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ORIGINAL

IMPLEMENTATION OF KEY COMPETENCES: PERCEPTIONS OF HEADMASTERS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

IMPLANTACIÓN DE LAS COMPETENCIAS: PERCEPCIONES DE DIRECTIVOS Y DOCENTES DE EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose was to assess headmasters and Physical Education teachers' perceptions on the implementation of Key Competencies (KKCC). All the secondary schools located in Burgos (Spain) agreed to participate. A mixed research design was used. On one hand, an expert validated questionnaire was used to obtain data from all the headmasters (N=30) and all the heads of the Physical Education departments (N=30); on the other hand, a single case study was conducted in one of the schools. Headmasters highlighted that KKCC foster students' learning and help assess the whole learning process. Teachers underlined that the KKCC promote the use of different learning methods in class and they believed that cooperative learning strategies are needed. Age influenced headmasters' positive perception on KKCC, and teaching experience influenced teachers' perceptions. The single case study showed that PE teachers in the same department work differently the KKCC.

KEYWORDS: Key Competences, teacher perception, cooperation, student involvement, teaching strategies.

RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio fue conocer las percepciones que tienen sobre la implantación de las Competencias Básicas (CCBB) los equipos directivos y los docentes de Educación Física (EF). Participaron todos los centros de Educación Secundaria de la capital de Burgos (España). Se empleó una metodología mixta, utilizando un cuestionario validado para obtener datos de los directores (N=30) y de los jefes de departamento de EF (N=30) y un estudio de caso único. Los equipos directivos consideran que éstas potencian el aprendizaje del alumnado y favorecen la evaluación. Los docentes valoran la variedad de alternativas en el aula mediante el uso de metodologías cooperativas. La menor edad de los equipos directivos es un factor que influye en su percepción positiva, mientras que la menor experiencia es el factor determinante de esta percepción entre los docentes. El estudio de caso refleja que los profesores de EF de un mismo departamento trabajan de manera diferente las CCBB.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Competencias básicas, percepción del profesorado, cooperación, implicación del alumno, estrategias docentes.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, Key Competencies (CC) are seen as something more than just a curricular element in the field of education, as many international bodies recommend their use as a tool for the evaluation of learning experiences – the Delors Report (1996), the DeSeCo Project (OECD, 2002), the PISA Report (OECD, 2006, 2009) and the European Parliament and Council Recommendations on Educational Convergence (Council of the European Union, 2000, 2001, 2002a, 2002b). As established by the European Commission (EURYDICE, 2002), we should understand these “key competencies” as a collection of skills and knowledge that allow students to learn to regulate their own learning, applying this experience in their day-to-day reality. It is therefore essential that educational centres seek to establish joint proposals that allow for a coherent assessment of the acquisition of these competencies. The European Council and Parliament define these competencies in terms of eight domains, with the areas of learning to be worked on in each curricular subject clearly established. Focusing on the Spanish legislative framework, the most recent Education Act (LOMCE [*Ley Orgánica de Mejora de la Calidad Educativa*], 2013) states that competencies (previously referred to as basic competencies, now known as key competencies) are the most important of all curricular elements. All areas should therefore contribute to ensure a solid learning experience that can be readily transferred to a social reality.

This implementation of CCs, combined with a consistent evaluation of the knowledge thus acquired, has resulted in positive experiences in other countries (Halasz and Alain, 2011; Keating, 2009), showing greater student learning on finishing the compulsory education cycle. In Spain, a number of researchers have studied its importance and its bearing on the education system (Escamilla, 2008; Gómez-Pimpollo, Pérez-Pintado, Arreaza, 2007; Heras and Pérez-Pueyo, 2012; Moya and Luengo, 2009; Pérez-Pueyo, et al., 2013; Sarramona, 2004; Zabala and Arnau, 2007).

