Active Minds Changing Lives

GIS in the Public Relations Curriculum

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What is public relations?

"Public relations is the management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the various publics on who its success or future depends."

-Cutlip, Center and Broom

GIS-PR Parallels

GIS Analysis	PR Planning
• Frame the Question	• Situational Analysis
• Understand the Data	• Research
• Choose the Method	• Objectives
• Process the Data	• Program
• Analyze Results	• Evaluation

Teaching Goal

- Demonstrate to students how GIS can enhance public relations research and planning.
- Provide students with basic GIS skills.

Teaching Method

- Incorporate GIS into the course through five hands-on sessions.
- Assign ESRI "Learning ArcGIS Desktop" course completion outside of class.
- Require students to use GIS when creating a backgrounder for a local non-profit organization.

Hands-on Sessions

1. Tiger Line files - where to find and how to download
2. Spatial joining - attaching data to the files
3. Geocoding exercise -turning addresses into points
4. Spatial statistics -- how to find the mean center of their data
5. Design -- adding appropriate tables, graphs, legends

Spatial Statistics

- Calculate the median center of their data
- Calculate the mean center of their data
- Calculate the directional distribution of their data

Backgrounder

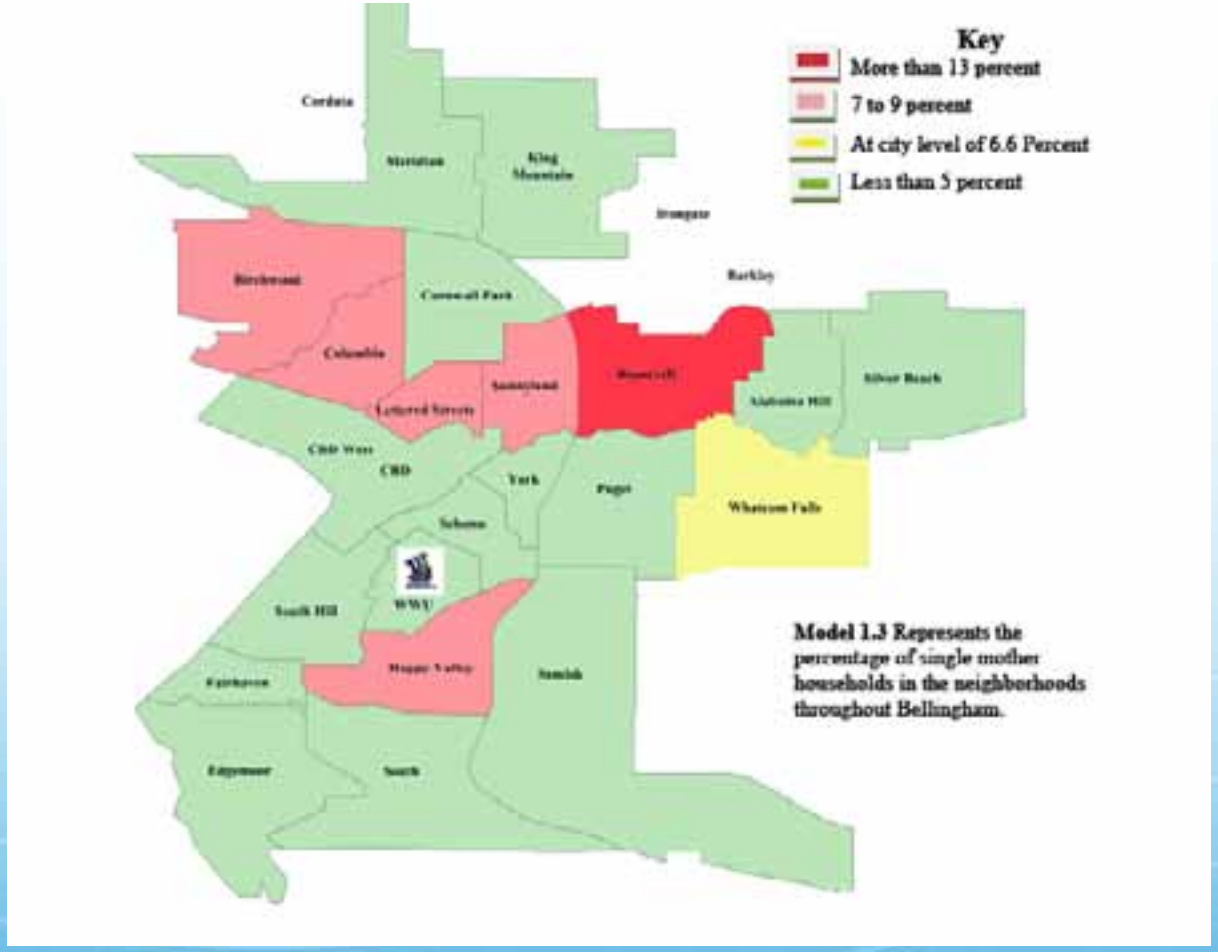
Client -- Homeless Service Center

- Backgrounder focused on three main questions:
  1. What are the poverty statistics for Whatcom County?
  2. Where are households with veterans predominately located? What other information associated with veterans can you find (such as numbers of disabled vetarans, veterans living at or below poverty level, etc.)?
  3. Where are the households with monthly housing costs above 30% of income (or 35%) - for both owners and renters located?

Teaching Assessment

- Feedback and observation during hands-on sessions.
- ESRI course completion certificates.
- Student backgrounders.
- Student course evaluations.

Student Maps



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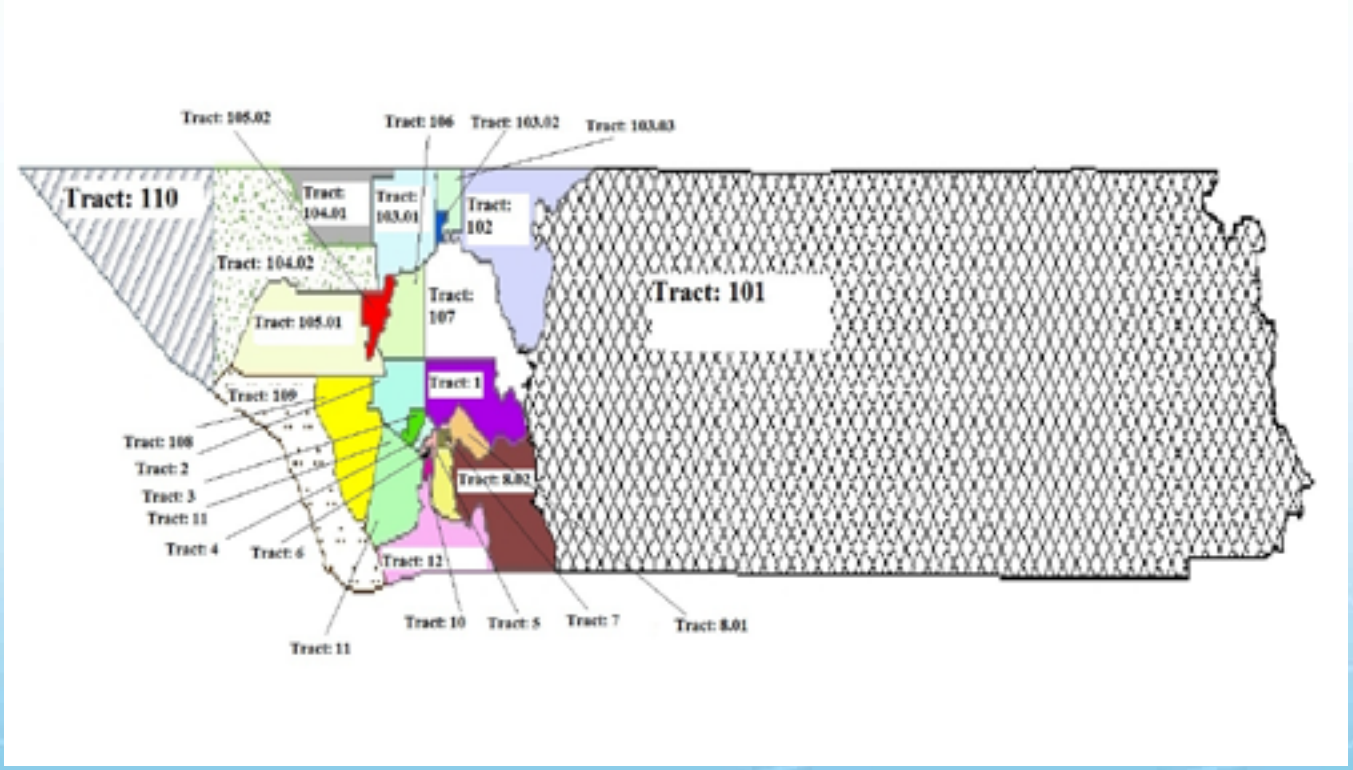

