

Veronika Timpe-Laughlin & Shinye Lee
Educational Testing Service
(Contact at vlaughlin@ets.org)

THE ISSUE



Continuity between primary and secondary school has been a recurring challenge since the very first early foreign language programs were launched (Johnstone, 2009; Nikolov, 2009)

Previous literature has explored the transition in other European countries (e.g., Courtney, 2017; Kolb, 2011; Pfenninger & Singleton, 2017)

But

Little is known about the transition from learning English language learning (ELL) in primary school to ELL in secondary school in

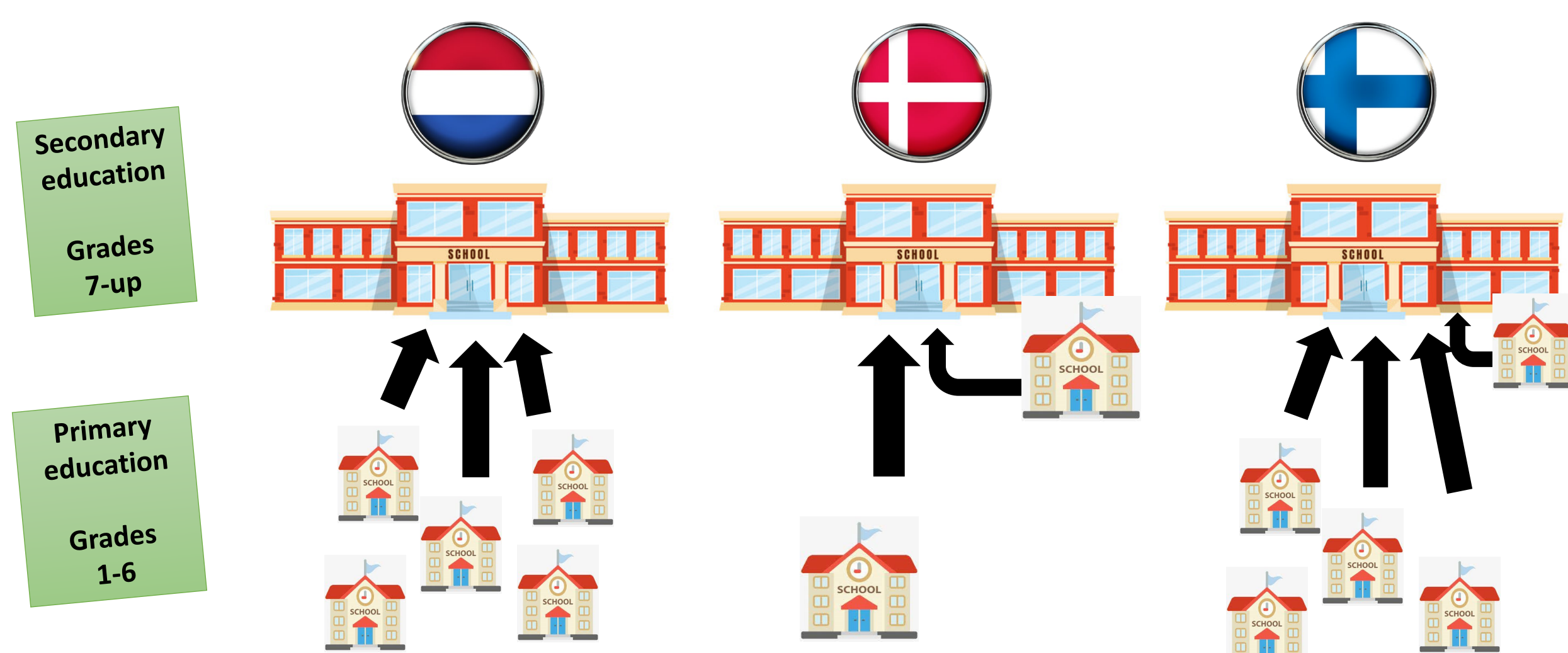


RESEARCH QUESTION



1. What are the teachers' perceptions relative to the transition from English language learning (ELL) in primary school to ELL in secondary school across the three countries?
2. How do teachers cope with potential challenges related to the transition when teaching English in the first year of secondary school?

