

Coping with Transition

from Lower to Upper Secondary Maths & Chemistry



As a parent, what can you do to help your child through this transition period?

Be Encouraging and Supportive

Talk to your child about the changes he will be going through and find out how he feels about them. Encourage him to embrace these changes and enjoy the experience along the way. Share your personal story with them. It could be your school life or your career change. It will certainly connect well with them.

As a parent, you may have your worries for your child, but turn that into encouragement. Knowing that you believe in them can make a world of difference in their learning attitude. Always show support by being a good listener and stay away from criticism and comparison with other children.

When a child is promoted from Secondary 2 to 3, he will face:

- New environment with new classmates
- New teachers with different teaching methods and styles
- New subjects to study i.e. Additional Maths, Social Studies, Pure Chemistry, Pure Physics, Pure Biology
- New responsibilities i.e. CCA leader, class committee

The above changes can be overwhelming for a 15-year old teenager if not managed carefully.

Be Realistic of your Expectations

Parents are usually worried about their children's results during the transition period from Secondary 2 to Secondary 3. You should allow time for your child to adjust to new teaching styles, new subjects and new peers.

As each individual takes different amount of time to be comfortable in his new environment, parents should place more emphasis on the child's development and feelings instead of focusing only on his academic results.

Yes, their academic results could be a warning sign that he isn't coping well with the transition stage, but it is more important to understand the reasons for his under-performance. If the reason is because he does not understand the concepts from the teachers or has weak foundation for certain subjects, you can then find specialised academic classes to help him.

Understand the Scheme of Assessment

From the numerous calls we have received, we found out that many parents are unfamiliar with how their child is assessed in examinations. In the GCE O-Level, Elementary Maths is a compulsory subject for all students. This is also one of the reasons for the introduction of Elementary Maths topics in Lower Secondary. When students enter Secondary 3, they are taught more depth and application in these topics. Therefore, most students cope better with Elementary Maths than Additional Maths since the former builds on students' Lower Secondary Maths foundation.

On the contrary, students who choose to take up Additional Maths are faced with a challenge as most of the topics are new and the concepts are rather abstract. The questions in Additional Maths are also application-based which means that students must have the ability to make their inferences and apply the concepts on problem-solving. Additional Maths will be useful for students going to Junior College and engineering-related courses in Polytechnic.

For your reference, we have included the scheme of assessment from Singapore Examination and Assessment Board (SEAB). Both subjects have similar scheme of assessment: same duration of papers, use of calculators is allowed, and formula sheet is provided for all Maths papers.



