

Encountered Changes: Voices of Young Teenagers during the Transition from Primary to Secondary School

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Abstract: Results from a hermeneutic, phenomenological study, designed to increase understanding of early adolescents' lived experiences during transition from primary to secondary school, are reported. This period is known to be stressful, among other populations, and Thai early teenagers appear to be no exception. Data were generated from 14 early adolescents, in a secondary school in southern Thailand, via interview, using the hermeneutic method to conduct and analyze interviews supplemented with field notes. Trustworthiness of findings was assured via an audit trail and rigor of the written report. Data were analyzed, based on Heidegger's and Gadamer's methodology.

The theme, "Encountered Changes," describes Thai early adolescents' feelings regarding transition to secondary school, including problems with emotional alteration, new and different teaching-learning approaches and facing an unfamiliar society. Three categories identified were: *emotional alteration*, consisting of easy annoyance, low self-confidence, being tired and bored of study, being in distress, feeling lonely among strangers and missing former friends; *different learning approaches*, involving encountering difficult and hard academic work, more profound content and going forward, and having to focus more on responsibility and real experiences; and, *facing an unfamiliar society*, including feelings of containment by strict school rules and regulations, and problems with surrounding inappropriate behavior from peers.

Findings may help school health providers, parents, nurses and others better recognize and address adolescent vulnerabilities, and develop interventions that foster early adolescents' readjustment and feelings of well-being during this important time.

Thai J Nurs Res 2009; 13(1) 68-79

Key words: early adolescence, transition from primary to secondary school, Hermeneutic phenomenological research

Background

Major psychosocial and behavioral¹ causes of ill health among adolescents internationally include: drug and alcohol abuse; cigarette smoking; violence; early sexual activity and its adverse outcomes; depression; and, suicide.² Although these problems are related to a number of factors, the literature documents

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that transition from primary to secondary school is one such factor.^{3,4} Little is known about Thai early adolescent experiences during transition from primary to secondary school.

Prior studies have shown that transition from primary to secondary school impacts early adolescents' psycho-emotional well-being, as revealed by their: lowered self-concept and intrinsic motivation;⁵ increased depressive symptoms;⁶ bullying and aggressive behaviors;⁷ decreased peer affiliation;⁷ perceived school hassles;⁸ and, chronic academic strain.⁸ Longitudinal studies also have found that this transition period correlations to adolescents' emotional health at a later period in their development.⁹

Current statistics indicate the incidence of Thai early adolescents' psychosocial and behavioral problems increase during their transition from primary to secondary school. Teenage pregnancy increased from 10.8% in 2002 to 13.9% in 2004. However, the age of the first sexual experience has decreased for females from 12 to 9 years old.¹⁰ The median age for initiating alcohol consumption is as early as 11 years, for boys, and 15 years, for girls.¹⁰ Cigarette smoking and use of amphetamines use are known to begin at age 13-14 years.¹¹ Violence also has increased steadily over the past few years.¹¹ These issues point to the fact that early adolescence is a critical time, and there is a need to better understand and support the approximately 670,000 Thai early adolescents¹¹ transitioning from primary to secondary school.

Although evidence reveals that knowledge about the transition from primary to secondary school is available, utilization of the research is limited, especially for and among Thai early adolescents who have unique characteristics and social contexts. Most studies of early adolescences have been conducted in contexts different from Thailand.^{13,14} Little knowledge, specific to Thailand, is available to offer students experiencing the transition.^{15,16,17} Therefore, nurses and other health providers, in Thailand, need to seek to

understand how Thai early adolescents interpret their lives during this transition period, before implementing interventions to improve their well-being.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research, which will be briefly discussed, is suitable for exploring Thai early adolescents' experiences.¹⁸ This type of research, allows one to gain an understanding of a phenomenon as it emerges through the fusion of the range of vision both of the participants and the researcher.¹⁸ The researcher attempts to explain and understand the meaning of a phenomenon by interpreting narrative interviews as a text. The meaning of the text and the understanding of the researcher depend on the distance between the history and culture of the participants and the researcher.¹⁹

Historical awareness is a way to gain more understanding and knowledge. Interpretive reading involves application of the dialectical method between the event and its meaning, generating a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study by moving from explanation to a new understanding. In this new understanding, the text is interpreted based on the researcher's pre-understanding or preconception. As there are differences in the researcher's and participants' histories, hermeneutics calls for a shared understanding or inter-subjectivity.¹⁸

Method

Participants

Approval, for this study, was obtained from the human research ethical committee, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Participants were provided with comprehensive information about the study and assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Written consent and assent were obtained from parents and participants, respectively, prior to data collection.

