

Changing directions in GI education in the Netherlands and Flanders: an overview of changes throughout the last ten years.

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It seems that education of GI related skills and knowledge is well established in the Netherlands and Flanders. At colleges and universities, students are well served. Outside the university, a range of vocational courses fills the knowledge gap for those who need either specific, often software related, skills or knowledge related to a specific field of GIS application.

This paper deals with the hypothesis that the contents of the GIS courses in the Netherlands and Flanders have gone through some phases of transition.

During the first years, courses were rather different from each other, related to an uneven spread of GIS experience and therefor GIS teaching. During these first years GIS courses were often a result of the work of individuals, very much influenced by local opportunities and constraints. These individuals were hardly aware of similar work at other places and hence the GIS courses they taught were rather different from each other.

The next phase was one of convergence: the use of GIS and related to that the teaching of GIS was becoming more diffused. Due to better communication and more co-operation, courses showed a strong tendency towards having identical structures in terms of contents and software used. International developments like the Core Curriculum illustrate this phase.

The present phase seems to be one of divergence again. GIS teaching as such is now well established and is becoming more and more related to different professional disciplines. Next to the typical GIS courses, a range of GIS related courses has been developed for specific target groups.

The paper will describe to what extent the hypothesis fits for the Dutch situation and the situation in Flanders. In the spring of 2000, a questionnaire will be held to study the changes in contents of the courses taught at universities and colleges. The results of this questionnaire will be presented at the Budapest meeting.