ABSTRACT

A partnership model between several school districts and a liberal arts university was explored as a means of delivering quality professional development in this interpretive study. Teachers self-reported their thoughts about the effects of the professional development delivered through a partnership model, the effects on their practice, and the similarities and differences between this professional learning and other professional development opportunities they have been a part of. The researcher conducted two rounds of interviews with six educators, three from each of two districts. Data from the interviews was compiled and coded to determine common themes. Several themes emerged in support of the literature: leadership, application of the skills and knowledge developed, teacher inclusion, university involvement, coaching and mentoring, goal alignment, and sustained professional development. Three new themes emerged: lasting relationships, applied knowledge, and rejuvenation. The results of the study provide a foundation for exploring the effectiveness of a Professional Learning Partnership and its impact on rural educators. The recommendation for leaders of small, rural districts, is to collaboratively plan professional learning opportunities jointly with other small, geographically close school districts.