Practical Ideas for Rural Educators

2014 Annual AMLE Conference   Nashville, TN

Saturday, November 8

Introductions

+ *Sara Hartman*

+ *Sarah Luthy*

+ *Stephanie Snyder*

What interested you in this presentation?

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November 7, 2014

Learning Targets

✤ know the statistics of rural schools in America

✤ understand the consequences of teaching in rural middle schools

✤ practical ideas for implementing *This We Believe*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hU2WhYccbTY

Statistics

✤ Rural schools: 32.9%

✤ Rural students: 22.4%

  ✤ 2011-2012: 9,765,385 students enrolled

  ✤ median district enrollment: 533

✤ State education funds to rural districts: 22.9%

✤ Rural students who are Title I eligible: 19.3%

(Johnson, Showalter, Klein, & Lester, 2014)
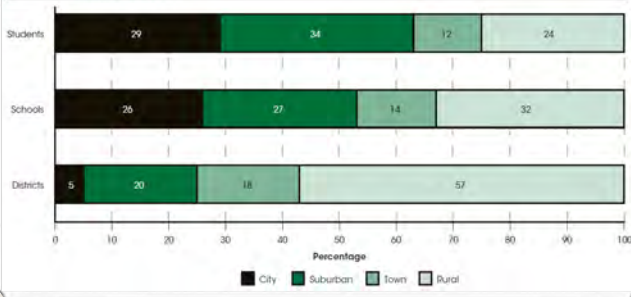
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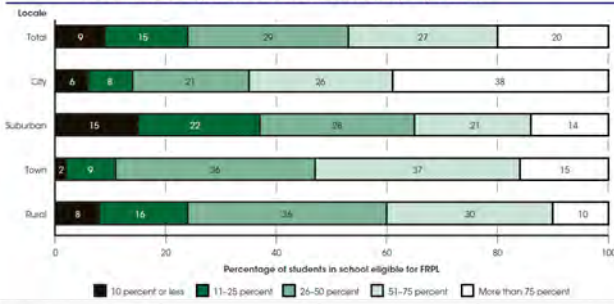November 7, 2014

Statistics ~ Distribution by Locale

Figure 1. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, schools, and districts, by locale: School year 2010-11

Category	City	Suburban	Town	Rural
Students	29	34	12	24
Schools	26	27	14	32
Districts	5	20	18	57

Percentage (0–100)

■ City ■ Suburban ■ Town □ Rural

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2013)

Statistics ~ Free or Reduced Lunch

Figure 4. Percentage distribution of public elementary and secondary students, by locale and percentage of students in school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL): Fall 2010

Locale	10 percent or less	11–25 percent	26–50 percent	51–75 percent	More than 75 percent
Total	9	15	29	27	20
City	6	8	21	26	38
Suburban	15	22	28	21	14
Town	2	9	36	37	15
Rural	8	16	36	30	10

Percentage of students in school eligible for FRPL (0–100)

■ 10 percent or less ■ 11–25 percent ■ 26–50 percent □ 51–75 percent □ More than 75 percent

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2013)

What challenges do you see in rural education?

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Challenges

* teacher retention, ongoing initiatives/PD

* limited access to technology

* smallness of schools

* school funding

* complexity of student aspiration

* low community and parental involvement

School Funding

* Resources
  * "diseconomies of scale exist resulting from higher rural district fixed costs based on lower student enrollment" (Sundeen & Sundeen, 2013, p. 8)
  * per pupil spending (United States Census Bureau, 2008)
* Base Salary (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.)
  * Rural: $39,800
  * City: $43,600
 * Suburban: $46,800

Attracting & Keeping Quality Personnel

Reasons teachers will not come or decide to leave:

* Low pay (Monk 2007; Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer 2012; Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013)

* Large numbers of students with special needs (Monk 2007)

* Highly mobile population (in some regions) (Monk 2007)

* Classroom management issues (Mee & Haverback, 2014)

* Organization issues (Mee & Haverback, 2014)

* Benefits (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer, 2012)

* Geographic isolation (Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer 2012; Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013)

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Strategies Associated with Retention

