

Innovations in Rural Education: Teaching to Cross-Curricular Learning Outcomes

Friday 6 August 2021 - Parallel Session 6 - 11.30am to 12.30pm (GMT+1)

MURRAY - Preparing Teachers for Rural Schools

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Rural schools continue to face challenges brought on by social and economic conditions that impact rural communities. The implementation of school improvement initiatives in these schools showcases their innovative capacity in responding to their contextual challenges. Indeed, given the tenuous conditions under which many rural schools operate, a culture of continuous improvement undergirds their operations. This presentation will explore the experiences of teachers as they worked together to implement an improvement initiative. Driven by the school division's personalized electronically blended learning philosophy which aimed to empower students to become 21st Century learners, the improvement initiative saw the school engaging in several systemic changes that resulted in several structural modifications in the school's operation. These changes included implementing flexible scheduling for K-9 classes, co-teaching of the math and ELA curriculum, and project-based learning. The data used for this presentation was garnered from an instrumental case study conducted in a rural Saskatchewan school. Data were collected over three-months incorporating non-participant observation of five team meetings over the school term, semi-structured interviews of 12 participants who worked on the implementation of the initiative, and document analysis of project documents and meeting minutes. The findings highlighted in this presentation have the potential to encourage rural teachers to think differently about curriculum delivery as well as the possibilities of doing things differently in the classroom. The findings also shed light on the contextual challenges faced by rural teachers as they engage in the implementation of a school improvement initiative.