Five years of experiences with the European Workshop Environmental Sciences and Management (EUW)

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Outline

- Why a European Workshop (EUW)?
- What is the EUW?
- What are characteristics course components?
- Lessons learnt / Future challenges
Why a EUW?

- To prepare students to deal with complex problems
- To improve students’ *boundary crossing skills*
  - Disciplinary boundaries
  - Cultural boundaries
  - Boundaries between theory and practice
What is the EUW?

Students

- work on a complex (wicked) problem
- work together with 30 persons with different disciplinary and cultural background
- produce one concise report
What is the EUW?

- **Students work**
  - in an intensive period of 8 weeks fulltime
  - in the end of the first year of the MSc program
  - apply knowledge, theory and skills and acquire new skills

- **Three key chair groups at WU:**
  - Environmental Systems Analysis
  - Environmental Policy
  - Environmental Technology
  - but an increasing interest from others
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Phases</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. Enrolment</td>
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<td>2 and 3</td>
<td>2. Preparation</td>
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<td>4 and 5</td>
<td>3. Field-work</td>
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<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>4. Data analysis</td>
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<td>6 and 7</td>
<td>5. Reporting</td>
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<td>6. Reflection</td>
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Timeline EUW
Characteristics course components of the EUW

- Matrix approach
- Field work
- Role of the lecturers
## Characteristic course components: EUW Matrix

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<td>Geo-1</td>
<td>P1.1 + CZ</td>
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Characteristic course components: EUW Matrix

- Enables students to deepen their disciplinary knowledge and skills
- Forces them to cross disciplinary boundaries
- Enables intensive group interaction
- Facilitates involvement of every student
- Facilitates formulation of goal, research questions, and writing together
Field work: what do the students do?

- Meet the client
- Collect data by interviews, questionnaires and field observations
- Make a start with analyzing data
- Present preliminary results to the client and receive feedback
- ‘Experience’ the study area
Characteristic course components: Field work

- Setting in which students have to deal with the complexity
- Context in which students have the possibility to integrate classroom-based knowledge, to transcend disciplinary knowledge and to combine and connect findings
- Provides plenty of opportunities for communication (content-related, managerial & informal)
Course components: Role of the lecturers

- Limited supporting ‘disciplinary’ lectures
- Applied skills training in
  - Project management
  - Data collection methods
  - Group dynamics
- Many plenary and sub-group feedback sessions to facilitate the research & learning
10 EUW’S in 4 different countries

Topics:
- Cycling in the city
- Green in and around the city
- Sustainable development of brown fields
- Sustainable urban water management
- Reinvigoration of a coastal area
- Scenarios for sustainable water management

Countries:
- Czech Republic, Ukraine, Norway and Uzbekistan
Needed to make the EUW a success

- Good ToR
  - Written together with and supported by the commissioner
  - Related to the ‘disciplines’ of the participating students
  - Fitting the matrix approach (2 dimensions of the issue)

- Clear yet flexible structure
  - three phases, supporting sessions, EUW matrix
Needed to make the EUW a success

- Good communication between all involved
  - Skype, video conferencing
  - SharePoint, flip chart in the field
  - Trust
  - Respect for everybody’s contribution
- Possibility to do independent research in the field
  - Contact persons per area
  - Means of transportation
  - ‘Freedom’ for the students
Needed to make the EUW a success

- Team of ‘lecturers’
  - From different disciplines
  - Methods & methodology
- Who get along, trust and somehow supplement each other & who can disagree
- Who are good facilitators
  - who can be a bit modest
  - who see the importance of learning by interaction
Cultural dimension?

- Student group
  - Preferably no dominance of a nationality in group / MT
- Research area
  - It was not always possible to do independent research
  - It was not always expected that students can do a good job
  - Not in all cases the importance of mutual learning was acknowledged
Future challenges

- EUW as a more Transdisciplinary case study?
  - More and other involvement of the ‘commissioner’?
  - How is transdisciplinarity influenced by cultural differences?
  - How is transdisciplinarity influenced by language barriers?

- EUW in cooperation with local universities?
  - using modern ITC and the Internet?
Thank you for your attention!
Communication is supported by SharePoint

- Special website to support the communication within and between:
  - geo-groups
  - expert groups
  - Czech / Ukraine / Norwegian student group
  - management team
  - students and teachers

- SharePoint EUW-Marine 2010