

RURAL EDUCATION
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Letter from the Rural Education SIG Chair

How time flies when you are having fun. When I began my sabbatical last September, I thought I would have lots of time to engage in any number of projects. The time is going much too fast and I can already see September looming on the horizon; however, I know I will return to the university much refreshed and enthused for my normal duties and tasks.

I hope many of you will be making the journey to San Francisco for the AEAR Conference next week. The program that has been put together by David looks impressive and very interesting. I want to thank him for his efforts on the behalf of us all.

I want to especially invite you to come to the business meeting on Friday, April 7, 6:15 – 8:15 pm (Moscone Center South, Mezzanine Level East, Room 220). This meeting is very important because it provides members of the SIG to discuss the policy and direction of the organization. The executive is always open to new ideas from its members.

There are two special events scheduled for this year's business meeting. The winner of the SIG's Outstanding Dissertation Award will be acknowledged. This year the distinction goes to Dr. Caitlin Howley for her dissertation entitled "Remote Possibilities: Rural Children's Out Of School Activities and Educational Aspirations."

Congratulations to Caitlin! She has confirmed that she will be attending the business meeting; please come along and share her moment.

I want to thank the review and selection committee – Paul Theobald (Chair), Mary Frances Agnello, and Kristine Reid. I think this award is one of the most important things we do. It provides acknowledgement and encouragement to new scholars and provides them with invaluable feedback on their work. Those who take on the task of serving on the committee are very deserving of our thanks.

One issue that always comes up at our business meeting is how to increase membership in the SIG. Our membership chair, Kris Reid has an interesting idea that I wish to endorse. She suggests that we encourage members to reach out to others in their areas and invite them to join the SIG. Whoever is successful in recruiting the most members will be given some form of reward. It could be a free or reduced registration at the next AERA meeting (Chicago, 2007) or the price of admission for one of the tour events that are always part of the conference.

The more members we have the more sessions we have assigned to the SIG. We have all remarked at one time or another that given the number of rural schools in North America, our membership should be much larger than it is. Why don't you do something about this?

Invitation to Dinner

At the end of the business meeting I would like you all to join me for dinner at a select location. I have consulted with our treasurer Kathleen and she assures me that depending on how many of you take up the invitation we can pay for all or a good portion your meal. Please join us and bring your dancing shoes. (Note to Caitlin: remember no clowns!)

Shortly, after AERA I leave for Australia where I have been invited to be a visiting scholar for three months at Charles Surt University. I cannot think of a better way to end my sabbatical. While there I will be initiating a collaborative research project on Teacher Education for Rural Schools with Dr. Colin Boylin. The University is located in Wagga Wagga, NSW. Any one passing through please drop by and say hello.

Long may your big jib blow,

Dennis Mulcahy

Callejo-Perez Prepares the Conference Schedule

The program for the annual conference represents the efforts of authors, reviewers, and a program planner. After David Callejo-Perez, program chair, sent proposals to reviewers and received the completed critiques, still work remained for planning the program and designing sessions. The results of this more than six month effort for the Rural Education SIG are five sessions in the 2006 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 7-11, in San Francisco. The summary below includes all the sessions and the Business Meeting, which is scheduled for Friday, April 7, 6:15pm-8:15pm.

Program Schedule

1. **Rural Education SIG Business Meeting: Rural Schools and Assessment**

Session type: Business Meeting

Time: Fri, Apr 7 - 6:15pm - 8:15pm

Place: Moscone Center South, Mezzanine Level East, Room 220

As part of the business meeting, Stephen Swidler will discuss pedagogy and assessment through the eyes persons in one-room schoolhouses. The SIG hopes to raise awareness and create a plan of action to protect successful rural schools.

Chair: Dennis M. Mulcahy, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Presentation: **Naturally Small: One-Room Schoolhouses and Rural Communities**, Stephen A. Swidler, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

2. **Rural Education Research: Students and Identity**

Session type: Paper Discussion (formerly known as Roundtables)

Time: Sat, Apr 8 - 9:05am - 9:45am

Place: Moscone Center West, 3rd Floor, Room 3009

These papers center on the role of identity formation in students' ways of life and interpretation of their learning world.

Chair: David M. Callejo-Perez, West Virginia University

Discussant: Kalle R. Kossar, West Virginia University

Gender, Family Help, and Homework Management Reported by Rural Middle-School Students:

Jianzhong Xu, Mississippi State University; Lyn Corno, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Patterns of Adjustment During the Transition from Middle To High School in Rural African-American Youth:

Dylan Robertson, Center for Developmental Science; Tom Farmer, The University of North Carolina-Chapel; Matthew J. Irvin, The

University of North Carolina-Chapel; Jana Thompson, Center for Developmental Science.

Spatial and Sociodemographic Patterns of Student Mobility:

Kai A. Schafft, The Pennsylvania State University.

