



Research Article

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Educational Approximations Between Preschool and Primary School: The Perspective of Kindergarten and Primary School Teachers

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Abstract

This article aims to understand how a group of preschool and primary school teachers view the process of educational transition between these two educational contexts, considering the consequences that these moments have on the children's school career and on their own personal and social experience, and that teachers play a key role as links between both. Methodologically, this research is based on the collection of information through a questionnaire survey, with open and closed questions, filled in by 20 preschool educators and 20 primary school teachers from the Autonomous Region of the Azores, Portugal. The collected data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results obtained allow us to conclude that there are specific differences in the way preschool teachers and primary school teachers look at educational transition, although both consider it as an important aspect of the children's educational path, highlighting the need for a closer relationship between both in the construction of a process that is intended to be continuous and smooth.

Keywords: educational transition, preschool education, primary education, teacher's perspectives

1. Context of the Study

Every human being goes through several transitions throughout life, the first one takes place at a young age, with the entrance to nursery school, and many will follow: the entrance to kindergarten, to primary schools, to college, to the first job, etc. These transitions, as Sim-Sim (2010, p.111) states, are always emotionally charged and connoted "...with periods of expectation, stress and fears [which] always imply[m] the loss and separation from something known and, simultaneously, the integration into a new and unknown context, involving the fear of what is strange, the abandonment of established routines".

There are several studies that show the importance of transitions in the life of the child, young person or even the adult (Petriwskyj, Thorpe & Taylor, 2005, in Vasconcelos, 2015) and the possible

consequences that these transition processes have on the success of the children's educational path (Ahtolaa, Silinskas, Poikonenc, Kontoniemi, Niemi & Nurmi, 2011).

In educational terms, "the transitions between education cycles are remarkable moments in the social life of students, parents, educators and teachers, as well as delicate points in the morphology of the educational systems" (Abrantes, 2005, p. 25).

In this context, the educational transition processes are constituted, from an early stage, by a diversified set of situations which lead to great anxieties, concerns, and expectations for all those intervening in the educational action, i.e., children, educators, teachers, and families.

This type of change, which may arise in different contexts and at different times during the educational pathway, ends up gaining more relevance between the end of Preschool Education and the entry into compulsory schooling. On the one hand, because the child leaves kindergarten, losing one of its spaces of play par excellence, its routines and its professional reference, the kindergarten teacher. On the other hand, because, on entering primary school, they are confronted for the first time with the imposition of a curriculum to be followed and with a set of rules, especially behavioral rules, which imply a greater degree of personal, social, and school demands on their part (Sim-Sim, 2010).

As it is a process that concerns all its stakeholders, preschool and primary school teachers have a particularly relevant role as a link between the two contexts and connoisseurs of the educational processes that take place in them, contributing to avoid a rupture in this transition and ensuring that it is secure and working to give continuity to the learning processes are taking place (Formosinho & Merali, 2016; Rodrigues, 2005), in the search for better strategies that ensure a "smooth transition" (Yeboah, 2002; Chan, 2012).

Unfortunately, this process, which is supposed to be continuous, coherent, and fluid, does not always happen in the best way. There are many discontinuities identified in the specialized bibliography that alert us to multiple aspects that should be considered by those involved. Vasconcelos (2015) highlights, for example, discontinuities in children's attitudes and behaviors, in families and in schools, alerting us to the need to incorporate everyone's knowledge and perspectives, including those of policymakers, in the whole process. These many discontinuities are identified in the conceptions and practices of early childhood educators and primary school teachers (Cardona, 2014; Einarsdottir, Perry & Dockett, 2008; Fisher, 2011; Santos, 2015), in the way children perceive these stages (Babić, 2017; Cardona, 2014; Eskelä-Haapanen, Lerkkanen, Rasku-Puttonen & Poikkeus, 2017) and in the families' perspective on the process (Cardona, 2014; Chan, 2012). In the case of teachers, in particular, Castro, Ezquerria and Argos (2012, p.549) conclude that "although teachers are aware of the existence of discontinuities between both stages, which affect different types of elements of a didactic and organizational nature, as well as the negative repercussions that they can produce on children, the incorporation of planned activities aimed at mitigating these dysfunctions is not very common". As Early, Pianta, Taylor and Cox (2001) state, "...transition practices are far from optimal" (p.203).