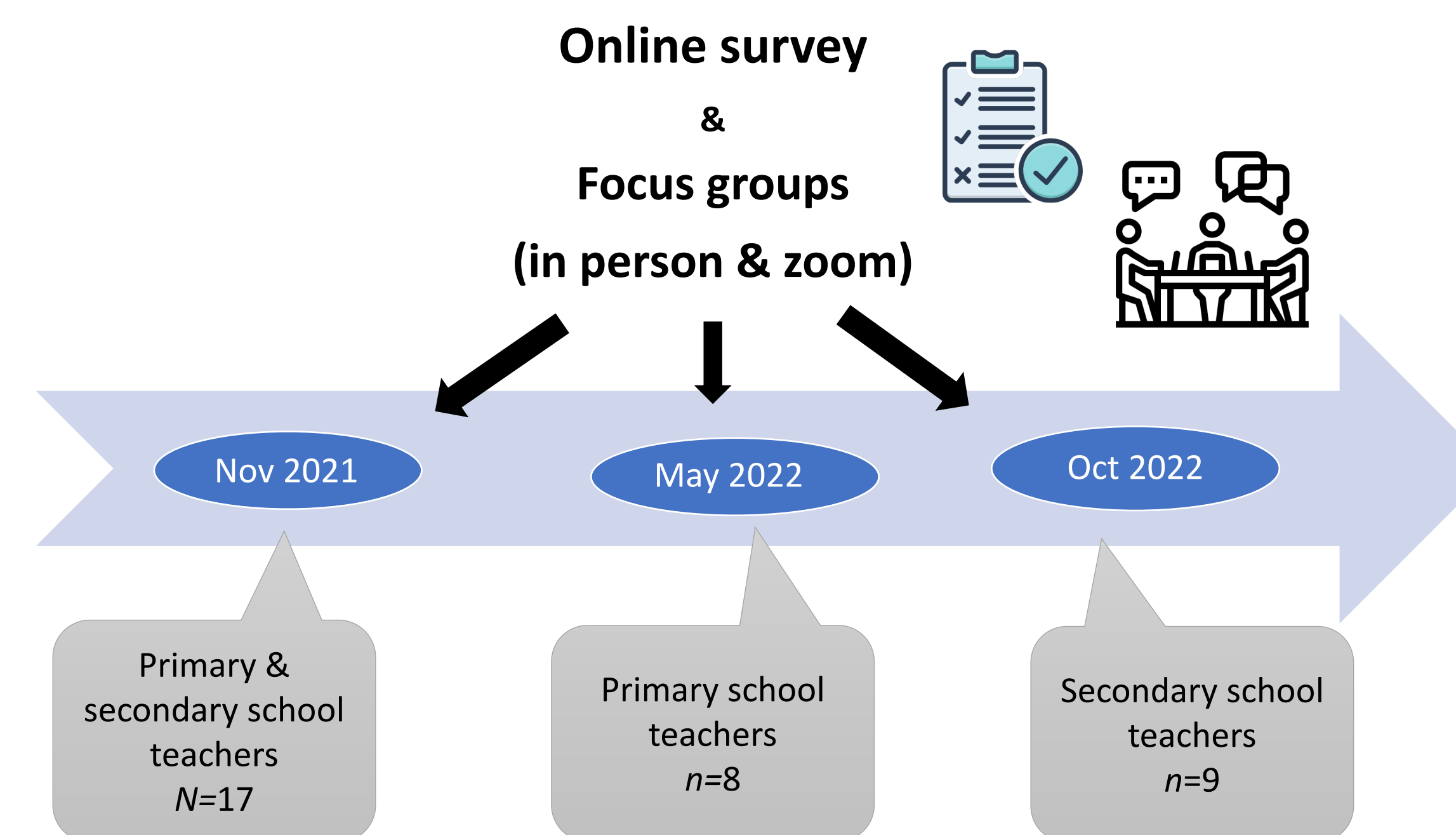
THE CONTEXTS



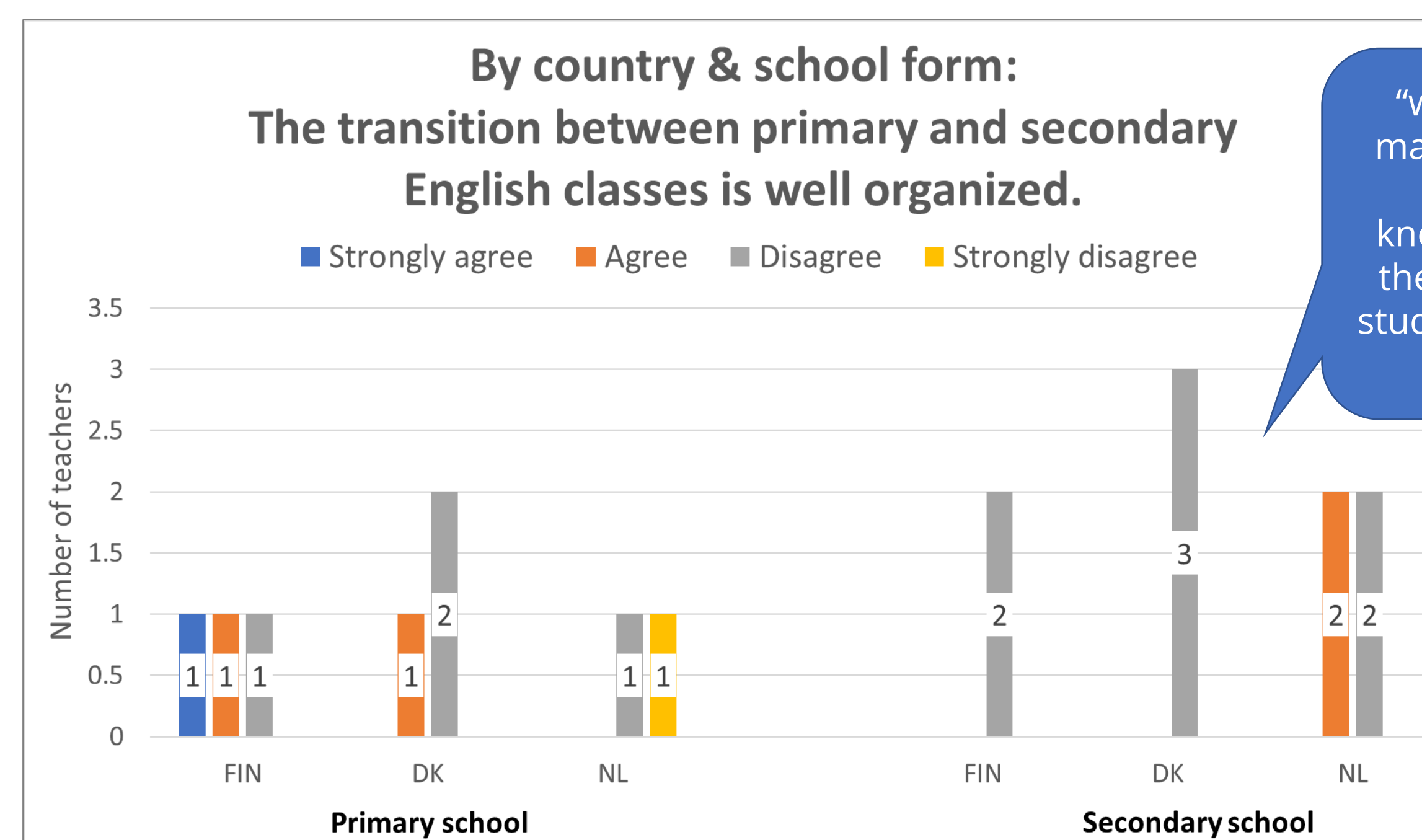
PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

| | All | Primary school | Secondary school |
|---|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| N | 17 | 8 | 9 |
| Country | | | |
| NL | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| DK | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| FIN | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Age | | | |
| Mean | 38.25 | 34.25 | 43 |
| Range | 24-54 years | 24-47 years | 29-54 years |
| Number of years teaching English | | | |
| Mean (SD) | 10.24 | 6.63 | 13.44 |
| Range | 1-25 years | 1-14 years | 3-25 years |
| Education (highest degree) | | | |
| Bachelor | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Master | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| PhD | 1 | 0 | 1 |

