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Stage-Specific Tasks and Support for Career Adaptability During the Transition from Junior to Senior High School

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Abstract: The transition from junior to senior high school brings changes in the learning environment, social roles, and future educational choices into a single period. Students therefore need to move beyond general career awareness toward stage-specific tasks they can undertake. From an educational psychology perspective, this article develops a framework spanning three successive stages: the end of Grade 9, the summer before and entry into senior high school, and the beginning of Grade 10. These stages emphasize, respectively, goal activation and self-assessment, orientation to the new environment and information exploration, and preparation for choices and action-based feedback. Support from families, homeroom and school psychology teachers, subject teachers, and peers is integrated into the progression of tasks. A 45-minute classroom lesson and a post-lesson action sheet are then proposed to connect task identification, access to support, action commitments, and feedback-based revision. The analysis suggests that career education during this transition should align time points, student tasks, support providers, and classroom activities, allowing career adaptability to develop through a sequence of actions that students can understand, attempt, and revise.

Keywords: Transition from junior to senior high school; Career adaptability; Career education; Support network; Classroom lesson

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1. Introduction

Moving from junior to senior high school requires students to adjust simultaneously to different learning methods, peer networks, teacher interactions, and expectations for self-management. Unlike a routine school-entry adjustment, this transition also brings decisions about the future into everyday learning at an earlier stage. As coursework becomes more demanding, students must reassess their strengths. With growing amounts of information about subject selection and educational progression, they must begin to connect

school subjects with university majors and occupations. The disruption of established peer groups also requires them to seek new forms of relational support. In this context, career adaptability involves attending to future tasks, exploring possible pathways, making preliminary choices amid uncertainty, and turning those choices into action. Isolated lectures or one-off assessments are unlikely to help students incorporate career information into their lived experience of transition. Support should instead be organized around successive tasks arising from the changes students face, linking awareness of the future to current learning, the rebuilding of relationships, and everyday action.

Research on developmental trajectories, relational support, school systems, curriculum design, and evaluation mechanisms provides a useful foundation, yet these strands have not been sufficiently brought together within the junior-to-senior-high-school transition. Career exploration and engagement among senior high school students follow observable developmental trajectories; career support therefore needs to account for when tasks arise and how students' circumstances change [1]. Existing work has also drawn attention to relational contexts, school organization, curriculum modules, and evaluative feedback. In practice, however, the timing of activities can become disconnected from those responsible for providing support, while classroom activities may remain detached from students' immediate concerns. From the end of Grade 9 through the beginning of Grade 10, environmental orientation, assessment of abilities, information seeking, and preparation for choices unfold in close succession. If separate school units address these matters independently, students may struggle to see a coherent direction in the support available. Three questions guide this article: which career adaptability tasks belong at each transition stage; how different support providers can divide responsibilities around these tasks; and how classroom activities can translate general career-development expectations into manageable student actions.

2. Foundations of career adaptability during the transition

Career adaptability support during the transition should begin with students recognizing changes in themselves. Its first aim is to develop an orientation toward the future that can be refined over time, rather than to require a settled occupational goal. By the end of Grade 9, students have accumulated experiences in academic subjects, extracurricular interests, peer collaboration, and family expectations, but may not yet have organized these experiences as personal resources for future choices. Once they enter senior high school, new subject combinations, assessment practices, and school cultures may further alter their judgments about interests and abilities. Initial tasks should therefore enable three basic actions: describing current priorities in learning and everyday life; identifying strengths and constraints relevant to those priorities; and raising questions to be tested in the next stage. This provides a practical entry point for career exploration while easing the pressure to commit prematurely to a fixed direction. Reflection on experience, comparison of possible tasks, and small, feasible actions can help teachers foster a future orientation within actual learning situations. Individual choices can then be treated as provisional judgments open to revision as experience accumulates.

Career adaptability also depends on a relational environment offering steady emotional support, information, and feedback on action. Parent–child relationships may contribute to the development of career adaptability through academic self-efficacy and career decision-making self-efficacy [2]. For students in transition, this points to a practical role for support providers: turning anxiety about whether they can adapt to senior high school into a judgment about what they can do first. Families can assist with clarification of

values, emotional acceptance, and daily routines without allowing a single educational outcome to displace students' own exploration. Homeroom teachers and school psychology teachers can help identify adjustment pressures, clarify short-term goals, and establish routes for seeking help. Subject teachers can provide feedback on abilities through coursework and applications of disciplinary knowledge, while peers can reduce the unfamiliarity of the new setting through shared experiences and joint efforts. Each group thus contributes a distinct form of assistance. When their feedback is coordinated around the student's immediate task, students can also learn whom to approach when difficulties arise.