Therefore, for this process to be relevant, to lead to an easy adaptation of the child to a new context, and to promote development, smoothing out any discontinuities that may occur, it is fundamental that educators and teachers are able to envisage a set of intervention strategies that lead to coherent, articulated and fluid transitions between the two contexts, identifying procedural aspects and aspects of pedagogical intervention that, assumed by the different intervening parties, may be elements to be considered before, during and after the transition.

Ahtolaa et al. (2011, p.300) point out that "cooperation over curricula between the preschool and the elementary school, as well as passing on written information about children turned out to be the most effective predictors, although they were the least commonly used practices".

Provided it is adequate and well founded, the information passed on by the educator to the primary school teacher may constitute an important tool to guarantee the continuity of the children's educational process, respecting their needs. At the same time, the curricular continuity also represents an added value so that the process of educational transition takes place respecting the children's needs and interests, offering continuity in the learning experiences, an approximation in the pedagogical practices of educators and teachers and, consequently, a greater and better approach and knowledge

of the contexts by all the intervening parties (Ahtola et al, 2011; Ahtola, Björn, Turunen, Poikonen, Kontoniemi, Lerkkanen, & Nurmi, 2016; Fisher, 2011; Lopes da Silva, Marques, Mata, & Rosa, 2016; Vasconcelos 2015).

A good articulation and relationship between preschool teachers, primary teachers and families is also pointed out as a relevant factor for a more successful transition (Ahtola et al., 2016), which, being a relevant aspect for all, is not always achieved in practice.

And because children are the main stakeholders in this process, their involvement should be strongly considered. Their fears and expectations and the construction of a positive outlook towards transition should be part of the intervention, strengthening learning and fostering relationships among peers, between children and teachers and between children and the school environment (Babić, 2017; Castro et al., 2012; Einarsdottir, 2011; Eskelä-Haapanen et al., 2017).

This articulation between the different stakeholders should also anticipate and be able to manage the expectations and demands of each one, because, as shown in the work of Dockett and Perry (2001; 2002), they are not the same for all of them.

In the specific case of teachers, much has also been written about the profile of the child wanted when transitioning to primary school. As Kinkead-Clark (2018) states, "the findings also highlight that different teachers' perspectives of children's readiness lead to different understandings of how this should be supported" (p.1). In an apparent trend to privilege academic skills by teachers, educators seem to privilege other types of skills, more social and affective (Chan, 2012; Kinkead-Clark, 2018). However, not all studies corroborate this trend, with some research suggesting that both studies emphasise the behavioural domain, associated with skills such as self-control and self-regulation, as key skills for a successful transition (Correia & Marques-Pinto, 2016) and that the perspective is the opposite, i.e., that early childhood educators give great importance to the development of basic instrumental skills and that teachers consider as fundamental the "development of good attention, autonomy and listening skills, ... not considering the acquisition of basic instrumental skills as facilitators of school adaptation" (Castro et al., 2012, p.545).

In this sense, the present research sought, within the scope of a wider study, to understand the way educators and teachers envisage the process of children's transition from early childhood education to primary education, the importance they give to it and the transition strategies they refer to implement to facilitate this transition.

2. Methodological Options

2.1 Data collection instrument

To collect information for this exploratory research, 40 questionnaire surveys were conducted (20 to preschool teachers and 20 to primary school teachers), with open and closed questions, to deepen the way each one thinks about what should be and what they do within their intervention to facilitate a continuous and articulated transition process.

The questionnaire survey was the data collection instrument chosen because, as Quivy and Campenhoudt (1998) state, it allows asking respondents a series of questions about certain aspects of their professional life, "(...) seeking opinions, expectations, knowledge or awareness of an event or problem, or any other point of interest to researchers" (p. 188).

The questionnaire was organized into two blocks of questions. A first block with general aspects allowed for a brief characterization of the teachers surveyed, covering topics such as age, gender, years of teaching service, year of schooling that they teach at the date of application of the questionnaire, and training.

A second block, where pedagogical questions were raised, sought to understand the importance attached to the transition process and how it is perceived by the teachers (time to start, main responsible parties, implementation strategies, skills that children should develop and facilitating aspects).

The closed-ended questions were analyzed quantitatively, and the open-ended questions were analyzed using the content analysis technique (Bardin, 1979), in an inductive analysis, i.e., with categories arising from the data obtained.

2.2 Characterization of Participants

Forty teachers participated in this study, 20 of whom were preschool teachers and 20 were primary school teachers from the Autonomous Region of the Azores, Portugal.

