



National Center for **Research** on
Rural Education (R²Ed)

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r2ed.unl.edu

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National Center for Research on Rural Education (R²Ed)

- *Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS) in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln*
- Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (7/2009 – 6/2015)



Mission

To advance and support the scientific foundation for education in rural settings

Long-Term Goal

To improve in rural settings students' acquisition of knowledge and skills by identifying effective practices that lead to the systematic provision of evidence-based instruction and practice in rural settings



R²Ed Outreach Program

- Disseminate nationally to 2500 constituents about research methods and findings associated with rural education issues
- Achieved through:
 - speaker series
 - research summaries
 - electronic newsletters
 - national conference
 - website with resources such as recorded presentations, links to resources, event notifications



CONNECT

2013

INFORM

ADVANCE



APRIL 3-4
OMAHA

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL EDUCATION RESEARCH



Conference Goals

- Assemble education researchers, practitioners and policymakers from across the country
- Foster dialogue about research-supported influences of teaching, family engagement, community involvement, school environment and contextual factors on the academic success of rural students

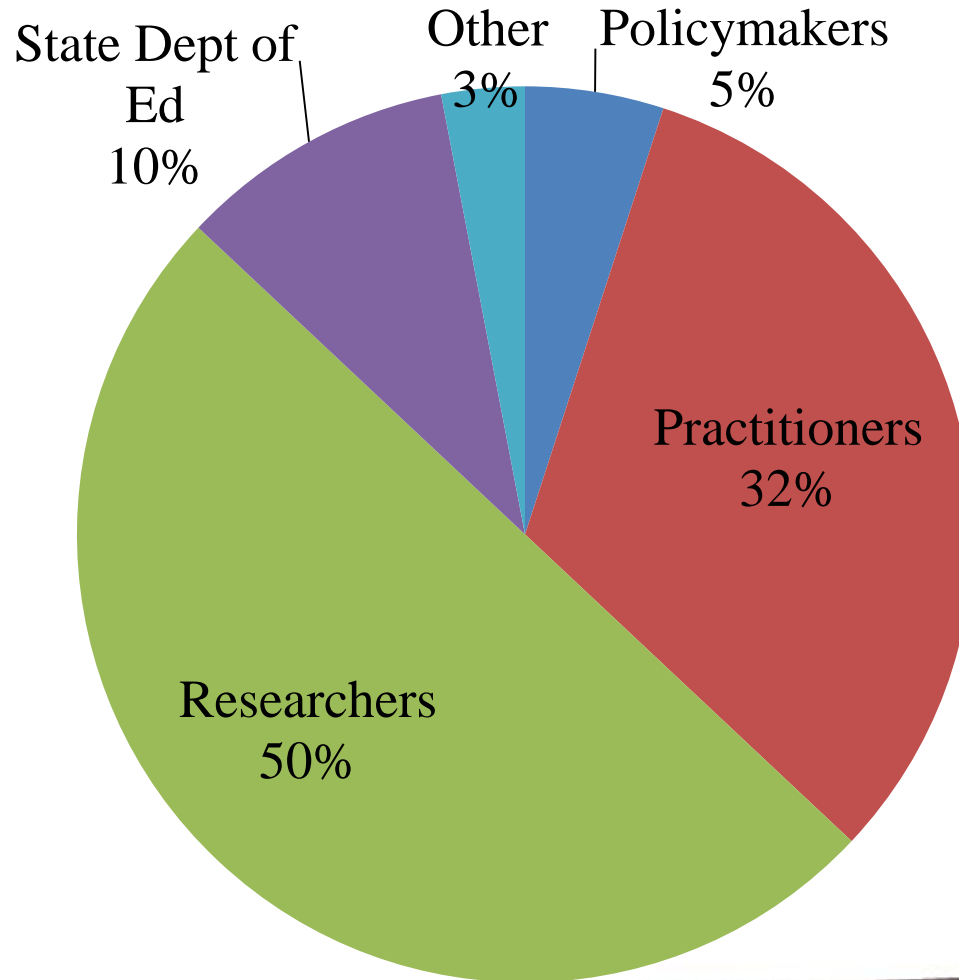


Conference Goals

- Research platform for exploring current issues and future directions of rural schools and education policy
- Feature presentations, roundtable discussions, open panels and a conference-specific Twitter feed



