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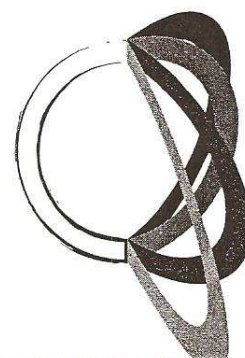
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PE TEACHERS' COMPETENCIES: WHICH ONES ARE CONSIDERED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT AND WHERE ARE THEY ACQUIRED?

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Introduction

It is well accepted that teacher preparation is a long term process during which a large array of competencies are progressively developed. Nevertheless, these competencies are very often not clearly defined. Since 2001, in the French Community of Belgium, a decree lists the competencies that teachers should develop to achieve their role within the educational system [1]. This study aimed to identify competencies that PE teachers consider as important and to determine, from their point of view, in which context these competencies are developed.

Methods

A questionnaire has been sent to all PE teachers of the French Community of Belgium. 2525 answers were collected, coming from 1091 schools. Among these questionnaires, it was decided to compare answers of two groups of teachers according to their graduation year: (1) 188 teachers graduated in 1984, 1985 and 1986 (group A); (2) 156 teachers graduated in 1992, 1993 and 1994 (group B). Both group had sufficient teaching experience and passing time to judge events. They were clearly graduated prior or later than the enforcement of new school organization principles at the end of the 1980s. Teachers indicated on six-point Likert scale the importance that they gave to 21 competencies ("very important" to "not important at all"). Moreover, for each competency, teachers had to determine in which context (pre-service preparation, in-service training, professional activity and other) they acquired it. They had to estimate the proportional role of each context (%). The comparison between two proportions was used to analyse the statistical significance of the differences between groups.

Results

In both groups, "To be able to manage the group" was considered as the most important (5.8 vs 5.9/6 for group A and B). Relational aspects were ranked at the top 10 ("To have a good sense of communication"; "To have animation skills"; "To be able to establish relationships with youths"; "To be able to work with colleagues"). Aspects linked to the knowledge and mastery of teaching content were relatively less evidenced. Group B teachers gave greater credence to the pre-service preparation than their oldest colleagues. That period was considered as fundamental for acquisition of the contents to teach and to develop theoretical knowledge. Professional experience was seen as a determining factor for the acquisition of relational competencies. Except for the adaptation to teaching innovations, in-service training took a limited place. "Others contents" (personal practice, for example) was identified as contributing to athletic aspects.

Discussion/Conclusion

Data confirmed that teacher preparation needs to be considered as a complex process. Results also pointed out that differences between both groups concerned mainly the role of the pre service preparation and professional experience. Data seemed to indicate that the youngest teachers could have enjoyed more advantages from their initial preparation.

References

[1]. Conseil de la Communauté française (2001). D. 08-02-2001 ; M.B. 22-02-2001. Retrieved from Internet: <http://www.cdadoc.cfwb.be/RechDoc/>.