

**P20 Literacy Collaborative  
January 30, 2020  
Evaluation Report**

**Submitted by Aimee Howley  
On Behalf of WordFarmers Associates**

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**Background**

On January 30, 2020, the P20 Literacy Collaborative, under the auspices of the Higher Education Literacy Steering Committee, convened a one-day meeting at the Conference Center at OCLC in Dublin, Ohio. This meeting was the second gathering of the P20 Literacy Collaborative, which brings together in one community of practice stakeholders from Ohio institutions of higher education (IHEs), educators from school districts, representatives from the state’s ESCs and SSTs, and others.

Teams from each of the seven funded *Improving Literacy Partnership Grants*, and members of the Higher Education Literacy Steering Committee, established in 2019, attended the meeting. In addition, participants from a related grant-funded initiative—at an eighth IHE—also attended. The work of the Collaborative is grounded in the “science of reading.” Its aim is to help higher education faculties update teacher education curricula to reflect findings from high-quality research on early literacy instruction. The theory of action supporting the effort maintains that curricula grounded in the “science of reading” will prepare educators to provide instruction that results in improved literacy outcomes and improved equity outcomes across Ohio school districts.

Sign-in sheets documented the participation of 42 members of the Collaborative, not including project staff from the University of Cincinnati’s Systems Development and Improvement Center, the guest speaker, and the evaluators. The 42 Collaborative members included 16 representatives from Ohio school districts, 21 IHE representatives, and 1 SST representative. The other three members in attendance were from the Ohio Department of Education (n=2) and the Ohio Department of Higher Education (n=1). Thirty-three attendees returned completed surveys (i.e., a response rate of 79%).

These are the meeting’s intended outcomes:

1. To understand Ohio’s approach to improving literacy outcomes for all learners;
2. To gain a clear idea about how to establish supportive time standards for improving literacy;
3. To gain a clear idea of the components of literacy learning supported by research;
4. To gain a clear idea of quality of instruction standards; and
5. To learn about efforts of university-district partner teams to improve teacher understanding and application of evidence-based language and literacy practices.

## **Evaluation Methods**

This section of the report first summarizes the evaluators' data collection methods, including descriptions of the data-collection instruments. Next, it describes the data analysis methods employed in generating findings pertinent to the evaluation questions that guide the study.

### **Data Collection and Instrumentation**

The evaluation team gathered data in two ways. First, one team member collected observation data by attending the sessions and completing a prescribed data-collection protocol (see Appendix A). The protocol focused on five domains (subdivided into a few criteria for each): preparation and introduction, demonstration, engagement, evaluation, and mastery. These domains reflect research about what constitutes high-quality professional development (e.g., Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger, & Beckingham, 2004; Croft, Coggshall, Dolan, Powers, & Killion, 2010; Guskey, 2000; Killion, 2008; Trivette, Raab, & Dunst, 2012). The protocol also included a section for recording narrative comments, which served as the basis for the included summary of events. The observer completed a protocol for each hour of the event, noting the amount of time represented in each category.

Second, the team gathered feedback from participants using an electronic survey, completed after the event. The survey included six items measuring their views about the quality of the meeting. It also included five pairs of before and after questions (10 questions total) that measured the participants' learning as it related to the five meeting outcomes. These questions enabled the evaluation team to determine the training's impact. Lastly, the survey included an open-ended question soliciting participants' general feedback.

### **Data Analysis**

To summarize observation data, the evaluation team aggregated the observer's protocols and used them to produce cumulative totals for each criterion's duration. To summarize session ratings and other feedback from participants, the evaluators used the open-source statistics program jamovi<sup>1</sup> to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. Because there were relatively few open-ended comments, the evaluators decided to present them verbatim in an appendix (see Appendix B). The team also categorized the participants' open-ended responses with emergent themes; these narrative data can be found in summary form in the findings section of the report.

