

Working with Refugee and Migrant Children

A study of transition into mainstream
classes (preliminary discussion)

Background to Study

- 60 children
- Intensive English Language Centres (3 metropolitan)
- Study of transition: mixed methods!
 - ‘get to know you period’
 - Observations
 - Photos
 - Lolly jars
 - Smiley faces
- Today: some results from qualitative component

Some Preliminary Results: Pre-transition

– ‘Going to school is good!’

- Meng: Because I am very happy and I am happy for many more stuff.
- Interviewer: What are you happy about?
- Meng: About, know more many stuff.
- Interviewer: So what sort of things?
- Meng: Many stuff, and many and many and it gets more and more and more.

– ‘I’m worried about English’

- Jagan: It will be hard because I will have to learn lots of English, and to make friends.
This will be hard. And I will have to talk.
- Interviewer: And is that harder than now, in your class?
- Jagan: Yes it is, because they will know English in the mainstream.

Some Preliminary Results: Post transition

- ‘Making friends is hard’

Interviewer: So do you think it's easy to make

Jagan: It is really, really, really hard to make new friends.

Interviewer: Why do you say that?

Jagan: Because new friends can be bad and they don't want to play with you, and first I can have a good time with them but then in it is bad.

Interviewer: So you played with them first and then stopped?

Jagan: Yes at first I thought I would play with them but then I play with my old friends again. Some days the new friends want to play with me, and some days they don't.

Some preliminary results: Post transition

- ‘Transition is hard’ but... school is still good!

Interviewer: And can you tell me how you felt?

Baheera: um scared

Interviewer: You were a bit scared?

Baheera: Yeah

Interviewer: Why were you scared? What were you thinking?

Baheera: Because it was a new school and everybody was new.

Hermosa: I have lots of fun at school, and everyone be's nice to me

Dai: [this was a great day] Because I do PE and I like it. And also I learn Italian. It is great when I learn Italian. Also I see [name] in the yard and he is my friend, from in my old class. And that makes me happy

Preliminary Conclusions

- Prior to transition, students were anxious about learning English but post-transition this didn't seem to be prominent in their talk any more
- Friendships are (not surprisingly!) a priority for children, and having someone they know in a school seemed to decrease their anxiety levels
- Students spoke positively about going to school before and after transition