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An ethnographic study. Transfer students: The dynamics of acceptance or rejection in one Michigan secondary school

Toma-Kosmet, P. Eleanor, Ph.D.

Michigan State University, 1990

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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY
TRANSFER STUDENTS: THE DYNAMICS OF ACCEPTANCE OR
REJECTION IN ONE MICHIGAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

By

P. Eleanor Toma Kosmet

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
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1990

ABSTRACT

TRANSFER STUDENTS: THE DYNAMICS OF ACCEPTANCE OR REJECTION IN ONE MICHIGAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

By

P. Eleanor Toma Kosmet

The experiences of 19 randomly selected secondary school transfer students were examined in this study. Five of the 19 students were randomly selected for extensive interviews.

Ethnographic inquiry was the methodology used. Life histories, open-ended questionnaires, self-reports, information from parents and teachers, and observations were used for the purpose of triangulation for ongoing analysis.

Four primary questions guided this study from the perspective of the subjects, parents, and teachers.

1. What types of academic expectations were placed on each transfer student?

2. What systems were used to place new students in appropriate courses?

3. How does students' academic achievement after a transfer compare with their achievement before the transfer?

4. What social contacts, if needed, must be arranged to assist students with their transfers?

Responses from secondary school transfer students were analyzed regarding peer acceptance or rejection, academic adjustment, and their adaptation processes. School personnel and parents were interviewed about the significant effects that the transfer had had on students. Recommendations from students, parents, and school personnel for assisting future transfer youths, if assistance was necessary, were particularly significant to this report. Three conclusions were drawn from the data:

1. The period of adjustment to the new school culture varied with each subject.

2. Secondary school transfers within one Michigan school setting were traumatic and unsettling.

3. Current theories on student transfers warrant further research.

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TO MY DAUGHTER

PATRICIA KELLY MACK

Every day I thank God
that He allowed you to remain on earth
with us following your accident.
Thank you, Kelly, for the happiness you have given to me.

Love,

Mom...

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Background

A child's education does not consist solely of attending daily classes. The child masters lessons; grows mentally, physically, and emotionally; and copes with personal crises. Along with these dynamics, individual differences, interests, attitudes, and growth rates change throughout the school years. A student who transfers from one secondary school to another face other changes as he/she becomes the "new kid on the block."

Two major changes have combined to make many family units less effective entities in which to raise children. First, a change has occurred in the traditional family unit with the entry of women into the labor force and with increasing incidence of divorce, family units no longer include both parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents.

Yet many children from single parent families successfully survive the trauma and unsettling experience of divorce. When the family is unable to provide closeness and security, the child often attaches himself/herself to a significant other.

This attachment is usually done at a place of gathering; which at this age

level and in most instances the place is the school. With conditions such as both parents in the work force, high mobility, and the lack of other relatives in the household; adolescents turned to one another, to the school, and to the entertainments of a larger society. (Coleman, 1965)

The phenomena of change in the family structure has placed considerable pressure on today's children. Green and Sanford (1983, p144) discussed the effects of this increased mobility:

Homes have become places where people merely sleep and eat. Because of a mobile society, adolescents seem to lack a tightly knit family background releasing adolescents from family contracts and encouraging "a- do-it-[sic]-your-own-thing" mentality.

Family mobility often necessitates that youngsters change schools. Benson and Weigel (1980-81, p18) discovered that "Some children may actually benefit from changing schools ... while others may find the changes detrimental."

Warner (1988, p4) described the problem of changing schools as follows:

Moving to a new school can be one of the toughest things a kid has to do. Your whole world can change in just one stroke. The fact that it happens to some kids at least once, doesn't make it any easier. Face it, it's hard to leave behind your entire world and start off for another, completely different world.

Many secondary school students are unable to adjust to a new school environment without some assistance. Like other adolescents, they are uncertain about new relationships, peer acceptance, their self-concept,

emotional ties from previous situations, and their appearance. Many students are concerned about their popularity and how to handle peer pressure, experiment with sex, drugs, and alcohol (Green and Sanford, 1983).

Statement of the problem

There is a dearth of literature on students' responses to a secondary school transfer. According to Bayer (1982, p.12),

There are some studies on student adjustment to new school environments, occasional recommendations as to the process by which schools might facilitate the integrations of students into their new schools, and only a few controlled studies on the relationship between school intake processes and subsequent student adjustment.

As the incidence of secondary school transfers increases with the growing mobility of the population, there is a need to examine what happens to students as they change schools. In particular:

1. Do transfer students have difficulty finding acceptance within their desired peer group?
2. Is similar information taught in the classes of all schools?
3. How long does it take transfer students to adapt to their new environment?

Purpose of the study

The researcher's primary purpose in this study was to determine whether selected secondary transfer students experienced difficulty in adapting to a new school

environment. Using first-hand documentation, the researcher also attempted to determine the students' thoughts about the transfer before, during, and after the change.

A third purpose was to discover whether support mechanisms existed to form a transition between the academic classes in the new school and those of the previous school.

Rationale for the research

Little research has been conducted on acceptance or rejection in secondary schools. Warchol (1979, p. 234) stated that several computer searches had been performed for studies of school transfers and:

Through a regional information and dissemination service, the Area Cooperative Educational Services ("ACES") in New Haven, a computer search through ERIC, and educational journals, searches did little to substantiate that information concerning academic transitions was to be found as helpful resource material.

The present study was an attempt to provide information in this regard.

Goldberg (1980) noted that mobile families face a double stress; not only the students, but other family members as well, experience problems and concerns when adjusting to a new community. "Most children, regardless of age, may be especially vulnerable in that they usually were an involuntary participant in the family relocation process."

Benson and Weigel (1980-81, p. 15) conducted a study with 643 ninth-grade students in an attempt to determine

"the relationship between school mobility, recency of change, and academic achievement." Classroom Behavior Inventory was used to measure classroom adjustment. Benson and Weigel found that mobility was negatively associated with students adjustment in the classroom. They admitted, however, that the type of method used might have distorted the results. Ratings could have been prejudiced by teachers' and counselors' viewing students under different conditions, and they may also have placed different values on the same types of behavior. By using methods such as rating and ranking, other variables entered into the ratings of students, which allowed possible distortion of the evidence presented.

Several researchers have focused on the influence of mobility on school achievement and adjustment. Yet, according to Benson and Weigel (1980-81, p. 15) findings concerning the effect of mobility on school achievement have been inconsistent." Data for this study were gathered from people who had first-hand experience with secondary school transfer students and therefore should provide a more accurate account of the transfer experience.

Researchers have also studied the relationship between mobility and classroom adjustment. Benson, Haycraft, Steyaert, and Weigel (1979), found a negative association between mobility and classroom adjustment, as measured by teacher ratings of sixth graders.

Pittman (1975, p. 4) listed several difficulties that many transient students encounter. He believed these problems pose a challenge to the new school and/or the school board. The difficulties he mentioned included:

1. The student suffers from a severe disbelief in himself/herself.
2. The student achieves less in school.
3. The student is less motivated.
4. The student displays less ambition.
5. The student drops out of school earlier.
6. The student reads less and with less accuracy than his/her peers.

The above mentioned challenges were coupled with another set of problems Pittman discovered:

1. Difficulty in becoming totally integrated into a classroom because of lagging records.
2. Peer rejection until proven himself/herself worthy of acceptance by some system he/she must first discover.
3. Adjustment to a new teacher.
4. Adjustment to a new principal.
5. Adjustment to a different curriculum.

Definition of terms

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are used in this dissertation.

Acceptance. A positive reaction when an individual is seeking approval.

Adaptation. A positive response to inner and outer demands; an individual's behavioral change in adjusting to

a new or modified culture and its surroundings (Lazarus, 1969, p. 17).

External influences. Social or interpersonal demands; expectations from these demands exert powerful pressures on the individual (Lazarus, 1969, p. 17).

Internal influences. Demands arising in part from a person's biological makeup, which requires certain physical conditions such as food, water, and warmth for comfort and survival, and in part from his/her having learned from the past to desire certain kinds of social conditions such as approval and achievement (Lazarus, 1969, p. 17).

Rejection. A negative reaction when an individual is seeking approval.

School transfer student, transient student, newcomer, new student. A child who moves with his/her parents or relatives from one school location to another (Pittman, 1975, p. 3).

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations

1. This study was not designed to evaluate how well a school helped students adapt to a transfer.

2. Students' progress toward "culturalization" was not appraised when the study population was selected.

3. After data from the primary questionnaire were gathered, further study was limited to five subjects who were randomly selected from the group who responded to the primary questionnaire.

Limitations

1. The students who participated in this study did not necessarily represent students in the same type of situation in other schools. Therefore, generalizability of the findings was limited.

2. The students' desire to appear accepted in the new school might lead to inaccurate self-reporting during the investigation.

Overview

Chapter I contained the background of the study, a statement of the problem, the researcher's purposes in the study, rationale for the research, definitions of terms, and delimitations and limitations of the study.

Chapter II begins with a review of literature on social change and its effect on the adaptation of secondary school transfer students. Psychological theories regarding adolescent behavior are discussed in the second section. A synthesis of various authors' writings is presented in the chapter summary.

The methods and procedures used in conducting the study are explained in Chapter III.

In Chapter IV, the findings regarding the experiences of transient students' are reported.

Chapter V includes a summary of the study, major findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, how schools can enhance recommendations for the culturalization process

for secondary transfer students, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature begins with a discussion of social change for secondary school transfer students, as defined by various authors. In the second section, psychological theories of adolescent behavior are reviewed. The chapter summary includes a synthesis of various authors' ideas.

In conducting the study, the researcher reviewed data on social change, especially as it pertains to secondary school transfer students. To grasp the nature of the changing school cultural syndrome, it was necessary to clarify the manifested conflicts of growth and development during adolescence. Researchers have indicated that transfer students are not the only youngsters who progress through developmental phases. Erikson, (1968) Coleman, (1965) and several other researchers believed that all children pass through certain developmental or maturational stages. Whether these stages occur at the same rate or age depends on the individual child.

Many students who transfer schools face challenges in addition to the ones they face during the regular progression through developmental phases. These added challenges include learning new rules, regulations, expectations, curricula and peer groupings. Adjusting to new teachers, counselors, principals, and neighborhoods, as well as attempting to survive in a culture that might be quite different from the one left behind, often take precedence over academics.

Social change and its effect on the adaptation of
secondary school transfer students

Today people in America live at an extremely rapid pace and experience an enormous amount of change in day-to-day life. In his book Future Shock, Toffler (1970) stressed that changes in communication must occur simultaneously with technological advancements. He said that health and well-being are related to the individual's ability to acknowledge, understand, and adapt to the changes of society that promoted change within oneself.

Coleman (1965) suggested that a number of changes have combined to make the family unit a less cohesive and less effective entity within which to raise children. One change is the entry of women into the labor force. Another change is that households no longer include two parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. In addition, because of economic demands, it is often necessary for families to move several hundred miles to accept employment. Cornille, Bayer, and

Smyth found that children who transfer schools as a result of such moves were considered to be at risk. Not only did the these children appear to lose the security provided by the family unit, but they faced other difficulties as well. Some of these impediments included changes in schools, friends, and neighborhoods, and the change from a known to an unknown culture.

When change occurs quickly and the family is unable to provide closeness and security, many transfer students attempt to find someone or something else to which to attach themselves.

The attachment is usually done at a place of gathering, which at this age level and in most instances the place is the school. With conditions such as both parents in the work force, high mobility and the lack of other relatives in the household, adolescents turn to one another, and to the entertainments of the larger society. (Coleman, 1975)

Siegelman (1983, p. 41) maintained that if change is anticipated, "rehearsal or a part of the change makes the new situation less disruptive; and reduction of anxiety in major change requires both information and emotional support."

Goldberg (1980), Holland, Kaplan, and Davis (1974) Warchol (1979), Youngman and Lunzer (1977), Benson et al. (1979), Abramson (1974), and Walling (1990) found that school transfers were negatively related to students; adjustment and achievement. Holland-Jacobsen et al. (1984, p. 51) suggested that "whether or not the move has a

positive or negative long-term effect, the child needs guidance and direction to ease the immediate adjustment to his or her new surroundings."

Cornille et al. (1983, p. 229) stated that "the consequences of geographic mobility on the social and emotional development of children have been examined to a very limited extent." Therefore, although transfer students might not appear to be dysfunctional, they do need assistance and direction to help reduce the effects of culturalization collision.

Walling (1990, p. 7) wrote that "America is a nation on the move ... about 20% of the population moves each year, including many families with school-age children. Youngman (1977, p. 280), too, noted that "few children escape transferring from one school to another, and consequently school transfer must be considered a standard feature of education.

McWhirter (1969, p. 300) asserted that "because of mobility, the students are subject to negative experiences in a new school environment." Researchers have found that for transfer students to adapt to their new school they "must find peer acceptance, meet academic and behavioral standards, and be accepted by their teachers as an appropriate member of the class." (Holland-Jacobsen et al. 1974, p. 49).

Several studies have been done on mobility and its relationship to students' academic performance. Bayer

(1982), Goldberg (1980), and Holland-Jacobsen et al. (1984), concluded that the results of such studies have been inconsistent and contradictory. Although many internal and external factors influence student achievement, most researchers have observed only one or two of these variables at a time (Holland-Jacobsen et al. (1984, p. 51).

Adler (1975) listed five stages involved in adjusting to the "culture shock" of transitional experiences. Walling (1990, p. 21) suggested that Adler's frame of reference may be broader than the "context of transient students, but his stages are applicable to students' adjustment to a new school culture." Walling discussed each of these stages with regard to transient students.

1. Contact. The perception in this first stage is that new environments are intriguing, but this perception tends to be screened and selective. The newcomer feels excited and stimulated by the newness and is likely to be curious and interested in the new school.
2. Disintegration. The newcomer begins to feel significant differences between old and new environments. Contrasting cultural realities cannot be screened out. The newcomer feels increasing confusion and disorientation. Isolation and loneliness set in. The new student becomes depressed and withdraws.
3. Reintegration. The differences between old and new environments become all-important. The new school culture is rejected. The newcomer feels angry, frustrated, and anxious. Attitudes of rebellion, suspicion, and hostility are exhibited. The new student may appear to be highly opinionated, usually preoccupied with likes and dislikes.

