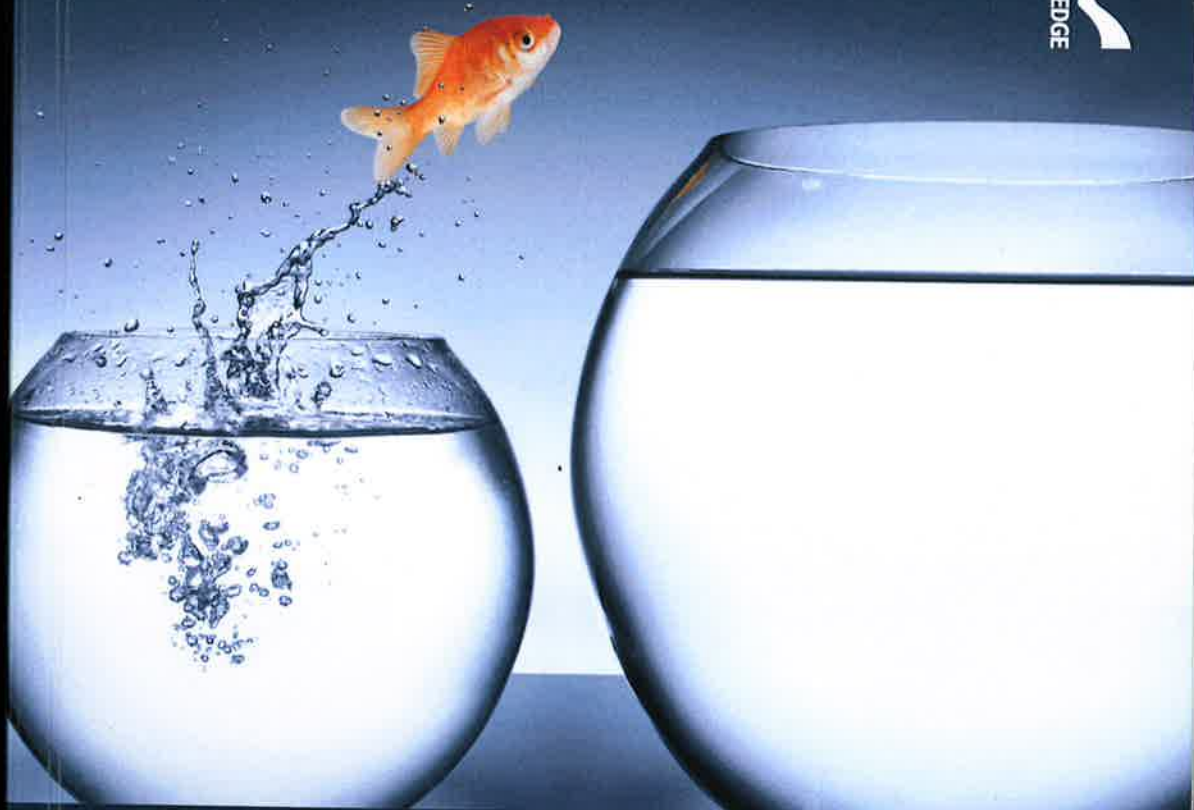


ROUTLEDGE



UNDERSTANDING **SCHOOL TRANSITION**

WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN AND HOW TO HELP THEM

JENNIFER SYMONDS

Chapter 9

Motivation, engagement and achievement

Chapter overview

Children's personal achievement is an outcome of their participation in learning and motivation to learn, which are connected to their feelings about school. This chapter covers each area, beginning with an examination of children's intrinsic motivation. Next, children's feelings about school and learning behaviours are overviewed using engagement theory. Finally, changes in achievement at transition are discussed. In all areas, after they change schools, children appear to suffer losses that can be related to transfer school environments. I discuss these relationships in order to relay why school transitions in early adolescence create academic risk.

Introduction

In the early 1980s, US psychologist Jacquelynne Eccles and colleagues set out to discover whether children's achievement motivation developed in response to the differences in school environment they encountered as they progressed through school. In a review of 23 studies, Eccles concluded that children's confidence and achievement declined across the school years, with a pronounced dip after transition to junior high school (Eccles, Midgley & Adler, 1984). The authors hypothesised that these declines were caused by a *developmental mismatch* between children's age-related needs and the features of school environment that changed over time. They called this theory *stage-environment fit* (Eccles & Midgley, 1989).

