

Strengths and obstacles in the transition from Primary Education to Compulsory Secondary Education



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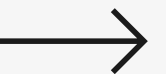
Introduction

- The transition from primary to secondary education is one of **the most characteristic elements of education systems**.
- Educational transitions **are essential in students' trajectories** as they influence their personal, family and social development.
- **Discontinuities in these transition** processes are constituted as a selection process, **associated or converging with school dropout and failure processes**, thus increasing the risk of social exclusion among adolescents and young people.
- The transition to secondary school is often associated with a decrease in pupils' "academic performance".

Sources: (Gimeno Sacristán, 1996; Monarca et al., 2013, Tarabini, 2020)



INTRODUCTION



Introduction

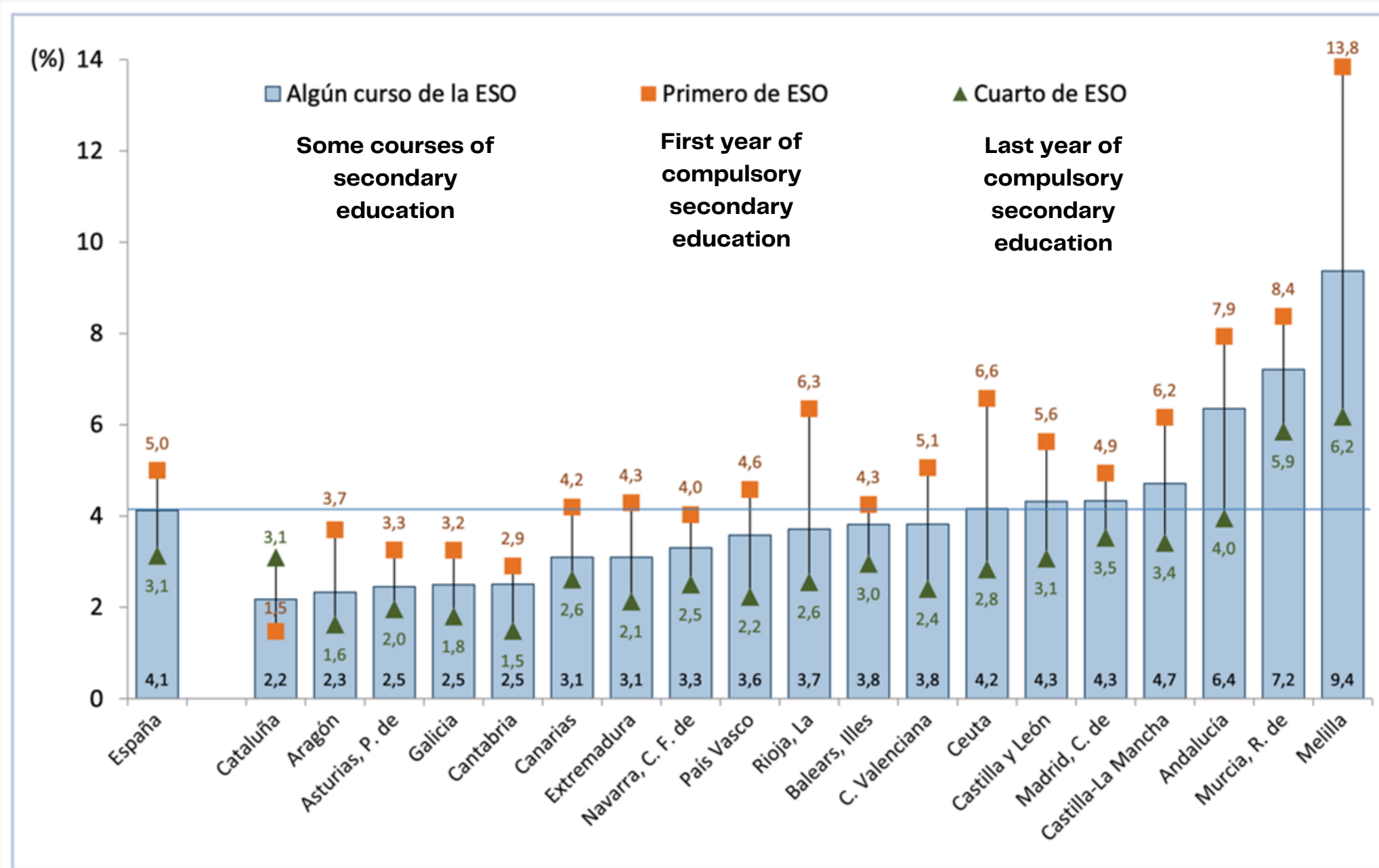
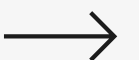