4. Autonomy. A measure of balance is regained. Legitimate differences between old and new school cultures are recognized. The student feels less like an outsider, relaxes, and gains self-assurance. Confidence begins to return.
5. Independence. In the final stage, the differences between old and new environments are recognized and valued. Attitudes of trust, humor, and the full range of previous emotions are restored. The student becomes expressive, creative, and self-actualizing.

Gordon (1983, p. 366) suggested that one way to understand adjustment is to view it as dynamic. Her stages of developmental conflict are similar to Adler's stages. According to Gordon, the stages of conflict are as follows:

- 1) Latent conflict refers to the time when conditions for conflict exist.
- 2) Perceived conflict refers to the time when group members intellectually or cognitively know that conflict exists.
- 3) Felt conflict occurs when one or more of the parties feels tense or anxious.
- 4) Manifest conflict refers to observable behavior designed to frustrate another's attempts to pursue his or her goals. Both open aggression and withdrawal of support illustrate manifest conflict. At this stage, conflict should be resolved.
- 5) Conflict aftermath refers to the situation after conflict is resolved or suppressed.

Through their investigations, Coleman (1965), Benson and Weigel (1980-81), Warner (1988), Mears and Gatchel (1979), Wechsler (1989), Pittman (1975), Warchol (1979), and

Lazarus (1969), established that adolescents experience various levels, stages, and degrees of internal and external conflict associated with mobility and a change in cultures.

Conflict plays an important role in most people's lives, because "conflict is a universal problem, how it is handled is of the utmost importance" (Lazarus, 1969, p. 18). Students' ability to master the threats and frustrations produced by conflict will depend on how well they adapt to the new school culture.

Psychological theories of adolescent behavior

Psychosocial Theory

The Psychosocial theory developed by Erikson, encompasses eight stages of development from birth to old age. The fifth stage, "Identity versus Role Confusion," relates to the developing adolescent.

Erikson (1968) extended the studies of Sigmund Freud. Instead of focusing on abnormal functioning in people as did Freud, Erikson focused on a positive and healthy approach within people. He discovered that no two personalities were alike. Each individual "owns" a personality, which is somewhat shaped by his/her mother or a significant other. Personalities are individualistic and many times appear unexplainable.

Erikson believed that, during adolescence, children encounter conflict within themselves from early childhood. The problem is linked to leaving the family and to finding

a significant other. Erikson believed that the new interpersonal dimensions that emerge during adolescence concern "a sense of ego identity at the positive end and a sense of role confusion at the negative end." He contended that adolescence is a "stormy" time and that children who are gifted in the pursuit of identifying and expanding their new roles in society accept a more implicit ideological outlook. If a student is not as gifted as his/her peers, "easing" into a situation becomes more explicit. He/she searches for something that is comfortable and/or anticipates "techniques, ideas, and ideals."

Peer acceptance is considered to be the first need of a transfer student. If this need is met, most of these students will resume active pursuit of their academic endeavors. However, when a transfer student enters a new culture and that culture deprives him/her of peer acceptance, the student experiences a feeling of identity loss or confusion.

To restate Erikson, is to say that if young people reach adolescence with a vital sense of trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry; chances of arriving at a meaningful sense of ego identity are enhanced. Conversely, youngsters who enter adolescence with a considerable amount of mistrust, humiliation, uncertainty, guilt, and inferiority are hindered.

Economic or social adversity appears to be the primary reason for the high rate of mobility in American society

today. Most students who change schools do so involuntarily, being "forced" by circumstances beyond their control to move from school to school, town to town, and often from state to state. Erikson stated that a young person who was unable to attain a sense of personal identity, either because of an unfortunate childhood or difficult social circumstances, "displayed a certain amount of role confusion---a sense of not knowing where he belonged or to whom he belonged." However, he maintained that failure to establish a clear sense of personal identity during adolescence does not guarantee "eternal" failure.

Erikson said that even those youngsters who establish a sense of personal identity during adolescence will encounter challenges and threats to that identity sometime during their lives. He emphasized that life involves constant change and that confronting and solving problems at one point does not guarantee that those problems will not reappear later or imply that new solutions to those problems could be found.

Transactional Analysis

Transactional analysis, propounded by Eric Berne, in the 1960s, is based on the belief that humans have a need to be recognized and appreciated. Berne wrote that "social interactions and social interchanges among people [are] aimed at fulfilling the need for recognition." Berne

believed that people must be "stroked" or they will manifest inappropriate behavior.

As new students undergo the culturalization process, being accepted by a desired peer group is one way of receiving "strokes." If these transfer students are not accepted into a desired peer group, latent conflict appears and growth and development become incongruent and distressful.

Summary

Since the mid 1960s the phenomena of geographic mobility and a shift from the traditional family structure have been discussed in the literature. New research has been performed, but researchers have not addressed the "relative differential impacts of the various types of transfer experiences" (Bayer, 1982). The present investigation appears to be a "pioneer" effort to expand the base of information regarding secondary transfer students' responses to new culturalization experiences.

Toffler (1970) stressed that changes in communication and technological advancements must occur simultaneously. He also stressed that to adapt successfully to change, one must acknowledge and understand the reasons for that change. Coleman (1965) said that two major changes that have taken place in American society during the latter part of the twentieth century are the growing number of women entering the work force and a breakdown of the traditional family structure. McWhirter (1969) reported that because of school

transfers brought about by a move, children often undergo negative experiences.

Several studies have been done on geographic mobility and its relationship to student academic performance. However, Goldberg (1980), Bayer (1982), and Holland-Jacobsen et al. (1984) concluded that findings of such research have been inconsistent and contradictory.

Bayer (1982), Benson and Weigel (1980-81), and Warchol (1979), stated that research on students' responses to school transferring and the relationship of such transfers to academic performance was limited. They advised that future researchers should focus on individual case studies to determine whether secondary transfer students need assistance with the culturalization process.

Warner (1988), Goldberg (1980), Holland et al. (1974), Warchol (1979), Youngman and Lunzer (1977), Benson et al. (1979), Abramson (1974), and Walling (1990) discovered that transferring schools did have a negative effect on students' adjustment and academic achievement. Along with the negative effects associated with a school transfer, Cornille et al. (1983) discovered that the social and emotional development of these children has been only "slightly" examined. Such children have been identified as being potentially "at-risk."

Whether it be Adler's stages of adjustment (contact, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and independence) or Gordon's stages of conflict (latent, perceived, felt,

manifest, and conflict aftermath), it is believed that, in most cases, conflict resolves itself. The final stage of conflict, independence or conflict aftermath, is individual and does not occur at the same time for all people.

To help in understanding the stages of adolescent behavior and development, two psychological theories were reviewed. These are the psychosocial theory, founded by Erik Erikson, and transactional analysis propounded by Eric Berne.

Erikson maintained that personalities are individual and at times unexplainable. He stated that adolescence is a "stormy" time for children and they have either implicit or explicit ways of identifying and expanding their new roles in society. Erikson believed that life involves constant change and that adversity is a threat throughout life. He maintained that people can almost always find solutions to new problems as they arise.

Berne's transactional analysis is based on the notion that people need recognition and appreciation; if these "strokes" are lacking, individuals will exhibit inappropriate behavior. Being accepted by a new peer group is one way transfer students receive recognition and appreciation; without this acceptance, latent conflict is likely to appear.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

This study was focused on the dynamics of acceptance or rejection of transfer students in a rural secondary school. The ease with which these students adjusted to a transition in regard to academics, peer acceptance/rejection, and a new social culture was of primary interest. "The effects on the child of a transitory existence are sometimes deep and difficult to overcome" (Pittman, 1975, p. 1).

This chapter contains an explanation of the methods and procedures used in the study. The purposes are, restated, and the selection of methods used in the study are discussed. Next, the survey instrument is described. Selection of the sample and the data-collection procedures are explained. Finally, the data-analysis techniques are discussed.

Purpose

The researcher's primary purpose in the study was to determine whether selected secondary transfer students experienced difficulty in adapting to a new school environment. Using first hand documentation, the researcher

also attempted to determine the students' thoughts about the transfer before, during, and after the change.

A third purpose was to discover whether support mechanisms existed to form a transition between the academic classes in the new school from those of the previous school.

Methods used in the study

The ethnographic inquiry method was employed in this investigation to interpret secondary school transfer students' behavior and to attempt to discover the influences on that behavior. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 36), ethnographic or qualitative research is:

an umbrella term and refers to several research strategies that share certain characteristics. Research questions are not framed by operationalizing variables; rather, they are formulated to investigate in all their complexity, in context. While people conducting qualitative research may develop a focus as they collect data, they do not approach the research with specific questions to answer or hypotheses to test. They are concerned as well with understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of reference. External causes are of secondary importance. They tend to collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where subjects normally spend their time.

Ethnography is flexible and does not entail extensive pre-fieldwork design. the strategy and even direction of research can be changed relatively easily, in line with changing assessments of what is required by the process of their construction. As a result, ideas can be quickly tried out and, if promising, followed up. In this way, ethnography allows theory

development to be pursued in a highly effective and economical manner. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 1)

Extensive interviews were conducted with transfer students and their parents for the purpose of collecting first-person narratives. Also, questionnaires containing 12 open-ended questions concerning the transfer were administered to the new students and their parents. Additional information provided by parents and school personnel was the third primary source of data.

Triangulation of these strategies permitted the researcher to interpret the data in such a manner as to "counteract various possible threats to the validity of analysis which has respondent validation representing one kind of triangulation" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, p. 198).

Hammersley & Atkinson explained further that:

What [triangulation] amounts to is checking inferences drawn from one set of data sources by collecting data from others. More generally, data-source triangulation involves the comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from different phases of the fieldwork, different points in the temporal cycles occurring in the setting, or, as in respondent validation, the accounts of different participants (including the ethnographer) involved in the setting.

The survey instrument

A questionnaire devised by experts (Gillespie, et al., 1988) in the field of education assisted with first hand data gathering. Responses from transfer students and their

parents concerning the ease of the transfer provided invaluable first hand documentation on the experiences of secondary school transfer students. Because the survey was first used in this study, the results cannot be compared to those from another sample to determine the validity of the questionnaire.

By administering this survey to another group of secondary transfer at a different site, the results from this study could be tested for validity.

The student questionnaire contained the following questions:

1. Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.
2. Please describe your first day at this school.
3. Please describe the end of the first week at this school.
4. How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?
5. What type of student(s) did you first associate with as a new student (i.e., athletes, band members, honor students, cheerleaders, etc.), and who were the friendliest group toward you? Please explain.
6. Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school? Please explain.
7. What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school? Please explain.
8. What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools (i.e., first semester, second semester, middle of a semester, etc.)? Please explain.

9. How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes? Please explain.
10. How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?
11. What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to make transferring schools easy and enjoyable?
12. What would you like to see happen in school when a new student arrives? Please explain.

Sample selection

After obtaining the principal's permission to conduct the study in the chosen school, the researcher obtained the proper release forms from parents and students. In addition, approval to conduct the study was received from the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects.

To identify potential subjects for the study, the research asked the principal for a list of students who had transferred to the school during the 1989-90 academic year. The office of the school principal and counselors compiled a list of 78 new students. From this list, the researcher randomly selected 20 subjects to participate in the questionnaire portion of the study. Five of the 19 students who returned completed questionnaires were randomly selected for extensive interviews.

Data-collection procedures

The researcher met individually with each subject to explain the purpose of the study and the methods that would

be employed to obtain the data. A packet containing a letter of explanation of the study, student and parent consent forms, and parent and student questionnaires was sent home with the students so they could discuss the project with their parents. (See appendices A, B, and C). All but one student returned the completed release forms and questionnaires.

Extensive interviews were conducted with five randomly selected students, these interviews allowed the researcher to collect additional data from the school transfer students, their parents, and teachers at the site to amplify the questionnaire responses, Open-ended items from the student and parent questionnaires provided a frame-work for the interviews. Once interviewees had responded to those items, follow-up questions were posed.

Data-analysis techniques

Ongoing analysis of the field notes, observations, and interviews transcripts took place throughout the investigation. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) noted:

In ethnography, the analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research. It begins in the pre-fieldwork phase, in the formulation and clarification of research problems, and continues into the process of writing up. Formally, it starts to take shape in analytic notes and memoranda; informally, it is embodied in the researcher's ideas, hunches, and emergent concepts. In

this way the analysis of data feeds
into the process of research design.

The data gathered in the study are presented in Chapter

IV.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

Introduction

The data presented in this chapter were gathered from the primary questionnaire responded to by 19 students who were randomly selected from a group of 78 transfer students at one secondary school. Extensive interviews with 5 of the 19 students provided additional data.

In some cases, responses to the first questionnaire differed from those given in the interviews. A few subjects hid their feelings on the preliminary questionnaire, but when questioned personally, they gave more unsettling responses regarding the transfer.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section contains the 14 students who were not selected for personal interviews and the researcher's synthesis of students' responses to items 1 through 12.

The second section contains individual profiles of the five students who were interviewed, their questionnaire interview responses, and their parents' interview responses to interview questions concerning secondary school transfer students are presented in the third section. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

Questionnaire responses of fourteen transfer students

The 14 students whose questionnaire responses are presented in this section were randomly selected from 78 transfer students in the school in which this study was conducted. The subjects were from various socioeconomic backgrounds. The first 20 students who were selected consented to be in the study. However, one young man's parents asked him to inform the researcher that he could not be part of the study. The student desperately wished to be part of the group in order to "write" about his experiences as a transfer student.

In this section, the 14 students' responses to items 1 through 3 are presented first, followed by the researchers' synthesis of responses. Next items 4 through 12 will present students' responses, followed by the researchers' synthesis of responses.