Of the 20 preschool teachers, 85% (17 teachers) were female and only 15% (3 teachers) were male. In terms of age, the majority (40% - 8 teachers) were aged over 50 years, with the lowest percentage of respondents in the 23 to 30 age group. In terms of length of service, the highest percentage of preschool teachers (50% of teachers - 10 teachers) have more than 25 years of service. In terms of academic training, 60% (12 teachers) had a Licentiate's degree and 40% (8 teachers) a Master's degree.

Of the 20 primary school teachers surveyed, 60% of the teachers were female (12 female teachers) and 40% male (8 teachers). With regard to age, the highest percentage of respondents is in the interval between 41 and 50 years of age (40% - 8 teachers), followed by the group of over 50 years old (30% - 6 teachers), representing in total 70% of the teachers surveyed. Regarding the length of service of teachers, the highest percentage of teachers has more than 26 years of service (50%). Regarding the academic background of these respondents, 55% (11 teachers) had a Licentiate's degree and 45% (9 teachers) a Master's degree.

Table 1: Characterization of Participants

		<i>Preschool Teachers</i>	<i>Primary Teachers</i>
Age	23 to 30 years	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
	31 to 40 years	5 (25%)	4 (20%)
	41 to 50 years	5 (25%)	8 (40%)
	≥ 50 years	8 (40%)	6 (30%)
Years of service	≤ 5 years	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
	6 to 10 years	1 (5%)	1 (5%)
	11 to 15 years	3 (15%)	3 (15%)
	16 to 20 years	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
	21 to 25 years	2 (10%)	2 (10%)
	≥ 26 years	10 (50%)	10 (50%)

3. Results: Teachers' Perspectives on Educational Transitions

3.1 The perspective of Early Childhood Teachers

For all the preschool teachers interviewed, it is important to bring together early childhood education and primary education during the school career of the children/students, for several reasons.

Seven preschool teachers (35%) believe that this approximation between educational cycles facilitates the process of transition to primary education. For six of them (30%), there is a wide range of learning, competences, attitudes, values, and contents that should be transmitted from one educational context to the other. Four of them (20%) mention that these two educational cycles should be brought closer together so that the transition is gradual in the children's school career, and 3 preschool teachers (15%) answered that the main reason for considering the transition important is the promotion of educational continuity.

When asked whether there was a right moment to start bringing these two levels of education closer together, a large majority (70% - 14 teachers) stated that they did not consider that there was an

exact moment to bring preschool and primary school closer together, because this process should be carried out in the long term. However, 30% of the respondents (6 teachers) considered that there is a right moment to bring the educational approximation between these two educational levels, which should happen at the beginning of the school year, just before the transition to the 1st grade (3 teachers) or from the third term of the school year, just before the transition to the 1st grade.

When asked who they considered to be the main responsible for the transition process of the children, 85 % (17 teachers) indicated the pre-school teacher and 15 % (3 teachers) the parents and/or the family. Among the response categories offered, the option Primary School Teacher was not considered by any of the respondents.

At the same time, we tried to find out if the preschool teachers were familiar with the primary school programs, which are the curricular documents that guide the practice of primary school teachers. Most of the teachers, 80% of the participants (16 teachers) indicated that they knew the programs and 20% (4 teachers) said that they did not know them.

When asked if, according to their professional experience, they consider that there has been articulation and continuity between preschool and primary school, 50% of the teachers (10 teachers) answered yes, while the other 50% (10 teachers) indicated no, that throughout their professional practice this articulation and continuity between these two teaching cycles has existed.

The 10 teachers who answered that there was articulation were asked to indicate in which aspects the process took place. Thus, 6 teachers indicated that this articulation and continuity existed through the performance and participation in common activities and 4 teachers mentioned that the articulation between these two educational levels is achieved through meetings between the preschool and primary teacher. The 10 teachers who answered negatively also justified their answer by indicating that there was no articulation between preschool and primary school due to the concern of primary school teachers to comply with the programs and the lack of compatibility of schedules.

When asked about the main strategies implemented with a view to a smooth transition process between preschool and primary school, preschool teachers mention a diverse set of strategies, as follows:

- 50 % of the respondents (10 teachers) mention that they implement various activities for interaction between Preschool and Primary Education, such as study visits, presentations and games;
- 5 teachers, that is, 25%, state that one of the strategies to promote the transition between these two educational levels is the planning of activities between both levels;
- 15%, i.e., 3 teachers, emphasize that the dialogue with the primary school teacher about the children to be received (capacities, competences and limitations) is one of the strategies implemented;
- finally, only 10% (2 teachers) refer that in their pedagogical practices they hold working meetings with the parents, to understand certain aspects and competences that will be essential for an educational transition process.

