



Developing Rural Scholars for Conducting Research and Service in Rural Communities: The Effects of a High-Impact Learning Opportunity

Audrey E. H. King, J. Shane Robinson, Tyson Ochsner, Mark Woodring, and Paul Weckler

Introduction

- High-impact learning (HIL) experiences expand thinking and allow application of learning (Kuh, 2008)
- Rural communities are in need of positive change to improve resilience and vitality
- Rural Scholars Program includes a 16-week course and a 10-week lived, research- and service-based experience in a rural community

Purpose and Research Questions

Assess the Rural Scholars program and its impact on the students

- How did the 16-week course impact the Rural Scholars' 10-week research and community service experiences?
- How did this immersive research experience influence students' interest in pursuing research in the future?

Methods

Eight semi-structured interviews were completed via Zoom. Questions were asked regarding program effectiveness, highlights of experience, and levels of preparedness. Data were coded using Glaser's constant comparative (1965).

Findings

Theme 1: Theory to Practice

"I felt like I could see the theories we learned about in action. As a graduate student, I really appreciate that."

Theme 2: Need for Additional Research Training

"If we're going to be dealing with human subjects, I think it is very beneficial to learn about the IRB process early and maybe have training on it whether your project requires it."

Theme 3: Increased Desire for Research Experience

"I have already talked to my advisor about doing my masters. This experience opened that door I had closed."

Conclusions, Implications, & Recommendations

- Additional research training is needed
- Rural Development course should continue to build community
- Course should include researching human subjects, IRB, data collection, and analysis
- Longitudinal data collection of Rural Scholars