From a more practical standpoint, many academics have sought to define practical courses of action, some adopting a more deductive approach (Lleixá, 2007; Moya and Luengo 2009; the Atlántida Project, 2013; Pérez-Pueyo and Casanova, 2010; Pérez-Pueyo, et al., 2013; Zabala and Arnau, 2007), while others were more inductive (Barrachina and Blasco, 2012; Blázquez and Sebastiani, 2009; Díaz-Hernando, 2008; Escamilla, 2008; Grubb, 2012; Polo, 2010; Sarramona, 2004). Seeing such a large number of proposals, we can confirm that in Spain there is unanimity with regard to the desire to implement CC in a regular way. It would appear to be the case this is formal level, being done in terms of programming. However, recent research has highlighted the difficulty of its real introduction into the classroom (Méndez-Alonso, Méndez-Giménez and Fernández-Río, 2014 a & b), especially due to the lack of common criteria regarding its implementation, as each proposal brings with it a series of recommendations, based on modelled approaches, which in very many cases differ greatly between each other (Pérez-Pueyo et al., 2013). This complication is further aggravated by the fact that each

centre of learning has total pedagogical independence to adapt its organisational structures to the specific characteristics of the students, teachers and educational context. The choice of one or another approach in order to contribute to CCs is not solely based on the pedagogical criteria of each teacher, but also on the need for a certain coherence in the curricular and classroom programmes.

Researchers such as Hargreaves (2003) highlighted the resistance of those involved to any changes pursued in the field of education, and CCs are no exception. Following this line of argument, Fullam (2002) suggested that the introduction of an educational element such as CCs is a complex process, as it implies the active participation and commitment of the members of the educational community. The question is: "do they all have the same opinion?" Some people have therefore stressed the importance of looking into the process by which CCs are implemented from the various perspectives of those involved (Gordon et al., 2009).

In view of all of the above, the first study was proposed on the perceptions of those involved in the CC implementation process in the classroom: administrators, teachers and students. Based on this central idea, the following aims were established: (a) to analyse the evaluation of administrative and PE teaching staff with regard to the introduction of CCs in education centres; (b) to analyse to what extent age, the teachers' experience and the year that they are teaching have a bearing on the positive perception of key competencies; and, (c) to analyse the real work done by PE teachers at an educational centre with regard to CCs, including the students' perception.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. PARTICIPANTS

The type of sampling for participant selection, on the basis of convenience, covered all secondary education centres in the provincial capital city of Burgos, Spain. All these centres were defined and classified by their nature or proprietors, the educational stages and years taught, and the number and type of students, teachers and administrative staff. Of the 30 centres, 26.7% are public, 70% are state-assisted private schools and 3.3% are fully private. The 30 administration teams at these centres, with an average age of 51.4 ± 7.8 and 30 Physical Education heads of department, with an average age of 42.9 ± 6.5 , all took part in the research. The case study focused on the four years covered by the Compulsory Secondary Education cycle known in Spanish as ESO – *Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria* – at one of the participating schools, with the following student numbers: 1st Year: 29 students. 2nd Year: 26 students. 3rd Year: 29 students. 4th Year: 28 students.

2.2. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Based on the aims and the sort of approach established in the study, a range of data-gathering methods were employed, structuring each one in a series of categories, in order to ensure greater clarity when analysing the results.

2.2.1. QUANTITATIVE INSTRUMENTS

A questionnaire was used which was based on guidelines established by Morales, Urosa & Blanco (2003) and Muñoz & Fonseca-Pedrero (2008), validated by a group of experts. Once all the items had been listed, we checked that they were sufficiently differentiated, carrying out item-total correlation analysis against all of the others (Morales et al., 2003). Correlations were obtained for all items, varying between 0.327 and 0.654 (acceptable), with a confidence interval of 95%. Reliability analysis was also carried out on the questionnaires using Cronbach's Alpha, with a result of 0.949, showing high internal consistency.

The questionnaire was aimed at administrators and PE heads of department. It asked questions concerning the implementation of proposals in educational centres based on CC assessment, as well as on the range of resources available and methodological strategies. It featured 8 items, all focused on questions ranked on a Likert-type scale, with values from 1 to 5 (1 = "No/Nothing", 2 = "A little", 3 = "Somewhat", 4 = "Quite a lot", 5 = "A lot"). Having carried out factor analysis of the two questionnaires, two factors were obtained: 1. "Level of the importance of the CCs" and 2. "Methodological aspects when dealing with CCs". The questions or items which covered each of the two factors were: Factor 1: "Useful in ensuring significant learning", "Strengthens student learning", "Allows for a consensual appraisal at all levels" and "Promotes a wide range of classroom alternatives". Factor 2: "Requires student involvement", "Favours process evaluation"; "Formative and shared assessment required" and "Cooperative approaches into the classroom should be included"

2.2.2. QUALITATIVE INSTRUMENTS

Research adopted the "unique case" approach, undertaken in the 2013-2014 school year. Monitoring followed a methodological, pedagogical, didactic and curricular approach, focusing on PE teachers at the selected secondary school. The criteria used to choose the educational centre were those of accessibility and work availability throughout the school year.

