

FROM SCHOOL TO SCHOOL

The Integration into the Secondary School of Pupils  
in Transition from Primary to Secondary Schooling

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ABSTRACT

*Few studies have investigated the integration of pupils into the secondary school, particularly in relation to various forms of school organization.*

*The aim of the study was, therefore, to compare first year groups in transition sub-schools and in a traditional school in respect of pupil integration. A total of 715 pupils in five government schools were the sample and data was gathered over a period of fifteen months.*

*More pupils were found to be integrated in the transition sub-schools than in the traditional school, with a sex differentiation present. An integrative sequence was identified and pupil progress through it related to organisational characteristics of the schools.*

The re-location of school pupils, from a primary to a secondary school environment - a re-location that has at times been designated by several writers as a "transition" experience (Power and Cotterell 1979); Viney, 1980, can be affected by numerous factors including the nature of the contexts through which they pass, and in turn has a variety of effects on pupils (Duke, 1979; Evans and Richards, 1980; Rutter *et al*, 1979). Unfortunately, there is no one psychological or educational theory, or for that matter one super-ordinate research project which adequately accounts for all the factors affecting a transition or for all the likely outcomes of transition.

INTEGRATION: AN OVERVIEW

When individuals, for example pupils, adapt to a new environment, experience satisfaction within it and feel a sense of 'belongingness' there, they are regarded as integrated in that new environment (Getzels and Guba, 1957; Jones and Crandall, 1981; Taft, 1977). Several writers point out that the process of becoming integrated is actually part of the broader concept of socialization, and many of the ideas that pertain to socialization pertain also to integration (Getzels, 1974; Musgrave, 1979; Ross, 1977). Others (e.g. Musgrave, 1979; Schein, 1971) note that important aspects of becoming socialized and for that matter becoming integrated are to learn roles and their associated expectations. Pupils who do not meet a school's expectations of academic performance, or of social behaviour, are unlikely to be satisfied with the school or to have a sense of well-being while attending. As a consequence these pupils are likely to be more detached or alienated from their school (Bardsley, 1976; Evans and Richards, 1980; Power and Cotterell, 1979; Sen, 1978). Others have shown that integration into the school can be difficult when pupils do not clearly understand the roles they are to play. Several writers (e.g. Becker, 1961; Musgrave, 1973; Sen, 1978) point out that role expectations and perspectives about values may be communicated directly to a new incumbent, but these expectations and perspectives may, on other occasions, permeate the individual in more subtle ways during the period that he is exposed to various experiences in the setting.

When role expectations and value perspectives are not communicated directly but are allowed to permeate the individual the extent to which both are learned will vary since the permeability of individuals varies (Bardsley, 1976; Musgrave, 1973; Richardson, 1974). If this is the case, then clearly when role expectations and value perspectives are communicated

directly it can be postulated that individuals will adapt more readily to the environment and be integrated into it (Jones and Crandall, 1981; King, 1973; Power and Cotterell, 1979).

From the perspective of the child the satisfactions and freedom from anxiety which accompany an effective shift of identification from primary to secondary school in conjunction with the learning of acceptable norm and value positions, are a guide to the efficiency of the adjustments being made. Viewed from the school's perspective, on the other hand, the aggregate of these individual adjustments can act as a 'pulse beat' that indicates how effective are various aspects of the school's programmes which are geared to fostering better integration into the secondary school environment.

#### SCHOOL RESPONSES IN FACILITATING INTEGRATION

Several schools in Victoria have implemented variations in their structure and routines to facilitate the communication of role expectations to pupils, recognizing the claims of Nisbet and Entwistle (1969), Sen (1978) and Semmens (1980) that school environments may be enriched by teacher actions directed towards making the pupil feel a valued and important member of the school community and by the establishment of a 'climate' conducive to personal growth and healthy interpersonal relationships.

