

Scientific popularization activities for non-formal education

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ABSTRACT

Several social debates related to environmental and health issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, have raised major concerns about misinformation and science denialism. Therefore, there is a need for public understanding of how science works [1] and to promote scientific literacy in the general population [2]. Popularization of science acquires a unique importance in the construction of a democratic society promoting scientific and technological literacy in a critical perspective and fostering the political insertion of citizens in decision-making [3]. Besides formal education, scientific popularization activities may take place in non-formal education contexts with children and young people [4].

Integrated in Higher Professional Education study cycle we developed a course that intended to enable students to: promote scientific literacy and awareness of environmental issues in children and young people; apply different forms of science popularization depending on the context of intervention; plan, implement and evaluate scientific popularization activities for children and young people. The research carried out included 20 students and used diverse instruments to collect data (questionnaires and students' productions). Findings revealed that students acquired more mature ideas about the purposes and the relevance of popularization of science, and an increasing recognition that and as future professionals who will intervene with children and young people, they may have an important role in the process.

KEYWORDS

Popularization of Science, Non-formal Education, Scientific Literacy, Scientific Popularization activities

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