

**“Sustaining the Community Mind for Long-term Community Resiliency:  
Appalachian Values Assessment in Floyd County, Virginia”**

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February 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014**

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## **Final Report Narrative**

Title of Project: “Sustaining the Community Mind for Long-term Community Resiliency: Appalachian Values Assessment in Floyd County, Virginia”

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Grant Period: February 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

Grantee Name: Radford University Penelope W. Kyle, President

Project Director: Melinda Bollar Wagner

### **Description of Project:**

Sustaining the Community Mind for Long-term Community Resiliency: Appalachian Values Assessment in Floyd County, Virginia

The 2013 ATP partners are the Floyd County, Virginia Office of Community and Economic Development and the non-profit Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery. The County's Land Policy Task Force found that "What Matters Most" to Floyd County residents was "preservation of rural character, Appalachian heritage, and community identity." The ATP students used qualitative research methods to learn what resident farmers want to preserve and their perceptions of potential threats to the valued way of life. Echoing recent social science research that finds "narrative" and the identification of "core values" as critical elements that help sustain communities affected by cultural and economic change and persistent negative stereotyping, the Development Director noted that having these data "would allow for going beyond simply reacting to outside stressors as they arise. From a land planning and economic perspective, it is valuable to know these answers."

Students collected data by audio recording interviews with 14 Floyd County farmers and transcribing the interviews verbatim. They analyzed the data by constructing topic logs, time diaries, material culture inventories, and by conducting content analyses. Using linguistic analyses the students discovered the words most frequently used in the interviews and topics which produced an elaboration of vocabulary. Using these methods the students gained insight into the dimensions of rural character, Appalachian heritage, and community identity that resident farmers valued. (<http://www.etsu.edu/cass/projects/ru/>)

## **Activities:**

In addition to the conference presentation, poster, and other activities, please include full details regarding the following requirements of the 2013-2014 Scope of Work:

- activities with community partners (include partner name(s), dates and locations of meetings, topics of focus-group discussions, etc.)
  - Kathleen Ingoldsby, Co-Director, Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, May 2013, Floyd County Store, lunch meeting, topic: “the community mind” and the importance of learning about it.
  - Lydeana Martin, Director, Floyd County Office of Community and Economic Development, first contact July 30, 2013, meeting August 1, 2013, Mrs. Martin’s home, discovery meeting, topic: brainstorming how the ATP Project could best benefit her office.
  - Catherine Pauley, Co-Director, Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, August 28, 2014, Radford University APST 495/SOCY 482 class, topic: teaching students about Floyd County from the perspective of a multiple-generation native; telling her own story of learning coping skills from older generations of her family that fostered resiliency.
  - Kathleen Ingoldsby, Co-Director, Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery, August 28, 2014, Radford University APST 495/SOCY 482 class, topic: showing and discussing her TED talk on the importance of place, focused on Floyd County; generalizing from Ms. Pauley’s examples to the importance of narrative for fostering resiliency.
  - Lydeana Martin, Director, Floyd County Office of Community and Economic Development, September 2, 2014, Radford University APST 495/SOCY 482 class, topic: Floyd County’s demographics, history, and current problems.
  - 92 E-mail messages among Lydeana Martin, Kathleen Ingoldsby, Catherine Pauley, Melinda Wagner, and APST 495/SOCY 482 students to:
    - choose interview respondents
    - contact interview respondents
    - develop the interview questions
    - plan meetings

- Lydeana Martin, Kathleen Ingoldsby, and Catherine Pauley, November 18, 2014, Radford University APST 495/SOCY 482 class, topic: critique of drafts of poster and oral presentation.
- Lydeana Martin, Kathleen Ingoldsby, and Catherine Pauley December 12, 2013, Radford University APST 495/SOCY 482 class, topic: critique of final poster and oral presentation.
- required presentations of student research to community groups other than the primary partner (include the name of the group(s), the date of the presentation(s), and document publicity surrounding the presentation in the attachment section below)
  - Appalachian Teaching Project Conference, December 5-7, 2013
  - Floyd County High School, January 23, 2014
  - AASIS (Arts and Sciences in the Schools) Teachers Workshop, Radford University, February 12, 2014
  - Appalachian Events Committee's Appalachian Awareness Day, Radford University, open to the public, February 21, 2014
  - Appalachian Studies Conference, Marshall University, March 28-30, 2014
  - Student Engagement Forum, Radford University, April 23, 2014
- links to any videos or social media that show the students interacting with their community partner(s)
  - The folder "A ATP Cls&CommunPrtnr PHOTOS" will be shared with Dr. Roberta Herrin via Google Drive

### **Project Outcomes:**

Students in APST 495 Research in Appalachia/SOCY 482 Qualitative Research Methods: Campbell, Kasey L.; Daniels, Misty L.; Gray, LaTeeka E.; LaPrade, Taylor R.; Roccaforte, Analise C.; Salyers, Charles D.; Thompson, Olivia D.; Watterson, Hannah M.; Wood, Sarah M.; Woodson, Ryan M.; Curtis, Victoria R.; Looney, Langley J.; Stewart, Haley M.