Table 1. A basic script of the semi-structured interview administered to teachers.

1. How do you think Key Competencies help in the classroom? Could you give some specific examples?
 2. Do you feel that PE has a major role to play in this respect? Is it different to that of other subjects? Why?
 3. Is the methodology a relevant and decisive aspect? Could you give an example?
 4. Is the relationship with teachers of other subjects important? Is that something you look for?
 5. Do you think that the implementation of CCs in the classroom means that students become more involved in their learning? Does it improve their interpersonal relationships?
-

The first instrument was a semi-structured interview with each of the four PE teachers in the department. It gathered information on the perception of the day-to-day role played by CCs in the classroom. As regards the design process, a first draft of the questions to be asked was prepared, based on the researcher's experience in this area, taking the factors from the questionnaire administered to head teachers and teachers from the quantitative part of the study as a point of reference. The first draft was sent to a further three university professors who were also experts in the area. Having incorporated the modifications suggested by those academics, a second draft of the interview was prepared, to be given to a group of five secondary school teachers as a test run. When this had been concluded, they were asked to comment on the aspects to be improved upon. This information was of major importance, above all in terms of clarity of expression, comprehension, simplicity, and the suitability of selected materials, and was therefore used to prepare the interview that was finally administered. There were five general questions for each of the teachers, related to which other questions were asked (see Table 1).

Table 2. Basic script used in discussion groups during the final session.

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1. Is PE different to other subjects? Why?
 2. Does PE mean you do more physical activities outside school? Why?
 3. Do you think it's important to work on other aspects as well as on motor skills (spoken activities, information-gathering, reasoning)? Why?
 4. What have you learn in terms of PE over this school year? What were the activities you learnt most from?
-

The second instrument used in this qualitative part of the research was an observation diary, analysing PE classes for the 4 academic years of the ESO secondary cycle. This diary was filled in throughout the school year, with details of a weekly session with each of the selected classes (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years). The expert opinions and factor analysis applied to the questionnaire meant that seven variables were identified from the various agents that intervene in and have an influence on the classroom: *1. Session objectives. 2. Activities. 3. Explanation given by the teachers of the session for the students. 4. Level of coherence between the CCs and the content covered. 5. Relationship between inter-disciplinary work. 6. Links to other types of learning. 7. Reflection/Assessment.*

Finally, to close the school year and as the basis for the monitoring process, the third instrument used in the data gathering was a discussion group in each of the four academic years we observed. This took the form of a final session for each of the classes in which a series of questions stimulated a discussion among the students. Students were not asked about CCs (the vast majority are unaware of what they are), but were instead questioned on matters that implicitly linked to the role that these competencies play (see Table 2). The aim was to obtain extra information regarding the work done by PE teachers taking part in the research, in order to gain a better understanding of the learning experience.

2.3. PROCEDURE

The two questionnaires were administered in person, so that the researchers could explain the procedure for responses and clear up any queries concerning the questions. The researchers also personally collected the completed questionnaires to ensure that a physical record was kept of all samples in the study. In parallel with the data analysis, the case study was conducted at the selected centre.

2.4. ANALYSIS USED

This research has used a mixed methodology in which we have used statistical analysis via SPSS 20.0 (IBM, Chicago, IL) and qualitative analysis via Weft-QDA. As far as the statistics are concerned, we have calculated averages, standard deviations, contingency table and chi-square (χ^2) analysis and ANOVA. The qualitative analysis focused on structured information gathered from students based on the two factors that were used, through a case study in a specific education centre. We then compared two types of analysis based on data triangulation.

