# Notable indicator 2: Enhancing courses through service-learning

## Department activity: “Evidence of revision of existing courses that significantly improve them” (outstanding)

Service learning is the most important pedagogical concept that I have embraced since starting at Appalachian State University. I was introduced to service learning through the Appalachian and Community Together (ACT) office here on campus, and was selected as a act faculty fellow for the 2009 2010 academic year. Faculty fellows in service learning attend a series of workshops on aspects of this pedagogical model, and develop syllabi, or enhancing existing syllabus, to integrate service learning activities into a course.

In preparation of the international service learning project, I wrote a grant proposal for the successful applications of learning technologies (salt) grant offered by the Reich College of education for the academic year 2010 2011. The application I spent on the idea of internationalizing the web design course through an international service learning project with partner organizations in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, Indian. The International Office here Appalachian State connected me with community partners in the cities of Chennai and monitor I, whom I contacted about the project ideas. Grant was successfully funded, allowing me to travel to Chennai and Madurai to meet with the partners and to expand on the project ideas that students will be engaged in for the spring semester 2011.

Student groups were challenged with developing projects to assist the community organizations with their web development needs. I go was pursuing factors technology mentors for the groups and southern India, to medicating with them via e-mail and posting website designs and ideas through online services such as voice to solicit comments and reactions to the web design. Student feedback for the 1st implementation of this in the course was primarily positive. The following quotes were taken from the end of the semester course evaluations:

“This was a great project, it helped me understand much more about technology and communicating with others”

“My partner in India and I have become great friends, thanks for letting us have this opportunity to connect with others on the other side of the world”

This project serves as a model for service learning program international service learning projects. I presented a poster session at the 2010 society for information technology in education (site) international conference in Charleston, South Carolina. In addition, the course ideas were featured on the Appalachian State home page in an article related to international service learning projects at the University.

I have continued to collaborate with partner organizations in Chennai, inviting them to work with students in my courses in the past few years. One recent example is Agnes from the Chennai community, who was a guest car ITC 5620 course in the spring 2012 semester. I've also introduced service learning into other courses, for instance a community based project in our introductory eye to see 50 to 20 course, where students create mobile learning activities for the public available at the Boone Greenway, a popular recreation area in town.

This project allows groups of instructional technology students at Appalachian State University to collaborate online with peers associated with the agencies in southern India. During the course of the semester, my join class groups matched with providing a web design service to one of the NPO/NGOs in southern India that agreed to work together on this project.The student groups are required to communicate online throughout the semester with the agency and associates such as local teachers in the Tamil Nadu region of southern India.

The task of my instructional technology students is to act as technology mentors to the agencies, with respect to communicating their message online through the agency website. This allows students to utilize web design skills developed in class, providing a connection of theory and practice that puts the course concepts into concrete form, and reciprocally benefits both the community agency and the students. Online communication tools are provided for students and their colleagues in India, and at points during the term all groups utilize a variety of asynchronous and synchronous e-learning communication tools.

Artifacts related to this indicator:

* Appalachian & the Community Together (ACT) Faculty Fellow 2009 - 2012 (announcement, application, and letter of award)
* College of Education Successful Application of Learning Technology (SALT) Grant (announcement, application, and letter of award)
* ITC 5620 syllabus reflecting service-learning project
* Summary of student feedback related to the service-learning project
* Poster presentation from the 2010 Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE) International Conference
* Homepage article on the Appalachian State University website related to this course