



Ohio Deans Compact

IMPROVING LITERACY PARTNERSHIP GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

University of Akron

Sparking the Reading Shift in Summit County: Reaching Out to Raise the Literacy Achievement in Ohio

Dr. Shelley Houser

Partner LEA: Twinsburg City Schools, SST Region 8

At the University of Akron Center for Literacy, we have been engaged in a community of practice with the Twinsburg City School District and State Support Team 8 (SST8) in northeast Ohio. Our interactions with TCSD have allowed teachers to join UA faculty in exploring the science of reading during the 2020-2021 school year via our 2-minute trainings, *Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties* and *Equipped for Reading Success* by Dr. David Kilpatrick Book Study, and LETRS training supported by SST8.

We have seen each level of engagement spilling over into the next among participants. Many teachers partaking in the 2-minute trainings have reached out with questions and are eager to learn more. Educators engaged in the book studies and LETRS have developed an enthusiasm for the research and effective implementation of evidence-based practices. The rich interactions between UA faculty and TCSD educators have greatly benefitted both groups as we make shifts in pedagogy and practice.

Tina Magyar, an educator from Twinsburg CSD that has participated in all levels of our community of practice this year stated, *“Loved receiving the 2-minute trainings! I hope they continue! The Kilpatrick book study and LETRS training go hand in hand...well-worth all the work!”*

Franciscan University of Steubenville

DataSTARS: Database of Sharing, Teaching & Applying Reading Strategies

Dr. Megan Reister, Dr. Kathy McVey

Partner LEA: Jefferson County ESC

DataSTARS is part of the larger project: *Preparing Teachers to Use a Variety of Evidence-Based Reading Strategies & Tools in the Science of Reading through Creation of a Shared Virtual Database: A Collaboration Between Pre-service and In-service Educators - Applied in Virtual & F2F Environments*. DataSTARS has allowed for the development of a virtual database to house demonstrations and tutorial videos of reading strategy evidence-based practices grounded in the Science of Reading (SoR) that educators can implement in the classroom. These strategies and supplemental materials can be used as teaching tools in the K-12 classroom to improve literacy, which means that DataSTARS can be implemented in virtual and F2F environments! The faculty of core reading courses at the Franciscan University of Steubenville has been able to work with school partners to implement and carry out the reading strategies during instruction. The same faculty have been taking part in growing their professional development as they engage in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading & Spelling) training together over the next two years.

The impact of the work is that at the pre-service level, the faculty of the core reading courses have been able to engage in course rewrites to reflect SoR research and information at the IHE. At the in-service level, the faculty of the core reading courses have been able to bring on additional school partners to take part in the LETRS training with them.

When asked if there is any interest in presenting research and sharing what has been gained as a school partner through participating in DataSTARS, one of the school partners responded by saying, *“I would love to do this. I think the work that Dr. Reister and Dr. McVey are doing to prepare future teachers is amazing. The evidence-based strategies and efforts the tutors are implementing are resulting in reading gains for our students.”*

University of Rio Grande

Project L.E.A.R.N. (Literacy Education and Achievement with Rio’s Neighbors)

Stephanie Scott

Partner LEA: Gallipolis City Schools, Gallia-Vinton ESC

The University of Rio Grande in partnership with Washington Elementary has been diligently working to change reading courses to align directly with the Science of Reading. Collaboration among professors and teachers has been very successful in working to revise course syllabi. Implementing these changes is ongoing in preparing pre-service teachers to be effective reading teachers with a solid foundation in the Science of Reading. Students in the Phonics and Reading Methods courses have relayed positive feedback in course revisions and feel more prepared with instruction embedded from the Science of Reading.

The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.
—Dr. Seuss

“The Science of Reading approach has positively impacted my passion for teaching reading.” – Shay White

Shawnee State University

Reading Redesign for Instruction and Implementation (R2I2)

Dr. Sandra Beam

Partner LEA: Portsmouth City Schools

The R2I2 Grant has allowed Shawnee State University to partner with Portsmouth City Schools to provide LETRS training to the primary grades staff. Forty+ teachers completed LETRS Units 1-4 and immediately began implementing science of reading concepts in the curriculum.