One such development in school organization has been the advent of mini-schools designed to create sub-groups of pupils within the secondary school. The belief has been that by establishing smaller groups, supported by pastoral care provisions and some elements of mini-school identity in the school, a warmer 'family' climate can be created within which adaptations of expectations can be made by pupils.

#### THE BASIC QUESTION

It was considered appropriate to learn more about the nature of mini-schools in Victoria, and, in particular, about the effects they and their different contexts have upon pupil integration into a new school. So, the basic overarching research objective for this study became:

to determine what were the relationships between different school contexts and the nature of secondary school pupils' intergration into their new schools.

#### COMPONENTS OF INTEGRATION

From an examination of a number of theoretical models dealing with the entry of newcomers to a group, and ideas from assimilation theory, Crandall (1976) described four multi-faceted features of the notion of integration. In essence he suggested that, in studying integration into a group it is appropriate to obtain a measure of a person's satisfaction, identification, norm convergence and involvement with the group. These are not unique concepts; other writers have included similar facets in their theories, for example, Taft (1977) and Richardson (1967).

The four 'markers' of integration used in the study, following the Crandall outline were:

##### 1. Satisfaction

The pupil's feelings of worth and competence in the new environment, and, as several other writers have shown, consists of several aspects. Power and Cotterell (1979) identified four, which can be reduced through factor analysis to three, designated

'satisfaction with social competence', 'satisfaction with school' and 'academic confidence' (Evans and Richards, 1980). The Student Opinions Scale developed by Power and Cotterell (1979) was employed to measure satisfaction. After factor analysis, 34 of the initial 36 items remained. A Cronbach's (1970) alpha coefficient of 0.89 was obtained for the scale (N = 624) with each subscale in excess of 0.72.

## 2. Identification

The notion of feeling 'at home' in the school (King, 1973 ; Odetola et al, 1972) or pupil attachment to the secondary school.

An 8 item scale was derived from Coulter's (1971) study of the socialization of beginning teachers. Each item sought the pupil's response to situations in which the secondary school was depicted as a source of ridicule or embarrassment, or as the subject of praise or commendation. A Cronbach's 'alpha' coefficient of 0.81 was recorded for the scale (N = 318).

## 3. Norm Convergence

The adoption of values held by others in the environment, particularly those of others more advanced in the process of integration.

A Likert type scale was developed comprising 20 items arising from discussions with secondary school pupils. Pilot-testing, with 264 subjects showed a Cronbach's 'alpha' coefficient of 0.88.

## 4. Willingness to be Involved

By isolating 'willingness to be involved' as the final stage in the total process of integration, Crandall highlighted his proposition that the new entrant may be satisfied, with his new group, identify with it, and even hold values and attitudes that are comparable or congruent with those of longer-term members, yet may not wish to become involved in the activities of the group. The form of this scale followed that for "Identification" with 7 items yielding a Cronbach's 'alpha' of 0.77 from 318 students.

## COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL ORGANISATION

It would be incorrect to assume that the responsibility for effective integration should be borne completely by the individual pupils. As earlier suggested, the ways in which secondary schools are organized also influence pupils' perceptions of satisfaction and of belonging and their general sense of well-being in the new environment (Duke and Perry, 1978; Dutch and McCall, 1974 ; Evans and Richards, 1980 ; Power and Cotterell, 1979).

During the past three decades many writers have built on Weber's conceptualization of bureaucracy and its elements (Hage and Aiken, 1970; Hall, 1972; Matthews, 1974; Punch, 1972, 1969). As a result a commonly accepted set of variables has emerged and has been applied in studies of a wide range of institutions and organizations. Hage and Aiken 1970 have concisely presented eight variables (four structural and four related to performance) which it was decided to use in this study. They were:

### Structural Features

1. Complexity: the degree of organizational inter-dependence, shown in the extent of collaborative planning and teaching,
2. Centralization: refers to the patterns of power distribution in the school, particularly those associated with a hierarchy of authority in decision-making

3. Formalization: relates to the presence of organizational rules and to the extent to which they are enforced.
4. Stratification: the distribution of rewards to different position holders in an institution. Schools have been traditionally considered as relatively unstratified, but more recently the emergence of status boundaries, in conjunction with the concern for performance criteria as important promotional determinants, have led to a greater sense of competition amongst lower-rank teachers than has been the case.