Participants were 14 secondary school students in a large urban city in southern Thailand. The school

is a well-known, highly competitive, public school, under the Ministry of Education, from which its 4,159 M.1 to M.6 students can advance to the university level. Mathayomsuksa 1 [M.1] students are comparable to 7th graders in a western school system, while Mathayomsuksa 6 [M.6] students are comparable to 12th graders. The school has 12 classrooms, which are classified by the students' entrance scores into M.1. Four classrooms are for the talented or gifted students who are in the Science and Mathematics Ability Program [SMA] and English Program [EP]. Two classrooms are for good students who have relatively high entrance test scores, while six classrooms are for general students who obtained medium to low entrance test scores for the ordinary academic program.

Each participant had at least one semester at the school, and ranged in age from 11 to 14 years (mean = 13 years). The majority (n = 11; 79 %) were Buddhist females. Almost all (n = 13; 93 %) reported their family's income as sufficient for household expenses. Most of them (n = 10; 71%) lived in a nuclear family. Eight (57%) lived with their parents and two (14%) with their mothers, while their fathers worked in a distant city. The parents of three (21%) participants were divorced; one (7%) lived with her single mother and two (14%) with their fathers and grandparents, although their mothers kept in touch with them. One (7%) lived with her grandmother and relatives after her parents died from cancer. Thirteen (93%) participants lived in a municipal area. Eight (57%) came to school via their parents' car or motorcycle, 3 (21%) walked and 3 (21%) used a bus. Five (36%) students were admitted as a result of entrance examinations, four (29%) by way of a lottery system and three (21%) because they lived near the school. In addition, two students (14%) were admitted as a result of patronization (parents financially supported school activities). The nine students admitted by means other than an entrance examination (lottery, location to the school, patronization) had to take an

examination so as to determine into which academic program they would be placed.

Each participant had different experiences before enrolling in the school. Ten (72%) were from private schools; 2 (14%) from schools supported by a municipality or non-government organization; and 2 (14%) from a government supported school. Of the 14 participants, 6 (43%) were in the lower entry-score classes, 5 (36%) in the high or gifted entry-score classes and 3 (21%) in moderate entry-score classes. Five (36%) participants were in the same classroom with friends (two of which were close) from their previous school.

Data generation

Data generation corresponded with Fleming, Gaidys and Robb's method²⁰ based on Heidegger's and Gadamer's methodology.¹⁸ After receiving permission from each respective school's administrator, participants were recruited on a voluntary basis, by a teacher, acting as a counselor, who did not participate in giving grades. Consent forms from parents and assent forms from participants were obtained prior to the interviews.

Data were generated from fourteen in-depth interviews (one from each participant) supplemented with field notes from the researcher's observations. Interviews were guided by the researcher's efforts at self-awareness, and by maintaining good relationships and democratizing conditions. To enhance self-awareness and understanding of each participant's expressions, the researcher's pre-understanding (ideas) and attitudes about the transition from primary to secondary school were documented prior to the interviews. The researcher's experience with her adolescent children and their friends helped her maintain rapport. To help participants relax, before being interviewed, they were: contacted by phone or in person; provided a light meal and conversation

together; assured no right or wrong answers existed; and, encouraged to freely express their responses to questions. Interviews were conducted, at a convenient time for each participant, in a small, private, air-conditioned infirmary room that was free from distractions. Seats were set at the same level, to decrease researcher authoritative and participants' feelings of inferiority.

