

**ARTICULAÇÃO CURRICULAR ENTRE A EDUCAÇÃO PRÉ-ESCOLAR E O 1.º CICLO DO ENSINO BÁSICO:
CONCEÇÕES E PRÁTICAS**

**CURRICULAR ARTICULATION BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND PRIMARY SCHOOL:
CONCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES**

**ARTICULACIÓN CURRICULAR ENTRE LA EDUCACIÓN PRE-ESCOLAR Y EL 1ER CICLO DE LA ENSEÑANZA BÁSICA:
CONCEPCIONES Y PRÁCTICAS**

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RESUMO

Introdução: A articulação curricular entre a Educação Pré-Escolar (EPE) e o 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico (1.º CEB) é um processo fundamental na adaptação da criança à escola. Os professores, devem estabelecer ligações com os educadores de infância, facilitando a transição entre estes dois níveis de ensino, num processo harmonioso, promotor da sequencialidade do processo educativo.

Objetivos: Averiguar a importância e o significado que os professores do 1.º CEB conferem à articulação curricular, conhecer os aspetos do perfil do aluno privilegiados aquando da consulta do processo individual, bem como as iniciativas mais frequentes no âmbito da referida articulação.

Métodos: Foi realizada uma investigação de carácter descritivo e analítico, com recurso ao inquérito por questionário, aplicado a uma amostra de 45 professores a lecionarem a turmas do 1.º ano de escolaridade do 1.º CEB no concelho de Viseu (Portugal).

Resultados: De salientar a grande relevância atribuída pelos professores à articulação curricular, o privilégio conferido por estes ao saber estar (cidadania), ao sentido de autonomia e à capacidade de comunicar das crianças, bem como o empenhamento dos docentes na realização de atividades e projetos vários, para além das comemorações de dias temáticos e festas.

Conclusões: A articulação entre os dois níveis de ensino assume-se como um processo facilitador da transição entre estes níveis de ensino e contribui para uma adequada adaptação das crianças à escola, promovendo o sucesso escolar de todos os alunos.

Palavras-chave: Articulação curricular; Educação Pré-Escolar; 1.º Ciclo do Ensino Básico; Continuidade educativa.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Curricular articulation between early childhood education and primary school is a fundamental process concerning the child's adaptation to school. Primary teachers should establish links with pre-school educators, facilitating the transition between these two levels of education in a harmonious process, and promoting the continuity of the educational process.

Objectives: To ascertain the importance and the meaning that teachers of primary school confer to curricular articulation and to know the aspects of the profile of the pupils that are favoured when consulting the individual process, as well as the most frequent initiatives regarding that articulation.

Methods: A descriptive and analytical research was conducted, using a questionnaire survey applied to a sample of 45 teachers of the 1st year of primary school in the municipality of Viseu (Portugal).

Results: From the data obtained, it is worth mentioning the great importance that teachers attribute to curricular articulation, the privilege conferred by them on how to behave in society (citizenship), the sense of autonomy and the children's ability to communicate, as well as the teachers' commitment to carry out a variety of activities and projects, in addition to the celebrations of thematic days and parties.

Conclusions: Curricular articulation facilitates the transition between these two levels of education and contributes to an adequate adaptation of the children to the school, thereby promoting school success for all pupils.

Keywords: Curricular articulation; Early childhood education; Primary school; Educational continuity.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La articulación curricular entre la Educación Infantil y el ciclo inicial de Educación Primaria es un proceso fundamental en la adaptación del niño a la escuela. Los profesores deben establecer vínculos con los educadores de infancia, facilitando la transición entre estos dos niveles de enseñanza, en un proceso armonioso y promotor de la secuencialidad del proceso educativo.

Objetivos: Averiguar la importancia y el significado que los profesores de Educación Primaria atribuyen a la articulación curricular, conocer los aspectos del perfil del alumno privilegiados en la consulta del proceso individual, así como las iniciativas más frecuentes en el marco de dicha articulación.

Métodos: Se realizó una investigación de carácter descriptivo y analítico, con recurso a la encuesta por cuestionario, aplicada a una muestra de 45 profesores del 1.º año de Educación Primaria en el municipio de Viseu (Portugal).

