Maria Karamitsou

A more comfortable learning style

A fifth-year civil engineering student at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece, Maria Karamitsou spent the summer of 2005 working at an institute of seismology, studying earthquake-resistant construction techniques.

Recently, however, she found herself focusing more on the behavior of water than of earth. During the spring semester, Karamitsou completed an intensive research project on different aspects of hydraulics, including water handling, the water cycle, reservoirs, filter banks, gates, and dams.

As she began work on the project, Karamitsou realized that she needed outside sources to bolster her research, and recalled that she had once heard about information being available on the MIT Web site. "I was searching for information for this project," Karamitsou explains, "and I remembered that once in the newspaper in Larissa, where I grew up, there was an announcement and an Internet address for OpenCourseWare. So I sent an email to MIT, asking them to help me — and they did. They told me where to search for information on the site, and which courses to look for, and it was very helpful.

"Course 18.327 – Wavelets, Filter Banks, and Applications had lots of information," continues Karamitsou. "I didn't find any videos, but I found lecture notes, handouts and slides from presentations, and some problem sets. It helped me a lot; I learned many, many things. I especially liked the fact that I saw many diagrams there. I was able to find almost the same information at my own university, but it was more theoretical. Sometimes I have a hard time with the theoretical style, and having all the information in mathematical style was very informative, and very helpful."

Karamitsou has not yet had the opportunity to use MIT OCW as a complement to her other courses, but she plans to take advantage of it in the near future. "This coming semester," Karamitsou explains, "I'm taking some courses on concrete. I have already searched for this on OCW, and found many courses in this area, so I'm sure that that is going to be a big help."