3. RESULTS ANALYSIS

3.1. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AND PE TEACHERS

As shown in Table 3, both administrative staff and teachers gave high scores (above 3.85 out of 5) to the two factors under analysis. Nevertheless, we saw how the factor relating to the importance of CCs (factor 1) among the administrative staff received the highest score (4.55), with only very slight deviation between the answers (0.32). This first factor also reflects a difference between averages which significantly leans toward administrative staff over teaching staff.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of administrative staff and PE teachers

	N	Medium	Description Type	Variation
Administrators				
Factor 1	30	4.55*	0.32	0.103
Factor 2	30	3.91	0.87	0.765
PE TEACHERS				
Factor 1	30	3.95	0.25	0.064
Factor 2	30	3.86	0.34	0.116

Note: Significance of the factor differences between groups: * $p < 0.05$

3.1.2. INFERENCE ANALYSIS: CONTINGENCY AND χ^2 TABLES

Based on the questionnaire items, grouped into two factors, we analysed the significance of the relationship between the items, both for administrative and PE teaching staff (see Table 4). Comparison of the items between the factors was performed to see the significance of the answers from each group.

Table 4. Contingency and χ^2 tables for the items from each of the analysis factors.

Relationship between questionnaire items	Chi-Square Test		
	χ^2	gl	p
Administrative Staff			
Creates significant learning (F1) / requires student involvement (F2)	21.311.	6	0.113
Reinforces student learning (F1) / Improves process assessment (F2)	10.714	3	0.003
Allows assessment of all academic years (F1) / Training assessment required (F2)	9.113	5	0.225
Varied classroom alternatives (F1) / Use of cooperative approaches (F2)	7.535	7	0.313
PE TEACHERS			
	χ^2	gl	p

Creates significant learning (F1) / requires student involvement (F2)	20.154.	7	0.115
Reinforces student learning (F1) / Improves process assessment (F2)	11.965.	5	0.213
Allows assessment of all academic years (F1) / Training assessment required (F2)	9.422	5	0.115
Varied classroom alternatives (F1) / Use of cooperative approaches (F2)	8.165	7	0.001

Note: F1 and F2 indicate the factor for each item.

The answers from the administrative staff showed some significance, in relation to the idea that working CCs strengthen student learning and improve process assessment ($\chi^2_{(30)}=10,714, p = 0.003$). The answers given by PE teachers reflect the significance of items relating to the variety of classroom alternatives and the need to incorporate cooperative approaches so that the CCs ($\chi^2_{(30)}= 8.165, p = 0.001$) work coherently.

3.1.3. ANOVA

For greater in depth analysis, a scale variable was created, based on the two questionnaire factors: "Positive perception of CCs". This variable is shown in Table 3 with categorical independent variables: Age: (a) 24 to 34, (b) 35 to 43, (c) 44 to 54 and (d) over 55. Years of experience: (a) 3 to 8, (b) 9 to 15 (c) over 15 and Academic years taught: (a) 1st and 2nd, (b) 3rd and 4th and (c) All years. One-way variance analysis (ANOVA) was carried out on independent groups, to check if there were statistically significant differences in the level of positive perception of CCs, depending on the aforementioned variables. We also carried out *post-hoc* analysis, indicating in which groups this significant difference was noted (Table 5).

Table 5. Anova (Bonferroni) analysis for age-based variables, years of experience and academic years taught in relation to the positive perception of the role of CCs.

POSITIVE PERCEPTION OF CCs	<i>F</i>	<i>gl</i>	<i>p</i>
Administrators			
Age	126.13	1	0.018*
Years of experience	96.66	2	0.223
Academic years taught	69.13	1	0.112
PE Teachers			
Age	111.12	1	0.221
Years of experience	94.32	2	0.003**
Academic years taught	66.34	1	0.213

* $p < 0.05$ - 24 to 34 and 44 to 54

** $p < 0.05$ - 3 to 8 years of experience and over 15

Among the administrators taking part in the study there were significant differences in terms of age, specifically in the 24-34 and 44-54 age ranges ($F_{(30)} = 126.13, p < 0.018$). This reflects the fact that the youngest administrative staff members are those who have the most positive perception of the role of CCs. With regard to PE teachers, there was a significant difference in relation to the years of experience (F

($t_{30} = 111.12$, $p < 0.221$), showing that teachers with less professional experience attached a more positive value to the incorporation of CCs in their educational practice.

