This fall, COE faculty member Theodore J (T.J.) Kopcha was awarded a Public Service and Outreach fellowship with the UGA Archway Partnership. Kopcha is an assistant professor of learning, design and technology in the department of career and information studies. A former secondary school mathematics teacher, he has spent his career examining the ways in which systems theory can improve the ways technology is integrated into K-12 settings and how technology can improve student-centered approaches to teaching, particularly in the area of mathematics.

Kopcha is using his fellowship to extend his work with technology-enhanced learning. In his role as a fellow with Archway, he is travelling to schools across Georgia that are part of the partnership, which brings higher-education resources to select communities in Georgia. The nature of his work varies from community to community–projects are identified through close collaboration with the teachers, students and the larger community. As part of his fellowship, he has travelled to five of the Archway communities to help with conceptualizing the process of integrating technology or exploring strategies for negotiating the changes that technology may bring.

Kopcha’s fellowship has also provided an opportunity to work closely with two Archway communities, Candler County and Hart County, to provide ongoing, site-based professional development to integrate technology into STEM education. With the help of learning, design and technology graduate students Lenie George and Kalianne Neumann, he offers training and classroom-level support to middle school teachers in Candler County School District. He and his graduate students will work closely with teachers as they develop a place-based interdisciplinary STEM curriculum that uses mobile technology to support data collection and analysis (for details, see t.uga.edu/142).

In Hart County, Kopcha and his graduate students are working with the elementary, middle and high schools as they integrate Bring Your Own Technology (BYOT) into the Hart County School District’s STEM and general education curriculum. Kopcha helps plan for BYOT as well as offer training and classroom-level support as teachers learn to integrate technology into math, science and language arts. Both George and Neumann are former teachers with experience conducting interdisciplinary activities in secondary mathematics and language arts (respectively). (For details, visit t.uga.edu/143.)

The Public Service and Outreach fellowship has provided Kopcha with the time and resources to fully immerse himself in the mission of Archway. With support from both the Office of Public Service and Outreach and Archway, he plans to work with his graduate students in the spring to continue their ongoing efforts to improve education in rural communities across Georgia.

Archway fellowship allows professor to bring technology to rural Georgia communities

This fall, COE faculty member Theodore J (T.J.) Kopcha was awarded a Public Service and Outreach (PSO) fellow with the UGA Archway Partnership, Theodore J (T.J.) Kopcha (left) meets with COE doctoral student Lenie George (middle), and Tiffany West (right), Teacher of the Year in the Candler County School District. Photo credit: Betsy McGriff

Middle Grades Education students create photo booth for Hilsman Middle School celebration

UGA Middle Grades Education teacher candidates pose in the photo booth they created for Hilsman Middle School students, families, and faculty as part of HiFest, Hilsman’s back-to-school open house with a festival-like atmosphere. In the photo booth, teacher candidates took photographs of HiFest participants, who donated a variety of props, and posted the pictures on the school’s HiFest website, http://bit.ly/hiFest

Pictured from left to right: Halie Hunter, Harlie Aldridge, Brittany Byrd, Erin Wedereit