Conference Attendees



Themes from Qualitative Analysis of Notes Taken at Roundtable Discussions

- Defining and accounting for the rural context
- Interdisciplinary research partnerships
- Influences on student outcomes
- Future directions and research dissemination



Defining and Accounting for the Rural Context

Lack of consistent definition of “rural”

- Need for meaningful criteria
- Need to identify contextual variables
- Need to consider commonalities as well as differences



Interdisciplinary Research Partnerships

- Need for partnerships among LEAs, regional service units, state agencies, higher education, local school boards, families, communities, researchers, and policymakers
- Need for more “authentic” partnerships
- Need to develop ways to maintain communication



Influences on Student Outcomes

- Lack of unified definition of and methods for measuring student success
- Myriad influences on student success not traditionally considered in research
- Importance of teacher professional development



Future Directions

- Need to get research into hands of consumers
- Need for comprehensive research agenda with multiple rigorous methodologies
- Future topics
 - Community-related variables
 - Empowering families to be involved in research
 - Evaluating sustained impact of professional development



R²Ed Research Program

Focus on rural teacher professional development, or supports provided to rural schools, to improve student performance and engagement



Research Contributions

- Data-based understandings
 - *What works*
 - *For whom*
 - *Under what conditions*
- Rural context
- Key Areas
 - Instruction/education
 - Professional development of teachers
 - Related issues (e.g., family-school partnerships)



Rural Defined

- Fringe (5 or fewer miles from an urbanized area),
- Distant (more than five miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area), or
- Remote (25 miles from an urbanized area and also more than 10 miles from an urban center)

(National Center for Educational Statistics, 2007)



SNAPSHOT OF RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Rural Teachers and Parents as Partners

- Consultation-based family-school partnership model for addressing behavioral concerns that interfere with learning and achievement of K-3 rural students
- Large-scale randomized trial conducted in 144 classrooms to date (ongoing)



Preliminary Results

- Significant positive effects of the partnership intervention on students, teachers and parents:
 - **Students'** behaviors at school and home
 - **Teachers'** strategy use in the classroom, problem solving skills, and relationship with parents
 - **Parents'** strategy use at home, problem solving skills, engagement in the process, and relationship with teachers



***TeacherSpeak* Rural Professional Development Survey**

- 268 rural and 327 non-rural teachers from 43 states in the U.S.
- Variations in existing rural professional development (PD) experiences for reading, science, and mathematics instruction
- Differences in PD practices between rural and non-rural settings
- Potential influence of PD characteristics on teacher knowledge, perceptions, and practices



TeacherSpeak: Select Key Findings

- Similarities:
 - perceptions about PD topics and applications in the classroom
 - reports of duration of best PD experience
 - reports of best PD experience taking place in person rather than from a distance
- Differences:
 - non-rural PD is conducted by school, district, and university providers
 - rural PD tends to take place with regional or state-level providers
 - *rural vs non-rural teachers collaborate more with their colleagues both during and outside of PD*



TeacherSpeak: Select Implications

- Rural teachers have more opportunities for PD than is often presumed
- Non-rural teachers may be able to better utilize school/district personnel in PD than rural teachers
- Topic-specific PD is effective at increasing teachers' knowledge, utility and practice in the classroom



CSI: Coaching Science Inquiry in Rural Schools

- 119 rural middle and high school science teachers across 109 schools
- PD Summer Institute and Instructional Coaching focused on guided scientific inquiry
 - Guided scientific inquiry infuses instruction of scientific inquiry knowledge and skills with science content
 - Student-centered model
 - Technology-delivered follow-up coaching (treatment) versus no professional development (control)
 - Impact on teacher and student inquiry knowledge, skills, self-efficacy and attitudes

