

## PRACTICE

### **The Chesapeake Bay & Poultry Farming: A socio-environmental perspective**

Caroline M. Solomon<sup>1,3</sup> and Khadijat Rashid<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Science, Technology and Mathematics, Gallaudet University  
800 Florida Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business, Gallaudet University, 800 Florida Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002

<sup>3</sup>Corresponding author: [caroline.solomon@gallaudet.edu](mailto:caroline.solomon@gallaudet.edu)

#### **ABSTRACT**

Students will explore the influences of poultry farming on the ecosystem health of the Chesapeake Bay. A field trip to a poultry farm helps put the case study in context. In a jigsaw design, students first act as expert groups or stakeholders and then are assigned into different synthesis groups. During each step of the process, students utilize social and natural science datasets and discuss their sources, intent, and purpose to create synthetic products aimed at achieving actionable science.

#### **KEYWORD DESCRIPTORS**

- **Ecological Topic Keywords:** aquatic ecology, estuaries, ecological economics, environmental justice, eutrophication, nitrogen cycle, nutrient loading, watershed, sustainability, waste management
- **Science Methodological Skills Keywords:** collecting and presenting data, correlation versus causation, graphing data, quantitative and qualitative data analysis
- **Pedagogical Methods Keywords:** Assessment, concept mapping, formal groupwork, jigsaw, scoring rubrics, role playing, case study

#### **CLASS TIME**

The module utilizes four to six weeks (10 class sessions) of the course. Introduction to the topic leading up to the modules was six class sessions of

# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

which two were devoted to the concept of socio-environmental synthesis, two sessions served as an introduction to economic tools and concepts, and two sessions were an introduction to ecology.

## **OUTSIDE OF CLASS TIME**

Students spent about 75 hours on classwork and related projects (including extra time spent on field trips).

## **STUDENT PRODUCTS**

For each module students are expected to produce the following:

1. What do you need to know (WDYNTK) list
2. Pre-socio-ecological system map
3. Expert or stakeholder group presentations which is scaffolded with two mini-assignments:
  - a. Large datasets
  - b. Normative thinking
4. Synthesis group discussions
5. Synthesis product (actionable science)
6. Post-socio-ecological system map

## **SETTING**

This module includes a field trip, with the rest taking place in a standard classroom. Students will need access to on-line datasets during some of the class sessions, either via their own or provided computers.

## **COURSE CONTEXT**

The modules are designed for a general studies or special topics course in socio-ecological synthesis for upper-classmen (juniors and seniors) including students with majors in both the social and natural sciences.

## **INSTITUTION**

Private, small liberal arts university primarily offering undergraduate degrees.

## **TRANSFERABILITY**

The modules were developed at Gallaudet University, the only bilingual liberal arts university for deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States. However, they are transferable to any setting in which class sizes are small and students

# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

have declared majors in either a science or a social science, business or humanities discipline and have already taken courses in their majors. Use of the modules in places that are distant from the Chesapeake Bay will need to substitute alternative sites for the field trips embedded in the modules, or provide virtual, on-line or text-based exposure to the sites and issues. These include sites with increasing population density in a six-state area that includes the political (Washington, DC) and economic (New York City) capitals of the United States as well as a sizeable fraction of its population.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This project was part of a multi-institutional study supported by the NSF Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center to assess the effectiveness of teaching socio-environmental synthesis (SES) using different pedagogical approaches in a variety of undergraduate institutional settings. I thank all of our colleagues from the participating institutions (Washington State University (Vancouver), University of Maryland College Park, Gallaudet University, Widener University) and Alan Berkowitz of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies. This work benefited from support from the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC) - NSF award DBI-1052875.

## **SYNOPSIS OF THE MODULE**

### **Principal Ecological Question Addressed**

What role can poultry farming on Maryland's Eastern Shore play in improving the health grade of the Chesapeake Bay from a D+ to a C?