## **Summary of Meeting Content**

This second meeting of the collaborative was primarily devoted to a lecture (a presentation with very little audience participation) by Tim Shanahan, Ph.D., Distinguished Professor Emeritus & Founding Director, the Center for Literacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Shanahan's lecture was delivered partly before a working lunch and partly after.

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<sup>1</sup> The software developers indicate that the name of this program should not be capitalized.

The meeting opened with a half-hour session titled “Ohio’s Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement,” presented by Sarah McClusky, Ed.D., Assistant Director, Literacy; and Beth Hess, J.D., Literacy Specialist; Office of Approaches to Teaching and Professional Learning at the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). At about 10:20, Dr. Shanahan was introduced and began his lecture, titled “Promoting Children’s Reading Success: The Importance of Higher Education-District Partnerships.” The first part of his lecture concluded at 11:45 and the meeting transitioned to a working lunch. Dr. Shanahan resumed after lunch and concluded his lecture at 3:00 PM.

An evaluator took notes on the substance of the meeting, both the introductory presentation and the main lecture. The introductory presentation by the Dr. McClusky and Ms. Hess announced a new literacy grant program and the extension of the existing *Striving Readers* grant program. They then provided an update on the emerging state literacy plan; the current draft was said to incorporate changes informed by public comment. Then the presenters explained several features of the plan.

Dr. Shanahan’s lecture presented his outlook on the meaning of literacy (e.g., “education is not a vaccine”), methods for supporting literacy (e.g., “work to make kids’ reading part of their lives”), and the uses and misuses of research (e.g., “use research more like the scientists and less like the politicians and salespeople”). Shanahan asserted that literacy had four components, each of equal worth and demanding equal time (i.e., knowledge of words and parts of words, oral reading fluency, reading comprehension and learning from text, writing). The notes suggest a content accessible to both university faculty and district leaders, but they did not record explicit consideration of how the content would support university-district partnerships *per se*.

## **Findings**

This section presents both qualitative and quantitative data about the meeting. First, it summarizes the observation data. Next, it presents statistics summarizing the participants’ ratings of the event. The section then considers the participants’ self-reported gains in knowledge and, finally, concludes by presenting categorized participant responses to the one open-ended question on the feedback form.

### **Observation Data**

An observer used the data-collection protocol to track the approximate amount of time spent on criteria related to five domains (preparation and introduction, demonstration, engagement, evaluation, and mastery): one form for every hour of the training, with comments. Total times were computed by summing each form’s subtotals, creating a measure of how much time was spent on the various criteria and domains during the entire meeting. Table 1 presents the total times in minutes and, more usefully, as percentages. Discussion of findings focuses on time percentages across the five domains (i.e., rather than across criteria within domains).

Table 1: Observers' Records of Session Criteria

Domain	Criterion	Minutes (Proportion)
<b>Preparation and Introduction</b>	Presents PD objectives with linkages to prior knowledge and big-picture concepts	9 (4%)
	Provides and explains agenda and learning materials (e.g., readings, activities)	2 (1%)
	Connects PD to empirical research (e.g., citations; verbal references)	27 (12%)
	Discusses how PD aligns to school/district /state/federal standards or goals	13 (6%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	51 (22%)
<b>Demonstration</b>	Builds understandings required to implement practices or concepts	152 (65%)
	Provides examples of content/practice in use	14 (6%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	166 (71%)
<b>Engagement</b>	Gives participants opportunities to respond to the presentation/express themselves	0 (0%)
	Allows participants to interact with one another related to training content	12 (5%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	12 (5%)
<b>Evaluation</b>	Shares indicators of successful transfer to practice	2 (1%)
	Helps participants process and evaluate their own acquisition of skills/concepts	0 (0%)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	2 (1%)
<b>Mastery</b>	Offers follow-up resources, coaching, or activities to support implementation and continued learning	3 (1%)
	<b>TOTAL (All Domains)</b>	234 (100%)

Note 1: Observation times do not include shorts breaks, transition times, and so on.

