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I. What is the Diagnostic Assessment (DA)?

The Diagnostic Assessment (DA) is a study that measures **basic competences**. Although it uses the current curriculum as a reference, it is not linked to the specific curriculum development carried out in each school.

Its aim is to measure the ability of students to activate and use relevant knowledge to deal with certain situations and problems related to a specific area. In other words, as well as knowledge, it involves having the ability to select and apply appropriate lessons learnt and use them in given situations to solve problems in various situations and contexts associated with their personal and educational experience.

Basic competences are those that are considered to be necessary and beneficial for any individual and for society as a whole and, to a certain degree, they are commonly understood to be “the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for all individuals to lead a full life as active members of society”.

This assessment was carried out for the first time in the 2008-09 academic year,

with a total of **six editions** of the DA having been performed to date. All tests have been carried out using **computers** since 2013.

This assessment is carried out jointly by **three of the Department’s services**: the Basque Institute for Research and Evaluation in Education (ISEI-IVEI), the Education Inspectorate and the Teacher Support Services (*Berritzeguneak*). The items on the tests were prepared by a team of experts in each competence, coordinated by the ISEI-IVEI.

As well as testing performance in basic competences, the students and managers from the schools also completed **context questionnaires**, which make it possible to identify variables and factors associated with better or worse academic performance.

The Diagnostic Assessment for Primary Education was carried out between 6 and 17 March 2017 and for Compulsory Secondary Education between 20 and 31 March 2017.

The Diagnostic Assessment is:

- a **widespread assessment**, with the participation of all students from the 4th year (aged nine) of Primary Education (PE) and the 2nd year (aged 14) of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE), who are educated in schools that are publicly funded.
- an **external assessment**. The testing of students is carried out by staff from outside the school and quality control is the responsibility of the Education Inspectorate and the ISEI-IVEI, except for certain aspects of linguistic competences (such as written expression) which were assessed with internal staff from the ISEI-IVEI;
- a **standardised assessment**, so every student is assessed based on the same protocols and instructions;
- an **inclusive assessment**. All students being educated at the assessed levels participate in this evaluation so, insofar as is possible, every effort is made to adapt the formats of the tests;
- is **instructional and provides guidance** for the schools and it is informative for the families and the education system.

Since it started in 2009, the Diagnostic Assessment has been divided into two parts:

- On the one hand, a **fixed part** in which every edition has assessed the three most instrumental competences

–linguistic communication competence in Basque and Spanish and mathematical competence–, with the aim of obtaining a more accurate and continuous measurement of their situation.

- On the other hand, a **variable part**, in which the other competences defined in the current regulations are successively assessed.

The following tables show the competences that have been assessed in each edition and the format used for testing (paper or computer) and, additionally, how the tests were organised in the primary (PE) and secondary (CSE) schools.

BASIC COMPETENCES		DA09	DA10	DA11	DA13	DA15	DA17
EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT	Linguistic communication competence in Basque	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Linguistic communication competence in Spanish	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Linguistic communication competence in English			✓		✓	✓
	Mathematical competence	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Competence in science, technology and health. ¹	✓			✓	✓	
	Scientific competence						✓
	Social and civic competence		✓		✓		
	Learning to learn competence				✓		
	Competence in information processing and digital skills					Piloted	

First day of testing			Second day of testing		
Competences	Duration		Competences	Duration	
	4 th PE	2 nd CSE		4 th PE	2 nd CSE
Linguistic communication in Spanish	45'	55'	Linguistic communication in Basque	45'	55'
Short break	5'		Short break	5'	
Mathematical competence	45'	55'	Linguistic communication in English	45'	55'
Long break	20'		Long break	20'	
Scientific competence	35'	45'	Questionnaire	30'	
Total (including breaks and presentations)	2h 45'	3,15'	Total (including breaks and presentations)	2h 40'	3,00'