3. Stage-specific tasks for career adaptability

Tasks can be organized around three consecutive points: the end of Grade 9, the period from summer to school entry, and the beginning of Grade 10. At the end of Grade 9, the focus is on goal activation and self-assessment. Students prepare a personal resource inventory covering subjects, activities, responsibilities, and interests that have recently received substantial attention, then identify abilities they would like to develop further. They also record the three questions about senior high school that concern them most, such as the pace of coursework, subject selection, clubs, residential arrangements, or peer relationships. These questions are sorted into those answerable through school information and those requiring direct experience after entry. During the summer-to-entry stage, attention shifts to orientation to the new environment and information exploration. Students can read introductions to the school's curriculum and clubs, interview a senior high school student or teacher about actual study routines and choice requirements, and record what they learn on a map of the senior high school environment. Teachers should provide a common information-verification checklist to distinguish factual information, personal accounts, and matters still requiring confirmation. Such guidance may help prevent fragmented information from becoming a source of unnecessary anxiety.

Early in Grade 10, the central tasks are preparation for choices, feedback on action, and help-seeking. Students first compare their experiences after entry with expectations formed over the summer, identifying areas of successful adjustment, continuing difficulty, and further exploration. They then select one small goal that can be advanced within two weeks. Possible goals include changing an approach to studying a particular subject, trying a club activity, researching a university major, or discussing a learning difficulty with a teacher. Each goal should be accompanied by a specific action, an observable output, and a person from whom feedback will be sought so that progress can be reviewed. Continuity across stages is essential: the personal resource inventory prepared at the end of Grade 9 informs summer exploration; questions collected over the summer guide experiential checking in Grade 10; and feedback from Grade 10 revises students' understanding of themselves. Career adaptability is thereby developed through connected academic and everyday tasks. Students can change direction in response to new experiences while retaining a sense of agency and control over future choices and documenting the revisions they make.

4. Support networks and classroom lesson implementation

A school-level support network should assign responsibilities around shared stage-specific tasks rather than allow separate departments to deliver unrelated messages. Work on career education systems in general senior high schools emphasizes coordination among objectives, content, implementation, evaluation, and institutional provision [3]. During the transition, homeroom teachers can monitor progress on stage-specific

tasks; school psychology teachers can support self-understanding, decision-related stress, and help-seeking skills; subject teachers can offer feedback on academic performance and disciplinary applications; and grade-level teams can coordinate key dates and resources. Families can maintain stable routines, listen to students' reasons for choices, and provide practical resources, while peer groups exchange information and experiences of taking action. Each support provider can leave brief comments on the student's action sheet, noting, for example, what changed during the week, what might be tried next, or whom the student should consult. Coordinated feedback can reduce duplication, make appropriate sources of help more visible, and gradually build students' capacity to mobilize support for themselves.

A 45-minute lesson entitled 'A Personal Career Navigation Map for Senior High School' can help students combine personal resources, stage-specific tasks, and the support network in an actionable pathway map. During minutes 1–5, the teacher presents three transition scenarios involving the pace of learning, selection of information, and proactive help-seeking, then asks which immediate action problem most needs attention. During minutes 6–13, students complete a personal resource card identifying three existing strengths, two concerns, and one possibility they hope to test in senior high school. In minutes 14–23, small groups sort five task categories—adjustment to the environment, information exploration, verification of abilities, preparation for choices, and help-seeking—into three time frames: the near term, the current semester, and later. During minutes 24–35, students draw individual pathway maps and question one another, specifying an action and an observable output at each point. In minutes 36–42, a support-network role-play asks students to respond to the same difficulty from the perspectives of the student, a parent, a homeroom teacher, and a peer. During minutes 43–45, students make a seven-day action commitment specifying the first step, its completion date, and a feedback provider. Senior high school career curricula can be systematically organized around grade-level goals and competency modules [4]. The proposed lesson translates such modules into small tasks appropriate to the transition period.