✤ Additional professional development opportunities
(Berry, Petrin, Gravelle, & Farmer 2012; Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013)

✤ Access to high quality technology (Monk, 2007; Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013)

✤ An emphasis on positive working conditions and school climate (Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013)

Limited Access to Technology

Technology Availability - Rural vs. Urban Areas
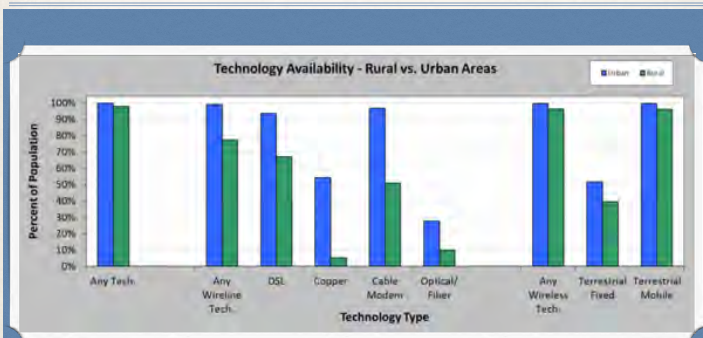
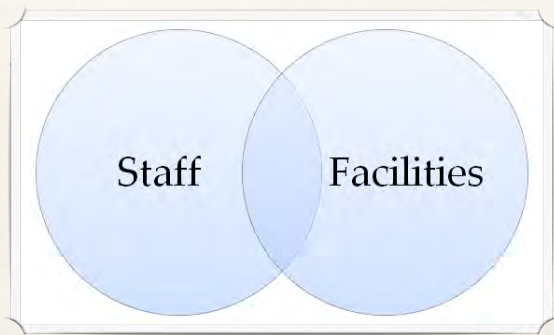(National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2014)

Suggested Technology Fixes

Purchase resources:

✤ online auctions

✤ refurbished equipment

✤ establishing a consortium

✤ grants

(Thomas, 2005)

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Smallness of Rural Schools

Staff   Facilities

(Thomas, 2005)

Parental Involvement

Effective Middle School Teams

❖ believe that parental involvement is essential to student success

❖ are open and approachable to parents

❖ serve as a resource to the parents of adolescents

❖ approach problem-solving opportunities as a team rather than as individuals

Robbins, C. & Searby, L. (2013). Exploring parental involvement strategies utilized by middle school interdisciplinary teams. *School Community Journal*. Vol. 23, Issue 23, p. 113.136.

Rural Communities' Educational Attainment Levels

❖ Education level is associated with higher earnings and lower unemployment rates.

❖ Rural America struggles to find effective ways to raise education levels in places where job opportunities are slim.

❖ High school completion in rural areas is at 82.5%, below the national average of 85.5%.

❖ Only 17.5% of adults in rural areas have college degrees, as opposed to non rural areas at 30%.

United States Department of Agriculture. (2012). *Educational Attainment in Rural America*. Retrieved October 15, 2014 from http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/rural-economy-population/employment-education/rural-education.aspx.

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Complexity of Student Aspirations

LISTEN TO THE MUSTN'TS

Listen to the MUSTN'TS, child,
Listen to the DON'TS
Listen to the SHOULDN'TS
The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS
Listen to the NEVER HAVES
Then listen close to me—
Anything can happen, child,
ANYTHING can be.

Shel Silverstein

Complexity of Student Aspiration

Student Resistance to Schooling

- ✤ Rooted in Resistance Theory
- ✤ Qualitative Interviews with Observations
- ✤ Investigates Student Reasoning for Resisting Education
- ✤ Majority of students in vocational trainings
- ✤ Little to no research examining white, rural students

Themes:

- ✤ school and home values do not align
- ✤ feelings about education quality
- ✤ student behavior vs. teacher expectations

(Hendrickson, 2012)

Complexity of Student Aspiration

Student Resistance to Schooling

"This (differing backgrounds of students and teachers) can result in a culture clash between students with close-kinit families valuing place-based knowledge and teachers with a message of worldliness" (Hendrickson, 2012, p. 37).

