

Teaching a GIS Course in Public Administration: An Interdisciplinary Approach

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Abstract

Geographic information systems (GIS) have become one of the most innovative and sophisticated technologies for managing spatial data at local, national, and global levels. GIS has many functions and is used for several purposes in public and private organizations. Yet, teaching of GIS courses at university level is very limited to schools of engineering and agriculture in Turkey. However, many of the policy makers and public employees are trained in social science disciplines such as law, political science, public administration and international relations, and unaware of GIS and its applications in practice, which leads inefficiency and ineffectiveness in professional life.

The main objective of this paper is to analyze the application of GIS and its technology in social science disciplines from an interdisciplinary perspective. It is believed that the traditional methods and curriculums don't satisfy the needs of students and employers alike. The paper questions how a social science instructors design and integrate the technology related courses such as GIS into the curriculum.

The paper includes the practical usage of GIS in several governmental departments in local and national level such as environment, health, migration, security and agriculture. The paper also demonstrates how a GIS course enhances the teaching and learning process and increase the participation of students into the class sessions. The public administration departments within the university settings should support technology related education like GIS, which is necessary and inevitable for future generations.