For the interviewed preschool teachers there is a set of aspects that are considered facilitators of educational transition. In this context, the following were identified as the main facilitating aspects: (1) development and learning, which includes eight dimensions of analysis - global competences, language, personal and social development, motor expression, mathematics, artistic expressions, knowledge of the world and development; (2) knowledge of the context of the primary education, which includes 5 dimensions of analysis - school, teachers, room, proximity to the students of the primary education, a new stage; (3) and family/school relationship (Chart 1).

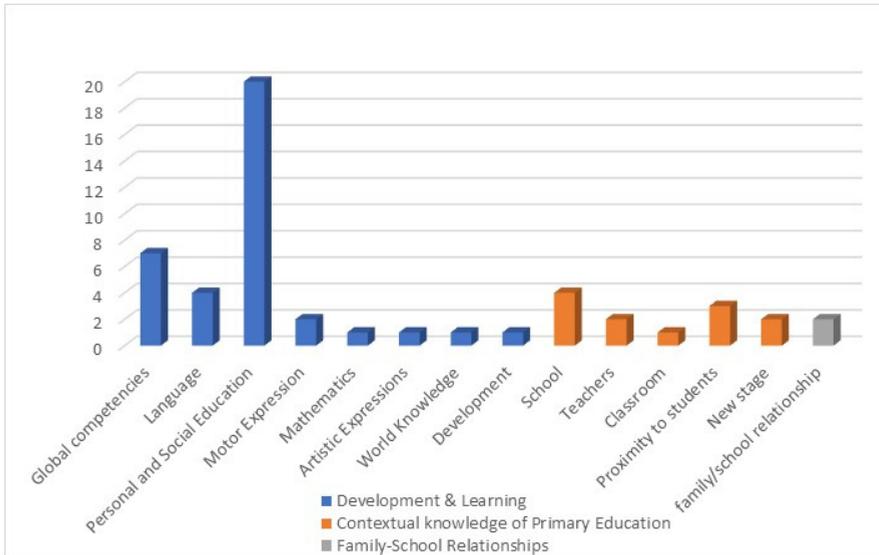


Chart 1: Aspects facilitating the transition from the perspective of Preschool Teachers

The highest frequency of answers, as shown above, is concentrated in the first category - *development and learning*. For the interviewed preschool teachers, facilitating aspects of the transition are the development of general competencies and contents that allow working on the content areas foreseen in the Curricular Guidelines for Pre-School Education (6 occurrences), as well as aspects related to the educational transition (1 occurrence) because, as one educator points out: it is important to have "educational continuity, which ensures success". Also considered facilitating aspects are those related to the various content areas, namely: (1) Language, considering aspects such as communication, oral and written expression; (2) Personal and Social Development which, being the area with the most occurrences, included aspects such as autonomy, socialization, attitudes and values, and children's working methods and routines; (3) Motor Expression; (4) Mathematics; (5) Artistic Expressions; (6) Knowledge of the World; and (7) child development, particularly cognitive development.

The second category of analysis with a higher number of incidences was the *knowledge of the context of the primary education*, whose information is distributed by the dimensions: (1) the School; (2) the Teachers; (3) the Room; (4) the proximity to the students of the primary education; (5) and a new stage.

For 4 preschool teachers, it is important that the children get to know the school before the transition, so that they "get to know the educational community, the physical spaces of the school and how it works" or so that they can establish "a relationship with the school space". For two preschool teachers, it is important that the children can "meet the future teachers". For one teacher it was important that the children could "get to know the room and the materials". For three others, it is important to be close to the primary school students and to know what a new stage in their school life will be, because it allows "the preschool child to get to know what the next stage will be".

In the third and last category, two preschool teachers pointed out the closeness of the *relationship between the School and the Families* as a relevant and facilitating aspect of the educational transition.

When asked about the fundamental skills for the transition of children from preschool to primary education, the preschool teachers focused their answers on the various areas and domains of the Curricular Guidelines for Pre-School Education, highlighting, in particular, the area of Personal and Social Development, and within this, autonomy as an essential competence, as shown in Chart 2.

