



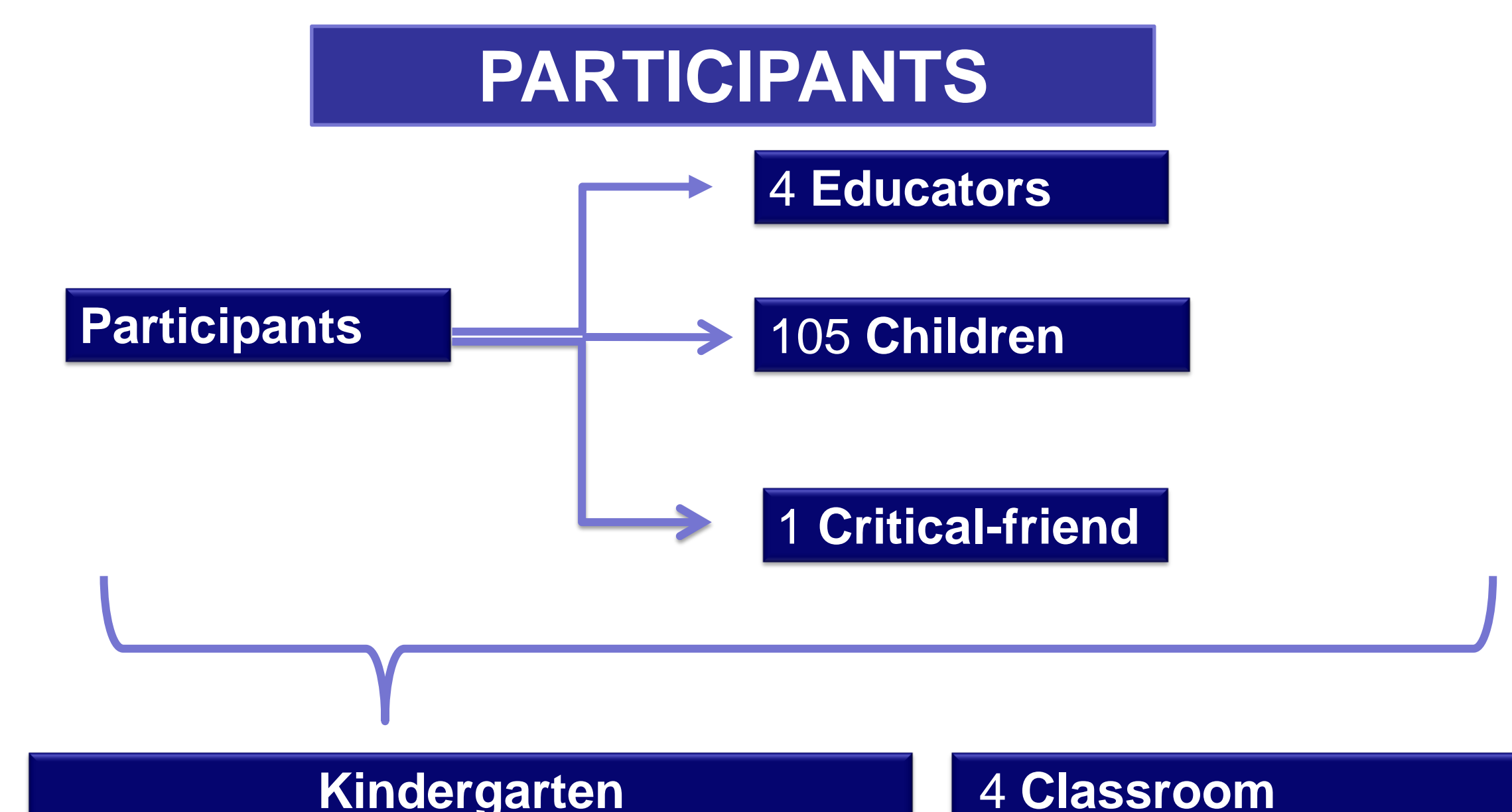
LEARNING TO LISTEN AND GIVE VOICE TO CHILDREN

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THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

This study focuses on a professional development theory that developed through context based teacher education (Oliveira-Formosinho and Formosinho, 2001, 2008), sustaining an ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). It relates to EEL Project (Pascal & Bertram, 1999) and to DQP (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2002, 2009), as a developmental evaluative strategy which supports the monitorization of change processes both at the levels of teacher and children learning.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of the study lies in the development of a praxis that claims that the child as an individual with competence and rights to participate. It focuses on the following questions: What training strategies support educational transformation for the construction of children participation and voice? How to build, on a daily basis, a pedagogical “grammar” which encourages the participation of children in their own learning and growth?

METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES

The study takes the form of action research (Máximo-Esteves, 2008) in which all those involved can contribute both to the thinking that informs research and practice and to connected knowledge development.

Two techniques of observation used to measure change are:

1. The Child Involvement Scale (Leavers, 1994)

This is an observation method which aims to measure the level of a child’s involvement in an activity. It is child focused and attempts to measure the process of learning rather than concentrating on outcomes.

2. The Adult Engagement Scale

Interactions between the practitioner and the child are the important factor in the effectiveness of the learning experience (Oliveira-Formosinho, 2004). The observation measures three aspects of the adult’s behavior which affect the child’s learning – sensitivity, stimulation and autonomy. (Laevers, 1994)

MAIN FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The involvement of child improves +0.5 (fig. 1) with the transformation of adult-child interaction, classroom layout and materials, the daily routine and projects implementation that allow freedom, agency and cooperation. Results are parallel to previous studies conducted by Formosinho (2001, 2002, 2009).