Resultados: De destacar la gran relevancia atribuida por los profesores a la articulación curricular, el privilegio conferido por éstos al saber estar (ciudadanía), al sentido de autonomía y a la capacidad de comunicar de los niños, así como el compromiso de los docentes en la realización de actividades y proyectos variados, además de las celebraciones de días temáticos y fiestas.

Conclusiones: La articulación entre los dos niveles de enseñanza se asume como un proceso facilitador de la transición entre estos niveles de enseñanza y contribuye a una adecuada adaptación de los niños a la escuela, promoviendo el éxito escolar de todos los alumnos.

Palabras clave: Articulación curricular; Educación infantil; Educación primaria; Continuidad educativa.

INTRODUCTION

Curricular articulation is an essential process for the adequate transition among different levels, from early childhood to secondary education, through the planning of joint activities, turning school into an integrating environment, promoter of educational continuity.

Educators and teachers, as curriculum managers, should seek to establish links, discuss and communicate as a team, so that the transition from early childhood education to primary school can occur sequentially and harmoniously (Aniceto, 2010), contributing to the educational success of all pupils.

In this formative process, each cycle should consider everything the pupils have already learnt, each child's stage of development and their learning abilities at each level, always remembering that every pupil is unique and has their own learning pace (Cruz, 2008).

Although educational continuity between early childhood education and primary school should be established, this does not mean that the former is a level of children preparation for the next stage, as early childhood education is not supposed to be organized on the basis of the setting for compulsory schooling, but rather in the sense of lifelong education, facilitating the necessary conditions to successfully address the next stage (Ministério da Educação, 2016).

It is therefore important that educators and teachers commit themselves to good curriculum management, which implies the establishment of curricular articulation strategies, since this is the only way to achieve the desired educational continuity.

As explicitly stated in the Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education, it is a question of providing, at each stage, learning experiences and opportunities that allow the child to develop their potentialities, strengthen their self-esteem, resilience, autonomy and self-control, creating conditions for them to succeed in the next stage (Ministério da Educação, 2016).

Thus, this research tried to analyse how the curricular articulation between early childhood education and primary school is perceived by the teachers of the 1st year, namely by finding out the importance and meaning they attribute to it and by knowing the characteristics of the pupils' profile favoured when consulting the individual processes and also the most frequent initiatives in this context.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Curricular articulation has been the focus of a great number of studies over the last decades in line with the growing social and pedagogical concern about children's adaptation to school and the promotion of educational success, as the transition to the first years of schooling is considered a critical factor for children's adjustment to the demands of the school environment and in determining future school success (Margetts, 2002).

As social beings we are part of different contexts. The articulation among these contexts helps in the transitions of education levels and should be safeguarded from an early age, so that it can contribute to children's effective adaptation to the new educational environments, with a view to success in their development (Carvalho, 2010).

There are many fears concerning the adaptation to school, both on the part of parents and children. In order to overcome this anxiety and insecurity, it is necessary to ensure the adaptation to the new context (Portugal & Laevers, 2010), so as to develop confidence in their capacities to respond to the challenges they face.

Teachers are among the most crucial factors in building an effective articulation between the two school levels (UNICEF, 2012), that comes precisely from the differences recognized at these levels as a way of establishing a harmonious transition, respecting the evolutionary process of the child's education (Cruz, 2008).

For this transition to take place properly, a good relationship between educators and teachers of primary school is fundamental, so as to guarantee the desired articulation between the two levels (Lage, 2010), favouring children's preparation for the mentioned transition.

In this regard, Serra (2004) points out that children's emotional well-being is a decisive factor in learning and that teachers and educators can join efforts in order to find curricular articulation mechanisms that promote that well-being in children.

It is within this context that Serra (2004) defines curricular articulation, characterizing it as being a set of activities that facilitate the transition between the first two cycles, these activities being inserted, or not, in the school timetable.

