One of the first areas of study taught in most elementary schools is literacy. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary defines literacy as “the ability to read and write.” Rural Illinois High School Students are not writing at a high school level in hand written documents in an informal context. My research project will be a comprehensive report which will include a list of grammatical errors, as well as spelling mistakes made by rural Illinois high school students with an emphasis on how these errors are related to phonics. These common elementary mistakes were made by high school students who filled out the Illinois Rural Youth Poll in 2013 that were ages 13 and above, with varying races/ethnicities, parental education levels, and student jobs. None of the students participating in this survey were aware that any of their open ended responses would be analyzed and criticized.

Using this research, rural Illinois teachers of all grade levels will be able to see which words or grammatical errors teachers need to place more of a focus on in the elementary classroom, so students will be masters at grammar and spelling once they reach the high school level. I plan to submit my article to a national literacy magazine and will hopefully be published.