



Just Like Any Student: Facilitating Factors for the Transition from International Connection Classes to Dutch Secondary Education

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Preface

Growing up in a safe environment in the Netherlands, it is easy to overlook that not everyone enjoys that same safety, nor access to opportunity. In the search for a thesis topic, I explored topics concerning education in developing countries. Due to COVID-19, opportunities for research in developing countries were limited, and I scaled down to more local topics still concerning equality of education. By reading up on several reports, newcomer education in the Netherlands became my topic of choice. I am fascinated by the resilience the young newcomers display in getting used to a new education system, and the gratefulness with which they talk of the opportunities here. It made me appreciate that no opportunities for growth should be taken for granted. Instead, they should be actively fostered and fought for. The opportunities that I have enjoyed should be available for anyone that wishes to pursue them.

This thesis was supervised by Dr. Josje van der Linden, and I wish to thank her for her active involvement and feedback. Moreover, this research was made possible due to the help and involvement of ISK-school staff and former students. Last, the support from my friends and family served as a foundation for creating this thesis.

Isabel Berman

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Abstract

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all children have a right to education. In the Netherlands, young newcomers from the age of twelve will first enter International Connection Classes (*Internationale Schakelklas*; ISK) to learn Dutch and get acquainted with the Dutch education system. Depending on the learning route, afterwards they transfer to a Dutch secondary school. This transition offers a set of challenges such as getting used to a new school while also getting used to a new host country. This phenomenological study aimed to investigate which factors could facilitate the transition for young newcomers. The focus on facilitating factors appreciated young newcomers' autonomy and resilience. To investigate facilitating factors a document review was conducted, four ($n = 4$) ISK-experts were interviewed, and seven ($n = 7$) former ISK-students were interviewed. Documents rarely focused on facilitating factors, whereas ISK-experts emphasized that the transition often went well. Former ISK-students emphasized that the transition was challenging, but turned out fine. The conclusion of the research was that it is emphasized that young newcomers wish to be 'just' a student, but they are not 'just' a student. They need support with getting used to the new school. Minimal measures are recommended in order to appreciate young newcomers' needs to not stand out, but nevertheless have support available.

Keywords: ISK, Young newcomers, Newcomer education, Social justice.

Samenvatting

Alle kinderen in Nederland hebben het recht op onderwijs. Vanaf 12 jaar gaan nieuwkomers in Nederland naar de Internationale Schakelklas (ISK). Hier krijgen ze intensieve Nederlandse taallessen, en worden ze voorbereid op het Nederlandse schoolsysteem. Afhankelijk van de leerlijn gaan ISK-leerlingen daarna naar de middelbare school. Deze overgang is lastig voor de leerlingen omdat ze zowel aan een nieuwe school aan het wennen zijn, als aan het ontvangende land. Dit fenomenologisch onderzoek onderzoekt welke factoren deze overgang makkelijker zouden maken. De focus op faciliterende factoren erkent de veerkracht en autonomie van jonge nieuwkomers. Om de overgang beter te begrijpen en sterke punten en valkuilen te onderzoeken is een literatuuronderzoek gedaan, en in aanvulling daarop werden vier ($n = 4$) ISK-experts geïnterviewd. Om dieper in te gaan op de ervaring van ISK-leerlingen zijn zeven ($n = 7$) oud ISK-leerlingen geïnterviewd. De literatuur ging niet diep in op de sterke punten van de huidige procedure, terwijl ISK-experts benadrukten dat de overgang vaak wél goed ging, maar dat de studenten eveneens ondersteuning nodig hebben. Oud ISK-leerlingen benadrukten dat de overgang lastig was, maar dat het uiteindelijk goed kwam. De conclusie van dit onderzoek is dat alhoewel jonge nieuwkomers graag zoals iedere andere leerling zouden willen zijn, ze dat niet zijn. Er is extra ondersteuning nodig om deze overgang makkelijker te maken. Om de behoeftes van jonge nieuwkomers in acht te nemen, worden kleine maatregelen aanbevolen. Dit zorgt ervoor dat ze niet opvallen als ‘anders’, maar dat ondersteuning desalniettemin beschikbaar is.

Trefwoorden: ISK, Jonge nieuwkomers, Nieuwkomer onderwijs, Sociale rechtvaardigheid.

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Introduction

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all children in the Netherlands, including newcomers, have the right to education and are obliged to go to school (United Nations, 1989). The term ‘newcomer’ entails anyone that was not born in the Netherlands but moved there indefinitely. Young newcomers face issues concerning acculturation, and, like any teenager, development. They search for a new identity in the host culture, while also facing the psychosocial challenges that come with being a teenager (Titzmann & Lee, 2018; Ward et al., 2001).

School serves as a protective space against the challenges faced in relation to acculturation and development. For example, school can offer guidance in getting to know the new country (Looman, 2016). According to the Capability Approach (CA), everyone should be provided with the opportunity to realize their capabilities. Capabilities refer to the opportunities to realize one’s valued way of being and doing (Sen, 1999, 2009). Although schooling can serve as a protective space for facing challenges, Unterhalter (2003) explained that it can also contribute to capability deprivation. For example, it can reproduce inequalities by underestimating the abilities of newcomer students. Therewith, the equality in opportunity to realize one’s full potential is impeded. School can serve as a protective environment providing structure and opportunity for newcomers. Instead, it might reproduce inequalities by not offering the same opportunities to newcomers to fulfill their potential compared to Dutch students.

In the Netherlands, newcomers between the age of 12 and 18 start at International Connection Classes (*Internationale Schakelklas*; ISK). The ISK is for all children entering the Netherlands who do not command Dutch at a sufficient level to proceed to other education. In the ISK, newcomer children follow intensive Dutch classes and other subjects that are relevant for their follow-up education. Moreover, the ISK aids with integration into Dutch society (Thomas, 2016). After finishing the ISK, students transfer to regular Dutch education which can either be Vocational Schools (MBO), or a secondary education track ranging from ‘lower’ practical (*vmbo*) to ‘higher’ theoretical levels (*vwo*), or they start working. The transfer is based on their age, competencies, and fluency in the Dutch language (Le Pichon et al., 2016).

There has been a range of criticism on the ISK and the transition to follow-up education. The intensive Dutch lessons abruptly halt after the transfer, thus leaving the responsibility and challenges of keeping up with the Dutch language with the students

themselves (Onderwijsraad, 2017). The lack of guidance with full comprehension of the new language together with exposure to a new social context as an insecure teenager could lead to impeded realization of capabilities. More specifically, as other factors relating to development and acculturation call for more attention during this transition, capability deprivation could arise due to a lack of mental space (Titzmann & Lee, 2018; Unterhalter, 2003). In addition, more than one in three ISK-students are put on levels within Dutch secondary education that do not suit their cognitive capacities, due to their levels of Dutch not being sufficient (VO-raad, 2016). This is another example of capability deprivation (Unterhalter, 2003). It is important to investigate factors that help newcomers in the transition from ISK-schools to secondary education, in order to provide them the opportunity to fulfill their capabilities.

The aforementioned represents the set of challenges faced in newcomer education, and the transition to a Dutch secondary school. Past research has mainly focused on transitions to Vocational Schools (MBO), but not so much on the transition to secondary education, though it offers its own challenges. In addition, the voice of the young newcomers themselves has not often been included in the research on this transition. As well as stating the right to education for all, the CRC emphasizes the importance of hearing the voice of the youth themselves (United Nations, 1989). Listening to the youth and their experiences with the existing system instead of only reviewing the process from an expert's point of view deepens insight into the experience. Newcomer youth are affected directly by the existing procedure for the transition from ISK to secondary education, therefore, it is important to include them in the process of improving it. Improving this transition can promote opportunity for newcomers to fulfill their capabilities (Sen, 1999, 2009). Past research has primarily outlined fallacies in the current transition. A focus on facilitating factors appreciates the young newcomers' resilience. Therefore, the present study aims at exploring facilitating factors for the transition from the ISK to Dutch secondary education. The following questions will be examined:

What are facilitating factors for the transition of newcomers from International Connection Classes (ISK) to Dutch secondary education?

- I. What do experts in the field, and documents identify as fallacies and strong points of the existing procedure for transitioning from the ISK to Dutch secondary education?
- II. How did former ISK-students experience this transition in terms of facilitating and thwarting factors?

Theoretical Background

The Young Newcomers

Young newcomers face various challenges after arrival in their host country. They face stressors such as the loss of their homeland, family, friends, and material possessions, in addition to challenges concerning acculturation (Crooks et al., 2020; Kirmayer et al., 2011; Van Willigen, 2009). Acculturation is defined as an ongoing process of adaptation when individuals of diverse cultural groups come into contact, and as a result changes in either host or origin culture occur (Redfield et al., 1936). Challenges arising from acculturation can be learning a new language or acquiring new appropriate social roles within the host culture (Titzmann & Lee, 2018). Young newcomers also face stressors concerning development. As teenagers, peer relationships and autonomy grow increasingly more important, and internal processes such as growing self-awareness, insecurity and identity formation thread forward (Titzmann & Lee, 2018). Developmental and acculturation challenges can meet in identity formation. Newcomers can feel like they lost part of their identity due to the adjustments in the migration period (Meda, 2017). They often struggle with finding a balance between maintaining their own cultural traditions, while adopting new ones in the host culture, and creating a blend of cultures in the process (Rousseau et al., 2004).

These challenges can amount to significant distress. Nevertheless, newcomers are resilient (e.g., Sleijpen et al., 2017). In other words, they can adapt well despite the adverse circumstances that they faced or the challenges they are currently facing (Southwick et al., 2015). Their environment can play a significant role in providing helpful resources (Ungar, 2011). A family acts as a consistent and comfortable support system where one can feel a connection to their ethnic identity (Burgos et al., 2017). At school, newcomers get the opportunity to practice their autonomy, and learn more about the host culture which could aid in their identity formation (Looman, 2016; Van Willigen, 2009). Schools can have a redistributive effect as they could provide extra resources for young newcomers to develop themselves just as their native peers, despite the challenges.

Functions of Education and the Capability Approach

Biesta (2009) proposed three interrelated functions of education, namely, qualification, socialization, and subjectification (see Figure 1). He argues that the primary focus is on qualification, in other words, preparing for future jobs. Socialization and subjectification are taken for granted in this process. Socialization refers to the ways in which we become

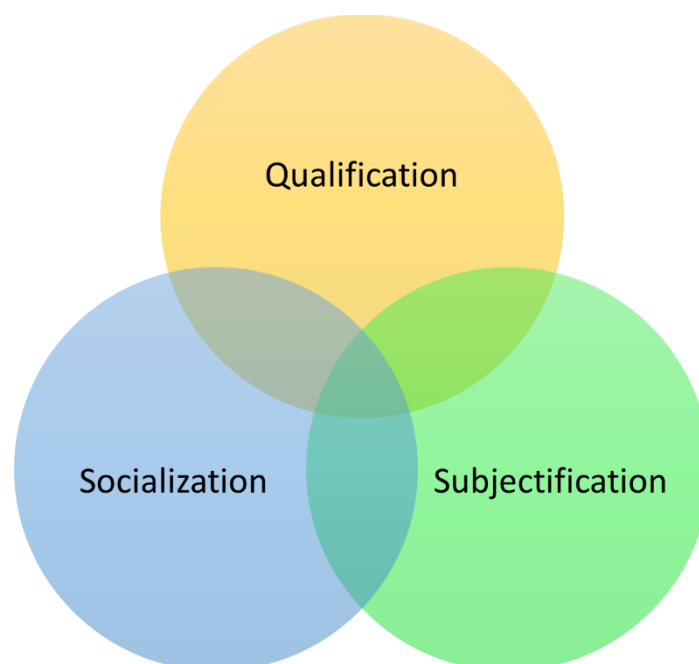
'members' of a society. In other words, the road to participation. Subjectification refers to the development of the individual in the student. For educational purposes, Biesta (2009) argues that we must look beyond mere qualification, and seek to fulfill all functions independent, and interdependent of each other (see Figure 1).

