Comment on egusphere-2022-320
Anonymous Referee #2

Referee comment on "Hand-written letters and photo albums linking geoscientists with school classes" by Mathew Stiller-Reeve et al., EGUsphere, https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-2022-320-RC2, 2022

General Comments

This article reports an interesting work done by the authors in the field of geoscience education and is based on the educational approach through hand-written letters and photo albums. Moreover, the article highlights an important aspect of the science communication focusing on a more personal and engaging interaction between science communicators and audience. Today, the communication process is conditioned by digital technologies and this article faces and discus the possible contribution of an analogical and slower communication.

Although the topic is relevant to the journal, the manuscript needs revision to improve the overall scientific level. In addition to the description the authors must indicate what is positive and what needs to be improved. For example, the activity you describe is a time-consuming activity, but not expensive.

See specific and technical comments.

Specific Comments

The article is generally well written but in some part it has repetitive phrases even not
necessary for the reader’s understanding. You may synthesize concepts that are too conversational, with some repetitions and non-essential information that make the reading difficult, especially in the introduction. Moreover, some phrases seem to be too emphatic for a scientific publication.

Considering you the 4 classes at different schools across Europe you should explain if the interaction between researchers and students was always in English. Did they write letters and comments in English? This is something that possibly may interact with their thoughts and the writing in a different language.

Generally, to make easier the reading, put quotes and citations at the end of the sentence and do not use brackets if not strictly necessary.

Regards the Evaluation and Cognitive assessments, you have very few data both respect to the total number and to the available sample. This needs to be discussed.

Moreover, the first question contains more than one question and the evaluation process is not linear so you must take it into account analyzing the answers.

In the concluding remarks you must discuss and emphasize that you analyzes are based on little data and that perhaps by gaining more experience and adding more data your conclusions will become more robust.

Finally a question: Have you observed gender-related aspects?
For example, did the class only interact with male scientists? Did girls and boys ask different questions? This is important for example when you write that some students have stated that they see the research profession as a real possibility.

Technical corrections

46 remove

Maybe only we ... foundly ...

50 remove

Our project was certainly not the first to use hand-written letters and photography to connect science with a younger audience.
For our project we would be interesting for discussion to understand why they consider it detrimental.

On this expedition they

replace a project called with the project

was (46 active students total) with - 46 active students - was

which Pedrozo-Acunía et al. (2019) noted as beneficial to inspire "next generation geoscientists"
noted as beneficial to inspire “next generation geoscientists” by Pedrozo-Acuna et al. (2019)

that we present

then it was time to put pen to paper

These questions could be anything from general questions about why the scientists became scientists, to what exactly they will be doing on their research expedition.

(albeit very interesting)

see
They started to put together their responses.

Once the letters were sent in the post, it was time for the next exciting part of the project, where the scientist would balance scientific research and photo journalism.

In the next step of the project the scientist balanced the communication process with scientific research and photo journalism.

With equipment in hand, the scientists were ready to go to sea.

They captured both the scientific and the personal aspects. They captured the excitement and the mundane. They captured the research instruments and the sports equipment.

They captured both the scientific and the personal aspects, research instruments and excitement, sports equipment and the mundane.
Once the scientists returned to shore, they were meant to post their albums to the classes. However, due to one of the scientist’s travel plans, all the albums were delivered personally to the schools involved.

With

Once the scientists returned to shore all the albums were delivered to the schools involved.

Initially, these link-ups were meant to be the first time the scientists and students met face-to-face. This was not the case since a couple of the classes had already linked-up with the scientists during the expedition itself. However, for one of the schools, this was the first face-to-face interaction. Here it is worth noting something (albeit anecdotally) important.

For one of the schools, this was the first face-to-face interaction.

R.O.V images

With the communication for the AKMA Polaroid project over, it was time to evaluate the
process to see if the use of these “traditional” ways of communication impacted the students taking part.

Since the number of evaluations were likely to be rather low (we estimated 10-20 of the 46 pupils who had initially sent questions to the scientists),

Since we estimated the number of evaluations to be rather low,

since the question contains more than one question, the process of analyzing the answers is not linear and you must take it into account when analyzing the answers.

only about 37% ? of students, please discuss this.

add the acronym BERA

Since the survey was voluntary, we received considerably less answers than the total number who took part.
Does that mean that they were obliged before? I suggest to remove the sentence

221 remove brackets

230 less than half of the initial sample of students discuss this and the meaning of analyzing so scarcely data.

234 remove can

235 replace

The neutral and negative comments (of which 3 of 17 students came with) spoke to ways we could improve the project, but also to wider issues around communication and education.

3 of the 17 comments were neutral and negative and indicate how we could improve the project, but also how widening issues around communication and education.
One of the other students with

One student

This speaks nicely to how we opened this article with our memories of how personal photography and letters used to feel.

We have to remember that
In total, 6 of 15 students (only 15 of the students answered the second question) mentioned aspects of the AKMA project itself.

Only 15 students answered the second question, 6 of which mentioned aspects of the AKMA project itself.

Over half of the students (10 of the 16 who answered this question) stated that they had realized new things about scientists.

16 students answered this question, 10 of which stated that they had realized new things about scientists.

Finally, some of the students (3 of 16)

Finally, 3 out of 16 students
350 add that this could make up for the fact that our analysis has little data

370 Not mentioned in the text

Fig. 3 the images are not seen well