

Comments and Criticism

Comment on analysis of the taxonomy of scouting's formal science education program: Scouting's science merit badges

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Vick and Garvey¹ analysis of the taxonomy of the science merit badges in the U.S. Scouting movement piqued my interests in the areas of science, Scouting and education. I am an Eagle Scout, former Scoutmaster, and current merit badge counselor, as well as a scientist (clinical pharmacology) and Regent Emeritus of the University of California. The role of the merit badge program in Scouting is manifold, including giving Scouts experience in nature, civics, leadership, and an exposure to potential educational and career choices. With more than 100 badges available, and only 21 required to earn Eagle, the highest rank in Scouting, clearly there is a wide range of electives which can be personalized for each scout. Of the 23 science merit badges selected by the authors, only one, Environmental Science, is required for Eagle.

I did not see in the article a statement about whether the authors had experience in the Scouting movement, or contacted any Scouts or their leaders. I believe missing from the article is the practicality that the merit badge requirements themselves are individualized for each Scout at the discretion of the counselor. Thus, their strict evaluation of words such as “explain” and “discuss” may be inappropriate for practical way in which the Scout and counselor work together. That said, it would interesting to see an evaluation of these suggestions by the Scouting movement.

Notes

¹Vick, M., & Garvey, M. P. (2011). Levels of cognitive processes in a non-formal science education program: Scouting's science merit badges and the revised bloom's taxonomy. *International Journal of Environmental Science Education*, 6, 173-190.

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