Student #1

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: It wasn't that bad. I moved here in the summer and started at the beginning of the year. I got a job when I got here so I had a chance to meet people from the school.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at school.

Response: I felt real stupid. I just walked by myself and sat by myself in my classes.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: It was pretty much like the first day. I still didn't really meet anyone. I stayed out three days of the first week because I hated being here with no friends or anything like that.

Student #2

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: It wasn't easy at all. All new faces and habits. Most of the schools I went to were out of the city, and most of the kids have been there since kindergarten and they treat you as an outsider; "Let's pick on the new student." They criticize your clothes, your hair, make-up, and even the way you walk and talk. You have to put on a tough act even if you're not, and even then they'd try to corner you to see if you were really as tough as you act. I have changed a lot of schools; some are even harder and stricter than others.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: It felt the same. Am I good enough? Are the students going to harass me? Are the classes going to be hard?

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: At the end of the first week I was kind of discouraged.

Student #3

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: This is not the first time I've changed schools. I came here in my junior year. I moved in the summer and when I signed up for school, I found out when basketball practice was. Basketball started before school. Everyone always expected me to get some kind of scholarship for basketball. But when I

came here, their plays were not the same and they never gave me a chance. Mr. _____ is the _____ teacher and he said that if I got up in front of a lot of people and did bad, then because I was new, I could be embarrassed the rest of my school days. But when I got out on the floor I did great! He still didn't play me much. This girl named _____ was supposed to be a "star." Everyone worshipped her. That's how I was at my old school. But _____ knows she was the "star" and treated everyone bad. She made fun of everyone! Volleyball was good and I played great! Everyone treated me just like everyone else. I guess now I'm accepted.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: I knew a girl from the basketball practices that already started. She showed me my classes. I'm not a quiet person so I guess I adjusted pretty well my first day, but I felt like I missed my old friends and boyfriend at my old school.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: I cried the first week every day when I got home because I missed my friends and boyfriend at my old school. That first weekend there was a football game at _____ and also one at my old school. I chose to spend that weekend at my old school to see my old friends and my boyfriend.

Student #4

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: I thought transferring to a new school would be easy, but it turned out to be one of the most painful experiences that I ever had to go through. I had acquired a good many friends through the sixteen years I had lived in

_____ [out-of-state] and had a special place in my life for all of them, especially my best friend _____. If it wasn't for all the courage she put into me, I would have never made it through the transfer.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at school.

Response: My first day was definitely a memorable one. There were stares and quick glances given to me left and right. At first I thought it was kind of funny, but after three or four classes it started to get on my nerves. Fortunately people were very friendly to me and made me feel comfortable. It was really weird though. It all felt like a dream and that when I woke up, I'd be in my old school again and back with my friends.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: By the end of my first week of school, I had a good many friends and had a date for Friday night to go to a party which I felt would help my social life a great bit which it did. Even though I wanted to cry inside I thanked God continuously for making things a lot easier on me than it could have been.

Student #5

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: Transferring schools wasn't that hard for me although it was difficult scheduling my classes because the classes here and the classes at my old school were a little bit different. But I did get good classes except there was no room in any math classes.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: The first day was mostly scheduling and walking the route to all

my classes. I knew all the people so that made it easier for me.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: At the end of the week, I was excited about coming back to school the next week. I had a lot of things to do that weekend. I had a lot of catching up to do with my old friends.

Student #6

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: It's never easy to transfer. I guess I'm kinda getting used to it since I've moved to a new school every two years. It seems we always have problems with the system. Then when you finally get in they treat you like you're dumb. When you ask about where things are they laugh, "The Cafeteria (ha, ha)." I hesitate to ask questions now. I just hope we don't move anymore (which I doubt). A couple times I've thought about quitting so I didn't have to deal with their shit.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: Well I felt real dumb 'cause no one even showed me around so I didn't know where any of my classes were. I didn't know anyone so I sat by myself wondering why I always have to be the "new girl." Everyone stared at me and said stuff like, "Who's that?" The worst time of day was at lunch. Everyone sat with their friends and all I did was find the least popular area and stood there looking out the window till the bell rang.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: It was pretty much the same. I still wasn't making friends. Everyone

seemed so different from the friends I had before. The people that did talk to me seemed to be the least popular. I did recognize a few people from "the old" schools I went to, but none of them seemed to recognize me. I wouldn't walk around the halls between classes like everyone else, I would go straight to class and wait for the bell to ring.

Student #7

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: Very difficult. My biggest adjustment was being forced to miss freshman cheerleader tryouts at my new school. I was on the cheerleader squad at my previous school for grades seven and eight. This was devastating to me, but I was also a band member and became friends with other band members my freshman year. My first year was on the verge of horrible. I did not want to leave the school and friends I had known all my life.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at school.

Response: Very nervous. On the first day of school I was also mistaken for another new girl who was tall and blond, but she was considered to be a "rebel" and that's who people thought I was.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: I got along well with all my teachers. My math teacher was a good guy and tried to help me socialize and not to be so shy. He teased me a lot.

Student #8

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: I was sad, I was mad.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at school.

Response: I was shy and afraid nobody would like me.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: It was the same as the first day.

Student #9

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: Unfamiliar with people and the way of doing things.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response. Confused and out of place.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at school.

Response: I felt a little more comfortable with just about everything.

Student #10

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer a new school.

Response: I was mad. I was living with my mom, and I didn't like my living conditions. So I moved to my dad's. I like it a lot here.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: I felt sorta lost. And everything was going down hill.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: I was trying to fit in, and things were getting better and better.

Student #11

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: It wasn't. I was very scared and frightened. I felt that it was impossible to go to a new school. I thought that I would never make new friends.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: Everything was different, and I kept comparing things to my old school. Everyone kept staring at me and whispering, which made me very uncomfortable.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: I was very unhappy. I kept wishing that I was at my old school. I didn't know who to talk to because I didn't know their past "reputation."

Student #12

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: I didn't want to go and leave my friends. I was scared. And also my dad was getting married and I had to go here to school.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: I was lost but _____ was by my side.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: I knew my way around, and I knew a dozen more people.

Student #13

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: It was my choice to move up here with my dad, but I was nervous. Look at me now, I was confident before coming here. Once here, all confidence is gone and look at me---no one to eat with.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: I had a really good first day. Everybody was coming up to me all day and made me feel really welcome and asking me questions about _____[out of state].

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: It was still pretty good, but at first I was the "new girl from _____" that everyone was asking about, and after a little while everyone knew who I was, so it wasn't that big of a deal anymore.

Question 4: How fast did you become acquainted with your new school? (I am including the fourth question here to indicate the variance in this students' answers.)

Response: I've been here three months, but I'm still not really adjusting. I feel like I don't have any close friends that I can talk to if I'm upset about something. I feel really insecure and think people don't like me, and I feel like I can't be myself a lot of times. I feel alone, a lot!

Student #14

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Response: I felt very uncomfortable attending a new school, walking into a building unknown to me, crowded hallways, filled with faces I did not know. A

little tense about being late to my first class because I did not know exactly where it was.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Response: I thought of quitting school and not ever going back. I felt like I didn't fit in and I was isolated from everything around me. The day seemed too long, like it would never end.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Response: I didn't feel any better.

Summary of responses to items 1 through 3. The students described their secondary school transfer as being somewhat difficult and unsettling. A few students adjusted to the transfer better than others. As they overcame the stumbling blocks, traumas, and other obstacles, most subjects did adapt to their new culture, but they did so at an uneven pace.

It is interesting that, in response to Question 1, subjects 1, 3, 4, and 13 said "it was easy" to transfer to another school. Yet in responding to Questions 2 and/or 3, the same subjects indicated they were having a difficult time making friends and maintaining their self-esteem.

Responses to items 4 through 12

Question 4 - how fast did you become acquainted with your new school?

Response: It took about 2-3 weeks because it is so much different from the school I used to go to. I just knew the places

where I went every day. I didn't know the rest of the school.

Response: I was surprised how fast I fit in with everyone. I listened to people and never spread any accusation around about them or down-talked them.

Response: After about two months in my new school, my boyfriend that I'd been going with for a year broke up because there was too much distance. After this a guy asked me out and he seemed to be popular, an athlete, and so we went together and he treated me like crap. But that's when I got acquainted. Through volleyball, basketball and my new boyfriend. Since then I don't go out with anyone from this school.

Response: Actually, I became acquainted with _____ really fast, maybe even too fast. I was receiving too much attention from everyone that I tried to use all of the attention to cover up my real feelings. I knew then and only then, nothing would ever take the place of my old friends. Well after all the attention wore off, it all hit me too fast, how much I longed to go home to people I could talk with freely and not feel like an outsider with.

Response: It took a couple days for me to memorize my schedule. I only got lost once. But it was pretty easy for me to get around. It's not that big of a school!

Response: Well, after a month or so I was eating lunch. Not a whole lunch, just a bag of chips and a pop. And a few people were talking to me. When I finally made a friend he was a "stoner," but actually was about the nicest person I met all year. I used to go home and tell my mom that I met new people because I didn't want her to get worried. She worries too much about stuff like that.

Response: Not until I made the varsity cheerleader squad at the end of my freshman year did I feel I belonged. My

friends were now back to cheerleaders and I felt this was great.

Response: Probably two months. I was nervous and I couldn't do my work.

Response: About one week. Well, I went here before, but it still took me three to five days to adjust. When I adjusted, I sorta just sat in the room quiet, not saying a word, just observing what went on.

Response: It took a long time. Sometimes I still feel like an outsider. I adjusted by not expressing my opinion about people I didn't like and by checking people out. Finding which people I'd get along with. Also because of snotty people or people who don't like me because of my boyfriend or my friends or because of what they have heard.

Response: I took almost ten months before I really adjusted and I did it by finally making some friends and getting a job. The worst frustration to me was that no matter how hard I would try to fit in, I was always "the new girl."

The people at my school were generally snobby, which also made things hard.

Response: About a week or two.

Response: I've been here three months, but I'm still not really adjusting. I feel like I don't have any close friends that I can talk to if I'm upset about something. I feel really insecure and think people don't like me, and I feel like I can't be myself a lot of times. I feel alone, a lot!

Response: I knew my way around by the end of the first week, and knew what the classes were each period.

Synthesis. Transfer students described the length of time it took them to become acquainted with their new school as being anywhere from "really fast" to "ten months."

Occasionally, the response was "Never." As time went by, most students began to settle into their new environment. There were exceptions in this study, both positive and negative.

Question 5: What type of students did you first associate with as a new student (i.e. athletes, band members, honor students, cheerleaders, etc.), and who was the friendliest group toward you)? Please explain.

Response: The people I hung around first was the people I knew from work. They have been here a while, and they were the only ones I knew good enough to feel comfortable around.

Response: I didn't go for any certain kind of person; if they came up and talked to me and were friendly, I associated with them and tried to stay away from gossipers and troublemakers because I went through all that in my other schools.

Response: Athletes, and funny people. These were the same kind of people that I hung around with at my old school. The smart people were stuck on themselves like they knew everything, but the half-cool kids made you feel you have to have a car, and I don't have a car.

Response: As a new student I feel it's important to associate with everyone and be friendly and aggressive. Most of the people I "hung out with" and still do are athletes and most of the cheerleaders. I really don't know who the honor students are. Everyone was friendly to me and tried to make me feel comfortable.

Response: The guys that were (are) my friends were mostly athletes such as football and basketball. The girls were mostly in the "popular" group. My best friend was (is) a cheerleader.

Response: The first person that associated with me was a stoner, and to

top it off it was a guy. As a matter of fact he was one of the only people that talked to me in the first month and a half. Still we're good friends. I guess we always will be because of the fact that he was the first person that talked to me.

Response: Band members were my first friends. They were also the friendliest toward me.

Response: The preppies and the burnouts. A lot of them acted bad and immature.

Response: Kinds that aren't too outgoing. The most friendly group is the non-academic minded.

Response: All types at first [except_____]. The non-academic students were more friendly to me.

Response: More of the brainy, smarter kids.

Response: Outgoing, athletes, etc. Same group was friendliest and more new ones every day.

Response: Different types but it was mostly the trouble makers that associated with me, but I wasn't interested. The athletic and academic minded, although, some of them kind of make me feel insecure.

Response: I was a loner, I didn't seem to fit into any certain group. Most of the time I found myself in the company of students labeled trouble-makers, rebellious, or some were called burnouts. They were the friendliest, and easier to get along with. They weren't two-faced, and didn't expect a whole lot from anyone.

Synthesis. The students' selection of friends ran the gamut from "funny people," "athletes," "stoners," "burnouts," "preppies," "not-too-out-going," "non-academic

mind," or "rebellious," to "everyone." In general, if a new student latches onto "any type" of a peer, he/she will usually hold onto that relationship until a new, more desirable one can be found. As one subject stated, "The first person that associated with me was a "stoner" ... I guess we will always be good friends because of the fact that he was the first person that talked to me."

Question 6 - Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school? Please explain.

Response: Sort of. I was in the bad group at the other school. Getting in trouble, not doing my work, slacking off in classes, etc.

Response: There are some differences, but I think that teenagers are basically alike all over the place.

Response: No. At my old school we were constantly over at each other's houses, at parties together, and on the phone. Here I talk with certain people at lunch and at certain classes. I don't do anything with anyone on the weekends. But in volleyball and basketball season I see friends from sports after school at games and practice.

Response: My friends at _____ are definitely different from my friends at _____. That's why I miss home so much because my friends and I had the best relationship in the world. There was never jealousy or talking about each other behind our backs. We knew how to confront each other, but here everyone would rather spread rumors without getting the facts. Friends should realize that good friendships are based on trust.

Response: NO!! The people at my old school were extremely rich. And they

acted like they were. Even if they had to act it to fit in. The only people I really hung around with were my boyfriend and a girl who felt the same way I did.

Response: No, that's the problem. Everyday after school and on the weekends, I would try to go back and visit my old friends. I would always tell them how much I hated it here and how I wanted to go home. The friends I have at this school have no idea, even after a year, that I'm not what they think I am. They think I'm a good little girl that never does anything wrong, but actually I have been in lots of trouble and a lot of it was associated with me moving a long time ago. While I'm here, I have to put on an act. But after school and on the weekend I can really be myself.