### **What Happens**

After two assignments (a brainstorm list and pre-socio-environmental system map), students are introduced to the issues surrounding poultry farming, including a lawsuit by environmental groups against Perdue Farms Inc., large chicken producer headquartered on Maryland's Eastern Shore. After becoming familiar with the issue, students are assigned to different expert groups (Government & Policy, Land Use, Environmental Activists, Scientists, Economists). They complete mini-assignments to learn about working with large datasets and normative thinking and then present their expert group perspective based on data they collect via various big data websites provided and interpret using visual or graphical representations. Students are divided into synthesis groups that have a member from each expert group and they discuss possibilities for actionable science. Students choose the medium they think is the best to show their ideas for actionable science, which can vary from videos, blogs, white papers and posters, to presentations. A post-analysis socio-environmental

# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

system map completes the module.

## Module Objectives

- Identify concepts and norms from the natural and social sciences to address the effects of poultry farming
- Interpret and analyze field or real-time data from scientific and social science databases and use correct visualization tools
- Integrate concepts, tools, and methods from both natural and social sciences to analyze the effects of poultry farming
- Synthesize urban and rural issues in understanding the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Evaluate the ethics, norms, and actionability of the lawsuit in remedying the poultry manure issue

## Equipment/ Logistics Required

Students need access to large datasets (via the web), and transportation to a poultry farm.

## Summary of What is Due

1. What do you need to know (WDYNTK) list
2. Pre-socio-ecological system map
3. Expert group presentation scaffolded with two mini-assignments:
  - a. Large datasets
  - b. Normative thinking
4. Synthesis group discussions
5. Synthesis product (actionable science)
6. Post-socio-ecological system map

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE MODULE

### Introduction

You will be introduced to the economic and ecological influences and stresses on the Chesapeake Bay through an interactive PowerPoint quiz during the first day of class (in Lecture 1). The interactive quiz will allow you to test your knowledge of the Chesapeake Bay and stimulate your thinking so that you can ask more in-

# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

depth questions. During the second day of class, you will be introduced to socio-environmental synthesis (Lecture 2), then the foundation of economics through a series of lectures and reading Stephen Smith's *Environmental Economics: A very short introduction*. You will also, through a series of lectures and reading of several chapters from Norman and Spoolman's *Environmental Issues and Solutions: A modular approach*, be exposed to different elements of environmental science

Then, over the next 4-6 weeks, you will be doing a case study of the impact of poultry farming on the ecosystem health of the Chesapeake Bay, following a "jigsaw" approach (see Overview of Activities and Assignments). After completing two assignments (what do you need to know "WDYNTK" list and pre-socio-ecological system map), you will learn about this issue from class lectures and discussions, readings, and a field trip to a poultry farm. Next, you will join an expert group (Government & Policy, Land Use, Environmental Activists, Scientists, Economists), complete mini-assignments to learn about working with large datasets and normative thinking and then present your expert group perspective based on data you collect via websites that provide large data sets and interpret using visual or graphical representations. In the last part of the jigsaw, you will be assigned into synthesis groups that have a member from each expert group and to discuss possibilities for actionable science. You will choose the medium you think is the best to show your ideas for actionable science which can vary from videos, blogs, white papers, posters, or presentations. A post-socio-ecological system map completes the module.

## Materials and Methods

The overview of instructions for each stage of the case study is as follows:

### (1) Introducing the Case Study

You will first do the WDYNTK and pre-socio-ecological system map assignments to acquaint yourself with the system that you will be studying in this module. Please read the handouts and readings we provide, attend lectures, and prepare for the field trip (by filling out forms for site visit and read information on when/where to meet).

### (2) Stakeholder Group Work / mini-assignments / presentation

The instructors will assign each of you to a stakeholder group (Government & Policy, Land Use, Environmental Activists, Scientists, Economists) and provide

# TIEE

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

you with mini-assignments #1 and #2 to guide you through how to find data and analyze them for your stakeholder group presentations.

### (3) Synthesis Group Work / final product

The instructors will select students from each stakeholder group into various synthesis groups to share your knowledge from your stakeholder group. You will be provided with instructions on the tasks for the group activity and guidelines for your final synthesis product and post-socio-ecological system maps.

