

News Release

Collaboration across University of Minnesota Campuses Results in Unique Video Stories Created at UM Twin Cities Enhanced with Spatial Mapping Component by GIS Applications Class at UM Crookston

By Itollefs on Wednesday, March 5, 2014 Collaboration is an important aspect of the classroom and a powerful learning tool. Unique opportunities for this kind of work take place between faculty and students on campus, and last fall, two U of M instructors took collaboration beyond their own classrooms and connected two classes on two campuses in the University of Minnesota system. Assistant Professor Eric Castle, who teaches in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department at UM Crookston and Associate Professor Akosua Addo, who teaches in the U of M School of Music worked together to offer a distinctive learning opportunity to their students.

The two met at a meeting on internationalizing the curriculum and discovered they had a mutual interest in the factors that shape play. After that initial meeting, the two began to explore opportunities for collaboration around this mutual interest. They found a great mix for their students focused around play in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood near the U of M's West Bank.

The goal was to tell a digital story about play that was taking place in the diverse, immigrant neighborhood. Addo's Mapping Arts Play class created a digital story and Castle's GIS Applications students added a spatial mapping component designed to enhance the video story.

Castle says it proved to be challenging to work across campuses, but it was well worth the effort. "My students were challenged to think creatively about mapping," he says. "While my class is heavily technical and could become formulaic, this project had the students take what they learned and use it in a way that was creative and augmented the story."

Some of the stories used data such as walking and driving distances while others used crime rates to tell their story. Castle's class of eight students divided up to work with small groups on the Twin Cities campus to develop the collaborative spatial mapping projects.

The result combine maps with data points, still photographs, and video stories about several playgrounds as well as a local dog park in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.

The project is distinctive in its collaboration between two very different kinds of classes working together. Addo and Castle will present in April at an internationalizing curriculum conference and are looking at other potential places to present the information they have gleaned from the successful collaboration.

Today the University of Minnesota, Crookston delivers 29 bachelor's degree programs, 20 minors, and 36 concentrations on campus--as well as 13 degrees online--in the areas of agriculture and natural resources; business; liberal arts and education; and math, science and technology. With an enrollment of 1,800 undergraduates from more than 20 countries and 40 states, the Crookston campus offers a supportive, close-knit atmosphere that leads to a prestigious University of Minnesota degree. "Small Campus. Big Degree." To learn more, visit www.umcrookston.edu.

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