"Adventure Learning in Indiana County"

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PROJECT FOCUS

The Adventure Learning Trail Project (ALT) is a collaboration between IUP students and community partners to create a virtual excursion in downtown Indiana that will serve to stimulate tourism, encourage learning, and promote economic revitalization of the town through linking historical knowledge to Global Positioning Systems (i.e., geocaching) technology.

PROJECT DETAILS

Course Number, Name, and Instructor:
ANTH 211: 001 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology, Fall 2016
Instructor: Dr. Abigail Adams, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Community Partners:
Downtown Indiana Business Improvement District – Indiana, PA
Downtown Indiana is a non-profit organization focused on revitalizing the commerce and culture of downtown Indiana, PA. Downtown Indiana (DI) seeks to "enthusiastically promote the commercial activity of the community's business owners and support the presence of its property owners though the Business Improvement District (BID)." DI has initiated a number of projects related to economic development, including Small Business Saturday and the Indiana Fire and Ice Festival. The stated objectives of DI are marketing and economic development, promotion of the district, maintenance of the district, and management of services and security (http://downtownindiana.org/). The objectives of the Adventure Learning Trail are directly aligned with these objectives.

Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County – Indiana, PA
The Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County is a longstanding community organization, originating in 1938. The society's mission is "to promote a greater appreciation of the Indiana community's rich heritage and a better understanding of life today." The HGSIC has an extensive library that contains census records, early newspapers, cemetery transcriptions, surname files, family collections, county and general histories, atlases and maps, abstract court records, directories, periodicals, and more. Librarians and historians of the HGSIC will work with students to utilize these records and incorporate them into the ALT.[1]

Need
Indiana, Pennsylvania is a historic town with much to offer visitors and residents alike. 2016 marks the Bicentennial of Indiana, and this anniversary celebration provides the ideal platform from which to launch a project that intentionally links our past with our future. The Adventure Learning Trail (ALT) will provide IUP students with an opportunity

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[1] More information about their facilities and programs can be found at http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~paicgs/.

to collect oral histories and stories from local residents and "memory-keepers" with the end goal of creating a virtual geocaching tour of the town. This student-led research will enable undergraduates to collaborate with local community members to identify salient historical topics in order to chronicle the cultural heritage of Indiana. This data will then be used to create a geocaching walking tour in conjunction with the newly launched WalkWorks program in the town. Indiana is one of seven counties in the state of Pennsylvania currently participating in the program funded through the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health Center for Public Health Practice.[2]

Our community partner, Downtown Indiana, is the administrator of the Indiana County WalkWorks Program and seeks to collaborate with IUP in order to compliment the current WalkWorks program with an innovative, educational component. The objectives of the WalkWorks program are easily aligned with the objectives of the Adventure Learning Trail. WalkWorks identifies and promotes safe walking routes; offers social support through guided, community-based walking groups; helps schools develop walk-to-school programs; and addresses local policies to increase safe walking routes. Specifically, the ALT will collaborate with Downtown Indiana to promote healthful living and community engagement by including a geocache element to the WalkWorks program.

Geocaching is a global scavenger hunt involving hidden objects found through the use of GPS systems such as those on Smartphones. The website GeoCaching.com describes the goal of geocaching as finding hidden object by using a set of latitude-longitude coordinates that can be mapped to lead participants to a specific local. At this site, participants look for the "cache," or a hidden prize, anything from a QR code which they scan to link them to a webpage to a small box containing a logbook and a small object for trading. Scavenger-hunt-type activities are gaining in popularity among all ages as they promote physical activity, adventure learning, and problem-solving skills. Engaging in learning through technologies like geocaching helps all learners by "encouraging them to demonstrate creativity and innovation; communicate and work collaboratively; use critical thinking and problem solving and decision-making skills, and demonstrate and understanding of technology."[3] The ALT will build upon the already existing program of WalkWorks Indiana to add this geocaching element with the goal of attracting more visitors to participate in the walking tour by adding an adventure component based on historical engagement. Additionally, the ALT will utilize the official application (app) of GeoCaching.com to create the geocaching journey (mapped onto the pre-existing WalkWorks trail) and electronically link participants to selected digital recordings from the oral histories collected by students as well as historic photographs, maps, and other relevant archived material.