3.2. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This analysis focuses on the data obtained from the single case study. All the information gathered through the various instruments used in the three processes (initial, intermediate and final) was triangulated and collated, based on the two factors for analysis from the questionnaire. An example of codification is given for each of the three instruments used in the case study to ensure a more fluid monitoring of the text extracts which are presented in association with the questionnaire ideas: **IPET1**: *Interview with 1st Year Physical Education Teacher*. **TD1**: *1st Year Teacher Diary*. **DG1**: *1st Year Discussion Group*

3.2.1. LEVEL OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CCs

Having structured, analysed and categorised all the information obtained through the three data-gathering instruments, a total of 563 text extracts were obtained in this factor. These were then divided into 165 interview extracts, 248 from the observation diary and 150 from the discussion groups.

Starting with the idea that the motor skills aspect is seen as one of the key elements in PE, the great variation in the contents covered by each teacher was noted, as well as way in which those contents were handled, above all in relation to CC assessment/classification:

“I classify motor skills and to some extent conceptual content [...] I do not focus on CCs at all, as I feel that we have enough on our plate already, in order to come to an agreement, without having to think of other matters” (IPET4)

“I feel it is essential that we work on CCs, not just us but in all areas [...] I agree that PE is different, but that should not be an excuse that means we can say that competencies are of no use or that it is impossible to assess them. It is therefore necessary to assess aspects that go beyond mere motor skills.” (IPET2)

All these opinions are taken verbatim from the interviews and are a faithful reflection of the practical day-to-day aspects noted in the teacher's diary.

“Students do tests and play [...] There are no instruments or procedures that show what the student has learnt. If working with competencies requires learner independence and an

involvement in areas of enquiry, in that case they are not observed” [...] Students only do tests and free play” (TD4)

“The Study Units that students do are varied, alternating the content type and its assessment, showing that teachers give a greater role to CC” (TC2)

The discussion group highlighted the fact that the students appreciate linking classification to other aspects as well as motor skills:

“Things were always that way [...], the boys playing football, the girls playing volleyball and the children who do not really like sport struggling with the physical tests” (DG4)

However, although the work was purely related to motor skills, motivation was not always low:

“Gym is my best subject, I always get good marks [...], [Researcher:] What have you learnt? Learnt? Well... running, jumping...” [...] (DG4)

What can be seen is a high level of motivation for a subject in which students have worked on more aspects other than just motor skills, meaning a more important role for CCs:

“It was very different [...]. We did a lot of sport, a lot other work too, we worked in teams and made a lot of oral presentations. I did everything the teacher asked of me and I never threw in the towel- [Researcher:] Are you more motivated? A lot more! Some years I failed because I wasn't much good at jumping, at throwing the ball, while other I passed although I never knew why. (DG2)

Another important aspect which should be analysed within the “Extent of CC importance” was the level of agreement between the four teachers in terms of organising themselves. This organisation centred on course content and the student assessment method, and therefore, the importance given to CCs. There are a number of contrasting points concerning the programming, the information gathered in the initial interview and the subsequent day-to-day action the teachers took and recorded in their diaries:

“Working with CCs without initial training is quite complicated, although I agree with the idea behind them” [...] That's why I always like to include some ground-breaking content, using new activities and approaches” (IPET3)

“We have included new sports like Kin-Ball, although there are no assessment activities that alter the standard ones” [...] It's always theory, practice and a practical exam” [...] (DP3º)

In academic years like the 1st year of the ESO cycle, teachers say that they do not work with CCs, arguing that their methods have worked perfectly well for many years and that nothing will make them change the way they teach. This aspect is further highlighted by the failure to monitor programming:

“I think it is great, really interesting, everything you are doing about competencies, but given that I only have a few years left I doubt anything will change.” [...] “The programming is something that is there, but to be honest, I do not pay it much attention, what really interests me is seeing children taking part in sport” (IPET1)

“We are now at the end of the first term and can see the way the teachers improvise class content [...], today football, tomorrow running... this lack of structure makes it impossible to work coherently with competencies” (TD1)

3.2.2. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS WHEN DEALING WITH CCs

As was the case with the first factor, all the information obtained from the three data gathering instruments was categorised. A total of 489 text extracts were obtained, divided into: 168 interview extracts, 213 from the observation diary and 108 from the discussion groups.