It is where these three functions meet that education could ensure equality of outcomes next to equality of opportunity (Biesta, 2009). Education should focus on preparing pupils for future jobs, preparing them for participation in society, and on guiding them in finding their valued ways of participation (Biesta, 2009). For newcomers, qualification requires teaching skills to be able to participate in the labor market (Dagevos et al., 2018). Socialization requires developing skills to be able to integrate in the host society (Pels, 2012). Further, integration in society affects newcomers' identity formation (Meda, 2017). Neglecting one of the educational functions could impede a newcomer's opportunity for participation in the new host society. Therefore, it is key to consider these functions interdependently. Filling in these functions for newcomers could entail providing additional resources.

The Capability Approach (CA) emphasizes the need for additional resources for minority groups. According to Sen's CA (1999, 2009), capabilities are the opportunities for individuals to develop their valued 'functionings'. In the context of the CA, functionings are the desired beings and doings of a person. Instead of measuring an individual's quality of life

Figure 1

Three Functions of Education (Biesta, 2009)



by economic wealth and income, the CA assesses it by agency. Agency is explained as the opportunity to bring about the change that is valued. Sen's agency seems to relate to Biesta's function of socialization and subjectification. Education should provide space for students to find their valued way of becoming a member of that society (Biesta, 2009). The CA takes it one step further, and emphasized that it is not merely about fulfilling each functioning, but about everyone getting the opportunity to fulfill their functioning, and therewith bringing about their valued change. Applying this to the concept of education, the CA draws a similar conclusion as Biesta (2009), namely, the idea is not that students learn to master outcomes such as literacy or basic knowledge on a subject (i.e., qualification), but that the environment provides opportunity for empowerment (i.e., socialization), and for an individual to choose which functioning to pursue (i.e., subjectification). Education is said to be the building stone for human development freedom (Sen, 1999, 2009). Inequality, then, would amount to a lack of, or constrained agency (Walker, 2006).

Functionings depend on circumstances. For example, they can be enhanced by new policies on equality. Similarly, they can be impeded by institutionalized inequalities. This can lead to capability deprivation (Unterhalter, 2003). To attain a functioning, resources need to be converted, but inequalities lead to diminished capacities to convert (Hart, 2012; Walker, 2006). Biesta (2009) also emphasizes that due to structural inequalities, equality of opportunity does not necessarily translate to equality of outcomes. More specifically, newcomers might be given resources (i.e., equality of opportunity), but might be unable to convert these (i.e., equality of outcomes). Comparably, individuals adapt their choice of functionings to their external circumstances (Nussbaum, 2000). It is possible that newcomers internalize the lower educational expectations for stereotype immigrants, and therewith choose to pursue other valued functionings. This is much like the phenomenon of stereotype threat, where minority groups would underperform if initially exposed to the lower-accomplishing stereotypes of their group (Steele & Aronson, 1995). This exemplifies the importance of taking an equity stance together with the CA. To overcome injustice, additional resources need to be provided for disadvantaged groups (Fraser, 2008). This could aid in building both equality of opportunity, and equality of outcomes by providing newcomers with education that not only focuses on qualification, but also on subjectification and socialization (Biesta, 2009).

The aforementioned emphasizes the importance of education for young newcomers. It is an environment to overcome injustice, and can therefore have a redistributive effect (Sen,

1999, 2009; Walker, 2006). However, if not given enough support with resource conversion, it can also lead to effects of stereotype threat, therewith creating a possibility that young newcomers do not follow their truly valued functionings, and face capability deprivation (Nussbaum, 2000; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Unterhalter, 2003). This exemplifies the need for additional assistance with the conversion of resources, in order to foster both equality of opportunity, and equality of outcomes (Fraser, 2008; Biesta, 2009). Moreover, the CA demonstrates that each individual will function differently (Walker, 2006). Therefore, it is important to hear the individual voices of young newcomers in order to create a more comprehensive overview of their needs within education.

The Case of the Netherlands: The International Connection Class

In the Netherlands, young newcomers between the ages of 12 and 18 enter the ISK. The group attending this school shows vast variety, for example, refugees, asylum seekers, and children of migrant workers.

There has been a range of criticism on the ISK. For example, teachers often have to work with outdated methods and curricula. This affects the opportunity for skill development in newcomers directly. In addition, classes primarily consist of refugees, thus schools have to cope with students that are constantly being relocated. Often, this leads to classrooms consisting of students with significant variations in their academic levels, and their level of Dutch (Onderwijsraad, 2017). Next to that, students often come from traumatic backgrounds which can impede learning (e.g., Van Willigen, 2009). Taken together, the ISK faces various challenges that could impede the equal participation of young newcomers in their host society.

Following the CA and the three functions of education, schooling should serve as an environment for newcomers to qualify themselves for future participation in life, while also developing their own interpretation of what that participation would be (Biesta, 2009; Sen, 1999, 2009). Newcomer children have less opportunity for participation in society than Dutch children do (Dagevos et al., 2018; Onderwijsraad, 2017). This is an example of capability deprivation, and could be interpreted as an impediment to the newcomers' chances to full participation (Fraser, 2008; Unterhalter, 2003). It is important to identify which factors contribute to the identified disparity in opportunity for participation. Dagevos and colleagues (2018) specifically mention the troublesome transition from the ISK to follow-up education as a contributing factor. Therefore, it is essential to improve the young newcomers' experience

of this transition. As this study aims to explore their experiences, the individual voices of the young newcomers should be put forward. Moreover, it acknowledges their growing need for autonomy, and emphasizes their voice and therewith their participation in the improvement of their experience.

Methods

The present study examined the research questions through phenomenological qualitative research methods. A phenomenological approach aims to seek the essence in a lived experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This approach allowed for better insight into the essence of the experience of ISK-students transitioning to secondary education. In turn, understanding the essence could contribute to exploring facilitating factors influencing transition. The voice of newcomer youth has been overlooked in past research. Including the youth in the process of improving this transition was key in finding facilitating factors that fit their needs and expectations of the transition. The experiences of young newcomers supplemented the existing body of knowledge on the transition to secondary schools.

Sub Question I

The following will outline the methodology employed to answer the question: What do experts in the field, and documents identify as fallacies and strong points of the existing procedure for transitioning from the ISK to Dutch secondary education?

Participants

To gain insight into the current procedure for the transition and the fallacies and strong points of it, a document review and semi-structured interviews were conducted. The documents elaborating on the current procedure are outlined in Appendix A. Documents were obtained primarily from the website of LOWAN. LOWAN is an organization that supports schools that organize newcomer education. Its website serves as a source of information for newcomer education, providing sources such as empirical studies, checklists, and teaching instruments. The website links with various institutes concerning newcomer education. These institutes included the Kohnstamm instituut, ITS, Instituut voor Taalonderzoek en Taalonderwijs Amsterdam (ITTA), Onderwijsraad, Inspectie van het Onderwijs, and VO-raad. The documents concerned information surrounding the general procedure for the transfer to secondary education, tools to use in the follow-up education, and suggestions for interventions to implement in this transfer. An overview of the documents that outlined strengths and fallacies of the current procedure can be found in Appendix B.

For the interviews with ISK-experts, the researcher employed purposeful criterion sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015). Based on the websites of organizations such as LOWAN, several expertise centers for the transfer from the ISK to secondary education were found. The

expertise centers were contacted and informed of the study per email, and several contacts were provided. Four ($n = 4$) experts in the field of newcomer education, and particularly in the transfer from an ISK to secondary education were interviewed on their views. The participants were recruited from the provinces of Gelderland, Utrecht, and Groningen in the Netherlands. Each participant was connected to a specific ISK in the province. The experts had varying roles, namely, as ambulatory supervisor, dean, care coordinator, and transition coach and mentor. The ambulatory supervisor and dean were interviewed together and were connected to the same school. The interviews served as additional information to the document review. Considering that procedures vary across the Netherlands, recruiting from different provinces allowed for better insight. Moreover, the varying roles of the interviewed experts provided a holistic view on the transition.

Procedure, Instruments, and Analysis

Once participants were recruited, both written and oral informed consent was obtained before each interview (see Appendix C). Based on the research questions of the present study, the theoretical background, and the document review, an interview guide was constructed (see Appendix D). The interviews were semi-structured of nature (Flick, 2018), and lasted approximately one hour. All interviews were conducted online due to the specific circumstances concerning COVID-19 at the time of the study. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Two participants wished to receive the transcript of the interview afterwards to check that the transcript reflected their stance on the field. The content of the interviews was used to supplement the information gathered from the document review.

In order to discern strong points and fallacies of the current procedure as outlined by the documents and ISK-experts, the researcher employed an approach in accordance with Creswell (2011). Strong points and fallacies were identified by going back and forth between the transcriptions and documents (See Appendix B and Appendix E). An inductive analysis was conducted to identify themes based on the identified strong points and fallacies (Creswell, 2011).

Sub Question II

The following will outline the methodology employed to answer the question: How did former ISK-students experience this transition in terms of facilitating and thwarting factors?

Participants

Former ISK-students were recruited using purposeful criterion sampling (Palinkas et al., 2015). Via the website of LOWAN, emails were sent to several ISKs in the province of Groningen, Drenthe, and Friesland. The researcher opted for these provinces to keep open the option to do in-person interviews, despite the circumstances surrounding COVID-19 at the time of the study. Three schools offered help with recruiting former ISK-students, one in Groningen, and two in Drenthe. From these schools, seven participants ($n = 7$; Male = 2, Female = 5; $M_{age} = 16.7$, $SD_{age} = 2.1$) were recruited. Six participants transferred to *vmbo*, and one to *havo*. Two participants had already finished their secondary education, and were in their follow-up studies. At the time of the study, participants were attending, or had attended three different schools for secondary education, both in Groningen and Drenthe. Variety in the sample was ensured through variance in schools, age, and gender. This ensured a level of representativeness for the Dutch newcomer student population.

Procedure and Instruments

Both written and oral informed consent was obtained before the interview. If the participant was under 16, informed consent was also obtained from their caregiver (see Appendix F). Prior to the interviews, a pilot interview with a former ISK-student that transferred to Dutch secondary education was conducted. Based on this, the research questions, the results of sub question I, and the theoretical background, an interview guide was constructed (see Appendix G). Interviewing teenagers can pose several challenges such as a perceived power imbalance, or gaining confidence (Bassett et al., 2008). In addition, with young newcomers, cultural differences can also play a role in the interview (Hazel, 1995). In constructing the interview guide, these challenges were taken into account. For example, more time was scheduled to establish rapport with the participant. Rapport was established through small talk on, for example, current popular music (Bassett et al., 2008). The interviews were semi-structured (Flick, 2018), and lasted approximately 40 minutes. Four interviews were conducted online, and three interviews were conducted in person. One interview was conducted in a pair. If desired, participants received the transcript.

Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews with former ISK-students were recorded and transcribed. The data was processed in Atlas.ti. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis using open coding. This way, the exploration of facilitating factors was not limited by a set framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis followed the principles suggested

by Braun and Clarke (2006). They emphasized that a good theme does not have to be the most prevalent subject within the data, but is one that captures something related to the research questions. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases for thematic analysis were employed in the current study. Firstly, the researcher familiarized herself with the data through transcribing, reading, and re-reading the data. Secondly, initial codes were generated (See Appendix H). Thirdly, the initial codes served as a base for searching themes. This resulted in the facilitating themes 'social-emotional' including friends and age, 'teachers' including attention and mentors, 'preparation ISK' including learning Dutch, learning about the Netherlands, and learning about secondary school. Thwarting themes that were derived were 'social-emotional' including age, home situation, and language insecurity, and 'lack of Dutch stimulation' including contact with 'own' and limited contact with Dutch students. Fourthly, the initial themes were reviewed to see if the themes worked with the coded extracts, and the entire data set. This was done through re-reading the transcripts with the themes in mind. This led to the elimination of various themes and subthemes. Fifthly, the themes were organized and defined in order to present it in the report. Lastly, extracts were selected that would reflect the themes properly in the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The Researcher

The researcher opted for including a brief paragraph on reflexivity due to the nature of the present study. The results call for interpreting the participants' experiences, and therefore a level of subjectivity will be present in the results. The researcher is Dutch, in her twenties, and a masters-level student in the field of educational sciences. Moreover, she grew up in a White, middle-class family, thus providing a particular lens of interpreting experiences of minority students. Overall, the researcher aimed to keep in mind her particular lens with which she would conduct the present study. For example, open coding allowed to stay closer to the former ISK-students' experiences. Moreover, triangulation was employed by exploring the experience of the transition through different perspectives, namely, from that of ISK-experts, students, and documents. This increased validity, and reduced the influence of bias (Flick, 2018).

Results

The Current Procedure, Strengths and Limitations

The Existing Procedure for the Transfer

Upon entering the ISK, there is an intake process. Some schools opt for a ‘prolonged intake’ taking three to six weeks, others opt for shorter time periods. The intake process aims to create a comprehensive image of the new students and their strengths and weaknesses (ITTA, 2016). This process follows four steps. Firstly, the teacher gathers information through taking tests, gathering the history of the child, and observing the child in class. Concerning the history, teachers consider aspects like mother tongue, schooling in the country of origin, and length of stay in the Netherlands. These can affect a student’s performance and learning rate. Through observations, the teacher aims to create an image of the cognitive and social-emotional skills, the working attitude, and the skills relevant for school such as use of a dictionary. Secondly, the learning route (see Figure 2) is decided based on the teacher’s

Figure 2

Learning Routes in the ISK (LOWAN, n.d.)



Note: Translated from Dutch by the researcher.

evaluation of the aforementioned factors. Thirdly, the individual educational needs of the student are decided on, and it is discussed how they can be helped to attain the highest possible outcome. Lastly, the chosen route is continually reevaluated through gathering information on the student throughout the year (ITTA, 2016).

In the first year of the ISK, the main focus is on the acquisition of the Dutch language. In the second year, the focus shifts towards preparation for the follow-up education (LOWAN, n.d.). These preparations differ per school. Mostly, courses are tuned to what the student will do in secondary school, and there is a bigger focus on acquiring school skills such as doing homework and planning (LOWAN, n.d.; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2020). During the course of the second year, parents or mentors of the ISK register the student in the secondary school of choice. Parents and the student will always be involved in the choice of the school.

Once the student has been admitted to the new school, ISK-schools often employ the ‘warm transition’. A warm transition mostly includes a file on the student, sometimes also outcomes of standardized tests (e.g., IQ tests, or grades in the ISK), and optimally a talk with the key figures in the new school (Van der Grinten et al., 2021). LOWAN (2017) provides a template for the file on the student containing two parts. The general part includes information on how the student progressed in the ISK, but also on what extra support they might need in their follow-up education. The personal part concerns anything the student wants to inform the secondary school about (LOWAN, 2017). This way, the receiving school gets the opportunity to gather holistic information on the new student.

After the transition has taken place, some schools continue to follow their students. For example, some have ambulatory supervisors that follow the student up to two years after leaving the ISK. Next to that, they can have transition coaches that do a more in-depth check up with the former ISK-students (ISK Quadraam, 2022). In addition, there are several rules instilled by the VO-raad that help the newcomer student adapt to the Dutch schooling system and the exams. First of all, a student that has followed Dutch education for less than six years get 30 minutes extra time on the final national exams. Each school can decide for themselves whether they allow the extra time on normal exams during the student’s school career as well. Secondly, newcomer students are allowed to use a dictionary. Lastly, they can sometimes be exempt from following language subjects such as German and/or French (VO-raad, 2018).

Facilitating and Thwarting Factors according to Experts and Documents

Table 5 presents a brief overview of the strengths and weaknesses that were identified in the document review (Appendix B). Strikingly, few facilitating factors were highlighted compared to the amount of thwarting factors. Some facilitating factors contradict each other. Ingleby and colleagues (2013) vouch for a period of segregated education for newcomers, while LOWAN and ITTA (2020) emphasize the importance of newcomers transferring to a Dutch school. Other strengths seem good in their intention, but lack follow-up. For example, the warm transition was often pointed out as a strength in the current procedure (Bakker, 2017; Van der Grinten et al., 2021). At the same time, it was highlighted that there was significant variation in ISK-schools that actually implemented the warm transition (Azouagh, 2017).

Table 5*Identified Strengths and Weaknesses Ordered According to Document*

Author(s), Title	Facilitating Factors	Thwarting Factors
<i>Azouagh (Inspectie van het Onderwijs; 2017), 'Schoolloopbanen nieuwkomers: Een verkennend onderzoek naar de schoolloopbaan van nieuwkomers'.</i>	Employing the warm transition. Incorporation of parents in the transition procedure. Intention of ISK-schools to follow-up on newcomer students that made the transition.	Variation in number of schools making use of the 'warm transition'. Hesitance of secondary schools to admit ISK-students. Lack of placement with students of similar age. Language deficiency of ISK-students at the point of transition. Lack of communication between secondary school and ISK after transition of students. National discrepancies on procedures between ISK-schools. Lack of Nt2-knowledge on secondary schools.
<i>Bakker (2017), 'Aansluiting Verbeterd met Warme Overdracht'.</i>	Employing the warm transition.	Underestimation of level in secondary school due to fear of worse evaluation of the school. Lack of individual follow-up guidance in secondary schools. Social-emotional consequences of adapting to a new school. Abrupt transition to following in-depth courses in Dutch.
<i>Ingleby et al. (2013). 'Educational Challenges Raised by Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Children and Other Newcomers: The Dutch response'.</i>	High degree of professionalism amongst Nt2-teachers. Extra grants for schools with students with educational disadvantages. Segregation of newcomer students allows for a period of individualized education.	Social-emotional consequences of embedding a minority student in a Dutch majority class. Teachers in Dutch secondary education (including ISK-schools) are primarily from majority backgrounds, little attention is paid to intercultural issues.
<i>LOWAN & ITTA (2020), 'Doorstroom van ISK naar Regulier Onderwijs (in 'coronatiejd')'.</i>	Individualized focus of the ISK-schools. The embedding of the newcomer student in a Dutch secondary school to take a flight in their Dutch proficiency.	The impeding effect of COVID-19 on language deficiencies and for preparing the student for secondary education.
<i>Mulder et al. (ITS & Kohnstamm Instituut; 2011), 'Onderwijsprestaties en Schoolloopbanen na de Schakelklas'.</i> <i>Onderwijsraad (2017), 'Vluchtelingen en Onderwijs'.</i>		Lack of follow-up guidance in secondary schools. Abrupt halt of Dutch lessons. Working with outdated methods and tests in the ISK. Limited exchange of ideas and interventions between ISK-schools.
<i>Stavenuiter et al., (2016), 'Onderwijs en Doorstroom naar de Arbeidsmarkt van Jonge Nieuwkomers in Nederland: Een onderzoek naar jonge nieuwkomers van 13-23 jaar ten behoeve van het project K!X Works'.</i>		Lack of guidance with language acquisition in secondary schools. Age differences in secondary school classes and its impeding effects on connecting with peers. Lack of knowledge on the 'Dutch' way of studying and learning. Lack of knowledge in newcomer students on the Dutch education system.
<i>Van der Grinten et al., (Oberon, Sardes, Hogeschool Utrecht, Fontys & VO-raad; 2021), 'Nieuwkomers in het Voortgezet Onderwijs'.</i>	Employing the warm transition.	Big transition from the warm welcome in the ISK, to the cold atmosphere in secondary schools. Experience of cultural differences in the Dutch classroom. Lack of involvement of parents.
<i>VO-raad (2016), 'Asielkind leert onder zijn niveau'.</i>		Underestimation of cognitive capacities ISK-students due to language deficiency. Hesitancy of secondary schools to admit ISK-students due to fear of worse evaluation of the school.
<i>VO-raad (2018), 'Meer Kansen met Maatwerk voor Nieuwkomersleerlingen'.</i>	Prolonged intake process in ISK-schools.	Uncertainty in possibilities for individualization of education for newcomers in secondary schools.

The information derived from the documents (Appendix B) and ISK-experts (Appendix E) will be discussed within five categories, namely, school culture, knowledge on newcomer education in secondary schools, communication, the student, and support¹.

School Culture. When asked what made the transition easier for schools and students, experts mostly referred to having a similar school culture. Specifically, a culture of individualized education:

The schools that are easiest to work with are those that apply the same individualized focus as we do. Those that just check: What is the starting position? What does this student need? And that skip the whole part of: ‘Oh okay!’, but immediately think: ‘This is the student, this is what they need, how will we arrange this?’ That is the best collaboration (Dean).

Similarly, LOWAN and ITTA (2020) suggested that having a more individualized school culture could make the transition less rigid for the students. Van der Grinten and colleagues (2021) and the interviewed experts expressed that ISK-students often referred to the transition to secondary school as going from a ‘warm bath’ to a ‘cold shower’. The care coordinator emphasized that this discrepancy in reception of the newcomer students could have significant impact on the student. For example, it could lead to schools expecting too much too soon. Instead, the focus should be on what *is* possible, as done in more individualized approaches. In addition, the ambulatory supervisor mentioned that it is particularly unwelcoming for a newcomer student to enter a school where they are unaware of their situation, or their needs. A priority should be to create a safe learning space for any student, from there, the rest follows (Care coordinator; VO-raad 2018).

Knowledge on Newcomer Education in Secondary Schools. Both documents and the interviews pointed at a lack of knowledge on NT2-education² in secondary schools (Azouagh, 2017; VO-raad, 2018). This lack of knowledge could be a root of several thwarting factors in the transition. For example, secondary schools display a hesitance in admitting newcomer students due to language deficiencies (Azouagh, 2017; VO-raad, 2016), thinking it will lead to worse evaluation of their school, or because schools would not know how to help them:

¹ All quotations from the expert interviews were translated from Dutch by the researcher.

² NT2 refers to ‘Dutch as second language’ education.

There are also schools that say: ‘That does not suit us. You start here, you participate in all subjects. Either you participate, or you do not fit here, then just go to a lower level, or look for another school. We have so little NT2-students, we do not have the capacity to invest in that, we already have children with dyslexia, with autism, with ADHD, at some point it’s enough’ (Mentor/Transition coach).

The above refers to a school not knowing how to meet the needs of a newcomer student. Other schools would sometimes be eager to admit newcomer students, but for possibly wrong reasons:

There are schools that are very open to receive them but it comes from a motivation like: ‘Oh those poor refugees’. Well, that’s another extreme, and that is very cringy because we think: ‘Well, they’re not all piteous, and they also don’t all have major trauma’. So that motivation is also too extreme. You just need some expertise, think like they are any normal student, they don’t always need special treatment (Dean).