While she was writing the review, Eccles carried out a large scale empirical study of children's academic attitudes at school transition. These were mainly white children from low- to middle-income communities in Michigan, who moved from a single classroom teacher in the last year of elementary school (age 12), to subject specialist teachers in a larger middle school (age 13). The results published over the next decade revealed that children's needs for autonomy and social support from teachers were not being met in the transfer schools (e.g. Eccles, Wigfield, Midgley, Reuman, Mac Iver & Feldlaufer, 1993) and that

these mismatches were accompanied by declining motivation and attitudes towards mathematics (Mac Iver, Klingel & Reuman, 1986). They also found that when classroom conditions improved after transition (e.g. when children moved to teachers who were more confident about teaching), children's attitudes improved (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, 1989).

This chapter takes stage-environment fit theory as a starting point for understanding changes in children's academic behaviour at school transition. It is underpinned by the idea that moving schools alters the conditions in which children seek to fulfil their needs for identity, self-esteem, autonomy, competence and social support, which in turn influences their motivation, engagement and achievement (Symonds & Galton, 2014). However, few studies make these connections explicit. More often they simply track changes in academic behaviour across transition. As a guide for educators, this chapter reviews the theory behind each area (e.g. what is motivation?) before summarising the relevant research at transition. It gives a good international overview of how motivation, engagement and achievement have developed and, where possible, refers to the features of feeder and transfer schools that were linked to these psychological changes.

Motivation

A good starting point for thinking about children's attitudes to learning is to consider *why* they want to learn. This is termed 'motivation', which in long hand is the '*energizing* properties that characterize various aspects of the self-system' (Roeser & Peck, 2009, p. 121) and in short hand is the answer for 'why does anyone do anything?' (Eccles & Wang, 2012, p. 142). Although there are countless elements to motivation, each with a special relationship to school achievement outcomes (Eccles & Wang, 2012), for decades psychologists have fixated on whether children are motivated more by the intrinsic value of mastering tasks and subject knowledge, or by their desire to perform according to external goals and standards (Ames, 1992). This mastery/performance distinction forms the basis of much motivational research.

Researchers have noted a link between mastery/performance motivations and the type of strategies that children use when they are learning. For example, children who strive towards mastery goals tend to use deep-processing strategies such as linking information, whereas those motivated by performance goals use surface-level strategies such as rehearsing subject content (Anderman & Patrick, 2012). Currently there is some debate about which motivational approach best predicts achievement, as many studies find that children do better at school when they strive to meet an external standard, rather than engage in learning for learning's sake (Anderman & Patrick, 2012). However, these studies looked at the effects of motivational approach on academic grades, whereas there may be stronger connections between mastery motivation and other types of achievements, such as contextual understanding and cross-referencing ability between subjects.

Internationally, researchers find that mastery motivation declines and performance motivation increases after children change to secondary school or the equivalent at age 11–12 years. The most in-depth study comes from Carol Midgley, a US psychologist. Midgley drew on work by Carol Ames, an educational psychologist working at the University of Illinois who wrote extensively about how teaching practices can influence different motivational styles (e.g. Ames, 1992). Ames advised that teachers should be able to promote mastery motivation in class by engaging children in tasks that were novel, varied, relevant and that offered opportunities for autonomy. She rationalised that children would focus less on performance if tasks could be completed through specific, short-term goals. Performance orientation would also decrease, she felt, if teachers stressed effort as much as ability and kept evaluations private. However, as Midgley recognised, Ames' recommended techniques for promoting mastery motivation were at odds with typical middle school pedagogy.

In her prior work with Eccles, Midgley discovered that teachers in middle schools wished to control children more and gave children fewer opportunities for decision making (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, 1988). She figured that these restrictions on children's autonomy would decrease the opportunity for them to independently master tasks. Also in her experience, middle schools promoted performance motivation by focusing more on relative ability than on effort in their grading practices, by streaming children and by giving special privileges to high achievers. In the early 1990s, Midgley studied students as they moved from 21 elementary schools to 10 middle schools in Michigan. In those schools, both teachers and students observed that performance goals were stressed more and mastery goals less, after transition (Midgley, Anderman & Hicks, 1995). In elementary school, teachers more often encouraged children to achieve for personal improvement, while middle school teachers talked about the benefits of getting good grades. Accordingly, middle school students were more concerned about doing better than other students, while elementary school students were more concerned with understanding lesson content.