#### Performance Features

1. Emphasis in Effectiveness: the extent of individualization in instruction.
2. Organizational Goal Emphasis: the pattern of decisions made to allocate scarce resources amongst the competing needs in a school.
2. Morale: aspects of occupational satisfaction by teachers including satisfaction with the teaching role, feelings of competence and esteem in the profession, and perceptions of a clear career path (Argyris, 1964; Herzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943).
4. Attitude to Change:  
The resultant Organisational Characteristics Profile consisted of 55 items arranged as 8 dimensions of organisation and yielding 'alpha' coefficients ranging from 0.62 to 0.86.

An additional aspect of school life was examined to highlight the interaction of teachers with pupils. An integration-Facilitation Procedures Scale was developed which sought responses on the time spent by teachers in activities designed to assist pupils in transition. The 16 items were arranged as a likert type scale with an 'alpha' coefficient of 0.93 (N = 63).

#### THE SAMPLE SCHOOLS AND PUPILS

The focus of attention in the study was on secondary schools with organizational structures designed to aid the transition from primary to secondary school. From the 42 schools identified as containing year 7 mini-schools (Evans, 1979), nineteen finally conformed to the two selection criteria employed to discriminate between them, namely, the presence of an autonomous identity, with a geographic location and some freedom in curriculum choice, and a concentration of staff with teaching loads primarily at the junior secondary level. These schools were termed 'transition sub-schools'. A four-cell matrix was employed to classify the nineteen schools and the most representative school in each cell was selected for analysis. As a result, the four schools represented a range of operational profiles within the transition sub-school concept.

For comparative purposes a school organized along 'traditional' lines at the year 7 level was selected in the same geographic area.<sup>1</sup>

The sub-schools, in order of representativeness, were named<sup>1</sup>

1. Forestway High School
2. Parklands High School
3. Glenview High School
4. Beachside High School
5. Outlook High School (the Traditional School)

The sample comprised the total first year intake (715 pupils) in these Government, co-educational High Schools located in the eastern area of Melbourne. After adjustments for pupil transfers or absences, 610 complete data sets were obtained.

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1. Pseudonyms were used for school names to maintain the confidentiality of respondents.

**RESULTS**

(a) Sequential Stage Analysis

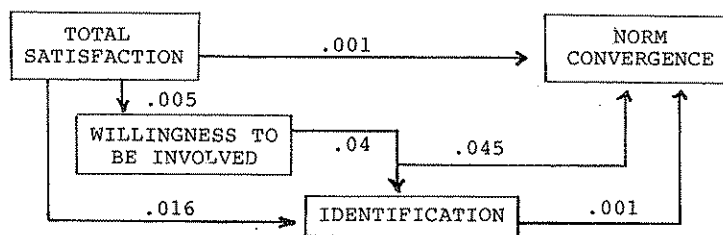
Preliminary to investigating whether a developmental sequence occurred within the elements of integration, the three 'satisfaction' dimensions were consolidated into one composite variable titled 'Total Satisfaction'. This use of a single satisfaction criterion permits more comparisons with the work of other researchers, such as Coulter (1971), Crandall (1976), Jones and Crandall (1981), and Richardson (1974).

The four criterion variables of integration remaining after consolidation of the satisfaction criteria were analysed using the cross-lagged panel correlation technique (Cook and Campbell, 1979; Crano, 1974; Kenny, 1979).

A series of six comparisons were undertaken within the set of correlated variables to exhaust all possible combinations of two variable sets over the two time periods.

