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Factors Affecting Students' Participation in Informal Ecological Education Activities: the Case of Guangzhou and Hong Kong

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Abstract

Education is critical in arousing students' awareness of the interrelatedness of nature and humankind. Besides the formal curriculum, students also acquire ecological knowledge from informal education sectors. This paper attempts to reveal the factors that affect students' participation in informal ecological education activities, using data from a survey that was conducted in the Guangzhou Green Country Ecological Education Centre and the Hong Kong Produce Green, during 2002 and 2001. The results suggest that environmental NGOs in Hong Kong play a crucial role in ecological education, whereas the government and the mass media assume a more dominant role in ecological education in Guangzhou. The findings also revealed that people who value the importance of nature are more likely to participate in outdoor ecological education activities. Hence, it is important that environmental educators should focus on nurturing students' acceptance of human beings as a part of nature, rather than apart from nature. They should also be encouraged to treasure our planet Earth.