

## Implementing the Compost teaching unit in Switzerland

The composting teaching unit was tested in spring 2008 in a secondary school class (7<sup>th</sup> grade) in the Zurich area during three lessons within five weeks.

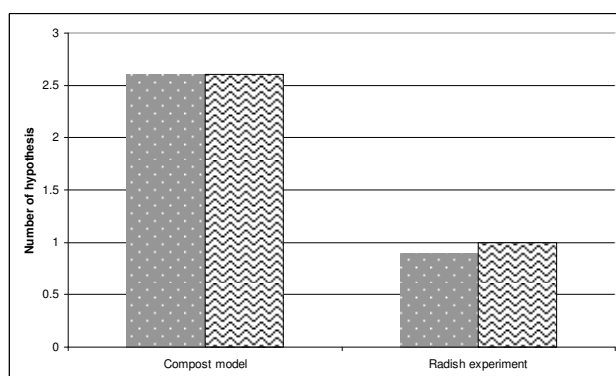
The main parts of the unit were two experiments. The pupils explored on one side if radishes grow better on compost soil than on normal soil. During five weeks they could observe that compost helped the plants to grow faster. On the other hand the pupils monitored a compost model. The goal was to observe how compost waste develops. In addition to the experiments, a forest excursion was implemented to show the natural compost cycle.

Apart from testing the general suitability of the composting class model for the use in a Swiss school, a goal was to evaluate the gender- and language-specific responses of pupils to this teaching unit. The differences were analysed with texts which the pupils wrote for the experiments. The number of written hypotheses was counted for the statement. Between various mother tongues there was no significant difference. The girls wrote more hypotheses for the radish experiment. On the other hand the boys wrote more for the compost model. It is possible that girls are more afraid of the organisms in the compost and the compost waste than boys.

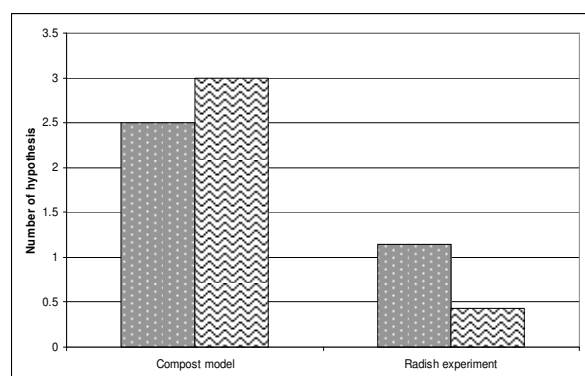
Another part of the compost teaching was environmental education. A goal of the teaching was to change the consciousness of the pupils. The evaluation of the units by the pupils showed that they understood the main advantages of composting.

It was not part of the evaluation if compost teaching has changed the behaviour of the pupils.

The varied teaching was an advantage for the pupils, but also a lot of preparation work and material. No doubt, compost teaching is a good thing.



Numbers of written hypothesis (points: German mother tongue, zigzag: other mother tongues)



Numbers of written hypothesis (points: girls, zigzag: boys)