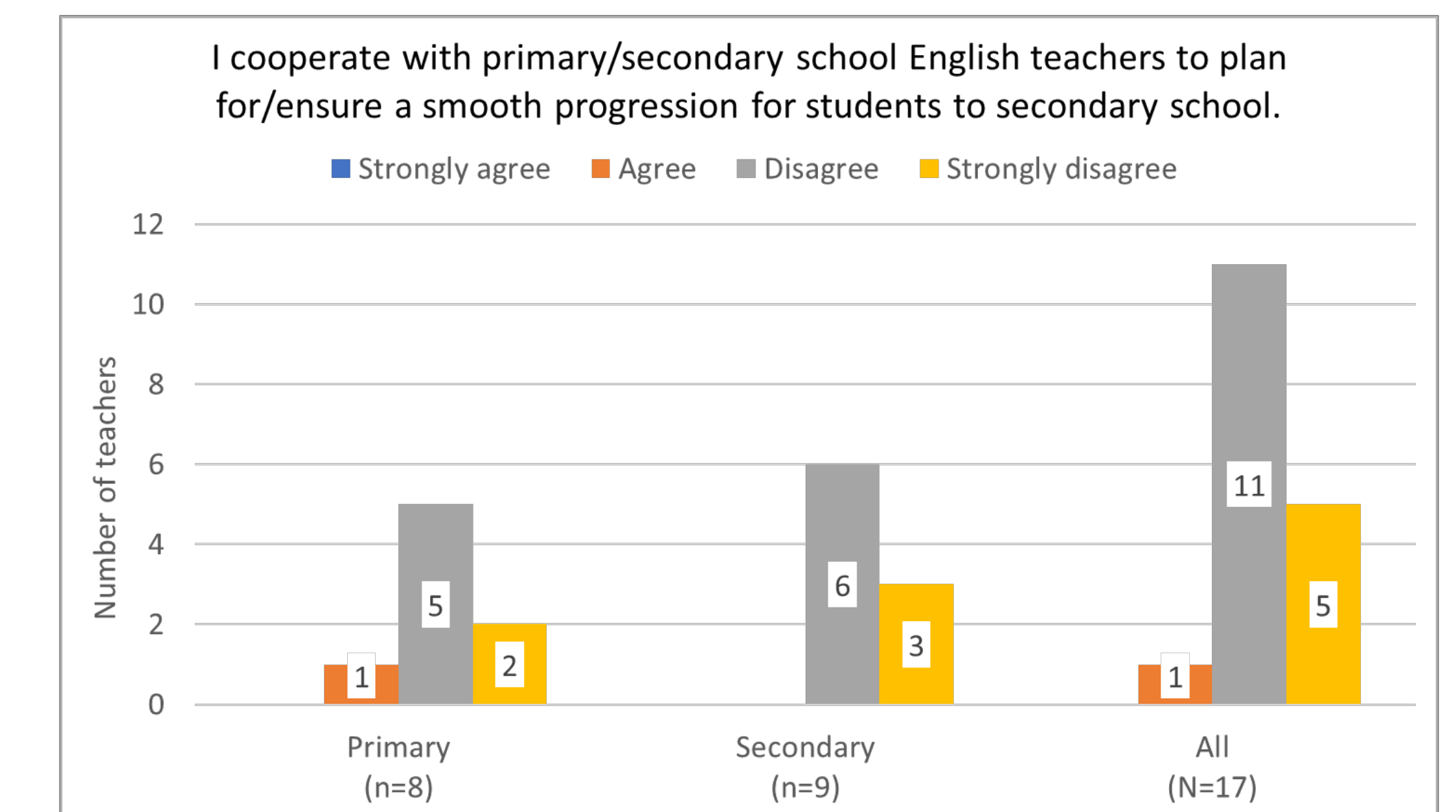
DATA COLLECTION



THE FINDINGS



THE FINDINGS



I give extra instruction to students who have a weaker profile [...]. I stimulate reading in own levels instead of classroom-based reading. There is also an extra possibility for students to take on a flex hour in which they get more help. --NL

| Reported challenges in 7th grade ELT | n |
|---|---|
| Diverse English skills | 9 |
| Differentiation | 4 |
| Low confidence in speaking English | 3 |
| Motivational issues | 3 |
| Lack of reading skills | 2 |
| Students not used to teaching and learning approaches | 2 |
| Concentration | 1 |

| Approaches to dealing with challenges in 7th grade ELT | n |
|--|---|
| Getting to know learners | 9 |
| Safe, comfortable environment | 4 |
| Introducing students to methods used in secondary school | 3 |
| Using the TOEFL YSS and other assessments | 3 |
| Clean slate approach | 3 |
| Using differentiating activities | 2 |
| Confidence building | 2 |

“I start from scratch, and I try to meet them on their level, so they don't get the feeling of begin “behind the class”. --DK

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

- Issues around transition that we learned about from teachers included:
 - Lack of communication/collaboration
 - Limited information passed on to 7th grade ELT teachers
 - Limited understanding of the curriculum and approaches to teaching English in the adjacent school form
- But: Teachers all deal with it on a yearly basis so they have **untapped expertise** that can be used to establish a systematic communication between primary and secondary school English teachers, help inform joint curriculum planning, and offer best practices examples and strategies.