An open-ended, semi-structured interview guide was used to stimulate discussion of each participant's transition experience, without directing him/her to specific answers or meanings. Subsequent questions were driven by their responses, which facilitated additional probing into the meaning of the transition. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Participatory dialogue techniques were used and included: active listening; openness to what the participant was saying; continual reflection on what the participant's words meant; and, how the participant had formed his/her particular point of view and accepted it for what it was.²¹ The dialogue represented the shared world of understanding between the researcher and the participant.²¹ The researcher summarized each participant's interview with the participant, after finishing the probing of each issue, to assure shared understanding. Each interview was conducted for an average of 52 minutes, ending when the participant had nothing else to say about the transition.

The researcher's field notes on interaction observations included: interview atmosphere and environment; researcher's feelings; and, participant's reactions during the interview. This information was used to support the text and recorded immediately after each interview. A reflective journal was maintained to aid understanding and included: information from the literature; researcher's feelings and thoughts about the interview; and, a summary of the researcher's new understanding of the transition. For each consecutive interview, the researcher's new understanding

became a new pre-understanding. Interview data were carefully transcribed for analysis. Superscripted annotations, showing a marked difference to the tone and tempo of speech or participant's feelings, were used for richness of the data.

Data analysis

Hermeneutic analysis of data was conducted in accord with Fleming, Daidys and Robb,²⁰ and Patterson, Watson, Williams and Roggenbuch.²² Initially, the researcher's pre-understanding was established and documented from her background as a: nurse working with children; mother of two teenagers, who had experienced the transition; and, daughter of parents who believed in "put others' heart in your heart." Then, the researcher: iteratively read the transcript of each interview; listened to the tape of the interview; interpreted the documentation of the participants' non-verbal behaviors; and, wrote comments of the interview situation, to find an expression that reflected the meaning of the texts as a whole. Next, single sentences about the transition were investigated and selected, for a deeper exploration of the parts. On the basis of understanding of the parts or the sentences, the words then were related to the meaning of the whole. After the participant's expressions of the interview were grouped, based on the researcher's interpretations, the transcript of the next participant was iteratively read and steps 3-5 were followed to expand understanding of the phenomenon. The previous and next participant's transcripts were analyzed for points of similarity and differences regarding expressions of the phenomena, and the phenomenon, across all participants' stories, were grouped into themes.

Results

The theme, "Encountered Changes," included the early adolescents' perceptions, during transition

from primary to secondary school, about the: changes in their emotions; new and different teaching-learning approaches; and, surrounding unfamiliar environment. The categories (See **Table 1**) comprising this theme were named: *emotional alteration*, *different learning approaches* and *facing an unfamiliar society*.

Encountered Changes: Emotional Alteration

The category, *emotional alteration*, describes changes in the early adolescents' moods and inner feelings related to the surroundings during their transition from primary to secondary school. The participants experienced: easy annoyance; low self-confidence; being tired and bored with academic studies; being in distress; being lonely among strangers; and, missing former friends. *Easy annoyance* describes how their moods were changeable, particularly when aroused by the surrounding stimuli. The females noticed they were more sensitive, easily upset and unable to tolerate stimuli during their hormonal puberty changes. They discussed being hot-tempered and easily annoyed when they could not get their way. Since it was painful, caused them uneasiness and having to be careful with their clothing, and interfered with them being carefree teenagers, the female early adolescents felt annoyed with menstruation. They thought it was shameful if their menses was made public. Some of them were easily annoyed by their surroundings, i.e. noise from other students or talkativeness in class.

Low self confidence was described as the early adolescents' decreased belief in their own capability when in public. Although they were not skinny, some described negative feelings about themselves and expressed feeling ashamed of their appearance. They also discussed a lack of self confidence, especially in public. Others felt no one was on their side, and lacked confidence among strangers and unfamiliar environments.

Being tired and bored with academic studies described the early adolescents' feelings of weariness, lack of energy to study and lack of time for leisure. They felt tired, because their busy schedules consumed almost all of their time and energy. They had no time left for playing or resting, unlike when they were in primary school. Being tired and bored decreased their willingness to study.