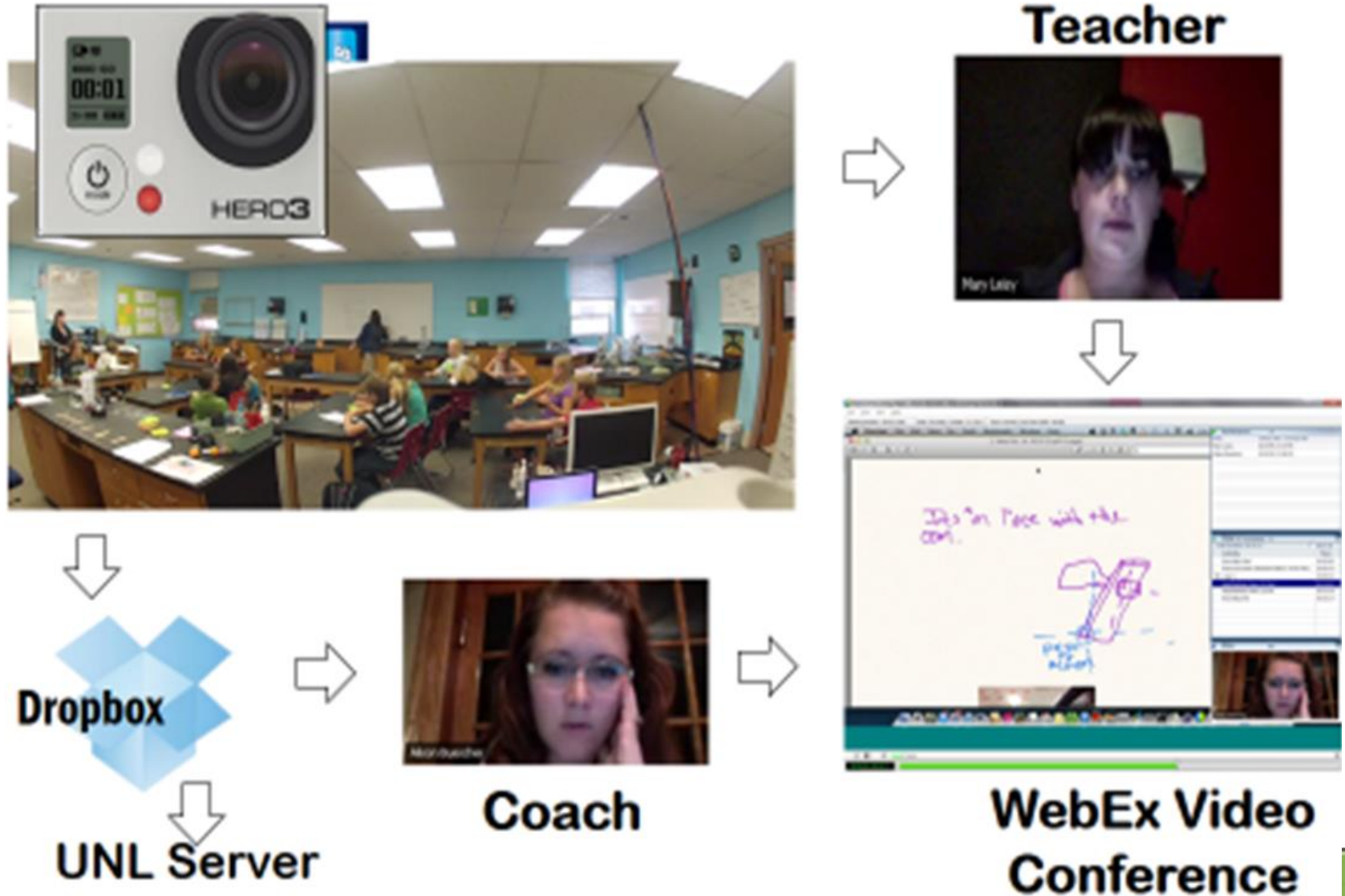


CSI: Coaching Science Inquiry in Rural Schools

- Two elements to PD
 - Two-week summer institute
 - Technology-delivered distance coaching for 6–8 weeks during the school year
- Teacher-coach planning followed by opportunities for teachers to practice, refine, and analyze new and existing skills

