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Students in O'Loughlin Elementary School's after-school program look at urban and rural pollutant diagrams held by Fort Hays State University senior Tucker Sexson, left, and FHSU junior Doug Colglazier on Wednesday afternoon in the O'Loughlin cafeteria.

FHSU students find kids know the environment

By **DIANE GASPER O'BRIEN**
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A couple of students from Fort Hays State University showed up at O'Loughlin Elementary School on Wednesday afternoon prepared to teach youngsters something about water conservation.

Tucker Sexson and Doug Colglazier learned something themselves, too. The FHSU agronomy majors found out that the students' parents are good teachers.

When asked what pollution means, students were quick to answer, "When you don't take care of the water," and "It screws up the earth."

"My dad puts the oil in a container when he changes oil in his 1967 Pontiac," said Christian Wright, a second-grader in Kids After School, O'Loughlin's after school program.

"We can clean up our dog droppings and put them in a waste basket," third-grader Ashlyn Parrish said when the children were asked to name some ways people can help stop pollution.

Sexson, a senior from Weskan, and Colglazier, a junior from Rozel, and fellow FHSU students are giving presentations during a two-week span as a service learning project made possible by a Water L.I.N.K. grant from the Envi-



Students watch as Colglazier simulates rain and the resulting pollution spread on a watershed EnviroScape.

ronmental Protection Agency to promote water awareness issues.

The FHSU students brought with them a plastic watershed model called "EnviroScape," as well as posters that showed different methods of watershed management. The EnviroScape included a water treatment plant, golf course, storm drain, construction site, forest, industrial site, abandoned well, farm, plowed field, residential area and highways and roads, and it tracked pollution from those areas.

While Colglazier manned the EnviroScape, Sexson helped students design their

own T-shirts depicting various methods of water conservation.

"I like talking to kids and helping them think about what their families might need to change habits," he said. "We're stewards of the land, and they need to know that herbicides and fertilizers are good things when used properly and with good management."

Colglazier simulated sprinkling a pesticide, which actually was red Kool-Aid and fertilizer (yellow Kool-Aid) about the EnviroScape, as well pouring oil (chocolate syrup) and factory sludge (cocoa and water mixture).

He then showed the students what happens to rivers and other water bodies when it rains, pushing pollutants into clean water.

"Oh, that's not good, that's not good," second-grader Ashlee Martinson repeated over and over as she watched the red "pesticides" pour into a river.

"Would you want to go swimming in that kind of stuff?" Colglazier asked as students vigorously shook their heads "No."

The youngsters were impressed when Colglazier showed them the value of terraces and grass strips, showing how to stop pollution at its source.

"The terraces divert water to the safe ways," he said, demonstrating the process. "And the grass strips catch the contaminants, and clean water flows through."

Joyce Wilson, director of the after school program, even was interested in the demonstration.

"It's nice to have something different than the normal activities," she said. "They learn so much from something like this, and it's good for them to have good role models of older students."

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