**Study Site:** Maryland's Eastern Shore (where most of the poultry farms are located in the state).

### Overview of Activities and Assignments:

Day	Part of jigsaw	Assignment
1	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-assessment</li> <li>• Creating socio-ecological system maps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WDYN TK list;</li> <li>• Pre-socio-ecological system map</li> </ul>
2	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field trip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken Wars</li> <li>• Maryland's Ban on Arsenic in Chicken Feed</li> <li>• Select chapters from <i>Beautiful Swimmers</i></li> </ul>
3-4	Part 1 – Expert Group Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Large Datasets</li> <li>• Normative Thinking</li> </ul>
5-6	Part 1 – Expert Group Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group presentations</li> </ul>
7-8	Part 2 – Synthesis Group Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose medium for final product</li> <li>• Synthesize across expert group perspectives</li> </ul>	
9	Part 2 – Synthesis Group Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole class sharing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synthesis Product</li> <li>• Synthesis Product Presentations</li> </ul>

10	Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Revise socio-ecological systems maps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Post-socio-ecological system map</li> </ul>
----	---	--

### Questions for Further Thought and Discussion:

1. Were you limited by the type of data and evidence you found? Did you question where the data originated or what point of view was presented to you?
2. In general, did you find that some sources of data were more trustworthy or reliable than others? Which sources?
3. Why is it important to synthesize data and evidence from different disciplines and sources to better understand and create actionable science for supporting both poultry farmers and the Chesapeake Bay? What was the biggest challenge (or step) in synthesizing the data and evidence?
4. Based on the skills and knowledge you have learned in this case study, what do you think is the best method for addressing the core problem (actionable science) of the rural impact of poultry farming on the Chesapeake Bay?

### References

- (1) Textbooks, books and journal articles to provide you with background information:
  - a) *Environmental Economics: A very short introduction*. Stephen Smith
  - b) *Environmental Issues and Solutions: A modular approach*. Norman Myers and Scott E. Spoolman
  - c) *Beautiful Swimmers*. William W. Warner
  - d) Kobel, R (2010). *The Chicken Wars*. Chesapeake Life.
  - e) Associated Press (2013). Maryland ban on arsenic in chicken feed takes effect. Accessed at:  
<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/01/01/maryland-ban-on-arsenic-in-chicken-feed-takes-effect.html>

(2) You are encouraged to read a newspaper or websites such as the [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#) or CNN daily.

(3) The following links with big data are provided for your reference. All of these websites will provide you with raw data so it will be up to you to crunch the numbers to understand what it means:

## Social Science Data

- a) **Bureau of Labor Statistics** (<http://data.bls.gov/>): The Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor is the principal Federal agency responsible for measuring labor market activity, working conditions, and price changes in the economy. Its mission is to collect, analyze, and disseminate essential economic information to support public and private decision-making. It provides a snapshot of the income and prospects of the average American including at the state and local level.
- b) **Bureau of Economic Analysis** (<http://www.bea.gov/itable/index.cfm>): The mission of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) is to promote a better understanding of the U.S. economy by providing the most timely, relevant, and accurate economic accounts data in an objective and cost-effective manner. It is a source for statistics on national income accounts including gross domestic product, personal income, consumer spending, and other measures of the state of the American economy. It also provides state and regional data.
- c) **Census Bureau** (<http://www.census.gov/data.html>): This is a source of information about the number of Americans living, working and dying in a particular region. The Census Bureau provides comprehensive and up to date data on the demographic and economic profiles of Americans in each census tract at the local, regional and national level.
- d) **Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development** (<http://commerce.maryland.gov/about/maryland-economy>): promotes business in Maryland with access to property data,



- business incubators, research parks, sources of Maryland economic productivity, government agencies, and tax data.
- e) **Virginia Economic Development Partnership**  
(<http://yesvirginia.org/ToolsResources>): promotes economic growth in Virginia by providing information similar to (d) above for VA.
- f) **Chesapeake Bay Commission**  
(<http://www.chesbay.us/publicationsmain.htm>): The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a policy leader in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. As a tri-state legislative assembly representing Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, the Commission's leadership covers a full spectrum of Bay issues: from managing living resources and conserving land, to protecting water quality. It combines its unique access to both the legislative and executive branches of each Bay state with well-honed skills in research, policy-development and consensus building to help develop policy toward the goal of restoring the Chesapeake Bay.