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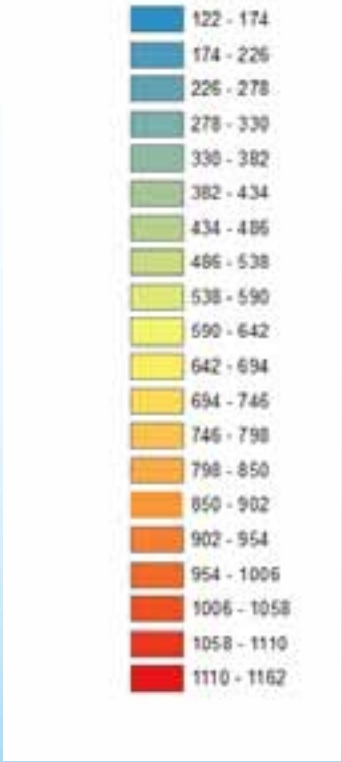

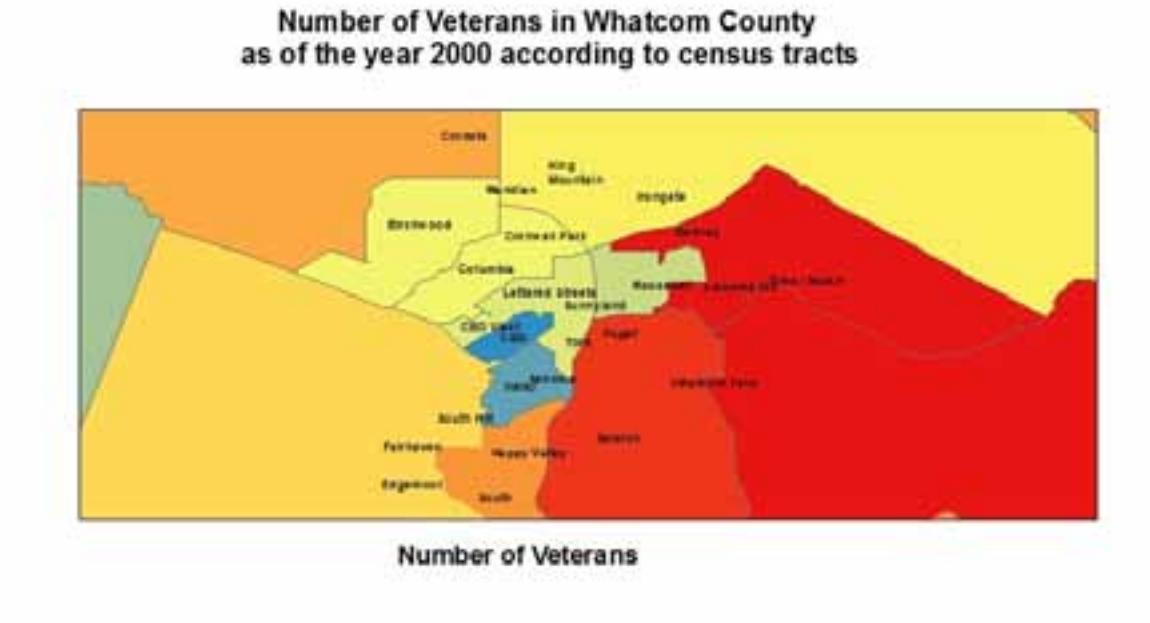

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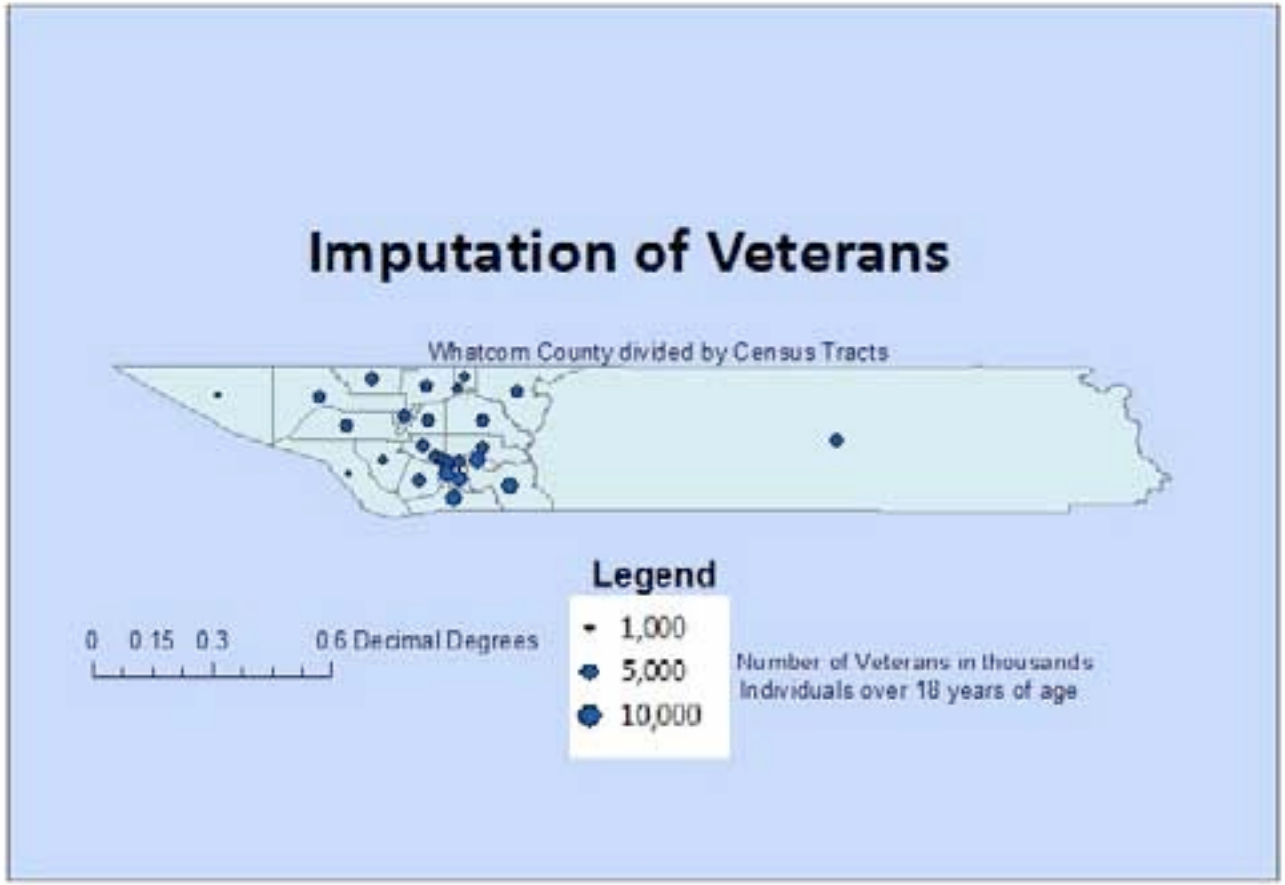

What we Learned

- So-called “digital generation” doesn’t necessarily learn software easily
- More hands-on sessions
- Push students harder to complete on-line course
- Give students more time to revise

Teaching Goals - Reached?

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