

**ROSE URBAN-RURAL EXCHANGE
PROGRAM EVALUATION 2005
TEACHER TRAINING
AMENDED REPORT**

PREPARED FOR
ALASKA HUMANITIES FORUM

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INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Humanities Forum contracted with the Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Alaska Anchorage to evaluate how well the Teacher Training component of the Rose Urban-Rural Exchange achieved its purposes in 2005. This is the fourth year of the Teacher Training program. Teacher Training together with the Student Exchange and the Sister-School Exchange make up the Rose Urban-Rural Exchange. That broad program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Alaska Humanities Forum. It is intended to build mutual understanding and a statewide sense of community by bringing urban students and teachers to rural Alaska—and rural students and teachers to urban Alaska—to learn about each other's cultures.

Under the Teacher Training program, teachers from middle schools and high schools in urban areas participate in cultural camps sponsored by rural communities and Alaska Native organizations. These camps, many of which have been operating for more than a decade, were established to introduce Native young people and adults to their traditions, histories, and cultures. Allowing urban teachers to share this experience is intended to help them develop a greater understanding of and respect for Alaska Native cultures and rural life. Participating teachers are given a formal orientation before they leave for camp. After they return, teachers develop lesson plans and give public presentations based on what they have learned.

To do this evaluation, we drew on a variety of data, including (1) observations of orientation sessions; (2) the teacher-training curriculum; and (3) pre- and post-visit surveys of participants' knowledge about urban and rural Alaska. We wanted to learn how the program affected the following: participants' attitudes toward and perceptions of the areas they visited and about their own home areas; how much they learned about the areas they visited; and how teachers evaluated the content, format, and effectiveness of the program.

This formal evaluation of the Teacher Training program focuses on the operation of the program and how effectively it achieved its goal of fostering greater understanding of Alaska Native cultures and rural life. We describe what happened this year and offer recommendations for future years.

OVERVIEW

Based on successful experiences in the Student Exchange component of the Rose Urban-Rural Exchange, the Alaska Humanities Forum developed Teacher Training to give urban teachers hands-on experience in rural Alaska Native culture. In 2002, the forum began this summer program for teachers, sending middle- and high-school teachers to Alaska Native culture and spirit camps in rural Alaska. At these camps, urban teachers are exposed to Native arts and crafts, history, subsistence lifestyle, language, and dance. Also at these camps, Alaska Native elders pass on their stories and culture to young people.

Teachers go through an orientation before they leave for camp, and after their return they complete lesson plans based on their experiences. These individual lesson plans are compiled in a notebook of lesson plans that are available to all Alaska teachers to help

them bridge the urban-rural divide. Also, because a semester of Alaska Studies is now a statewide graduation requirement, these lesson plans constitute a valuable resource for Alaska studies courses. In addition to creating lesson plans, teachers who complete the Teacher Training program are required to give public presentations to their colleagues, school administrators, or community organizations.

TEACHER TRAINING COORDINATORS

The Alaska Humanities Forum contracted with consultants Barbara A. Bernard and Shirley Mae Springer Staten to coordinate Teacher Training in 2004. Ms. Bernard holds a master's degree in education and has worked in the Anchorage School District for 21 years as a resource and classroom teacher and as a curriculum coordinator. Ms. Staten has a master's degree in Applied Psychology and has 12 years' experience as an event coordinator and group facilitator. Most recently, she organized and coordinated the cultural events for the United Nations/NGO Forum on women in Beijing, China.

In 2003, the program consultant developed a three-credit, graded, graduate-level course—Rural Communication and Culture—for the Alaska Humanities Forum's Teacher Training Institute (see the appendix for course syllabus). The same curriculum was used in Teacher Training in 2005. The three-credit course curricula are included in the appendix.

RECRUITMENT

The program's goal in 2005 was to recruit 30 urban teachers. Recruitment for the summer 2005 Teacher Training program began in September 2004; nearly fifty-five teachers applied to participate. Applicants were from the Matanuska-Susitna, Fairbanks, and Anchorage school districts. During their interviews, teachers were asked to respond to a variety of questions including their reasons for applying to the program, their learning goals, and their knowledge of Alaska Native culture. After interviews, the program consultants and the staff of the Alaska Humanities Forum selected 25 candidates and six alternates.

PRE-VISIT TRAINING

In April 2005, teachers began a nine-hour orientation class designed at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art (see the appendix for orientation agenda and assignments). That orientation included information on the Rose Urban-Rural Exchange Program and Alaska Native cultures as well as practical information on village travel. Barbara Bernard presented some of the material and invited additional speakers who talked about cross-cultural differences, Yu'pik communication styles, and subsistence. To prepare for their visits to culture camps, the new participants met with a group of teachers from the third year of the Teacher Training program and two students from the Student Exchange program. The course also included material from a variety of sources on Alaska Native peoples and cultures.

SELECTING CULTURE CAMPS

Panu Lucier, the coordinator for the Rose Urban-Rural Exchange, worked with Shirley Mae Springer Staten to expand a list of possible culture camps for the 2005 program. Over the next few months, Ms. Staten evaluated camps through telephone conversations and e-mail messages to learn camp schedules, costs, accommodations, and activities. Ms.

Staten also took into account participants' availability on specific dates and their camp preferences. Teachers were placed at the following camps:

Koniag Region/Kodiak Island (Alutiiq/Sugpiaq)

The Academy of Elders' Science Camp is sponsored by the Kodiak Island Borough School District. The camp is located at Dig Afognak Camp. Programs and activities available at this camp include strengthening environmental education for Native young people, making science and math more culturally relevant to Native young people, and providing opportunities for students to build critical thinking skills and confidence. An advantage of this camp is that it brings young people and elders together.

