



A strategy to teach Earth Science to Erasmus students

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The Universitat de Valencia is the second most popular university in Europe for the Erasmus exchange program in Europe. Close to 2000 Erasmus students attend yearly the lectures in Valencia University. Most of them arrive to Valencia –also to Granada, Barcelona and Salamanca- because the cultural attractive. Valencia moreover offers a warm and dry climate, which make the University of Valencia very popular for the Erasmus students. In 2003 a survey developed by the International Exchange Coordinator of the Geography Degree shown that 33 % of the student choose the Valencia University because the night-life, 22 % because the climate, 23 % because the suggestion of a friend (mainly due to the climate and night-life) and only 22 % because of the academic background of the university. Another survey at the end of the 2003-2004 year shown that 84 % of the Erasmus student did not know that Valencia had a lagoon (called l'Albufera) nearby, and that 23 % of the students ignored that the main park of the city was developed on the river bed, after the artificial change of the mouth of the river to a southern position due to the flood of 1957. The Erasmus students new almost nothing about the landscape of the surroundings and the city of Valencia.

A strategy was developed since 2003 by the International Exchange Coordinator of the Geography Degree to show to the students coming from the Erasmus project the landscape of the Valencia Country by means of field visits to the key locations in two days. One day is devoted to the coastal land where lagoons, river mouths and population concentration are the main topics. The second day a trekking on the mountains located at the Sierra de Enguera give an idea to the students of the Desertification processes after the land abandonment during the 50 and 60's.

The students attending the lectures and the two days excursion (280 in 2008) found this excursion as a key point in their adaptation to the new university as they know how is the landscape were they are living. And moreover, they have the chance to find colleagues to share the year abroad.

Key Words: Erasmus, Earth science, Landscape, Environment, Valencia, Spain