The above shows the importance of creating more expertise on newcomer students. Although they do not always need extra support, nevertheless, it should be available. One possibility for creating more individualized education is implementing the VO-raad rules. However, most schools are not aware of them, nor how or whether to implement those rules (VO-raad, 2018), but as mentioned in one of the interviews: “*The students won’t abuse those [VO-raad] rules, they just want to be normal. When it’s not necessary anymore, they won’t make use of it, they won’t abuse their positions, because they just want to be able to participate.*” (Mentor/Transition coach). So, some schools are hesitant in using the flexibility provided through the VO-raad rules, or are unaware of how to implement them.

Two experts expressed that they experienced a lack of solidarity in sharing the responsibility for educating newcomer students:

They can’t shift responsibility toward us like: ‘Well, that’s not possible, it’s simply not possible that we admit that student’, then I think: ‘Well, of course not, the student has to come to you, they shouldn’t be in ISK-schools forever?’ [...] The ISK is just there to make the transition possible, that’s why we exist, but it’s a very twisted idea that we carry the responsibility for these newcomers. It’s weird because we carry that responsibility as a society, they are here, we have to give them equal opportunities, that’s a responsibility for all (Dean).

Mulder and colleagues (2011) emphasized the importance of viewing the ISK as fully connected to the secondary school, as what takes shape in the ISK lasts for a lifetime. LOWAN & ITTA (2020) emphasized that this transition is crucial for the newcomers, not only for learning Dutch, but also for their future prospects. In addition, secondary schools often fail to follow-up on the effectiveness of implemented interventions to meet the needs of newcomer students (Dean). This could suggest a similar attitude toward and unawareness of newcomer education and how to meet newcomer students' needs. To increase knowledge on NT2-education in follow-up education, ISK expertise centers are on the rise. These centers provide teacher trainings, information meetings, and conduct research. They have an overall goal of creating awareness on newcomer students in follow-up education, next to providing concrete trainings for school staff (Ambulatory supervisor; Care coordinator; Mentor/Transition coach).

Communication Between Schools. Azouagh (2017) and ISK-experts emphasized the strained communication between ISK-schools and secondary school. Additionally, documents mention a lack of follow-up guidance once the student is in secondary school due to this strained communication (Azouagh, 2017; Bakker, 2017; Mulder et al., 2011). Moreover, despite the warm transition being highly appraised by both the documents (Bakker, 2017; Van der Grinten et al., 2021) and experts, it often occurred that the file of the ISK student would not come through or was not shared with the whole team:

[...] that a school does not fully receive the information, that it doesn't arrive at the right people, and then later on I have to deal with that and I get questions like: 'what is going on with them?' Then it turns out that the warm transition didn't fully come through to everyone (Ambulatory supervisor).

Something put forward in the interviews and in some documents was the importance of implementing one primary contact for, for example, communication between ISK and secondary school and for the newcomers themselves (Stavenuiter et al., 2016; VO-raad 2018). The dean exemplified that this creates more control over the communication regarding each student:

The applications always go through me because then the secondary schools have one clear address for communication if they have any questions. You lose control easily... In the past it turned out that having several points of contact didn't work because you don't use the same methods or agreements (Dean).

Finally, Azouagh (2017) suggested that ISK-schools should provide handouts of what a newcomer student is capable of, and what they learned in that specific ISK-school. Procedures vary significantly for each ISK-school, so providing handouts could facilitate communication and awareness of the newcomer's needs in the receiving secondary school (Azouagh, 2017).

The Student. The transition can be straining on the newcomer students. It comes with abrupt switches to Dutch classes on a higher level, together with a switch to a classroom primarily consisting of Dutch children (Bakker, 2017; Ingleby et al., 2013; Onderwijsraad, 2017; Van der Grinten et al., 2021). Next to that, students are often significantly older than their classmates in secondary school, which could impede finding a connection with the students (Azouagh, 2017; Stavenuiter et al., 2016). Whilst making a switch to higher level Dutch classes and a Dutch classroom, newcomer students often enter the school with a language deficiency (Stavenuiter et al., 2016), also emphasized in the interviews: *“Vocabulary, so language really is, not for all students, but for a lot it’s a big deficiency on the new school, and they have to work very hard to get to that level.”* (Ambulatory supervisor). In addition, subjects in secondary school are often culturally sensitive:

Last year there was a Thai boy that transitioned to *vmbo* and then he receives a history book full of western history about the Second World War, and coming from Thailand, he is not aware of that part at all, so he misses a lot of context. Then on top of that it is also a book that is quite difficult to understand (Dean).

The transition can put a strain on the student in terms of learning, and adapting. It seems crucial to allow for a period to get used to the new school. The experts emphasized a safe learning space is the first step in that adjustment, and that takes time:

Something we notice, in another area, is social-emotional, they... In the new school they're 'just' a student, but they don't feel like 'just' a student, not always. They don't want to be different, but sometimes they are, that can be a culture-thing, a language-thing, so what we hear from many students is that it takes so much time to really adjust to the new school (Dean & Ambulatory supervisor).

Support for the Student. Several interventions for easing the transition to a secondary school were suggested by the documents and by the experts. Interventions that concerned having the student take a look in the new school, or already participate in some classes before the transition, either for a day, a few weeks, or, in some cases, having them

partially transition in the final year, were positively regarded (Azouagh, 2017; Van der Grinten et al., 2021). A partial transition entails that the student follows several classes in the secondary school they will transition to, while still following classes in the ISK. These short internships or partial transitions can help with taking flight in learning several things about the new school:

[In secondary school during short internships] they have to pay attention to how the children do their homework, what happens if they're late for class, all kinds of assignments, and then also just following the classes. Secondary schools get prepared well and help organize it, and afterwards we have brief evaluation talks with the teachers (Care coordinator).

Another intervention often mentioned was buddy-projects (Azouagh, 2017; Bakker, 2017; LOWAN & ITTA, 2020; Stavenuiter et al., 2016; Van der Grinten et al., 2021; VO-raad, 2018). However, some experts expressed their doubts on the effectiveness of buddy-projects:

Some schools provide a buddy, that before the transfer they already have contact with another student that will guide them. It seems perfect, but in practice... They're still teenagers that will eventually think: 'a buddy, I don't feel like that at all!', or they think it's awkward or something (Dean).

Another expert expressed that support from other students does not have to take the shape of a buddy project, but that teachers could appoint a classmate that could answer the newcomer students' questions and check in with them. The newcomer student then has one appointed fellow student that they can ask their questions to (Mentor/Transition Coach). In addition, the role of parents should be highlighted (Bakker, 2017; Van der Grinten et al., 2021). What happens in school is inevitably taken home:

Well and you notice, I also have children in secondary school, and you are needed regularly with planning or organizing for example. When, as a parent, you aren't familiar with the school then that makes that very difficult (Care coordinator).

Moreover, newcomer students will face themes within subjects that are culturally sensitive. For cases such as this, pre-teaching can help (i.e., going through the next day's lessons content in order to prepare a student for what will be discussed; LOWAN & ITTA, 2020; VO-raad, 2018). This was also put forward by the care coordinator and ambulatory

supervisor. It can prepare a student for the next day's classes, and serve as a check-in whether they are following the classes well enough. Furthermore, the VO-raad (2018) called for continued additional Dutch classes in secondary school.

All in all, the documents primarily pointed out the fallacies in the current procedure for the transition. ISK-experts emphasize that, in fact, the transition often goes well for newcomer students, and that the perceived notion of secondary schools that they cannot offer the amount of assistance these students might need seems to be based on a lack of knowledge on NT2-education. Like any other student, young newcomers need time to get used to the new school, and they do not always need special treatment.

Experiences of ISK-students in Terms of Facilitating and Thwarting Factors

The themes that were identified in the interviews were organized in terms of facilitating and thwarting factors as according to sub question II. The themes and its subthemes will be outlined below.³

Facilitating Factors

School Factors. Students mentioned that they felt well prepared by the ISK for their transition to secondary schools. The preparation that mattered most to the students was learning Dutch, learning about the Netherlands, and learning about secondary school. Moreover, individual attention from the teacher was highlighted by the students.

Learning Dutch. First responses to what students learned in ISK-schools which helped them in secondary school mostly related to learning Dutch: *“They helped me with many things, especially with language”*, or *“We really learned some words that we didn't know, and now we speak using those words”*. Students expressed that they were often afraid that their Dutch was not good enough, therefore, the preparation by the ISK was highly valued. For example, one student who did a partial transition explained that it helped them gain confidence in the Dutch language:

The partial transition really helped because it didn't get too heavy, because obviously in two or one year you don't know 100% Dutch, maybe 60%, 70%, and if you really are in a normal class then they all speak really fast and you have to build it up slowly, that helped a lot.

³ All quotations from the interviews with newcomer students were translated from Dutch by the researcher.

Learning About the Netherlands. Students valued getting to know the Netherlands and the Dutch culture. You get to know the country you live in, and understand better how to adapt: *“It helped with getting to know society, to know how others think. Of course, you’re from a completely different society, a different culture, and if you then remain in that then you can’t participate well here. That really helped”*.

Learning About Secondary School. Next to learning about the Netherlands and learning Dutch, students also valued learning about secondary school. They learned how to act towards teachers, to do their homework in time, but also learned about the different levels in Dutch secondary education. Students mentioned that this helped them because their former schooling experiences often differed from that in their home country:

We prepared for secondary school quite a lot, because she [ISK-mentor] often told me: secondary school won’t be like this, it is not like the schools in Saudi-Arabia, it’s a very different school, it’s this and that... I learned everything step by step: How do you behave with teachers?

Students explained that the information on Dutch secondary schools made the transition easier. Some even mentioned that they thought it was easy in secondary school because of all the things they got to know in the ISK: *“It was kind of easier when we came here [to secondary school], because we know some things, well actually not some, but most of it. Then when we came here we thought it was easy. Not at all what we expected”*.

Individual Attention by Teachers. Most students spoke highly of their teachers, particularly of their mentors in the ISK, but also of teachers in secondary school when they provided a similar individualized attention as in the ISK. Students explained that in the ISK the teachers knew ‘your story’, what you were good at, or what you were struggling with, but that that was not always the case in secondary school:

B: Yes they think like: ‘oh we’re in the Netherlands already for a few years or maybe born here’. They think we were in primary school and stuff, that’s not the case.

A: But wasn’t always bad, we could do normal.

Teachers in secondary school that were aware that the students came from an ISK-school made the smallest gestures that were highly appreciated:

Also in the last moment, when they explained something to everyone, and everyone understood, and then they still ask me in the end: did you understand? I say: 'yes, I did'. That was everything to me when they asked that.

One student emphasized that having more individualized contact with secondary school teachers might help with asking them questions that one would be ashamed to ask: *"Well then... I just think it would be easier for students when they can have easy contact... that would just be different. That for example... they can ask questions more easily, that then they're not ashamed"*.

Personal Factors. Various facilitating personal factors came forward in the interviews. The two most prominent ones were friends and peer support, and being eager and curious.

Friends and Peer Support. Friends could help ISK-students adapt to the secondary school, and Dutch friends helped the students with learning Dutch. Secondary school classes were experienced as very chaotic compared to ISK classes, however, one student explained that it is all okay as long as you have friends: *"At first I thought it was quite busy, but you get used to it [secondary school classes] especially if you just have some friends"*.

One student that transferred together with another ISK-student explained that this was helpful. As aforementioned, students can feel ashamed to ask questions. For them, it helped that they could first ask each other, especially questions about the language:

For example when I... I understand Dutch, now I understand much more, but in first year when I understood one word and she didn't, then I could explain it to her in my own language, then she could understand easier, and she could also explain me.

This supported what other students emphasized in the interviews, namely, that it was easier to ask help from their peers, Dutch or from the ISK, than from teachers: *"Yes well students I did not find very difficult, I asked some questions there, they helped me"*. Peers played a significant role in adapting to the new school.