In turn, Barbosa (2010) gives a definition of this concept as a sequentiality that should rule the whole educational process, since the development of capacities and skills on the part of each individual should occur in a continuous and progressive way, preparing pupils for the following cycle and thus promoting a continuity of the previous one.

In this sequence, Aniceto (2010) conceives curricular articulation from a perspective of pupils' experiences and knowledge, defining it as the establishment of theoretical and practical mechanisms capable of finding adjusted and facilitating responses concerning transition processes among teaching levels and cycles, based on the child's previous knowledge and experiences, fostering the construction of knowledge and skills.

Curricular articulation has, therefore, a very important role in a successful school adaptation process, allowing for the necessary educational continuity. According to Serra (2004), the latter refers to the way knowledge is organized in a sequenced perspective in the various educational levels, taking into account the children's development, as well as their learning capacity at each level.

Curricular articulation between early childhood education and primary school has been recommended since the beginning of the work of the Education Committee of the Council of Europe in 1969, who tried to address this subject in the conferences of the European Ministers of Education. In this sense, a questionnaire was sent to all state members, and the answers given allowed the conclusion that half of the countries recognized the existence of articulation difficulties (Nabuco & Lobo, 1997).

Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo (Lei n.º 46/86, October 14th) states that the articulation among the cycles obeys a progressive sequentiality, attributing to each cycle the function of completing, deepening and extending the previous one, in a perspective of the global unity of basic schooling (Article 8 no.2). According to this fundamental law, the articulation is promoted in order to establish a link among all education levels, from early childhood education to secondary school (Pires, 1987).

Decreto-Lei n.º 6/2001, January 18th, advocates that curriculum organization and management is subordinated to guiding principles, such as coherence and sequentiality among the three cycles of basic education and articulation with secondary school. It also advocates curriculum integration and assessment, ensuring that this one is the regulating element of teaching and learning (see Article 3 a) and b)).

The mentioned Decreto-Lei predicts the implementation of common projects, allowing for the participation of teachers and pupils from both cycles, in a joint and articulated work, which presupposes knowledge of the different educational realities, an ingredient that facilitates the transition process.

In 2007, the Directorate-General for Curriculum Innovation and Development, in articulation with the Regional Directorates for Education and the School Inspectorate, created the document entitled "Curriculum Management in Early Childhood Education - Contributions for its Implementation", which advocates the relationship between early childhood and primary education. This same document professes the articulation among the various stages of the educational process, in a progressive sequence, granting each stage the task of completing, deepening and extending the previous one, always in a context of continuity and global unity of education.

Also noteworthy is Article 43 of the Decreto-Lei n.º 75/2008, April 22nd, which states that curriculum articulation and management should promote cooperation among the teachers of the school grouping or non-grouped school, trying to adapt the curriculum to the pupils' specific needs, in a clear reference to the key role of the governing bodies and of the teachers in this process.

The analysis of these normative documents highlights a concern about curricular articulation. However, this is not always a fact, which hinders the process of adaptation and of educational continuity. Often, the transition among cycles occurs with the change of school groupings, which contributes to a break in the continuity of a work that is supposed to be systematic and articulated.

The Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education make a clear reference to this subject, arguing that the educator should promote educational continuity from the moment the child begins early childhood education up to the transition to primary school, so that this transition can be experienced in a positive way, as an opportunity to grow, to undertake new learning experiences, to know other people and contexts, to start a new cycle, so as to feel confident in their capacities to respond to the challenges they have to face (Ministério da Educação, 2016).

The relationship between the educator and the child is very important and should be established from an early age, since it is the educator's role to provide the conditions for each child to experience successful learning in the next phase, being his duty, in collaboration with parents/family and in articulation with his primary school colleagues, to facilitate the child's transition to compulsory schooling (Ministério da Educação, 2016).

Transition is often seen as an ecological concept (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), including an interconnected set of systems (home, kindergarten and school), through which children move in their early learning years. This transition implies the participation of the various people involved in the planning of strategies that facilitate curricular articulation. Being reflected upon in the school grouping, these strategies can be very varied, necessarily involving communication and joint work between educators and primary school teachers.