Being in distress described the early adolescents' feelings of tension, fear of failure, and worry pertaining to studying and changes in daily life. Students in the gifted class feared receiving low scores, while those in the fair score classes feared failing examinations and having to repeat classes. Some students worried about finishing assignments, by the deadline, and obtaining good grades in order to meet the quota to enter reputable schools. Some described being distressed by the chaos of their daily lives. Chaos for them began in early morning, before going to school, and lasted until midnight. They described constantly hurrying. Each morning they hurried to get ready for school and then hurried to switch classrooms at school. They also described problems finding classes, managing money and activities, and dealing with bullying classmates. After school, their chaos continued at home with homework and study until midnight.

Feeling lonely among strangers was the early adolescents' feelings of having no one to: talk to; work with; be friends with; or, help them, when they needed help. They indicated they felt lonely.

Missing former friends related to missing their friends from primary school. They missed old friends even more after comparison and disappointment with their new friends. Some of them felt their new friends were unreliable. They perceived their new friends' behaviors as being unfair and inconsiderate, as well as sexually inappropriate. The early adolescents believed their new friends did not accept them and felt they had nobody whom they could call "true" friends. This resulted in feelings of unhappiness.

Table 1 Encountered changes categories/subcategories and examples

Categories/ sub-categories	Examples
1. Emotional Alteration	
1.1 Easy annoyance	I'm hot tempered...I felt increased annoyance. Menses makes me sick, stomach-ache, worried, annoyed and felt awkward. My friends were talkative in class. They're so loud. I felt annoyed.
1.2 Low self confidence	I don't feel confident in myself when doing things. I was too fat. I was frightened as I stood alone. My friends were all looking at me.
1.3 Being tired and bored with academic studies	It's like ka...a, I felt tired...d. ^{speaking in a drawl} [I] feel bored...just focusing only on studies is boring. Sometimes I wondered why I had to learn.
1.4 Being in distress	I was stressed...I felt nauseated, had headaches and stomach-aches. It's crazy and chaotic. We didn't know where the places were, where to change for the coupons, where to eat, and how to use the allowance for the meals...the class wasted half of the period for the teacher to scold, scold, scold and scold...Some boys stirred up things just for the sake of their desire not to learn
1.5 Feeling lonely among strangers	I had no friends. No one talked with me...I had to walk alone. I felt alone. I came alone with a broken arm and splint. No one helped me at all.
1.6 Missing former friends	I miss my friends in P.6. They didn't flirt. We're friends with a bond.
2. Different Learning Approaches	
2.1 Difficult and hard work	Study is more difficult, need more knowledge... Study is hard...from 8.30 am until the evening. ...harder than when I was in P.6 There's hardly any free time. A lot of assignments greatly reduce our free time. [I]go to sleep around midnight, beyond ordinary time.
2.2 More profound content and going forward	We know more profound things...learn the content gradually.
2.3 Focusing on responsibility and real experience	Teachers train us to be responsible. They won't remind us when to turn in the assignments. Here, they [teachers] emphasize more practicality than theory.
3. Facing an Unfamiliar Society	
3.1 Containment by strict school rules and regulations	...feel uneasy...Oh why is it so strict? I feel that getting dressed [for school] is not relaxing like when I was in primary school.
3.2 Surrounding inappropriate behavior	...the seniors came to school made-up and looking for a boyfriend. They kissed...walked together holding hands with no shame. Impolite words were written like 'I want to fuck you'... This school seemed to like slapping. A senior threatened to slap her junior. My friends slapped each other on irrational minute matters.

Encountered Changes: Different Learning Approaches

Different learning approaches, the second category in the theme, represented the early adolescents' encounters with different learning approaches, such as difficult work, more profound content that moved forward quickly, and a focus on responsibility and real experiences. *Difficult and hard work* related to academic assignments, which were difficult to understand and often time consuming. The adolescents had to work harder than previously to obtain understanding of the content, which frequently required them to work from morning to night. They used their free time at school, after school hours and on weekends to do assignments.