Student-Led Rural Community Dialogues: Discovering and Reinventing Students' Place:

Matthew C. Calvert, University of Wisconsin-Extension; Cynthia Taines, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Mystery of Size: School-District Size, Curriculum Offerings, and Student Achievement in Rural Pennsylvania:

Yi Gong, Keene State College; Wenfan Yan, Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Full Circle: A Case Study of the Consolidation, Closing, Restoration, and Reopening of Barnardsville Elementary School:

Gail D. Buckner, Western Carolina University; Mary Jean R. Herzog, Western Carolina University.

An Inquiry into Achievement Differences: Traditional and Virtual High-School Courses:

Dennis M. Mulcahy, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Michael Kristopher Barbour, The University of Georgia.

3. **Immersion Experience and Cultural Identity: Urban Students and Teachers Learning in Rural Alaska Native Communities**

Session type: Symposium

Time: Sun, Apr 9 - 10:35am - 12:05pm

Place: Moscone Center West, 2nd Floor, Room 2022

This symposium will present outcome data from three related programs that over the past 6 years have immersed urban Alaska students and teachers in the rural Alaskan Native communities. Data will be presented to show that program participants learn not only about Alaskan Native culture but about their own cultural experiences. The data will include a professionally produced DVD (15 minutes) documenting teachers' experiences.

G. Williamson McDiarmid, University of Washington; Alexandra R. Hill, University of Alaska-Anchorage; Letitia C. Fickel, University

of Alaska-Anchorage; Rosyland Frazier, University of Alaska-Anchorage; Paul Ontooguk, University of Alaska-Anchorage; David Hall, Chinook Elementary School.

4. **Research on Rural Education: Multiple Perspectives in the United States and Abroad:**

Session type: Paper Session

Time: Mon, Apr 10 - 8:15am - 10:15am

Place: Moscone Center South, Mezzanine Level East, Room 222

This session combines papers dealing with research on rural education in the US and abroad that create possibilities for comparative studies in education.

Chair: Edmund T. Harmann, University of Nebraska

Discussant: Aimee A. Howley, Ohio University

Analysis of Distance Education Use in Rural Schools:

Wallace Hannum, The University of North Carolina; Tom Farmer, The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; William Veal, College of Charleston; Jim Barber, The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; Jonathan Banks, The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill; Michelle Sylva, The University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Mix and Match or Mismatch: High-Ability Students and Rural Schools in an Australian Context:

Margaret M. Plunkett, Monash University-Gippsland; Monique Y. Osborn, Monash University.

School of the Air in Australia: From Radio to Satellite:

Stephen J. Crump, University of Newcastle.

School Size and the “Power Rating” of Poverty: Substantive Finding or Statistical Artifact?

Theodore Coladarci, The University of Maine.

The Influence of Rurality on Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Status in English Elementary Schools:

Linda M. Hargreaves, Cambridge University; Anthony Pell,
Leicester University.

5. **Rural Education: Rethinking the Possibilities**

Session type: Paper Session

Time: Mon, Apr 10 - 4:05pm - 6:05pm

Place: Moscone Center South, Mezzanine Level East, Room 224

This paper session seeks to expand research about rural education by examining issues and problems (diversity and gender identity) not usually associated with rural communities.

Chair: Shana Pate, North Texas State University

Discussant: Sharon L. Spall, Western Kentucky University

What Can I Learn from Rural Black Family Pedagogy?

Sherick A. Hughes, The University of Toledo.

Saving the Children of the Poor in Rural Schools:

Aimee A. Howley, Caitlin Howley, and Craig B. Howley, Ohio State University.

The Development of Secondary-School/Community Partnerships for a College-Going Culture in Diverse, Rural Schools, What Matters:

Betty Alford, Stephen F. Austin State University; Peggy B. Gill, The University of Texas at Tyler.

What Makes Effective Rural School Teachers?

Andrea M. Lachance, The State University of New York-Cortland

Teacher Resources in High-Need Rural Schools in Texas:

Debra H. Jones, Celeste Alexander, Michael Vaden-Kiernan, and Zena H. Rudo, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

Jorissen Reports on Funds

The secretary, treasurer for the Rural Education SIG, Kathleen Jorissen, confirms that the treasury as of December 2005 reflected a positive balance. Jorissen will provide an updated report at the business meeting that will include expensive regarding the annual meeting, but the December balance was \$1,679.00.

News from ACCLAIM

Craig Howley
Ohio State University

Despite the loss of NSF funding, ACCLAIM is proceeding to recruit new doctoral students for a cohort to start classes in the summer of 2007. Seventeen students have already applied--without any recruitment effort on the Center's part. Recruitment will likely double the applicant pool (20 spaces are available).

