

Social Network Analysis as a Research and Pedagogy Tool in Problem-Focused Undergraduate Social Innovation Courses

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Abstract : This exploratory case study explores the deployment of Social Network Analysis (SNA) in mapping community assets in an interdisciplinary, undergraduate, team-taught course focused on income insecure populations in a rural area in the US. Specifically, it analyzes how students were taught to collect data on community assets and to visualize the connections between those assets using Kumu, an SNA data visualization tool. Further, the case study shows how social network data was also collected about student teams via their written communications in Slack, an enterprise messaging tool, which enabled instructors to manage and guide student research activity throughout the semester. The discussion presents how SNA methods can simultaneously inform both community-based research and social innovation pedagogy through the use of data visualization and collaboration-focused communication technologies.

Keywords : social innovation, social network analysis, pedagogy, problem-based learning, data visualization, information communication technologies

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