

Editorial: Elevating Voices within our Diverse Tapestry of Rurality

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The publication of *Theory & Practice in Rural Education* enters its fifth year, marking a significant achievement. The editorial leadership feels privileged to collaborate with authors, reviewers, and readers to fulfill the journal's mission of publishing high-quality articles that address theoretical, empirical, and practical issues in rural education.

This issue offers a diverse range of timely and critical topics explored by our authors. The breadth of manuscripts offers a collection of qualitative, descriptive, and practice-based studies. This issue challenges us to reflect on the diverse tapestry of stakeholders and resources in our rural schools and communities. Authors focused on areas such as perspectives of rural educators on teaching controversial texts, the visibility of Queerness in rural narratives with school-based implications, the perceptions of female superintendents serving in rural schools, the effects of distance learning on teachers in rural Title I schools, and the characteristics of students with cochlear implants and their implications on rural disproportionality. Additionally, the issue includes a book review of *Struggling to find our way: Rural educators' experiences working with and caring for Latinx students* by Stephanie Oudghiri.

TPRE is supported by ECU Library Services and the Rural Education Institute. All manuscripts undergo a double-blind review process, coordinated by the staff, including the Journal's Executive Editor, Journal Manager, Assistant Editors, Associate Editors, and Reviewers.

The publication of this issue would not have been possible without the continuous support of various individuals. Special recognition goes to Jennifer Levi Williams, the Journal Manager; Arleth Medal, the Assistant Editor; Dr. Robert Quinn, the Associate Editor for the Research Forum; Dr. Martin Reardon, the Associate Editor for the Practice Forum; Dr. Jan Lewis, the Director of J. Y. Joyner Library; Joseph Thomas, the Assistant Director for Collections and Scholarly Communication, Joyner Library; and Nick Crimi, the OJS Administration, Joyner Library. The journal extends its gratitude to the reviewers on the editorial board and the authors who have contributed their valuable work to this issue.

Looking ahead, the journal is currently accepting manuscripts for the next general issue, scheduled for publication in the spring as per tradition. Additionally, a guest-edited

special issues topic on trauma informed practices is being prepared for fall 2023. Scholars and practitioners in the field of rural education are invited to submit their work to the Research Forum, the Practice Forum, the Digital Projects Forum, or the Book Reviews Forum for 2024 issues. Manuscripts for general issues are typically due in the fall, with expected publication dates in May. Special issues topic manuscripts are typically due in late winter, with publication expected in the fall. Our Fall 2024 special issues topic is yet to be determined.

Those interested in participating as peer reviewers can register on the journal's website (<http://tpre.ecu.edu>). By editing their profile and navigating to the "Roles" tab, individuals can select "Reviewer" and specify their interests related to rural education. The journal is also seeking an Executive Editor to oversee the review, editing, and publishing process. The Executive Editor will serve as a leader and collaborative member of the TPRES team, with primary responsibilities including the initial manuscript review, providing authors with feedback in collaboration with section editors, and conducting the final proofread. Letters of interest should be addressed to Kristen Cuthrell, Interim Executive Editor, and Jenn Levi Williams, the Journal Manager, at tpre@ecu.edu

About the Authors

Arleth Medal, is a Graduate Assistant for the Rural Education Institute and Assistant Editor for the *Theory & Practice in Rural Education*. Currently, she is entering her second year in the Master's plus Specialist in School Psychology program at East Carolina University. She has extensive professional experience supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and behavioral challenges and aims to acquire knowledge in supporting the unique needs of students residing in Eastern North Carolina.

Taylor Parrish is a Program Coordinator at East Carolina University in the Rural Education Institute. She is an ECU alumna with a Bachelor's in Education and has several years of teaching experience. Currently pursuing a Master's degree in Higher Education at Liberty University, she is dedicated to expanding her knowledge in the field. She has previous research experience in teacher recruitment and retention in rural North Carolina, and a wealth of expertise and passion to the field of rural education.

Kristen Cuthrell, EdD, is a Professor at East Carolina University in the Department of Elementary Education and Middle Grades Education and serves as Director of the Rural Education Institute. Her research interests include reform in educator preparation, innovation in clinical experiences, and professional development in rural schools.

Jennifer Levi Williams, MA, is an adjunct instructor and university supervisor in the College of Education at East Carolina University. She serves as the journal manager for the *Theory & Practice in Rural Education (TPRE)*. Her education includes a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Elementary Education from East Carolina University.

Jennifer also holds certifications in K-12 reading, and gifted education, and is Nationally Board Certified. Prior to her work at East Carolina University, Jennifer taught for ten years in public schools. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree through the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in Curriculum and Instruction. Her research interests include challenges and opportunities in rural education, educational policy, international and comparative education, gifted education, and technology in education.



Mission: Initiate and facilitate partnerships and research-driven innovations that enhance holistic development and opportunities for pk-16 students and their families in rural communities. Collaborate with stakeholders towards positive transformation in families and schools.

Vision: Be a place where educational stakeholders in rural communities come and feel at home in accessing resources and support to address the issues that confront us.

Goals: Improve educational outcomes for rural students, school, and communities through

- ECU Next Gen: We grow the next generation of rural educators and researchers.
- Local and Regional Development: We collaborate with schools and communities to build capacity for all.
- Rural Education Promotion: We articulate and advocate the importance of rural schools and communities.
- Research and Evaluation: We study our practice and investigate what works in rural schools.

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Contact us at ruraleducation@ecu.edu to connect and collaborate!