

Use of the Surface Tables in GEO3220 – Exploration Lab 2

College/ Subject: CLES / Geography

Module: GEO3220 The Cryosphere

Lecturer: Dr Damien Mansell

Purpose of session: To improve student understanding of remote sensing and applications in glaciology through discussion and computer based practical exercises.

Number of students present: 50

Resources used: ArcMAP



Why was the session ran in the Forum Exploration Lab?

The advantage of the surface tables is that they allow students to engage in IT software whilst allowing group discussion and student lead learning. 5 students were on each of the 10 tables allowing for student discussions improving skills such as critical analysis, image processing, team working, communication, presentation and improve knowledge and understanding of the subject.

The software we were using was ArcMap. Many of the students had training in this software in a compulsory level-2 module, but some students may have struggled to complete the exercise on their own. Since the module I was teaching was not a GIS module, this allowed “student experts” to assist those less capable of GIS to meet the ILO’s which related to understanding satellite remote sensing applications for the Cryosphere.

How the room was used?

Students were provided a hand-out with detailed ILO’s, GIS instructions and questions for discussion. By visualising satellite images of the Cryosphere students lead discussions and created practical outputs. At the end of the session groups were invited to present their findings and outputs to the cohort.

Comments from students

“The use of the surface tables allowed discussion about the data, visualisation, techniques and understanding of the material which would not be possible around a computer screen.”

“Forum exploration Lab work was both great fun and insightful - nice to be in a different setting to the Lecture Theatre all the time.”

“The practical was good and interactive”

“I thought it was a very useful way of engaging in the material in a more practical manner.”

“The content was interesting and it was nice to be able to use the exploration labs for looking at modelling and GIS”

Observations

Students engaged in the material as they would for a normal computer practical but the tables allowed for discussion and evaluation amongst students which enabled student-lead learning, more detailed understanding as well as encouraging students to critically evaluate the data and approach. Students seemed more engaged in the material as they were challenging each other as they worked their way through the exercise.