One of the main factors when working with competencies in the classroom is group work (Perez-Pueyo, 2013), dealt with through the delegation of roles in the tasks undertaken and the responsibility of the group members. We have noticed here that the level of cohesion is very different among the various groups of students who we observed. This could be due to a number of factors directly related to CCs, such as the approach used, the type of activity, group structuring and teacher-student communication:

“The class is fun because it seems more like free play than an ESO secondary cycle subject” [...]. “The relationship between the teacher is not very professional and this meant that sometimes there was a lack respect” (TD1)

“Students work in groups from the outset [...]. It does not matter who plays better, runs faster or throws further. What is important is that the teachers ensure that the class moves

forward as a group, increasing motivation for the next Study Unit" (TD2)

"The teachers are very demanding and the students have a lot of respect for them" [...]. "The relationship between the students is quite good. This is most evident when tournaments are organised" (TD3)

"There is no doubt that this is the group in which there is least inter-personal relationship, as the class does the tests and has free time. The groups are clearly differentiated" (TD4)

There is full concordance between the information given in the teachers' diaries and the perception of the various classes taken from the discussion groups:

"I really enjoyed this subject this year, above all the group work, which has allowed me to achieve things I thought were impossible." "It's a lot more motivating for us to do different things, above all when you know you're going to achieve them" (DG2)

"I really like PE, the only thing is that Roberto and Santi never stop insulting me and the teacher does nothing to stop them" (DG1)

"In PE I have a good time with my friends [...] [Researcher:] Do you work in groups? In a group, yeah, always with my friends (laughs)" (DG4)

The existence or not of group work in PE classes may be reflected in student perceptions of their chances of achievement and, as a consequence, their motivation, showing how student motivation levels dropped in the groups in which students did not work together on tasks which focus on class achievement. This is seen in both the teachers' diaries and the discussion groups.

"The lack of motivation for some students is very high. For all the effort they make it is impossible to reach the level they need to pass" (TD4)

"I hate PE, I always will, from the beginning of the course I could see I was not going to make it, whatever I did, however much effort I put in" (DG4)

“The fact that the teacher makes us pause to reflect at the end of each course helps the kids to express themselves and ensure they are listened to, which is essential” (TD2)

“The group work was the best thing about the subject for me [...] it made us aware of what others were doing and meant we shared out the work a lot better (DG2)

4. DISCUSSION

Triangulation of the data gathered with the various instruments allowed us identify a series of ideas. Both the administration staff and the PE teachers had a clear perception of CCs. However, administrators attach significantly more value to them than PE teachers. They highlight their value as a tool which strengthens student learning and evaluation of the educational process. PE teachers value how CCs favour the use of a variety of classroom alternatives and the incorporation of cooperative methodologies. The youngest administrators view this curricular aspect in the most positive light, while PE teachers with less experience consider their use more relevant than their more experienced colleagues.

With regard to the first stated aim of the research, both administrators and teaching staff saw the introduction of CCs as a positive development, reflecting the need to incorporate them into schools and educational centres as tools that create a consensus between teachers, as well as their being a methodological and evaluation strategy in their day-to-day work (Fisher, 2012; Hortigüela, Abella and Pérez-Pueyo, 2014). Gitomer, Brown and Bonett (2011) argue that regardless of whether teachers are in favour or against the incorporation of competencies as a work element, until there is specific integration and performance in educational centres, it will be impossible to gather relevant comparative data concerning their operability and suitability. Both the extent of the importance given to CCs in this respect and the methodological aspects in their daily use were rated highly by all those taking part in this research. The group of administrators attached most importance to the inclusion of CCs in school projects.