Study Revealed:

- ✤ Discord in value systems
- ✤ Mislabeled and mishandled misbehaviors
- ✤ Curriculum and Methods do not meet needs
- ✤ IDs/examines rural, resistant attitudes

(Hendrickson, 2012)

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Complexity of Student Aspiration

(Hendrickson, 2012)

High Importance upon Family
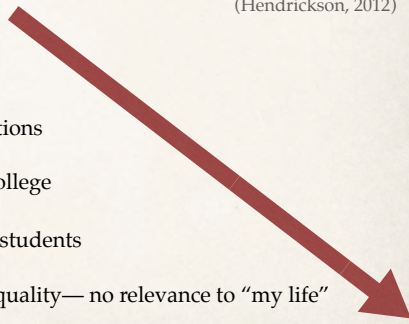 Minding Parent Wishes

  Family values regional, vocations

    Students don't expect college

    Teachers discipline students

      School is not quality— no relevance to "my life"

        Minimal effort for eventual diploma

Complexity of Student Aspiration

According to Hendrickson, 2012, "These students justified their resistant actions by blaming the teachers for not relating to them . . . This may have been a result of students' attempts to save face and protect their culture by confronting teachers and disengaging with coursework, while lacking a critical understanding of these disparities" (47).

Education must:
  ✤ Value student voices
  ✤ Reinforce community
  ✤ Family value systems
  ✤ Increase motivation to do work that is valued
  ✤ Use resistance as critical conversation catalyst
  ✤ Believe that resistance = potential rural revolution

(Hendrickson, 2012)

Complexity of Student Aspiration

Stability and Change in Rural Youths' Educational Outcomes Through the Middle and High School Years

  ✤ 3,312 Students- African American 54% and White Youth 46%
  ✤ 4 Middle Schools, Three HS, 2 Alternative MS/HS combination- all rural
  ✤ Surveyed Over 3.5 Years

Survey questions targeted trajectories tied to aims of the study:
  ✤ School Belonging
  ✤ Value of Education
  ✤ School Misbehavior
  ✤ Extracurricular Participations

Data to be compared with Urban Youth   (Witherspoon & Ennett, 2011)

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Complexity of Student Aspiration

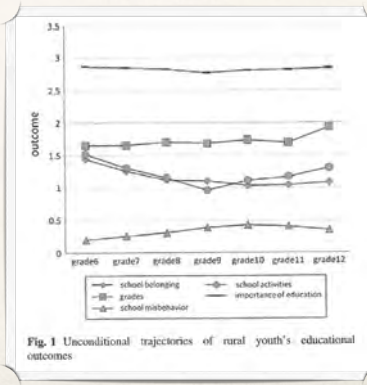**Fig. 1** Unconditional trajectories of rural youth's educational outcomes

(Witherspoon & Ennett, 2011)

Complexity of Student Aspiration

Lasting Implications of Pathways Identified

* Over 3.5 year span, most all trajectories wavered
* "Light at the end of the tunnel," though middle to high transition years imperative
* Misbehavior increased dramatically
* Sense of belonging dropped significantly in 6-10 grades
* Corollaries to urban research
* Stark contrast to suburban or affluent findings

Study finds that school pathways, unique to district are more "salient to students' sense of school belonging" than geography as some previously posited

(Witherspoon & Ennett, 2011)

Complexity of Student Aspiration

Relationship of School Context to Rural Youth's Educational Achievement and Aspirations

"Students across high and low-poverty communities benefit from positive perceptions of their ability, a sense-of school valuing, and belonging and preparation for post-secondary education" (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011, p.1238).