Fabian and Dunlop (2006) identified some key areas to be taken into account when developing joint curricular strategies: promotion of children's socio-emotional well-being; support of learning across the transition and communication.

Children's involvement is decisive for success in transition. As far as this is concerned, some initiatives should be implemented, such as talking to children about transition, familiarizing them with the primary school environment and people, discussing activities and experiencing new situations, such as visits to primary schools prior to starting this next stage, so they become aware of the different ways of learning at school (Margetts, 2002). Activities involving parents/families and privileged agents of the child's education in the process could also be promoted.

For a successful transition to take place, some aspects are considered to be crucial: the ongoing communication between school and pre-school teaching staff, curricular articulation across the phases of education, where children should be helped to learn with and from each other, flexible admission procedures (e.g., allow children to start school with a friend; schools having systems installed to help children make friends) that give children the opportunity to experience a positive start on their first day at school.

Taking into account the present framework, an empirical research was conducted on the perception of first year primary school teachers about curricular articulation between early childhood education and primary school and the way this articulation is carried out.

2. METHODS

The undertaken research used a descriptive and analytical methodology, based on the questionnaire survey. According to Fortin (2003), the descriptive study consists of simply describing a phenomenon or a concept related to a population, in order to establish the characteristics of this population or of a sample of it.

Descriptive research describes existing perceptions, attitudes, behaviours or other characteristics of a group of subjects. This type of research “asks *what is*; it reports things the way they *are*” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 281).

2.1 Sample

The research had as target population the 1st year primary teachers in the various public school groupings of the municipality of Viseu (central region of Portugal). The teachers who are teaching the 1st year were chosen because they are the ones who are most directly involved in the curricular transition.

We used a non-probability sampling technique, a convenience sample (Hill & Hill, 2005), where subjects were selected because of their accessibility and proximity to the researcher.

A total of 68 questionnaires was delivered in five school groupings of the municipality of Viseu. However, not all teachers answered them and three questionnaires were cancelled due to improper filling. The percentage of responses was 66.2%.

The sample was thus composed of 45 teachers, mostly female (96.0%), the majority being between 47 and 55 years old. It is also verified that teachers with a long professional experience were chosen, namely the ones having between 28 and 37 years of service (40.0%).

In terms of academic qualifications, teachers with a bachelor’s degree prevail (82.0%), followed by those holding a master’s degree (16.0%). Teachers’ high professional stability should be highlighted, since almost all the teachers in the sample (98.0%) belong to the School Grouping Teaching Staff, with only one teacher belonging to the Pedagogical Zone Teaching Staff.

2.2 Data collection tool

In order to collect data, the questionnaire survey was used, a tool rigorously standardized, both concerning the text of the questions and their order, which allows the comparison of the answers (Ghiglione & Matalon, 2001) and requires them to be written by the subjects (Freixo, 2011).

The questionnaire was built respecting the usual rules and taking into account the quality and organization of the questions. It contains closed and open questions, in order to collect information to meet the stated objectives.

This tool is divided into two parts: the first consists of five closed questions and aims at collecting data concerning the respondents’ personal and professional characterization; the second is made up of twelve questions (ten multiple choice questions and two open questions), which are intended to know the teachers’ perceptions about the topics under analysis.

After being developed, the pre-test was administered to five teachers who are not part of the sample, in order to verify the suitability, correctness and degree of understanding of the questions asked. The application of this preliminary version of the questionnaire revealed that there was no need to introduce any changes with a view to its improvement.

2.3 Procedure

For the implementation of the study, several steps were taken. First, the request to carry out the survey in school context was made to the Directorate-General of Education (DGE), through the platform for Monitoring School Surveys. This request was favourably answered by DGE, since, as it is stated, “submitted to analysis, it complies with the requirements”.

Next, a formal request for authorization was made to the directors of the school groupings for them to allow the application of the questionnaires in the various schools involved. In addition to this authorization, informed consent was also requested to the teachers through a declaration of voluntary participation in the research.

The questionnaires were personally delivered, in some cases in school grouping meetings, taking advantage of the fact that all teachers were present; in other cases they were delivered to every teacher in each one of the schools and collected later, within a previously established period.