Being Eager and Curious. As aforementioned, learning Dutch was of significant importance to the students. They explained that it was important to be eager and curious for this too:

Yes to be curious, curious about everything, that when you look outside at cars or something, you have to be curious: what is that, why? You learn some words from that as well. It helps. I think: just do it.

Being eager and curious was also mentioned when explaining why the transition was okay, or sometimes even easy for them: *“I didn’t find it hard, I just wanted to explore, I just wanted to get to know new things, nothing really bothered me”*. In addition, being eager and curious helped with making friends in the new school, another factor that facilitated the transition for ISK-students: *“That [making friends] went well, I was fairly social and did not struggle with it, it went well”*. So, students emphasized that being eager and curious helped with learning Dutch, making friends, and adapting to the new school.

Thwarting Factors

School Factors. As aforementioned, learning Dutch was of great importance to ISK-students. It helped them adapt in the new class, and get by in their host country. However, when asked what the ISK should improve to make the transition easier, students mentioned that it was too easy not to speak Dutch while they were in the ISK, despite ISK-rules.

Contact With ‘Own’ Culture. Friends are an important part of the transition. One student mentioned that she missed the ISK because in secondary school they did not understand her like other students in the ISK did, and another student mentioned that you simply are not tempted to do those ‘Dutch things’ when surrounded by people from the same background: *“Not at all, over there you’re with foreigners only so they are the same as you and are from the same country as I am, then you don’t do Dutch things, you’ll mostly do foreign things”*, and:

I think it’s a culture-thing, because if you... you get used to... when you’re here you also get used to Dutch culture, but if you find someone that is like you, same culture as you, well... then I think you rather go with that.

Students explain that they feel more connected with their ‘own’ culture, and seek that out, therefore lacking some Dutch stimulation within ISK-schools. Rather, students often speak Arabic or English within ISK-schools.

Limited Contact With Dutch Students. On top of the fact that students often connect with people from the same background in the ISK, they state that there is little opportunity to interact with Dutch students until they transfer to secondary school: *“[In secondary school] It*

was the first time that I interacted with Dutch students". One student mentioned that she was happy to make the transfer because she had more contact with Dutch students, which improved her Dutch. Other students mentioned that they sought out Dutch people themselves during their time in ISK-schools:

I was with Dutch people quite a lot, playing soccer at their school, friends, so I heard the language constantly and the words always return you know, so what I learned in school, I heard in the streets. That helped me most actually.

As soon as students transferred to secondary schools, or when they sought out more Dutch contact themselves, their Dutch took flight.

Personal Factors. Just as personal factors can facilitate the transition, they can also thwart it. Two main factors that thwarted the transition to secondary school were older age, and language insecurities.

Older Age. ISK-students are often older than their secondary school classmates when they transfer. Although friends play a key role in facilitating the transfer, being older than the classmates sometimes inhibits them from connecting with them like they do with peers of their age. Being older did not only influence making friends, but also affected motivation for some students. Students mentioned that some friends had a challenging time adjusting when they are older and transfer to a secondary school. They would be unmotivated due to less connection with the school or their peers:

I think they [other ISK-students] thought it was childish, I understand because ISK-students are kind of too old, then they're there with children that are 14 or 15 or so, and then they're just kind of children you know. First I also felt like that, I was 15 when I was in first grade, and everyone else was like 13... I really thought: 'I'm here with children'. I asked my mentor: 'Can't I transfer to second grade?'.

One student that was 12-years-old felt that his age indeed helped him to adjust better. He explained that he felt he was right at the age where one adopts new norms and values, so he could also find more connection with his Dutch peers.

Language Insecurities. When asked what their first impressions were, students often mentioned that in secondary school, everyone speaks fluent Dutch. Learning Dutch in the ISK was of great value to the students. At the same time, it was a barrier for them as they felt insecure about their proficiency in the Dutch language. It was a big transition from the ISK to

secondary school: *“They really speak fluent Dutch, I was like: ‘I don’t understand a thing!’ A little bit, part of the Dutch they were speaking I did but I did not know what to do”.*

All in all, students seem to do well in the transition. Though they wish to be like the other Dutch students, they recognize that they are different in terms of language proficiency, and the schooling that they are used to. They value the efforts of teachers that recognize that they might need some help. The individual attention that is given is highly valued, and desired. This attention can come from school staff, but also age peers that guide them in the school.

Discussion

The present study aimed to answer the question: What are facilitating factors for the transition of newcomers from International Connection Classes (ISK) to Dutch secondary education?

The document review primarily pointed toward fallacies in the current procedures. For example, that there is a lack of follow-up guidance once students transferred to secondary schools, or that secondary schools display a hesitance to admit newcomer students (See Table 5 or Appendix B). Lacking were factors that facilitate the transition. The document review would suggest that the transition is not going well. Contrarily, the interviews with ISK-experts pointed toward more factors that were facilitating the transition, or factors that could help meet the current thwarting ones. They emphasized that the transition is going well. For example, expertise centers are on the rise with, amongst other aspects, the aim to inform secondary schools on newcomer education. Expertise centers can help increase NT2-knowledge in secondary schools, and therewith decrease hesitance in admitting newcomer students. Next to awareness on the challenges regarding the transition, ISK-experts also outlined factors that would help address these challenges. Moreover, former ISK-students expressed that the transition was challenging but went alright for them. The students emphasize that they tended to be eager to get to know the new school and Dutch students. ISK-experts expressed that the students go through a normal adjustment period, just like any other student that would transfer to a new school. In many ways, it seems that ISK-students are like any other student.

However, former ISK-students face various challenges that might prolong the period of adjustment compared to Dutch students. Therefore, they need additional support. ISK-experts, documents, and the students themselves emphasized that the language deficiency is a source of insecurity in the new school. The students transfer from a school where no one speaks Dutch fluently, to a school where fluent Dutch is the norm. On top of that, the teachers were different from their former ISK-teachers that would know their story and strengths and weaknesses. ISK-experts expressed that though the students wish to be 'just' a student, they do not always feel like this due to additional processes such as acculturation. For example, students mentioned they would have liked more contact with Dutch students to be able to learn more about the Netherlands, and to practice their Dutch. However, they also mentioned that they miss having contact with students from their 'own' culture, as they tended to understand their situation better. The results emphasize that the transition is going well, but

that due to the challenges that students face getting used to the new school and concerning identity formation, additional support is necessary.

Taken together, the facilitating factors for the transition from an ISK-school to a secondary school can be put into two overall categories. Firstly, to help newcomers adjust to the new school, and in order to tailor to each student's needs, individualized education is key. This would entail that the teacher and relevant staff members in the secondary school are aware of the student's background and how to meet that student's specific needs. ISK-experts expressed that collaborating with secondary schools where there is an individualized school culture makes arranging the transition easier. This is due to communication, but also due to a continuity in the pedagogical climate. Students emphasized that they felt seen. Despite language insecurities, they would sooner approach a teacher that knew about their background. This emphasizes the need for an individualized school culture to ease the transition. Secondly, newcomers are resilient, and their environment is key in supporting that resilience. An individualized school culture could ensure the support from school staff, but additionally, peers and family play an important role for teenagers. Newcomers value the help of their teachers, their Dutch friends, and ISK-friends. The transition calls on the support of the newcomer student's environment.

Newcomers are resilient, but nevertheless need additional support with adapting to the new secondary school. Like their native age peers, developing as a teenager poses several challenges such as growing insecurity, and identity formation. However, for newcomer students, there is an additional layer to identity formation. Not only are they discovering whom they wish to be when growing up, but they are also discovering their identity in the host culture (Rousseau et al., 2004). This could impact their mental health and ability to integrate into the host society (Su & Costigan, 2009). These obstacles hinder the student's ability to keep up with school. For example, newcomer students can be hesitant to speak up in class due to their language insecurities. This could indicate capability deprivation, considering that due to the inherent organization of the secondary school, the student feels less safe to ask a question (Unterhalter, 2003). Therewith, the newcomer student's opportunity for participation in class becomes diminished compared to their native peers. Individualized education is key in helping newcomers adapt to the new school. As ISK-students emphasized, approaching teachers would become less challenging once they were aware of their story. Teenagers place incremental value on autonomy (Titzmann & Lee, 2018). Ensuring a safe learning environment appreciates this need as it creates opportunity for the students to

approach teachers themselves. Moreover, each student has specific needs within an education system. Young newcomers have access to schooling like any other Dutch minor (United Nations, 1989). However, without additional support, access does not ensure valued outcomes for young newcomers. Individualized education provides a safe learning environment in which newcomers can autonomously participate.

As emphasized by the Capability Approach, minorities need additional support with converting resources into valued outcomes (Hart, 2012; Sen, 1999, 2009; Walker, 2006). Additional support can come from individualized education, but also from the young newcomer's environment. ISK-students helped each other understand things in class if they did not understand a certain word in the textbook. Moreover, there was a need for more contact with Dutch students as they were eager to practice their Dutch. Contact with native peers is crucial for practicing a new language (e.g., Feinberg, 2000), and integrating the mother tongue in second language education can increase confidence and facilitate the learning process (De Oliveira et al., 2016). Furthermore, in line with growing autonomy and increased emphasis on peer relations (Titzmann & Lee, 2018), ISK-students mentioned that it was easier to ask questions to peers than to staff members. The additional support with language and getting used to the new school can thus be provided by the newcomer's peers.

Identity formation is a layered challenge, and the environment plays an important role in supporting the newcomer's resilience (Rousseau et al., 2004; Ungar, 2011). For example, ensuring opportunity for contact with both ethnic and national peers aids in balancing the formation of both a national and ethnic identity. In turn, a healthy balance contributes to an improved psychological and sociocultural integration (Berry et al., 2006). Peers also contribute to greater self-esteem and provide support (Burgos et al., 2019; Thomas & Daubman, 2001). This could prevent capability deprivation because newcomers are supported in their identity formation, therewith decreasing the weight of the challenge (Unterhalter, 2003). However, there is an overt emphasis in education on the newcomer students' adaptation to a Dutch school and integration into Dutch society. ISK-students emphasized that they longed for contact with Dutch peers, and wanted to have less contact with ethnic peers. This could suggest that ISK-students foster assimilation ideals instead of acculturation ideals (i.e., leaving one's ethnic culture behind instead of finding a balance between both), often associated with negative mental health consequences (Frazer et al., 2017). Instead of placing the emphasis on the newcomer adapting to a new system, it seems of greater importance to guide the newcomer in finding their place within their host society. Contact with both national

and ethnic peers can aid with this (Berry et al., 2006). Moreover, this emphasizes the importance of not only focusing on qualification and socialization within education, but also on subjectification (Biesta, 2009). Guidance in identity formation is an interdependent function of education. Attention toward subjectification could prevent capability deprivation for young newcomers getting used to a new school and host society. Their environment and individualized education can ensure this.

All in all, the current study contributed to the literature an empowering view on helping newcomers transition to a new school environment. The focus on facilitating factors rather than on thwarting factors is an addition to the current literature that primarily points out the shortcomings of the current procedure (See Table 5 and Appendix B). Additionally, it appreciates the newcomer's autonomy and resilience. By triangulating perspectives, a comprehensive overview was created of the current procedure. Moreover, the study demonstrated that newcomer students very often do well, but nevertheless need guidance in order to work toward equality of valued outcomes next to equality of opportunity. Individualized education and support from the student's environment are key in realizing this.