Note 2: Percentages are approximate and may not equal 100% due to rounding. Domain subtotals may not match domain proportions due to compounded effects of rounding (i.e., sub-proportions are the summed proportions of individual items and are not re-calculated based on sub-total amounts).

The meeting, perhaps surprisingly given the lecture format, included activities reflecting all five of the domains associated by research with high-quality professional development. Of these, *Demonstration* claimed the largest proportion of time with 71%, followed by *Preparation and Introduction* (22%), *Engagement* (5%), *Evaluation* (2%), and *Mastery* (1%). The results for the three domains receiving the least attention would be typical for the format of this meeting (i.e., lecture).

The protocol that the observer completed also provided space to record comments. In general, the comments indicated that the meeting followed the time allotted on the agenda, though the lecture lasted 15 minutes longer than advertised. The notes show that listeners began to leave the meeting starting at lunchtime; about six departed at lunchtime and three others by about 2:15. The observer noted that, before the lunch break, Dr. Shanahan had promised small-group interaction after lunch, but that none ensued.

### Participants’ Ratings of the Session

The rating form that participants completed included six items about the quality of the meeting. Table 2 presents descriptive statistics summarizing participants’ ratings of these items. These statistics indicate that respondents found the meeting to be of high quality. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with the questions using a three-point Likert scale (with 1 as the low rating and 3 as the high rating). Even the lowest rated item—that the meeting provided an opportunity for participants to give and receive feedback—still received a relatively high rating (mean=2.57).

Table 2: *Quality of the Meeting (3=agree, 2=partially agree, 1=disagree)*

Item	Mean	SD	N
The desired outcomes of the meeting were clear.	2.82	0.53	33
The meeting provided information through at least two learning modalities (e.g., text and a diagram, video and a written summary).	2.88	0.42	33
The meeting provided me with an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the work of the Literacy Collaborative.	2.61	0.70	33
The meeting provided me with an opportunity to give and receive feedback.	2.58	0.66	33
The meeting provided me with an opportunity to reflect on the work.	2.76	0.50	33
The meeting included materials that will help me make progress with infusing the Science of Reading into curricula and/or partnership activities.	2.66	0.55	32

### Participants’ Ratings of Impact

This section of the survey asked participants to rate their before- and after-meeting knowledge of topics addressed during the session. Respondents used a 3-point Likert scale to answer, where 3=high, 2=moderate, and 1=low. Comparison of the paired (before and after) items provide a measure of the extent to which the session contributed to participants’ knowledge. A statistically

significant difference between respondents’ ratings of before-meeting knowledge and after-meeting knowledge suggests that the meeting accomplished its goals. Table 3 presents descriptive statistics related to these paired items.

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics, Before- and After-Meeting Paired Items*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Before/After</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>N</b>
Understanding Ohio’s approach to improving literacy outcomes for all learners.	Before	2.19	0.60	31
	After	2.71	0.46	31
Having a clear idea about how to establish supportive time standards for improving literacy.	Before	2.00	0.45	31
	After	2.42	0.67	31
Having a clear idea of the components of literacy learning supported by research.	Before	2.58	0.56	31
	After	2.77	0.43	31
Having a clear idea of quality of instruction standards.	Before	2.40	0.62	30
	After	2.57	0.57	30
Being aware of efforts of university-district partner teams to improve teacher understanding and application of evidence-based language and literacy practices.	Before	1.93	0.58	30
	After	2.47	0.51	30

As the statistics in Table 3 indicate, ratings of knowledge after the session were higher than those before the session. Paired sample t-tests revealed that the differences in before-session and after-session means were statistically significant. Table 4 shows the p-values and effect sizes corresponding to these comparisons. The average effect size was 0.92—an effect that most researchers would characterize as high.