This collaboration will be a tool for community building. More specifically, student and community participants will aim to create an inclusive public history project that can help

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[2] Please see http://www.health.pa.gov/WalkWorks/Pages/default.aspx#.V1cT32bD-Uk.

[3] International Society for Technology in Education. (2007). National Educational Technology Standards for Students. Washington, D.C: International Society for Technology in Education.

to unify the town and university as they work together to connect the past to the present and raise historical consciousness. One of the primary goals of the ALT is to promote a sense of place by drawing on Indiana's rich and unique history so that individuals may begin to attach personal meaning to these sites and claim historical ownership. The ALT will build upon knowledge production, or a community's ability to incorporate new interpretations of history through new technologies. The ALT will invite residents to participate in the production of this historical knowledge through face-to-face interviewing. The citizenry's contribution to the project through oral history will provide an opportunity for the community to more deeply develop intellectual and emotional attachments to Indiana. In *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community*, Archibald (1999) writes: "What is happening in cities and towns all over this land is a forgetting, a truncation of narratives that attach people to each other and to their places and give them a sense of lives lived before their own and lives that will be lived later."[4]

According to scholars like Archibald, history can reinforce shared ideals. In turn, historical preservation becomes a method to reinvigorate belonging and redefine one's community. Through the Appalachian Teaching Project, the Adventure Learning Trail endeavors to help local citizens and IUP students collaborate to research, interpret, and exhibit (electronically) the past in a manner consistent with Indiana's social and economic objectives for revitalization. This is achieved by making history relevant and accessible to current inhabitants, tourists, and potential residents. This multidisciplinary approach aims to create comprehensive historical narratives on particular themes that capture the public's interest in an inclusive way that highlights a collective heritage.

Indiana is an Appalachian county ideally situated for economic revitalization, with a large, state university, rich agricultural production, and an engaged citizenry. Like many communities in Appalachia, Indiana County has been economically impacted by the substantial contraction of the coal industry. The average per capita personal income for Indiana County in 2015 was $36,900, or approximately 87 percent of the Pennsylvania average.[5] According to the Appalachian Regional Commission, the County Economic Status for Indiana is classified as 'transitional,' meaning that Indiana County ranks between the worst 25 percent and the best 25 percent of U.S. counties based on a comparison of unemployment rate, per capita income, and rate of poverty.[6] This measure indicates that, although Indiana is not 'distressed' nor 'at-risk,' it stands to benefit from efforts of economic stimulation. The proposed Adventure Learning Trail is designed as a sustainable, community-building program which will encourage increased foot traffic and, in turn, spending in the downtown business district.

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[4] Archibald, Robert R. (1999). A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community. Rowmenand Littlefield, Walnut Creek, CA.

[5] Please see http://www.indianacountyceo.com/INPACC/media/INPACC/docs/County%20Data/County-Profile-Feb-2016.pdf?ext=.pdf.

[6] Please see http://www.arc.gov/research/SourceandMethodologyCountyEconomicStatusFY2007FY2016.asp.

Planned Meetings with Community Partner
The proposed 2016 ATP project at IUP would partner Anthropology Majors from ANTH 211 with Downtown Indiana and the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County to create an Adventure Learning Trail in the Borough of Indiana.

To begin the project, the students of ANTH 211 will meet with representatives of the community partner organizations early in the Fall 2016 semester (most likely in September). The class will collaborate with leaders of these community organizations to identify local spaces, events, and histories to profile in the geocaching project. The objectives of this early meeting will be to communicate to students the goals and importance of the project, expose them to the current historical programs in Indiana, and detail the resources available to student through our community partners, including the HGSIC library. Students from ANTH 211 will conduct participant observation during the Appalachian Folk Festival on September 10, 2016 to identify historical and cultural topics important to the inhabitants of Indiana. A second meeting with community partners will occur in late November when students share their research results with the stakeholders. The final meeting with our community partners will be held to make the ATL public and discuss the implementation and maintenance of the Adventure Learning Trail. Other local groups, including local political leaders, educators, and youth groups (i.e., local Boy and Girl Scout Troops) will be invited to attend in order to generate enthusiasm for the ALT.