Limitations and Future Research

First of all, this was a small-scaled study. To capture the experience of former ISK-students, seven students were interviewed from three different ISK-schools. Considering that procedures for the transition differ significantly, the present study only captures part of the experience of students transferring to secondary schools, and is not representative for the experience in the whole of the Netherlands. Secondly, participating students were selected by their former ISK-teachers. Teachers might select students that talk easily about their experiences, and therefore might primarily be the 'success stories'. However, the 'success stories' could also shed more light on the facilitating factors in their experience which was beneficial to the aim of the present study. Thirdly, the present study only interviewed ISK-experts, and not secondary school teachers. This paints a one-sided picture. Future research could contrast the experiences on newcomer education of ISK-experts with that of secondary school teachers. Fourthly, most of the documents outlining strengths and fallacies in the current procedure were non-peer-reviewed documents. However, the purpose of each document used is stated in the overview (See Appendix A and Appendix B). Therefore, the reader is given opportunity to weigh the value of the information. Fifthly, as aforementioned, the researcher is not from a minority background. This could have affected how the former ISK-students talked about their experiences. For example, there could be a perceived power

imbalance when talking to minority teenagers (Bassett et al., 2008). When thinking of what was difficult in the transition, students often thought it was easier to talk about their friends' experiences than about their own. This could suggest that they did not want to speak badly of how they experienced the transition in the researcher's presence. Lastly, the phenomenological nature of the present study could be a limitation. As the aim was to capture the essence of newcomer students' experiences, it could be called into question whether a researcher from a majority background is able to capture that essence. Nevertheless, through including the voice of young newcomers in the present study and triangulation of perspectives, the researcher aimed to get closer to that essence.

Recommendations

- ❖ The newcomer's environment plays an important role in sustaining their resilience (Ungar, 2011). ISK-experts emphasized the lack of involvement of parents in the newcomers' education. The present study highlighted the importance of the environment in supporting the newcomers in the transition. This does not only come from peers, but also family. It is important to understand factors that could ensure increased involvement of parents in their children's education (e.g., Burgos et al., 2019).
- ❖ ISK-students long for contact with both ethnic and national peers, but seem to uphold assimilationist ideals and aim to have less contact with ethnic peers. Contact with both supports the integration of a balanced ethnic and national identity (Berry et al., 2006). Moreover, integrating the mother tongue in second language education can increase confidence and aid in identity formation (e.g., De Oliveira et al., 2016). It could be questioned whether the ISK lends enough opportunity to allow for the young newcomers' ethnic identity, next to the formation of a newer Dutch identity. Future research should consider how the ISK could lend opportunity for the student to foster both their ethnic and national identity.
- ❖ Individualized education depends on a safe learning environment and therewith a continuity in the pedagogical climate (Bakker, 2017). It is important to consider how to best create a safe learning environment for young newcomers. One example of this is the handout created by Ithaka & Sardes (2019) on creating a safe learning environment. Expertise centers could further investigate factors that ensure a safe learning environment in secondary schools.

- ❖ Expertise centers play an important role in increasing knowledge on NT2-education amongst school staff, and can therewith ensure more individualized education. Lack of knowledge on NT2-education seemed to be the root of several thwarting factors, such as a hesitance in admitting newcomer students. Therefore, it is crucial that expertise centers continue with informing secondary schools on newcomer students and their particular needs within education. Expertise centers could communicate specific measures implemented in the ISK that could be useful in secondary schools, or create a concrete set of tools for teachers to accommodate to newcomer students in the classroom.
- ❖ Former ISK-students recognize that they are not always just like any other student, but do wish to be like any other student. They value measures that recognize the challenges they face, but do not call them out on their differences compared to their native peers. Teachers could consider implementing small measures in class that implicate support but that do not single them out.

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Appendix A – Documents on the Transition Procedure**Table 1***Overview of Consulted Documents on the Current Procedure for the Transition from ISK-school to Secondary School*

Author, Title	Purpose of Document	Information
<i>ITTA (2016), 'De leerling in beeld: Een werkwijze voor verlengde intake'.</i>	Handout on LOWAN-website.	The four steps of the prolonged intake.
<i>ISK Quadraam (2022), 'Begeleiding aan nieuwkomersleerlingen na de ISK (schooljaar 2022 – 2023)'.</i>	Handout created by ISK Quadraam.	The role of ambulatory supervisors, transition coaches, and the expertise centers in the transition.
<i>LOWAN (n.d.), 'ISK-uitstroomprofielen, leerlijnen en NT2 streefniveaus'.</i>	Section on LOWAN-website.	The varying learning routes in the ISK. The courses linked to each learning route.
<i>LOWAN (2017), 'Toelichting doorstroomdossier ISK – vervolgonderwijs'.</i>	Handout on LOWAN-website	Guidelines on material to include in the file for the warm transition.
<i>Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap (2020), 'Informatiedocument onderwijs aan asielzoekers'.</i>	Information for municipalities and schools organizing newcomer education.	Newcomer students learn school skills such as homework and planning in ISK-schools.
<i>Van der Grinten et al. (2021), 'Nieuwkomers in het voortgezet onderwijs'.</i>	Handout based on a collaborative research project to give concrete advise on individualized education for newcomers.	Elaboration on the procedure for employing a warm transition.
<i>VO-raad (2018), 'Meer kansen met maatwerk voor nieuwkomersleerlingen'.</i>	Brochure for secondary schools to understand how they can individualize education for newcomers.	Elaboration on VO-raad rules for newcomer students in follow-up education.

Appendix B – Document Review

Table 2

Identified Strengths and Weaknesses, and Suggested Interventions Ordered According to Document

<i>Author(s), Title</i>	Type of Document, Purpose	Facilitating Factors	Thwarting Factors	Suggested Interventions
<i>Azouagh (Inspectie van het Onderwijs; 2017), ‘Schoolloopbanen nieuwkomers: Een verkennend onderzoek naar de schoolloopbaan van nieuwkomers’.</i>	Research report, written in assignment for ‘Inspectie van het Onderwijs’ (Educational Inspection), within the expertise group for newcomer primary education.	Employing the warm transition. Incorporation of parents in the transition procedure. Intention of ISK-schools to follow-up on newcomer students that made the transition.	Variation in number of schools making use of the ‘warm transition’. Hesitance of secondary schools to admit ISK-student. Lack of placement with students of similar age. Language deficiency of ISK-students at the point of transition. Lack of communication between secondary school and ISK after transition of students. National discrepancies on procedures between ISK-schools. Lack of NT2-knowledge on secondary schools.	Short ‘internships’ in the new schools including a detailed diary on the experiences. ISK-schools creating a personal handout of their procedures and what the receiving school can expect of the student. Secondary schools should report back to ISK-schools on the progress of the newcomer student.
<i>Bakker (2017), ‘Aansluiting Verbeterd met Warme Overdracht’.</i>	Article in magazine.. Written to encourage schools to employ the warm transition.	Employing the warm transition.	Underestimation of level in secondary school due to fear of worse evaluation of the school. Lack of individual follow-up guidance in secondary schools. Social-emotional consequences of adapting to a new school. Abrupt transition to following in-depth courses in Dutch.	Improved communication between secondary school and ISK through ‘warm transitions’. ‘Secondary-school student for a day’. Buddy-projects. Include parents in the student’s school life.
<i>Ingleby et al. (2013). ‘Educational Challenges Raised by Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Children and Other Newcomers: The Dutch</i>	Chapter in book ‘Migrants and Refugees: Equitable education for	High degree of professionalism amongst NT2-teachers. Extra grants for schools with students with educational disadvantages. Segregation of newcomer students allows for a	Social-emotional consequences of embedding a minority student in a Dutch majority class. Teachers in Dutch secondary education (including ISK-schools)	

<i>Author(s), Title</i>	Type of Document, Purpose	Facilitating Factors	Thwarting Factors	Suggested Interventions
<i>response</i> '.	<i>displaced populations</i> '.	period of individualized education.	are primarily from majority backgrounds, little attention is paid to intercultural issues.	
<i>LOWAN & ITTA (2020), 'Doorstroom van ISK naar Regulier Onderwijs (in 'coronatijd')</i> '.	Handout with tips and tricks to tackle possible deficiencies developed during the lack of educational stimulation during COVID-19.	Individualized focus of the ISK-schools. The embedding of the newcomer student in a Dutch secondary school to take a flight in their Dutch proficiency.	The impeding effect of COVID-19 on language deficiencies and for preparing the student for secondary education.	'Superwarm' transfer including a personal development plan for the newcomer student. 'Triad of language' in secondary education: a focus on language in every subject, extra guidance by the Dutch teacher, extra Dutch classes with possibilities for 'preteaching'. Attending homework classes. Buddy projects.
<i>Mulder et al. (ITS & Kohnstamm Instituut; 2011), 'Onderwijsprestaties en Schoolloopbanen na de Schakelklas</i> '.	Research report written in assignment of the Ministry of Education.		Lack of follow-up guidance in secondary schools.	Guidance throughout whole school career of the student. Start viewing the ISK as fully connected to the secondary school: What takes shape there can last for the student's whole school career.
<i>Onderwijsraad (2017), 'Vluchtelingen en Onderwijs</i> '.	Research report written as advisory on how to improve participation of refugees through education.		Abrupt halt of Dutch lessons. Working with outdated methods and tests in the ISK. Limited exchange of ideas and interventions between ISK-schools.	ISK-diplomas with differing levels to encourage getting the language proficiency to a higher level in order to be able to follow higher levels of education. Encourage joint decision-making between secondary schools and ISK-schools on the organization of ISK-schools.
<i>Stavenuiter et al., (2016), 'Onderwijs en Doorstroom naar de Arbeidsmarkt van Jonge Nieuwkomers in Nederland: Een onderzoek naar jonge nieuwkomers van 13-23 jaar ten behoeve van het project K!X Works</i> '.	Research report written for the project 'K!X Works' to help young newcomers integrate into the Dutch labor market.		Lack of guidance with language acquisition in secondary schools. Age differences in secondary school classes and its impeding effects on connecting with peers. Lack of knowledge on the 'Dutch' way of studying and learning. Lack of knowledge in newcomer students on the Dutch education system.	Buddy projects. Primary contact in a secondary school for newcomer students for extra support.
<i>Van der Grinten et al.,</i>	Handout based on	Employing the warm transition.	Big transition from the warm	Short 'internships' in the new schools

<i>Author(s), Title</i>	Type of Document, Purpose	Facilitating Factors	Thwarting Factors	Suggested Interventions
<i>(Oberon, Sardes, Hogeschool Utrecht, Fontys & VO-raad; 2021), 'Nieuwkomers in het Voortgezet Onderwijs'.</i>	a collaborative research project to give concrete advise on individualized education for newcomers.		welcome in the ISK, to the cold atmosphere in secondary schools. Experience of cultural differences in the Dutch classroom. Lack of involvement of parents.	including a detailed diary on the experiences. Buddy projects.
<i>VO-raad (2016), 'Asielkind leert onder zijn niveau'</i>	News article on VO-raad website.		Underestimation of cognitive capacities ISK-students due to language deficiency. Hesitancy of secondary schools to admit ISK-students due to fear of worse evaluation of the school.	
<i>VO-raad (2018), 'Meer Kansen met Maatwerk voor Nieuwkomersleerlingen'.</i>	Brochure for secondary schools to understand how they can individualize education for newcomers.	Prolonged intake process in ISK-schools.	Uncertainty in possibilities for individualization of education for newcomers by secondary schools.	Encourage additional Dutch lessons for newcomers. Give professionals regarding newcomer education space to individualize education. Encourage contact between newcomers, other students, and the teacher. Prioritize creating a safe learning space for all students. Pre-teaching. Provide a primary contact for newcomer students, but also fir teachers with newcomer students in class, within secondary schools. Buddy projects.

Appendix C – Informed Consent Experts**rijksuniversiteit
groningen**

Beste participant,

Heel fijn dat u mee wil werken aan een interview over de algemene procedure rondom de schakel van een Internationale Schakelklas (ISK) naar het voortgezet onderwijs (VO), en de sterke punten en valkuilen daarvan.

