Case Study Analysis: An Innovative Pedagogical Strategy that Facilitates Student Learning through Engagement in "Real Life" Community Food Systems Work

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Outline

1. Civic Agriculture & Food Systems Minor Overview
   • ALS4204 Concepts in Community Food Systems Course

2. Case Study Analysis Assignment
   • Purpose and Design
   • Methodology
   • Results/Findings

3. Conclusions
ALS 2204 Introduction to Civic Agriculture
ALS 3404 Ecological Agriculture: Theory and Practice
ALS 4204 Concepts in Community Food Systems
ALS 4214 CAPstone: Civic Agriculture & Food Systems

Embody a commitment to developing & strengthening student understanding of an economically, environmentally, & socially sustainable agriculture & food systems through building community capacity, using local resources, and serving local markets and citizens. ~ T. Lyson
Virginia Tech

ALS 4204
Concepts in Community Food Systems
CRN: 19813
Spring 2015

Course Overview
A comprehensive examination of the economic, socio-cultural, health and environmental issues related to community food systems. Topics include: local and regional food systems development and sustainability, food sovereignty and security, and population and environmental health. Analyze models, strategies, and policies relevant to community food systems. Pre: 2204 (3H, 3C).
Purpose/Objectives
Case Study Analysis Assignment

1. Engage in “real-life” food systems work
   - Experience with community practitioner engagement

2. Introduce research methods
   - Primary and secondary data methods & collection

3. Synthesize a case study report that described the dimensions of the local community food system
   - Describe different dimensions of the food system within SW Virginia
Case Study Analysis Methodology

Presented Topics (n=14)

Self-Selection into 9 Teams

Data Collection Methods
  Semi-structured interview script template

Diverse Reporting Formats

Student Learning Outcomes
  (IRB Approved)

(19 students; 8 teams of 2, 1 team of 3)
Case Study Analysis
Components/Reporting

1. **TOPIC**: 25 word summary

2. **SITE**: Oral Creative Reflection

3. **RESEARCH METHODS**: Abstract

4. **OVERVIEW & HISTORY**: 500 words

5. **INPUTS and OUTPUTS**: 250 words each

6. **CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, SOLUTIONS**: 150 words

7. **ACTIONS TAKEN and LESSONS LEARNED**: 300 words

8. **REFERENCES, GLOSSARY, IMAGES**

9. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
Case Study Analysis Outcomes

- Communication Skills
- Assignment Structure
- Critical Thinking
- Research Skills
- Problem Solving
Case Study Analysis Topics

SWEET LAND FARM
tasty RAW milk
{FROM}
gloss-fed cows

Windrush Farm
U-Pick Blueberries

Interfaith Food Pantry
Serving Blacksburg
A Program of New River Community Action

Roanoke Natural Foods Co-op

Eats Natural Foods

Oasis World Market

Annie Kay's
Main Street Market

Y Neighborhood Harvest

Gillies

Appalachian Sustainable Development

Appalachian Harvest
Case Study Analysis: Site
Creative Reflection Options
Poetry: Haiku, Tanka, Limerick
Photovoice - Generative Metaphor

Food secure for all
Caring for you and me
Thank your food pantry

U-pick
There once was a Giles County man
whose blueberries grew many miles
Too busy to pick
so we came quite quickly
and harvested by the bucket.
Case Study Analysis: PechaKucha

EATS: Natural Food Retailer

Gillie’s Restaurant
Farm to Restaurant

Gleaning in the New River Valley

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: WINDRUSH FARM

Interfaith Food Pantry
FOOD BANKS PANTRY

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FARMS
A Case Study Analysis of Glade Road Growing
ALS 4204
May 2015

Sweetland Farm
CSA Milk Share
Willis, VA
Key Findings: Assignment Structure

“We got to analyze various aspects of a part of the community food system that we may not have looked at or thought about otherwise.

“Breaking down the case study was very helpful & encouraged better time management.”

Prompt feedback, and positive reinforcement improved final written report.

Way the case study analysis was separated was practically perfect… spaced out enough for sufficient time to complete assignments; feedback was also given with enough time to correct assignments. Sections built upon each other very well. What I learned from a previous one helped out with the next ones.
Key Findings: Critical Thinking
Understanding of “real-life” community food systems work

Students learned...

- “Complexity of local food systems was made clear, ... i.e., the struggles food insecure individuals as well as farmers face.”

- “Takes innovation & creativity to succeeding in a food system & interacting directly w/individuals made this clear.”

- “Different aspects of a community food system takes plenty of different people working together to facilitate change.”

- “Focusing on ...benefits, challenges, history, future endeavors, & lessons and what the community...”
Quotes about what student learned…

- “Appreciated openness and "unedited“ conversation (interview) that dove much deeper into the difficulty of the organization's evolution; **primary materials helped make that level of conversation possible.**”

- “**Primary sources were absolutely the most effective.** Secondary sources were helpful in preliminary research when providing background;”

- “Community food systems are extremely individual to the area for which they are providing. This individuality really **forces serious researchers to investigate those involved to get a good feel for the dynamics of the regional food system.**”
Key Findings: Problem Solving

- Navigated working with community partner to accomplish multilayered assignment.
  - Scheduling interviews and follow-up
  - Proprietary information sharing
  - Streamlining project content

- Negotiated Multiple Assignment Format Constraints
  - Multiple Word Limits and Writing Genres
  - “I liked the PechaKucha quite a bit…it was a succinct way to wrap up a lot of information, and it was visually appealing which made it easier to pay attention….also the most challenging…to summarize information in 20 seconds was the most difficult part because we had a lot more we wanted to say after getting more involved with the community partner.”
Conclusions

➢ Advanced communication skills
  ▪ Interaction with community partner
  ▪ Diverse writing and oral genre practice
  ▪ Case study analysis written report
  ▪ PechaKucha presentation

➢ Improved problem-solving
  ▪ Technological challenges
  ▪ Navigated multiple technology modes/platforms

➢ Advanced critical thinking
  ▪ Integrated learning
  ▪ Reflective practice in and out of class
  ▪ Research in practice with community partner
Integrated Learning through Case Study Analysis

Thank you for your attention!