Response: I have few people I call "friend." **Explanation:** if you don't get close you cannot get hurt.

Response: Yes. Ya Buddy.

Response: No. I really don't have any. I used to hang around with old friends, but they would put me down a little. That didn't last long because I figured I wasn't perfect so I said stuff about them.

Response: Yes.

Response: Yes. Mostly the middle group---not jocks and not burnouts. Just the average students.

Response: Yes. Some.

Response: No, my friends in [out of state] were more involved in school and sports activities, and they weren't promiscuous and into drugs. Some of them were kind of stuck up though.

Response: No. My friends before were more like what we called "preppies"; they never got into trouble; they avoided

confrontations with teachers and other school staff members.

Synthesis. Most students responded to this question with an emphatic "NO!" Some were involved with preppies and athletes, whereas others either kept to themselves or attempted to find a relationship with an "average" student.

Question 7: What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school? Please explain.

Response: Some of them fit in real easy and it took others time. A lot of us just think about missing our old school and how we don't like the new school and it is hard to make friends and stuff when you hate the school you go to.

Response: They were negative. They were scared and unsure how to act and worried about what people thought about them.

Response: Well, everyone says it's great, but they don't seem too great. New people hardly ever seem to smile, and they always go to visit their old schools.

Response: After talking to a few other transfer students, I discovered that they had some problems too. They miss their friends and agree with me that moving so close to graduation is even more difficult.

Response: Actually, I don't really know any other transfer students. But I'm sure they had trouble just like the rest of us. Everyone does.

Response: It is hard to leave your old school. My new school is very "cliquish," and the transfer students feel this.

Response: Nothing, but take me back to _____, my old school.

Response: To be more friendly.

Response: Nothing, because transfers occurred when they were younger and it didn't seem to bother them.

Response: Be more friendly. I think a newcomers group would be a very good idea. Make sure they know where every one of their classes is and introduce them to their friends.

Response: It is difficult to leave your old school. Too many cliques. People are snobbish.

Synthesis. Most students stated that transferring schools was difficult. Several students appeared to read internal influences of other transfer students that stated "transferring schools was easy," but they suggested these remarks were not the truth. Few students found it difficult to admit that a transfer was difficult.

Question 8: What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools (i.e. first semester, second semester, middle of a semester, etc)? Please explain.

Response: At the beginning of the year. That way you won't stick out a lot. It is just easier for the student.

Response: It is best if you don't have to transfer, but if you do it is better to start right at the beginning of the year so that you can make friends with other new students. The longer you wait, the harder it is to fit in. I know because I have transferred in the middle, at the end, and in the beginning, and beginning with everyone else is easier.

Response: I don't think a person should change schools anytime after starting ninth grade, but if they have to move, I think it would be easiest to move after school has started and everyone has gotten used to being back again after

their summer. This way everyone you see is willing to help you find your classes. If you start on the first day of school, then everyone is in such a hurry to find their own classes, they act like it's a bother to help you. It kind of makes you feel like there is something wrong with you. You have to learn not to take it personally that they are nasty.

Response: The best time to move to a new school is definitely near the end of the school year so you meet enough people to associate with in the summer and feel comfortable with the next school year.

Response: I think it is best to move to another place before school even starts. That way, you can get to know people before they have to go. If they have to transfer during the year, I think it should be first semester so they can get into a little "group." If you transfer later in the year, everyone already has their "little groups," and it's harder to get into the crowd you want.

Response: Actually, I feel you shouldn't have to transfer at all, and if you ever have, you'll know what I mean. I guess the beginning of the first semester is best. Because I've moved so many times I know that the worst time would have to be the middle of a semester. For one thing, you're behind on all the work and the kids treat you like you're from another planet. When you go in and sit down, everyone stares. When you're little, it's not too bad because you don't judge people, but when you're older, it's a whole different story.

Response: Beginning of a new school year is probably the best.

Response: Never.

Response: No time, but beginning of the year might be easier.

Response: I transferred in the middle of the semester, which is hard. At the

beginning or at the end of first semester is better. You don't stick out as much.

Response: I thought it would be neat to arrive before school, but now I don't know...no time is good.

Synthesis. Many subjects preferred not to transfer schools at all. But they stated that, if it was "necessary," transferring schools at the beginning of the school year was more beneficial to them.

Question 9: How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes? Please explain.

Response: It wasn't that easy in some and easier in others. There are still classes I am not comfortable in. But I started to fit in with the teachers and the students.

Response: It was hard at first. Everything was so foreign to me. When I went to other schools, they didn't cover some of it; anyway, I didn't.

Response: I found that when I switched from a class "C" to a class "D" school, other students thought I was a brain. But when I switched from a class "D" school to a class "B" school, I felt kind of behind and inferior. But if you pay attention, you can do as well as ever. Your grades usually go down a little your first semester because of an adjusting period.

Response: I took the same classes, and they were all basically the same with the exception of chemistry and algebra II. I admit my grades aren't as good as they should be right now, but I know they're going to improve before the end of the year.

Response: It was pretty easy. The classes were pretty much alike here and at my old school. Except for my gym class. It is more physical here and it

is also co-ed. At my old school they had girl's gym and guy's gym. It was all in the same gym but just split classes.

Response: It's never easy to adapt to new classes, new teachers, or new students. It was very hard because the classes are different from the ones I had before. In some areas the work was a lot harder, and then in the areas where I needed help it was much easier. But my mom thought it was strange how I was failing classes that I used to do well in. You just have to get used to the scene.

Response: Fairly easy. Classes were similar to my old school, but more difficult.

Response: Not bad.

Response: Some of the teachers could help more.

Response: No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't.

Response: Some classes were behind me, and some classes were ahead of me. I achieved more because I had nothing and centered all my attention around studies.

Response: My classes were ok, but I tried too hard to be popular. I never had confidence and I always thought if I moved to another school, I would gain more confidence, but I never did.

Response: I hated school and my classes. I didn't want to be there, so I wasn't interested in any of my classes. I always sought ways of missing a class or two, and then I'd just hang around in the restroom and smoke.

Synthesis. Responses to this question were "easy," "hard," "classes are different from my other school's," "teachers should help more," and "no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't." There are as many reasons for children

either to adapt to their classes or to fail. Adaptation may depend on students' learning styles or difference in teaching styles. Or it may be that a student is more interested in making friends than in competing for academic honors. Regardless, researchers have confirmed that entering a new curriculum is an unsettling adjustment period for most adolescents.

Question 10: How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?

Response: It wasn't bad. They are a lot different from the school teachers where I came from, but I got used to it.

Response: All right.

Response: My old teachers were great, and my new teachers are too. Of course you are always going to have problems with one or two teachers, but for the most part they welcome you just like the kids do.

Response: One thing I did like about the move was my new teachers. I get along with all of them quite nicely, and I love their sense of humor. They know how to get the best work out of you. I believe that a teacher's attitude and a good sense of humor help a student feel more comfortable and eager to learn.

Response: In my opinion, teachers are not hard to adjust to. But if you were used to a certain type of teacher or something like a teaching style, it would be harder.

Response: It wasn't, because I didn't know how they would react to certain things. And you definitely don't want them to embarrass you. I guess there is one teacher that I adjusted to, but it took me a while. She taught me a lot about who I am, and not to let guys treat

me like shit. I wish all teachers would be helpful and talk to you when you look sad.

Response: Teachers were great.

Response: Not hard.

Response: I couldn't even if they had tried to help me.

Response: I respected most teachers. One class, I did not like; the teacher never looked at the class and always gave an assignment without an explanation. Most teachers just said, "Here's your book, take notes," and did not go out of their way to help. Other kids had friends to go to their house and help---I had no one.

Response: They could have been more friendly.

Response: My teachers are easy to get along with and they've been really nice and caring to me.

Response: I hated teachers. I hated the fact that they were able to tell me what to do. All I wanted was to be left alone. They were too authoritarian. I resented them because they were a part of the place I hated to come everyday. I got into arguments with them; I was suspended a number of times. I felt I couldn't back down or give in to authority. I did things deliberately to cause trouble. There was only one teacher who I liked, who I thought was good, who I thought I could trust, but in the end, I caused her a great deal of trouble too.

Synthesis. Most responses to this question were favorable. Occasionally, students stated that a teacher could have been more friendly and helpful.

Question 11: What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to make transferring schools easy and enjoyable.

Response: That it takes time to get used to the teachers, students, and the school itself.

Response: When you start a new school, don't walk in with an instant attitude because not all schools are the same. Give your new school a chance, try to make friends, be polite, and if they can't be polite to you, then stay away from them and find friends elsewhere. Ask a lot of questions about your new school so you have some idea what goes on so you are not totally lost. Visit your school after classes so you can get a tour so you know where things are so you don't have to be embarrassed asking other students where something as simple as the bathroom is. There's ways to get through the confusion and humiliation. When you have a disagreement go to your counselor; don't confront them by yourself, have a neutral party present.

Response:

1. It helps (if you are in high school) to have a car.
2. Have an open mind; different people are going to do things differently.
3. Try out for sports. You make many friends and meet lots of people.
4. Break-up with your old boyfriend and find a new one at your new school. His friends will become yours.
5. Be sociable and willing to make new friends. Remember: first impressions last, so don't come across bossy, or scummy, or dizzy.

Response: Always keep a positive attitude and be friendly to everyone you meet. Never act better than anyone, or you'll be cast out immediately. Be yourself and you'll succeed.

Response: Not much. I guess you could have people be a little more helpful and not act like you're bothering them.

Response: Maybe assign students to a welcome committee or buddy system. Someone should be there to help transfer students for at least three to six months. Remember it is hard to get involved with peer groups once they are formed. The buddy or welcome committee could try to ease this. Find out transfer students' desires, activities, etc., and try to match them with someone in the same area.

Response: When you see someone that's new or come to the office and ask who's all new---then go talk to the new people and make them feel at the right place.

Response: Show them around more. Start talking to them.

Response: First, see how the student acts. If he wants to be accepted, find someone who he might like to hang around.

Response: Nothing really (because it is really up to the student). If someone wants to be accepted, they will go out of their way to make friends. But if they want to be alone, they will keep to themselves.

Response: If I had more confidence in myself and felt like I could reach out to people easier, I'd feel more at ease.

Synthesis. The responses to this question were many and varied. Most students thought a welcoming committee would benefit new students.

Question 12: What would you like to see happen in school when a new student arrives? Please explain.

Response: People not giving him a hard time or anything like that. It is pretty weird moving to a new school, and people should understand that and try to be cool to the new student.

Response: I would like to see everyone give them a chance. Try to make friends; if you don't like a student you don't have to be mean to them. Don't let them know you don't like them by going behind their back and talking about them. Criticism hurts worse second hand.

Response: I think the teacher in each class should welcome the new student and ask where they came from. But don't make them feel stupid.

Response: There's really nothing more you could do to help a new student feel more comfortable when he or she arrives but to be nice to them and offer to go places with them or sit with them at lunch. That always makes a newcomer feel more wanted.

Response: I don't think teachers should put a new student on the spot during class right away (ask questions, go to the board, etc.) because it just embarrasses the student if they are nervous and mess up. At first they feel as if people are watching them and won't like them if they screw up!

Response: Well, nothing that would embarrass you because that's the last thing you want. I guess you should like, at least show them their classes and introduce them to some teachers and maybe some kids.

Response: They should have things like newcomers meetings.

Response: Make sure they know their way around. Let people know that you are new so if you need help someone will be there for you. Don't make fun of new people or pick on them; instead invite them over and be nice.

Response: Just make them feel welcome and help them have a sense of belonging.

Response: Perhaps schools should have a welcoming committee composed of students to help new students learn their way around. Also, new students must learn the "ways" of other students. When a person I had just met said, "We're going to meet out at the trail on lunch," I didn't know what the "trail" meant. It was an area students would sneak out to smoke. New students don't know the language and symbols, and they can only learn them from other students.

Synthesis. Students suggested that (a) schools should have a welcoming committee for new students, (b) everyone

should be more friendly toward new students, (c) new students should not be embarrassed by other students or teachers, (d) new students should visit the school before it begins or right after classes start to get acquainted with the school plant, and (e) new students should attempt to learn the ways of the new culture.

Profiles of the five student interviewees and their questionnaire/interview responses

Santana Corlion, T. J. Cameron, Jamie Mason, Madison Edwards, and Seneca Cordova (pseudo-names) were five students who were randomly selected for in-depth interviews. In addition, parents of four of these five students responded to questions about their child's school transfer. Because of the student's ages, the restrictions of anonymity and confidentiality were imposed. Therefore, responses are reported without a detailed description of the subjects or their parents.

Santana Corlion

Santana lived with her father in the district in which this study was performed. Before her school transfer, Santana lived with her father but attended a school outside the district. Both Santana and her father were aware that attending the previous school was illegal, but because of Santana's resentment about transferring schools, and guilt surrounding a divorce, her parents allowed the mother's address to be listed as the permanent place of residence.

This allowed Santana to attend school where she had been raised, with security being a positive factor.

For the two years that Santana attended school in her mother's school district, her father had to drive his daughter to her school every morning and pick her up at her mother's home every night.

Santana's responses. Santana's responses to the questionnaire items were as follows:

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Santana: I felt really bad because the people I grew up with, I grew up with since second grade. I knew everybody in the school so it wasn't easy coming to a different school where you knew nobody.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Santana: Different than my last school. Because nobody talked to me and I felt lost. Not only was I a new student, I had to take it slow.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Santana: I made a few new friends. I felt more comfortable and was starting to know teachers and kids better and finding kids I knew from my old school.

Question 4: How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?

Santana: About one to two weeks and because of friends I already knew.

Question 5: What type of student(s) did you first associate with as a new student? (i.e. athletes, band members, honor students, cheerleaders., etc.), and who was the friendliest group toward you?

Santana: Athletes, preppies, rebels, and stoners. I got along with them.

Question 6: Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school?

