

Strengthening Rural Literacy Educators: Learning and Development Through an E-Coaching Network

Thursday 5 August 2021 - Parallel Session 4 - 11.30am to 12.30pm (GMT+1)

MURRAY - Preparing Teachers for Rural Schools

Kari Dahle-Huff (*Montana State University, Billings, USA*), **Lisa Ortmann** (*University of North Dakota, USA*), **Rachael Waller** (*Montana State University, Billings, USA*)

Teachers and schools in rural contexts experience unique professional circumstances in regard to the needs of their students and their professional expertise. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, about 24 % of students in the United States are in rural schools, or about 12 million students (2019). The purpose of this paper is to examine how to provide rural literacy specialists the opportunity to develop professionally in their area of expertise while simultaneously seeking to better serve the specific literacy needs of students in rural schools. For the past several decades federal legislation aimed at strengthening the quality of reading instruction helped formalize and fund literacy coach positions in schools (Denton & Hasbrouck, 2009). Joyce and Showers' (1981) foundational work asserts, "coaching is characterized by an observation and feedback cycle in an ongoing instructional or clinical situation" (p.170). This review of literature will examine current research on professional development conducted through the modality of E-coaching and support for school-based literacy intervention planning. Of particular concern is research that has established a growing consensus that effective professional development programs share several necessary key features such as, "job-embedded practice, intense and sustained durations, focus on discrete skill sets, and active-learning" (Kraft, Blazar, & Hogan, 2018; Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009; Desimone, 2009; Desimone, & Garet, 2015; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). Professional development offered to rural literacy specialists with these features will not only nurture leadership in rural schools, but foster learning embedded in rural contexts.