

**“Research, Curricula Development, & Grant-Writing Support for  
ROOTS WITH WINGS:  
Floyd County, Virginia, Place-based Education Oral History Project:  
A Youth Resiliency Effort”**

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**PROJECT FOCUS:** Radford University will develop teaching materials for use in the Floyd County place-based education oral history project, **ROOTS WITH WINGS**, to strengthen the capacity of Floyd County’s youth -- as well as Radford University student mentors -- to compete in the global economy.

**PROJECT DETAILS:**

**Course Number, Name, and Instructor:** APST 495/595, Research in Appalachia, Dr. Theresa Burriss.

**Community Partners:** Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization; Floyd County High School.

**Need:** Community partners have identified a need for hands-on learning materials to provide high school students with a more sophisticated understanding of their community’s resources and strengths and a greater degree of mastery over a variety of communication and technology skills, such as interviewing, digital recording and editing, and public speaking.

Why is this needed? Research has shown that youth who know their community narrative are more resilient when facing challenges. Floyd County’s youth do face challenges. Nearly half (43%) of the 2,032 students enrolled in the county’s school system participate in the federal free and reduced lunch program (16% higher than the state rate). While 2.4% of Virginia’s children under 17 live in impoverished households, 5.1% of Floyd County’s children do, and this rate has increased since 2000. Increase in Methamphetamine use has led to higher incidence of child-abuse-by-neglect cases. On every measure of community issues or threats, Floyd County’s incidence has increased over recent years and outpaced the New River Valley and the state of Virginia, with teen pregnancy being the only exception (Communities in Schools of Floyd Virginia 2012).

<b>COMMUNITY ISSUES, 2011</b>	<b>Floyd County’s rate per 1,000 students compared to Virginia’s rate</b>
High school alcohol incidents	127% higher
High school drug incidents	74%
High school dropouts	4%
	<b>rate per 100,000 residents compared to Virginia’s rate</b>
Suicides	211% higher
Homicides	161%
Drug deaths	139%
Court intake complaints: alcohol, tobacco, drugs	165%
Intake complaints: weapons	300%

This intervention focused on Floyd County High School students will have multiple purposes. The Project plants the *roots* of a “web of meaningful relationships” found to be a factor in community resilience; the Project affixes state-of-the-art technology *wings*. Studies have shown that “children's resilience [is] enhanced by a strong sense of belonging to a vibrant community

that ‘celebrates its own culture and history’ (McKay & Prokop 2007:47; Kirmayer et al 2009:84). The belonging includes an appreciation of parents and elders, and of tradition. The most resilient children have “a strong ‘intergenerational self.’ They know they belong to something bigger than themselves” (Feiler 2013b). In the context of populations that have labored under the weight of negative stereotyping, the “‘indigenous psyche’ provides a counter-model and form of resistance against mainstream representations . . . that serves as ‘identity protection’” (Kirmayer et al 2009:72; Sonn & Fisher 1998).

#### **Number and Description of Planned Meetings with the Community Partner:**

- *Planning Meeting* with community partners: Co-directors of the Floyd Story Center and Floyd County High School Technology Instruction teacher will meet with the APST495/595 students to crystallize needs and plan solutions on **Thursday, September 4**, at the **Floyd Story Center**.
- *Fact-finding and Advice-seeking Meetings* with community partner scheduled for **end of September and end of October** at **Floyd Story Center**.
- *Presenting Drafts and Obtaining Feedback Meeting*, **mid-November** at **Floyd Story Center**.
- *Presenting Final Products* to community partners (prior to printing materials) on **Thursday, November 20** at **Floyd Story Center**.

#### **Overview of the Project, Including its Central Focus**

The central focus of the Fall 2014 Appalachian Teaching Project is to provide support for the ROOTS WITH WINGS: Floyd County Place-based Education Oral History Project. The details of the support will be honed in collaboration with the community partners. In particular, ATP students will create instruction materials to be shared with the high school students to increase their understanding of and appreciation for oral history, its social importance and effective ways of collecting it. Moreover, the curricula will include instruction on current technology and digital recording/editing to capture the oral history interviews. Students will work with the RU Sponsored Programs and Grants Management staff to learn about finding potential grantors for the community partners to increase funding for their work.

#### **Goals and Objectives:**

The tentative goals for the 2014 ATP are ambitious, and consist of these student activities: Students will:

- Study qualitative research methods and methodologies.
- Learn and apply qualitative coding strategies.
- Evaluate and revise oral history mentoring materials used by college student mentors to assist high school students.
- Create oral history & movie-making curricula instruction materials for high school students.
- Identify potential donors/grantors for the project and study grant writing strategies.
- Critically analyze different viewpoints of or theories about a contemporary issue using reliable sources.

- Make connections between one's academic experiences/ knowledge and one's own participation in civic life, politics, and government.
- Apply ethical reasoning to contemporary local, national, and global issues.

The goals will be prioritized in consultation with the community partners.

The objective of teaching the ATP students qualitative methods is to enable them to render high school students' work into data, and to evaluate and assess that data with an eye toward developing information of interest to potential funders. The ATP students would then follow through with writing and submitting grant proposals.

The objective of developing mentoring materials and curricula instruction materials is to enhance the relationship-building opportunities and to improve the learning that takes place in the ROOTS WITH WINGS Project.

### **PROJECT OUTCOMES:**

- Poster outlining the semester's products.
- Presentation at the Appalachian Teaching Project Conference in Washington, D.C.
- Presentation at the Appalachian Studies Association Conference.
- Presentation to the community partners, and upon their recommendations, to other community audiences.
- Printing materials to present to the community partners.
- Preparation for participation in the ROOTS WITH WINGS: Floyd County Place-Based Education Oral History Project in Spring 2014, for the FALL 2015 Appalachian Teaching Project.

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