Santana: Some are because they transferred in too. I like to be with active students, and that's what the kids were from the other school.

Question 7: What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school?

Santana: Quit making the lower kids feel out of place and have a newcomers committee.

Question 8: What time of the school year do you feel it best to transfer schools?

Santana: Not the middle of the school year because by then new people are there, and the next grade at high school everyone will know everyone and who they are. If you transfer in the middle of the year, you stick out like a sore thumb and it is more difficult. I like the beginning of the school year because transferring at the end of the year would be worse than the middle of the year. They can start fresh with other new people and get to know them throughout the year, and it would be easy to believe you know someone and wouldn't stick out like a "sore" thumb.

Question 9: How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes?

Santana: Not really, one class pre-algebra was higher than my ability.

Question 10: How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?

Santana: Ok, no problems but to other students a teacher yelled and over did it to a new student. I felt so sorry for the new student. Most of them were helpful to me at the beginning of the school year, but during the school year, teachers were rude and not fair to transfer students.

Question 11: What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to make transferring schools easy and enjoyable?

Santana: Talk to them, introduce them to people, make them feel at home. Assist, help, and have people talk and laugh and see that they are getting along. Be friendly, don't let them sit alone and communicate with them.

Question 12: What would like to see happen in school when a new student arrives? Please explain.

Santana: Same as above, only have a newcomers welcoming committee.

Interview questions. Santana's answers to the interview questions follow.

Question: Are large schools more friendly and accepting to a transfer student than small schools, and vice versa.

Santana: I don't really know--I don't see where it really makes a difference. In small schools everyone knows everyone so they look at a new person real weird and others start rumors. Big schools are no different. I had the same problem in both schools, and it depends on how people are in the school and vice versa.

Question: Are most new students settled into school now?

Santana: I am, but other new students are scared and did not apply to or try to fit in. They didn't think it would do any good, so they kept to themselves and were unsocial, didn't talk to anyone. They did their work and they did what they were told.

Question: How many moves or transfers have you gone through?

Santana: I have been through two transfers. The first did not mean anything to me because I cannot remember it. The last transfer I remember well, and it was very difficult.

Question: Explain how you felt with each move, and were the moves easier with each one?

Santana: The moves were not easy and I did not want to move. I put my father through a lot of trouble to keep me at my old school.

Question: What time of the year did you arrive at your present school?

Santana: At the beginning of the school year, but I still had some difficulties adjusting.

The following is a list of characteristics usually surrounding a transfer student. How do you see yourself in these situations?

- a) **Question:** Santana did you have a disbelief in yourself anytime during your transfer?

Santana: No!!

- b) **Question:** Did you achieve less in school as a result of your transfer?

Santana: Yes, I didn't care to study at first. I just wanted to get to know people. I hated it here and would have done anything to go back to my old school.

- c) **Question:** Are you less motivated since arriving here?

Santana: At first I was half-way motivated, and toward the end of the first marking period my motivation decreased and I failed three classes.

- d) **Question:** Do you display less ambition since your transfer?

Santana: No, I wanted to do extra-curricular activities and make new friends. I wanted to go out for sports, but I was not ambitious toward the academics.

- e) **Question:** Have you ever considered dropping out of school as a result of your school transfer?

Santana: No!!! I never thought about that no matter what happened.

- f) **Question:** Do you feel that was because you are in the ____grade?

Santana: No. Because I want to finish school and go to college and get a grasp on my future and career.

g) Question: What, if any, other things went through your mind as the transfer was completed?

Santana: Hopefully, not losing my friends from my other school that I had before the transfer.

Question: Did your records arrive with you at the time of your transfer?

Santana: No, they came later.

Question: Were your teachers helpful to you as a new student?

Santana: Most of them were, but because they were like that with most freshmen at the beginning of the school year. During the year, teachers were rude and not fair to the transfer students.

Question: Not fair, what do you mean?

Santana: They treated them differently and yelled more---like you are not a smart student.

Question: How did you adjust to a new principal and assistant principal?

Santana: I didn't adjust to the assistant principal. But later on towards the middle of the year he was ok. At first he did not treat me fair. After a fight the assistant principal said he believed the other girls because he knew them for a longer time, so he blamed me. Because I was new, "I was the fall person."

Question: How did you feel about all this going on in your life?

Santana: I hurt really bad and I wished I was older.

Question: Older? Why do you say that?

Santana: Because if I was a senior and they were a junior, he would have blamed them.

Question: So you feel adults are unfair to a few newcomers?

Santana: Well, some are---yea.

Santana's parent interview. Santana's father was the parent interviewed for the study.

Question: How did Santana react when you informed her of the upcoming transfer?

Parent: She resented it, no question. She kept saying "I am not going to that school," over and over again. I had joint custody of Santana, and it was more convenient to have her stay in the school she grew up in and to keep her same friends. When she lived with me, I would drive her to her school every morning and pick her up every night from her mother's.

Question: Did you have concerns regarding Santana after you told her of the transfer?

Parent: Yes, I knew what she said was true, my reasons for encouraging [her to transfer] arguments were---I knew that she wouldn't listen. She has a closed mind. I said to her, "you will have friends wherever you go" and her response back to me was---"Yea, but I'll miss all the gossip in the halls and over there I will not be included anymore. My friends will forget me." I mentioned that she did get into trouble at her present school, and her argument back to me was, "It wasn't my fault." Santana's no angel, but she isn't a devil either! Every encouragement I gave her, she had retaliation for it, just like arguing with a religious person. Then I tried to argue the legal aspects. We knew she was living in the wrong school district and attending the wrong school if she continued to live with me. But she didn't care. This went on for two years. Living with me and having me drive her to and from her school in town. I said that she could go back and live with her mother or go to the school in my district. Santana decided against further arguing...and we set up an appointment to meet with school officials. We went in, and Santana and I walked through the school together and explored it. Anytime a child goes into a

strange environment, they are scared enough; therefore, that's why I went with her.

Question: Do you feel most kids are scared of a new environment?

Parent: Yes. Any new environment. If I know what my children are going through, then I will be able to help them better. I make all the decisions regarding my children. Sunday is reserved for family only. The kids have a say in all decisions, but dad has the final word. If the kids are cool headed and explain things properly (adult-like), I will usually see it their way. If kids have sensitivity and logically present things to me, I will give it a try.

Question: Did you prepare Santana for the move, or did you spring it on her?

Parent: I went over it time and time again. Santana did not relent. She moved in with me at Easter and I drove her to _____ so she could finish out the school year. She would live one week with me and one week with her mother. Both Santana and her brother wanted to live with me. The family had a meeting and discussed what was best for the children. It was decided that the children would live with me.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with during the move?

Parent: Really, the move from her mother's place to mine. That preceded any discussion before going to school. No lies, no report cards to mom will be torn open. I was now to drive her to her present [old] school everyday until the school year was finished.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with upon the completion of the move?

Parent: Anything Santana could do to go back to her old school she did---until the day she registered at her new school---that was the last time she said anything about her old school.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with one month or more after the move was completed?

Parent: Santana was very quick to get acquainted and get new friends. This is what I had expected---guys were attracted to her and things went well for the first three weeks. Her old school was not mentioned but then I would get "the classes are harder than at _____." The teachers assumed that she already knew things, so Santana had to learn what teachers called the fundamentals. Santana was discouraged because her new school was too overwhelming. Her first year's academics was a rough one. Her motivation was a struggle and she received "D's" and "E's" on her report cards because of lagging classroom records. They put her in too advanced classes for her without finding out where she really belonged.

Summary. Santana's relationship with her father was one of trust, truthfulness, confidence, and openness. Santana perceived the expectations placed on her by her father and a new "culture" to be difficult and unsettling. Her father realized that changing schools would be traumatic to Santana, but believed it was essential for her to attend a school in the district where they lived.

Santana and her father thought that, as a new student, she was not placed in classes that would benefit her. Although her pre-algebra class was difficult, Santana "didn't care to study." Her main interest in school was "to get to know people." Santana's academic achievement declined somewhat from the previous year. Santana's father indicated that she would rather socialize than study.

According to Santana, she had failed some classes as a result and was behind in the credits she needed for graduation. She realized school was important but would rather sacrifice her grades than her friends. She wanted to

attend college but was somewhat uncomfortable because she would not be graduating with her class. Santana was not blaming her school transfer and the school itself for her low academic achievement. She had been expending too much time and effort in acquiring friends.

One of Santana's final comments was, "I like this school now, but I wish I never had to leave my other one." She thought that schools should have a system to welcome new students if they need help getting acquainted. "And if they say they don't need help, they're not telling the truth." She endeavored to be friendly to students who appeared to be alone, even if they were not transfer students, because "I know how they feel." Lastly, as a child of divorced parents, attending school within a new culture and emerging as a young lady has been difficult for Santana. Living close to her previous school and friends did not make the secondary school transfer a less unsettling experience.

T. J. Cameron

At first, T. J. was excited about his new adventure in changing schools. Both parents had prepared T. J. and his sister for the upcoming family relocation a year in advance. T. J. thought it would be exciting to attend a new school and meet new friends.

His first few days at the new school were not what he had anticipated. Neither was the first month or the rest of the school year. Before they moved, T. J. and his family

had visited the area and evaluated every school district so that they could select schools that would benefit both him and his sister.

T. J. became unhappy with his new school. The boys seemed jealous of him because of his car and his good looks, which attracted the girls' attention. As time passed, T. J.'s self-esteem collapsed. The boys in his neighborhood would not invite T. J. to join their group, which was similar to his former school group. When he was not accepted, T. J. considered dropping out of school.

In the past, T. J. had not had difficulty making friends or meeting new people. In his present environment, T. J. had had difficulty meeting new people, and his male peers were exceptionally rude to him. At lunch time, T. J. would leave campus for one reason or another. T. J.'s mother noticed this occurrence and called his counselor to ask why he was allowed to leave the school's "closed" campus.

T. J. felt uneasy in the school cafeteria and sat alone while others around him enjoyed the lunch break. T. J. was "afraid" he might look bad in the eyes of his peers, so he displayed a false sense of security. T. J. wanted to be liked and was sensitive to those around him. He thought students were hostile toward him because they were afraid of someone who came from a big city, which they termed "murder capital." T. J. was amazed at how unsophisticated the students and teachers appeared to be, and wished there was a support system for new students.

T. J's responses. T. J.'s responses to the questionnaire items were as follows:

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

T. J.: I had no problems with it. I was looking for a change and a challenge in it. I thought it might be exciting.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

T. J.: The first day was confusing, and I felt uncomfortable and alone.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

T. J.: I didn't know anyone and I was depressed, but I hoped it would become better. Because I wouldn't go out for football, the coach and football players treated me poorly. Maybe that's why the guys didn't want to associate with me.

Question 4: How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?

T. J.: I still haven't adjusted to the school system. I feel that the kids are very non-accepting of me, but I'm not letting it bother me.

Question 5: What type of student(s) did you first associate with as a new student (i.e., athletes, band members, honor students, cheerleaders, etc.), and who was the friendliest group toward you?

T. J.: No one really. The non-academic minded.

Question 6: Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school?

T. J.: Some are, but only one or two.

Question 7: What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school?

T. J.: They should be more accepting to the new students.

Question 8: What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools?

T. J. No time! Beginning of the year is the worst time because everyone is back seeing friends and glad to be with each other, and they care less what others have done.

Question 9: How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes?

T. J.: Math was quite different from my old school. This school is behind, so I dropped Algebra II. Physics is further ahead in this school, but I picked right up on it because of the teacher. I was lost in my English class. The kids knew what type of questions the teacher was going to ask on the exams. I gave up in class, showed for class, took the quizzes by putting answers down without reading the question. This class didn't mean anything to me.

Question 10: How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?

T. J.: It was easy.

Question 11: What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to keep transferring schools easy and enjoyable?

T. J.: Everything should be equal to whoever transfers in. The same outlook, the same interest, but they must have a goal in life. Just because they have one thing in common, that is not enough for friendship.

Question 12: What would you like to see happen in school when a new student arrives?

T. J.: Treat them nice and talk to them. Have a welcoming committee for new students.

Interview questions. T. J. responded to the interview questions as follows:

Question: Tell me if you feel that large schools are more friendly and accepting to a transfer student than small schools, or vice versa.

T. J.: Large schools are more accepting than small schools. There are more people and a greater chance in finding someone with the same interests. The odds narrow when you go to a smaller school.

Question: T. J., do you still feel alone?

T. J.: Yes. But I feel that I didn't have a chance to ask kids over because of the timing of our move. Dad and I lived in a motel for about a month before our house sold in _____, and Mom and Dad purchased another. The pressure to play football was too great, and the guys I knew played football and the coach had them put pressure on me. When I didn't want to play football, I had no friends left that I had already met.

Question: How many moves or transfers have you gone through?

T. J.: Seven. Kids wanted me to be their friend and I always looked forward to new friends, but the move here became a disaster because of circumstances.

Question: The following is a list of characteristics usually surrounding a transfer student. How do you see yourself in these situations?

- a) **Question:** T. J., did you suffer from a disbelief in yourself anytime during your transfer?

T. J.: After I moved, I went downhill. It varied day to day. From being great to two hours later---nothing. I don't know why.

- b) **Question:** T. J., did you achieve less in school as a result of your transfer?

T. J.: My academic grades were better in this school, but mentally I do not feel comfortable here. I do not know people.

- c) **Question:** Are you less motivated since arriving at this school?

T. J.: Yes, I go to school and watch my watch all day hoping the time will go by faster. I sleep in class and do nothing. I am so far ahead of the class I had nothing to do---physically.

d) **Question:** Do you display less ambition since your transfer:

T. J.: Yes and no. I am busy at home, but not in school. I wanted to be out doing something.

e) **Question:** Have you ever considered dropping out of school as a result of your transfer?

T. J.: I may have wanted to drop out from school, but I waited because I know I need my education. It is very difficult to get any place without it.

f) **Question:** What, if any, other things went through your mind as the transfer was completed?

