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Title: Influencing high school students to continue with science at school

Abstract:

The supply of scientifically educated individuals needed for a modern society is interrupted when students fail to choose post-compulsory science at school. Developing strategies to encourage students to choose science relies on understanding the influences that impact this decision. This paper presents an overview of the (pre-Covid) subject selection environment in four schools. Seven subject selection events were observed and all the documents given to students at these events were reviewed. Semi-structured interviews were held with 15 adults within these schools who were identified by school representatives as being in a position to influence student subject choice. The events, materials and interviews provide evidence that science is promoted as being of value for a narrow range of occupations. This restricted perception of the utility of science may be a factor in students choosing to discontinue science in their final years of school.