2.4 Data processing and analysis

For the analysis of the quantitative data, descriptive statistics was used, which made it possible to determine the absolute frequencies and the percent relative frequencies, through the use of the SPSS program, version 21.

The qualitative data concerning the open questions were subjected to content analysis, following the criteria proposed by Bardin (2015). It is a technique of communication analysis in order to obtain, by systematic and objective procedures for

describing the content of messages, indicators (quantitative or otherwise) that allow the inference of knowledge regarding the conditions of production (inferred variables) of these messages.

The analysis carried out made it possible to gather the data, categorizing them in such a way as to make the analysis of the answers and their interpretation more objective.

3. RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Teachers show a very positive perception regarding the relevance of curricular articulation between early childhood education and primary school. The percentage of teachers who consider it very relevant (58.0%), or totally relevant (27.0%) is worth mentioning. Only two teachers do not attribute any relevance to it (see Table 1).

These results indicate that the great majority of teachers is aware of the importance of curricular articulation between the two educational contexts, meeting the conclusions that Teixeira and Cardoso (2013) obtained in a similar study and, in addition, they also show that most teachers of primary school had the concern of including curricular articulation in the Class Curricular Project. This result is very positive because, as Carvalho (2010) claims, curricular articulation is assumed as facilitator of the transitions and should be ensured so that it can contribute to the educational success of all children.

Table 1 – Relevance of curricular articulation between early childhood education and primary school

Degree of relevance	N	%
Irrelevant	1	2.0
Little relevant	1	2.0
Relevant	5	11.0
Very relevant	26	58.0
Totally relevant	12	27.0
Total	45	100.0

Teachers refer several justifying reasons for the relevance of curricular articulation: it facilitates children's transition from early childhood education to primary school (twelve mentions); it contributes to a better progression of learning/educational continuity and promotes better knowledge of the child as an active agent of the teaching process (10 mentions each). Other reasons mentioned are related to the exchange of knowledge about pupils' previous course concerning their competences and to the provision of prerequisites, both with 3 mentions each, as well as to the appreciation of pupils' knowledge and experiences and also of the syllabuses and guidelines of each of the levels, both with two mentions each (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Justifying reasons for the relevance of curricular articulation

Justifying reasons	N.º of answers
It facilitates children's transition from early childhood education to primary school	12
It promotes the exchange of knowledge about pupils' previous course concerning their competences	3
It promotes better knowledge of the child as an active agent of the teaching process	10
It develops adequate skills for knowing how to behave in primary school	1
It allows for advantages in terms of language skills and mathematics when beginning primary school	1
It improves the progression of learning/educational continuity	10
It allows for a better knowledge of syllabuses and guidelines	2
It improves the appreciation of pupils' knowledge and experiences	2
It provides pupils with prerequisites	3
It develops pupils' phonological awareness	1
It checks behaviours	1
It creates the conditions for pupils' educational success	1
Total	47

Teachers were asked to indicate, among the definitions of curricular articulation presented, the one that best corresponded to their conception. As shown in Table 3, more than one-third of teachers (35.0%) share the opinion that curricular articulation consists of establishing theoretical and practical mechanisms, capable of finding adequate and facilitating responses for transition processes among different levels and cycles based on the child's previous knowledge and experiences, promoting the construction of knowledge and skills (Aniceto, 2010).

It is also expressive the percentage of teachers (29.0%) who perceive curricular articulation as the sequentiality that should rule the whole educational process, since the development of capacities and skills on the part of each individual should occur in a continuous and progressive way (Barbosa, 2010).

It is still worth mentioning the percentage of teachers (27.0%) who consider curricular articulation as all the activities promoted by the school with the purpose of facilitating the transition between early childhood education and primary school, whether they are activities implemented within school hours or not, experienced inside and outside the school, with or without pupils' participation (Serra, 2004).

These results reveal that the participants have a clear idea of what effective curricular articulation should be. It means to transit, to enter a new stage, to change, to adapt to new realities, to rethink practices and habits (Barbosa, 2010), so it presupposes a collaborative and systematic work among the various people involved, aiming at the child's harmonious development and well-being.