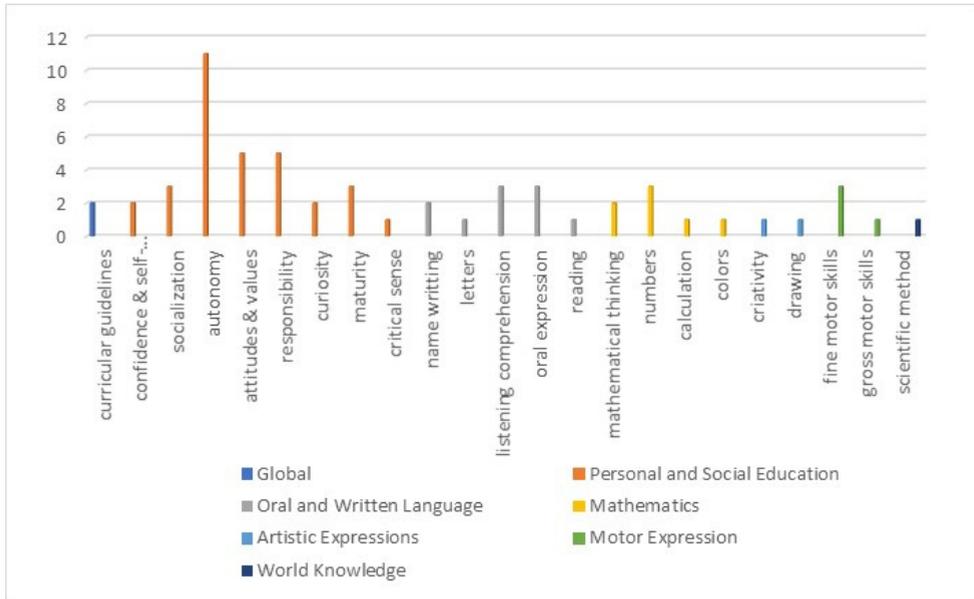


Chart 2: Key competences for transition from the perspective of Preschool Teachers

The competences identified by the preschool teachers can thus be organized into 7 subcategories of analysis, namely: (1) General aspects; (2) Personal and Social Development; (3) Oral and Written Language; (4) Mathematics; (5) Artistic Expressions; (6) Motor Expression; and (7) World Knowledge. For 2 preschool teachers, the skills that children should develop should concern the whole of the areas and domains of the Curricular Guidelines for Pre-School Education, because they are all important insofar as they "facilitate the continuity of the educational process".

In Personal and Social Development, competences were identified related to confidence and self-esteem, socialization, autonomy, attitudes and values, responsibility, curiosity, maturity, and critical sense.

Regarding Oral and Written Language, the following competencies were identified as fundamental: the writing of the name; the identification of letters, particularly those of the name; oral comprehension, namely the ability to answer questions and understand what is asked; oral expression, highlighting the ability to speak spontaneously and logically about matters of everyday reality or to be able to ask questions; and reading, with pre-reading competencies identified as fundamental.

In Mathematics, fundamental competencies emerged: the development of mathematical thinking; the identification of numbers and counting; calculation; and the identification of colors.

In Artistic Expressions, creativity and drawing were pointed out as fundamental, with particular reference being made to the need for children to know how to "draw in greater detail the human figure and what surrounds it".

Regarding Motor Skills, the answers indicated two indicators: fine motor skills and gross motor skills. In fine motor skills, the development of "motor dexterity", knowing how to "skillfully use brushes, pencils and scissors" and "being able to draw complex pictures" were listed as fundamental skills. In gross motor skills, one of the interviewees considered that it was important for children to know how to "jump, run, jump".

Finally, for the area of World Knowledge only one reference was identified, which highlighted the importance of children knowing how to follow the "scientific method".

3.2 The Perspective of Primary School Teachers

Unequivocally, all primary school teachers (20 teachers) surveyed consider it important to bring together preschool education and primary school during children's schooling, justifying this position with the following reasons:

- 7 teachers (35%) considered that this approximation facilitates the process of transition to the 1st year of schooling;
- 5 teachers (25%), considered that there is a multiplicity of learning, competences, attitudes, values and contents that should be transmitted from one context to the other;
- 4 teachers (20%) stated that the main reason for this approximation should be made so that there is a continuous curricular articulation, which avoids gaps between the two educational cycles;
- 4 teachers (20%) stated that it is in early childhood education that children develop the essential prerequisites for primary education.

When asked if there was a right moment to start bringing these two levels of education closer together, 11 teachers (55%) considered that there was a right moment to bring these educational approaches together, coinciding in stating that this moment should take place from the last year of preschool education. For the 9 respondents (45%) who do not consider that there is an exact moment for this to happen, this process can be carried out in the long term, i.e., during attendance at preschool.