Arctic Slope Region (Inupiaq)

The Arctic Subsistence Education and Experience: Culture/Inupiaq Language Immersion Camp is sponsored by the Inupiaq Studies Program at Ilisagvik College in Barrow. Barrow is the largest of eight Native communities on Alaska's North Slope—the area north of the Brooks Range. The camp was established in 2003 and is west of Barrow. Camp participants, who are college-age, travel to camp by boat with two guides and one elder. Campers learn how to hunt bearded and other seals. After a successful hunt, students prepare dry meat and seal oil and learn to preserve seal skins for future use. Other activities can include gathering and preserving edible coastal plants, hunting caribou, and observing polar bears and other animals in the surrounding areas. The participants also learn the history of the North Slope and various activities associated with the Inupiaq culture. Campers document their experiences with video, audio, and digital cameras; after the camp, they give community presentations about their experiences.

Southeast Region (Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian)

Kake Culture Camp is sponsored by the Organized Village of Kake. Camp activities include Tlingit dancing; gathering subsistence food like goose tongue, sea asparagus, and gumboots (chitons); and catching deer, seal, and octopus. Campers are also taught some of the Tlingit language. Instructors include culture specialists, elders, and guest artists. Students in grades 7 through 12 also participate in an overnight survival camping trip.

Klukwan Traditional Knowledge Camp is sponsored by Chilkat Indian Village. Camp activities include learning subsistence skills—like harvesting hooligan and salmon—as well as cedar-basket weaving, Chilkat and Raven's tail weaving, wood carving, traditional sewing and beading, and song and dance.

Dog Point Fish Camp is in Sitka. Camp activities include language building, traditional subsistence harvesting and food preparation, cultural knowledge, survival skills, and hunting and fishing.

Hydaburg Cultural Camp is a day camp located at the Boys and Girls Club of Hydaburg. Students in grades K through 12 can attend. Camp activities include Native dancing, weaving, arts and crafts, subsistence fishing and canning.

Saxman Native Youth Cultural Exchange Camp is located at Camp Fox Village on Mahoney Lake near Saxman, outside of Ketchikan. Seventy-five to 100 campers, ages 7 to 18 years old, participate per session. Camp activities include canning and smoking fish; native singing, dancing, and language; working with deer and seal skin; food gathering; Native games; swimming; and story telling.

Aleut Region (Ungagan)

Sand Point Spirit Camp is sponsored by the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association and offers a week of overnight camping and a week of day camping. This camp teaches traditional Aleut activities including fishing, set netting, preparing fish, dancing, drum making, and traditional arts and crafts.

Pribilof Island Stewardship Culture Camp is located on St. George Island and is open to any child living in the community of St. George. It combines traditional Aleut knowledge and practices with Western practices and environmental science to teach campers to be good stewards of the land. Most campers are in grades 6 through 12, but children and young people from ages 4 to 20 may participate, depending upon the activities.

Cook Inlet Region (Athabaskan)

Tebughna Cultural Camp is located on Cook Inlet, 28 miles from Tyonek and accommodates about 20 campers. This camp is open to children of all ages. Camp activities include bead working, talking circles, trapping, traditional food preparation, tanning hides, boating safety, and swimming lessons.

Doyon Region/Interior (Athabaskan)

Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp is located 12 miles outside Fairbanks on the Tanana River. Twenty to forty campers ages 12 to 16 years old participate in camp activities that include beading, dancing, hide tanning, snare making, basket making, birch spoon making, plant and tree identification and use, graveyard cleaning, camp chores, guest speakers, World Eskimo and Indian Olympics attendance, fish-wheel building, and fish cutting and smoking.

Hughes Culture Camp is sponsored by Hughes Tribal Council. Usually held the third week in July, the camp has two paid staff members and accommodates between 20 to 30 campers. Activities include birch-bark-basket making, cooking, story telling, fishing, subsistence food preparation, and fish drying.

Additional information about specific regions or villages was available at the following websites:

Alaska Community Database online: www.state.ak.us/mra/CF_BLOCK.cfm

Alaska Native Knowledge Network: www.ankn.uaf.edu

Alaska Travel Industry Association: www.ttavelalaska.com

TEACHERS' VISITS TO CULTURE CAMPS

In the summer of 2005, the 26 teachers in the Teacher Training program traveled to the rural culture camps described above. Twenty-two of these teachers were from the original 25 who were selected. Three of the original 25 were unable to attend due to medical problems. Four of the six alternates also participated in the culture camps, with the remaining two alternates dropping out of the program for personal reasons. Participating teachers were asked to keep journals about their experiences for later use in lesson plans and presentations. All the teachers completed the camp visits.

POST-CAMP CULTURE MEETINGS, LESSON PLANS, AND PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

When participating teachers returned from the rural camps, they attended two half-day debriefing sessions with Ms. Bernard and Ms. Staten. During those meetings, the teachers made presentations lasting about 7 to 10 minutes. Most made PowerPoint presentations that incorporated digital photographs. Several participants reported working many more hours than required to develop these presentations. The presentations examined urban and rural differences as well as connections. The teachers also talked about preconceptions they had before going to the camps and how those notions had changed because of their experience. Teachers said they were anxious to make their presentations at public gatherings, and they worked with the Alaska Humanities Forum staff to arrange schedules. Teachers also submitted their journals to Ms. Bernard.

During the debriefing sessions, teachers were encouraged to schedule a public presentation as well as to complete their lesson plans. Teachers are, however, unlikely to teach discreet lessons based on their Teacher Training experiences. Instead, they will likely draw on their experiences at various points as they teach throughout the semester or as they talk with colleagues and other educators at their schools. Nevertheless, the participating teachers did agree to develop lesson plans that could, at the very least, serve as models or stimuli for other teachers wishing to take up the theme of urban and rural Alaska life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Because the program ran so well and seems to have reached its goals, we have few recommendations. The project coordinators spent more time working on recruitment in Fairbanks, reflected in an increase of Fairbanks teachers. This has greatly improved over last year.

- *Recruiting in Juneau needs to be improved.*

Suggestions for improved recruiting include:

- Replicate the same techniques that were used in Fairbanks for recruiting teachers in Juneau.
- Alternatively, recruit a liaison in the school district who can confidently represent the program to prospective recruits.

