

SP - (15841) - BIOLOGY IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS: PLANTS ALSO DIE

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Short Abstract

The concept of death in living beings can be a suitable topic for the first educational years, considering the difficulties that 5-6-year-old students have to understand that plants, as living things, will die. This study aims to propose an activity to explain the idea of death as something inherent in all living things and to evaluate its acquisition, considering gender, after the intervention and a year later. The research design is quasi-experimental, with an intervention, posttest, and delayed posttest. Participants were 114 children (59 girls) from 5 classrooms of the third level of infant education (students aged 5-6). During the intervention, children worked on the concept of death in living beings, and the researcher deepened in the aspects of universality and inevitability. After it, students were evaluated: they had to identify in a series of pictures (plants, animals and non-living beings) those that one day would die. Only 39.47% of them correctly solved the proposed task, which means to select a butterfly, spider, sunflower, tree, and grass. Most of the students who failed did not identify the grass as something that will die. Students also showed difficulty in conceiving that trees die. However, one year later, in the delayed posttest, most students do correctly identify all the images that represent something that one day will die (60.53%). There are no statistically significant gender differences in none of the posttests. In conclusion, the intervention does not make children extrapolate the idea of death to some plants, mostly grass and trees. However, once they are in the first level of primary education, most students consider plants as beings that one day will die. The lack of gender differences when solving the activity suggests that these disparities may arise at higher educational levels.