Figure 1 illustrates a developmental sequence which can be inferred from the cross-lagged analysis. Probability levels have been included to indicate the significance level of each link. An a priori alpha level of .05 was established to test the significance of any observed differences.

FIGURE 1  
IMPLIED DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCE AMONGST CRITERIA



The patterns of associations in Figure 1 shows Norm Coverage to be the most highly dependent of the variables, and Willingness to be Involved as a precursor of Identification with the school. These results indicate a different sequence to that proposed by Crandall's (1976) theory in which willingness to be involved was a dependent outcome of the other three variables.

Interpretations of cross-lagged correlational outcomes must be made cautiously for it would be incorrect to claim that total satisfaction caused involvement, and so on. Rather, by 'casual' implication from the correlational data, it appears that some variable which caused total satisfaction later caused willingness to be involved (Kenny, 1979). We are left, then, with a causally-implied developmental sequence as follows:



This evidence for a sequence in integration provided some support for a sequential-stage approach to the concept of integration rather than a multi-faceted one. It was deemed reasonable, therefore, to assume that schools which advanced the largest numbers of pupils to high scores on the criteria in the sequence, indicative of greater integration, were more successful than other schools in facilitating pupil integration. This assumption will be examined in the next section.

(b) Comparison of the Proportion of Pupils At Stages of the Integrative Process

To investigate the proportions of pupils at each stage, and retention rates during Year 7, data were arranged into a format which was cumulative in that before pupils were regarded as falling at a point in the sequence they had to meet the criteria for each preceding stage (i.e. be at or above the grand mean). Four stages in the integration process were therefore identified.



The extent to which schools were able to retain the proportion of pupils who were integrated throughout the year, i.e. stages 1 to 4 in the sequence was, for convenience, termed the holding power or retention factor. When positive, the retention factor indicated that more pupils were integrated by the end of the year than at the start. Whereas, when negative, it signified decreases in the number of integrated pupils. Schools most successful in the integration of Year 7 pupils were those with the highest retention factors.

Full interpretation of retention rates would be incomplete, however, without a consideration of the absolute change in the number of pupils at stage 1 to those at stage 4 at the two times, since a positive retention factor could be arrived at even though there were substantial decreases in the number of pupils at the various stages during the year. As a consequence, effectiveness in the encouragement of integration was considered to comprise an improvement in the retention rate from stage 1 to stage 4 and an increase in pupil numbers within the integration stages.

There were no increases in the numbers of pupils in stage 1 by the end of the year, so attention was focussed on the decreases in proportions, and especially the smallest decreases. The data for each school were presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

RETENTION OF PUPILS THROUGH THE INTEGRATIVE SEQUENCE (BY SCHOOL)

(A) FORESTWAY HIGH SCHOOL

Time in Year 7	Frequencies in Integration Stage		Percent Retention Stage 1 - 4	Retention Factor
	1	4		
Early	48	6	12.5	
Late	44	15	34.1	+ 21.6
Change from Early-Late (Percent)	-8.3	150		

(C) GLENVIEW HIGH SCHOOL

Time in Year 7	Frequencies in Integration Stage		Percent Retention Stage 1 - 4	Retention Factor
	1	4		
Early	61	11	18.0	
Late	54	17	31.5	+ 13.5
Change from Early-Late (Percent)	-11.5	54.5		

(B) PARKLANDS HIGH SCHOOL

Time in Year 7	Frequencies in Integration Stage		Percent Retention Stage 1 - 4	Retention Factor
	1	4		
Early	96	35	36.5	
Late	91	37	40.7	+ 4.2
Change from Early-Late (Percent)	-5.1	5.7		

(D) BEACHSIDE HIGH SCHOOL

Time in Year 7	Frequencies in Integration Stage		Percent Retention Stage 1 - 4	Retention Factor
	1	4		
Early	63	10	15.9	
Late	46	7	15.2	- 0.7
Change from Early-Late (Percent)	-26.9	-30.0		