Figure 1. Percentage of repeaters with respect to students enrolled in Compulsory Secondary Education, by year, by Autonomous Communities and Cities. Academic year 2020–2021. Source: State School Council

- It is **essential to reflect on these discontinuities** to avoid falling back on narratives that skirt around structural issues and blame their "successes" and "failures" on isolated individuals.
- **Different dimensions**, such as: the **relationships** established within the educational community, the **curriculum**, the climate of coexistence, spaces for **participation**, assessment, the distribution of school and family time and **school organisation** in general.

Sources: (Ávila Francés et. al., 2022; González Lorente and González Morga, 2015; González-Rodríguez, 2019).

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH



Objectives of the Research

METHODOLOGY



The research project: *The Transition to Compulsory Secondary Education. Pedagogical Impact and Consequences.*

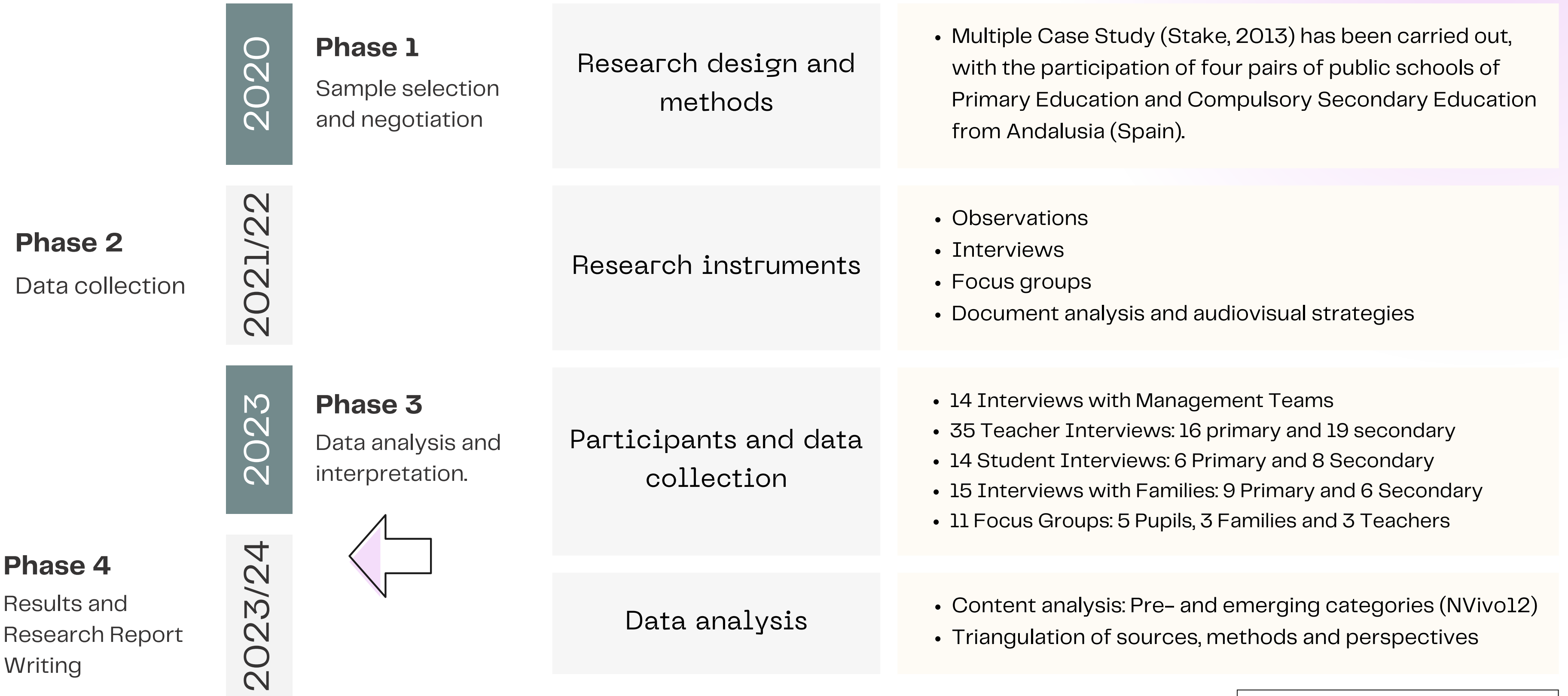
General Objective

- Explore the process of transition to Compulsory Secondary Education and identify the conditioning factors involved in the process