Similar differences in motivational approach at transition are found in Europe, where 9-year-old children transferring into five Italian middle schools reported decreases in mastery motivation across a one-year period (Zanobini & Usai, 2002). Also in the UK, researchers found a decline in mastery motivation and an increase in learned helplessness (i.e. using the excuse of not being capable enough) at transition from primary to secondary school in the early 1990s (Rogers, Galloway, Armstrong, Jackson & Leo, 1994). Although there is no research on performance goals at transition in the UK, the ORACLE studies of children's classroom learning behaviours set in the 1970s (Galton & Wilcocks, 1983) and 1990s (Hargreaves & Galton, 2002) found that children put more effort into their schoolwork immediately after transition. This may reflect a similar scenario to the US, where children are encouraged by transfer teachers to focus on getting good grades. In Galton, Hargreaves and Pell (2003), children explained that this tied to them getting a better job when they were older.

School engagement

An area that crosses over with motivation is school engagement. 'Engagement' is a term that is used very broadly in the public forum. However, as Eccles and Wang (2012, p. 141) pointed out, 'to inspire policy makers and educational pundits, one needs sexy and overgeneralised core constructs. But to design effective interventions and move our theoretical understanding forward, we need to be much more specific.' To give some idea of how complicated engagement truly is, I refer readers to the *Handbook of Research on Student Engagement*, where Eccles and Wang made this comment. The book is 840 pages long and contains 39 chapters by researchers from locations as diverse as New Zealand and Germany. A large proportion of the book debates what engagement is, how it relates to motivation and how it can be studied. In general, there is very little consensus on what engagement actually is.

In the handbook, many researchers simplified matters by taking the perspective of Jennifer Fredricks and colleagues (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004) that there are three types of engagement: emotional, cognitive and behavioural. The last two types cross over in a fourth type of engagement referred to as 'flow', which is a person's experience of being optimally engaged in the moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). However, this has not yet been studied in the context of early adolescent school transition. Therefore, I use Fredricks et al.'s categories in this chapter. In their definition, emotional engagement is children's feelings about school; cognitive engagement is their application of cognitive regulation and learning strategies to a task; and behavioural engagement is their general participation in school and school activities. As readers will note, the last two types of engagement refer to activity as it is carried out in the moment, whereas the first comprises children's longer-standing mental states (i.e. attitudes) that are activated only in certain contexts.

The relationships between the three types of engagement and motivation are not clear-cut. In one perspective, being motivated to do well and enjoying school may energise cognitive and behavioural activity. However this pattern can be reversed. Children who concentrate and participate more may have greater opportunities to enjoy school and receive encouragement for their ambitions. Another point is that engagement types and motivation can be independent of each other. A simple way of putting this is that *some* feelings about school can motivate behaviour, but not *all* feelings necessarily do so. In a study of Year 7 children, I found that around a quarter valued school for their future career but disliked their overall school experience (Symonds & Hargreaves, 2014).

Finally, readers should note that researchers more often ask children to give retrospective accounts of their feelings, cognitive efforts and participation, rather than study these as they occur in the moment, like when doing a task in English. This presents a paradox, as this method turns the activity types of engagement (cognitive, behavioural) into memory schema that may in turn be influenced by children's attitudes. Researchers have done this because it is more

difficult to assess children's emotions and cognitions during work activities than to gather their perceptions using a survey. Luckily, Galton and colleagues have conducted some high-quality observational research of 'in the moment action' that I review in the following sections.

Emotional engagement

Emotional engagement refers to children's emotional attitudes towards schooling. These attitudes assess school on the basis of emotion, such as whether children like or are frustrated by school (Symonds & Hargreaves, in press). Children's immediate emotional reactions to schooling, e.g. happiness and boredom, are better referred to as academic emotions (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2013), as they are first order experiences that are later turned into these more ingrained attitudinal states. For example, a child might develop a negative attitude towards school if they feel constantly afraid of their peers. Although feelings towards schooling are often thought of as part of children's school motivation (e.g. Eccles, Adler, Futterman et al., 1983), children can feel positive towards schooling but put very little effort into it (Symonds & Hargreaves, 2014). This presents a need for studies that separate out the different criteria that children judge their school experiences by (e.g. liking, pride, value, interest) if they are to be of any use for understanding how children react to changes in school environment. Even in the field of emotional engagement, most studies have combined a range of children's feelings into an overarching emotional tone that changes at transition, as I explore below.