Table 4: Statistical Significances of Differences between Before and After Meeting Knowledge and Associated Effect Sizes

Item	p	Cohen's D
Understanding Ohio's approach to improving literacy outcomes for all learners.	< .001	1.02
Having a clear idea about how to establish supportive time standards for improving literacy.	< .001	0.84
Having a clear idea of the components of literacy learning supported by research.	.012	0.48
Having a clear idea of quality of instruction standards.	.023	0.44
Awareness of efforts of university-district partner teams to improve teacher understanding and application of evidence-based language and literacy practices.	< .001	1.05

### Participants' Responses to Open-ended Questions

The question, "What other feedback would you like to provide?" elicited comments from 23 respondents. Comments were consistent with high ratings for quality and impact. Of the 23, 16 comments referenced appreciation of the content, the guest (Shanahan), or both. Of the remainder, four comments offered suggestions: more time for interaction and discussion. Finally, three offered sufficiently detailed "suggestions" that they amounted to critique: (1) dated material not aligning with objectives and (2) use of objectionable and inequitable *deficit language* ("welfare moms" and "inner-city kids"). Comments in Appendix B are coded "good presenter," "good content," "suggestions," and "critique" and sorted on those categories to help readers absorb all open-ended feedback.

### Discussion

Survey responses show that meeting attendees found the event to be of high quality. These data are bolstered by the observation data as well as by the respondents' answers to the open-ended question. Importantly, impact measures showed statistically significant gains in knowledge for all of the event's intended learning outcomes. Three effect sizes were large ( $d > 1.0$ ) and two were moderate (just under  $d=0.50$ ).

Although comments were more than predominantly positive and appreciative, the distinction between comments that were simply positive and those that offered either suggestions or critique were evident. This tension is likely part of the territory occupied by a higher-education-PK12 partnership; critique and suggestions, however, spanned that divide. And one should note the early departure of 9 or 10 unidentified participants (possibly not counted among respondents). In view of all the data, those Collaborative members who did respond found the quality of the meeting high and reported acquiring knowledge relevant to the session's objectives.

## References

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## Appendix A Observation Protocol

Observer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ COMPLETE ONE FORM PER HOUR OF PD

Name of project (check): OLi<sup>4</sup> \_\_\_ SDT \_\_\_ OCDBE \_\_\_ CSD \_\_\_ OPEPP \_\_\_

PD Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Which hour: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Other \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	CRITERION	OBSERVED (Check if "yes; add approximate time spent)
Preparation and Introduction	Presents PD objectives with linkages to prior knowledge and big-picture concepts	
Preparation and Introduction	Provides and explains agenda and learning materials (e.g., readings, activities)	
Preparation and Introduction	Connects PD to empirical research (e.g., citations; verbal references)	
Preparation and Introduction	Discusses how PD aligns to school/district/state/federal standards or goals	
Demonstration	Builds understandings required to implement practices or concepts	
Demonstration	Provides examples of content/practice in use	
Engagement	Gives participants opportunities to respond to the presentation / express themselves	
Engagement	Allows participants to interact with one another related to training content	
Evaluation	Shares indicators of successful transfer to practice	
Evaluation	Helps participants process and evaluate their own acquisition of skills/concepts	
Mastery	Offers follow-up resources, coaching, or activities to support implementation and continued learning	

COMMENTS:

**Appendix B**  
**Open-ended Question – Participants’ Verbatim Responses**

**What other feedback would you like to provide?**

Comment	CATEGORY
I would have liked actual applications on how to do things	SUGGESTIONS
I feel Dr. Shanahan had a lot of information to share during this most recent meeting. I would have appreciated the opportunity to share and collaborate with my peers during this time. He shared a lot of information and allowed us little to no time to engage in the learning.	SUGGESTIONS
I enjoyed the hospitality of the Director of Systems Development & Improvement Center and hearing about the progress of the other grant recipients of the P20 Literacy Collaborative. I also enjoyed Dr. Timothy Shanahan's presentation although I wish he would have given us more time to interact/converse with him and our team at our tables regarding the information he presented. I was already very familiar with the results of the NICHD's National Reading Panel Report which was a large part of his presentation.	SUGGESTIONS
I would enjoy having some portion of the day dedicated to mixing with members of the other teams. Perhaps the working lunch could include the "mixer." I believe we can all grow more when we get to know our fellow P20 collaborators better.	SUGGESTIONS
Wow! Dr. Shanahan--what a wonderful PD. Thank you!	GOOD PRESENTER
The presenter was very engaging and knowledgeable. I learned a lot about the best ways to use your time and the different pieces of reading. Very worth your time!	GOOD PRESENTER
Thank you for arranging to have Dr. Shanahan present to our Collaborative. He clearly explained several aspects of the science of reading that brought a greater clarity to my understanding. I would like to have received a hard copy of Ohio's Plan to Raise Literacy Achievement. It would have been helpful to review today. Thanks for always making these meetings meaningful and enjoyable!	GOOD PRESENTER
I truly enjoyed and was engaged in the work today. I would have liked additional time to process, especially because Tim Shanahan's research left me with questions about next steps and implications of current and future literacy instruction. I believe, as he pointed out in his example of the two different classrooms reading the same text about MLK, "Turn and Talk" can make a positive difference in delivery of content! Thank you for bringing Tim Shanahan to present and for a well-informed, lovely day!	GOOD PRESENTER
Tim was a great choice to have as a speaker!!	GOOD PRESENTER
Great meeting location and the lunch was outstanding. Appreciate being seated at round tables- enables conversations with the team.	GOOD PRESENTER

Tim Shanahan was outstanding- as always. Thank you for providing the opportunity to learn together.	
More applicable changes to my Elementary classroom I can make today.	GOOD CONTENT
Love to hear from experts in the field and time to dialogue with other practitioners.	GOOD CONTENT
Specific materials and resources for classroom teachers to instruct all specific area of literacy.	GOOD CONTENT
Excellent organized meeting.	GOOD CONTENT
I thought this was a meaningful and productive opportunity for institutes of higher education and district personnel/teachers to meet, interact, and share in a learning experience. Tim Shanahan was great.	GOOD CONTENT
Always enjoy these meetings! Quality programming!	GOOD CONTENT
I found the researched referenced throughout the presentation applicable and helpful to my teaching experiences.	GOOD CONTENT
Very informative and enjoyable. Lots of info to take back to my school.	GOOD CONTENT
The presentations and content was completely aligned to the goals of the session. Having more of an opportunity to dialog and collaborate would be appreciated. Thank you, Tim	GOOD CONTENT
I really enjoyed and Literacy collaborative. The information shared on this day has really made me reflect on my current practice.	GOOD CONTENT
This was again a very basic training. Respected scientist but the grand majority of his presentation was on the National Reading Panel report (20 years old). Also, if you have seen him before this was the same presentation. NRP is an important report but, I would imagine everyone/most knew this information. There was one opportunity to discuss during his presentation and it was not very meaty AND 0 time for questions/discussion. He never really talked about implementing SorR in higher ed. I enjoyed hearing about Ohio's plan and the other projects and wish there was some time to collaborate. It was a day of sitting and listening. Doesn't seem to match objectives.	CRITIQUE
I again am concerned about the language choices of the presenters. As with the fall meeting, this presenter used deficit language (e.g., "welfare mom") in their presentation. This is problematic in general, but now that this has occurred in two meetings, I am wondering if the views of the larger group are in agreement with this type of language usage and believe it is acceptable? This is problematic because, as educators, we need to use person-first language and language that does not reduce people to a situation or moment in time.	CRITIQUE

I appreciated the expertise that the speaker brought to the meeting. Much of the research presented was useful. I was dismayed to have a speaker refer to women as "welfare moms" (despite that being the word used in the study being discussed, this is absolutely unacceptable) and children from urban contexts as "inner city kids." It would have been helpful to have more time to discuss the content or to interact with others who were at the meeting. As a learner, I do not find it helpful to be lectured to for hours at a time, and I believe that an interactive meeting would create more productivity from the teams. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

CRITIQUE