As main responsible persons for the transition process of children, primary school teachers considered by a large majority (15 teachers - 75%) that the preschool teacher is the main responsible person for the process. However, 3 teachers (15 %) mentioned the primary school teacher as one of the responsible persons for this transition. In addition, 2 teachers (10%) stated that the parents and/or the family are the main responsible persons.

When asked about knowing or not the Curricular Guidelines for Pre-school Education, a document that guides the pedagogical practice of early childhood educators, 75% of the respondents (15 teachers) answered affirmatively and 25% (5 teachers) negatively.

To the question - taking into account your professional experience, do you consider that there has been articulation and continuity between early childhood education and primary education? - 11 teachers (55%) answered that there has been articulation and continuity between the two educational levels throughout their professional experience, justifying their answer by pointing out situations such as the realization and participation in activities common to both levels (8 teachers) and meetings between the educator and the teacher (3 teachers).

The 9 teachers (45%) who mentioned that, throughout their professional practice, this articulation and continuity between these two educational cycles has been practically non-existent, justifying their position by stating that this situation is mainly due to the primary school teachers' concern to comply with the syllabus and by the incompatibility of schedules.

Regarding the main strategies identified by teachers for a smooth transition from early childhood education to primary education, teachers mentioned a diverse set of strategies. The data highlights that 50% of the participants (10 teachers) refer that the main strategy for educational transition is essentially the realization of activities between the two educational cycles (study visits, presentations, games, reading and dramatization of stories).

Invited to identify the main aspects facilitating the transition, the Primary School Teachers take into consideration: (1) the role of teachers; (2) knowledge of the primary school context; (3) development and learning; and (4) promotion of equal opportunities (Chart 3).

Regarding *the role of teachers*, one teacher mentioned the openness and flexibility of the preschool teacher as facilitating this transition, and another teacher mentioned the importance of dialogue between professionals in the process.

In the subcategory *knowledge of the primary school context*, 4 teachers indicated knowledge of the school as a facilitating aspect, considering its functioning and rules and the necessary adaptation to the environment of the cycle/school.

From the subcategory *development and learning*, six dimensions of analysis emerged. The first one is related to the development of global competences that facilitate the transition, in particular, competences that facilitate in a general way the educational continuity, and general competences, such as "notions about certain fundamental contents for the primary education".

The second dimension refers to the area of Personal and Social Development, where specific processes that facilitate transition are pointed out: socialization, autonomy, and values. In this dimension of analysis, socialization gains particular relevance, considering aspects such as the "relationship with others in society and compliance with social rules" or the fact that "social interaction facilitates and motivates learning" as particularly relevant.

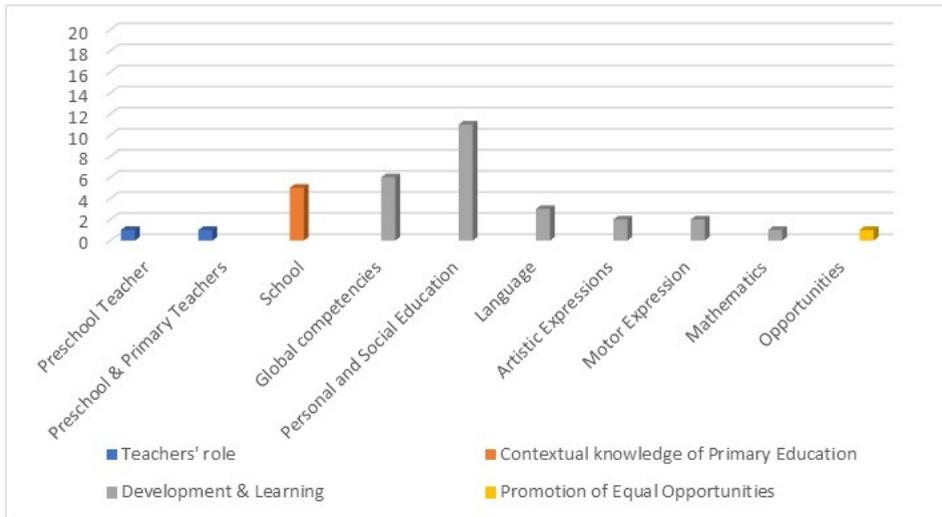


Chart 3: Aspects facilitating transition from the perspective of Primary School Teachers

The third dimension refers to the Language area, with the development of orality (2 answers) and reading and writing (1 answer) being identified as facilitating aspects.