The general pattern across studies is that children's emotional engagement declines after school transition. In Leicestershire, children in the ORACLE and ORACLE replication studies felt less happy at school and enjoyed school less in the year after transition, with a sharp drop in attitudes occurring in the first transfer school term (Croll, 1983; Galton et al., 2002). This may have been part of a longer-term developmental pattern, for in the US researchers found that children's emotional engagement steadily declined across elementary school and middle school (Grades 5 to 8) (Li & Lerner, 2011), and across middle and high school (Grades 7 to 11) (Wang & Eccles, 2011), but suggests that something about changing schools precipitates a steeper decline.

These declines are also apparent if we look at children's attitudes towards individual subjects. In Leicestershire, UK (Galton, Gray, Rudduck, Berry, Demetriou & Edwards, 2003), and in Michigan, US (Wigfield & Eccles, 1994), children's attitudes towards mathematics dipped sharply after transition, then declined more slowly across the transfer year. In Michigan, children also reported a dip in liking English immediately after changing schools. However, in Leicestershire, children liked English more in their first term after transition, before becoming less enthusiastic. A similar pattern was noted for their attitudes to science, which were stable across transition but then declined rapidly by the end of the post-transition year. By comparing the end points of children's

attitudes in both studies, through a new analysis that standardised the measures (Gray, Galton, McLaughlin, Clarke & Symonds, 2011), Galton and I found that having this 'honeymoon period' (Hargreaves, 1984) stalled the decline of children's attitudes so that, by the end of the first transfer year, they were less low in Leicestershire than they were in Michigan. So anything you can do in your school to prop up children's attitudes, even if this is only temporary, might have a positive effect on how their emotional engagement develops in the longer term.

There are few studies that connect these changes to specific features of feeder and transfer schools. In Symonds & Hargreaves (2014) we attempted this by systematically analysing children's statements about how they felt (e.g. 'I like school') in relation to their rationales for these attitudes (e.g. 'when my friends are not falling out with each other'). We found that 11- and 12-year-old children enjoyed school when they had positive relationships with teachers and peers, and lessons that were fun, relevant and gave them adequate opportunities for autonomy, reward and challenge. Conversely, they disliked school when they experienced conflict with teachers and peers, and when lessons were boring, irrelevant to their identities and made them feel incompetent. These feelings were the same for children regardless of whether they had experienced a school transition. Similar findings come from a study of around 3,000 15-year-olds across England (Gorard & Huat See, 2010), suggesting that these are widespread conditions for school enjoyment. However, children in our study who were in their first year of a transfer school also connected their feelings about school to a loss of emotional support from teachers and an increased focus on their personal identities and maturity status, revealing how their transition through the status passage and experience of teachers in transfer schools moderated their attitudes.

Cognitive engagement

The mental strategies that children use to engage in a task are referred to as **cognitive engagement**. These include learning strategies (e.g. rehearsal and summarising), controlling effort (e.g. persisting, avoiding distraction) and monitoring and evaluating progress (Fredricks et al., 2004; Markus & Wurf, 1987). Although not specifically a study of transition, research across the transition period with children in Washington, DC found they reported less cognitive engagement (how often they created links between information, made decisions on learning, and planned and checked their homework) as they moved through middle and high school (Wang & Eccles, 2011). However in the ORACLE replication study in Leicestershire, trained observers found that children paid more attention in class after transition than they did beforehand (Hargreaves & Pell, 2002). And, the percentage of children who were off task in lessons reduced from 23 per cent to 18 per cent. There, more boys moved into patterns of off-task behaviour than girls, while more girls switched to become concentrated workers. Possibly the different methods of these studies

might explain their divergent outcomes, for children's retrospective accounts of their cognition might not match up to their behaviour in the moment. And, differences in educational context or cohort might have added to these variants.

