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

Susan Clark, Director, Civic Agriculture & Food Systems Minor

Vivica Kraak, Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise

Jenny Schwanke, Community Partner Liaison

Pete Ziegler, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences

Liza Dobson, Horticulture Student

Civic Agriculture
and Food Systems
VIRGINIA TECH

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

Civic Agriculture & Food Systems

ALS 2204 Introduction to Civic Agriculture

ALS 3404 Ecological Agriculture: Theory and Practice

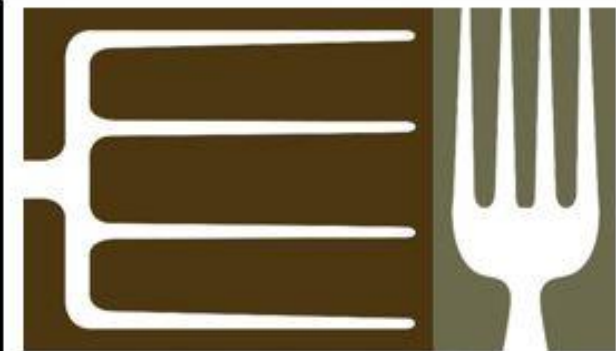ALS 4204 Concepts in Community Food Systems

ALS 4214 CAPstone: Civic Agriculture & Food Systems

Food Security/sovereignty

Civic engagement
Democratic Participation

Embodies 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

Civic Agriculture and Food Systems

VIRGINIA TECH

Cornerstones

Collaborative Teaching
Experiential learning

Healthy people/
communities

Ecological
stewardship

Strong local
economies

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).
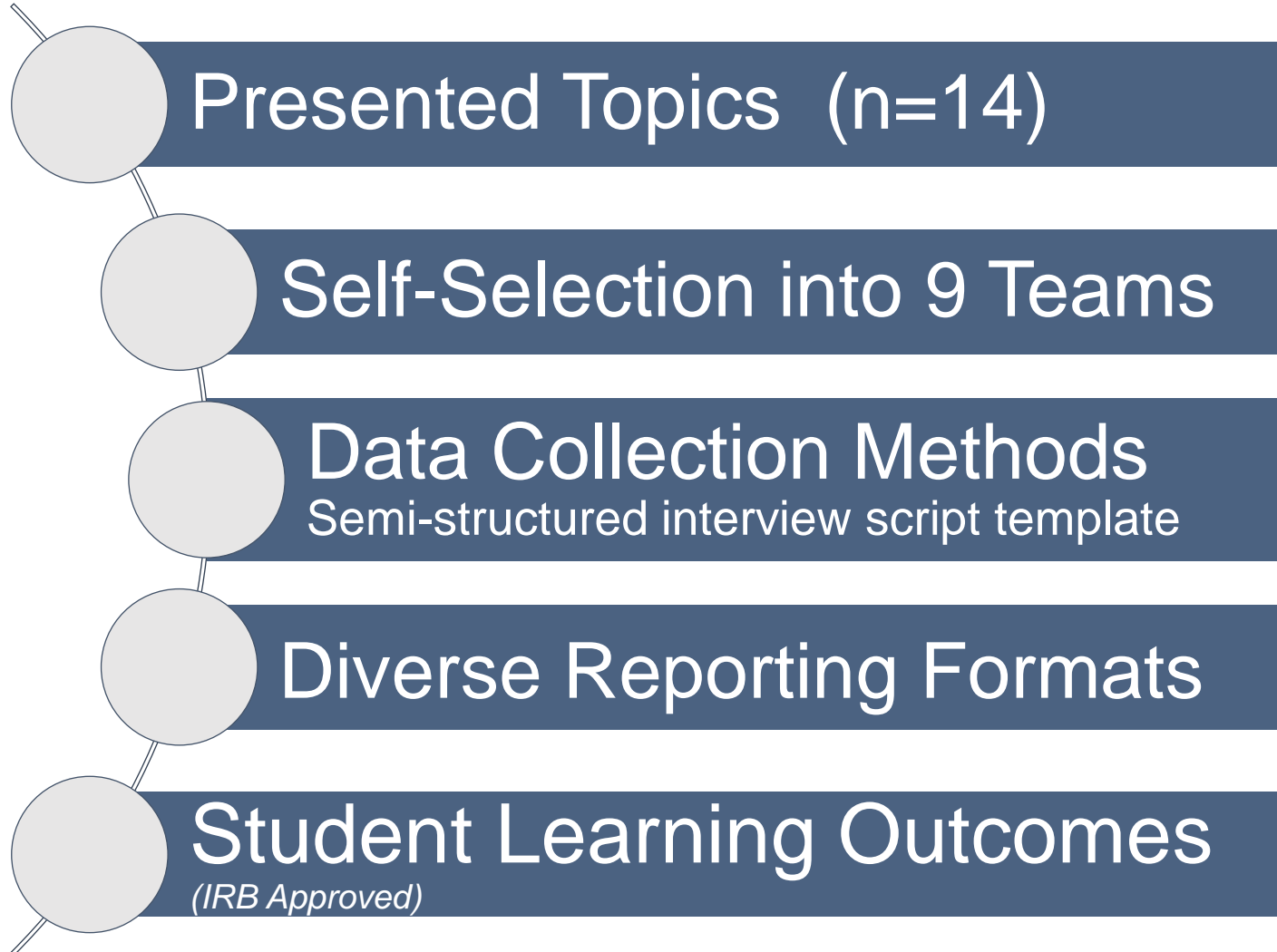
Civic Agriculture and Food Systems
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Community Engagement Case Study Analysis