Table 1 – Curricular articulation conceptions

Definitions of curricular articulation	N.º	%
1- An interconnection of knowledge from different fields in order to facilitate the acquisition of a global knowledge by the pupil.	4	9.0
2 – All the activities promoted by the school with the purpose of facilitating the transition between early childhood education and primary school, whether they are activities implemented within school hours or not, experienced inside and outside the school, with or without pupils' participation.	12	27.0
3 – Establishment of theoretical and practical mechanisms, capable of finding adequate and facilitating responses for transition processes among different levels and cycles based on the child's previous knowledge and experiences, promoting the construction of knowledge and skills.	16	35.0
4 – Sequentiality that should rule the whole educational process, since the development of capacities and skills on the part of each individual should occur in a continuous and progressive way.	13	29.0
Total	45	100.0

We tried to know if teachers of primary school consult the pupils' individual processes when teaching the 1st year. The answer was affirmative for more than two thirds of the respondents (89.0%), while a small part of them (11.0%) refers not to do so. This is contrary to the recommendations of the Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education, since, according to them, each child's developed processes and learning progresses should be communicated, while respecting due ethical principles (Ministério da Educação, 2016).

In this follow-up, teachers were asked to indicate three aspects of the pupils' profile they favour when consulting pupils' individual processes. Thus, the most mentioned aspects were: the ability to cooperate and accept coexistence rules (28.0%), general learning (20.0%), the sense of autonomy (17.0%), communication skills (13.0%) and mother tongue acquisition (11.0%) (see Table 4).

These data show that teachers are most focused on children's skills linked to citizenship, to the ability to know how to behave (cooperate, accept coexistence rules, interact) and to communicate concerning specific learning, namely the mother tongue or mathematics.

This means that teachers are aware of the specificity of early childhood education, so they do not expect it to anticipate the kind of learning adequate to primary school, but rather to develop the necessary skills for children's educational success when entering compulsory education.

Table 4 – Aspects of pupils' profile that were favoured when consulting individual processes

Pupils' favoured aspects	N	%
General learning	24	20.0
Mother tongue acquisition	13	11.0
Mathematics learning	5	4.0
Ability to adapt to changes	9	7.0
Communication skills	15	13.0
Sense of autonomy	20	17.0
Citizenship (the ability to cooperate and accept coexistence rules)	34	28.0
Total	120	100.0

It was also important to realise, through the answers to an open question, which are the main activities teachers develop concerning curricular articulation (see Table 5). Content analysis revealed the predominance of the following categories: i) pedagogical activities (29), highlighting the planning and implementation of joint activities/projects with early childhood education (8), the exploration of short stories of primary school pupils with children attending early childhood education (7), the implementation of artistic expression activities within the Programme of Aesthetic and Artistic Education (PEEA) (4) and of activities concerning the study of physical and social environment – experimental activities (2); ii) projects (27), highlighting the development of reading and writing projects (15), or any others involving both teaching levels (thematic fairs, pedagogical vegetable garden, school grouping newspaper); iii) celebration of thematic days and end-of-term parties (21).

Table 5 – Main activities developed concerning the implementation of curricular articulation

Categories	Main activities	N.º of answers
Celebrations/parties	Celebration of thematic days and end-of-term parties/parties included in the Activities Plan	21
Projects	Development of reading and writing projects	15
	"Fruit Heroes" project - final work divulged to early childhood education children	2
	Thematic fairs	2
	Planning and implementation of projects together with early childhood education	5
	Pedagogical vegetable garden	2
	School grouping newspaper	1
Subtotal		27
Pedagogical activities	Mathematics activities/progressive and regressive count of numbers	2
	Exploration of short stories with children attending early childhood education	7
	Activities concerning the study of physical and social environment – experimental activities	2
	Artistic expression activities within PEEA	4
	Planning and implementation of joint activities involving primary school pupils and children attending early childhood education	8
	Personal and social training activities	1
	Multidisciplinary activities	2
	Sport activities/motricity/functioning of the playground with all the children/pupils	3
Subtotal		29
Others	Final year nursery school children's visit to primary school, guided by the primary school pupils	2
	Study visits	3
Total		82

