



Active Learning for a Better School Environment – A Norwegian Pilot Project

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Background

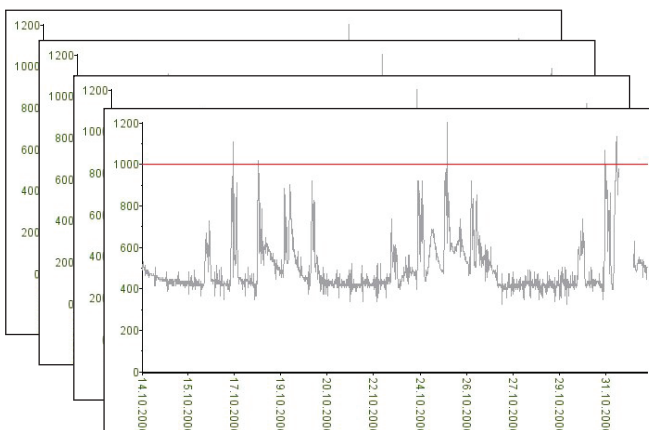
In 2003 a new Section 9 A was added to the Norwegian Education Act stating, “All pupils in primary and secondary schools have the right to a good physical and psycho-social environment which promotes health, well-being and learning”. The act makes clear that pupils shall participate in the continuous and systematic work to improve their own school and learning environment.

The Environmental Education Network *miljolare.no* (English version: *sustain.no*) is a Norwegian Internet based educational tool and support system for Sustainable Development for lower graduates. It includes more than 150 activities in 12 thematic areas.

In order to establish *miljolare.no* as a tool to fulfil Section 9 A in schools and local authorities in Norway, the project “Active learning for a better school environment” was started in the Ringerike council in the eastern part of Norway in January 2006. The project was initiated by the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education. Universal Design is a prioritised strategic area for Norwegian authorities. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for the Plan of Action for Universal Design and also funds the project.



Pupils from Ulleraal School investigating dust and measuring CO₂-concentration and indoor temperature.



CO₂-concentrations from the “Indoor air quality”-activity result pages.

Project description

One of the main goals of the project is to raise awareness and knowledge about sustainable development among pupils and teachers in the council’s schools. The pu-

pils participate in the systematic work to improve their own school environment according to Section 9 A by using practical activities relevant to the school curriculum based on the activities in the Environmental Education Network. The school administration and the local authorities are provided with useful information about the school environment that they would otherwise not have access to due to limited resources.

A steering group with representatives from local authorities, the school administration, teachers and pupils has been established and is led by NILU on behalf of the Directorate for Primary and Secondary Education. Pupils participate both in the planning and in practical work.

The project includes seven schools and a minimum of two classes in each school. The project is planned for three activity periods of one week each and will be carried out in the school year 2006/2007. The pupils will carry out activities within the topics “Indoor air quality” and “Universal design” (both indoors and outdoors) and “Energy use”. They will report their results on the web page and also write reports using a web based report tool.

Results

The results of the pupils’ investigations will be used as input to the Ringerike council budget handling regarding school building renovations and maintenance in the coming years.

