



Teaching Geography to young (ERASMUS) and old (NAUGRAN) students. Why not mix in the same class?

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Since 2000, the University of Valencia is developing a program to teach students older than 55 years, which is called NAUGRAN. This is a key program that covers the needs of a society that is having more and more population over the age of 55, and with a life expectancy that surpasses the 81 years. Moreover, the University of Valencia is being the second most popular university in Europe for the ERASMUS students exchange program, with almost two thousands students arriving to Valencia yearly.

During the last six years, Geography was taught to both students in independent lecture rooms and field and laboratory classes. In 2008, an experiment was carried out with both types of students (Erasmus and Naugran) which consisted in attending the lectures and the field excursions together. Following each excursion a survey was done to check the success or not of the new strategy.

The results show that: i) ERASMUS students learnt more about the Human Geography of Spain as they listened from the NAUGRAN students to tell them the social changes occurred in Spain; ii) The NAUGRAN students increase their interest in learning more when they see students who study in different countries, speak different languages and travel around the world. Seeing as how a new generation is being educated, is, for them fascinating, and they want to be part of the new world; iii) the ERASMUS students believe that they are privileged students as they compare their conditions with the two generations before; and iv) the ERASMUS students understand better the physical processes as many of the NAUGRAN students show them examples such as floods, intense thunderstorms or frost episodes they lived

As a conclusion we recommend to mix sporadically students from different ages and backgrounds to teach Geography as this will be a reinforcement of the ideas taught and they will learn from a much broader view.

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