year to identify issues, trends etc, share this information with our staff and the Intermediate & use to inform our teaching & learning programmes.
- Maths – review our content & coverage at the Year 5 & 6 level. Greater liaison with the Intermediate re Numeracy stages / achievement data and content coverage
- Interschool sports / activities more often to help our students get used to being with a larger group of students & teachers from other local primary schools
- Our Yr 5 & 6 students to attend some Intermediate activities esp. in second half year e.g. Drama performances, sports days etc.
- Yr 7 students (from our school) to visit our Yr 6 students to talk about being at Intermediate School.