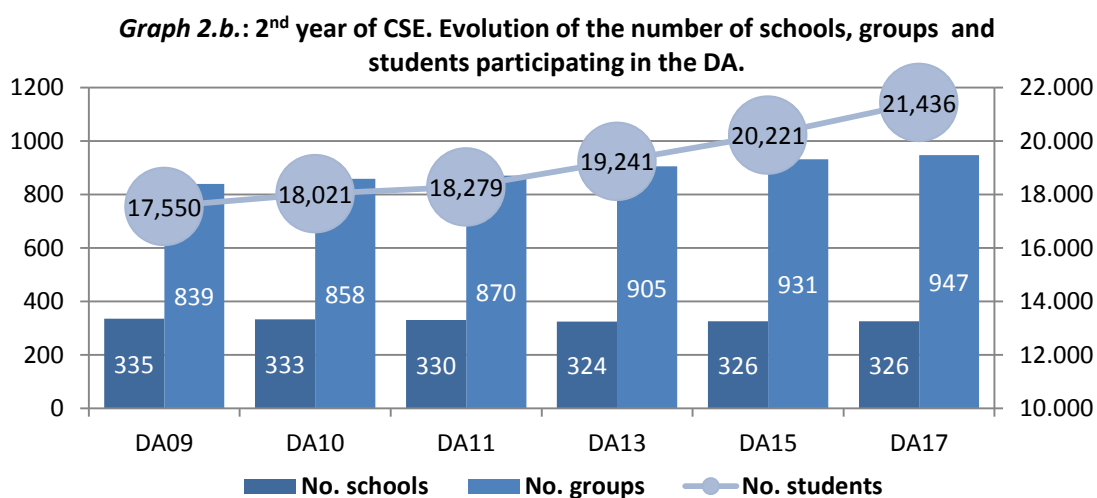
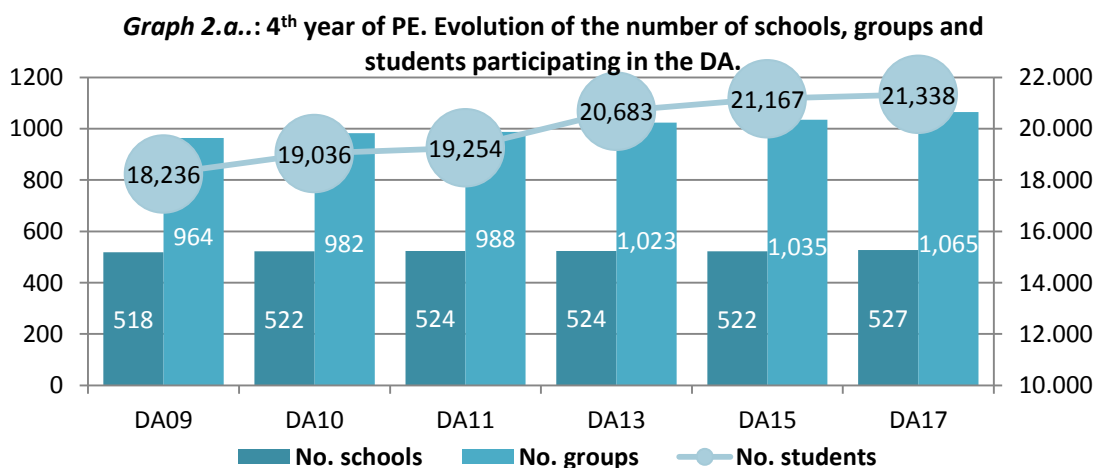
¹ Following Decree 236/2015, *competence in science, technology and health* disappeared and was replaced by *scientific competence*. In ED13, *competence in science, technology and health* and *social and civic competence* were assessed together. Therefore, the results for this competence in ED13 should be treated with some caution when comparing them with the results in ED09, ED15 and ED17.

2. What population was assessed?

As noted above, this is a widespread assessment and, therefore, as in previous years, in 2017 testing involved all students being educated at publicly funded schools (publicly-owned or private subsidized private schools) from the 4th year of

Primary Education (PE) (21,338 students) and the 2nd year of Compulsory Secondary Education (CSE) (21,436 students).

The population assessed in the six editions of the DA are shown in the following graphs:



As can be seen, the number of students who have been assessed over the years in each DA has increased. 2017 was the edition with the highest number of students assessed, both in the 4th year of PE and the 2nd year of CSE. If the figures from 2017 are compared with those from 2009, 3,102 additional students were assessed from the 4th year of Primary Education and an extra 3,886 students were evaluated from the 2nd year in Compulsory Secondary Education.

As stipulated in the Order on Diagnostic Assessments, and as is common in international assessments, the scores obtained by some students were not included when calculating the average scores of the schools and groups:

- Students who officially have special educational needs (Adaptaciones Curriculares Individuales or ACI), whose situation prevents them from doing the tests.

- Immigrant students who have been educated in the Basque education system for less than one year and who

are not familiar with the language used in the tests.

3. How has the percentage of each stratum changed in the DA?

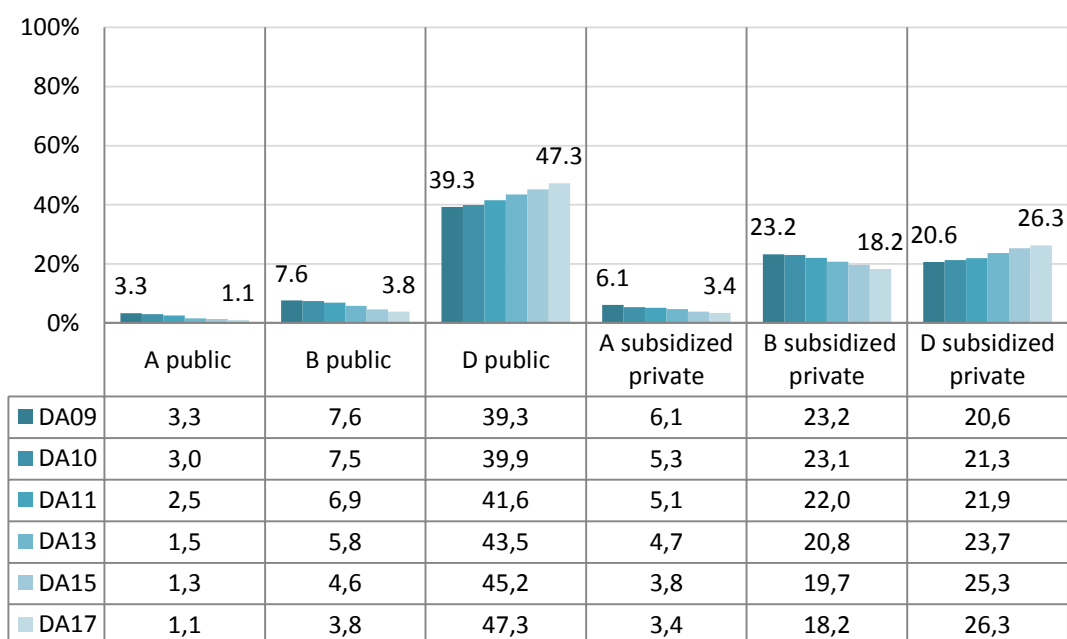
The Basque education system is divided into two networks and three linguistic models. Six strata have arisen from the combination of both variables, and these are used as a reference in the Diagnostic Assessment.

