



New successful ideas to teach Earth Science to students older than 55 by means of trekking

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During the last 10 years, the Geograns Program within the NAUGRAN initiative of the University of Valencia is using trekking as a way to teach in the field Earth Science. This paper review the contribution of this program and show the results and future challenges.

The life expectancy is growing all over the world. This is a clear trend in the Western societies where after two generations there is a large group of inhabitants that have a new life after retirement. The universities must understand that this new group of citizens need services that will allow them to know better the society. This is why the University of Valencia developed in the end of the 90's a program to teach to students older than 55. The program that allows to those students to attend lectures at the University is called NAUGRAN. This is a program for more than one thousand students that cover the needs of a group that is having more and more population over the age of 55, and with a life expectancy that surpass the 81 years in Spain.

Teaching History, Arts, Sciences or Literature can be easily due for those 55-old students. However, teaching geosciences is being very difficult, as the students must visit the field and the laboratory. Within the GEOGRANS project, and during the last six years, Physical Geography was taught to students older than 55 in independent lecture rooms and field and laboratory classes. The main strategy was to show them the concepts and the ideas of the Physical Geography in the field. The excursions allow to shown the main features of the landscape (rivers, mountains, rocks...) and the impacts of the humankind on the changes of the nature to the students. The program is now 6 years old and it is being very successful with more than 200 hundreds participants and with excursion every two weeks.

This paper will show the importance of teaching to students that arrive to the university after retirement. And that trekking is a successful strategy as the students realise that they can be active and see the environmental changes suffered but the the land and the society. During the last 10 years more than 100 excursion were done by the Geograns Project. They were mainly one-day excursion, but sometimes two days excursions and one week excursions are done. The three types of excursions are showing positive acceptance of the students.