Specific Objectives

- To know the perceptions, experiences and interpretations from the point of view of students, teachers and their families
- To find out how this transition process affects the quality of life and personal development of adolescent pupils
- Explore the educational processes that promote a successful transition
- Explore curricular, pedagogical and assessment elements that negatively affect transition.

Methodology



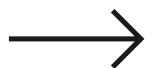
Sources: (Stake, 2010, 2013)

RESULTS →

Results

Social Dimension	Political Dimension	Personal Dimension	Pedagogical Dimension
Positive and negative factors in educational community involvement	Influence of political decisions on the education system and the role of educational guidance	Perceptions, experiences and expectations in the transition process	Organisation of space and time, methodologies, relationships, evaluation, response to diversity, among others.

SOCIAL DIMENSION



Results

SOCIAL DIMENSIÓN

Positive and negative factors in educational community involvement

Evidences

Well, the children say that at secondary school, there is not much contact between their parents and the teaching staff, and there is only little contact in tutorials. There should be more contact between teachers and families, although I have to say that I am informed about everything about my daughter. (Mother, Interview, 27/03/22)

I think that here they mainly meet with the tutors, and the teachers who teach the different subjects do not meet with all the parents of each student. So, the tutor is the one who is in charge of mediating between the teachers and the family. Maybe that can be a difference with concerning primary school. (Music teacher. Interview, 21/01/22)

SOCIAL DIMENSION



Results

SOCIAL DIMENSIÓN

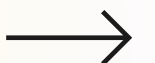
Positive and negative factors in educational community involvement

Evidences

*We try, little by little, because they are still young, to make them understand that once they make the giant leap to secondary school, they will find: firstly, teachers who cannot dedicate the individualised time to them that is dedicated to them in school, in primary education, this is a reality that is there, and it is absurd to discuss it. That is to say, due to overcrowding, due to how school time is organised, there needs to be more closeness and knowledge that primary school tutors have of all the situations of their students.
(Headmaster of primary school)*

Well, there are problems because of the lack of time, the inability to stop and talk to one or the other.... For me, these are the problems: the lack of communication with other collaborators, with the families... (Secondary school tutor)

POLITICAL DIMENSION



Results

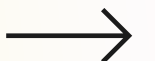
POLITICAL DIMENSIÓN

Influence of political decisions on the education system and the role of educational guidance

Evidences

I believe that this abrupt leap for some children, the move to secondary school, is a consequence, from my point of view, of one of the worst measures that could have been taken in education in the last thirty years, which was that children aged 11 and a half, many before they were 12, were moved to a secondary school. (Headmaster of secondary school)

POLITICAL DIMENSION



Results

POLITICAL DIMENSIÓN

Influence of political decisions on the education system and the role of educational guidance

Evidences

"We, the guidance counsellors, what we do is accompany them in that transition process. In other words, we exchange information and support students who may have educational needs. We gather information from families, especially those from socio-culturally deprived backgrounds. We inform sixth-grade students about high school, what secondary education is like, and what they must do. We even organize initiatives and interventions by the educational centres, where they come here, see the high school, and engage in activities with us. In essence, we are part of that transitional process. We also gather families, provide them with talks, and so on. For instance, at the beginning of the term, I was giving talks to families of these new students who arrived at the high school, so they could get to know the institution and learn a bit about their children's developmental process. We are transitioning" (Counsellor. High School 1, 01/21/22).

Results

POLITICAL DIMENSIÓN

Influence of political decisions on the education system and the role of educational guidance

Evidences

"Above all, mechanisms of communication between educational stages are essential. Because for instance, I wonder why a child in one educational centre is a child who does not give you any trouble, and here it is like a roller coaster? Furthermore, it also happens the other way around, that sometimes you talk to elementary school colleagues, and they ask you, "Hey, how is it going...?" and you say, "Oh, it is going well," and they say, "It is going well? However, he used to be such a handful!" Right? So, communication between educational teams among faculties is essential.

