

Mortell, Marie, 2003, *Student Perceptions of the Benefits of Transition Year: A Comparative Study.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The central theme of this dissertation is an examination of students' perceptions of the benefits of Transition Year in a variety of different schools. This dissertation begins by giving a short history of the Transition Year programme, which began as a pilot project in 1974 and did not become a mainstream programme until 1994. It is now offered in most second-level schools throughout the country.

The study explains the main aims of the programme and how it differs from other programmes in second-level schools. It then gives a brief outline of Transition Year in each of the three schools used in the research. They are an all-boys voluntary secondary school, an all-girls voluntary secondary school and a mixed VEC school that is classified as educationally disadvantaged.

The literature review that follows firstly looks at recent Department of Education documents that preceded the Education Act 1998. It then examines the main Department of Education documents on Transition Year. This is followed by evaluations of the programme by the Department of Education, parents, teachers and finally students.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology used in this study. It explains why the questionnaire is thought to be most useful and why a limited number of interviews are also conducted.

There follows an analysis of the questionnaire and of the interviews. The detailed findings are then discussed and results are also given for each of the three individual schools. The discussion focuses on the following: personal development, relationship with peers and teachers, the Transition Year curriculum and attitudes to study.

Conclusions and recommendations are then drawn from these findings and comparisons are made between the various schools