

Title: Technology and the Teacher in Rural Schools: Are They A Match?

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Abstract

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How information is received and processed has become the greatest challenge for traditional educational systems that have failed to keep pace with growing technological advances. Rural teachers are not adequately prepared to integrate technology in classrooms. Thus, the grave concern is whether or not students will be prepared to enter competitive working environments.

The primary purpose of the study was to examine rural teachers' technological utilization and training. The secondary purpose was to examine influential factors associated with technological outcomes with rural teachers.

A questionnaire instruments with open and closed- item statements was developed to collect data from 144 teachers in 6 rural counties. Most of the teacher participants were Caucasian females with over 20 years of teaching experience. Correlation analyses were employed to determine influential variables with technological perceptions, and multiple linear regressions examined predictors for technological outcomes.

Some of the results from the study revealed teachers lacked classroom computers. Thus, teachers were unable to integrate technology into the curriculum. Comparatively, significant tech response differences were found with training and administrative support. High correlations were found between teaching and using technology for basic and remedial instruction. Tech teaching was only performed with adequate support and resources. Regression findings confirmed some correlation findings. For example, the number of students, computers, and tech courses were predictors of technological success at classroom levels. Some of the findings had great implications for unprepared students in a growing technological workforce.

Significantly, the study concluded that veteran teachers are more likely to be uncomfortable with technology. Yet, technological illiteracy exists in varied rural settings. It was also clear that students will not be adequately prepared for high tech environments, because teachers are not equipped to provide tech-based instruction.