

The impact of teaching on students' definitions and explanations of astronomical phenomena.

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Abstract

A longitudinal study of the influence of education on the children's ability to define and explain astronomical concepts (equator, axis, orbit, day/night cycle and seasonal changes) was carried out. The initial analysis was conducted of the way the topics were covered in the textbook and taught in the classroom. Subsequently, 20 students (aged 10–11 years) were interviewed two months after having been taught the topics and again four years later in order to establish the impact of the teaching on their ability to define and explain the concepts correctly. The results indicated that after two months the students were able to recall the scientific explanations given in the lessons, but that after four years they could only provide everyday and inaccurate explanations.



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