More profound content and going forward described the early adolescents' perceptions of the depth of the new content, and the process of sequentially going forward with the various levels of study. This was different from that of primary school. Basic knowledge at each level was the basis for higher levels of knowledge in secondary school. They described how they needed to understand each topic before going to higher levels of study.

Focused on responsibility and real experience represented early adolescents' perceptions about learning processes which emphasized more individual responsibility and real experiences than when they were in primary school. They had to be responsible for turning in assignments on time, without a reminder from the teachers, and had an opportunity to apply what they had learned in the classroom to real life situations.

Encountered Changes: Facing an Unfamiliar Society

The unfamiliar society faced by participants included feeling contained by school regulations; assuming a modern social value of self beautification

and using force to solve conflicts, rather than talking in a reasonable manner. They described the new society as 'containment' by strict school rules and regulations, and as being surrounded by inappropriate behavior of peers. *Containment by strict school rules and regulations* was their feeling of uneasiness, due to school rules and regulations, such as wearing a school uniform and complying with restrictions about hair length.

Surrounding inappropriate behavior included their perceptions of their new surroundings as being full of inappropriate behavior and adoption of force for resolution of conflicts. They considered inappropriate behaviors to include: using lipstick or *Uthaitip solution* [A red herbal solution normally mixed with water for the purpose of drinking, but instead applied as lipstick]; having romantic relationships; conducting improper phone calls; and, writing impolite words in public. Students viewed these behaviors as ways of obstructing their studies and disappointing their parents. Some also felt that the new society adopted fighting and violence, rather than reason, to solve conflicts.

Discussion

In this study, emotional alterations for the female participants, compared to the male participants, were addressed, primarily, within the context of bodily changes. When girls entered the secondary school setting, their hormonal changes may cause them to experience discomfort when facing new circumstances.²³ Changes in one's estrogen level can affect behavior,²⁴ i.e. an increase in mood swings and a "hot" temper. Hormonal changes also may influence, indirectly, early adolescents' establishment of new social relations. For example, the female students were easily annoyed secondary to the onset of their menses. This feeling may have been intensified as a result of them having pain or discomfort, as well as from the Thai social belief, transferred from the elder

generation, of the need to keep their menses a secret because it is shameful.

The female participants also perceived emotional alterations in their self-confidence in public, and felt unsatisfied about their appearance during puberty. Puberty presents, in females, with growth spurts, breast enlargement and acne sometimes. All of these can influence early adolescents' psychological well-being²⁵ and feelings of low self-confidence when they are in unfamiliar circumstances. This is similar to the Piagetian perspective that one could explain the greater likelihood of reported worries through an interaction of their maturation and environment.²⁵ Similar to prior research, the girls tended to worry about personal physical attributes, such as body shape and appearance.²⁵

Prior research, in Thailand, has indicated that the feeling of shame toward menarche stem partly from early adolescents' lack of sex education. Parents, in Thailand, either avoid answering questions or give incorrect information when their children want to know about menarche²⁶ Thus, young Thai girls tend to enter the preadolescence period with ambiguous feeling about their changing bodies and menarche.^{26,27} Similar to Thai adolescents, western female adolescents are known to perceive menarche and menstruation as embarrassing, shameful and something to be hidden, especially within the context of school.²⁸

Both the male and female Thai early adolescents described emotional alterations when they were unable to easily feel connected in social relationships. During the first period of their transition, living with strangers made them feel lonely. Similar to previous studies, they failed to have established friendships during the first few days of secondary school and often felt alone for as long as a couple of weeks.²⁹ Their concerns also related to social issues, such as fitting in, making new friends³⁰ and getting along with peers.³¹ During

the transition, they missed their former friends and recognized differences between the behavior of their former and new friends. They felt unsatisfied with their new friends. Such feelings may have arisen from their limited time, within the new school, to learn about each other. By comparison, they had spent more than six years with their former friends.

Emotional alterations may arise from early adolescents' own, as well as significant others,' expectations of them to succeed in their academic studies. The idea of materialism and wealth, within the Thai society, may have influenced the participants, in this study, as well as their parents. Some believe that the more money one has the better one's social status and that the way to having more money is to study.³² This belief may have pressured adolescents into paying more attention to studying and to questioning their academic ability.

