

Stretched mattresses and tiny solar systems: communicating STEM without metaphors.

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Communication is both an art and a science, that is highly dependent the audience, message, and speaker. In case of STEM, there is also the stereotype to overcome that these are topics as superhumanly complicated as they are exciting. Often we mitigate by using metaphors: atoms are tiny solar systems, and gravity is a stretched mattress. But are there other ways?

In this talk, I will first lay out some philosophy of STEM didactics and what barriers I (anecdotally) find have to be taken down for successful narration, followed by a few examples of how colleagues and myself have been putting it into practice in a number of regional, national, and international projects, such as the Einstein Telescope Education Centre and the upcoming MaGIC programme for teacher professionalisation.

Presenter: KOEKOEK, Gideon (Maastricht University)

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