



Interdisciplinary field approach to teach Environmental Sciences. The biggest ecological gradient in S-Europe as scenario.

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A multi- approximation to Natural Sciences learning is proposed taking the field as scenario, along the biggest environmental gradient in South-Europe. Different Bio- and Geo-diversity hotspots from the arid Ebro Basin to the subalpine stage of the Pyrenees Mountains are the lecture halls; there, Univ. professors, decision-makers and scientists teach on geology, soil science, botany, ecology or land-use management discuss on real conflicts. This approximation is aimed at students on Master- and PhD-level of the subjects biology, ecology, agriculture and forestry, landscape planning and environmental technology. Problem cases, workshops and "success stories" on sustainable development were studied using ICT tools in practical examples by means of study and field trips. Additionally web contents (as www.ipe.csic.es/floragon/index.html) give support to these tools. The course was held along an ecological transect with contrasted scenarios as: salt-playa lakes in the Monegros Desert, the biggest river confluence on the Iberian peninsula (Aiguabarreig), the beechwoods in the Moncayo Natural Park or the alpine grasslands of Spanish Pyrenees Mountains. These areas are natural spaces with some figure of protection, from special protection area for birds to National Parks.

The interdisciplinary and European dimension of this project is shown clearly in the orientation of the content and in the interaction between the partners from within and without universities. The curriculum of the Intensive Programme has been included as a compulsory module into the Master- and PhD-Programme "Ecology and Biodiversity".

This teaching format, below the Erasmus Intensive Programme (IP) SUSTMONT – "Training on approaches to sustainable development in mountain areas under global change" won recently the Lifelong Learning Award (2010) from the Austrian Minister for Science and Research. SUSTMONT has lead to an intensification and continuation of the IP-partnerships with the objective of a Joint Master Programme "Sustainable Mountain Management", which will be further pursued within the new Erasmus Intensive Programme EUROSTAIN.