- *Additional information needs to be included in the training.*

Suggestions for that additional information include:

- Clarify with the teachers and the staff of the camps the role of the visiting teachers. Teachers told us that it was sometimes unclear to what extent they were simply camp participants and to what extent they were expected to help the camp staff. A couple of teachers mentioned this as a problem this year. As camps change (are added or removed) and teachers have different expectations each year, we suspect this will continue to be a problem. Being aware and trying to clarify the role of the teacher as much as possible may be the best the program can do.
- Provide classroom follow-up. As with other professional development, classroom follow-up is critical, both to support teachers in implementing the lessons and to remind them to actually use the lesson provided.
- Evaluate program effects. We need to assess how the teachers' rural experiences contribute to urban students' understanding of rural Alaska and to their sense of a statewide community. As Tom Guskey, a well-known scholar of professional development, has written:

Teacher knowledge and practices are the most immediate and most significant outcomes of any staff development effort. They also are the primary factor influencing the relationship between staff development and improvements in student learning. Clearly if staff development does not alter teachers' professional knowledge or their classroom practices, little improvement in student learning can be expected.¹

- Classroom observations and measures of student learning need to be part of the evaluation. The evaluation needs to include observations of participants' classroom practices if we are to have a sense of the effect the program is having on teachers. The logical next step is to determine the effects of teachers' knowledge and practices on student learning.

In conclusion, while the pre- and post- visit teacher training course content is very good, it could be improved as we suggest above. The teaching methods used in the training appear to be appropriate for the participants.

¹ Guskey, Thomas R., and Dennis Sparks, *Journal of Staff Development*, Fall 1996, Volume 14, Number 4.

CHARACTERISTICS OF 2005 TEACHER TRAINING PARTICIPANTS

In 2005, 29 teachers responded to the pre-visit survey. The response rate was 100%. The tables below, reporting characteristics of participants, are from this 2005 pre-visit survey.

Table 1. What is your current assignment?

Current Assignment	Yes N=29	No N=29
Teacher	24	2
Administrator	0	26
Other Assignment*	2	24

*Both other assignments were as counselors.

Table 2. In what type of educational setting do you work?

Educational Setting	Yes N=29	No N=29
School	26	0
Administrative	0	26
Organization	0	26

Table 3. Are you currently teaching?

	Yes N=29	No N=29
Currently Teaching	24	2

Table 4. What subjects do you teach?

Subject	Number of Teachers N=29
Art	1
Biology and Science	4
Business Technology	1
Language Arts, English, and Literature	4
Health and Physical Education	2
Math	3
Spanish	1
Special Education	5
Multiple Subjects	1

Table 5. What grades do you teach?

Grades	Number of Teachers N=29
6	2
7 to 8	8
9 to 12	11

**Table 6. How many years have you been in the profession?
How many years have you taught?**

Years in Education Profession or Teaching	In Education N=29	In Teaching N=29
0-10	15	16
11-19	7	5
20-29	3	4
30+	1	0

Table 7. In what kind of setting do you teach?

Setting	Yes N=29	No N=29
Regular Classroom	12	13
Special Education Resource Room	3	22
Classroom with Special Needs	17	8
Classroom that supports Special Needs Students	7	18
Other Setting**	4	21

** Other settings were gymnasium (1), counseling office (1), and Special Education resource room (2)

Table 8. What certifications do you hold?

Certification	Yes N=29	No N=29
Elementary	11	0
Special Education	6	20
Secondary Education	17	9
Administrative	0	26
Other***	4	22

***Other – ESL, K-8, Spanish Education, and Type C Counselor

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Scales of Opinions and Self-reported Knowledge

As part of this evaluation we describe how attitudes and opinions of participating teachers appeared to change after they took part in the 2005 Teacher Training program. We collected data from 29 teachers before the program and 20 after. We asked teachers to respond to questions on a 5-point scale, with 1 representing the least knowledge, lowest opinion, or lowest frequency, and 5 representing the highest on all measures.

We analyzed the results of teachers who completed the pre- and post-training evaluative questions and test of knowledge. Table 9 shows the median responses on the four Likert scales items (perceptions of knowledge about urban Alaska, perceptions of knowledge about rural Alaska, opinions about urban Alaska, and opinions about rural Alaska) at each of the two times the questionnaire was administered. For ease of interpretation, scale scores are normalized back to the original 1-to-5 scale. Table 9 also shows whether the change in responses between the two administrations of the questionnaire was statistically significant. We then tested whether the observed changes from pre- and post-exchange were statistically significant. For statistical details about how we analyzed these data and tested differences for statistical significance, see the appendix.

As Table 9 shows, for teachers who participated in the orientation (including those who may not have traveled to a camp for medical reasons) and for whom we have pre- and post-visit data, we found significant changes in the rural knowledge after the summer camp experience. The teachers felt more knowledgeable about rural Alaska than they had before. On the other hand, teachers' self-reported knowledge of urban Alaska and opinions of urban and rural Alaska varied little from the pre-visit to post-visit.

Table 9. Self-perceived Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceptions (N=20)

Perceptions of Urban Knowledge	
1=none 2=a little 3=some 4=a lot 5=extensive	
Time of Administration:	Median Scale Value
Pre-	3.9
Post-	3.8
Significance of difference	p>0.05
Direction of Change	No significant change
Perceptions of Rural Knowledge	
1=none 2=a little 3=some 4=a lot 5=extensive	
Time of Administration:	Median Scale Value
Pre-	2.0
Post-	3.2
Significance of difference	p<0.01*
Direction of Change	Greater Knowledge
Attitudes about Urban Alaska	
1=highly negative 2=negative 3=neutral 4=positive 5=highly positive	
Time of Administration:	Median Scale Value
Pre-	3.9
Post-	3.9
Significance of difference	p>0.05
Direction of Change	Not Significant
Attitudes about Rural Alaska	
1=highly negative 2=negative 3=neutral 4=positive 5=highly positive	
Time of Administration::	Median Scale Value
Pre-	3.1
Post-	3.3
Significance of difference	p>0.05
Direction of Change	Not Significant
* Difference significant at the 0.05 level or less	

Knowledge Tests

We also asked teachers a series of questions to test their knowledge about information and issues before and after the orientation session. We used the same test before and after the orientation to assess how effective the orientation was in improving teachers' knowledge. The questions were not designed specifically to test their knowledge of the program curriculum but rather to test their more general knowledge about issues critical to rural Alaska. In part, we were interested to see if the experience heightened their general interest in rural Alaska and led to greater knowledge.