Dit interview zal gebruikt worden voor mijn masterscriptie dat zich focust op faciliterende factoren voor nieuwkomerleerlingen voor de schakel naar het VO. Dit gesprek zal worden opgenomen. De opnames zullen alleen door mij beluisterd worden, en worden na het afronden van het onderzoek verwijderd. De resultaten van het interview zullen anoniem verwerkt worden.

Na het interview mag u contact opnemen als u twijfelt, of aanvullingen heeft op wat u heeft verteld. Het is ook een mogelijkheid om het transcript naderhand te ontvangen.

- Ik wil graag het transcript ontvangen en nalezen;
- Ik wil graag het onderzoeksrapport ontvangen.

Te allen tijde mag u aangeven dat u niet meer mee wilt doen met het onderzoek. Mocht u nog vragen hebben kunt u mij bereiken op: 06-36104401, of per email: i.berman@student.rug.nl.

Alvast bedankt!

Hartelijke groet,

Isabel Berman

Toestemmingsformulier

Bij het ondertekenen van dit formulier geef ik toestemming aan de onderzoeker voor:

- Het afnemen van een interview;
- Het opnemen van het interview;
- Het verwerken van de gegevens van het interview;
- Het opslaan en archiveren van verzamelde gegevens;
- Het geanonimiseerd publiceren van de gegevens in een onderzoeksrapport.

Datum en plaats:

Handtekening participant

Appendix D – Interview Guide Experts

Introductie

Ik doe onderzoek naar de ervaringen van oud-ISK leerlingen over de schakel naar het voortgezet onderwijs. Ik wil graag hun meningen naar voren brengen middels mijn onderzoek. Daarvoor moet ik eerst een beter beeld creëren over deze overgang.

Beeld van expert

Zou u kort kunnen vertellen wat uw rol is binnen het ISK-onderwijs?

Algemene procedure

Zou u een beeld kunnen schetsen van een algemene schoolloopbaan van een nieuwkomer vanaf de intake op de ISK, tot en met de overgang naar het voortgezet onderwijs?

Hoe verloopt dit op uw school?

Wie speelt welke rol (schakelcoach, nieuwe school, mentoren, ouders, leerlingen)?

Is de leerling over het algemeen nog in beeld bij de ISK na de schakel?

Op welke manier worden de leerlingen voorbereid op het doorstromen naar het voortgezet onderwijs?

Informatie over nieuwe school, deelschakel, meeloopdagen

Valkuilen en Sterke punten

Wat zijn volgens u knelpunten in de huidige procedure?

Waar lopen leerlingen volgens u vaak tegenaan in de schakel naar het voortgezet onderwijs?

Taal, sociale integratie, nieuwe omgeving, minder individuele steun, doelgroep vluchtelingen

Waar lopen schakelcoaches/docenten/mentoren tegenaan in de schakel naar het voortgezet onderwijs?

In de hulp aan leerlingen, contact met nieuwe school, follow-up, verschillende procedures bij verschillende ISKs

Wat zijn volgens u de sterke punten van de bestaande procedure?

Verschillende soorten overdracht, verlengde intake

Wat voor invloed heeft de bestaande procedure voor de schakel naar het VO op de schoolloopbaan van nieuwkomerleerlingen na de schakel?

Als u volledige vrijheid had in het aanpassen van het beleid, procedures etc. aangaande de schakel naar het VO, wat zou u dan veranderen?

Verkendend

Ik wil me vooral richten op faciliterende factoren voor ISK-leerlingen die overgaan naar het VO. In uw ervaring, wat zijn factoren die leerlingen helpen bij de overgang naar het VO?

Aanvulling

Wilt u nog wat toevoegen aan wat u heeft verteld naar aanleiding van de vragen?

Geven de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven een duidelijk beeld van uw visie op dit gebied?

Wilt u nog iets herformuleren?

Heeft u nog feedback voor mij als interviewer?

Heeft u tips omtrent het interviewen van nieuwkomerleerlingen?

Literatuur on topic

Appendix E – Facilitating and Thwarting Factors According to ISK-experts

Table 3

Facilitating Factors for the Transition to Secondary School According to ISK-experts

Facilitating factor	Example/Clarification
Using similar methods (i.e., books, material) as used in most secondary schools.	<i>“We chose to use secondary school methods instead of NT2-methods because that transition was already big, but becomes even bigger because teachers talk fast, everyone speaks Dutch, and it becomes a big web that [newcomer] students can’t keep up with”</i> (Mentor/Transition coach).
Individualized education in the ISK helping to make proper estimations for each student.	<i>“We always look at the student, that they don’t stay longer than necessary, and also the other way around. If it would be wise to stay in the ISK for half a year more because then you can transition to a better-fitting level then we choose for them to stay longer”</i> (Mentor/Transition coach).
Having a similar school climate in the ISK and secondary school: One putting individualized education on top.	<i>“The schools that are easiest to work with are those that apply the same individualized focus as we do. Those that just check: What is the starting position? What does this student need? And that skip the whole part of: ‘Oh okay!’, but immediately think: This is the student, this is what they need, how will we arrange this? That is the best collaboration.”</i> (Dean).
Having one primary contact in both the secondary school and the ISK for communication regarding the students.	<i>“The applications always go through me because then the secondary schools have one clear address for communication if they have any question. You lose control easily... In the past is turned out that having several points of contact didn’t work because you don’t use the same methods or agreements.”</i> (Dean).
Warm transition optimally including a talk with the new mentor to ensure transfer of relevant information concerning the student.	<i>“That with the new mentor, and the current mentor, if that already works out, and otherwise with a care coordinator or team leader or whatever and you just have a conversation about the student. We want to work toward having the student present as well, but that wasn’t possible yet due to corona. But that would be optimal.”</i> (Care coordinator).
Buddy-projects when tracked and organized well.	<i>“I contact the secondary school as soon as I can to communicate that certain students will come to their school, and if it’s necessary I already include some information on them so we can already discuss what might be needed for them, but also to invite them to think with us how to receive this student, or how to guide them.”</i> (Dean).
Partial transitions, short internships, or student-for-a-day projects.	<i>“Students can take care of each other. It doesn’t always have to be the mentor, it can also be a student that simply asks: ‘Hey, are you managing, are you aware of the homework for tomorrow, did you understand everything in class?’, those kinds of things.”</i> (Care coordinator).
Keeping track of former ISK-student’s progress.	<i>“[In secondary school during short internships] they have to pay attention to how the children do their homework, what happens if they’re late for class, all kinds of assignments, and then also just following the classes. Secondary schools get prepared well and help organize it, and afterwards we have brief evaluation talks with the teachers.”</i> (Care coordinator).
Keeping track of former ISK-student’s progress.	<i>“When the students just transferred I contact the mentors and teachers to ask how the transition went, whether we [ISK-school] can provide any support still... Then halfway through the schoolyear I contact them again, and at the end of the year again. We keep track</i>

Facilitating factor	Example/Clarification
The rise of expertise centers informing secondary schools on newcomer students.	<i>whether they pass on to the next year, whether they might go to a higher level, just how they are as well.” (Ambulatory supervisor)</i> <i>“We [expertise center] also provide information meetings for teachers, or we sit in with meetings with a newcomer student that isn’t doing very well, and we think with them. We can also provide coaching in classes, or even think with the schools on budgets. Basically anything the school is in need for.” (Care coordinator).</i>

Table 4*Thwarting Factors for the Transition to Secondary School According to ISK-experts*

Thwarting factor	Example/Clarification
Differences in reception of newcomer students within secondary schools are very big. All described it as often moving from a ‘warm bath’ to a ‘cold shower’	<p>“Once they’re in school there... what we mostly hear from the students is that the school here [ISK] is a warm bath, a warm nest, we speak slowly, we are considerate toward them, we take them into consideration, we listen, and on the secondary school everything goes very quick, and it’s all colder and more formal and a lot, that is what we hear back.” (Mentor/Transition coach).</p> <p>“We have a regional function as ISK-school, so some of our students live far away and then want to transition to a secondary school nearby, and often that’s a school that has no clue what to do with newcomer students [...] and in other schools they blend right in” (Dean).</p>
The VO-raad rules are still limiting the newcomer student’s educational potential.	<p>“Well, right now when a newcomer student transitions to first grade, you basically have to follow all language courses. So French, and German, and Dutch, and English. When they transition to second grade, they can drop one of the languages.” (Mentor/Transition coach)</p> <p>“After six years you don’t command Dutch a 100%, I would vouch for children always getting extra time, getting access to extra arrangements even within vocational schools or universities of applied science, encourage it! Encourage them following education.” (Mentor/Transition coach).</p>
Lack of involvement of parents in secondary schools.	<p>“Well and you notice, I also have children in secondary school, and you are needed regularly with planning or organizing for example. When, as a parent, you aren’t familiar with the school then that makes that very difficult” (Care coordinator).</p> <p>“We do that here [in the ISK] quite a bit, or actually the parent committee does that. But the new school should also invest time in including the parents, in explaining how everything works there.” (Care coordinator).</p>
Lack of follow-up research on effectiveness of implemented interventions.	<p>“I think the question of: ‘Is what we’re doing eventually actually effective?’, is really asked too little. It is kind of the shifting of responsibility, so if you, as a school, invest in hiring a NT2-expert, then you do have to question whether that expert is actually giving useful guidance, and whether it’s really effective.” (Dean).</p> <p>“Some schools provide a buddy, that before the transfer they already have contact with another student that will guide them. It seems perfect, but in practice... They’re still teenagers that will eventually think: ‘a buddy, I don’t feel like that at all!’, or they think it’s awkward or something.” (Dean).</p>
Effects of COVID-19 on implementation of usual interventions.	<p>“Of course, during corona, I don’t want to speak of deficiencies, because of course that’s a matter of how you see things, what your expectations are. Students developed incredibly well still during corona. However, they did have less Dutch stimulation, we do notice that, and we can invest to increase that, but for secondary schools this is another obstacle.” (Care coordinator).</p>
Strained communication between secondary schools and ISK-schools.	<p>“That a school does not fully receive the information, that it doesn’t arrive at the right people, and then later on I have to deal with that and I get questions like: what is going on with them? Then it turns out that the warm transition didn’t fully come through to everyone” (Ambulatory supervisor).</p>
Language deficiency.	<p>“Vocabulary, so language really is, not for all students, but for a lot it’s a big deficiency on the new school, and they have to work very</p>

Thwarting factor	Example/Clarification
Cultural differences in curriculum.	<p><i>hard to get to that level” (Ambulatory supervisor).</i></p> <p><i>“Last year there was a Thai boy that transitioned to vmbo and then he receives a history book full of western history about the Second World War, and coming from Thailand, he is not aware of that part at all, so he misses a lot of context. Then on top of that it is also a book that is quite difficult to understand” (Dean).</i></p>
Secondary schools’ hesitance to admit newcomer students out of an underestimation of cognitive capacities and a certain helplessness regarding newcomer students.	<p><i>“There’s also schools that say: ‘That does not suit us, you start here, you participate in all subjects. Either you participate, or you do not fit here, then just go to a lower level, or look for another school. We have so little NT2-students, we do not have the capacity to invest in that, we already have children with dyslexia, with autism, with ADHD, at some point it’s enough.’” (Mentor/Transition coach).</i></p>
Lack of solidarity between ISK-schools and secondary schools.	<p><i>“We can’t say... they can’t shift responsibility toward us like: ‘Well, that’s not possible, it’s simply not possible that we admit that student’, then I think: ‘Well, of course not, the student has to come to you, they shouldn’t be in ISK-schools forever? [...] The ISK is just there to make the transition possible, that’s why we exist, but it’s a very twisted idea that we carry the responsibility for these newcomers. It’s weird because we carry that responsibility as a society, they are here, we have to give them equal chances, that’s a responsibility for all.” (Dean).</i></p>
Lack of NT2-knowledge on secondary schools.	<p><i>“There are quite some mentors that want to see these students with a fresh pair of eyes, and that’s why they say that they won’t read the file, because then they’d be prejudiced, well, that’s a shame. Another thing is that teachers in secondary schools lack knowledge on NT2-students, so they do not really meet their needs.” (Ambulatory supervisor)</i></p> <p><i>“There’s schools that are very open to receive them but it comes from a motivation like: ‘Oh those poor refugees’. Well, that’s another extreme, and that is very cringy because we think: ‘well, they’re not all piteous, and they also don’t all have major trauma’, so that motivation is also too extreme. You just need some expertise, think like they are any normal student, they don’t always need special treatment.” (Dean).</i></p>

Appendix F – Informed Consent Newcomer Student

INFORMATIE OVER HET ONDERZOEK

“VAN DE ISK NAAR DE MIDDELBARE SCHOOL”

➤ **Waarom krijg ik deze informatie?**

- Je bent uitgenodigd om mee te doen aan dit onderzoek omdat jij de overstap hebt gemaakt van een Internationale Schakelklas naar een middelbare school, en hierover jouw ervaringen wil delen.
- Dit onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door Isabel Berman, en begeleid door Dr. Josje van der Linden.