These results show that teachers carry out an active curricular articulation, meeting Bravo's belief (2010) when he states that true curricular articulation depends on the educator and the teacher of primary school developing common educational projects, without being restricted to meetings or episodic activities. This way, still in agreement with Bravo (2010), this collaborative work in terms of the construction and development of common educational projects requires the creation of physical spaces and sharing moments, of exchange and joint planning, always having as reference the age group of the children and of the groups involved.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the biggest challenges perceived by children is the beginning of primary school. This is an important transition, involving changes at different levels: relationships, environment, space, time and learning contexts. All this may be exciting as a new experience, but it may also cause apprehension and fear of the unknown, bringing about feelings of confusion and anxiety (Fabian & Dunlop, 2006).

Curricular articulation, as advocated by many authors, facilitates children's transition from one teaching level to the other, favouring better progression of learning/educational continuity and better knowledge of the child as an active agent of the teaching process.

Teachers should value curricular articulation and take it into account in their teaching practices, because, as Aniceto (2010) points out, when articulating these two teaching levels we are increasing the credibility of one of them, overcoming the idea that still persists today about nursery school being a space for the mere occupation of children and providing the following teaching level with an improvement concerning the internal management of schools and the curricula, so as to ensure continuity between the two of them.

According to the results of the present study, the great majority of the surveyed teachers consider curricular articulation relevant, mostly because it facilitates children's transition from early childhood education to primary school, improves the progression of learning/educational continuity and promotes better knowledge of the child as an active agent of the teaching/learning process.

Furthermore, many primary school teachers believe that curricular articulation consists of establishing theoretical and practical mechanisms, capable of finding adequate and facilitating responses for transition processes across different levels and cycles based on the child's previous knowledge and experiences, this way promoting the construction of knowledge and skills (Aniceto, 2010). These data lead us to conclude that primary school teachers are aware of the meaning and the importance of curricular articulation within the formative process.

Most of them also refer that they consult pupils' individual processes when teaching the first year, checking aspects such as children's ability to cooperate and accept coexistence roles, sense of autonomy, communication skills, or general learning level. This is a good indicator, because adjustment to school depends to a great extent on the child owning the required social, behavioural and academic skills to answer to the demands of the new environment and to work independently (Margetts, 2002).

Having asked teachers to enunciate three curricular articulation activities they had carried out, the answers were quite diverse, in line with the official recommendations. However, the most frequent ones are related to the accomplishment of pedagogical activities and joint projects, namely related to the exploration of short stories, to artistic expression, the study of physical and social environment, or mathematics, as well as to the organization of parties/celebrations (Christmas party, Carnival parades, party at the beginning and end of the school year, among others). Other activities were less mentioned, such as games, study visits, thematic fairs, etc.

As far as the implementation of common projects is concerned, the Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education (Ministério da Educação, 2016) state that these can be a means of collaboration and of mutual knowledge, which can facilitate children's transition from one level to the other. It will be ideal for educators and teachers to construct and develop a systematic and articulated work that is not only restricted to parties and joint celebrations, as curricular articulation demands continued coexistence and collaboration.

Taking into account the teachers' perspective, it can be affirmed that the curricular articulation already practised is active, demonstrating a commitment of resources and wills. Furthermore, it should still be said that curricular articulation between these two levels should continue to be a primary school teachers' concern, so that it is not just a moment in time, but represents the concretization of the desired educational continuity.

It is therefore imperative that educators and teachers of primary school develop activities that foster curricular articulation, considering them as a practice of curricular management carried out among the different levels of education and based on effective collaborative work and reflection practices, which consubstantiates the hypothesis of this being an important topic to bet on when concerning educators and teachers' initial and in-service training.

As a suggestion for future studies, the deepening of this subject is proposed through the analysis of several documents (summaries, annual plan of activities, planning of joint projects, evaluation reports, etc.) and the observation of teachers' effective practices, which will allow to confront and complement the data now evidenced concerning teachers' favourable perception on this topic.

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