Community Food System Manifesto

Community Food System

Class Engagement Activities

Community Engagement Presentation

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

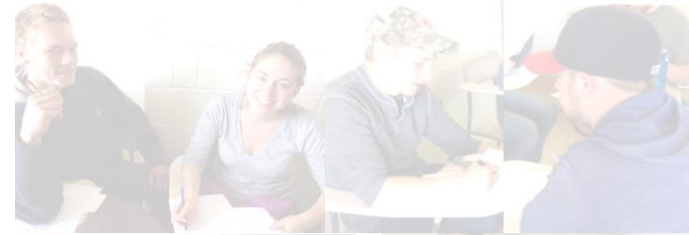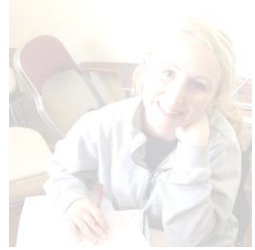9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
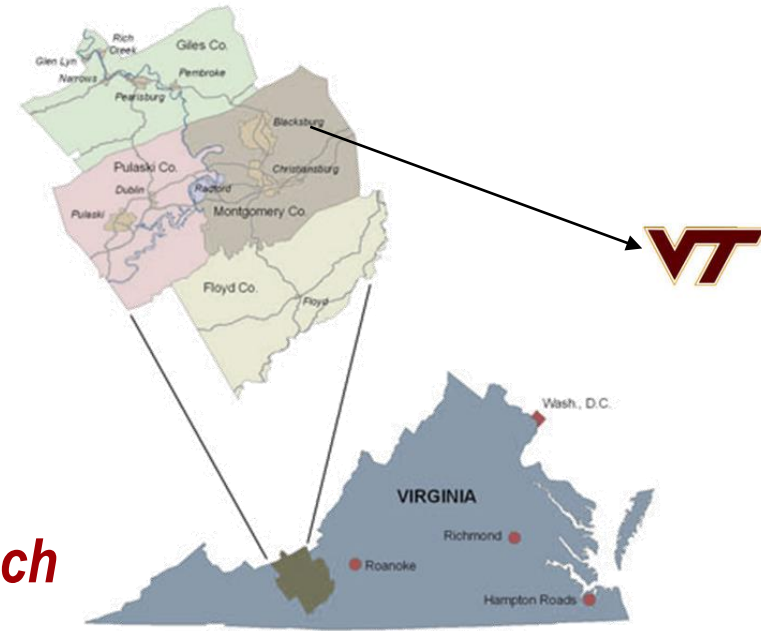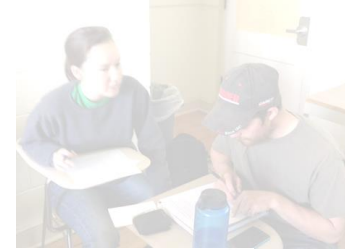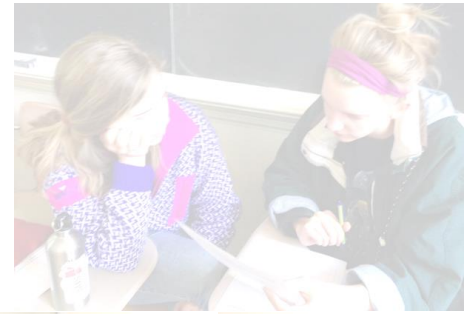
Case Study Analysis Outcomes

