

Data analysis

The data are obtained from the registration system the school uses. They are a good though not perfect indication of the drop-out rate. When students change classes, or when a class is split because the given number of students is getting too big, these students are marked as 'written out', although they are still taking a(nother) course. Only in the last case - of classes being split in two - it was possible to correct the numbers. Therefore, the drop-out rates are presumably (slightly) overrated.

NT2 (Dutch for foreigners) 1.1

There is no compulsory attendance in adult education (in general), although NT2-students who obtain a living wage are (sometimes) financially penalized when missing classes. Students who are doing a so-called 'integration course' sign a contract in which they agree to achieving a 1.2 level of Dutch (A2). Nowadays a 1.2 level is mandatory in Flanders for matters like social housing.

Level 1.1 consists a 'personal' and a 'public' part. Although the two parts lead to one certificate and either of the two courses is taught by the same teacher, they are treated as different groups in this analysis, following the data.

In school year 2016-2017 the number of students enrolled was 922. 217 of them didn't finish the course. This makes for a drop-out rate of **23,5%**.

The **focus group** consists of asylum seekers residing in two asylum centers in the city of Sint-Niklaas. They amount to **11,9%** of the total group of enrolled students. This is the most fragile group of refugee students. They are - without having obtained a residence permit - living in a situation of great instability, with the ever present possibility of being sent back (either to their country of origin or the country of entrance in Europe). This group, moreover, has no obligation whatsoever to take the courses. As a result, it is no surprise that the drop-out rate for this group is higher: **36,4%**.

There are day courses and evening courses. The **evening courses** are most commonly taken by students who work during the day.

Within the **day courses**, different trajectories are provided: a **standard trajectory (2 times a week, 60 hours)**, an **intensive trajectory (4 times a week, 60 hours)**, and a **lengthened trajectory (90 hours)**. The lengthened courses are meant for students who have a background of lower schooling and therefore require more time. Traditionally, intensive courses are organised for stronger students. Lately, students are often advised to take an intensive course to speed up their education (and obtain their certificate more quickly) rather than because of their capabilities. This blurs the differentiation which was envisioned with the different trajectories, and has led to a wider disparity within the class groups. As a consequence, the difference between the different trajectories is somewhat levelled out.

Schematically, the results for 1.1 look like this:

2016-2017	total number of enrolled students	general drop-out rate (%)	focus group % of total group	drop-out rate focus group (%)
1.1 (total)	922	23,5	11,9	36,4

2016-2017	total number of enrolled students	general drop-out rate (%)	focus group % of total group	drop-out rate focus group (%)
evening courses	249	25,7	10,4	30,8
day courses	673	22,7	12,5	38
standard day courses	275	21,1	12,4	35,3
intensive day courses	258	26	13,2	47,1
lengthened day courses	140	21,4	8,6	33

About one fourth of the students enrolled thus quit the course before its end. In the case of the focus group the drop-out rate amounts to about one third.

There are, contrarily to what was expected, no significant differences between day and evening courses. The different trajectories show similar drop-out rates. Only the drop-out rate in the intensive course is considerably higher for the focus group. The higher speed with which the subject matter has to be acquired combined with the increasingly failing differentiation policy, might explain this particular phenomenon.

The comparison with higher levels looks like this:

2016-2017	total number of enrolled students	general drop-out rate (%)	focus group % of total group	drop-out rate focus group (%)
1.1 (A1)	922	23,5	11,9	36,4
1.2 (A2)	948	17,7	11,6	30
2.1 (B1)	826	28	8,7	37,5
2.2 (B1)	510	27,1	7,8	42,5
2.3 (B1)	308	24,1	4,5	21,4
2.4 (B1)	227	24,2	6,2	57,1
3 (B2)	46	41,3	0	0

Thus, the drop-out rate of the focus group is persistently higher than the general drop-out rate. The figures show how the percentage of the focus group (in proportion to the total group) diminishes as the levels get higher. This is no surprise, since asylum seekers don't stay in that status forever. However, it is somewhat surprising to find out that the general drop-out rates over different levels are to a certain extent comparable, especially since the focus group - with a clearly higher drop-out rate - decreases over time.

The drop-out rate in 1.2 is considerably lower compared to the other levels. This can be attributed to factors of extrinsic motivation. As stated in the introduction, obtaining a 1.2 level of Dutch opens a lot of doors, such as improved access to social housing, the acquiring of the Belgian nationality, and a permanent employment contract. It can be presumed that the high drop-out rate in level 3 is skewed by the low number of enrolled students, resulting in percentages that don't represent patterns any longer.

Nursing assistant

This vocational training ultimately leads to a diploma of secondary education. It can be modularly assembled by the students and consists of three levels, all of which lead to a certificate that is recognised by the Flemish Community. The three levels build on each other.

As a holder of the first certificate - of ,logistic assistant' (**logistiek assistent**) - students can perform logistic tasks in health care environments. Holding the second certificate - that of ,verzorgende' - allows them to provide homecare. The their and last certificate - that of ,caring assistant' (**zorgkundige**) - permits them to assist nurses. The three certificates gradually increase students' job opportunities.

The **focus group** consists of (fully or partially) unemployed people who get an allowance. All of them are registered at VDAB, the Flemish job placement service. Most of them have signed a job training contract with this service. This might account for the consistently lower drop-out rates for the focus group in comparison to the total group. The contract serves as an extrinsic motivator.

The **vertical analysis** of the training looks like this:

2016-2017	total number of enrolled students	general drop-out rate (%)	focus group % of total group	drop-out rate focus group (%)
logistic assistant	884	22,6	12,3	16,5
verzorgende	1055	24,3	18,4	9,3
caring assistant	255	9,8	11	7,14
(total)	2194	21,9	15,1	11,5

The third certificate has a significantly lower drop-out rate. The combination of a - time wise - lighter programme (compared to the two preceding levels) with a considerable job opportunity growth might play a role here.

The training is given at **daytime (as a full-time or part-time programme) or in the evenings**. The training coordinator expected a lower drop-out rate in the evening courses. The figures prove her to be right, especially given the fact that the (externally motivated) focus group (with its lower drop-out rate) is almost absent here.

Her assumption was based on the students' motivation. Almost all evening students combine work with study. Hence, they have well deliberated their decision to receive the training and they turn out to be more committed to it.

This is how the **horizontal analysis** of the training looks:

2016-2017	total number of enrolled students	general drop-out rate (%)	focus group % of total group	drop-out rate focus group (%)
day courses	1456	26,6	21,6	11,1
evening courses	738	12,7	2,2	18,8