To that end, we asked participating teachers what they knew about the Alaska Native worldview and about urban-rural issues, including subsistence, education, health and safety, and economics. We report on only one year of data; consequently, we can only look at whether each group's level of knowledge changed over the duration of the program. Quite possibly, the experience heightened their awareness and led to subsequent changes in their knowledge. Our design, however, limits us to the single year for which we have data.

We compared the mean scores for those participants for whom we had pre- and post-visit data using a T-test². Table 10 shows the mean scores for these teachers, and the statistical significance of the changes within the group.

**Table 10. Changes in Knowledge Test Mean Scores
Pre- and Post-Matched Teachers (N=20)**

Time of Administration	Mean Score
Pre-	20.2
Post-	22.05
Significance of difference	0.02*
* Difference significant at the 0.05 level Note: Between school scores not comparable; comparisons valid only within groups.	

As Table 10 shows, teachers had significantly more correct responses on the post-program test than on the baseline test. Teachers typically answered two more questions correctly on the post-exchange test. Fourteen of twenty responding teachers seemed to have increased their knowledge.

² We used a paired equal-variance test, the paired T-test, for pre- to post-matched participants comparing the same teachers. We used equal-variance because we knew the teachers came from the same initial group. Using the paired T-test also shows that pre- to post- is a significant increase for both groups.

POST-PROGRAM MEASURES

After the program we asked the teachers to respond to the following series of questions on broad measures of concerns to the program:

- Maintaining contact with rural Alaska
- Current issues
- Accommodating people of different cultures
- Accommodating people of different values
- Overall experience in rural Alaska
- Overall assessment of the culture camp experience
- Retrospective assessment of the Teacher Training program and its affect

Responses to these questions are in the Survey Data Results section of this report.

TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

Finally, we also asked teachers some general evaluation questions to gauge their response to the program overall. The questions we asked were the following:

- List some of the things you learned from your training. How well did the orientation prepare you for your rural experience?
- Which of the sessions were the most effective orientation sessions?
- Which were the least effective?
- Tell us about your camp experience.
- What kinds of activities did you do during your camp visit?
- Did you strike up friendships during your visit? If so, please describe with whom you became friends. How did these friendships affect your visit?
- How helpful was your in-camp guide, local representative, or host organization during your camp visit?
- List some of the things you learned about your host camp or about rural Alaska that you did not know before you arrived. Do you have any new opinions or views on rural Alaska as a result of your camp visit?
- Please share your thoughts on what you have learned during your teacher training experience. How did you learn it? Do you feel changed as a result? Did your experience in rural Alaska meet your expectations? What will you remember and value most?

The verbatim responses to these questions are in the Survey Data Results section of this report. The responses were relatively brief so we have included them in full.

PREPARATION OF LESSON PLANS

Following their last class session, teachers completed lesson plans related to their rural Alaska experiences; they will try to integrate these plans into their course of studies in the following school year. We administer the post-visit survey in the November after the visits, about 11 weeks after the start of the school year. In some cases, teachers may not have had the opportunity to use the lesson plans they developed at the time we do the survey—only 6 of the 19 teachers who responded to the post-visit survey had used their lesson plans. Although such a small response does not yield much useful data, we report it below nonetheless.

Table 11. Participants Self-Reported Use of Lesson Plans (N=20)

	Yes	No
Have you used the lesson plans you developed during Teacher Training?	6	13
Did the curriculum address students' perceptions and misconceptions of rural Alaska?	5	1

Table 12. Participants' Self-Reported Focus of Lesson Plans (N=6)

Core Content	Yes	No
Attitudes toward rural Alaska	4	2
Accomplishments and capabilities of people in rural Alaska	3	3
Barriers that exist between urban and rural Alaska	3	3
Other (*)	3	3

(*Culture/pride and importance of knowing, English content/performance standards, Transition needs)

SURVEY DATA RESULTS

Maintaining Contact with Rural Alaska

Now that you have been in village Alaska, how will you go about seeking information about rural Alaska? [Asked post-visit only]

Methods 2005 participants ranked most likely:

1. Talk with your friends or relatives about rural Alaska (4.65)
2. Talk with fellow students or teachers about rural Alaska (4.65)
3. Go to Alaska Native performances such as dancing or storytelling (4.50)

**Table 13. Participants' Self-Reports:
Maintaining Contact with Rural Alaska
(N=20)**

	Teachers Post-Visit 2005 (N=20)	
	Average*	Most frequent response (# selecting response)
Talk with your friends or relatives about rural Alaska	4.65	Very likely (14)
Talk with fellow students or teachers about rural Alaska	4.65	Very likely (13)
Go to Alaska Native performances such as dancing or storytelling	4.50	Very likely (12)
Go to museums or cultural heritage centers	4.37	Very likely (10)
Talk with persons who are knowledgeable about rural Alaska	4.33	Very likely (7)
Talk with people who live in rural Alaska	4.30	Very likely (9)
Watch television programs or videos about rural Alaska	4.30	Very likely (10)
Travel to rural Alaska	4.21	Very likely (9)
Read newspapers or magazine articles about rural Alaska	4.15	Likely (11)
Read non-fiction books about rural Alaska	4.05	Likely (7); Very likely (7)
Read fiction books about rural Alaska	3.95	Very likely (7)
Listen to radio programs about rural Alaska	3.95	Likely (9)
Receive visitors from rural Alaska	3.85	Likely (9)
Take a class at my school	3.80	Some (8); Likely (8)
Read newspapers or magazines articles from rural Alaska	3.70	Some (10)
Attend conference, seminar, lecture dealing with rural Alaska	3.70	Likely (10)
Be a member of organization involved in rural Alaska	3.05	Some (12)
Average	4.09	

* 5-point scale: 1=Very Unlikely, 2=Unlikely, 3=Some, 4=Likely, 5=Very Likely

Overall Experience

When you think about your overall experience in rural Alaska, how important were . . .

