

Getting geography students involved in European integration

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The issue

- How to bridge the gap between “geography of European integration” and students’ personal opinions and attitudes as European citizens.

 - Or: How to combine the goals of ‘technical control’, ‘mutual understanding’ and ‘emancipation’.
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The history

- EU-funded Intensive Programmes about the Geography of European Integration

 - Experiences:
 - Mutual understanding
 - Mutual learning
 - Europe as a contested arena
 - Active learning strategies
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The course

- European Integration
 - Appr. 60 students (1/3 to 1/4 exchange students)
 - 3 to 4 teachers involved
 - 10 weeks
 - Conventional part
 - Project part
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The project

- ❑ Country report related to a European issue (e.g. CAP reform, Lisbon agenda, Structure Funds reform)
 - ❑ In international student groups
 - ❑ Data gathering includes visit to Brussels
 - ❑ Presentations in regional groupings
 - ❑ The European Parliament Debate simulation
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The simulation

- Mutual briefing in country blocks
 - Simulation with new roles:
 - Members of EP political parties (majority)
 - European Commissioners
 - Chairs of EP
 - Presentation of EC proposal and debates (including lobbying, finding common interests, party meetings, final debate)
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Experiences

- ❑ Increased interest in European politics
 - ❑ Lively discussions
 - ❑ Future-orientation highly appreciated
 - ❑ Successful link between 'subject-matter' and students' personal feelings and attitudes
 - ❑ Successful link between 'the geographical' and 'the political' and between theory and practice
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Experiences

- ❑ More openness to and respect for others and 'otherness'
 - ❑ Problem of difference in skills, knowledge and political involvement between students
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