

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

**ED
TECH**

Faces

APRIL 2012

EdTech Faces . . . Putting faces with the names you've seen in class.

Lynn Longenecker

Teacher, peace-builder, EdTech grad

Lynn Longenecker in Bolivia
with wife Laurie and children
Maria, Nathan, and Jesse.



Starting with the end in mind

JERRY FOSTER

When Lynn Longenecker graduated from Boise State's EdTech master's program, his career took off. Literally. He quit his teaching job in Pennsylvania, packed up his family, and took off for Bolivia, where he worked for three years as a peace-builder.

How an instructional design lesson helped diffuse violence in Bolivia

Peace-building is not on anyone's list of top 10 or even top 100 jobs these days.

That's unfortunate because the world could use more peace right now, and Longenecker's work there gave him an indelibly personal understanding of life and conflict in developing countries. That, combined with his teaching experience and advanced degree in EdTech



Countering strong social tension stemming from centuries of discrimination against indigenous people, youth from traditionally polarized western and eastern regions of Bolivia (seen here in LaPaz) have participated in a

series of exchanges which have allowed them to break down stereotypes and come to see each other as friends with common needs rather than as enemies to fear.

Photo courtesy of Lynn Longenecker

from Boise State, opened the door to his present job as coordinator of education initiatives for the Mennonite Central Committee, a worldwide ministry of the Mennonite Church, that works for sustainable development and peace-building.

Mennonites are committed to non-violence because it is key to following Christ's example; besides, says Longenecker, solutions brought through violence are seldom permanent. Look at conflicts around the world and throughout time. Violence leads to more violence.

And so he helped develop a coalition of local organizations that uses conflict analysis to identify sources of conflict between indigenous and Latino cultures in Bolivia. The groups now apply concepts of trauma healing and restorative justice to build lasting peace that comes from acknowledging the pain of injustice and retribution, and addresses differences in non-violent ways.



In a peace-building game called the human knot, Laotian students come to realize that people have to work together to transform conflicts. If anyone is left out or doesn't participate, the circle will stay tangled. Students also learn that there are many perspectives and methods which can be used to transform conflicts.

PHOTO: Mennonite Central Committee



Prior to the start of the Tumaini Brooks Center in Kenya, most children did not attend school because they worked on the coffee plantations with their parents. Girls became mothers in their early teens. Boys were easy prey to a life of crime. More than 500 children currently attend school daily.

PHOTO: Mennonite Central Committee

This is slow work that requires a long view and the commitment of local leaders from all sides.

And it was at times a low-tech job, but you can't keep a techie off the keyboard for long. As in most U.S. classrooms, technology was not the point of Longenecker's training, but a tool. He encouraged local organizational leaders and activists to use Facebook to tell their stories to each other, and he used Google Groups to create common space for inter-organizational coordination.

Longenecker says he used the framework of instructional design learned in EDTECH 503 to begin with the end in mind by identifying objectives, then developing strategies, and finally to evaluating the results.

The project planning model learned in EDTECH 581 (now 542) can be applied in many contexts, he says, whether in an education, peace-building, or a development context, such as economic, agricultural, or community development.

Coordinating worldwide education initiatives

Now back in the United States, Longenecker is the education coordinator for the Mennonite Central Committee, overseeing the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of about 100 education projects in 40 countries. He's also responsible for facilitating professional development and sharing among MCC workers in those countries. Since most workers stay in their positions only three years, it is critical to build institutional memory through collaboration.

Education initiatives range from increasing access to schools for children affected by poverty, violence, HIV/AIDS, as well as increasing the quality of educational opportunities by supporting teachers in public or church-owned schools with books, other materials, and teacher training.

Other initiatives include vocational training, after-school programs, orphanages, and programs to teach mediation skills for resolving local conflicts.

JERRY FOSTER is an adviser in Boise State University's graduate programs in educational technology.

Let's get together for supper!

I'll be in Boston and Minneapolis this spring for the following conferences. Let's plan on getting together to talk about you and the EdTech program.

Bring a friend who's interested in our EdTech master's program and I'll buy dinner for both of you.

Please contact me in advance at 208-426-4008 or at jfoster@boisestate.edu >.



JERRY FOSTER

BOSTON

April 11 & 12, 2012

National Catholic
Educators Association

MINNEAPOLIS

June 19 & 20, 2012

National Charter
School Association

