

”Lies-to-Children” and Science Communication

Wednesday 2 December 2020 13:45 (45 minutes)

Lies-to-children is a common concept in science education. It refers to the simplified versions of a subject that are usually taught to students in order to provide them with the mental structure needed to move beyond those same lies. One typical example is classical mechanics: a “wrong” picture of reality that is however extremely useful if one wants to understand quantum mechanics and relativity.

In this talk I will explain why lies-to-children is also a pivotal concept to understand science communication. Here it works differently because it is encoded in metaphors, not in the subjects of a curriculum, but the idea is the same. We’ll also see how lies-to-children are unavoidable when communicating theoretical physics to a lay audience, and we’ll learn how to be aware of their pros and cons in order to use them properly. Finally, through some motivating examples, I will encourage all EuroPLEx members to lie as much and as finely as possible about QCD in QuarkBits, the EuroPLEx collaborative blog.

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