## Scientific Data

- g) **Chesapeake Bay Program** (<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/data>): The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that leads and directs Chesapeake Bay restoration and protection. Bay Program partners include federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations and academic institutions. Among other things, the CBP provides data on water quality, toxic content level, land management, runoff and nutrients level, and other scientific raw data on the Bay as well as many maps. We recommend choosing data from regions in the Chesapeake Bay that have heavy poultry farming (e.g. Maryland's Eastern Shore which includes the Choptank, Nanticoke, Wicomico and Pocomoke Rivers).
- h) **Maryland Department of Natural Resources**  
(<http://dnr.maryland.gov/streams/Pages/data.aspx>) provides data on physical, chemical, nutrient and sediment data in the

# TIEE

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

Chesapeake Bay. Runs several programs including called Eyes on the Bay to collect data and monitor changes in Bay conditions.

- i) **U.S. Geological Survey** (<http://chesapeake.usgs.gov/data.html>): In 2009, the USGS was given the lead responsibility along with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to strengthen the science and respond to climate change in the Chesapeake Bay. In fulfillment of this responsibility, USGS collects and uses scientific data to help restore clean water, recover habitat, sustain fish and wildlife, and conserve land and public habitat in the Chesapeake Bay. We recommend choosing data from regions in the Chesapeake Bay that have heavy poultry farming (e.g. Maryland's Eastern Shore, which includes the Choptank, Nanticoke, Wicomico and Pocomoke Rivers).
- j) **Maryland Food System Map** (<http://mdfoodsystemmap.org/map/>). The Maryland Food Systems Map Project was developed by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. This is an interactive mapping tool and database to examine where different types of agriculture exist in Maryland. You can download certain datasets that you need to examine different relationships between poultry farming and other factors.
- k) **Google Maps** ([www.google.com/maps](http://www.google.com/maps)): Google Maps provides satellite images to help you examine the different land uses throughout the Chesapeake Bay.

## Tools for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Your learning and attainment will be assessed at several points during the module. Rubrics for evaluating each assignment you complete are available via the links in the following table.

Assignment	Learning Outcome Assessed	Link to Rubric
<a href="#">What do you need to know (WDYNTK) list</a>	#1	
<a href="#">Pre-socio-ecological system map</a>	#1, 3	<a href="#">Link to Rubric</a>

*TIEE*, Volume 12 © 2017 – Caroline M. Solomon, Khadijat Rashid, and the Ecological Society of America. *Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology* (*TIEE*) is a project of the Committee on Diversity and Education of the Ecological Society of America (<http://tiee.esa.org>).

# TIEE

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

<a href="#">Working with Large Datasets</a>	#2, 3	
<a href="#">Normative Thinking</a>	#5	
<a href="#">Expert group presentations</a>	#2, 3, 4	<a href="#">Link to Rubric</a>
Synthesis group discussions	#1-5	
<a href="#">Synthesis product</a>	#1-5	<a href="#">Link to Rubric</a>
<a href="#">Synthesis presentations</a>	#1-5	<a href="#">Link to Rubric</a>
<a href="#">Final socio-ecological system map</a>	#1, 3, 4	<a href="#">Link to Rubric</a>

## NOTES TO FACULTY

### Challenges to Anticipate and Solve

**Challenge #1: Understanding context outside of the student's major or discipline.** Students often struggle to understand information that is outside of their major or based on an unfamiliar framework. For instance, social science datasets include both qualitative and quantitative data, and science majors wrestle with accepting interview data. It is important to have a continuous discussion of the rigor with which social science data is collected to reinforce this understanding. It is helpful if there are two instructors teaching the course from the natural and social sciences who model respect and collaboration for the contributions from either area and show that neither approach is inherently "superior."