T. J.: I thought everyone might forget me from when I lived in _____. They somewhat did, but not as much now because I go back there every week- end and visit.

T. J.'s parent interview. T. J.'s mother responded to interview questions.

Question: How did T. J. react when you informed him of the upcoming transfer?

Parent: He was kind of excited---all the way. We could have stayed in _____ because his father had another job offer. But the kids wanted a change, and both of them were ready for it. It would be a new school, with new friends, new everything. They liked the idea that they would be living in a "rural" school district. Both children liked the new school and their counselor after they made their choice of schools. That may have been the deciding point to go here and not to a parochial school.

Question: Did you have concerns regarding T. J. after you told him of the move.

Parent: No. Because of the above explanation, the children decided where they wanted to attend school.

Question: Did you prepare T. J. for the move?

Parent: We prepared both children for the move. Their father worked for 25 years for a corporation, and we were aware that it was going to close. We did not know where to move, but it took a year to decide and T. J. knew about the move the entire time.

Question: Do you feel that knowing about the move helped T. J. prepare for it?

Parent: Yes. The kids did have a little say in the move. T. J. said "Dad I don't care where we move, you have to support us, and I don't care where we move. You have to work for the next 25 years and I am going to Michigan State University. I'm really looking forward to the move." But the problem may have been moving during the change of semesters. I am questioning the time of the year during which the move took place.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with during the move?

Parent: We are split---it is now looking like it was a bad bad idea. T. J. lived in a motel with his father and would come home on weekends with Dad to be with the family. This took place for two months. In the process, our house was being sold and we needed to purchase another.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with upon the completion of the move?

Parent: I asked my neighbor if her sons would introduce T. J. to their friends, and she said they have their own friends, and that T. J. will have to find his own friends. That's when I kept in touch with his school counselor.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with one month or more after the move?

Parent: It was better because the family was together. T. J. liked school better, liked the new house, and liked the area, but it is boring. T. J. will be out of town for the summer working for a contractor who had promised him a summer job. He won't be bored for the summer months! But even after one month after the move, T. J. is still not as happy as I would like him to be.

In April he kept going back to _____, every week-end. That was an easy out for him. I tried to put a stop to it---giving him a crutch by going back, but if he really wants to go I won't stop him.

Summary. T. J. was thrilled that he and his family were moving to the new location. Yet his apparent enthusiasm to transfer schools and make new friends was threatened by an unusual number of obstacles and barriers. Because of his size and outstanding personality, the football coach assumed T. J. would be the football player of his dreams. When T. J. declined to play football, the coach had the team urge T. J. to play football, to the point of harassment. As T. J. declined repeatedly, he was signing his own "death warrant." From then on T. J. was ostracized, and socially victimized, and his new car was vandalized.

Even though T. J. would not admit it to his family, he did confess in the interview that he was hurt by what was occurring, and "it's getting worse."

To listen to T. J. and his mother speak of the coach and how the team members devastated T. J.'s self esteem, this researcher questioned why this was allowed to continue. Neither T. J. nor his mother wanted to make waves, more than there were already.

T. J. attended school every day, knowing that he would be intimidated. He succumbed to the harassment, knowing that it would last only a while longer. He and his family

would be moving back to their previous town as soon as school was out for the summer.

Football was the catalyst of "destruction" for T. J. If it had not been for that, T. J. would have been an asset to the school.

Jamie Mason

Jamie lived with his mother, a divorcee. When the researcher spoke with his mother about setting a time for her to be interviewed (she canceled two interviews due to illness), she said she did not want to participate in the study. She claimed that Jamie's side of the story, not hers, was what the researcher wanted to hear. "Furthermore, he just dropped out from school because he was not receiving passing grades, and so why finish the year?"

After conversing for several minutes, it was mutually agreed that it would be in her best interest to withdraw from the study. She did not care what Jamie did.

Jamie took part in the study before his sudden departure from school. Although Jamie was a personable young man, he seemed to have a chip on his shoulder. He was one of the most difficult youngsters to get to know. He appeared to be a "tough guy" both internally and externally, but in conversations with the researcher he was polite, responsive, and willing to help with the data collection. Jamie wanted to be liked by most students, but he resented the

"preppies." He was not involved in the "regular" sports, but like to hunt, fish, and camp.

Jamie compromised his academic record for peer approval from the "rebels." He thrived on such stunts as hiding the cane of a student with muscular dystrophy, letting a blind girl walk into a wall after telling her she was headed for the door, and shooting paper wads at the preppies and/or teacher's. He and his friends made paper wads, and on signal they took aim and made a throwing motion with their arms as one of the group fired a wad at someone. No one knew who had thrown it because all arms were in motion.

Jamie's responses. Jamie's responses to the questionnaire items are presented below.

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Jamie: It wasn't easy when I first knew that we were going to move to another district, but when we did I met a few friends and it isn't so bad now, I guess, but there are still a lot of people I don't know.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Jamie: My first day at school wasn't all that bad. I guess because I knew a few people from my neighborhood when we moved in.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Jamie: The end of the week was pretty good because by then I had met some more people and had got to know my teachers and where the classrooms were.

Question 4: How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?

Jamie: I became acquainted with it pretty quick because there were a lot of people who talked to me and stuff.

Question 5: What type of student(s) did you first associate with as a new student (i.e., athletes, band members, honor students, cheerleaders, etc.), and who was the friendliest group toward you? Please explain.

Jamie: Wherever you go the preppies always ignore you, unless you're wearing solid gold and an outfit that costs more than \$100. When I came here I got along better with some athletes, but mostly, I hung out with the more moderate people, usually called rebels.

Question 6: Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school?

Jamie: Yes, because the people I hang out with don't put up with any shit from those rich preppies. Those preppies and all those people who think they know it all think their shit don't stink, well I got news for them. Nobody's perfect and that's how all my friends feel. And all those people who stab you in the back and gossip behind your back are the faggots I'm talking about.

Question 7: What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school?

Jamie: Haven't met any yet.

Question 8: What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools (i.e., first semester, second semester, middle of a semester, etc.)? Please explain.

Jamie: I think the best time to change schools would be when I did, in the summer, because then you have time to get to know people around your neighborhood and some kids that go to the school.

Question 9: How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes?

Jamie: My classes were easy to get used to because I had similar classes at my other school.

Question 10: How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?

Jamie: No problem at all. In my book, a teacher is just a teacher.

Question 11: What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to make transferring schools easy and enjoyable?

Jamie: All I can say is be friendly and try to talk to other people and get to know them, and try to get involved in sports and things because you can meet new people that way.

Question 12: What would you like to see happen in school when a new student arrives?

Jamie: All I would like to see is that people be more friendly and talkative to the new student and help them around to show them where things are, and people who already attend this school should try to become friends with the student.

Interview questions. Jamie's responses to the interview questions were as follows:

Question: Jamie, how did you feel when you were told that you would be transferring schools?

Jamie: I felt like garbage.

Question: Jamie, how easy was it for you to transfer schools?

Jamie: I knew people who introduced me to other students, and if I didn't know them, it would have been more difficult. I wish I hadn't transferred because I lost my friends, you know, friends from my old school still are best.

Question: Jamie, what was your first day like at this school?

Jamie: It was difficult to find my classes. The kids acted like I was a "retard" for asking where class was. I felt dumb. I didn't ask or associate with teachers. I just minded my own business because I didn't want to appear stupid.

Question: Jamie, what was your first week of school like?

Jamie: Still the same. I knew where my classes were because I worked there over the summer and got to know a few people.

Question: You must have become acquainted pretty fast with your new school because of your working here, is that right?

Jamie: The kids acted like I was a retard and I did not know what to talk about. Well I did with administrators, counselor, and teachers.

Question: Jamie, what was your favorite group to hang around with?

Jamie: Rebels were the easiest group for me because I knew how it felt and they were probably transfer students also. I like to cause trouble once in awhile---throw paper in class and hide the crippled kid's cane ... everyone does it.

Question: Jamie, what are the main type of groups in this school?

Jamie: The gossip group are the preppies. They like to gossip and talk about other people. The preppies are rich, spoiled, got everything, they know it all, and think they are better than you. The rebel just doesn't give a "crap" what happens. For example, we throw paper at the teacher on a dare.

Question: Jamie, what time of the year would you say is best to transfer schools?

Jamie: Kids on the Summer Youth Program from another school were here and I got acquainted with them and the rooms. We signed up for classes but did not get into what we wanted. I had poor grades, so they asked if I wanted to go to the Career Center.

Question: Did you go to the Career Center?

Jamie: Yeah, I like it ok.

Question: You must have adapted to your new classes pretty fast Jamie, right?

Jamie: Some were harder than the old school. I never adapted to biology though. I went to the Career Center because they had classes I liked.

Question: Jamie, what would be a good way to make transferring schools easy for future transfer kids?

Jamie: Get into sports. I wasn't in sports, but noticed that was a way to get into things.

Question: You seem to have adjusted pretty easily; how did you do that?

Jamie: I just walked up to people and started talking, but don't want anything to do with preps---if they talk to me, I talk to them. They never wear the same thing twice. They spend too much money on clothes to go to school, and it doesn't help them learn any better. I'm not jealous. Preps depend on what a name is; if trouble comes along, preps and athletes get out of trouble easier. Looks do mean a lot to preps, and clothes make a difference.

Question: What needs to be done to help transfer students fit in better?

Jamie: Same---but speak to them.

Question: Why?

Jamie: Because I know the feeling---

Summary: Jamie was pleasant, polite and talkative. Ten minutes before being notified that he had been selected for the interview, Jamie stopped the researcher in the hall and asked, "Am I one of your subjects?" Yes, the researcher responded, is that OK?" He smiled and said, "Thanks, I can hardly wait." Meeting times were set for an hour after school. He asked why we couldn't do it all at once. The researcher's response was, " Jamie, it might take four or five hours." He said, "That's OK."

With his mother's permission, the researcher picked Jamie up after school and drove to a nearby restaurant. As Jamie answered the questions, he was relaxed and comfortable. When questioned about what it was like on the first day at school and how easy it was to transfer schools, Jamie's interview responses were in direct conflict with those he gave on the questionnaire. Further questioning elicited the same types of conflicting responses. Jamie appeared hostile, which might have stemmed from the loss of a father in the home. Jamie was one of the "have nots," and although he said he was not jealous of the preps, the researcher detected that he might have had some animosity toward the preppies.

At times the researcher found it difficult to remain distant with Jamie. He desperately needed attention, and because he had been assured his responses would remain confidential, he knew that he could tell the researcher things that "men are not supposed to talk about." During his interviews he confided that he "felt like garbage" and that the kids called him a "retard."

After the interview and just two weeks before the end of the school year, Jamie had a sudden departure from school.

Seneca Cordova

Seneca transferred to her present school from a small, rural southern community. She was attractive, outgoing, vibrant, and had a winning personality. At her previous

school, Seneca had been an athlete, known all the students' first and last names, achieved well in her classes, met all graduation requirements, and earned enough "points" to go on the senior class trip. She was expecting this year to be the epitome of her school years because her schedule consisted of all "goof off" classes.

Seneca was told about the family move as soon as her parents were notified, but she did not care to move or even discuss it. She had relatives living in her new school district, attending the same school, and living close to her new home. However, she informed her family that she did not want to move and leave her friends, her grandparents, and most of all her school. Yet move she did.

Upon registering for classes in her new school, Seneca was told that she would be placed in eleventh instead of twelfth grade. This devastated Seneca to the point that her parents were concerned she might drop out of school or do something more drastic. Administrators of the new school, her parents, and Seneca reached an agreement whereby she was allowed to remain in the grade she had been in before the transfer. The reasoning was that Seneca had met all of the graduation requirements from her previous school and agreed to take the required senior classes at her new school.

Although it was difficult to transfer schools, Seneca chose to be with her nuclear family. She survived the year at her new school, attended the Career Center, and worked at

a local grocery store. She expected to continue her studies at a nearby college.

Seneca's responses. Seneca's responses to the questionnaire items are presented below.

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school?

Seneca: It was really hard. The people are really hateful. They already have their friends, so why should they take time to talk to you?

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Seneca: I would walk down the halls by myself and stare at the floor. When I got to my homeroom, I sat in a corner all by myself.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Seneca: I started going out to the Career Center after a couple days and there was one other girl that was going to be in my class out there, so me and her started talking.

Question 4: How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?

Seneca: Pretty fast because I went out to the Career Center for four hours.

Question 5: What type of student(s) did you first associate with as a new student?

Seneca: I really didn't associate with a group. I met people through my friend from the Career Center and her sister. Most of my friends are at the Career Center.

Question 6: Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school?

Seneca: No, I was in band and an honor student. I was friends with the basketball players and

cheerleaders. I was popular down there; up here I'm like a nobody.

Question 7: What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school?

Response: They said it was hard at first, but after awhile it got easier.

Question 8: What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools?

Seneca: I think it's better at the very beginning because nobody else knows what they are doing either.

Question 9: How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes?

Seneca: It really wasn't hard I only had three classes.

Question 10: How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?

Seneca: It really wasn't that hard; but they still have their "pets" from the year before.

Question 11: What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to make transferring schools easy and enjoyable?

Seneca: I think they should have a "welcoming committee."

Question 12: What would like to see happen in school when a new student arrives?

Seneca: Everyone trying to talk to them and make them feel welcome.

Interview questions. Seneca's responses to the interview questions were as follows:

Question: Seneca you stated that your move was difficult, could you give me more information on your transfer?

Seneca: The people! The teachers are somewhat hateful because they have already picked their

favorites. The preppie girls always want their way and seem to get it. It's hard coming in after being popular at my previous school and now a "nothing" here. I also wanted to graduate with my friends and now I can't.

Question: The first day of school was a little rough, what happened?

Seneca: I really didn't know where the gymnasium was, so I asked some kids where it was. They looked at me like I was "dumb" for not knowing where it was.

Question: You made friends at the Career Center very easily, and I suppose you did the same at school.

Seneca: If it wasn't for the Career Center, it would have been horrible. At the end of the first week, I still had no friends. The Career Center was a life-saver.

