

SP - (15966) - TEACHERS' PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF INTERACTING WITH SCIENCE CENTRES

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Short Abstract

Out-of-school science centres, including places such as science museums, are common around the world and are visited by millions of school children and their teachers each year. Previous studies have highlighted a range of benefits for pre-service teachers interacting with science centres. Benefits have included knowledge gains and positive affective changes. However, less attention has been given to the benefits that in-service teachers experience through their interactions with these centres. This study presents the results of an investigation into in-service teachers' perceived benefits of their past interactions with science centres. A total of 55 volunteer in-service primary and secondary school science teachers from around Australia responded to a survey about their past interactions with science centres. Although the data analysis was ongoing at the time of writing, the study confirmed that in-service science teachers experienced a range of professional growth benefits from their interaction with science centres. The majority of teachers reported science content knowledge gains, increased motivation to teach science and subsequent improvements in their own students' learning. Teachers also described benefits such as connecting to other science teachers, science professionals and industry as well as learning about the latest scientific developments. Future research should explore the characteristics of science centres that contribute to these benefits and how these existing resources could be further leveraged for the ongoing professional development and growth of in-service science teachers as well how these centres can continue to foster communities of practice.