These questions were only asked of the teachers post-visit. Thinking about their overall experience, participants identified the following as the three most important factors:

Results for 2005 Participants...

1. Other people from rural Alaska (4.73)
2. Campers from rural Alaska (4.40)
3. Camp staff in rural Alaska (4.20)

**Table 14. Participants' Self-Reports:
Importance of Various Factors in Rural Experience
(N=20)**

	Teachers Post-Visit 2005	
	Average*	Most frequent response (# selecting response)
Other people from rural Alaska	4.73	Very important (12)
Campers from rural Alaska	4.40	Very important (14)
Camp staff in rural Alaska	4.20	Very important (12)
Alaska Humanities Forum staff in urban Alaska	4.15	Very important (11)
Program Coordinator from urban Alaska	4.10	Very important (13)
Other people from urban Alaska	4.00	Very important (7)
Average	4.26	

*5-point scale: 1=Not at All, 2=Some, 3=Neutral, 4=Important, 5=Very Important

Overall Assessment of Exchange Experience in Rural Alaska

Thinking about your experience in rural Alaska, did you have any problems or difficulty with . . .

This question was asked of teachers post-visit only. Thinking about their overall assessment of the program, the participants identified the following as most problematic:

1. Chance to really get to know people your age (1.79)
2. Differences in teaching/learning methods (between urban and rural schools) (1.75)
3. The way the rural experience was organized (1.42)

**Table 15. Participants’ Self-Reports:
Problems Encountered During Rural Experience
(N=20)**

	Teachers Post-Visit 2005 (N=20)	
	Average*	Most frequent response (# selecting response)
Chance to really get to know people your age	1.79	No problem at all (10)
Differences in teaching/learning methods (between urban and rural schools)	1.75	No problem at all (10)
The way the rural experience was organized	1.42	No problem at all (13)
Readiness of village residents to meet &/or help urban teacher	1.37	No problem at all (15)
Too much contact with people from rural Alaska	1.20	No problem at all (18)
Readiness of the teaching staff to meet &/or help urban teacher	1.20	No problem at all (17)
Not enough time for travel	1.20	No problem at all (17)
Housing or where you were staying in the village	1.20	No problem at all (18)
How well you were prepared for this experience	1.20	No problem at all (16)
Not enough time with people from urban Alaska	1.20	No problem at all (18)
Guidance on personal matters during the experience	1.16	No problem at all (17)
Interaction with rural campers	1.11	No problem at all (17)
The way village residents live	1.11	No problem at all (16)
Food	1.10	No problem at all (18)
Cost of rural experience to you and your family	1.05	No problem at all (19)
Average	1.27	

*5-point scale: 1=No Problem at All, 2=A Few Problems, 3=Some Problems, 4=A Lot of Problems, 5=Very Serious Problems

Retrospective Assessment of Teacher Training

Thinking back over the entire Teacher Training experience (Application, Orientation, and Camp Visit), how much do you think the project affected you?

This question was asked of teachers post-visit. Participants identified the following as affecting them the most:

1. It helped you understand why Alaska Natives want as much control as possible over what affects them (4.32)
2. It gave you a chance to get to know people and their way of life in rural Alaska (4.15)
3. It gave you a perspective on your own community (4.05)

Table 16. 2005 Participants' Self-Reports: Effects of the Program (N=20)

	Teachers Post-Visit 2005	
	Average*	Most frequent response (# selecting response)
It helped you understand why Alaska Natives want as much control as possible over what affects them	4.32	Very strong (11)
It gave you a chance to get to know people and their way of life in rural Alaska	4.15	Very strong (10)
It gave you a perspective on your own community	4.05	Very strong (8)
It helped you understand why Alaska Natives would choose to live in villages for from the city	4.00	Very strong (9)
It gave you an opportunity to get a new perspective on yourself	3.95	A lot (7) Very strong (7)
It helped you understand why subsistence is such an important issue for Alaska Natives	3.89	Very strong (7)
It helped you understand Alaska Natives deep spiritual connection to their environment	3.75	A lot (7) Very strong (7)
It helped you understand why some rural communities feel that their schools and education are being neglected	3.74	A lot (7)
It helped acquaint you with another culture's social, government, and business techniques	3.70	Some (6) Very strong (6)
It gave you insight into working and social relations in rural community	3.70	A lot (7)
It influenced you to change some of your personal values	3.25	A lot (8)
It acquainted you with specific topics related to your interests but not offered at your urban school	3.10	Some (8)
It helped you choose a subject/career or set a goal for your future.	3.05	Some (6) A lot (6)
It influenced your goals/preferences for your academic/employment future after graduation	2.45	Not at all (6) A little (6)
It increased your ability to work independently (on your own)	2.15	Not at all (7)
Average	3.41	

* 5-point scale: 1=Not at All, 2=A little, 3=Some, 4=A Lot, 5=Very Strong

What did participants learn from the orientation?

List some of the things you learned from your training. How well did the orientation prepare you for your rural experience?