Overview of the project, including its central focus
The purpose of this research is to inform the citizenry of and visitors to Indiana about the rich, 200-year plus history of this place by featuring certain historical figures, events, and place during a geocaching expedition called the Adventure Learning Trail (ALT). The objective of the ALT is to contribute significantly to the historic preservation of Indiana as well as to encourage economic development through tourism and revitalization of the town's landscape. Through education and outreach, the ALT intends to promote a sense of community and social identity by engaging the public and promote a "livable community" which attracts both visitors and new residents.

The central focus of the project is to assist DI and the HGSIC in creating a geocaching expedition which features several historically salient topics informed by local voices with the objective of increasing visitor's and community member's participation in Indiana's WalkWorks program and revitalizing downtown Indiana. The WalkWorks program, through DI, has already identified a walking route designed around a scenic path with six identified points-of-interest, including historic homes and public buildings. These destinations each have a QR code scannable by mobile devices and linked to a map of the town. The ALT will build upon and expand this pre-existing infrastructure of WalkWorks to attract adventure seekers, history buffs, and local students to participate in WalkWorks by layering in a geocaching quest. There were originally over 30 historically relevant sites identified as potential points-of-interest on the walking route, but the WalkWorks program is limited to six destinations. With the ALT, we can expand the points-of-interest of the WalkWorks program by highlighting places that were considered, but not chosen as destination points. In preliminary discussions with our

community partners, some potential historical topics/sites include the Underground Railroad, the Rochester & Pittsburgh Coal Company, the Pennsylvania Railroad Breaking Yard, the Citizens Ambulance Service, the Jimmy Stewart Museum, and historic Indiana homes. Although the specific historical topics that are included in the ALT will be identified through the collaboration of IUP students and our community partners, there is rich ground from which to develop historical narratives for use in public education and adventure activities. Once historical topics have been identified, IUP students will spend several weeks researching the local topics and interviewing residents about their experiences and knowledge of these topics. Residents to be interviewed will be identified by snowball and convenience sampling. Priority in this project will be given to recording the oral histories of elderly residents of Indiana to ensure these voices are not lost and can be preserved for posterity. In addition to selected stories being embedded in the geocache site, these audio files will be housed and maintained by the HGSIC so that they may be accessed by the larger community and preserved for future generations. Once the information has been collected, students, advised by community partners, will create geocaches. Each "cache" will feature a specific historical topic and link the physical space to a mobile friendly webpage containing a broad range of historical data (i.e., historic documents, photos, citizen interviews) that can be accessed by the ATL participants. Additionally, the ATL will work with DI and local businesses to encourage participants of the ATL to spend time and money in downtown Indiana with commercial incentives, such as coupon rewards (bar codes to scan) from local businesses.

To ensure that this is a sustainable project to be enjoyed long into the future, the ALT will identify community "caretakers" to maintain the geocaches. This involves a monthly check on the geocaches to make sure they are intact and updated. One of the duties of the IUP students who are creating the geocaches will be to produce caretaker instructions for maintaining the cache and, potentially, adding new sites. We have yet to identify the community organization that will be responsible for the stewardship of the ATL, but this is an important goal of the project. Potential candidates that have been identified include local junior or high school history classes or the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts of America. The end goal is to create an interconnected, historical narrative of Indiana that can be engaged through the physical exploration of our town vis-á-vis geocaching, which, in turn, creates networks between residents, the university, visitors, the past, and the envisioned future of our community. Additionally, the Indiana community has several bike paths that have been developed from old railroad lines to promote physical activity. On objective of the ATL is to be connected through publicity to the Trans-Allegheny Trail Line in Indiana County to create stronger linkages of historical exploration throughout all of Indiana County.[7]

To guarantee that the ATL is a vibrant and utilized resource, students will work together with the community partners to create promotional materials for this historical expedition, including, but not limited to, pamphlets, flyers, and note cards. Finally, the culminating event for this project will be when students of ANTH 211 create a poster

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[7] Please see http://www.transalleghenytrails.com/ for more information.

and present project, research, and results in Washington, D.C. on December 2-3, 2016. It is our hope that several students further engage this research by presenting at the PASSHE Annual Undergraduate Anthropology Conference and/or at the IUP Undergraduate Research Forum in the spring of 2016.

