

Students' attitudes towards and interest in science

A report from the research project "Science for Life"¹

According to EU there is a strong need to renew science education to bring about a radical change in young people's interest in science education. The current importance of this question needs to be even more emphasized as young people's interest in choosing a scientific career is declining. One way to increase students' interest in science can be to bring in a humanistic perspective and to focus more on *scientific literacy* than *science literacy*. To be *scientific literate* means to be able to understand and take part in the public debate about socio-scientific issues, to form a personal opinion and to make decisions using both knowledge in and about science, from other knowledge areas and to consider personal values

We have designed an evidence-based research project to understand more about how and why students in lower secondary school develop interest, knowledge and self-efficacy working with socio-scientific issues. The project is built up in three steps. In the first we have developed a teacher guide with six authentic cases. In next step about 1500 students will answer a questionnaire, work with the cases and then answer another questionnaire. Many of the questions have earlier been used in different context and therefore it will also be possible to compare the results from this study with others to see if there are any tendencies of change. In the last step we will perform a qualitative study in about 6 classes.

On the poster the first preliminary results from the first student questionnaire will be presented. Here we will give a picture of about 1500 students' view of science education and science in society. We will also compare girls' and boys' views of science and compare their interest in science with other subjects in school.

¹ Research group: SISC Science in Social Context, www.sisc.se