The fourth dimension concerns the area of Artistic Expressions, in which we identified two answers referring to the importance of developing creativity and playing expressive games.

In the fifth dimension, Motor Expression, two indicators emerged: the development of fine motor skills, in particular "graphomotor training", and the development of gross motor skills, namely "psychomotricity".

The sixth dimension of analysis includes the area of Mathematics, referred to by only one teacher, who indicated that the development of calculation skills was fundamental.

Finally, in the third subcategory - promotion of equal opportunities, a teacher mentioned that attending preschool education and consequent transition to primary education is a way of "blurring some of the inequalities between students".

Following on from this, we wanted to understand which competences teachers identify as fundamental for children to move from pre-school to primary school. Primary school teachers listed competences related to several content areas, but particularly focused on aspects related to Personal and Social Development and Oral Language (Chart 4).

Regarding Personal and Social Development, socialization was the competence most frequently identified in the teachers' discourse, with 10 occurrences, followed by autonomy, compliance with rules, compliance with routines and curiosity, and self-knowledge and cooperative work.

In the area of Oral and Written Language, the most frequently mentioned competence was

phonological awareness (9 occurrences), followed by listening comprehension, oral expression, writing the name, taste for stories and other written texts, "identification of writing conventions" and "recognition of vowels and some consonants".

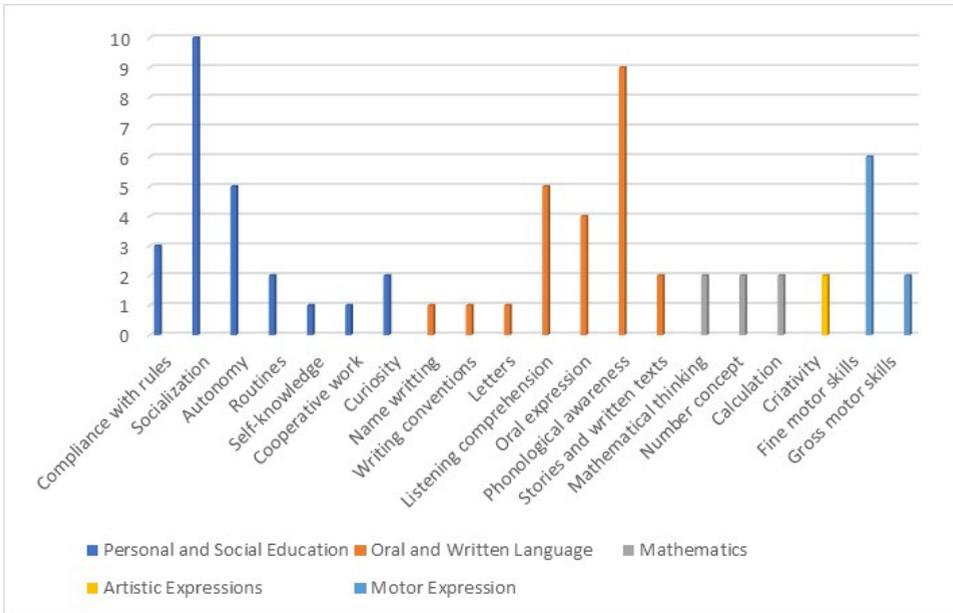


Chart 4: Key competences for transition from the perspective of Primary School Teachers

In the subcategory Mathematics, 3 indicators were identified: mathematical thinking, notion of number, and calculation, all with 2 occurrences. For the teachers surveyed, it is important that children know how to "represent and communicate mathematical thinking", know how to "master the number sequence up to ten", or know how to "perform small additions and subtractions".

The subcategory Artistic Expressions recorded two occurrences that point to the importance of children being creative.

Finally, in the subcategory Motor Expression, two major indicators emerged: (1) fine motor skills, with 6 occurrences in aspects such as general fine motor skills, and the development of "graph-motricity" and "handling scissors and pencils"; (2) gross motor skills, with two answers referring to the general development of skills in this area.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In a comparative analysis between the perspectives of early childhood educators and primary school teachers, we can see that, firstly, for both, it is important to bring together preschool education and primary school, with a view to a transition process that takes place in a gradual, coherent, fluid, and smooth way. For a high percentage of the respondents, the approximation between both educational levels facilitates the transition process and the development of a set of skills and learning that are considered fundamental, thus meeting what could apparently be considered as good practices, according to Vasconcelos (2015), Ahtolaa et al. (2011) or Petriwskyj et al. (2005).