Below we record verbatim all responses of 2005 participants to the above question:

- Alaska is made up of many different groups of Alaskan Natives, unique in their own right. For example, Athabascan people are many different subgroups with unique languages and cultural characteristics of their own. The orientation prepared me only by teaching me to go into the experience with an open mind and to be ready for a spirit of adventure. I truly enjoyed the Alaskan Natives who were invited to speak.
- I learned how Native Alaskans feel about the way their state treats them. I learned about the different values of time, land, and spirituality and some reasons for those differences. I felt very well-prepared to go to rural Alaska.
- It built enthusiasm for the trip—what to pack, possible opportunities. I felt the orientation was very helpful. It answered questions I didn't know I had.
- (1) Tlingit lifestyles, history, beliefs. (2) More about subsistence living. (3) I'm very fortunate to have had this opportunity. I'm very open-minded and the orientation was great. It made me feel okay to be open-minded. Orientation really pumped me up mentally for this experience.
- Who is presenting the lesson is more important than what is being presented. Orientation pushed me to analyze myself, my culture, my perspectives on Alaska Natives, and how growing up in Alaska as a "white" person affected me.
- Different ways of learning—by observation and desire to learn essentials. Respect for elders. Had heard about it, but hadn't experienced it first-hand.
- I learned that I should be more aware of my cultural background in relation to all people.
- Be flexible; forms of communication may vary.
- Prepared me by explaining culture, traditions, political views which, in turn, helped me to be culturally sensitive.
- I learned that many questions will be answered in time if you just wait and be patient. I learned that I can expect more from people.
- Go without expectations so that you are open to experiencing things. This was a biggy! My experience was very western. I had to look hard to see new things.
- The first-hand sharing of Alaska Natives who came to speak to us before our travels.
- Be flexible; look for things to learn. It's okay to be an observer. Well, I was able to relax and enjoy by observing, and I still felt comfortable to pitch in and help a little.
- Told to be flexible and needed to be. I already knew some of the background; this was a good refresher.
- The orientation taught me to have no expectations and to keep an open mind.
- To expect nothing; be prepared for anything. Have no preconceived notion of what to expect from the experience.
- The orientation prepared me as well as it could. I went to a new camp.
- I learned about age roles in Native cultures. I learned about the details of the history of the subsistence issues and laws. I learned about the pride that each person should have toward his/her culture.
- I learned a lot about Alaska Native cultures, urban vs. rural issues. and views on issues. I learned a lot about myself and how I relate to my own culture and history. I learned about Native ways of knowing and how I might incorporate that into my classroom. I believe orientation prepared me fairly well for my experience.

- I don't remember specific things from the training. I do know it was exciting and created a desire to participate and contribute.

Which of the orientation sessions were the most effective orientation sessions?

- The first session was the most important to me.
- The initial session was most effective in preparing me to respectfully visit another culture.
- Presentations from previous participants.
- 2-day orientation in April with guests from various Native tribes and previous Rose-Urban participants.
- Follow-up before presentation (ie, group discussions/reflections).
- Listening to previous campers, except the lady who complained constantly about one of the camp directors.
- Perhaps the second session—the Saturday session.
- Native presentations.
- The presenters from each Alaska Native tribe.
- All—especially language.
- Previous RURE summer teacher attendees.
- Personal experiences shared by Alaska Natives; made me feel more comfortable and at ease.
- What is culture?" "What is your culture?" Sensitive.
- The young, enthusiastic man at the beginning.
- The Native dancers and speakers; the presenters who went to rural Alaska the previous year; the woman who spoke about subsistence living.
- Listening to the rural presenters and the students who visited a village.
- The first and last sessions were of the most value.
- I really appreciated the songs and dance. I really liked the personal "growing up" stories. I loved the examples of arts and crafts.
- The sessions where we had speakers come to talk with us about their culture.
- The teacher presentations.

Which orientation sessions were the least effective?

- None (4 responses)
- Unsure/can't remember because it was so long ago (4 responses)
- The e-mail was least effective. Some e-mails I sent weren't received, and I never got some that were sent to me.
- I enjoyed them all.
- The complaining lady.
- Discussion of my culture and how I would change—been there, done that through my other travels.
- Repeated instructions from a facilitator.
- Being told repeatedly what I would experience (that it would be "life changing").
- The economic presentation on the statistics of subsistence; a handout would have covered it well enough.
- I really would not have dropped anything.

Descriptions of camp experience

- No one was at the landing strip to meet me, and I had to find my own way back to the landing strip on my return flight from 5 miles up river (I had to find my own boat ride from fish camp, too). It rained all day and night for 6 days (my entire trip). I enjoyed every minute of my experience.
- The camp was very well run and welcoming. Some of the campers were very friendly, but a few were wary. They got better as the week progressed. It was a first-time camp, and I could tell the directors were working out kinks. We had some medical emergencies and everyone adapted.
- It was frustrating and wonderful. Some of it seemed so disorganized and unstructured—that was a blessing and a curse. It was hard at times to determine my role (to step in and delegate or lay low and roll with the punches).
- Totally involved in the daily life in the village. I was included in all village activities and felt welcome wherever I went and folks eager to talk to me. Experienced Native dance and music, learned to bead in Tlingit fashion. Experience was fantastic.
- Great, but it wasn't a village, just a camp. I didn't see "village life," but I did see "rural" and "Native" life.
- I went to a day camp—great camp; loved all of it. I didn't particularly like the evenings in the bunkhouse . . . too smoky. I did meet other campers for dinner activities, but the housing could have been improved.
- My camp experience was right up my alley! The theme of the week was "Hip Hop the Alutiug Way," and we had a blast with the kids, connecting with all roots, to land and people, with everybody in camp . . . being a lover of letters, I jumped right in and helped the kids write and express themselves all week.
- It was a stewardship camp, not a cultural camp. I mostly (95%) interacted, part-time, with children; in the morning (9-11:30), 4 children (young ones); then in the afternoon (1-4), 8 kids (11-16 yrs). Then I was on my own the rest of the day with no interactions with villagers [sad face].
- Mostly arts, crafts, dance, singing. Little-to-no subsistence.
- It was the best experience I have had with a bunch of strangers in my life.
- We attended a month-long camp; 7 students from Y-K School District attended and earned college credits. Camp was a side branch of ANSEP. Professors from UA-Kuskokwim taught classes—very western. Culture part came from trying to get to know folks.
- Awesome time. Littlefield family was very generous.
- Stayed in the community center due to high wind forecast. Worked with 10 instructors and leaders of the Anagram People and Culture. Learned several crafts and stories.
- Please read our journals!! It's all there. On the go with kids all day. Stayed up late talking with adults.
- It was incredible, an experience of a lifetime. I loved it and learned so much from everyone who was there.
- Three weeks in camp with high school students. Fantastic! The kids were great; the experience was life changing. It was like stepping back in time (except for the solar panels and PowerPoint presentations). Marvelous!
- I expected it to be very unstructured and spontaneous, and it was very regimented and organized.
- I stayed at camp with approximately 50 other campers, adults, and elders. I was in the role of student monitoring, but not activity planning.
- I enjoyed the lessons and activities we did, but I thought that it should be led more by the elders and not urban people "believed" to be experts. I often felt that many more activities

could have been added and that my role was very undefined, which made me feel confused as to my duties/responsibilities at camp.