**Challenge #2: Utilizing and finding large datasets.** We taught the course over two iterations and learned that students have difficulty differentiating raw from analyzed data, and in finding the large datasets with raw data they need to analyze the problem at hand (see mini-assignment for Expert Groups Module 1, Day #1) . Based on this experience, we recommend that this type of assignment

# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

should be carefully scaffolded to point students to data on specific websites and teach students how to utilize large datasets. Students may benefit first from an exercise where a large dataset is given and they have to analyze it themselves before having them search for datasets relevant to the module.

**Challenge #3: Normative thinking.** Students are hesitant to question data sources and their limitations. Instructors can provide examples from their own disciplines (e.g. in economics, unemployment statistics do not apply to the whole population as most assume, but only include people between the ages of 16 and 64 who are actively seeking work).

**Challenge #4: Field trip sites.** It is difficult to find a poultry farm that is willing to allow students to observe farming practices. Likewise, any given farm will utilize only a subset of the practices that, in aggregate, influence the health of the Chesapeake Bay. For instance, if the farm that is visited follows many sustainable practices, observing that might not help students understand the influence of poultry farming overall. To counteract this, we discuss the different types and practices of poultry farms, and then have students read about others that are significantly different from the one we visit.

## Module Description

### Introducing the Module to Your Students:

Students were introduced to the issue during one lecture session through a PowerPoint that encouraged discussion. Students were also assigned readings that first introduced them to the fields of economics (such as *Environmental Economics: A very short introduction*) and environmental science (such as *Environmental Issues and Solutions: A modular approach*) before being assigned readings related to the issue (e.g. *Chicken Wars*, *Beautiful Swimmers*). Students then proceeded to create pre-socio-ecological system maps, and instructors commented on them through guided inquiry (e.g. why did you include that? why did you not include X?) The instructors emphasized the importance of looking at the issue through different lens (both social and natural sciences) and being open-minded to new ways of approaching an issue.

The introduction of students to the module on poultry farming was via readings related to the effects of poultry farming before turning in their brainstorm list assignment.

## **Comments on the Data Collection and Analysis Methods Used in the Module:**

Students are given some links to some real data sets, but one of the aims of the module is for them to learn how to search for data. They may require considerable assistance in finding suitable datasets that are relevant to the issue, and then in analyzing and synthesizing the information gathered. We recommend creating an in-class activity where they find a dataset and utilize it to make a graph.

## **Comments on Questions for Further Thought**

1. *Were you limited by the type of data and evidence you found? Did you question where the data originated or what point of view was presented to you? Did you find that some sources of data were more trustworthy or reliable than others?*
  - a. Discuss the different data and evidence that students found. Ask them about the type of organization or group that put the information up on the web. Some instructors like to use the librarian developed CRAP (currency, reliability, authority and purpose) test to help students evaluate various websites and sources.
  - b. Students seemed to have difficulty differentiating between reliable and unreliable sources of data on the web. They thought that if data was on the web, then it was acceptable whether it was from a private individual's blog full of opinions or from a government agency. The point of this question is to help students question the

veracity of every data source in order to develop an understanding of what is acceptable.

2. *Why is it important to synthesize data and evidence from different disciplines and sources to better understand and create actionable science for cleaning up the Anacostia River? What was the biggest challenge (or step) in synthesizing the data and evidence?*
  - a. Students often had difficulty viewing and understanding data from different disciplines and how they could relate to or complement each other and often were interdisciplinary but not synthetic in their thinking. It may be helpful to show students the pyramid that is often used to show Bloom's taxonomy of skills to show them that synthesis is the most complex skill in the learning process.
  - b. You can provide examples of how one can view a problem from two disciplines, but then take it further and show how the problem changes when one or more disciplines provide more information.
  
3. *Based on the skills and knowledge you have learned in this case study, what do you think is the best method for addressing the core problem (actionable science) of the rural impact of poultry farming on the Chesapeake Bay?*
  - a. The goal of this is to encourage students to "think outside the box" and to come up with innovative and actionable solutions to the issue under study. Encourage students to consider all the data and use these to come up with new solutions.