Findings are contrary to past research, attributed to economic changes over 20 years

Interpersonal Competence configurations, Attachment to Community, and Residential Aspiration of Rural Adolescents

A pressing issue is meeting the needs of high risk youth who "may not have the necessary skills or resources to leave . . . but who also have no desire to stay" (Petrin, Farmer, Meece, & Byun, 2011, p. 1103)

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## Complexity of Student Aspiration

Findings

- ❖ "high competent rural youth," maintain links to area (Petrin, Farmer, Meece, & Byun, 2011)

- ❖ High behavioral, academic, and social competencies = positive views (Petrin, Farmer, Meece, & Byun, 2011)

- ❖ Self-concept tied to achievement; classrooms and schools enforcing this see results (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011)

- ❖ At-risk Youth are not getting the knowledge necessary for a "productive lifestyle beyond their hometown," nor do they envision a rural lifestyle in the future (Petrin, Farmer, Meece, & Byun, 2011)

Complexity of Student Aspiration

Findings

- ❖ Smaller class size (not school size) affects high and low poverty youth (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011)

- ❖ In rural high and low poverty contexts, post secondary exploration predicts outcomes as well as aspirations (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011)

- ❖ further investigation needed to explore communal constraints upon students who want to seek out future career goals (Petrin, Farmer, Meece, & Byun, 2011)

- ❖ further investigation needed into school grade span configurations, and impact of distant and remote locations upon achievement (Irvin, Meece, Byun, Farmer, & Hutchins, 2011)

What else do you see?

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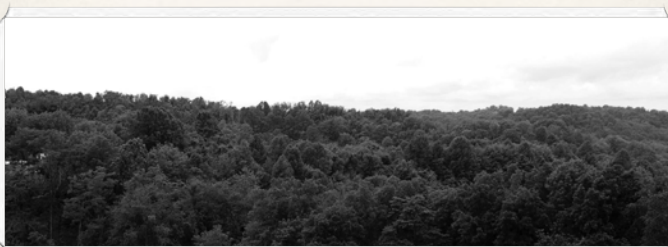
What positives do you see in rural education?

Positives/Take-Away Items

✤ utilize community agencies

✤ STEAM

✤ service learning

✤ place-based learning

✤ professional organizations

Place-Based Learning

This We Believe Tenants:

✤ Essential Attribute - Developmentally Responsive

   ✤ "Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant." Challenging Curriculum

   ✤ "The school includes community and business partners." Community & Business

(Association for Middle Level Education, 2010, p. 14)

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Place-Based Learning ~ Dream

Overarching Question:

✤ How do you make a dream come true?

Goals:

✤ Students will apply inductive and deductive reasoning across two content areas

✤ Students will recognize that dreams are attainable when a plan is in place

✤ Students will understand that reading, writing, and math skills work together

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Area Professionals   *Rural Action*

Bridge Builders   *Textbook Foundation*

Passion Works/Other NFP Art Studios   *Elks*

Lions   *American Legion*

PTA/PTO/PAC   *State & National Forestry Services*

Local Historical Societies   *Child & Family Services*

Post-Secondary Institutions   *Vocational Training Centers*

VFW   *County Library Branches*

Board of Developmental Disabilities   *Area Museums*

Sheriff's Department   *Local Government Agencies*

Community Agencies

Ohio Valley Museum of Discovery

ENGINEERING AN INNOVATIVE MUSEUM

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STEM to STEAM

✤ Remember STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math)?

$$STEM + ARTS = STEAM$$

STEAM

This We Believe Tenants:

✤ Essential Attribute - Challenging

  ✤ "Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning." Active Learning

  ✤ "Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relevant." Challenging Curriculum

  ✤ "Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches." Multiple Learning Approaches

(Association for Middle Level Education, 2010, p. 14)

Service Learning

✤ Make a Difference Fair

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Service Learning ~ Make a Difference

This We Believe Tenants:

- ✤ Essential Attribute - Empowering

  - ✤ "The school includes community and business partners." Community & Business

(Association for Middle Level Education, 2010, p. 14)

Professional Development & Organizations

This We Believe Tenants:

- ✤ "Ongoing professional development reflects best educational practices." Professional Development

- ✤ "Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practices." Committed Leaders

(Association for Middle Level Education, 2010, p. 14)

Association for Middle Level Education

National Art Education Association

International Reading Association

International Society for Technology in Education

Find your passion, and be involved!

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

National Rural Education Association

National Association for Gifted Children

American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

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What other practical ideas for implementation?

CEU Code:

VO-86