However, this apparent harmony fades away when we start to delve into the way preschool teachers and primary teachers think and claim to implement practices aiming at a transition with continuity, identifying in these groups some discontinuities.

When comparing the way they think about the existence of a specific moment for this approximation to start happening, we realize that, while for a large majority of preschool teachers there should not be an exact moment to bring together preschool and primary education, for more than half of the primary teachers, this moment should precede the entry of the child into primary education, putting aside the idea that it is a process that should be built over time, which implies a broad articulation between the various stakeholders, and curriculum continuity (Ahtolaa et al, 2011; Babić, 2017; 2016; Vasconcelos, 2015), although both groups of teachers reported knowing the curricular guidelines of the educational context other than their own.

Some discrepancies are also evident when considering who they consider to be the most important stakeholders in the process. While for the preschool teachers the main responsible parties are, first, the preschool teachers themselves and, secondly, the families, for the vast majority of primary school teachers, the preschool teacher is the main responsible party, pointing out the primary school teacher and the family as elements that are also relevant for the process. This way of looking at those involved in the process, in addition to not revealing closeness and articulation between all, it also leaves out the child, his/her expectations and perspectives, which may be a compromising factor of the whole process, because as Chan (2012, p.639) states, "a stronger connection amongst kindergartens, primary schools and parents would facilitate a smoother transition to primary school".

Also worrying are the data that indicate that half of the preschool educators and almost half of the primary teachers refer that, in their professional practice, there has been no articulation between the two levels of education, which, if it happens, puts into question the educational continuity also recommended in the main guiding document of the pedagogical practices of preschool teachers in Portugal (Lopes da Silva et al., 2016).

For those teachers, whose practice includes the implementation of pedagogical intervention strategies aiming at transition, this process takes place essentially through common activities, which include the participation of both educational levels, and meetings between preschool teachers and primary school teachers. And even for those teachers who stated that there is no particular attention given to the implementation of pedagogical strategies for educational transition, these strategies, if they exist, should involve, in the opinion of the preschool teachers and primary teachers, joint activities between preschool and primary education, and the preschool teachers go further, focusing on the dialogue between preschool teachers and primary teachers and on the dialogue with families. These strategies listed by the teachers, many of which were pointed out in similar research, still appear to be far from optimal, as Early et al. (2001) or Castro et al. (2012) already stated, being, however, more diversified in the practices of early childhood teachers. The scenario of cooperation in building a continuous curriculum (Ahtolaa et al., 2011; Ahtolaa et al., 2016; Vasconcelos, 2015), of good articulation between teachers, families, and children (Babić, 2017; Castro et al., 2012; Einarsdottir, 2011; Eskelä-Haapanen et al., 2017) still seems distant.

Finally, regarding the profile of the child who is desired to transition to basic education, coincidentally, preschool teachers and primary teachers highlight the development of Personal and Social Development as a key element for a successful transition, followed by the development of basic instrumental skills, similarly to the results presented by Castro et al. (2012). They also coincide in considering the knowledge of the school and its operating rules as an important element. While for preschool teachers, knowledge of the classroom and of other children who are attending primary school, as well as the family/school relationship, are also relevant aspects, this is not the case for primary teachers. Primary teachers appear to be more focused on children's learning development than on other factors and actors in the process. This focus on learning is also evident when they talk about the competences that children should have acquired by the time of transition. For pre-school teachers, there is clearly a primacy in personal and social development, particularly in the development of autonomy, attitudes and values and respect, aspects that are also highlighted by primary school teachers who, along with socialization, highlight the development of oral language (phonological awareness and listening and speaking) and fine motor skills as essential skills for a good transition between the two educational levels, results that coincide with those of Chan (2012) or Kinkead-Clark

(2018).

In summary, the results highlight the need for a closer relationship between preschool teachers and primary school teachers, starting with the way they perceive and understand the transition process, but also in the implementation of real transition practices that enhance the continuity of the children's development and learning. These data are indicative of a work that is still to be developed, of bridges that are still to be built, even though we are dealing with a small sample of participants. This study, in addition to necessarily being extended to other participants in the process, in order to look at it in its complexity and globality, needs to be deepened so that, in the future, action and training strategies may be outlined that allow preschool teachers and primary school teachers to envisage a pedagogical intervention that "Ensuring that continuity, and thus creating a supportive learning environment for young children, will require communication between schools and families and a better understanding of children's expectations and experiences" (Chan, 2012, p.661).

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