

P20 Literacy Collaborative  
March 12, 2020 Meeting Notes

On March 12, 2020 the P20 Literacy Collaborative held a virtual meeting via Zoom, from 9:30 am-1:00 pm. There were 43 participants in attendance. Participants could interact with one another or the presenter through a group chat function where they could post comments or questions.

Dr. Dottie Erb began the meeting by previewing the agenda and providing a summary and overview of the ongoing work of the Collaborative. She then instructed the group about where to access resources through the Deans Compact website. Dr. Mary Murray then introduced the speaker, Dr. David Kilpatrick.

Dr. Kilpatrick began his presentation at 10:00 am by reviewing the objectives for his presentation:

- Understanding word-level reading development, both identifying new words and remembering
- Understanding the basis of word reading fluency
- Understand why some students struggle in word-reading
- Learn the “elusive” research-based reading interventions
- Consider how these research findings should influence instruction and intervention

During the first hour, Dr. Kilpatrick introduced the field of the scientific study of reading, highlighting the scope of the work and research, and some of the niche areas within the field of reading research – specifically, orthographic learning (the scientific study of how we remember words) and the study of interventions for students who struggle with word-level reading. His work and his goal, he shared, involves trying to bring together these two areas of research - reading through the lens of orthographic mapping (how we store words in memory) and to move the research into the hands of teachers and those who can put it into practice, as he noted that there are huge gaps between research and practice. He continued his introduction by sharing several resources, including research journals. He said that “Reading Research” is not its own discipline – but is covered by many fields and is an interdisciplinary enterprise.

He then covered the following key terms relevant to the presentation:

- Auditory vs phonological
- Phonological vs phonemic
- Orthography and orthographic
- Phonological awareness vs phonics
- Decoding (phonic decoding and word-level reading)
- Sight word and sight word vocabulary

The presenter went into more detail about “poor word reading” (dyslexia): what it is and isn’t, and who it can apply to, noting that the underlying skills needed for reading are the same for students in varying disability categories, and that poor word reading is not related to IQ.

He outlined the components of phonological core deficit of dyslexia: sharing that impaired phonological processing has been considered the “universal cause” of dyslexia. This involves one or more of the following areas: phonemic awareness/analysis, phonemic blending/synthesis, rapid automatized naming, phonological working memory, nonsense word reading and letter sound knowledge acquisition. He pointed to researching over the past 50 years showing that phonological deficits are related to poor reading. In response to an audience question, he explained that rapid automatized naming is a marker for phonological core deficit but isn’t universal.

Dr. Kilpatrick explained the tiered level of interventions for working with struggling readers, noting that Tier 1 interventions (often in Kindergarten) focus on phonological awareness. He highlighted some of the research on Tier 2 and 3 interventions, such as those used with elementary grade students and those who are older. He referenced research by Vellutino et al. (1996) working with struggling readers beginning in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade using phonemic interventions. Students showed continued improvement from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He said it is a misconception that children learn to read in different ways – while teaching may vary, the learning process for students to learn to read efficiently is very similar, and strong readers have the same skillset. He highlighted the theory for why this is – addressing word-level reading and its deficits among readers.

After a break, Dr. Kilpatrick continued the discussion of reading. He said that visual word recognition is based on the creation of categories and codes. Code-based reading instruction, or explicit phonetic instruction, is better equipped to help students who struggle with reading. He showed additional research on instructional interventions for students with different levels of phonological core deficits – including students who are dyslexic, and students with severe reading deficits. He then had the group try an activity: Rapid Naming (Objects). Afterwards, he covered additional details about orthographic mapping – the process of remembering words, which builds sight vocabulary. He then introduced Dave Share’s self-teaching hypothesis – claiming that we self-teach the majority of words that we know; and he explained that orthographic learning is implicit, requiring little conscious effort. He next introduced Linnea Ehri’s Orthographic Mapping Theory – that sight words are anchored in long-term memory and are recognized regardless of how the word looks (such as font). Connecting pronunciation (phonics) to letter sequence is what allows recognition. He connected Share’s and Ehri’s theories to explain how we map words and commit them to memory.

After this portion of the presentation, there were several clarifying questions asked by participants. Dr. Kilpatrick then continued by addressing the relationship between phonological skills and word-level reading and explained that phonemic proficiency leads to letter-sound proficiency, then to orthographic mapping, then sight vocabulary. He added that explicit phonics training and phonemic awareness training are necessary to develop reading skills beyond a first-grade level, and that all skilled readers have phonetic knowledge. He broke down the skills for

phonological development, and word-reading development, and how they are connected to enable learning. The presentation ended at 12:30 pm, and participants asked several additional clarifying questions. For example, someone asked for clarification about the terminology – phonics, letter-sound reading, and when these skills should be incorporated at the kindergarten and first-grade levels. Dr. Kilpatrick explained that different skills are needed for students who have the phonological-core deficits. After the remaining questions from the chat were answered, Dr. Murray concluded the presentation with closing remarks, reminding participants to complete the meeting evaluation.