

Children and youth's interests towards science and technology and their predisposition to participate in activities related to these areas inside and outside of school

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Abstract

While there are many studies and reviews about the interest of children and young people in science and technology (C&T), so far very few of them have been concerned in studying the relationship between participation in activities outside of school related to C&T and the students' interest and involvement in school activities with these subjects as a focus. This relationship is especially relevant in the context of the new ecology of learning, characterized by the multiplicity of contexts largely outside the formal education that offer opportunities and resources to learn and for the diversity of activities and learning that people do in these contexts. In this line, the aim of our study is to identify the interests of children and young people in specific fields of C&T and their relationship with the predisposition to participate in activities related to these areas, inside and outside of school, nowadays and in their future life. To this end, a questionnaire on interests and attitudes was applied to three samples of children and adolescents of 10 (411) 13 (460) and 16 (535) years old. The results show significant differences between boys and girls in their specific interests in C&T. Also, they show the existence of a relationship between, on the one hand, these interests and the frequency of participation in activities inside and outside of school, and on the other, the purpose to undertake studies related to C&T in the future. In the conclusions, the importance of promoting the participation of children and young people in activities related to C&T in different contexts to encourage interest for these disciplines in secondary schools and higher education is discussed.

Keywords: interests, specific interests, science and technology, ecology of learning.