

***Extending Learning Opportunities for High School Students in Rural  
Communities – The Replication of a New Zealand Model in Canada***

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## *Abstract*

Internet-linked open classrooms that connect increasing numbers of rural students within school district intranets use traditional face to face and virtual teaching and learning. These open educational structures challenge the dominance of school size and location, enabling young people to meet in educational cyberspace to share experiences and collaborate in learning projects.

This paper will outline several synchronous and asynchronous technologies and their application to curriculum development that have provided extended learning opportunities for senior high school students in rural Atlantic Canada based on earlier research in New Zealand. Two pioneering open classroom innovations are outlined: collaborative development of advanced courses on the internet for sharing between open classes and, through this, the teaching of entry-level university science courses for senior students in small rural schools, providing hitherto unavailable learning opportunities and new pathways to higher education.

New instructional strategies and protocols have been developed in Canadian open classes that have implications for the professional education of teachers. The implications for regional social and economic development of increased access to educational opportunities through collaborative teaching and learning in open classes linking rural Canadian communities are examined.