- Worked with kids to make stewardship part of their daily lives. We did some work in the classroom and in the field.

Camp activities

- I learned to cut salmon, set a gill net, dry and smoke salmon, bead, cook Native foods, explore Koyukon language, folklore, skin ducks, care for elders.
- We ran nets, went hunting for Native foods, visited old living and village sites, tried Native foods, gathered wood, did cleaning chores, made local crafts, and played traditional games.
- Skinned a deer; made jam; gutted/filleted fish; prepared fish eggs; butchered seal; survival camp-out; hung out/chatted (a lot); craft activities; healing “sweat”; chores.
- Gill netted; filleted and cleaned fish; smoked fish in smokehouse; processed fish for canning; berry picked; prepared fish for meals in ways new to me; participated in potlatches and grand opening of the village medical clinic.
- Paint, stories (write and listen), carve, science (Native twist), hike, collect, Native foods, songs/dance, language, informal talking, sea exploring, read, games.
- Cooking, bead working, weaving, throwing board, beach combing, seal gutting, fishing.
- Every day was action-packed, ranging from daily subsistence activities like setting nets and gathering; walking and hiking around; activities around the fire and in the yurt; eating; storytelling; writing exercises; and just sitting on the beach and looking out over the water.
- Field trips to the shore, rookeries, and examining plants; overnight campout; journaling; potluck.
- Basket weaving, hat making, drum making
- Camped, language classes, hunting, hiking, making doughnuts.
- We attended classes (power point lectures; kind of “hands-off”), science, hike, kayak, steam, videography.
- Picking sea asparagus, shooting, fishing, drying sea weed, collecting greens, labeling plants.
- Woodworking, beading, baskets, kayak/baidarka, and drum construction.
- Herded little kids, helped supervise kids in all chores—cooking/dishwashing, finding food. Also, went to observe pulling a halibut skate.
- Seal hunting, butchering, cooking, story telling, singing, dancing, hiking and searching for edible plants.
- Hiking, kayaking, talking, birding, listening to an elder talk, and watching her clean fish (very cool—no knife).
- We beaded, danced, ate Native foods, swam, told stories, and took short hikes and banyas.
- I helped supervise the campers during carving, fabric dying, fish-net preparation, and elder time. I also participated in subsistence activities and nature walks.
- I did not bring any activities to camp; I didn’t know that I was supposed to. The activities I would have brought (done with students) would have been from another culture, and I thought we were going there to learn about Alutiiq culture.
- Seal counts, beach cleanup, tide pool observation, visited recycle center, listened to scientist about seal research, bird watching, classroom activities.

Relationships created at camp

- I struck up a friendship and looked forward to helping her and listening to her talk about her life and what she has done.
- I became friends with a couple of campers who shared personal experiences with me.

- Definitely. I bonded with a few of the campers and camp adults. The friendships formed were the BEST part of the visit.
- Yes—camp director, bed & breakfast owner, villagers. These new friendships let me into the real life of the village. They shared deep thoughts and feelings and their history and culture. It opened my eyes.
- Yes, I really enjoyed the camp directors/organizers. They answered my questions regarding education/curriculum, etc., and the elders were amazing.
- I became friends with 2 women from 2 small islands who worked at the camp and with one mom who was a camper with me.
- People were key to my experience, and I forged relationships I know I may very well have the rest of my life.
- I tried, but the adults were not available; the children responded while we were there but have not returned my e-mails. RURE partner and I became friends. It is good to share the experience with another urbanite.
- Yes, I had many conversations with the leadership presenters, which were very insightful.
- I made a lot of friends and great contacts who will come and help educate the staff at my school.
- Yes, but it was with folks nearer my age.
- Enjoyed Robby Littlefield.
- Great leaders and instructors. People working on the baidarka; they made it real with stories of their personal culture journey.
- Yes, came to know camp supervisors and elders, from whom I learned a lot.
- Yes, some of the other adult campers, the hunters and guides, and the leaders. I learned so much from them. Their views on rural education and life influenced me.
- The elder that visited our camp; the camp cook; several students (one is having Thanksgiving at my house); and the teacher who was with me.
- I have made some (a couple) friendships.
- Yes, I made friends with a man from the village. We were able to get some common ground through fishing. I got my nickname “Icha-hals” from him. This made me feel welcomed to the group.
- I did not strike up any friendships per se, but I would visit with some of the elders and the other teachers at camp.
- A little, but not that strong.

Assessment of in-camp guide, local representative, and/or host organization

- My host was not as much help as some of the camp participants.
- All were very helpful. Local people were also friendly and helpful.
- I found the people at the camp wonderful to work with; our host was less than friendly at times. She didn't return our calls once we arrived and was quite abrupt with her interactions with us and others.
- Very helpful; they explained things—the whys, the who, the when. Didn't mind answering my hundreds of questions.
- Excellent
- Great. No problems, amazing people.
- Most helpful; they were always willing to listen and talk and to offer any information.
- Virtually nonexistent
- Very—they were all helpful and wonderful to be around.
- So very valuable. The people that worked with us are awesome.