There are many changes in school environment at transition that might influence children's cognitive engagement. First, children have reported an increased focus on achievement at secondary school (Symonds, 2009). As discussed earlier, if there is a shift towards performance motivation, possibly children might feel more under pressure to achieve in their new schools. Following a model of work-related stress (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufell, 2001), this may encourage children to engage more in work if they feel they are up to the challenge, but may cause others to disengage if they feel emotionally overwhelmed and under-supported. Second, as discussed in Chapter 6, some teachers begin the school year by offering basic tuition (i.e. starting from scratch) in order to enable children with less experience to catch up. This appears to work well for engaging less experienced children, but can frustrate more independent and advanced learners. Third, another type of intervention is when children are involved in learning skills programmes in the first year of transfer school (e.g. James, McCormick, Black, Carmichael, Drummond, Fox, et al., 2007). Children across the UK reported that these programmes made a positive difference to their learning, but some lacked the language for discussing learning skills and felt lost when required to conduct independent research (Deakin Crick, Jelfs, Symonds, Ren, Patton & Grushka, 2010).

Behavioural engagement

Behavioural engagement 'draws on the idea of participation; it includes involvement in academic and social or extracurricular activities and is considered crucial for achieving positive academic outcomes and preventing dropping out' (Fredricks et al., 2004, p. 60). This definition also covers misbehaviour and a lack of participation, i.e. truancy. Although there is conceptual overlap between cognitive and behavioural engagement (i.e. if children are concentrating on work, they are also participating in learning), one can parse out studies that focus on cognition versus other types of behaviour, such as being organised for school, turning up to lessons and taking part in extracurricular activities. The range of behaviours that fall under this definition makes it illogical to assume that behavioural engagement develops in a systematic way across transition. It is therefore surprising that the few relevant studies all show declines in children's behavioural engagement as they move through the secondary school years.

If we consider truancy as a measure of behavioural engagement in the UK, we can see that in 2011–12 the numbers of unauthorised absences were fairly low and stable at primary school, but rose steadily after Year 7 (Figure 9.1). There is little difference between absences in Years 6 (0.6 per cent of pupils) and 7 (0.7 per cent of pupils); however, this does mark the starting point of the increase in absences, indicating that there is something particular about

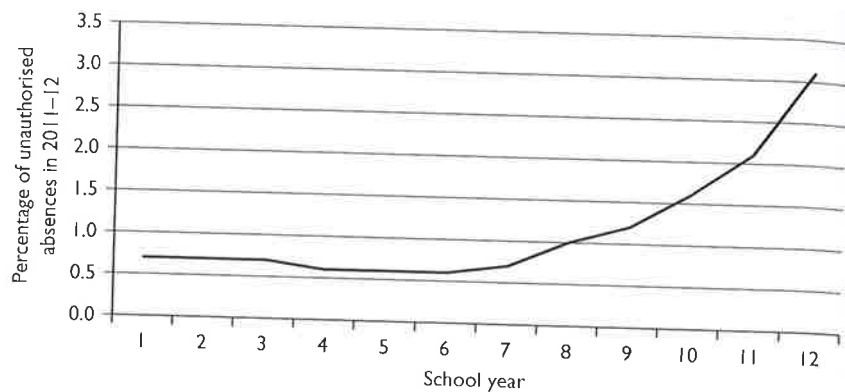


Figure 9.1 Percentage of unauthorized absences across school years

Source: compiled from open access data from the Department for Education (DfE, 2013).

secondary schooling (or being a secondary school student) that encourages children to truant.

In the US, researchers have studied behavioural engagement as children's reflections of how they have behaved in a set time period (i.e. recently, this year). In the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development led by Professor Richard Lerner at Tufts University, around 2,000 children were asked each year whether they attended school regularly, went to school without homework completed and whether they brought books and other materials to school every day. Researchers used a clustering statistical technique to find four common patterns of behavioural engagement development, across Grades 5 to 8 (Years 6 to 9) (Li & Lerner, 2011). Most children were classified as having moderate stable engagement (62.2 per cent) or high stable engagement (18.4 per cent) across the period. However, two groups of children had decreasing behavioural engagement that either steadily declined across grades (4.4 per cent) or increased temporarily in the year after transition to middle/junior high school before continuing to decline (15.1 per cent). A similar-sized study (around 1,000 children) by researchers from the University of Michigan found an overall decline in children's behavioural engagement across Grades 7 to 11, when engagement was measured by how often children had got into trouble at school, been disruptive and had trouble getting their work done (Wang & Eccles, 2011). In both studies, declining behavioural engagement was associated with social and academic disadvantage, and with being male.