This partnership has facilitated the hard work of and learning how to implement research-based practices into reading instruction through professional development, discussion, and practical application.

“The LETRS training at Portsmouth Elementary has provided the teachers with the “why” and “how” to apply the science of reading. The teachers are able to make informed educational decisions to assess, plan, and implement lessons that are aligned with the science of reading. Therefore, the teachers and students have greatly benefited from the LETRS training.” – Kathy Amburgey, First Grade Teacher at Portsmouth Elementary

Cleveland State University

CSU 12-Hour Reading Core Redesign

Dr. Laura Northrop

Partner LEA: Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Our work has three parts:

1. Revising our 12-hour reading core syllabi.
2. Developing case studies to use in our online courses.
3. Creating intervention materials to use with K-5 students.

Because our teacher education program at CSU is urban-focused, and many of our CSU students complete their internships in CMSD schools, aligning our curriculum with the needs of CMSD is critical to making sure our students are prepared to teach in this district. Our work with our partner district has primarily focused on identifying the knowledge and skills needed to be a successful teacher in CMSD and incorporating those into our syllabi. This alignment is in addition to the alignment with the Science of Reading, using the model syllabi.

Our impact so far has been being able to use revised syllabi for our phonics course and our assessment course during the 2020-2021 academic year at CSU. This included using two new textbooks for our assessment course, aligning our assessments with the types of assessments used in CMSD early literacy, and using two case studies based on student data.

“One obvious change in my teaching this year is related to planning. The new textbooks have allowed for easier planning and organizing. For example, the topics are covered with such depth it has reduced the need for supplemental readings. In addition, the textbooks are more student friendly and makes the content easy for the students to digest.” – Dr. Terri Purcell, faculty member at CSU

Marietta College

Alliance for Literacy

Dr. Raven Cromwell

Partner LEA: Marietta City Schools

Marietta College Education Department created a literacy alliance with Washington Elementary (a local school). Within this alliance, we participated in professional development surrounding *The Science of Reading*. Implementation of this view of reading is the goal for Marietta College literacy courses, as well as K-5 teacher instruction.

The impact has been twofold (1) Elementary students benefit from teachers implementing *The Science of Reading*, and (2) College interns can support this literacy initiative through fieldwork in schools.

“The Science of Reading is not a program, it’s an understanding of how students learn to read. We look forward to supporting teachers as they move toward this understanding.”

Mount St. Joseph University

Stronger Together: Advancing Reading Science (STARS)

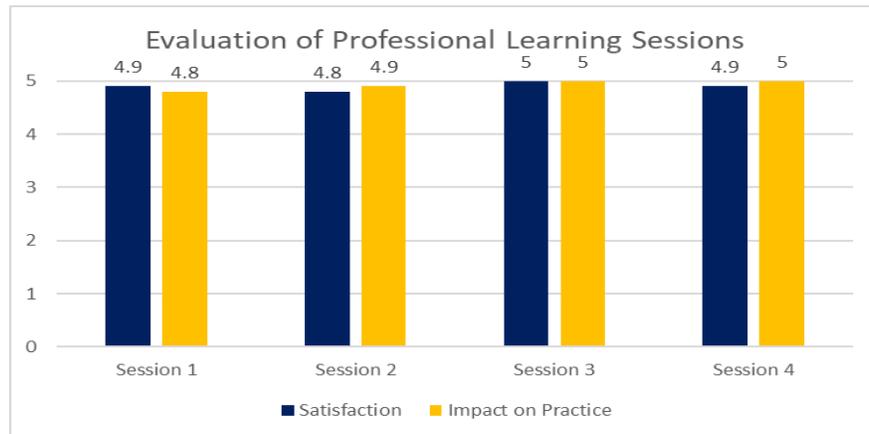
Dr. Amy Murdoch

Partner LEA: Cincinnati Public Schools

The work outlined in our grant was successfully completed during the 2019-2020 school year as planned. The work of our grant focused on two parts: collaboration with Cincinnati Public Schools and strengthening our 12-hour reading core. Our MSJ Reading Faculty (5 faculty members) collaborated with teams of 2-3 specialists (reading, EL, intervention) from nine Cincinnati Public Schools and the K-3 Reading Manager, Lucie Collier. We engaged in professional learning together around the science of reading using content presented by the MSJ PIs on the grant and utilizing Dr. David Kilpatrick’s two books—*Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties* and *Equipped for Reading Success*. We meet across four meetings and created a train-the-trainer model so the specialists could engage in a similar training and book study with their school faculty. We also used the meetings to learn about CPS’s new reading curriculum and get CPS educators’ input on our teacher training revisions. The meetings all went well and were highly rated (see graph below). Our MSJ faculty additionally met once a month across six months to collaboratively revise our 12-hour core and strengthen student teaching placements.

