SCIENCE MUSEUMS AS AN EDUCATOR'S TOOL FOR ENHANCING DISCIPLINARY DEPTH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL SCIENCE

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This research aimed to explore how interactive science centres can best support primary school teachers by enhancing disciplinary depth via the tactile opportunities available in science museums. Science centres provide a unique window in to the technological world of STEM through multimodal representations otherwise not available in a traditional classroom. It investigated the effects of a science centre excursion on local primary school teachers' confidence and attitudes toward science and teaching science. A total of 24 participants were interviewed and surveyed for this research with data collection occurring over 3 phases; before excursion, on excursion and after. The excursion was able to improve the self-rated confidence for science teaching of one-third of participants and was able to reignite the passion for science for several others, reminding them how accessible teaching science can be for primary aged students. Teachers' educational background in science seemed to positively influence confidence for science teaching, as did their years of teaching experience. Three recommendations were made to the centre to help them support teaching science passionately and in line with students needs allowing them to benefit from the excursion experience to the utmost. These involve the development of implementable learning activities for before and after the excursion.

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