Nevertheless, a child's personal, social, and developmental growth inevitably plays a role, right? That is inevitable, and of course, families too. Do we need to change things about the transition? Moreover, I will see how it was done this year and what new contributions we can make" (Counsellor. High School 1, 01/21/22).

Results

PERSONAL DIMENSIÓN

Perceptions, experiences and expectations in the transition process

Evidences

Teacher: "[...] the first trimester of sixth grade is very similar to fifth grade, at least in my perception. The second and third trimesters are a different story. These kids are moving on to high school, and although it might seem trivial, it is not because the kids start to change mentally. The classes often become challenging for people who may not have had any issues before and get very excited for whatever reason. That is a perception I have had since I have been teaching fifth and sixth grade since 2003, which is not just the other day... I attribute it to them growing up, becoming high school kids, not elementary school kids."

... [referring to high school] "I think it is a considerable barrier because, from the times I have been there, it has seemed like you are isolated, there is much difference, and the same goes for the teaching staff. If you know someone, you can see some connection, but generally, there is a thin but significant barrier." (Group interview with teachers, Primary School 2, June 2021).

Results

PERSONAL DIMENSIÓN

Perceptions, experiences and expectations in the transition process

Evidences

Teacher: "I would do it the way they used to do it in the past. Maybe increase the age for transitioning to high school. Alternatively, have them stay until the second year of secondary school... Because we indeed make them older before their time." (Group interview with teachers, Primary School 3, 2022).

Interviewer: "And what would you change? What would you improve?"

Teacher: "[...] I would primarily work on the methodology: how we will work and for what purpose. But that is the holy grail of education, trying to get the high school to reconsider its working methodology." (Interview with sixth-grade teacher, Primary School 1, June 2022).

Results

PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSIÓN

Organisation of space and time, methodologies, relationships, evaluation, response to diversity, among others.

Evidences

"In that sense, not, for example, the idea of discussing what I do in the classroom with elementary school colleagues, going there for us is a disaster, it can be done for a day or two, but it cannot be done more because they are neglecting children. It would be good if there were a gathering of sixth-grade teachers and high school teachers, in general, that would be very positive" (Head of Studies. High School 1, 01/21/22).

Student: "The previous school was more hands-on, more recreational, and this one explains things normally; it is a normal kind of teaching. The other was more about learning by doing things, through games..." (Student Focus Group, High School 1, March 2023).

Results

PEDAGOGICAL DIMENSIÓN

Organisation of space and time, methodologies, relationships, evaluation, response to diversity, among others.

Evidences

Teacher: "we are concerned because we have been working with them for nine years with a working system that breaks down when they get there and they become disoriented, such as cooperative work, teamwork, eh, the company." (Interview with 6th-grade teacher, CEIP 1, June 2022).

...

Student: "The teachers at school were multipurpose."

Interviewer: "Multipurpose? What does that mean?"

Student: "For example, teacher M was our tutor; he taught us Math, Social Studies, Language, and many things. The English teacher gave us English and Music. The teachers were multipurpose and gave us many subjects at the same time." (Student group interview, IES 1, March 2023)

...

Student: [About the primary school of origin and the current high school] "A little difference, yes. Besides, as there are many more exams, it complicates things. The exams in most subjects count for more or less sixty per cent of the grade for the subject. So exams are essential." (Student Focus Group, IES 1, March 2023)

Conclusion

The transition process from primary to secondary education is undergoing specific changes as protocols are being established.

The exchange of information between primary and secondary schools favours the process, as well as the exchange of activities. However, it still needs to be an optimized process. It has many aspects that must be improved.

The pedagogical approach of primary education is different from that of secondary education.

The specialization of secondary school teachers prevents them from getting to know the students sufficiently. They do not spend enough time with their pupils.

Families and students miss closer contact with teachers in secondary education.

Secondary school teachers also feel that families should be more involved in the teaching and learning process.

Families and teachers interviewed consider that the transition is made too early in many cases and that students need to be more mature to face certain situations that occur in secondary schools.

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Thank you!

Do you have any questions?



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