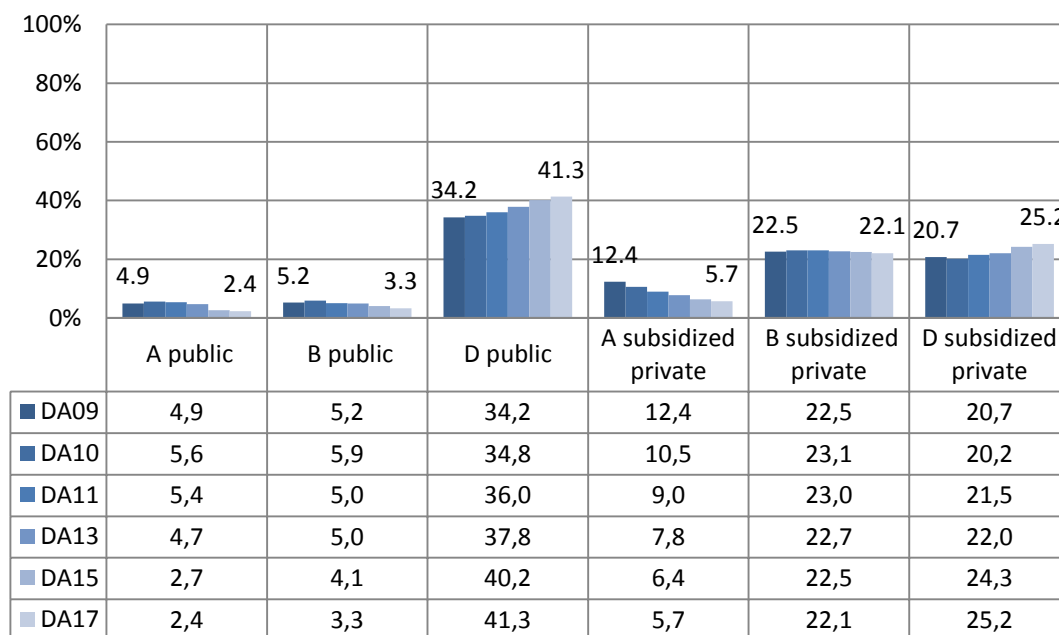
The characteristics of these six strata and the percentage that they represent in the system have changed over time. In fact, since the Diagnostic Assessment began in 2009, the percentage of students being educated in each stratum has varied

significantly. This information must be taken into account when putting into context and evaluating some of the analyses of the results used in this report.

The following graphs show the variations in the percentage of students in each stratum in the six editions of the Diagnostic Assessment.

Graph 3.a.: 4th year of PE. Evolution of students percentage by strata.



Graph 3.b.: 2nd year of CSE. Evolution of students percentage by strata.

In both DA17 and DA15, we can see a rise in the percentage of students represented in the D model, whether publicly owned or subsidized private. If we compare the figures from 2009 and 2007, we can see that:

- The percentage in public stratum A continues to fall and, of all the editions, is at its lowest in 2017. At this time, it only represents 1.1% in the 4th year of PE and 2.4% in the 2nd year of CSE.
- The percentage of the assessed population in the subsidized private A stratum also continues to fall. Between 2009 and 2017, the number of students in each stage fell by around 50%.
- The public B stratum is progressively losing students, educating 3.8% in primary education and 3.3% in CSE.
- The percentage in the subsidized private B stratum has been falling since

2009, but to a lesser degree; in 2017 it still represents one in five students.

- The public D stratum is the one with the most clear and continuous growth: it has increased by between 7 and 8 percent since 2009. In 2017 it covers 47.3% (4th year of PE) and 41.3% (2nd year of CSE) of the entire assessed population.
- The subsidized private D stratum is also progressing, although to a lesser degree than the same model in the public network: 5.7% in the 4th year of PE and 4.5% in the 2nd year of CSE.

In both graphs, we can see that the trends for the percentage of students in each stratum are similar in 4th year of PE and 2nd year of CSE throughout every edition of the Diagnostic Assessment.