Question: You said you became acquainted with your new school pretty fast. You did well, seeing how spread out it is.

Seneca: No, not really. For instance, it took me almost a year to find a bathroom that was close to my classes. I didn't ask anyone for help because I didn't want to feel dumb.

Question: You mentioned that you did not associate with any group at school. Was there a reason?

Seneca: It was the preps having the most fun, and they did not invite me to join in their group. The general education students are really not in any group, so they did befriend me. The "scutter" group is gross, their hair is greasy, and they wear gross clothes. I would not be friendly with them when they wanted me to join them. The "stoners" are the same way as the "scutter" group.

Question: You stated that your present friends are not the same type as you had at your old school. Why?

Seneca: I am not an honor student now. I did not want to transfer, and I begged my parents to let me stay with Grandma. But I was "forced" to move. I just didn't want to go to school and I didn't care to study. Down home I just needed electives to graduate, but here I needed more

"required" courses. I did not want to be here; I cried and cried. The teachers were more friendly down there than up here. I wanted to play basketball, but they already had their players up here, and I could not adjust to the harassment of other players.

Question: Seneca, in regard to student transfers, you mentioned that a welcoming committee would benefit other students. Is there anything else you might like to mention?

Seneca: I would like to see:

1. Someone take individuals around and show them their classes, bathrooms, gym, etc.
2. The students know where their homeroom is. It's hard to find things here.
3. Maps given to us that are easier to read.
4. Everyone talk to new people.
5. Students introduce people to friends and try to get them to feel more comfortable because you know they miss their old friends.

Seneca's parent interview. Seneca's mother responded to the interview questions.

Question: How did Seneca react when you informed her of the forthcoming move?

Parent: She was crushed and cried all the time. She would say, "How could you do this to me?" She threatened to quit school, etc. We promised her if she attended school here and at least give it a try, we would let her go back to live with her grandmother if she still wanted. She cried because she was going to miss her senior trip, so we promised all kinds of things to get her to move and graduate. We did everything we could to convince her to stay because we didn't want her to leave the family.

Question: Did you have concerns regarding Seneca after you told her of the move?

Parent: I was afraid that she wasn't going to come with us. It was just tearing her apart.

Seneca tries to act like a "hard nosed kid," but she isn't. We would have given her the moon just to stay with the family. We even made sure she started school with someone she knew.

Question: Did you prepare Seneca for the move, or did it come as a surprise to both you and her?

Parent: As soon as we found out about the move we told Seneca immediately. She knew that her father had come to Michigan for a job interview. We did have family here and she did know the area so, it was no surprise to Seneca. But she did not want to move and she kept giving us these reasons over and over:

1. She was a senior.
2. She had all points collected for her senior trip.
3. She had already met all requirements to graduate.
4. This was her senior year and she could take "all goof off classes."

When we moved here, Seneca was going to be placed in the junior class because she had not met this school's graduation requirements. But the school agreed to allow her to take only the senior requirement because she already had met the graduation requirements at her previous school.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with during the move? Upon completion of the move? One month or more after the move?

Parent: As we moved, it was not like the "normal" move that most people go through. My husband and son moved first and Seneca and I waited for her friends to graduate before moving here. The only items we brought with us were our clothes, Seneca's stuffed animals, radio, tapes, and yearbooks. We stuffed them in boxes and carried them on the bus. It wasn't until November that we went back for the rest of the household goods.

Parent: We lived with relatives until we could move into our home, because of "lagging" paper work with our house closure. We moved within two weeks, and then Seneca had an accident as soon as we moved into the house. The new problems at school were with attendance. The

accident caused a great deal of pain to Seneca which caused Seneca to miss school and the Career Center. The Career Center called home and told me Seneca would be dropped from the Center because of attendance. I called and explained the situation to them, and they finally allowed her to remain at the Center.

Parent: The same things were still unsettled but were a little more calm. Seneca had a few friends by now (in the summer); one friend was from a long time ago. Once school started, it wasn't easy for Seneca, but she enjoyed the Career Center and met friends there. Her old school was much different; she knew everyone back there and no one here. She was considered "cute," so she had a lot of guy friends.

Summary. Seneca had everything going for her at her previous school. Unlike the present school, her previous school was small; she knew everyone there, was an athlete, and was popular. The situation at her present school was just the opposite. She was alone without friends at the high school, did not participate in sports, and was not popular.

To keep Seneca with the family, her parents made several types of promises. They were concerned about Seneca's well-being because she was removed from her lifelong friends, grandparents, school, and community. Eventually, Seneca realized that if her parent's were to survive financially she must remain with them. Not only is Seneca intelligent and intuitive, she is understanding. She understood that she had to put aside her wishes to preserve her family's welfare.

Madison Edwards

When the researcher first met Madison, she thought he was about 18 years old. His muscular development, facial features, and mannerisms were not those of a 15 year old. Madison was reserved and polite but did not often smile. The researcher hypothesized that he might still be uncomfortable in his new school.

Madison was willing to help with the study and responded freely to the questions. Occasionally, an expression of self-satisfaction crept over his face as he answered.

Madison transferred schools so that he could live with his mother, a single parent. As with many family separations, Madison lived first with one parent and then the other. Madison was more than happy to move with his mother and to attend a new school. He did not hesitate to walk up to a group of students, a single student, or a teacher and ask for directions or help.

The researcher asked Madison how he felt as he walked up to these people; he said, "I needed to know, so I asked." Madison was not identified as a "new" student. He said most students and teachers thought he had attended the school the previous year. Madison was amused by this because he was a freshman. He believed people were friendly toward him because he was a football player, had a good reputation, was able to "go with the flow," and could differentiate good from bad habits.

Madison's responses. Madison's responses to the questionnaire are presented below.

Question 1: Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.

Madison: It was pretty easy, because I signed up for football and that's where I met most of my friends.

Question 2: Please describe your first day at this school.

Madison: I came to school and I got lost. I didn't know my way around but when I found some of my friends it was a lot easier.

Question 3: Please describe the end of the first week at this school.

Madison: I started knowing a lot more people, and it was a lot easier.

Question 4: How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?

Madison: After about the third week.

Question 5: What type of students(s) did you first associate with as a new student?

Madison: Athletes and cheerleaders because of football. Well, not so much cheerleaders but, most came and watched field practice.

Question 6: Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school?

Madison: No, but I still go with my old friends every weekend. Most of the time with my best friend. Most of the people I hang around with listen to different types of music than I listen to.

Question 7: What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools?

Madison: First semester because you get time to meet people.

Question 8: How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes?

Madison: Pretty easy. They got harder as time progressed.

Question 9: How easy was it for you to adjust to your new school teachers?

Madison: It was easy for some, and some I still haven't adapted to.

Question 10: What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to make transferring schools easy and enjoyable?

Madison: To schedule classes the day that registering starts.

Interview responses. The responses Madison gave to interview questions were as follows:

Question: Madison, you had a pretty easy time with your transfer. What else can you tell me that made your transfer so easy?

Madison: If it wasn't for football, I don't believe it would have been this easy. Because of being a football player, I didn't feel alone because of the friends I made there.

Question: What happened the first day of school to make it fun and enjoyable?

Madison: I was not afraid to ask teachers and other students where I needed to go. A lot of the kids were asking me where their classes were, etc. The kids still ask me if I went to this school last year. They say I look familiar and that they remember me from last year. I guess having a good reputation helps.

Question: What about after the first week, Madison? You still seemed to be having a good time with the situation?

Madison: It was kind of different at first, but I just didn't let it bother me.

Question: Do you think it was because of your football ability that made it easy for you to adjust?

Madison: Yeah, I guess if I wasn't a football player, I wouldn't have met my friends. They all like me and talk to me a lot in my classes and at lunch. Some kids don't eat lunch because no one wants to sit with them.

Question: What should they do to have someone eat lunch with them?

Madison: They should just walk up to the kids and sit with them.

Question: You became acquainted with the school within three weeks; that was pretty fast, wasn't it?

Madison: Well, I knew a lot more people and I knew my way around the building. When I first registered, I thought I was in a maze. But Mom and I walked around before school. That really helped me find my classrooms and stuff.

Question: Madison, describe the most friendly group of kids in school and what group you would want to associate with if you were not in football.

Response: The friendliest group in school are the "loners." The "loners" can make friends easy and lose them just as easy. Well, I call the "loners" "stoners" too because they accept you regardless of how you dress. I dress the way I want to because it doesn't bother me to talk to any group. The easiest group to get into is the "stoners"---"rebels" are "stoners," too. The jocks have always been my friends. If I wasn't in sports I would be with the "loners" and maybe the preps. The only thing wrong with the preps is that they wear expensive clothes; they're rich.

Question: Then you don't have a favorite group you hang around with?

Madison: Well, now they are the preps. We listen to rap and pop music, and some preps like heavy metal. My old school didn't have groups because it was too small of a school. Everyone knew everyone, but at this school, there are groups that accept only certain kids. I go to any group that I want to. Before I came here, I didn't know groups existed in schools.

Question: Explain why you feel students should transfer at the beginning of the year and not some other time.

Madison: If you come in during the middle of the year you:

1. Miss out on a lot of stuff.
2. Don't know what was learned.
3. Don't know what they are learning now.
4. Don't know what to study for, so I failed some classes.
5. Don't have any courses open to select from.

Question: Madison, you transferred in at the beginning of the school year. Is there something that might be important that other transfer students should know about?

Madison: Yes. Don't take a study hall or anything you will fail when you get there. Like French, it got harder as time went by. And because I failed some classes, I had to take one at another school in order for me to catch up with my graduating class. If you fail a class or take study hall, you get behind and then have to take a full load of classes for the rest of your school years.

Question: Madison, how would you suggest a new student be treated in school?

Madison: Accept the people for who they are not who they should be. Some people can act like a prep, but won't. So the preps make it more difficult for them because the new student doesn't want to conform to the prep group.

Question: Did anyone else help you with your transfer?

Madison: My counselor was just concerned with me getting along with my father. She told me that not getting along with him might be the reason my school work was affected.

Question: Do you think your counselor was correct in assuming your grades went down because of the relationship you and your dad had?

Madison: No, not really. I just wanted to be with my best friend from the other school. I like going to school here; I don't know why my grades went down.

Madison's parent interview. Madison's mother responded to the following questions.

Question: How did Madison react when you informed him of the forthcoming move?

Parent: He was happy because he was going to be in a good school district. His little mind started working on how to get away from his dad. He was living with his dad and wanted to get away from him. Madison knew what school district he would be happy in other than the one he was in, so he was glad this school was chosen over the others.

Question: Did you have concerns regarding Madison after you told him of the move?

Parent: That answer is the same as the first question. We knew it was a good school system and knowing the trauma he was going through with him leaving his dad and making friends. Madison never had a best friend, but did at his last school which he visits regularly. Adjusting to another school and making new friends was my main concern.

Question: Did you prepare Madison for the move, or did it come as a surprise to both of you?

Parent: Madison made the choice to move in with me, which meant he would have to change schools; it was a surprise ... surprise attack and shock. Madison's dad moved Madison back with me for the summer, and Madison made the decision to stay.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with before the move?

Madison: Many arguments between Madison and his dad, his dad and me, because of the decision Madison made to live with me. Things really got hot between the three of us.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with during the move?

Parent: We had to keep taking open hostility from his father during the entire move.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with upon completion of the move?

Parent: We completed the move before school started. We did have some problems with scheduling the classes Madison wanted.

Question: What did you find yourself dealing with one month or more after the move was completed?

Parent: Not much, because he seemed to like the school, and he still does.

Summary. The first time Madison met with the researcher he discussed his recent activities, the reason he needed an extra credit that year, and being a new student at the high school.

He believed his transfer was easy and unstressful because of his involvement in football. If it were not for football and the backing of his mother, the transfer might have been more difficult. Because of his healthy attitude, ability to make correct choices were constantly reinforced.

Madison thought his involvement with sports, the adjustment to changing parental guidance, the school transfer, and taking an especially difficult class (a foreign language) contributed to his first semester's failing grades. He realized he could not take any more study halls or "goof-off classes because he needed to make up these credits to graduate on time.

Responses to the teacher interviews

The researcher interviewed three teachers at the school where this study was conducted concerning their views of secondary transfer students. These teachers had expressed

an interest in the research. Their responses are reported below.

Teacher responses to secondary school transfer students

Question: As a teacher, how do you perceive a transfer student?

Response:

1. They appear mostly lonely or they stay by themselves.
2. They do not participate in class, therefore, their grades go down.
3. They are not comfortable in this school.
4. They do not talk much.
5. Their grades go down, sometimes drastically.
6. Their behavior is not within the "normal" range.

Question: How do you observe the transfer student's ability to fit in at this school? What types of peers are the most accepting of new students?

Response: This is terrible to say, but in this school the friendliest group is the worst group. They accept anyone. These are the "rowdies," "smokers," "partiers," "drinkers," suspected "druggies," people with poor grades who usually do not go beyond the high school level and "undermotivated" students.

Response: There are many cliques for the transfer student to attempt to break into. Each group is slow to accept anyone outside of the group. If the student is an athlete, they get accepted faster in most circumstances.

Response: Transfer students need to be special, special in terms of appearance. Then the group "might" take them in. If the student is not good looking or does not dress in a certain fashion, the group will not accept the new student at all. Usually, the kids that go here were raised here for most of their lives.

Question: Some students fit in well almost immediately. Can you give the reasons for the difference?

Response: YES! For the same reasons in the previous question.

Question: As a teacher, how do you view the social adjustment of a transfer student?

Response: It's very difficult. I spoke with several new students, and they said this school is a very difficult place to be welcomed into. And [there are] too many cliques.

Response: It is slow. Eventually most new students adjust at different rates and sometimes they adjust in spite of the other kids.

Response: This one student volunteered for everything. He ran for class office and didn't even come close to winning. He would have done anything to be accepted. But he:

1. Was quiet.
2. Was unattractive.
3. Was not smart, but took college prep courses.
4. Was finally treated ok, but the kids thought he was "out-of-it."
5. Was a real nice kid but he was NEVER ACCEPTED.