As regards the aspects to which administrators attach the highest value in terms of integrating CCs in their centres, the idea that they strengthen student learning and their assessment throughout the educational process are worth a special mention. PE teachers in contrast focused more on the variety of classroom alternatives that CCs offer. Lleixá (2007) attributes this perception among teachers to the practical nature of PE, closely relating the type of the content used to the educational approach and the way they work on a day-to-day basis. Teachers taking part in the research also have a significantly positive opinion of the need to employ cooperative methodologies when working with CCs. Researchers such as Fernández-Río and Martínez (2008) suggested that cooperative learning is a front-line tool, which is absolutely essential to furthering the work done with CCs. In contrast, there was no level of significance in the training and process evaluation

area. This unawareness among teachers of the strategy was not valued sufficiently highly by either the administrators or the teachers taking part (Heras and Pérez-Pueyo, 2012).

As regards the second aim of this research, we noticed that the age of the administrators is a determining factor in the positive perception of the introduction of CCs into schools and educational centres, with the youngest administrators valuing this aspect most highly. As Lozano, Boni, Peris and Hueso established (2012), there was a desire among younger administrators to change pedagogical models which have been in place for a number of decades and which are no longer appropriate to current social demands in schools. The determining factor with regard the integration of CCs into the classroom is experience: those with the least teaching experience see a need for working with competencies more than any others. This information is in line with the findings reported by Mendez-Alonso et al. (2014 a & b), which suggested that younger teachers with less experience but greater academic preparation and training valued the use of CCs in primary education in the most positive way. Fraile (2011) argued that older, more experienced PE teachers are less willing to change their educational practices for a number of reasons (comfort, unawareness etc.), even though they recognise that they might be able to improve on certain factors which were limiting them. With regard to the third main aim of this research, namely the case study, we noted a great disparity in the opinions expressed by the four teachers in the PE department of the school in this study. Firstly, and in relation to the importance given to CCs in PE, the triangulation of data points to a wide dispersion of the content developed by the teachers, as well as the assessment/classification of the CC employed. Among some groups there is predominance in the use of PE testing linked to student assessment and a lack of monitoring of teaching programming, which seem to indicate that a real implementation of CCs was not undertaken (Romero, Vegas and Cimarro, 2011). As a consequence, practical exercises are often repeated with a real lack of coherent programming, as noted and reflected by the students (they have stated this in their comments). In contrast, in other school years/groups, it seems that more importance is attributed to CCs and is reflected in the classes, above all when putting ground-breaking content and group work into practice. This way of working also corresponds to the students' positive assessment, linked to strong motivation and the satisfaction perceived through the possibilities that exist for achievement. Vera, Moreno-González and Moreno-Murcia (2009) argued that if we want to see real student involvement in this area, it is essential to put forward participative proposals, ensuring their independence, assessment and decision-making in the tasks to be undertaken. It has also been shown that students with a perspective and a sense of satisfaction in their PE achievements at school, value it higher, resulting in greater participation in physical activities outside school (Cardinal-Bradley, Yan and Cardinal, 2013).

Researchers have therefore seen that within the same educational centre, there can be two diametrically opposed views regarding the value of CCs in the PE classroom. As Barrachina and Blasco (2012) pointed out, if teachers in educational

centres do not seek out common elements and common courses of action, it will be difficult to assess the students' real learning throughout their schooling, and, significantly, they will receive instruction and have experiences that are diametrically opposed to CCs, which was observed in the data gathered by different means in this study.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This research has shown the importance of CCs to educational projects in the view of all those involved in the schools in this investigation. The administrators that took part gave greater value to the role of CCs in education, in order to improve student learning and assessment. Meanwhile, the PE teachers in the interview wanted to see methodological change toward a more cooperative approach to CCs, facilitating the possibility of offering a greater range of alternatives in the classroom. Younger administrators had a more positive view of CCs, while the PE teachers with less experience were those who placed most importance on their use in the classroom. The case study showed that PE teachers in the same department had differing, even contradictory approaches to CCs. This influenced student assessments of classes, with greater learner satisfaction expressed when group work was involved and better common achievement was possible (based on CC work).

There are some limitations to our research. Firstly, the study only focused on schools in one city. Further research will have to be done in other towns and cities to confirm whether or not the same results are reflected in different contexts. Secondly, this is essentially a cross-sectional study. It would also be useful to undertake a longitudinal study that compares the perception of administrators, teachers and students before and after the implementation of a CC-based project.

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