(E) OUTLOOK HIGH SCHOOL

Time in Year 7	Frequencies in Integration Stage		Percent Retention Stage 1 - 4	Retention Factor
	1	4		
Early	95	28	29.5	
Late	84	12	14.3	- 15.2
Change from Early-Late (Percent)	-11.6	-57.1		

The four transition sub-schools recorded higher retention rates than the traditional school, Outlook, notwithstanding Beachside's negative result. Forestway had the highest retention, despite an 8.3 per cent decrease in the number of pupils recording satisfaction scores above the grand mean. The school was obviously successful in holding more pupils through the integrative sequence as shown by more than doubling in the number of pupils retained to stage 4 at the end of the year. As a result, the retention rate at Forestway (21.6%) was higher than at the other schools.

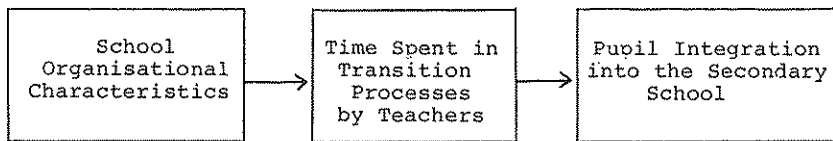
Parklands was the most stable of the five schools, recording a 5.1 per cent fall in the number of pupils at stage 1; offset by a 5.7 per cent increase at stage 4.

In Beachside and Outlook there were large declines in the number of pupils at stage 1 between the two measurement periods; Beachside declined by 26.9 per cent which was the largest for the five schools, and next was Outlook with a decline of 11.6 per cent. All the schools recorded decreases at stage 1, but Beachside and Outlook recorded negative 'retention' rates, with Outlook losing the greatest proportion (15.2%) during the year.

The tendency for transition sub-schools to retain a larger proportion of pupils through to the final stage of integration supports the proposition that they were more effective than the traditional school in integrating their Year 7 pupils. The position at Beachside was, however, somewhat ambivalent: Although it was classified as a transition sub-school it showed similar trends to Outlook, the traditional school. Beachside was the least typical of the sub-school group and was, therefore, the closest to the traditional school structure. Consequently it appeared that the more closely the structure of a school approached that of an 'ideal' transition sub-school the more likely it was that a larger proportion of pupils would become integrated in the school during the year.

(c) Consideration of a Full Framework

It was considered necessary in moving to the exploration of associations between organisational characteristics of schools and pupil integration within those schools to inject an intermediate step. Aspects of school organisation impinging upon the teaching staff would only have consequences for the pupils in the school through pupil-teacher interactions (Delamont, 1976; Rutter et al, 1979). Some researchers in institutional behaviour (e.g. Burns, 1980; Christal, 1974) have found the time allocations by staff members to various tasks to be a fruitful area for investigation. Accordingly, the time spent by Year 7 teachers in tasks designed to aid the integration of pupils in transition was incorporated into a full framework for analysis as follows:



A coefficients analysis revealed that only four of the eight organisational characteristics had the major part of their variance absorbed by the 'Structural' and 'Performance' factors.

They were:

Characteristics	Communality (% Variance explained)
1. Complexity	76.1
2. Centralisation	75.3
3. Stratification	57.1
6. Morale	56.2

These, then, were the four 'best' predictor variables which were employed in a test of the full framework.

Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance was employed for the analysis and the school scores were arranged in rank order as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
RANK ORDERING OF SCHOOLS ON THE FULL FRAMEWORK

Variables	School/Rank*				
	Forestway	Parklands	Glenview	Beachside	Outlook
<u>Task Environment</u>					
Complexity	1	2	3	4	5
Centralization	1	2	3	4	5
Stratification	1	2	3	4	5
Morale	5	2	1	3	4
<u>Mediating</u>					
Time Spent	1	3	4	2	5
<u>Student Integration</u>					
Social Competence	3	2	1	4	5
General Satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Willingness to be Involved	3	1	2	4	5
Identification	3	2	1	4	5
Norm Convergence	3	2	1	5	4
Total of Ranks	24	24	28	47	57

\*Rank ordering direction: 1 = High score except Centralization, Stratification, and Norm Convergence where 1 = low score. In all cases a rank of 1 indicates the most successful performance.