Chapter Summary

Researchers have verified that few transfer students escape "culturalization collision." Findings in this study indicated that transferring secondary schools was a traumatic experience. Some subjects and their parents stated that transferring schools at the secondary level is more traumatic than changing schools earlier in life.

Subjects who appeared to adjust readily indicated that sports, a friend, and/or their outgoing personality made transferring schools less of a problem.

Most parents' foremost concern was that their children would make friends; academics were of secondary importance.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the study. Major findings from the study and conclusions drawn from those findings are presented next. Recommendations given by transfer students, their parents, and teachers for how schools can facilitate adjustment to a school transfer are given, and suggestions are made for further research.

SUMMARY

Purpose of the study

The primary purpose in this study was to determine whether selected secondary transfer students experienced difficulty in adapting to a new school environment. Also an attempt was to determine the students' thoughts about the transfer before, during, and after the transfer.

A third purpose was to discover whether support mechanisms existed to form a transition between the academic classes in the new school and those of the previous school.

Review of literature

Literature concerning the dynamics of acceptance or rejection of secondary school transfer students is limited.

Two phenomena are related to a school transfer: an increase in the mobility rate and the breakdown of the family structure.

Some researchers have found that transferring schools has a negative effect on students' adjustment in the classroom (Benson & Weigel, 1980-81). However, Benson and Weigel discovered that:

some children may actually benefit from changing schools...while others may find the changes detrimental. However, these situations will go unnoticed in statistical computations. Therefore, future research should focus on individual case studies to identify and assess those critical variables affecting the ease of adjusting to changing schools. This will clearly help the school staff to recognize which incoming students need specific help and in what ways.

Methods

The researcher submitted a questionnaire to 20 students randomly selected transfer students in one high school; 19 of those students returned completed questionnaires. Five of the 19 students who responded to the questionnaire were randomly selected for extensive interviews, concerning their individual school transfers. "It was essential that direct quotations were clearly distinguished from summaries provided by the researcher" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

Major findings

Three major findings emerged from this study. First, most of the students had unsettling experiences with a school transfer. The period of adjustment varied from one

week to never. "Whether or not the move has a positive or negative long-term effect, the child needs guidance and direction to ease the immediate adjustment to his or her new surroundings" (Holland-Jacobsen et al., 1984).

The second major finding was that, because of increased mobility in society, many students are subjected to the anxiety and trauma of changing schools and to "negative experiences in a new school environment" (McWhirter, 1969). Holland-Jacobsen et al. (1984) found to adapt successfully to a new school, transfer students (a) must find peer acceptance, (b) meet academic and behavioral standards, and (c) be accepted by the teacher as an appropriate member of the assigned class.

Wechsler (1989) listed three principles that underlie a successful program involving transfer students: (a) commitment to assist transfer students, (b) making faculty cognizant of the needs of transfer students, and (c) elimination of barriers and obstacles to transfer students.

The third major finding was that adaptations took place at a different rate for each student. The internal and external influences of new students played an active role in the adaptation process. Such as: the preps accept students that fit their "standards;" (i.e. good looks, expensive clothing, etc.). If a new student desired to be accepted by the preps, but was not accepted, the student's self-esteem (internal influence) was lowered (i.e. Seneca Cordova).

Gordon (1983) suggested one way to understand adjustment is to view it as dynamic. Most of the transfer students in this study exhibited various aspects of Gordon's stages of conflict, such as noted below:

Stage 1: Latent conflict refers to the time when conditions for conflict exist.

Discussion: In the initial stage of a school transfer, most students are competing for peer acceptance. A few may have a different goal or exhibit immediate role conflict.

Stage 2: Perceived conflict refers to the time when group members intellectually or cognitively know that conflict exists.

Discussion: Perceived conflict may be suppressed, as observed with T. J. Corcoran.

Stage 3: Felt conflict occurs when one or more of the parties feels tense or anxious.

Discussion: Most students in this study experienced periods of anxiety, trauma, and stress.

Stage 4: Manifest conflict refers to observable behavior designed to frustrate another's attempts to pursue his or her goals. Both open aggression and withdrawal of support illustrate manifest conflict. At this stage, conflict should be resolved.

Discussion: When schools provide support services for students who need assistance, the students will be able to pursue the immediate goal of obtaining an education. During this stage of developmental conflict, most students should have either found a friend, made a sudden departure from school, or adjusted despite the circumstances.

Stage 5: Conflict aftermath refers to the situation after conflict is resolved or suppressed.

Discussion: Most transfer students did survive the stages of conflict, whether that conflict lasted a week, a month, or close to a year. One student in this study had a sudden departure from school. Attempts to find acceptance with a certain group cost him the chance to complete his education. Several students said that if they were granted one wish, "I would wish I was back at my old school."

Recommendations for schools

Because 20% of the American population move each year Walling (1990) and children are the involuntary participants in such moves, subject to the anxieties and traumas of changing schools, the school transfer and culturalization process must be viewed as a "standard feature of education" Youngman (1977).

Based on responses of secondary transfer students' parents, and teachers in the school they attend, the following recommendations are made for schools to enhance the new student culturalization process.

Student recommendations

1. School should have a welcoming committee for new students.
2. Everyone should be more friendly toward new students.
3. New students should not be embarrassed by other students or teachers.
4. New students should visit the school before it begins or right after classes start to get acquainted with the school building, and

5. New students should attempt to learn the ways of the new culture.

Parent recommendations

For schools attempting to implement a plan of action to assist transfer students, it would be appropriate and beneficial to collaborate with parents, teachers, and student. Parents made the following recommendations for how schools can facilitate transfer students' adaptation to the new school.

1. Schools should have a welcoming committee for new students.
2. Take a picture of the new students and put them in a weekly newspaper, or put a picture in the daily announcement sheet. Or have a bulletin board with pictures of new students.

Parents might see pictures of a bulletin board as helpful, but secondary school students might be embarrassed about having their pictures displayed. This recommendation might have a negative effect because external influences play a large role during this stage of development.

3. Take the new student around and show them where everything is.
4. Acquaint them with the extra-curricular activities and how and when to show up at meetings.
5. Leave room in the scheduling process to allow new students to chose desired classes instead of "leftovers."

Leaving room in the class scheduling process so that transfer students will not receive "leftover" classes is an excellent idea. One drawback to this suggestion is that students who have a sense of ownership in their school

believe they should be allocated places in classes before students who will be transferring. It is not advisable to give a desired class to a newcomer if a "regular" student desires the class first.

Teacher recommendations

Several teachers at the research site met with the researcher to discuss the positive and negative effects of a secondary school transfer. They suggested the following recommendations for practice:

1. Counselors should make it known to members of the student government that a new student has enrolled and should be shown around and introduced to other students. Also, these leaders should help new students become involved in the school activities.
2. Unofficial school records should arrive with the student, or official school records should arrive before the student.
3. Have certain days for new students to enroll.
4. Alert all personnel, to the arrival of a new student so that they can welcome the student if there is no welcoming committee at the school. Teachers should prepare to integrate the new student into the class and designate someone to sit with him/her during lunch break.
5. Teachers should allow new students an adjustment period and not lower their grades if they do not

readily participate in class. Teachers should consult previous school records before judging the student's ability. If there has been a major decline in the student's performance, the student should be referred to a counselor for assistance.

6. Ideally, the transfer should take place at the beginning of the school year. The first week of school should be devoted to orientation for all students.
7. Parents should be introduced to their children's teachers. They should be given dates of parent-teacher conferences, a class syllabi, and teachers' expectations for students. Packets containing student handbooks, school calendars, class schedules, and bus locations and schedules should be distributed to new students and their parents.
8. The principal should be friendly and accessible to students. The principal and assistant principal should spend five to ten minutes with each new student and welcome him/her to the school.

Recommendations for further study

1. The same study should be performed in a suburban or inner-city school to determine whether the experiences of students transferring to those schools would be similar to those of students in this study.

2. The study should be attempted anywhere that people transfer into to expand on the study.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF EXPLANATION

Dear _____

Your son/daughter _____ was a transfer student from a school district outside of your child's present school district. I am asking that you and _____ volunteer in helping me to look at how _____ adjusted to his/her new school.

To gather factual information, I would like permission to interview both parent and child. The parental interview should take approximately one to two hours and will be arranged for your convenience. With permission from you and _____, he/she can be interviewed three to four times after school. I would also ask your permission for _____ to respond to a pre-determined set of interview questions. These questions and responses will assist me when I interview your son/daughter. A copy of the questions will be provided to you along with a set of questions that I will ask at your interview. All results will be treated with confidence and your child will remain anonymous in any report of research findings. On request and within these restrictions, general results will be available to you and your child. I WILL NOT USE YOUR CHILD'S NAME OR ANY OTHER IDENTIFYING CHARACTERISTICS FOR REPORTING INFORMATION FROM THIS STUDY.

A consent letter of permission and preferred time for you to be interviewed is attached. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and in addition to it being voluntary, any subject, at any time may refuse to answer any question or may at any time, withdraw from the study without penalty or recrimination. Your child will also be told that his/her participation is strictly voluntary.

Results from the interviews and questionnaires will be reported as part of my doctoral dissertation on "Transfer Students: The Dynamics of Acceptance or Rejection of One Michigan Secondary School." Should you have further questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at my home, 784-2952, or at work 569- 3704.

Thank you,

Ellie Kosmet

STUDENT CONSENT FOR ELLIE KOSMET'S DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Dear _____

I am a doctoral student at Michigan State University, attempting to perform a study in the area of secondary school transfer students. For this to be accomplished, it's necessary to find out how easy it is to transfer high schools. I need to know why, what, and/or how a new student adjusted to the transfer process. Because you are a secondary school transfer student, would you be willing to voluntarily participate in this study?

The procedure will be as follows:

If your parents consent to your voluntary participation in the study, and if you agree to voluntarily participate, I would like to meet with you and explain what the study will be about.

If you voluntarily consent to participate, you and nineteen other school transfer students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. From the twenty student questionnaire's, five students will be random selected for indepth interviewing regarding a secondary school transfer.

The following assurances will be that:

- there will be confidentiality to you and your parents.
- school officials will not be informed of what I am learning.
- parents and teachers will not be informed of what I am learning from you and vice-versa.
- I will not ask for any information that will identify you.
- if you are selected for an indepth interview, a consent letter of permission and preferred time for you to be interviewed is attached.
- your identities will be known only to me.
- results from the interviews and questionnaire will be reported as part of my doctoral dissertation on "Transfer Students: The Dynamics of Acceptance or Rejection of One Michigan Secondary School."
- all results will be anonymous in any report of research findings. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary, and in addition to it being voluntary, you may refuse to answer any question or may at any time, withdraw from the study without penalty or recrimination.

Thank you,

Ellie Kosmet

WRITTEN CONSENT FOR ELLIE KOSMET'S DISSERTATION RESEARCH

Dear _____ and _____

You indicated your voluntary agreement to participate in this study by completing and returning the questionnaire. You also consented to be interviewed if chosen as one of the five random selected students. There is definite assurance that risk involved as to your identity will be minimal.

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Phone Number _____

Parent Interview Preference:

During the Day (time) _____

Evening (time) _____

Student Interview Preference:

During the Day (time) _____

Evening (time) _____

Thank you,

Ellie Kosmet
784 2952 (home)
569 3704 (work)

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Dear _____ please answer the following questions to the best of your ability which will present an account of factual circumstances connected with your school transfer. If for any reason you do not care to answer a question or withdraw from the study, you may do so at any time without penalty or recrimination.

If you do respond to the questions with factual information, it will assist me to report accurate results. I sincerely appreciate your voluntary participation in this study.

- 1) Please describe how easy it was for you to transfer to a new school.
- 2) Please describe your first day at this school.
- 3) Please describe the end of the first week at this school.
- 4) How fast did you become acquainted with your new school?
- 5) What type of student(s) did you first associate with as a new student? (i.e., athletes, band members, honor students, cheerleaders, etc., and who were the friendliest group toward you? Please explain.
- 6) Are your present friends similar to the same type of friends that you associated with at your last school? Please explain.
- 7) What have you heard from other transfer students as to how easy it was for them to transfer to this school? Please explain.
- 8) What time of the year do you feel it best to transfer schools? (i.e., first semester, second semester, middle of a semester, etc.) Please explain.

- 9) How easy was it for you to adapt to your new classes? Please explain.
- 10) How easy was it for you to adjust to your new teachers?
- 11) What can you tell me about a school transfer so that I will be able to "spread the word" and to keep transferring schools easy and enjoyable?
- 12) What would you like to see happen in school when a new student arrives? Please explain.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) How did your child react when you informed him/her of the forthcoming move?
- 2) Did you have concerns regarding your child after you told him/her of the move? Please explain.
- 3) Did you prepare your son/daughter for the move, or did it come as a surprise to both you and your son/daughter? Please explain.
- 4) What did you find yourself dealing with---
 - a) Before the move?
 - b) During the move?
 - c) Completion of the move?
 - d) One month or more after the move was complete?
 - e) What advice if any, can you give that would make a school transfer "pleasant and accommodating?"

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)
206 BERKEY HALL
(517) 353-9738

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1111

May 8, 1990

IRB# 90-178

P. Eleanor Kosmet
806 W. Michigan, Apt. 201E
Jackson, MI 49202

Dear Ms. Kosmet:

RE: "TRANSFER STUDENT: THE DYNAMICS OF ACCEPTANCE OR
REJECTION IN ONE MICHIGAN SECONDARY SCHOOL IRB# 90-178"

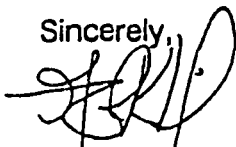
The above project is exempt from full UCRIHS review. I have reviewed the proposed research protocol and find that the rights and welfare of human subjects appear to be protected. You have approval to conduct the research.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval one month prior to May 7, 1991.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



John K. Hudzik, Ph.D.
Chair, UCRIHS

JKH/sar

cc: J. Suehr

APPENDIX D

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