- Helpful, but need to clarify their expectations of teachers during cruiseship days.
- Great!
- Excellent; very hospitable and friendly.
- Very helpful
- They were awesome, very hospitable, and kind. Lots of knowledge of culture and surroundings.
- Very helpful.
- Most of them were very friendly and accommodating.
- I was picked up and transported to camp by the village contact. Camp coordinators were wonderful.
- Somewhat helpful. I often was confused as to my role at camp. I felt like a staff member that wasn't ever invited to staff meetings because I was never sure what was going to happen next.
- The leader was quite good; the student helpers were just okay.

New knowledge, opinions, and views derived from camp visit

- Fish camp is a semi-permanent place where families go each summer to catch, cut, and dry salmon. People going up and down river are warmly received at camp and given refreshments immediately. Athabascan people are very warm and friendly.
- I have a new understanding of “Native time” and reasons why some don't commit to things.
- The population, sources of income, levels of education, governmental politics of local area (issues they're dealing with), number of visitors, attitudes toward the rest of the state. New/reinforced opinions. Rural Alaska is a wonderful/frustrating place to live.
- First-hand, hands-on experiences always provide new knowledge. All that I did was new to me, and everything I did was new and exciting.
- I didn't know what we'd be doing at camp, what the expectations were for me (leader or participant). I enjoyed being both, and I really got the sense that the Native culture truly values teachers. (Kids are always kids; I love that—naughty and nice.)
- Schools in rural Alaska “borrow” kids for kid count. Aleutian/Unangan Natives have a lot of resentment about WW II internment.
- I certainly have new views on rural Alaska, or rather views that have strengthened my opinions, realizing first-hand that subsistence is a way of life and that listening, communicating, working together is essential to survival.
- How little employment there was; how poor housing was; and how limited travel was. Yes [new opinions/views], closed community, low-quality services and living conditions, although the hotel where we stayed was top-notch.
- The social connections and political views. After my visit I am able to put faces to the issues rural Alaskans deal with. After hearing experiences and stories, I can relate what's happening to real human beings.
- The subsistence lifestyle needs to be protected and respected, or the young people will not learn and it will be gone.
- Natural history, plants/animals, overgrazing, birds. No [new opinions/views].
- How the herring industry has been hurt now that Asian cultures buy herring from Alaska.
- Island/chain life, weather dependent, changes quickly. It is a long way to Sand Point, but that is only half way to Attu.
- Again, it's all in the journal. New opinions? not really—just more information and reinforcing previous understandings.

- I learned the value and importance of subsistence living. I strongly believe that people should be allowed to hunt and fish when they need food for their plates. I didn't realize people still lived like that in the U.S.
- Subsistence is not just a hot-button issue; it is how these folks live. I appreciate the diversity of Alaska even more than I did before.
- The level of FAA/FAE children; low income of families; alcoholism/damp village; they (some of them) are very interested in keeping their culture alive.
- Be flexible! Age and elder roles; kids need to realize that everyone has a culture (even if it is not Native).
- Learned about catcher beaches, finding wood, catching food, banyas, nushniks, continuous loss of culture and language, and striving to regain and relearn lost culture.
- The main thing I learned was that the residents were not very closely tied to their traditional lifestyle.

Summary of learning from teacher training

Please share your thoughts on what you have learned during your teacher training experience. How did you learn it? Do you feel changed as a result? Did your experience in rural Alaska meet your expectations? What will you remember and value most?

- My experience in rural Alaska more than met my expectations. I learned to be more patient with my Native students as “time” in a village and “time” in the city are very different. I came away with a greater appreciation of the people, their culture, and their values.
- I gained some insight into why things are done the way they are from the camp staff and elders. I think I am more accepting of some concepts now. I was pleased with my experience and will value the concepts I've learned.
- I've learned to listen more. I've learned to slow down and take time to bond. I've learned to teach by doing instead of talking. I learned these things by being a part of the camp (listening, watching, and participating). I learned to skin a deer. I feel I have changed. It definitely met my expectations. I will value the stories and few insights into their lives they shared.
- I have changed indeed. I do not carry the burden of guilt on my shoulders any more for the horrible way my ancestors treated American natives. Natives in the village I visited say that the past is the past, live for today, but look to the future.
- I had an amazing experience and would do it again in a minute. It was as good as I expected and wish I could go again to a different place. All camps sounded so cool in follow-up training. I learned to listen, which required me to be quiet!
- I came across a saying in the Alutiuq Museum that I visited right before leaving which sums up everything I became more aware of . . . “Subsistence is not about food; subsistence is about a way of life.”
- Yes [R feels changed]. Experience met expectations in some impressive scenery and wildlife viewing, but not in others—fewer Native activities than I'd hoped for. I'll remember most the scenery and hikes and the littlest children.
- I learned through the Alaska Native presenters at camp. They told me about their backgrounds. I wish I had seen more of the subsistence lifestyle, but I will value the mentor perspective and better understand the sense of urgency in learning the culture and language.
- You must respect the sea. I learned it by watching our guides/hunters. It went way beyond my expectations. I can't put a value on this experience.
- The biggest is the difference in how adventure is approached.
- Being at camp around elders—priceless.

- Wonderful experience. Hands-on and social-interactive learning. Surpassed my expectations; value the personal stories that highlight the culture.
- It was fun, and I learned a lot. I liked experiencing a coastal subsistence culture.
- I will remember and value the friendships I made through this program. I feel I have changed quite a bit. I have a stronger connection to my culture and family. I have a greater understanding of Alaska Native cultures. I learned it just by watching.
- I have a much better understanding of where my rural students are coming from and that makes me a better teacher.
- I faced racism for one of the few times in my life. I feel like I am more aware of rural needs, more sensitive to Native Alaskan needs in my classroom. I think I expected to be included more. I will value silence more.
- I loved camp and was a little sad to leave.
- I learned by asking questions, listening, and doing new activities. I do feel somewhat changed. I reflected a lot on my own culture and feel a new sense of understanding of rural Alaska and Native Alaskans.
- I learned to ask more questions of myself and about our (society's) effects and obligations to Native cultures.