

Abstract

It is the aim of this study to know the perceptions of a group of teachers of the “3º Ciclo do Ensino Básico” about the contribution of practical activities in Science for the pedagogic and didactic innovation in teaching this discipline.

In order to do so, a group of teachers of those school levels was interviewed. The interview, applied individually to the six subjects who make up the sample, was a semi-structured one. The collected data were the object of a qualitative analysis and the results show that this group of teachers validates the official curriculum of Physical and Natural Sciences for those levels of education, especially in what concerns the compulsory implementation of practical scientific activities, suggesting implementation through scenarios favouring mainly cooperative and constructivist working methods, but also recognizing the importance of the more interactive forms of the delivery mode of teaching .

Simultaneously, the subjects recognise the importance of scientific activities as a valuable practice for the process of teaching and learning, not only because of their intrinsic qualities, but also because they give the students the possibility of learning how to learn, of thinking scientifically and developing important attitudes and competences, stimulating students and teacher to become more autonomous and more motivated for practicing action-research.

The study also reveals the subjects’ perceptions about some of the aspects they think can make the implementation of scientific activities in class easier or more difficult. In the first group of factors, the very nature of science and the scientific attitude of the teacher stand out; the latter factors consist, mainly, of the length of curricula, the poor logistics and the reality of classes at our schools.

Finally, there is a discussion of the conclusions of this study, where innovative aspects found in the practice of scientific activities, and consequences of their application, are analysed. The real classroom situation, according to the teachers’ perception, is confronted with the ideal situation. Finally, a reflection is made on the meaning of the present study, as well as some suggestions for further investigation.