- Communication Skills
- Assignment Structure
- Critical Thinking
- Research Skills
- Problem Solving

Case Study Analysis Topics

HERITAGE POINT
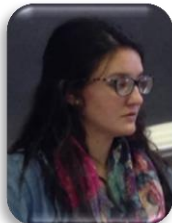A CO-OPERATIVE URBAN FARM

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

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

GLADE ROAD GROWING

ROANOKE NATURAL FOODS CO-OP

EATS
NATURAL FOODS

OASIS
WORLD MARKET

ANNIE KAY'S
Main Street Market

Windrush Farm
U-Pick Blueberries

the Y
YMCA

Y Neighborhood Harvest

GILLIE'S

APPALACHIAN
sustainable
DEVELOPMENT

APPALACHIAN HARVEST
HEALTHY FOOD, HEALTHY FARMS, CLOSE TO HOME

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

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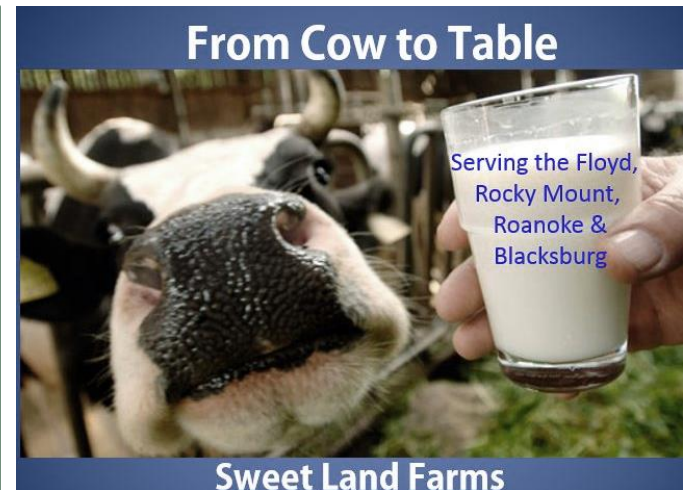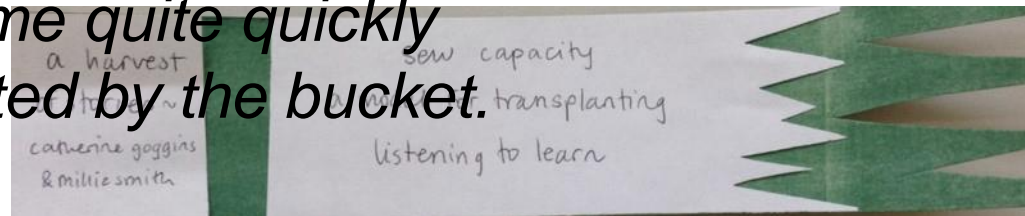A Program of New River Community Action

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
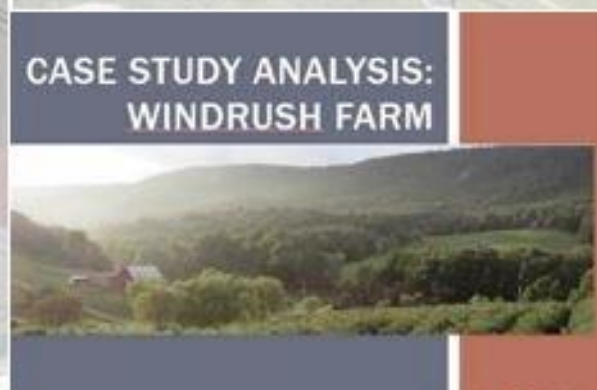*and harvested by the bucket.*

From Cow to Table
Serving the Floyd, Rocky Mount, Roanoke & Blacksburg
Sweet Land Farms

a harvest
catherine goggins & millie smith
sew capacity
transplanting
listening to learn

Case Study Analysis: PechaKucha

Key Findings: Assignment Structure

Prompt feedback, and positive reinforcement improved final written report.

"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.

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.**

"Breaking down the case study was very helpful & **encouraged better time management**."

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

Key Findings: Research Skills

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!