Findings of this study add to the body of knowledge regarding depressive symptoms, psychological distress and perceived stressors of early adolescence. All of which have been found to increase during their transition to secondary school.⁶ Adolescents are concerned and worried about increased homework,³⁰ problems with organizing homework,³³ and doing well in difficult classes.³⁴

Emotional alteration also may be fueled by circumstances within unfamiliar surroundings. The students interviewed, in this study, were tense and confused with the new school structure and policies, and how to manage their daily activities. Interviews were conducted at a school with more than 4,000 students, 7 buildings, and a policy of students having to switch classrooms and manage their activities without assistance. All these factors may have led them to feel distressed. This finding is similar to prior studies regarding young teenagers' concerns related to switching classrooms, dealing with the complexities

of the school system, navigating a large school environment³⁰ and getting to class on time.^{31, 34}

The participants struggled with the changed learning process and teaching style in the school, and they were tired and bored with their course work. Similar to previous studies which have reported that, because of their increased responsibilities, young teenagers need more time to study which may require them to decrease participation in extracurricular activities and time with their family.³⁴ The parents and early adolescents, in this study and as previously reported, had fewer interactions and did fewer things together outside the home compared to before they entered secondary school.³⁵

The participants perceived the presence of different learning approaches by way of social expectations. In moving to secondary school, with their increasing cognitive abilities, they were expected to take more responsibility for their learning and for acting like a grown-up. As reflected in the literature, teachers also perceive adolescents' physical maturity makes them more responsible.³⁶ Thus, participants were expected to take on an increasing number of academic responsibilities.³⁷ Previous studies support the finding that early adolescents perceive the secondary level of study to be more difficult than the primary level.^{30,34} They are expected to complete class assignments with less monitoring or individualized attention from their teachers and to assume more responsibility for managing their school activities.^{36,37}

The students' perceptions regarding feeling contained or restricted, by strict school rules and regulations, may reflect a mismatch between their stage of development and the school's control, coupled with their disappointment with the new society they encountered. As early adolescents, they are growing physically and want more independence;³³ however, the secondary school's policies placed restrictions upon their independence.

Participants felt disappointment with their surroundings, including experiencing inappropriate peer behaviors in the secondary school. During primary school, most students are in the school-age period when they pay attention during activities and do not have romantic relationships between the sexes.³⁸ As a result of changing from primary to secondary school, the early adolescents may have been shocked by the different culture. These students were taught, by Thai elders, that inappropriate behaviors, such as kissing in public places, were socially unacceptable.²⁶ In addition, prior research,^{39,32} has revealed that early adolescents are fascinated by the use of cosmetics.

Participants described being disappointed that the new society adopted fighting and violence rather than reason to solve conflicts. While in primary school, Thai early adolescents shift from being the oldest and most physically mature to the youngest and least physically developed, in secondary school. Thus, the status of those in the transition changed when they became the lowest members of the hierarchy and had little power.³⁴ Their changed status led them to face older and/or bullying students who tended to make them feel vulnerable.²⁴

As the results suggest, the transition from primary to secondary school, for early adolescents, brings with it many difficulties. Early adolescents face problems in dealing with a strange environment, physical bodily changes, more difficult course work, unfamiliar friends, older students, different rules and regulations and unfamiliar peer behavior. All of these factors require attention so that students can be assisted in appropriately dealing with their transition period from primary to secondary school.

Limitations

This small qualitative study was conducted in a large urban school in which students were very academically competitive. Eleven of the fourteen

participants were female and 12 were Buddhist. The findings should not be generalized to other early adolescents who have different experiences, live in different locations or are from other cultures. Also the adolescents were invited by a teacher, acting as a counselor, to participate in this study. Thus, although the teacher was not involved in the research process, the participants may not have felt free to decline involvement because of the teacher's status within the school system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings provide basic knowledge about early adolescent transition from primary to secondary school in southern Thailand. However, the knowledge gained came from a small group of early adolescents, primarily female, living in an urban setting. Future studies should involve a larger and more diverse sample, including students from rural and small secondary schools, as well as from other ethnic and religious backgrounds.