There are many ways that changing schools can shift children's patterns of behavioural engagement. First, children often report a decline in the quality of their relationships with teachers after transition (as covered in Chapter 6), as teachers become less emotionally supportive and more judgmental and strict (Benyon, 1985; Ferguson & Fraser, 1998; Midgley et al., 1988). This may account

for declines in children's behavioural engagement, as researchers conducting a study of around 4,000 young people in Edinburgh found that children's misbehaviour across 13 to 16 years was more strongly predicted by the quality of teacher–pupil relationships than by gender, family and economic backgrounds, and emotional engagement with school (Smith, 2006). Also, children might be more likely to avoid school if they move to a peer group that is unsupportive, are bullied or make friends with others who encourage them to truant and misbehave. Their developing identities can also play a role, when becoming deviant is part of a strategy to obtain social status in the new peer group. Children may also avoid schooling if their new lessons make them feel incompetent (Smith, 2006), depressed or overly anxious (McLeod & Fettes, 2007), while others may pull away from school if they prefer to pursue interests outside of the school curriculum (Demetriou, Goalen & Rudduck, 2000; Symonds, 2009), as was the case with this author.

Achievement

A big question for policy makers is whether changing schools at age 11–12 years is detrimental for children's academic progress. If we follow the majority of research in this area, we can see this is the case for many schools in the US. Here, researchers find a general decline in grade point average (GPA) and in state-wide achievement tests across transition. This pattern is documented as far back as the late 1970s, in a study of around 1,000 children in Minnesota who made different types of school transitions (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). There, researchers found that GPA dipped sharply for boys at transition from middle to junior high school at Grade 7, then for both genders at a second transition to high school in Grade 9. These dips were not merely a continuation of a longer-term pattern, as children's GPA was fairly stable within each school level. Similar findings came from a recent study of transition to high school in Los Angeles, where children's grades were fairly stable across middle school, but then dipped on entry to high school and declined in a linear fashion for the next two years (Benner & Graham, 2009). This pattern is not restricted to urban centres, as a third study presented almost identical findings from 16 schools in rural and small-town Missouri (Alspaugh, 1998). There, children generally made losses on state designed and administered annual tests at transition to middle and to high school in Grades 7 and 9. The researcher was able to demonstrate that these losses were larger at transition to high school, when roll size was bigger, and when schools took in children from multiple feeder schools (i.e. a pyramid system) compared to just one feeder school. In other words, the extent of the differences between school environments appeared to be a factor in the achievement loss.

There is less research on children's achievement and transition in the UK. This may eventuate from the UK not giving annual letter or numeric grades like in the US. The large gap in time between Key Stage 2 SATs scores in Year 6

and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades in Year 11 makes it impossible for researchers to trace any changes in achievement to school transition, even if comparing results across different school tiers, i.e. transition into high school at Year 9 versus into secondary school at Year 7. Also, when UK schools do give annual grades, these are teacher assessments, which is also problematic for research on school transition. Any changes in achievement based on teacher grades may reflect a change in grading practices, rather than a change in children's academic progress. Under these circumstances, the only valid ways of testing for change in children's achievement across transition in the UK are to analyse standardised Cognitive Ability Tests, which are rarely administered by feeder schools, or to administer one's own progress tests, which barely any research has attempted.

The one exception is the ORACLE studies of children in Leicestershire (Galton & Wilcocks, 1983; Hargreaves & Galton, 2002). There, researchers measured achievement in the third term before and after transition using abbreviated versions of the Richmond Tests of Basic Skills (France & Fraser, 1975), in the 1970s and in the 1990s. Each test in reading (vocabulary and comprehension), language (e.g. punctuation, spelling) and mathematics (concepts and problem solving) took around 30 minutes to complete. To assess progress, the researchers calculated whether children did better on the same tests after transition than in the year before. In the first ORACLE study, the majority of children made gains in achievement across the three tests (63 per cent), while a minority had stable achievement (7.4 per cent) or made losses (29.6 per cent) (Croll, 1983). A similar pattern was observed around 30 years later, with the majority of children making gains (60.1 per cent) and a minority being stable (6.1 per cent) or making losses (33.1 per cent) across all three tests (Galton et al., 2002).¹ In the 1970s study, more girls made gains than boys in mathematics (by 10 per cent), language (by 12 per cent) and reading (by 20 per cent), while in the 1990s study these gender differences were less apparent, suggesting an improvement in boys' progress at transition across the 30-year period. The central message from the ORACLE studies is that not all children experienced a decline in achievement after transition. In fact, around 60 per cent made academic progress. However, a significant minority (around 40 per cent) made no progress, which is not good news considering that all children should achieve more across school years.