## **Comments on the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:**

We emphasized learning instead of grades and there were times when we gave feedback to students via rubrics but did not use it to provide grades. For example, we did not grade the WDYN TK submissions or the pre-socio-environmental system maps because we wanted to encourage students to be bold and creative and submit whatever questions or ideas they had. From the pre-socio-environmental system map, we helped students develop and finesse their ideas into the post-socio-environmental system map that was graded.

Occasionally, it was clear that the entire class was having difficulty with a concept and when that happened, we went back and reviewed the material and then had students re-do the work to demonstrate understanding.

We used rubrics for most major assessments, but then we realized that we had some unstated and in some cases unclear expectations that were not in the rubrics and so we wrote them down and codified them in the rubrics to help assure consistency of evaluation.

## **Comments on Formative Evaluation of this Module:**

We conducted a pre- and post-survey of the class via SurveyMonkey. The pre-survey provided instructors with student demographics and level of comfort with interdisciplinary and/or synthetic thinking as well as how much basic content knowledge students had. A course evaluation was also given at the end of the semester.

We asked students probing questions about their understanding of the material at the beginning of almost every class. These questions underlined areas of student weakness and loose grasp of concepts, and we followed up with explanations in class.

We frequently assigned students group work, and mixed up the groups regularly so that each student got to work with every other student in the class and no groups had all “strong” members. We observed the group discussions and these provided us with information about areas where students were struggling, which we addressed after the group discussion or in the following class. Occasionally,

instructors would get involved in the group discussion to provide a course correction or information to aid student understanding.

Formative “transfer and apply” evaluation was built into both modules with the pre- and post-system maps where students initially did not understand the subject matter but by the end could redraw their system maps to show new and incorporated knowledge based on class discussion, research, professor input, and other sources of data.

Both professors met with all students, individually and in groups, to review progress and give feedback throughout the semester.

The evaluation of the pre-socio-ecological system maps via rubric (but was not scored) by the instructors also provided feedback on how students viewed the system and which areas needed to be emphasized during the module.

### **Comments on Translating the Activity to Other Institutional Scales or Locations:**

Our modules work best if they are embedded into a full course since then it can include along with the other module on the Anacostia River since then it can include both modules under an overarching theme, with super-synthesis occurring at the end of the semester. However, this module could easily stand-alone. For best results to model synthesis between the social and natural sciences, two professors from each discipline should be present full time so that each can contribute disciplinary knowledge and help students as they struggle with new material as well as synthesizing the information.

We offered the course on two separate occasions. The first time the course was taught, it was as an elective for both biology and business/economics majors, and the students in the class were all upperclassmen who had already taken several courses in one or both fields of study. Students had a strong background and interest in socio-environmental synthesis and were more invested in the course. Class size was relatively small with ten students, allowing for ample one-on-one time for each student with one or both professors. The class was also well balanced with five business and five biology majors, and group work was assigned in such a way that each group had equal numbers of biology and business majors.



# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

The second time, we offered it as a general studies course with different student dynamics. The class was larger and included 18 students who were first year students or sophomores with undeclared majors exploring their interests. Because of this, students had limited knowledge of both biology and economics. As a result, both professors had to spend much more time on teaching basic content than expected, which meant that synthesis work was reduced. Due to the larger class size, the one-on-one time with professors was more limited. The quality of student work and understanding of the material compared to the first cohort was measurably lower. Based on this experience, we believe that the modules will work best with juniors and seniors. The modules may be adapted for first and second year students with the understanding that instructors will need to provide more background and support in content knowledge both inside and outside of the classroom.

Gallaudet University has a unique interdisciplinary general studies program that typically features two professors from different disciplines in the classroom. As more professors have become familiar with the interdisciplinary model, the University has switched to having several sophomore-level general studies courses now taught by one faculty member. We recommend that the first few iterations of the module(s)/course have two professors. Later iterations of the module(s)/course could be taught by one faculty member if the other faculty member can attend a few classes to emphasize information from his or her discipline or provide feedback on certain assignments such as expert groups or system maps which require specialized content knowledge.