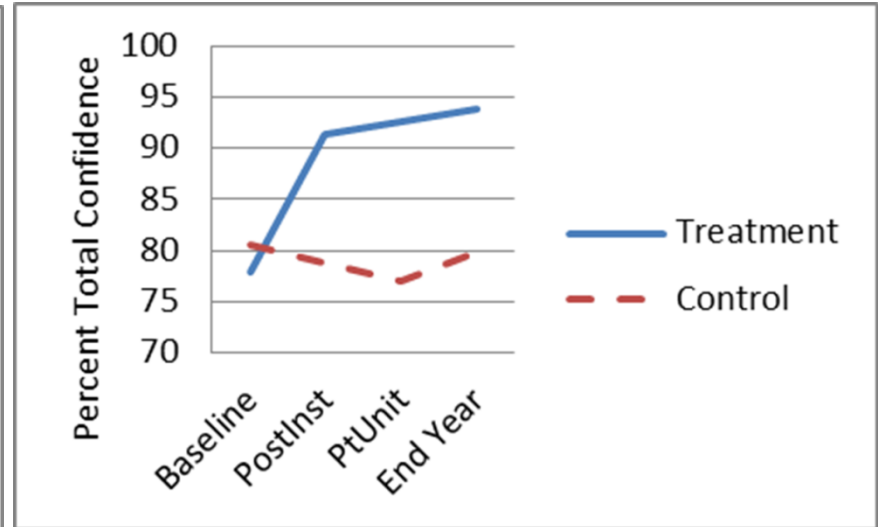
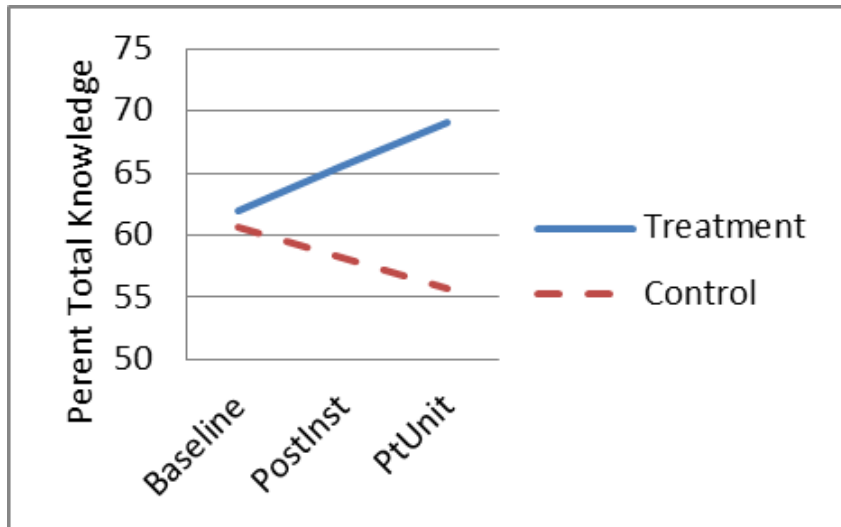


Multiple Technologies Used



CSI Preliminary Findings: Teachers

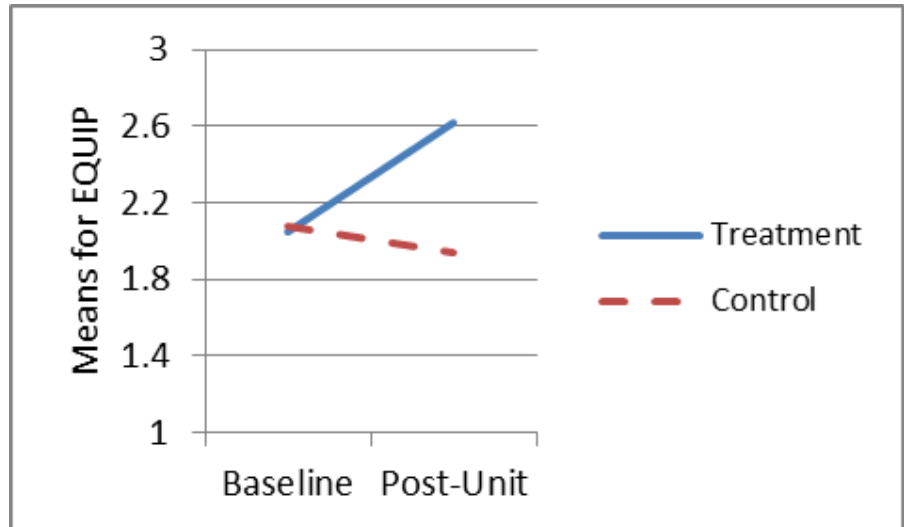
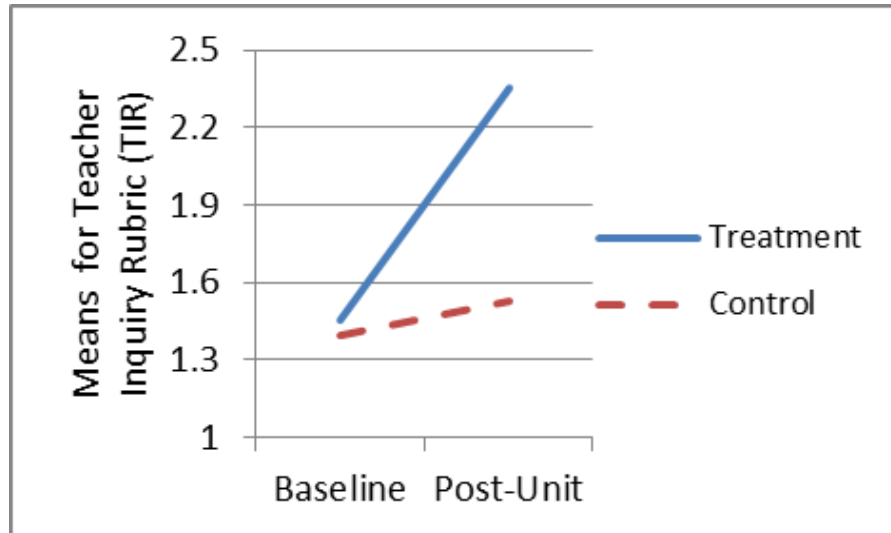
Significant gains in knowledge and self-efficacy