The knowledge gained from this study can enhance school nurses, other health care professionals' and school policy makers' understanding of students' transition from primary to secondary school. Nurses need to consider the development of anticipatory programs designed to make young teenagers familiar with their new secondary school environment, including their new friends, learning approaches, older students and school regulations. Such programs could facilitate students' transition to secondary school.

Acknowledgement

The first author expresses gratitude to the Thailand Nursing Council, for partial funding of this research.

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การเผชิญกับการเปลี่ยนแปลง: เสียงสะท้อนของเด็กวัยรุ่นตอนต้น ไทยในช่วงการเปลี่ยนโรงเรียนจากระดับประถมสู่มัธยม

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บทคัดย่อ: บทความนี้เสนอส่วนหนึ่งของผลวิจัยปรากฏการณ์นิยมเฮอ์เมนิวติกที่มุ่งเข้าใจประสบการณ์ชีวิตเด็กวัยรุ่นตอนต้นไทยช่วงเปลี่ยนโรงเรียนจากระดับประถมสู่มัธยม ข้อมูลทางสถิติชี้ว่าการเปลี่ยนแปลงดังกล่าวสร้างความเครียดให้วัยรุ่นตอนต้นไทยเช่นเดียวกัน การศึกษานี้ได้จากรู้อย่างตรงไปตรงมา 14 รายที่มีประสบการณ์การเปลี่ยนโรงเรียนอย่างน้อย 1 ภาคเรียนในโรงเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนต้นแห่งหนึ่งในภาคใต้ของประเทศไทย เก็บข้อมูลตามวิธีของเฮอ์เมนิวติกด้วยการสัมภาษณ์ร่วมกับการสังเกตที่บันทึกไว้ความน่าเชื่อถือของงานได้จากการดำเนินตามแผนที่วางไว้และการเขียนผลการวิจัยที่น่าเชื่อถือ วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลตามแนวคิดของไฮเดกเกอร์และกาตาเมอร์

ประสบการณ์สำคัญหนึ่งจากผลวิจัยที่น่าเสนอคือ “การเผชิญการเปลี่ยนแปลง” เป็นความรู้สึกของเด็กวัยรุ่นตอนต้นไทยต่อการเปลี่ยนโรงเรียน ในช่วงเปลี่ยนแปลงสิ่งแวดล้อม จิตสังคมและสรีระ เด็กวัยรุ่นตอนต้นไทยเผชิญการเปลี่ยนแปลงอารมณ์ การเรียนการสอนที่แตกต่างและสังคมที่ไม่คุ้นชิน เด็กรับรู้การเปลี่ยนแปลงอารมณ์ที่หงุดหงิดง่าย ไม่มั่นใจในตนเอง เบื่อและเหนื่อยกับการเรียน ตึงเครียด โดดเดี่ยวท่ามกลางคนแปลกหน้า และคิดถึงเพื่อนเก่า เด็กเผชิญการเรียนการสอนแบบใหม่ที่ยากและหนัก เนื้อหาลึกซึ้งและต้อยอด เน้นรับผิดชอบและให้ประสบการณ์จริง ทั้งเผชิญกับสังคมที่ไม่คุ้นชินซึ่งกรอบด้วยกฎระเบียบที่เคร่งครัด และพฤติกรรมไม่เหมาะสมของกลุ่มเพื่อน ความรู้ที่ได้สามารถช่วยให้ผู้ให้บริการสุขภาพในโรงเรียน บิดามารดาและพยาบาลตระหนักถึงภาวะเสี่ยงของเด็กวัยรุ่นตอนต้นไทยที่อยู่ในช่วงเปลี่ยนโรงเรียนและนำมาใช้เป็นแนวทางพัฒนาการพยาบาลเพื่อส่งเสริมการปรับตัวและความรู้สึกผาสุกของเด็กวัยรุ่นตอนต้นในช่วงเวลาที่สำคัญนี้

วารสารวิจัยทางการแพทย์ 2009; 13(1) 68-79

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