



Popularization activities for young children of the scientific activity in the field of environment

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Research projects now rely on various pillars which include of course high level science and equipments, and also communication, outreach and educational activities. This paper focuses on education for young children and present activities that aim at helping them (and their parents!) to grasp some of the complex underlying scientific issues in the field of environment. More generally it helps children to get familiarized with science and scientists, with the hope of enhancing scientific culture and promoting careers in this field.

The activities which are part of the popularization effort of the NEW Interreg IV RainGain project (www.raingain.eu) :

- Experiments led in classrooms of kinder garden to design and test a disdrometer made of a plate and flour or oil to observe the diversity of rain drop sizes. It simply consists in putting a bit (roughly 1 mm depth) of flour or oil in a plate. The features of the devices based either flour or oil were first studied inside with artificial drops. Then it was tested outside under actual rain.

- The writing of scientific book with and for children aged 8-9 years with the help of the editor of the collection. The process leading to the final book is split in three main successive steps: (i) A 1.5 h interactive session with the researcher and a class of 8-9 year children. They are simply given the general topic of the book few hours before and ask all the questions they have on it and get some answers; (ii) The researcher writes a book in which all the questions raised by children are answered (at least partially). The scientific elements should be inserted in a lively story with few characters. The story should be more than a simple dialogue; a genuine fiction should take place and come first so that children do not even notice they are understanding and learning; (iii) Once children have read the book, there is a second session to get some feedback and possibly edit the manuscript (altering a character, adding some explanations...). After the book is illustrated and published.

People involved in these popularization activities will share their feedback.