Course Guidelines and Project Goals

Student Goals:
- Students will work with Downtown Indiana and the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County to create a geocaching Adventure Learning Trail that highlights sites of local heritage. The ALT will promote local, historical knowledge about Indiana and encourage connection to community through adventure activities that appeal to diverse citizenry and visitors.
- Students will increase their experience and knowledge of research methods related to historical archives and oral histories by engaging the many resources of the HGSIC and interviewing community members as "memory-keepers." Under faculty supervision, students will conduct qualitative research (i.e., oral histories of community members, interview, and participant observation) on salient historical topics in Indiana County.
- Students will be engaged as active, informed, and empowered learners and leaders, helping to publicize and present their findings to local program providers, such as DI, HGSIC, local middle and high schools, and IUP faculty and staff interested in issues of historic preservation and community engagement.
- Students will explore the usefulness of using connective technologies, specifically GPS and the internet, to promote the public history and economic sustainability of Appalachian communities by creating an interactive, online resource for a geocaching adventure.

Student Activities:
- Class will meet regularly for academic discussion, lectures, methodology training, analysis of readings, writing assignments, and discussion of community work.
- Students will meet with Downtown Indiana and the Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County at the beginning of the Fall Semester, and throughout key phases of the project (as detailed above).
- Students will work with community partners, draw from publicly available data sources, and actively seek out other community members and organizations to identify specific historical topics for further research, related to local events, remarkable citizens, past industries, and old buildings in Indiana County.
- Students will use applied anthropology methods particularly digital anthropology and cultural resource management to create a virtual interactive trail that represents their ethnographic and historical research.
- Students from ANTH 211 will physically position a series of geocache sites throughout downtown Indiana in conjunction with the WalkWorks program which is linked to a virtual, interactive platform on the website GeoCach.com.

- Students will communicate their findings through written, online, and oral presentation to members of DI, the HGSIC, and other local leaders and organizations.
- Students will present on their final product at the ATP meeting in Washington.
- Students will also present a poster at the Appalachian Studies Association annual conference in March 2016, and/or at local conferences including the IUP Undergraduate Scholars forum.

Project Goals:
- Development of leadership and citizenship skills among students engaged in the project
- Strengthen writing and oral presentation skills of students engaged in the project.
- Contribute to enhancing community assets in Indiana – including walk and bike-ability and sites of cultural heritage.
- Capitalize on the rich history of Indiana County to bolster historical engagement and reinvigorate investment in the cultural heritage of the town.
- The Adventure Learning Trail will expand the already existing WalkWorks program by including a geocaching element which promotes historical knowledge and community pride.
- Improve relationships between long-term residents and IUP students by nurturing partnerships in proposing sustainable solutions to historic preservation and community revitalization.
- Build community through fostering a sense of pride and belonging in the local town on behalf of IUP students. Create a sense that they are involved in local processes and can play a role in cultural resource management and community service.
- Support the local economy through encouraging campus visitors, tourists, IUP students, and long-term residents of Indiana to be consumers at local, downtown businesses as diverse participants engage history in an exciting and interactive platform.
- Provide the opportunity for student to conduct community based research, present on their work, and be exposed to work occurring in other areas of Appalachia.
- Preserve the perspective of the local citizenry of an Appalachian community for posterity and ensure that these voices are archived and available for engagement in the future.

Project Impact
This project falls well in line with the ARC mission to "Innovate, partner, and invest to build community capacity and strengthen economic growth in Appalachia." We will use a widely-used and freely available technology to a) strengthen the capacity of the Historical Society, creating a new tool to pass history to younger generations; b) link the goals of two community partners: the Historical Society and Downtown Indiana and encourage future projects between the two; and c) add to the cultural resources that are helping make the downtown business district an engine of economic growth.

We envision that the following community changes will occur as a result of this project:

- Development of shared objectives and scholarly linkages between the Indiana Community and IUP students and faculty.
- The intellectual and civic development of students engaged in the project as they delve into the history and people of Appalachia
- Create potentially lasting partnerships between campus and community groups and service providers.
- Build community through fostering a sense of pride and belonging in the local town on behalf of IUP students. Create a sense that they are involved in local problems and can play a role in local solutions.
- Contribute to enhancing community assets in Indiana — student research can help local organizations build on existing initiatives.
- Provide the opportunity for students to conduct community-based research, present on their work, and be exposed to work occurring in other areas of Appalachia.
- Preserve and share personal histories that would otherwise have been lost.