

A Study of Instructional Decisions and Lesson Planning Strategies of Highly Effective Rural Elementary School Teachers

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Abstract – A teacher must have more than just effective instructional planning skills. However, if planning techniques are inefficient or nonexistent, it is impossible to envisage a teacher experiencing high levels of learning for children. Learning how to plan for effective instruction is an important aspect of the work that an elementary school teacher does on a daily basis. While some new and struggling teachers in metropolitan school systems have access to professional development on a number of topics, including instructional planning, rural teachers sometimes struggle to obtain such opportunities. The goal of this project was to collect data and insights from rural instructors who have demonstrated experience in achieving high levels of student learning. They were studied for the precise planning decisions and actions they engaged in while planning. Not only were planning techniques discovered, but the reasons for their use were also looked at. This qualitative study used five excellent school teacher.

Key Words – Nonexistent, Rural Teachers, Metropolitan school, Rural Instructors

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INTRODUCTION

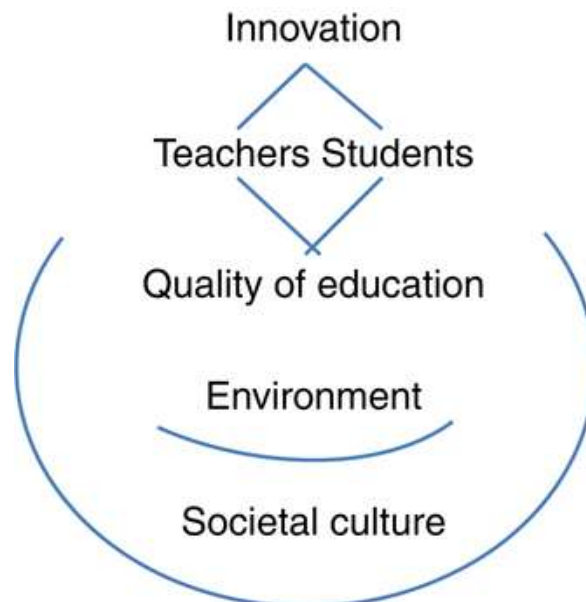
Teaching is challenging, and research shows that good teaching matters (Heck, 2007), a truth that educators who work in schools have known for years. Notably, research has consistently shown that instructors are the single most important element influencing student progress for over a decade (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003). Low-income pupils who had "very good" instructors for three years in elementary school, for example, earned test results that were comparable to those of middle-class students (National Academy of Education, 2009). The inverse, on the other hand, is likewise remarkable. We all have fond memories of our teachers from our school or college years.

A number of them were excellent, but others were not. Let's look at why we called them good. They were compassionate, sensitive, and charming in addition to being great teachers. They all had one thing in common: they used new approaches, tactics and teaching materials to make teaching more entertaining and successful. Teaching learning materials (TLMs), also known as instructional aids, assist a teacher in achieving the learning objectives that she or he has set forth prior to the start of teaching-learning activities.

These schools exist in a diverse socioeconomic and sociocultural environment. The term of urbanormativity captures one important understanding of rural settings' status in society, in which urban and suburban settings are considered as the norm, as they both rely on and exploit rural settings for resources (Thomas & Fulkerson, 2017). Rural schools' marginalisation within the greater educational system is helped by urbanormativity. Rural schools, on the other hand, are not homogeneous, and each has its own set of features depending on its location, population, and history (Hunt-Barron, Tracy, Howell, & Kaminski, 2015)

Rural schools and districts are often smaller in terms of student enrollment, but they also serve communities that are sparsely populated, dispersed over large distances, and provide parents with limited options for where their children can attend school. Rural schools are typically located in remote places, and student enrolment fluctuates as a result of economic developments, potentially resulting in either diminishing or increasing enrollment (Avery, 2013). Rural environments can offer a variety of unique opportunities for students, including access to local knowledge resources, as well as

the histories and daily experiences of rural school-aged children (Kassam & Avery, 2013)



Advantages of Rural Teaching

The benefits of teaching in rural areas are frequently overlooked or undervalued. Rural areas, for example, have lower living costs and smaller schools, allowing for better ties with pupils and the provision of tailored learning plans/attention for them (Player, 2015). Rural teacher recruitment and retention are linked to factors associated with rural environments, such as the intimacy of the rural lifestyle and small class sizes (Ulferts, 2016). Cohesion between kids, parents, and the school community is strengthened by more outside resources and stronger community links (McGranahan et al., 2010).

Rural schools have a higher level of satisfaction than non-rural schools (Player, 2015) since they have less inflexibility, bureaucracy, classroom disturbances, and disciplinary issues (Ballou & Podgursky, 1995). Furthermore, compared to urban and suburban teachers, their teachers often have more power and autonomy in the classroom, including the use of textbooks, standards, curriculum, and pedagogical approach (Player, 2015). Other benefits of teaching in rural communities identified by Boylan and McSwan (1998) include the prestigious status of teaching in the community, friendly communication among community members, strong teacher engagement in community, natural environment, lower cost of living, and less crime than in urban areas.

Shuls and Maranto (2014) suggest that the traditional teacher recruiting technique adopts a classical scientific management and Weberian bureaucratic perspective by emphasising highly standardised materialistic incentives such as financial motivation, which are based on a self-interest paradigm. Individual motivations of teachers are ignored in this perspective, and all teachers are treated as universally driven by economic interests (e.g., hazard pay for working in rural schools). There is, however, evidence that emphasising student-centered appeals can help rural teacher recruiting efforts (Hess, 2010)

Idealistic (e.g., student-centered or public service) appeals are important and may have a higher likelihood of being effective recruitment messages for difficult-to-staff jobs like rural teaching in impoverished communities, partly because altruism (rather than material incentives like salaries) is often the motivating factor for people to enter the teaching profession in the first place (Shuls & Maranto, 2014). The chance to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged marginalized pupils is one of these appeals. These opportunities are extremely common in the rural setting. As a result, because teaching takes place in a specific social and cultural environment (Eppley, 2015) ignoring the geographical dimension leads in a wasted opportunity to fully use rural teacher recruiting efforts.

Challenges of Rural Teaching

According to a Phi Delta Kappa 2018 report titled Teaching: Respect with Dwindling Appeal, the majority of parents in the United States do not want their children to pursue a career in education, and the majority of children do not want to become educators because the pay is not comparable to those with similar degrees, the profession does not garner respect, and the work demands are high.

The findings of Tran and Smith's (2019) study on college students' interest in becoming rural teachers echoes these sentiments. Indeed, much has been said about the difficulties that rural teachers face in terms of recruitment and retention, such as working in less desirable geographic locations with fewer amenities/recreational opportunities like beaches and shopping destinations (Miller, 2008b), lower pay (often as a result of a lower tax base) (Tran, 2018) and fewer professional development opportunities and pedagogical resources (Miller, 2012).

Furthermore, many rural schools are located in high-poverty areas, which creates further barriers to teacher employment (Monk, 2007) because they often lack resources, such as technology (Howley et al., 2011), as well as hazardous and inadequate facilities (Tran, 2018). Furthermore, due to reduced enrolment and teacher staffing, rural instructors frequently teach more out-of-topic courses, serving as both subject generalist and specialist (Biddle & Azano, 2016). This results in an increased demand for teacher preparation time (Hammer et al., 2005). They are frequently in charge of a lot more than only training (Berry & Gravelle, 2013), but they also face a lot of social, physical, professional, and psychological isolation (Anttila & Vaananen, 2013).

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