Science Shops - a concept for community based learning - DTU Orbit (22/12/2018)

Science Shops - a concept for community based learning

Experience from science shops show that besides assisting citizen groups, science shops can also contribute to the development of university curricula and research. The paper is based on an investigation of the impact of science shops on university curricula and research through a questionnaire sent out to science shops and through follow-up interviews with employees from nine different university based science shops. These science shops had in the questionnaire indicated that the science shop in one way or the other has had impact on university curricula and/or research. This paper focuses on the impact on university curricula. The case studies have been supplemented with articles and reports. The analysis has focused on the kind of impact, which the science shops have reported, and has tried to relate the impact to the local history of the science shop. One direct impact on the curricula is the competence students develop through science shop projects, where the students as part of their curricula work together with citizen groups on a topic proposed by the citizen group. The better the possibilities in the curricula for doing this kind of work the bigger is the potential impact from the science shop. At some universities the possibilities in the curricula are already there, while at other universities the science shop or scientific staff co-operating with the science shop develop the possibilities. Another type of impact on curricula is seen, when this kind of competence is offered students in other ways besides the direct work with science shop projects. The following ways have been identified: -Science shop staff develop theoretical and methodological courses, where students can learn the competence that can be developed through science shop projects like science communication, academia-user dialogue etc. -Science shop staff supply case studies based on science shop projects to courses taught by the science shop staff itself and/or by other teachers -Science shop staff participate in the development of and the teaching at courses within topics emerged from problems raised by citizen groups -Science shop staff participates in the restructuring of curricula in order to bring in methodological competence from science shop projects.

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