

Society for the Provision of Education in Rural Australia



25th NATIONAL RURAL EDUCATION
CONFERENCE

Proceedings

EDUCATION IN A
DIGITAL PRESENT:
ENRICHING RURAL
COMMUNITIES

**Adelaide, South Australia
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Edited by Colin Boylan

Education in a digital present: Enriching rural communities
Proceedings of the 25th SPERA National Rural Education Conference

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President's welcome message

In reviewing the history of SPERA I refer to a quote used to introduce the *Forward* of the 1987 SPERA National Conference held in Canberra.

“While it may appear at times that there is nothing that rural people can do to manage their future, it is certain that if they do nothing, others will manipulate the future for them”. (*Inside Australia, Spring 1985*).

When SPERA was launched at its first national conference in Armidale, New South Wales in 1985, delegates were excited by the SPERA philosophy: that collectively as parents, educators, academics and administrators they needed to provide a common voice in promoting the positive aspects of rural education and to become more self reliant and innovative in order to advance the provision of education services in rural Australia.

Marie Dale, President of SPERA, was concerned that rural communities were becoming conditioned to accept the disadvantaged label in order to attract funds. As such, SPERA emerged as a national organisation intent on promoting rural education in a manner that dispelled the negative mindset prevalent in rural communities over the previous decade.

Since 1984, through its annual national conference, SPERA has been bringing people together to talk about rural education, to encourage delegates to ‘show and tell’, to celebrate and share successful and innovative programs, to network and acknowledge, debate and interrogate the issues and challenges facing rural students and the communities in which they live.

While acknowledging this pro active approach, the issues facing rural and remote Australia, as per SiMERR's national survey findings, are still a critical

The 2009 Conference yet again embraces the concepts of partnership, collaboration and technology. The depth and diversity of keynote addresses, workshop presentations and the symposium session is evidence of the many initiatives undertaken by educators and rural communities in Australia and within the international arena. SPERA has made a significant difference and will continue to do so through its capacity to building strong state, national and international networks.

This year's conference, hosted by Flinders University, South Australia, with the theme *Education for a Digital Present: Enriching Rural Communities*, is a realisation of the vision and philosophy first voiced by Marie Dale as foundation president – a vision where we have a unified membership committed to pioneering new initiatives, thinking creatively and positively to encourage rural communities to work in partnership to equip rural students and their communities for a future that embraces lifelong learning, is responsive to the economic climate, has access to information and communication technologies and quality learning opportunities. Professor Neil Anderson presents and reviews the collective opinion of key Australian researchers concerning the emerging technologies most likely to have a significant impact on learning and teaching in regional, rural and remote areas. Within a similar context, Professor John Pegg and Dr Christine Reading consider the underpinning and practical implications for rural schools arising from state/territory based projects based


on developing partnership approaches among pre-service teachers, teachers and teacher educators to embed ICT in learning.

The keynote address by Professor Ken Stevens, provided through video-link, highlights the development of virtual structures and processes that enhance classes in and between rural schools. Ken discusses how these structures that have provided extended educational and, indirectly, vocational opportunities, for young people in local and non-local communities can now be extended, through collaboration, to rural community life in general. Following on from this Dr John Halsey in his topic *Youth Exodus and Rural Communities: Valorising Learning for Choice*, explores learning for choice in rural contexts and how leadership for this might contribute towards stemming/slowing some of the out-flow of youth from rural areas. Learning for choice is not a new idea per se but it does pose a dilemma for rural educators, students and their families. Dr John Halsey's keynote flows into the symposium session facilitated by Phil Brown (Country Education Project, Victoria) on the topic of *Supporting Learning in Rural Australia into the 21st Century*.

I acknowledge the 2009 Conference Committee comprising Gary Allen, Dr Colin Boylan, Don Boyd, Peter D'Plesse, Dr John Halsey and Michael Preece. It has been a challenge to coordinate conference in a state where there are no SPERA Executive members, but nevertheless, I am positive that this conference will be a highlight for all delegates.

I extend a sincere welcome to all Conference participants and look forward to meeting with you to continue our conversations on rural education.

Once again, thank you to our major sponsors, Flinders University, Adelaide, South Australia and AARNET for their support.



Emmy Terry, SPERA President
July, 2009

As a result of the blind peer reviewing process employed for the SPERA 2009 Conference, the following papers were accepted as refereed papers for inclusion in the Conference Proceedings.

John Pegg and Chris Reading: Embedding ICT in Learning: Power in Rural Partnerships

Neil Anderson: Web 2.0, the expansion of broadband to rural and remote Australia and the impact of ICT fuelled participatory culture

John Halsey: Youth Exodus and Rural Communities: Valorising Learning for Choice

Colin Boylan and Ted Munsch: e-Collaboration in Teacher Education

Tania Broadley and Sue Trinidad: Delivering PD in the Digital Present: Theory and Practice?

Brian Devlin and Amy Hutchinson: Interactive distance learning in 'real time' for one student with hearing impairment: A case study

Bronwyn Ellis, Julie Watkinson and Janet Sawyer: Enriching higher education possibilities for a regional community

Robyn Henderson and Karen Noble: FYI (First Year Infusion): A vaccine for the first year plague in a regional university

Karen Noble and Robyn Henderson: The Flagstone experience: Universities building stronger links to rural education communities through technological creativity

Sue Trinidad and Tania Broadley: What can nature teach us? Connecting digitally to improve learning outcomes

Kylie Twyford, Alan Anderson and Denise Smyth: Interactive distance e-learning for isolated communities: VET delivery in NSW

Hua (Maria) Wang and Elena Verezub: e-Learning models and factors that affect the success of e-learning

Lindy Croft-Piggin: Rural Youth identity in 'glocal' spaces

Andrew Wallace and Hamish Tait: Addressing disadvantage and promoting excellence in music education within rural communities



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