- received certification via IRB-net and instruction from Radford University's Institutional Review Board director
- developed an Interview Schedule (77 open-ended questions)
- contacted 14 interviewees

- interviewed 14 interviewees at the interviewees' home places, working in pairs: one interviewer and one technology/recording/photography specialist. Each student participated in two interviews, switching roles within interviewing pairs. Each interview was digitally audio recorded and photographed.
- transcribed interviews verbatim. **The interviews totaled 922 minutes and yielded 382 pages of verbatim transcription.**
- corrected each other's transcripts by listening to the audio files
- developed photo and photo log folders for each interview
- wrote field notes for each interview
- wrote diaries for each interview
- developed content logs for each transcription
- redacted transcriptions in preparation for analysis
- analyzed each interview, developing
  - time diaries
  - material culture inventories
  - key symbol/theme analysis
  - concordance files
  - linguistic analysis using concordance files
  - coding/content analysis of each interview question
- developed meta-analyses for all of the interviews combined, developing
  - meta time diaries
  - meta material culture inventories
  - meta key symbol/theme analysis
  - meta concordance files
  - meta linguistic analysis using concordance files
  - inputting coding of each interview question into one meta file, standardizing codes

#### Students created

- a Poster of their findings
- a script of an oral presentation describing their findings, utilizing both summary generalizations and specific illustrative quotes from the interviews
- a PowerPoint presentation to accompany the oral script

#### Students learned and applied

- qualitative research methods

#### Students gained familiarity with

- the culture and problems associated with rural life and especially with farming. Only one of the student researchers had lived on a farm. One other student had visited a farm regularly. Some had never stepped foot on a farm. The experience was eye-opening for them.

### **Problems Encountered:**

- The class function was both to teach qualitative research skills and embark on a major research project. In evaluations, students noted that we had done two semester's worth of work in one semester.
- The most difficult – in the sense of time-consuming – part was negotiating Radford University's policies for utilizing funds.

### **Program Continuation and Sustainability:**

- Some of the ATP students have continued working in Floyd County in a Spring 2014 class. The first day of this class, they presented their ATP Project at Floyd County High School, and discussed with the high school students the importance of this kind of research and the value of story.
- A research report monograph detailing the findings is in draft form.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

- Student researchers were correct that the class should have occurred over two semesters. However, University scheduling makes that unlikely.
- A major finding of the ATP Project was an undercurrent of discord between the County's "old Floyd" farmers and "new Floyd" non-farming residents. It would be naïve to expect that our research could effect rapprochement. But inspired by the work of Robert Gipe illustrated at the ATP Conference, we have tentative long-range plans for a potential project to promote dialogue. It might be possible to perhaps create a script and play based on the interviews. The motivation would be to help residents see each other in a relatively "safe" way. A character in a play could perhaps communicate what your neighbor might like to but doesn't because restraint blunts his candor. Robert Gipe's purpose is to instigate dialogue. Ours would be the same. Again, this is a long-range dream, and would require the cooperation and enthusiasm of a number of high school departments.

### **Attachments (in PDF format):**

Include such items as the following:

- Minutes of meetings with community partners
  - Summary of Meeting with LMartin Radford U
  - Audio files of on-campus meetings are available upon request
- Flyers, text for PSA announcements, etc.
  - AAD flyer 2014 Radford U
- Photographs showing students in action
  - The folder "A ATP Cls&CommunPrtnr PHOTOS" will be shared with Dr. Roberta Herrin via Google Drive

- PR such as newspaper articles, documentation of radio spots, etc.
- Correspondence with community partners
  - 92 E-mail messages are available upon request

Also attached:

- Poster file PDF ATP Floyd2013 PosterJazzy(3) Radford U
- PowerPoint file ATP Presentation Radford U 2013-2014 will be shared with Dr. Roberta Herrin via Google Drive

NOTE: The final report should document that all elements of the approved project proposal have been addressed, in addition to requirements of the Scope of Work.