The commitment of educators rebuilds itself with the stimulate presence of the critical friend and by the commitment to pedagogical learning.

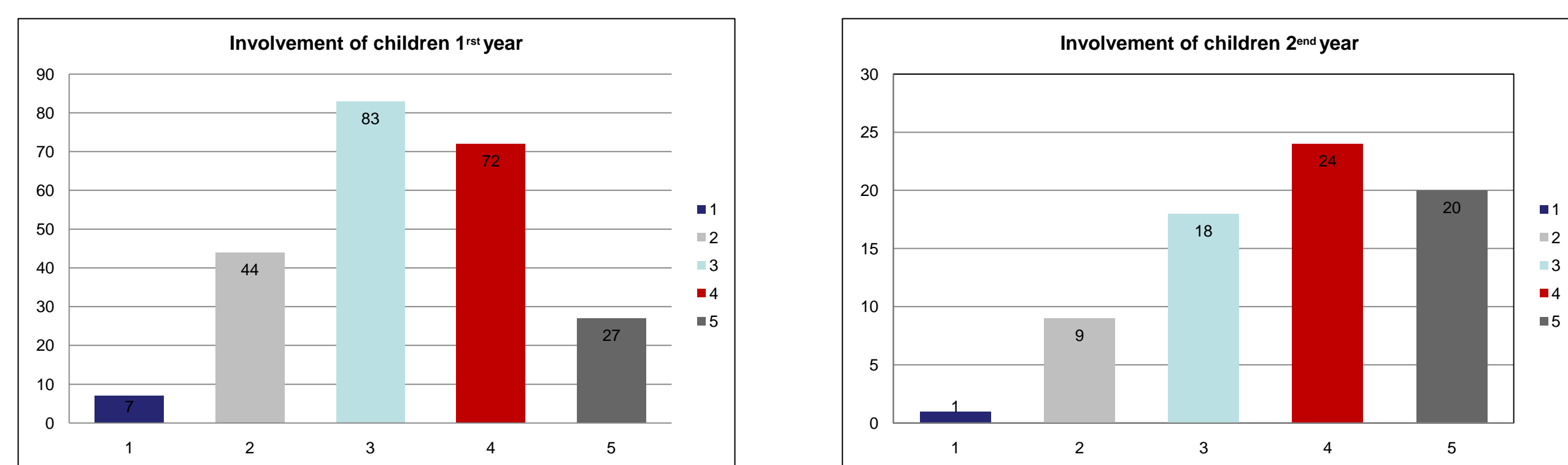


Fig. 1 - Comparison of the Child Involvement Scale before and after intervention

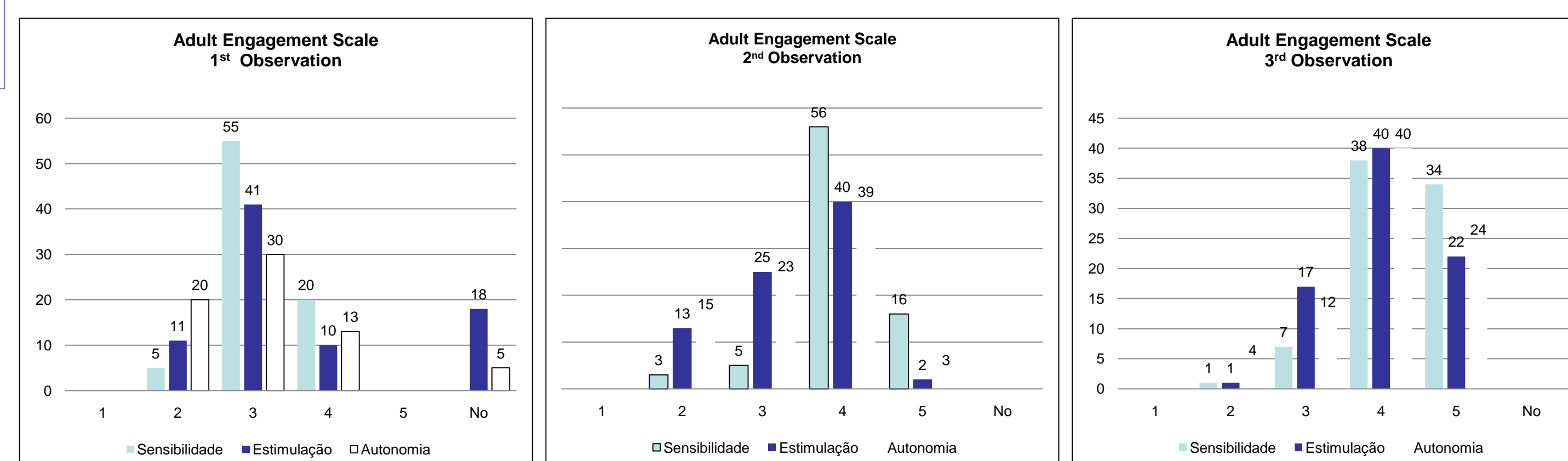


Fig. 2 – Comparison the Adult Engagement Scale before and after intervention

The study shows that staff is more open to suggest and discuss ideas, formally and informally. This has had a positive impact on provision and on the children's learning. Although the pulse of each room reveals individual looks, rhythms, and modes of action, the concerns of four teachers converge on the need to make sense of some pedagogical dimensions (Oliveira-Formosinho, 1998, 2007) such as space, time and child's interests and intentionality. Step by step we need to better understand the educational context, to encourage educators in the learning of childhood pedagogical models. This requires support in an atmosphere of openness and empathy to creates opportunities for professional development.