➤ **Moet ik meedoen aan dit onderzoek?**

Meedoen aan het onderzoek is vrijwillig. Wel is je toestemming nodig. Lees deze informatie daarom goed door. Stel alle vragen die je misschien hebt, bijvoorbeeld omdat je iets niet begrijpt. Pas daarna besluit je of je mee wil doen. Als je besluit om niet mee te doen, hoeft je niet uit te leggen waarom, en zal dit geen negatieve gevolgen voor je hebben. Dit recht geldt op elk moment, dus ook nadat je hebt toegestemd in deelname aan het onderzoek.

➤ **Waarom dit onderzoek?**

Vanuit de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen doe ik onderzoek naar het onderwijs voor nieuwkomer leerlingen. Voor mijn Masterscriptie onderzoek ik welke factoren leerlingen van de Internationale Schakelklas helpen bij de overgang van de ISK naar een middelbare school. Een belangrijk aspect van mijn onderzoek is om de meningen van de leerlingen zelf in kaart te brengen door middel van interviews.

➤ **Wat vragen we van je tijdens het onderzoek?**

- Er wordt toestemming tot deelname gevraagd.
- Een interview wordt afgenomen met jou over jouw ervaringen toen jij de overstap maakte van de ISK naar de middelbare school.
- Het interview zal ongeveer 45 minuten duren.
- Het interview wordt opgenomen.

➤ **Welke gevolgen kan deelname hebben?**

- Door jouw ervaringen te delen kan jij mij meehelpen met het onderzoeken van wat ISK-leerlingen kan helpen bij de overstap naar een middelbare school.

➤ **Hoe gaan we met jouw gegevens om?**

- De uitkomsten van het interview worden gebruikt voor het uitwerken van de resultaten voor de scriptie, en het schrijven van de scriptie.
- De uitkomsten van het interview worden geanalyseerd door de onderzoeker alleen. Gegevens worden anoniem verwerkt en er worden pseudoniemen (een bedachte naam) gebruikt om voorbeelden te geven in de scriptie.

➤ Wat moet je nog meer weten?

Je mag altijd vragen stellen over het onderzoek: nu, tijdens het onderzoek, en na afloop. Dit kan door mij te e-mailen (i.berman@student.rug.nl) of te bellen (+31636104401), maar mag ook tijdens het interview nog gevraagd worden.

Heb je vragen/zorgen over jouw rechten als onderzoeksdeelnemer of de uitvoering van het onderzoek? Je kan hierover ook contact opnemen met de Ethische Commissie Gedrags- en Maatschappijwetenschappen van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen: ec-bss@rug.nl.

Heb je vragen of zorgen over hoe er met jouw persoonsgegevens wordt omgegaan? Je kan hierover ook contact opnemen met de Functionaris Gegevensbescherming van de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen: privacy@rug.nl.

Als onderzoeksdeelnemer heb je recht op een kopie van deze onderzoeksinformatie.

Scrol naar beneden voor het toestemmingsformulier.

GEÏNFORMEERDE TOESTEMMING
“VAN DE ISK NAAR DE MIDDELBARE SCHOOL”

- Ik heb de informatie over het onderzoek gelezen. Ik heb genoeg gelegenheid gehad om er vragen over te stellen.
- Ik begrijp waar het onderzoek over gaat, wat er van me gevraagd wordt, welke gevolgen deelname kan hebben, hoe er met mijn gegevens wordt omgegaan, en wat mijn rechten als deelnemer zijn.
- Ik begrijp dat deelname aan het onderzoek vrijwillig is. Ik kies er zelf voor om mee te doen. Ik kan op elk moment stoppen met meedoen. Als ik stop, hoef ik niet uit te leggen waarom. Stoppen zal geen negatieve gevolgen voor mij hebben.

Bij het ondertekenen van dit formulier geef ik toestemming aan de onderzoeker voor:

- Het afnemen van een interview;
- Het opnemen van het interview;
- Het verwerken van de gegevens van het interview;
- Het opslaan en archiveren van verzamelde gegevens;
- Het geanonimiseerd publiceren van de gegevens in een onderzoeksrapport.

Volledige naam deelnemer :	Handtekening deelnemer :	Datum:

Volledige naam ouder/verzorger :	Handtekening ouder/verzorger :	Datum:

Je hebt recht op een kopie van dit toestemmingsformulier.

Appendix G – Interview Guide Newcomer Students

Introductie

Ik ben Isabel en doe onderzoek naar de ervaringen van leerlingen zoals jij die de overstap naar de middelbare school hebben gemaakt. Ik wil graag te weten komen wat voor dingen jou wel en niet zo geholpen hebben. Dit gaat dus helemaal om jouw ervaring, er is geen goed of fout.

Wie ben ik?

Kan je me iets over jezelf vertellen?

Wil je mij nog iets vragen?

Persoonlijke Informatie

Hoe oud ben je?

Waar kom je vandaan?

Hoe lang ben je nu in Nederland?

Hoe lang heb je op de ISK gezeten?

Wanneer heb jij de overstap gemaakt van de ISK naar de middelbare school?

De Overstap

Hoe zag het laatste jaar van de ISK eruit voor jou?

Heb jij een stage gedaan?

Andere vakken gevolgd?

Een gesprek op de nieuwe school gehad?

Heb je eerst kennis gemaakt op de nieuwe school voordat je de overstap maakte?

Denk je dat de ISK jou goed heeft voorbereid om naar de middelbare school te gaan?

Waarom?

Wat voor specifieke dingen hebben jou geholpen bij de overstap?

Heb je daar een voorbeeld van?

Wat is belangrijk om goed de overstap naar de nieuwe school te maken?

Wat was jouw eerste indruk van de nieuwe middelbare school?

Dacht je ook dat het zo zou worden toen je op de ISK zat?

Wat is er anders aan deze school dan op de ISK?

Hoe is de overstap van de ISK naar de middelbare school bij jou gegaan?

Wat voor cijfer zou je de overstap geven?

Waarom?

Wat vond jij fijn aan de overstap?

Voorbeeld?

Wat vond jij moeilijk aan de overstap?

Voorbeeld?

Hoe ging het met de nieuwe vakken?

Wat is je favoriete vak?

Wat is je minst favoriete vak?

Hoe ging het met het leren en huiswerk doen?

Hoe ging het met de nieuwe leerlingen om je heen? Lukte het een beetje om vrienden te maken?

Hoe ging het met de docenten?

Vraag je dingen aan medeleerlingen?

Wat heeft jou het meeste geholpen bij de overstap?

Heb je goed contact met je mentor?

Was er een specifiek iemand die jou het meest heeft geholpen bij de overstap?

Welke school vind je het leukst?

Waarom?

Miste je de ISK?

Wat vond je het fijnst aan de ISK?

Wat vond je minder fijn aan de ISK?

Wat vind je het leukst aan op de middelbare school zitten?

Wat vind je minder leuk aan de middelbare school?

Heb je nog contact met andere ISK-leerlingen?

Hoe ging de overgang bij hen?

Wat vonden zij moeilijk aan de overgang?

Wat ging goed bij hen?

Vraag over eerste dag?

Weet jij bij wie jij om hulp kan vragen?

Ouders/verzorger(s)?

Wat kan de ISK een leerling nog meer leren dat ze misschien helpt bij de overstap?

Wat kunnen ze op de middelbare school doen om de overstap makkelijker te maken?

Als jij nu alle macht in de wereld had om iets aan die overstap te veranderen voor de toekomstige leerlingen, wat zou jij dan veranderen?

methodes

Afsluiter

Is er nog iets heel belangrijks dat we nog niet hebben besproken, maar dat wel heel belangrijk voor jou was tijdens de overstap?

Wat vond je van dit interview?

Appendix H - Codebook Newcomer Interviews**Code**

 Adapting to secondary school

 communication ISK-VO

 Contact with "own" culture

 Create opportunity for Dutch practice

 Differences in ISK-schools

 differences in secondary schools

 Differences ISK and secondary school classes

 Different level than expected

 Different methods ISK and secondary school

 Difficulty Dutch System

 Difficulty learning Dutch in ISK with foreign students

 extra language lessons secondary school

 Follow-up education for parents

 getting to know new teachers

 Gratefulness for opportunity

 Help by students easier than teacher

 Helped adapting by Dutch students

 High value on getting to know secondary school

 High value on learning Dutch in ISK

 Importance of friends

 Improvement: individual attention in secondary school

 Improvement: mixing mothertongues in ISK

 Improvement: support secondary school

 Improvement ISK

 Improvement ISK: using methods secondary school

 ISK focus on Dutch

 ISK mixed classes levels

 ISK small, secondary school big

 Learning Dutch

Code

Learning Dutch fast in secondary school
Learning Dutch: Activities outside school
Learning Dutch: being young
Learning Dutch: Friends in secondary school
Learning Dutch: Friends outside ISK
Learning Dutch: having Dutch friends
Learning Dutch: Learning Dutch on the ISK
Learning Dutch: making-mistakes mentality
Less individual attention in secondary school
Limited contact with Dutch children
More courses in secondary school
More surrounded by Dutch students
no contact ISK after transition
Older age no motivation
Opportunities for growth
Parental involvement in education
Parents and Dutch education
Partial transition
Partial transition: communication ISK-VO
Partial transition: Courses for future direction
Preference for secondary school
Preperation ISK
Preperation ISK: getting to know the NL
Preperation ISK: learning about secondary school
Preperation ISK: methods secondary school
Primarily contact with teachers in ISK
secondary school mentor
short internship in secondary school
Short internship: learning about secondary school
Short internship: transition less scary

Code

Similar cultures/backgrounds in ISK
Social-emotional: be like a normal student
Social-emotional: being eager and curious
Social-emotional: being older than others is difficult
Social-emotional: Being young
Social-emotional: expressing needs
Social-emotional: home situation
Social-emotional: Language deficiency after transition
Social-emotional: Making friends
student-for-a-day in new class
support from teacher
Support in ISK: mentor
Support in ISK
Support secondary school
Transition in middle of the year
Transition to higher classes
Transition with other ISK students
unawareness teachers secondary school
Use of VO-rules
Using phone/laptop to find words
varying motivation to learn Dutch in ISK
visit ISK after transition