CSI Preliminary Findings: Teachers

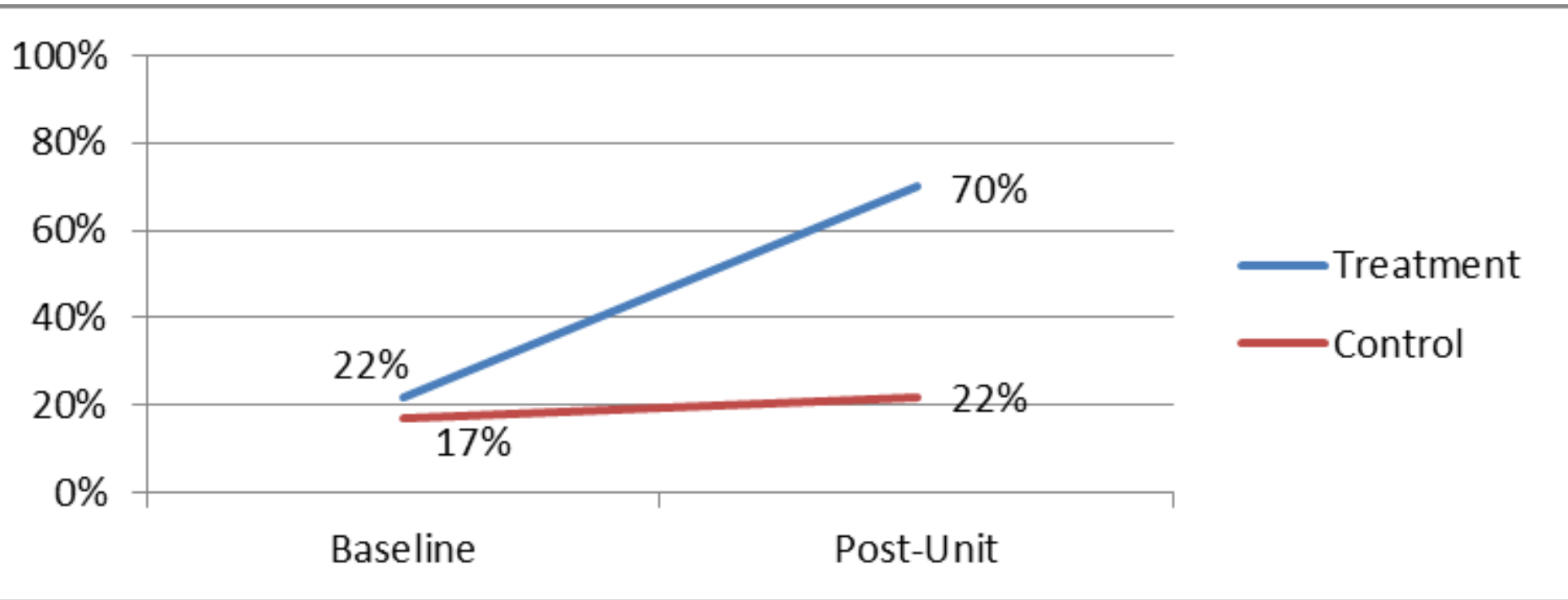
Teacher implementation of guided inquiry