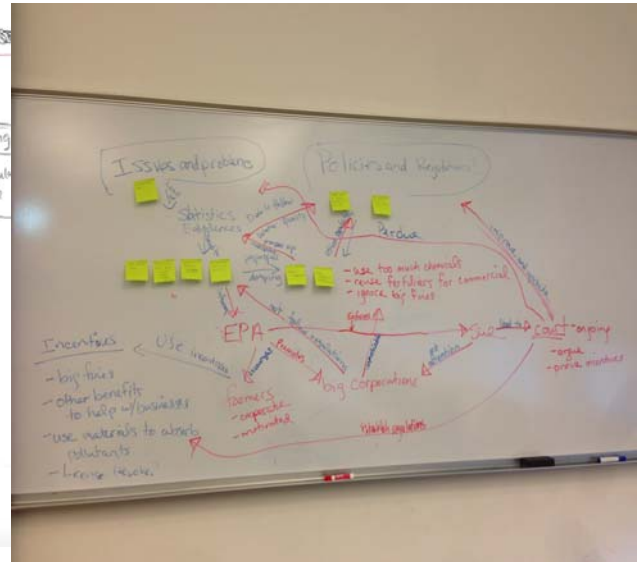
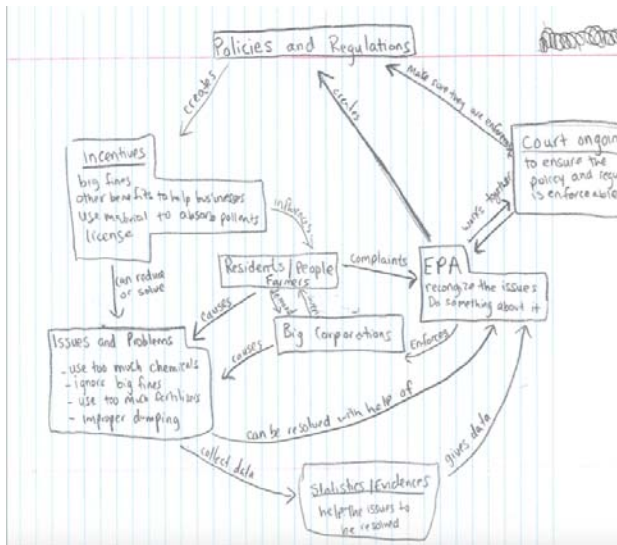
## **STUDENTS COLLECTED DATA FROM THIS MODULE**

Students did not collect data during the modules, but rather used large datasets that were available to them.

Below are examples of pre- (left) vs post-systems (right) maps.

# TIEE

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017



## COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

The Ecological Society of America (ESA) holds the copyright for TIEE Volume 12, and the authors retain the copyright for the content of individual contributions (although some text, figures, and data sets may bear further copyright notice). No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Use solely at one's own institution with **no intent for profit** is excluded from the preceding copyright restriction, unless otherwise noted. Proper credit to this publication must be included in your lecture or laboratory course materials (print, electronic, or other means of reproduction) for each use.

To reiterate, you are welcome to download some or all of the material posted at this site for your use in your course(s), which does not include commercial uses for profit. Also, please be aware of the legal restrictions on copyright use for published materials posted at this site. We have obtained permission to use all copyrighted materials, data, figures, tables, images, etc. posted at this site solely for the uses described in the TIEE site.

Lastly, we request that you return your students' and your comments on this activity to the TIEE Managing Editor (tiesubmissions@esa.org) for posting at this site.

TIEE, Volume 12 © 2017 – Caroline M. Solomon, Khadijat Rashid, and the Ecological Society of America. *Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology* (TIEE) is a project of the Committee on Diversity and Education of the Ecological Society of America (<http://tiee.esa.org>).

# TIEE

---

Teaching Issues and Experiments in Ecology - Volume 12, March 2017

---

## GENERIC DISCLAIMER

Adult supervision is recommended when performing this lab activity. We also recommend that common sense and proper safety precautions be followed by all participants. No responsibility is implied or taken by the contributing author, the editors of this Volume, nor anyone associated with maintaining the TIEE web site, nor by their academic employers, nor by the Ecological Society of America for anyone who sustains injuries as a result of using the materials or ideas, or performing the procedures put forth at the TIEE web site, or in any printed materials that derive therefrom.