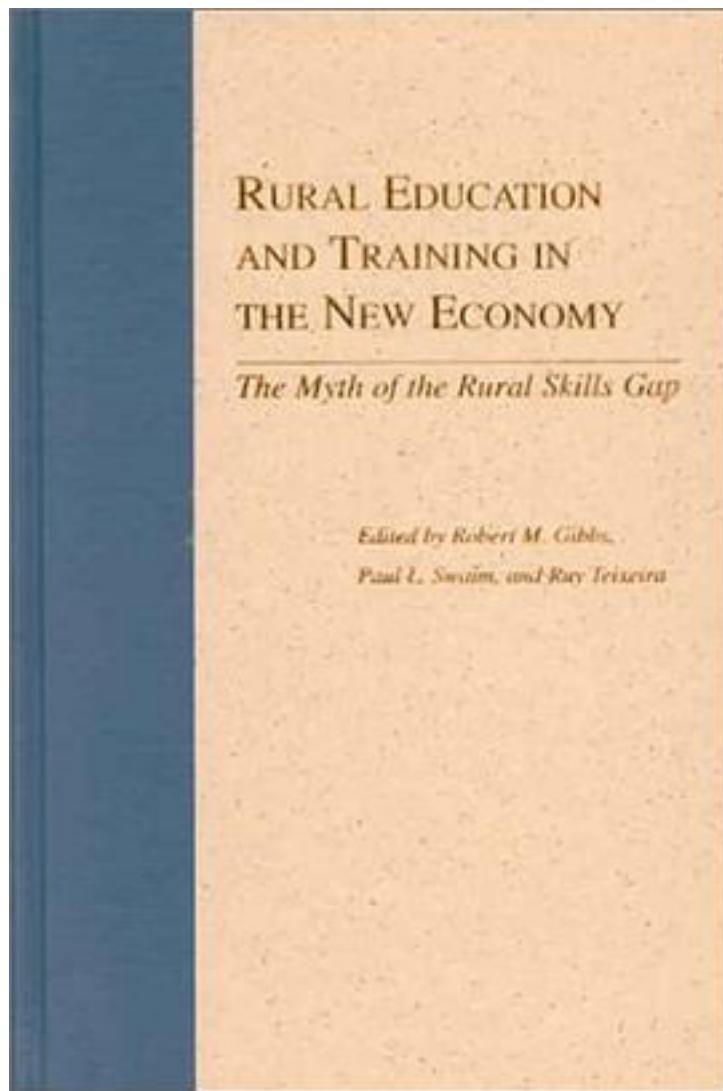


Rural Education and Training in the New Economy



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As wages have stagnated in American cities, they have actually declined in rural America, where over 40 percent of full-time, year-round workers earn poverty-level pay. The problem, according to most policy initiatives, is an undereducated rural workforce inadequately prepared for higher-paying, skilled work. But this is largely a myth, and their work is devoted to clearing up the misconceptions behind it. This task entails a top-to-bottom evaluation of the entire rural education and training system -- including schooling, training, adult literacy, college attendance, and geographic mobility -- the likes of which has never been done. On the basis of this comprehensive analysis, the authors then assess the plausibility that improving rural education and training is the key to improving rural job quality. Their investigation reveals the flaws in the assertion that rural workforce education and training are generally inferior to their urban counterparts. More importantly, they show that such faulty claims mask important areas of strength in the rural skill supply, which might be better exploited by rural development policy. The authors also test the proposition that higher education and skill levels lead directly to better jobs in rural areas. Their work, answering long-standing questions and overturning widespread assumptions, should contribute to a more sensible and effective approach to education and economics in rural America.

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