So-called "business model." The Center has developed a business model to sustain itself. ("Business plans" seems the appropriate term for helping, without funding, a large pool of the ready, willing, and able whom business-as-usual utterly ignores.) How is it done? (1) forget requiring mid-career educators to give up jobs and families and move to campus [nobody in his or her rural right mind wants that]; (2) deliver doctoral mathematics courses in a distance-education mode [we're doing it]; (3) get everybody together in the summer for lots of intense face-to-face work; and (4) get a bunch of universities cooperating in a regionalized program delivery. All of this is also a reason why it's not been done,

Interesting facts. During the planning for this "business model," the Center Management Team learned some interesting things. First, about 100 vacancies are announced for math education professors each year. Second, only about half these are filled, half--unfortunately--by professors already employed transferring from one university to another. Third, this means that actually 75% of mathematics education vacancies go unfilled each year.

Now, what's 'interesting' is that, over three cohorts, ACCLAIM will--serving a distinctly rural population with a distinctly rural scholarly program--likely produce (this is a /conservative/ estimate) 45 new math education doctors who care about rural places. Some students may migrate to urban areas, of course--but most are solidly committed to filling vacancies in regional institutions.

Give us 15 years, it seems, and ACCLAIM could single-handedly take care of the evident "national problem." By attending to rural places, no less. *Mirabile dictu*.

What's the lesson learned? If math is a national problem, if getting enough people to produce mathematics teachers is a national problem, and if ACCLAIM has demonstrated its capacity to solve this problem, then (this is irony) funding should be cancelled, and right quick. This lesson ay after all amount to dubious "learning.' One can hope. We're being a tad more aggressive than that, though.

On a happier rural note, at least 4 ACCLAIM students from the first (2002) cohort are working on approved rural-intensive dissertation projects; more will follow (not all have finished comprehensive exams as yet). We're also assisting (with modest financial support) two doctoral students from universities outside the ACCLAIM family to write rural-intensive, math education dissertations.

Addressing Needs of Rural ELL Students, Teachers, and Administrators through Staff Development

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Nearly 4.5 million children come to school from families where the home language is other than English (Therrien & Ramirez, 2000). In Texas, alone, over 630,000 students were served in English language learner (ELL) programs in 2002-2003, accounting for almost 15% (14.9%) of the school population (TEA,

2004) with 94% Spanish speakers and 87% of those economically disadvantaged (TEA, 2003). Nationally, in 2001-2002, ELLs comprised 9.64% of the national enrollment in public elementary and secondary schools, and 79% of these students were Spanish speakers (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002). Over 40% of the ELL students in the U.S. are enrolled in rural schools where most receive an English as a second language (ESL) program (Bérubé, 2002). Additionally, 46% of the teachers in the U.S. work in rural schools (National Education Association, 1997); however, classroom teachers have minimal, if any, training in meeting the academic or linguistic needs of their ELL students (Byrnes, Kiger & Manning, 1997; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). McColskey reported (2002) that approximately 12% of teachers nationwide have had “any” training working with ELLs.

Meeting the needs of ELL students is a challenging task when resources, including training for teachers and administrators are adequate, but it is even more daunting considering that in rural schools so few resources are available and training for teachers is so limited. We must focus special efforts in rural schools so that ELLs will have access to appropriate and equitable curriculum, instruction, and programs. An important first step in these special efforts is putting in place staff development programs for administrators and teachers aimed specifically at addressing the needs of ELLs.

One such effort has been developed in Texas with Project Triad, a Title III funded collaborative project among three (the triad) groups the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling at Sam Houston State University, Region VI Education Service Center, and 39 rural school districts. The overall purpose of Project Triad is to ensure that ELLs develop English proficiency and meet the same academic content and achievement standards that other children are expected to meet through a high-quality staff development program for teachers and administrators. The ongoing staff development program specifically addresses the affective, linguistic, and cognitive needs of ELLs in rural schools and focuses on literacy development.

Although Project Triad is determining through a variety of research projects, conducted by the participants, additional staff development needs are specific to rural teachers of ELLs, broad topics in the staff development program currently include:

- Insuring a successful program for second language learners
 - Mentoring to new ESL teachers
 - Team planning with administrators, mainstream teachers, and ESL teachers
 - Parent training modules for assisting parents to work with their children at home

- Enhancing second language acquisition, both linguistically and cognitively
 - Research-based reading instruction for ELLs
- Assessing student growth and program success
 - Action research for ELLs with emphasis on how to use data to alter policy, procedures, and curriculum
- Addressing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of second language learners
 - Curriculum planning and development in reading for rural ELLs

Additionally, Project Triad promotes the development of instructional leaders who can lead positive academic efforts on campuses for ELLs. This is accomplished through providing the option of a Masters Degree in Instructional Leadership. In this program, we meet face-to-face in one-third of the courses and the remainder of the courses is online using technology.

An important and unique aspect of Project Triad is that is a model of teaching and learning simultaneously. Much of the participants' work is done on their campus sites instead of predominately on the university campus and only occasionally in schools. Staff development occurs on-site in the schools with field experiences supported by the partnership with the university.

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