**Editorial: Trends in and Perspectives on Rural Education**

**Robert D. Quinn***, Professor of Art Education, Rural Education Institute Research and Innovation Associate*

The publication of *Theory & Practice in Rural Education* enters its seventh year. Unlike newlyweds experiencing the dreaded *seven-year itch,* our editorial leadership is thrilled to continue our partnership 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.

The research in this issue illuminates research on a variety of trends in and perspectives on current issues facing North American rural education. Mitchell, Craven, and Adams studied over 100 rural school and district leaders in one Rocky Mountain state. Boulden and Henry studied 15 rural school counselors across the U.S., examining their experiences responding to the rural youth mental health crisis. Shonerd, Grichko, and Lehmann’s qualitative study examines how rural pre-service teachers foster critical thinking in their practica and student teaching experiences. Rasheed, Kuehl, Azano, and Callahan examine teachers’ experiences with a place-based language arts curriculum for gifted third- and fourth-grade students in a high-poverty rural Appalachian school district. Bice and Cortes share their narrative inquiry drawing on perspectives from students in grades 3–12, their families, and teachers, to re-examine how the rural bus ride shapes learning, relationships, and equity in education. Boz, Hammack, Scherer, Lux, and Gannon’s multi-year study on the sustainability of locally relevant engineering practices in rural elementary schools followed three rural teachers after the conclusion of a five-year nationally funded project, exploring the factors that enabled or hindered the continuation of engineering-focused instruction without external support.

Additionally, this issue examines the perspectives of educational leaders and the issues they often face in rural education. Wallin, Newton, and Jutras’s empirical study of 70 teaching principals—school leaders who balance dual responsibilities of teaching and administration—in Canada’s rural, remote, and northern schools explores community contexts, workloads, challenges, benefits, and leadership practices. Flowers’ autoethnographic study of his experiences as a Black principal in a predominantly White rural middle school in the Southeastern United States provides an additional perspective on the issues faced by educational leaders.

Finally, this issue presents TPRE’s first Digital Project, an online showcase of oral histories of rural Tennesseans curated by Comer and Trent.

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 Williams, the Managing Editor; Dr. Jerry Johnson, the Assistant Editor; Dr. Jan Lewis, the Director of J. Y. Joyner Library; Joseph Thomas, the Assistant Director for Collections and Scholarly Communication, J. Y. Joyner Library; and Nick Crimi, the OJS Administrator, J. Y. 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, which is scheduled for publication in the spring of 2026. 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 the 2026 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 2026 special issue 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. General inquiries about the TPRE should be addressed to Robert Quinn, Executive Editor, and Jenn Williams, the Managing Editor, at tpre@ecu.edu

**About the Author**

**Robert D. Quinn**, **Ph.D.**, is a Professor of Art Education in the School of Art and Design at East Carolina University. He serves as a Rural Education Institute Research and Innovation Associate. Previously, he was a middle- and high-school art teacher in Montgomery, Alabama. His research interests include interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, uses of computer technology for teaching, learning, and teacher education, service-learning and community-engaged scholarship, and arts-based educational research.

Logo, company name

Description automatically generated

**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, schools, 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.

Sign up for our newsletter to stay informed of REI's current projects and research <https://education.ecu.edu/rei/>

Contact us at [ruraleducation@ecu.edu](mailto:ruraleducation@ecu.edu) to connect and collaborate!