Review of *Community Geography: GIS in Action (Student Text)*


(clickable PDF links to individual reviews)


II. Li, Yinghui. Community Geography: GIS in Action (Student Text) and Community Geography: GIS in Action (Teacher’s Guide).
Learning Module Candidate Reference: Community Geography: GIS in Action (Student Text).

Review by Anthony Howser, San Diego State University

English, Kim and Feaster, Laura. 
Community Geography: GIS in Action (Student Text). 
278 pages. 
2003.

Synopsis: 
“Hands on” and step-by-step text that offers a comprehensive introduction to GIS fundamentals. Lessons are taught with provided data with the requirement of ArcView onsite.

Application to the NSF-ATE Project:
*Great problem-based lessons geared toward the middle school to high school audience. It would seem that the high school audience would find this material more accessible.
*Since self-contained modules are implemented and intended for use with ArcView, they would, in some cases, need to be adapted or completely thrown out because the lack of certain functionality with our candidate solutions of ArcExplorer, ArcVoyager, or ArcIMS. (ArcExplorer, ArcVoyager, ArcIMS do not have all of the functionality that is required in these lessons. Specific functions that would require a full-blown desktop GIS are running scripts, address-based Geocoding, Zoom to Previous Extent, Set Scale Dependency, Full Theme Properties Dialog, and certain attribute table operations such as Sort Records, Summarize an Attribute Field, Promote Selected Records, Edit Attribute Table, etc.. Other than that, much of the other functionality can be duplicated or substituted in the lessons. It may be more useful for the higher level students to get experience with a full-blown GIS such as ArcMap/ArcView.)

Comments:
*Good book for a comprehensive introduction to GIS for the High School Audience. 
*The problem-based modules are engaging but may not interest the younger students as much as they do advanced high school students. 
*The issue of requiring the full functionality of ArcView with these learning modules is of concern.
*Please see additional information in review of Community Geography: GIS in Action (Teacher’s Guide).
*The book may be very useful in the creation of our learning modules.

Please note that these reviews do not necessarily represent the consensus views of the overall research team
Community Geography: GIS in Action (Student Text) and Community Geography: GIS in Action (Teacher’s Guide).

Review by Yinghui Li, San Diego State University

Community Geography – GIS in Action
Kim Zanelli English, Laura S. Feaster
2003
US$24.95

Community Geography – GIS in Action, Teacher’s Guide
Lyn Malone, Anita M. Palmer, Christine L. Voigt
2003
US$9.95

Synopsis:
Community Geography – GIS in Action
This book is designed for helping middle and high school students in investigating local areas using GIS technology to effect changes. The real stories in this book encourage students to seek out and study some issues and problems in student’s own communities. Each study module in this book contains a case study, a hands-on GIS exercise, and an exercise for self-study that can be customized to users' own communities.

What’s in the CD?
This CD includes ArcView 3.x projects and data for the exercises.

Synopsis:
Community Geography – GIS in Action, Teacher’s Guide
This book is designed for teachers who want to use “Community Geography: GIS In Action” for their students, this guide provides teachers with all the resources they'll need to complete the GIS exercises and self-guided projects with middle school and high school students. These resources include lesson plans, National Geography Standards, assessments for middle or high school students, evaluation rubrics, and teacher tips on completing self-study GIS projects.

The structure in “Community Geography, Teacher’s Guide” is very similar to the book – “Mapping Our World” because the authors are the same for both books. Both of the two books have lesson plans, National Geography Standards, assessments for middle or high school students, and teacher’s notes/tips. “Mapping Our World” can be described as a combination of “Community Geography – GIS in Action” and “Community Geography – GIS in Action, Teacher’s Guide”.

What is useful for the NSF-ATE project?
The step-by-step exercises in the book “Community Geography – GIS in Action” are the best instructions I have ever seen. They are clear, colorful, and easy to follow. Most of instructions come with screen shots which provide visual references to the software. I think this is a great reference book for designing our learning modules.

*Please note that these reviews do not necessarily represent the consensus views of the overall research team*