All of our reading syllabi were revised and strengthened, and an alignment tool was used to ensure careful sequencing of content and skill development across our courses for our teacher candidates. With CPS teachers (and then with other stakeholders across school districts in our region) we also created a list of strong practicum and student teaching placements.

We know this will positively affect our preparation of teachers. At the conclusion of each session with CPS educators, a survey was given to understand if they found the session enjoyable and useful (satisfaction) and if they thought the session would affect their practices with students (impact). The scale was 1 (not useful/no impact on practice) – 5 (extremely useful/high impact on practice). See graph below. The reading specialist continued the book club format across the 2020 summer and invited MSJ Faculty. We read and discussed *The Writing Revolution* by Wexler. The work strengthened our collective knowledge and sense of community.



“Incorporating the Science of Reading into our curriculum and instructional practices has definitely benefitted our students in the kindergarten through grade three levels. We are fortunate to have a large and growing number of teachers who have learned the Science of Reading through the graduate program at Mount St. Joseph University. The work with the STARS grant has deepened this knowledge and furthered our connection to MSJ, no influencing initial teacher training! As educators, we now have a powerful, common language around evidenced-based practices on how the brain makes sense of text that we

employ daily to help our students become thriving readers and writers.” – Lucie Collier, K-3 Literacy Manager Cincinnati Public Schools (left CPS at the end of 2020).

Muskingum University

Empowering Reader Achievement (ERA)

Dr. Allison Gunter

Partner LEA: East Muskingum Local Schools

The work we have done at Muskingum University, *Empowering Reader Achievement* (ERA), was designed to strengthen the core reading courses through syllabi revisions. Our syllabi revisions ensure the inclusion of the essential components of reading instruction, building an understanding of the Science of Reading, and connecting both the components and the Science of Reading to the Simple View of Reading. Additionally, the work of the grant is to create a flexible model of professional development in a rural area of the state which often experiences limited access to professional development. To this end, the ERA Team has developed a microsite to be housed on the Muskingum University Educator Preparation Program website to provide access to all teachers of literacy. The microsite consists of four modules grounded in the Science of Reading. It will focus on understanding the needs of learners with reading challenges, including dyslexia, multi-tiered systems of support in literacy, foundations of the Science of Reading, and science-based strategies for strengthening vocabulary. As a team, we are beginning to see the fruits of our labor as one of the revised course syllabi was piloted this past fall and spring semester. Some ISMM students who took the Foundations in Literacy course shared how the information they were learning in the course enhanced their ability to understand better the implications of using a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). MTSS was a concept briefly covered when discussing phonemic awareness and more deeply covered when discussing the IEP referral process.

As we continue to finalize our work on the ERA project, our school partners have expressed their excitement in anticipation of the final products and being able to be thought partners in the work: *“So excited to get to participate in the modules”* (M.S. at Franklin Local schools). This teacher from our partner at Franklin Local Schools thinks it is fantastic that such great information is being offered at no cost.

“The work that has been done on this project has provided the district I work in the opportunity to have a voice in what we would like to see coming out of our Local University as well as an opportunity to grow ourselves professionally in the understanding and implementation of the Science of Reading. The project has fostered a wonderful partnership” – Administrator, Rolling Hills School District

Ohio University

Curricular Revisions to Engage All Teachers in Growing Readers (CREATinG Readers)

Dr. Sara Helfrich

Partner LEAs: Alexander Local Schools, Athens City Schools

The purpose of the *Curricular Revisions to Engage All Teachers in Growing Readers* (CREATinG Readers) project is to redesign the 12-hour reading core courses to prepare teacher candidates to be better able to teach all children to read, including those with disabilities and learning challenges. Additionally, a website of research-based literacy resources will be developed. Faculty, teacher candidates, and mentor teachers will utilize the website in an ongoing effort to provide the most up-to-date educational resources for further learning and practice in university- and school-based classrooms. The members of this team include university faculty and classroom teachers working with teacher candidates spanning all licensure levels P-

12 and Special Education. The team worked together to develop and revise syllabi for five reading courses, including aligning to state and SPA standards, updating learning outcomes, providing a list of research-based instructional materials, and suggesting assignments and assessments.