There are several manners in which changing schools can impact academic progress. I summarise three of these below.

- *Changes in identity.* As discussed in Chapter 8, children can temporarily lose a sense of themselves as achievers when they are surrounded by unfamiliar peers, which can lead to a loss of academic self-concept. The new peer hierarchy may promote deviancy over conformity, which may encourage some children to reject learning in class. Also, many children feel more grown-up after transition, which may encourage them to seek new

avenues for personal development that do not involve doing well at school. However, children may also work harder if they believe that their identities are being facilitated by getting good grades and by the curriculum. Also, new subject specialist teachers serve as role models for children's future careers, encouraging children to want a job in that subject.

- *Pedagogical continuity and discontinuity.* For a long time, educators and researchers have debated whether it is better to have a smooth transfer between units of work across transition, or whether children prefer more radical changes in work complexity and curriculum after changing schools. The influence of each strategy on achievement is discussed in detail in a series of reports by Galton and colleagues (e.g. Galton, 2009; Galton et al., 2003; Galton, Gray & Rudduck, 1999). These authors stress that too much continuity is a bad thing, as it fails to inspire children who are looking for new learning challenges after transition. However, it is also apparent that continuity serves the needs of lower achievers, and that starting from scratch advantages those who enter secondary school with little experience in that subject area (Symonds et al., 2011). What is clear, therefore, is that the success of either strategy depends on whether it meets children's needs for support and challenge. As Galton and colleagues recommended, a balance of continuity and discontinuity may help improve achievement after transition. I would add to this by stating that this balance must be carefully worked out based on the learning needs of children in each classroom.
- *Developmental mismatch.* Finally, returning to stage-environment fit theory, there are several characteristics of transfer schools that are a poor fit with children's needs for identity, self-esteem, autonomy, competence and social support. As discussed in the introduction and the preceding chapters, these characteristics can eventuate a decline in children's motivation and engagement, which may impact their achievement. Commonly, children report experiencing lower levels of emotional support from teachers, greater teacher strictness, increased focus on performance goals and assessment, and complain about learning activities that have no practical component or personal relevance in transfer schools.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have illustrated how typical changes in school environment at transition can influence children's motivation and school engagement, and in turn affect achievement outcomes. Children are more positive about school and make better progress when they experience emotional support from teachers, a focus on mastery goals in lessons and assessment, interesting work and adequate learning autonomy, an appropriate amount of work consistency and a peer group that supports their academic achievements. In the US, children tend to have worse outcomes across the middle and secondary years of schooling, suggesting that these features of school environment are not readily forthcoming.

However in the UK, children's development is more mixed, suggesting that some features of transfer schools (such as moving to a more supportive peer group) are well suited to children's needs. On the one hand in the UK, children report enjoying school and subjects less, are less intrinsically motivated and are more likely to truant from school after transition. However, on the other hand they report more work effort and are observed to be more cognitively engaged in learning. Furthermore, school transition appears to act as a status passage, where children take school more seriously as a gateway to future career success. Unfortunately, children can hold this attitude while disliking school on a daily basis (Symonds & Hargreaves, 2014).

In general, transition appears to delay academic progress by disrupting children's academic identities, work trajectories and by creating developmental mismatch. Changes in the peer context are difficult for adults to control; however, they are a good topic for transition interventions that encourage children not to judge their achievements based on their classmates' progress, and to care less about how achievement might influence their popularity. In turn, this may help prevent children from disengaging and encourage a focus on mastery motivation. Teachers may also be able to reduce the delay in progress by creating a careful balance of continuity and discontinuity in children's learning – where the right balance should inspire children to achieve on tasks that are manageable for them. Finally, more attention to making work enjoyable may promote not only emotional engagement, but also children's desire to work, cognitive engagement and participation in school. In this way, school transition can live up to its potential for advancing children's progress, instead of causing the mixed reactions to schooling that we see today.

Note

- 1 These figures are a recalculation of data in Table 5.8 in Hargreaves and Galton (2002, p. 145).

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