Increases in use of inquiry instructional approach

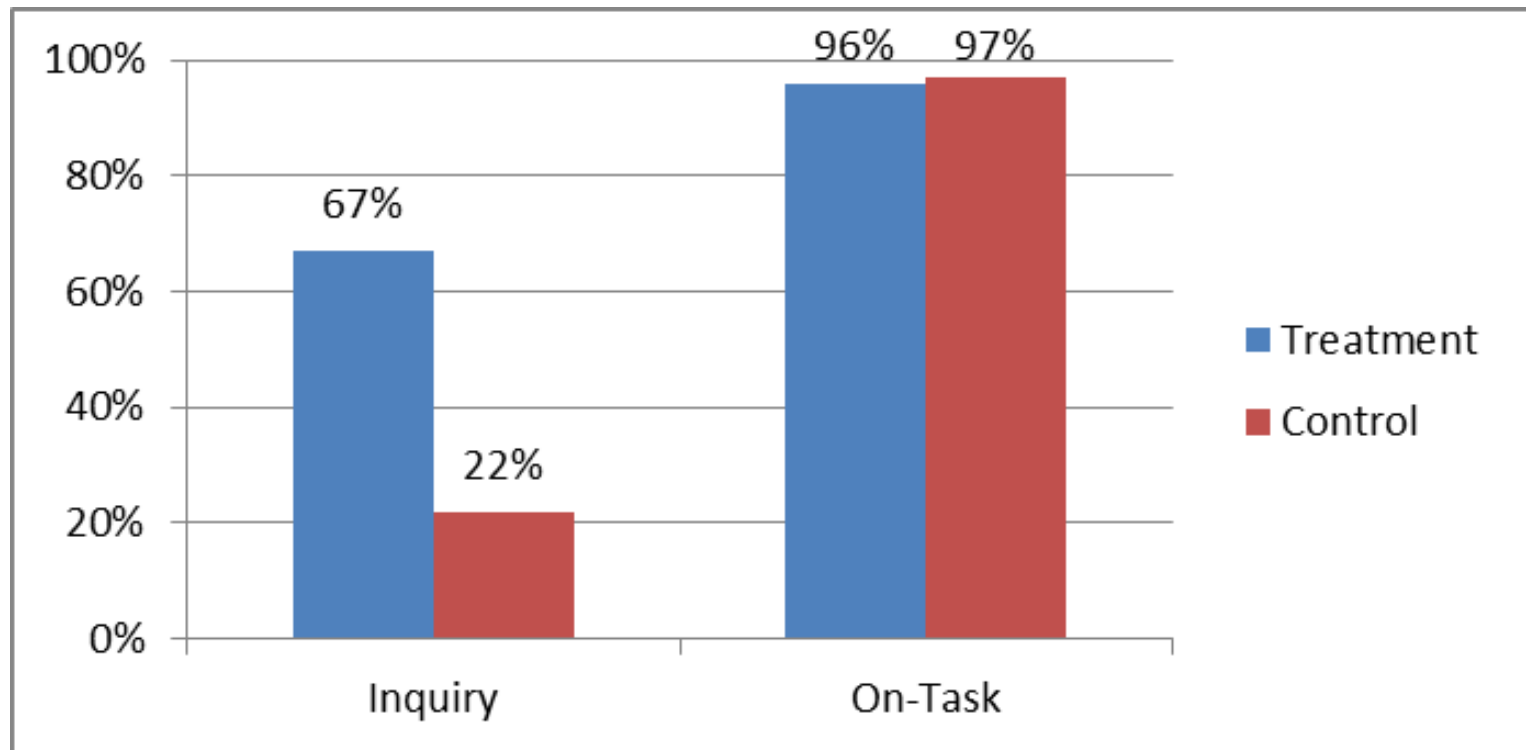


CSI Preliminary Findings: Teachers

Percent of instruction that teachers delivered in the classroom using the guided inquiry instructional approach in science classes