Kendall's W = 0.66 (For  $v = 11, s = 5$ )  $p < .01$

Best Estimate of 'True' School Ranking

1. Forestway/Parklands
3. Glenview
4. Beachside
5. Outlook

The Coefficient of Concordance ( $W = 0.63$ ) was significant at the .01 level. The observed rank associations were therefore stronger than could reasonably be assumed by chance.

It appeared that where teachers worked more closely together, greater time was spent in aiding transition, and the transition programme was more rationally conducted (since high complexity was indicative of interdependence amongst teachers in the act of planning and teaching). Furthermore, low centralisation and stratification indicated more participatory decision-making amongst the Year 7 teachers and the absence of status barriers in their working relationships. Finally, high morale is usually indicative of a sense of personal satisfaction by teachers with the occupation of teaching and their particular roles in it.

So, the more closely the staff at Year 7 worked as a team the more likely it was that their pupils would hold positive attitudes towards the school and see themselves at part of it. It was tempting to presume a reciprocal association whereby the closeness of the team operation at Year 7 was further reinforced by the observed reactions and attitudes of the pupils, but such a proposition was not investigated in the present study. Nevertheless, it represents an area worthy of fuller investigation in later research.

The 'best estimate' of the 'true' school ranking derived from Table 2 accorded closely with the original selection order of the schools in the study. Consequently, it appeared that, as the structure at Year 7 tended towards the transition sub-school approach, the more likely it was that:

- (a) the task environment of teachers would be seen as flexible, cooperative and complex, with considerable interdependence amongst them,
- (b) greater attention would be paid to individual children, particularly in the provisions aiding the transition between schools, and
- (c) the integration of pupils would be improved.



## CONCLUSIONS

A controversial question in educational research has centred on whether schools per se have effects on children. The present study found evidence of a school impact on pupil integration, a finding consistent with results from longitudinal studies such as those of Banks and Findlayson (1973); Power and Cotterell (1979) and Rutter, et al (1979). Strong support is evolving for the case that schools, as social organisations are influential on pupil attitudes.

This study provides strong support for the small-unit or sub-school structure to improve pupil integration, particularly when the degree of bureaucratism is low. The potential of the small-unit structure within large school communities lies in its flexibility for the development of pupil-teacher relationships. Teachers in sub-schools devoted more time to activities in the interests of pupils new to the school and had clearer goals and directions within the programme at Year 7. This adds to the growing body of research about the facilitating nature of small-unit school structures.

The analysis of elements comprising integration accorded closer with the sequential-stage theories characteristic of studies in immigrant assimilation (Richardson, 1974) and teacher socialisation (Coulter and Taft, 1973), than general, multi-faceted approaches (Bhatnagar, 1970). The findings of this study add weight to the case for considering integration as a developmental, sequential process and not a 'point-in-time' event such as characterises much of the literature on pupils in transition from primary to secondary school. Further research is yet required to clarify the order of variables within the sequence, but the implications for schools are profound. An understanding of integration as a process, similar to other aspects of childhood socialisation, should enable both primary and secondary schools to structure programmes for easing the transition of newcomers and speeding up integration. More concerted efforts in this regard may well serve to counteract the negative attitudes experienced by some children on entry to secondary school and provide more positive adjustments.

It should come as no surprise that there is a strong positive association between the time teachers spend in assisting with pupil transition and actual pupil integration. What has been shown, however, is that the allocations of time by teachers are related to the organisational setting in which teachers must work. This study suggests that affirmative action is required by school administrators and Council members to create environments within which teachers are inspired to 'go the extra mile' for it is, in the end resort, the children who must stand to benefit.

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