

GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA FOR A CHANGING WORLD

Changing Geographies: Innovative curricula
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GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA FOR A CHANGING WORLD



✦ INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

- ✦ As society changes, university degrees must adapt
- ✦ Graduates and postgraduates able to
 - ◆ perform very specialised tasks
 - ◆ adapt fast to new job conditions
- ✦ Spain: Royal Decree (2003) to adopt ECTS
 - ◆ Credits are given for attending lectures, fieldtrips and seminars; for lab-work, independent study, projects and exams.

INTRODUCTION

✠ Programmes needed a change

- Modernise the attitude of lecturers and students
 - Students too passive
 - Lecturers restricted to “preaching”

GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA AND THE ECTS IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

✦ Steps taken

- ◆ White Book
 - Territorial planning
 - Setting new standards (still pending)
- ◆ Universities are developing new curricula

✦ Main objectives of innovative programmes

- ◆ Dissolve gap between theoretical and practical classes
- ◆ Students play a more active role
- ◆ Lecturers as guides

GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA AND THE ECTS IN SPANISH UNIVERSITIES

✧ Consequences:

- ✧ Points must be awarded for all activities
- ✧ Estimation of the time spent in each activity
- ✧ Day-by-day chronograms with pre-set lectures
- ✧ Courses for lecturers (e.g., multimedia and IT)

✧ Balance

- ✧ Positive experience for students and lecturers
- ✧ Negative complaints on the time required and lack of IT courses for students

ADAPTING GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA TO A CHANGING WORLD

✦ Competences

- Understanding and interpreting landscapes, the meaning of spatial relationships and the construction of spatial models and schemas at different scales.
- Perceiving the different forms of organising space, the diversity and interdependence of regions and places, the mechanisms that drive to spatial segregation, and the nature of the changes that affect them.
- Collecting, comparing, analysing and presenting geographical information through different geographical techniques and perspectives.
- Applying and perceiving geographical concepts and communicating (written and orally) ideas, basic notions and geographical theories.

ADAPTING GEOGRAPHY CURRICULA TO A CHANGING WORLD

- ✦ The materialisation of this kind of proposals is, in general, much more limited, focused towards technical instruction.
- ✦ Geography degrees should have courses on
 - ◆ Geographic theory and epistemology
 - ◆ Regional geography
 - ◆ More specialised areas
 - ◆ Students need to be in close contact with modern technology throughout their degree

CONCLUSIONS

- ✧ Forming a professional Geographer is a complex process
 - ◆ Universities require dynamic and flexible programmes that are up-to-date with the needs of the modern labour market
- ✧ The programming of the degree should take a holistic approach to Geography
 - ◆ The implementation of this system by Spanish Universities has, in general, confused the requirements of a university graduate with those of a clerk.

CONCLUSIONS

- ✦ Although they have not been addressed in detail in this paper, the issues regarding university funding (public vs. private) are also important and different approaches should be fully discussed in academic circles as well as by European societies.