CSI Preliminary Findings: Students



Resources

- Advancing Rural Education Research: Importance of Interdisciplinary Research Partnerships
- Status of Rural Education
- Why Rural Matters
- FACE Handbook (Chapter: “Family Engagement in Rural Schools” by Witte and Sheridan)
- Making the Most of Opportunities to Learn What Works: A School District’s Guide



Resources

- School Turnaround and Learning Support (and listserve)
- Rural School and Community Trust (and newsletter)
- REL Central
- National Rural Education Association



Resources

- National Center for Research on Rural Education website - <http://r2ed.unl.edu/>
 - Archived presentations: recordings and documents
 - Upcoming Events
 - List of Rural Organizations
 - Pending book contract



Audience Responses

- How do these themes resonate with you and your experiences?
 - Defining and accounting for the rural context
 - Interdisciplinary research partnerships
 - Influences on student outcomes
 - Future directions and research dissemination
- In your experience, do these seem to be “right on track” or “far off base”? Examples?
- What do you think would be most helpful for future directions?



Contact Information

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**National Center for Research on Rural Education
(R²Ed)**

Website: <http://r2ed.unl.edu>



Resources for Rural Educators

Reports

Advancing Rural Education Research: Importance of Interdisciplinary Research Partnerships -

http://r2ed.unl.edu/workingpapers/2013/2013_2_Hellwege_OConnor_Nugent_Kunz_Sheridan.pdf

- A brief write-up summarizing discussions about Rural Education Research at a national gathering of educational researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers.

Developing a Coherent Research Agenda: Lessons from the REL Northeast & Islands Research Agenda

Workshops - http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2014014.pdf

- This report explains how REL-NEI conceptualized and organized the workshops, planned the logistics, overcame geographic distance among alliance members, developed and used materials, and created a formal research agenda after the workshops. The report includes links to access the materials used for the workshops, including facilitator and participant guides and slide decks.

FACE Handbook (Chapter: "Family Engagement in Rural Schools" by Witte and Sheridan) -

<http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/resources/handbook-family-and-community-engagement>

- A guidebook intended to provide educators, community leaders, and parents with a succinct survey of the best research and practice accumulated over the years related to family and community engagement in education.

Making the Most of Opportunities to Learn What Works: A School District's Guide -

http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/REL2014048/pdf/REL_2014048.pdf

- A practical guide for school districts about how to conduct research.

Status of Rural Education - http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_tla.pdf

- These reports, created by the Institute of Education Sciences, provide statistical data and information about on the status of education in rural America.

Why Rural Matters - http://www.ruraledu.org/user_uploads/file/2013-14-Why-Rural-Matters.pdf

- A biennial report analyzing the contexts and conditions of rural education in each of the 50 states and calling attention to the need for policymakers to address rural education issues in their respective states. (Created by the Rural School and Community Trust)

Websites

National Center for Research on Rural Education - <http://r2ed.unl.edu/>

- A website containing information about the work of the center, upcoming events, lists of related rural organizations and resources for rural education, written research summaries, archived recordings of presentations, and presentation documents.
- Pending book contract – look for an official announcement soon!
 - Represents current and futuristic thinking of seminal rural education researchers, with the goal of providing perspectives and directions to inform the work of rural education, practice, and policy.
 - Outlines our current knowledge base and maps a future research agenda for maximizing the educational experiences and achievement of rural K-12 students

National Rural Education Association - <http://www.nrea.net/>

- Connects rural educators to resources about current legislation that affects rural communities, research, and how to gain help with the specific education needs in a rural communities.

REL Central - <http://www.relcentral.org/>

- REL Central provides education research, dissemination, and technical support services to educators and policymakers in Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

Rural School and Community Trust (Newsletter available, too) - <http://www.ruraledu.org/>

- A national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving communities, the Rural Trust advocates for rural schools and provides resources for rural schools and teachers.

School Turnaround and Learning Support (Newsletter available, too) - <http://schoolturnaroundsupport.org/>

- The site provides resources and tools related to school turnaround best practices and also allows for networking to allow for more effect support for schools.