Abstract

Based on a literature search, this paper evaluates the impact of including live animals in science and biology lessons on learning processes, especially on students' intrinsic motivation and knowledge acquisition. Direct contact with live animals can significantly increase students' intrinsic motivation and interest in nature. Pupils who work with live animals show higher engagement and competence compared to those using alternatives like videos. However, the results of knowledge tests are mixed, with recent studies indicating that contact with animals does not significantly affect pupils' knowledge. Pupils' fear and disgust of animals is not a barrier to learning if teachers take an appropriate approach, working with live animals can even reduce these feelings. Extra-curricular activities like zoo visits provide opportunities to observe and interact with animals, offering advantages such as increased motivation and a more relaxed atmosphere. On the other hand the new environment can distract pupils, so preparation and reflection are key. Integrating live animals into the classroom is supported by most studies as a way to increase student motivation and sometimes knowledge. Ethical and practical aspects, along with alternatives, must be considered to ensure animals are not stressed or harmed.

Keywords: live animals, teaching, intrinsic motivation, knowledge, teachers' attitudes, zoos