After the lesson, classroom products should become starting points for ongoing follow-up. On a seven-day action sheet, students record whether an action was completed, obstacles encountered, help received, and adjustments planned. Homeroom teachers can review these sheets during class meetings or brief individual conversations. Rather than ranking career directions by perceived value, they should examine whether tasks are clear, actions are specific, and help-seeking routes are workable. Students experiencing substantial academic pressure may be referred for study-strategy and emotional support; those lacking information may benefit from school resource briefings, interviews with graduates, or occupational experiences; and disagreements with families may call for a discussion facilitated by a homeroom or school psychology teacher, with attention to factual information and student development. A brief review one month later allows students to mark which points on the original pathway map have been retained, adjusted, or added. The resulting cycle—classroom initiation, individual action, support feedback, and pathway revision—shifts the emphasis from completing a classroom activity to sustaining student action, while allowing schools with different resources to adapt the approach.

5. Implementation considerations and limits of applicability

Schools differ in staffing, instructional time, and access to outside resources. Transition support should therefore secure a minimum feasible combination before adding more elaborate arrangements. Well-resourced schools may involve school psychology teachers, career educators, homeroom teachers, subject

teachers, and external mentors in a shared network, with career portfolios documenting changes in student tasks. Schools with fewer resources can preserve at least three elements: verification of information before entry, a stage-specific task lesson after entry, and continued feedback from the homeroom teacher. Complex assessment instruments are not essential; personal resource cards, question lists, pathway maps, and action sheets can serve the main functions. Implementation also needs to accommodate differences among students. Those with clear goals may need opportunities to explore alternatives so that their pathways do not become overly narrow. Those without a clear goal can begin with everyday interests and past successful experiences. For highly anxious students, reducing the scope of tasks may establish a sense that progress is achievable. Where family expectations are strong, differing views should be translated into discussable information, values, and conditions for action. The quality of support depends chiefly on whether tasks fit students' current circumstances and whether feedback helps them identify the next step.

Evaluation of career adaptability during the transition should support development and revision. The central question is whether students become better able to describe their resources, formulate useful questions, obtain reliable information, plan stage-specific actions, and seek support proactively. Evaluation of general senior high school career education requires a dynamic approach serving diagnostic and improvement purposes [5]. A pathway map completed at the end of the lesson can provide initial evidence; the seven-day action sheet shows whether action has begun; and revisions recorded one month later indicate whether students can adjust plans in light of experience. Brief interviews and classroom observation can also capture changes in the specificity of questions, quality of information sources, and help-seeking behavior. The findings from such evaluation should guide the next round of support, such as additional training in information appraisal, stronger family communication, or further subject-based experiences. The present article offers a conceptual framework and classroom lesson design rather than an empirically validated intervention. Its purpose is to clarify the logic of stage-specific support and its classroom application. Adaptation to local curricula, differences in student development, and available resources remain necessary, and the effects of implementation require examination through sustained practice.

6. Conclusion

Career adaptability during the transition from junior to senior high school centers on helping students sustain future-oriented action amid environmental change. A settled answer about an eventual occupation can emerge gradually through continued exploration. This article organizes the transition into three stages—the end of Grade 9, summer through school entry, and early Grade 10—with respective emphases on goal activation and self-assessment, orientation to the environment and information exploration, and preparation for choices and feedback on action. Support from families, homeroom and school psychology teachers, subject teachers, and peers is linked to the tasks at each stage. Outputs from one stage can then serve as inputs to the next, building a connected sequence of resource identification, information gathering, choice preparation, action revision, and help-seeking. The practical contribution is the alignment of stage-specific tasks, support responsibilities, and classroom activities. A 45-minute navigation lesson and subsequent action sheet provide an implementable starting point for regular class meetings, school psychology lessons, or career education courses, with scope for schools to extend support according to local resources.

This work is based on a conceptual framework and classroom lesson design. Its evidence draws primarily on research concerning developmental patterns and support mechanisms, together with experience

in senior high school career education curricula and evaluation. It does not yet include sustained, cross-school observation of lesson implementation or changes in students. Differences in instructional time, staffing, family participation, and student starting points may also affect the fit of the proposed arrangements. Future studies could conduct longitudinal implementation evaluations across regions and school types, following changes from the end of Grade 9 to early Grade 10 in students' question formulation, information exploration, persistence in action, and help-seeking. They could also compare the effects of minimum feasible support combinations under different resource conditions. Further attention to how the same lesson serves students with clear goals, uncertain goals, or relatively high adjustment stress would help refine task difficulty, feedback frequency, and home–school coordination. These steps could move transition support beyond a uniform activity toward school practices responsive to both developmental stage and individual differences.

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Stage-Specific Tasks and Support for Career Adaptability During the Junior–Senior High School Transition Period

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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