This work has made us think more critically of both the university- and school-based work we do; that is, what we ask candidates to do in their reading courses and what we ask them to engage in while in the P-12 classroom. We have become more aware of the needs of all learners (P-16) and what we, as educators, can do to meet them. This includes the arrangement of courses (when they are offered within a program and how they align with work in the field), the need to revisit topics across courses, and the importance of making sure all assignments are meaningful to all learners, P-16.

"This has been important work for us to engage in, as it's the first time in a long time that we've addressed the reading curriculum as a whole as opposed to one course at a time. Looking at it holistically has made us more aware of the good things we do, the things we can do better, and what we've failed to address until this point. This will really help our candidates, and just as if not more importantly, the P-12 students they work with now and will work with in the future" – Sara Helfrich

Youngstown State University

A Sustainable Literacy Partnership Between YSU and Youngstown City School District

Dr. Marcia Matanin

Partner LEA: Youngstown City Schools

Our Literacy Advisory Team was made up of 50% of individuals from our partner district who provided input for our redesigned courses. We jointly developed a repository of literacy materials and have given access to all teachers in our partner district, as well as our teacher candidates. This Fall semester, we will teach our Foundations literacy course in one of our partner schools, with tutoring immediately following.

The impact of our work has been increased knowledge and skills related to the teaching of literacy for EVERYONE!

"This has been a fabulous opportunity for Youngstown State University to partner with Youngstown City Schools to positively impact P-12 student learning".

Walsh University

The Walsh Literacy Initiative: Dive In, Learn, and Change

Dr. David Brobeck

Partners: Perry Local Schools, SST Region 5, SST Region 9

Walsh has provided a multi-level relationship with our partner districts.

- Walsh hosted LETRS PD for partners.
- All courses, undergraduate and graduate were converted to content based on the Science of Reading
- Walsh preservice teachers, who are in classes based on the science of reading, were assigned field hours in SSTR 5 & 9 district using the science.

- Walsh offers graduate credit for partner teachers seeking graduate credit towards license renewal, a reading endorsement, or a master's degree.
- Read-A-Palooza went well beyond the partnership to a worldwide audience. The video library from the event has more than 10,000 views.

The primary impact of our work has been to provide effective reading instruction to a greater number of children throughout northeast Ohio and beyond. We changed our practice and have been able share our story with other Institutions of Higher Education and P-20 instructors.

“The LETRS professional development has given Walsh’s Education faculty the content to continue to provide our undergraduate and graduate students with exemplary literacy instruction – always consistent with best practice...scientific, research-based methodologies. As a Science of Reading EPP, all programs embrace this pedagogy.” – Professor Betty Marko, Walsh University

“Louisa Moats has famously asserted that “teaching reading is rocket science”. This is at the heart of LETRS, a professional development course, which translates research into practical guidance and accelerates teacher knowledge about evidence-based literacy practices. Specifically, LETRS empowers and equips educators by deepening knowledge about language structures, how the brain reads, why some students find reading difficult, and what can be done to prevent and remediate those difficulties. While LETRS is certainly not the only way to deliver professional development about the science of reading, it is an excellent accelerative tool for interested districts to consider. I have been encouraged by the passion, enthusiasm, and confidence it has generated throughout Stark County and throughout Ohio. Teachers who have been through the modules report that they feel more confident in their ability to diagnose and provide targeted evidence-based instruction--- and their kids are growing!

Personally, I am thankful that I was afforded the opportunity to learn alongside colleagues at Walsh University. I believe that my participation in this cohort was one factor that prepared me for doctoral work in Mount St. Joseph University's Reading Science program, and that is an incredible gift. I wholeheartedly believe that teaching is an artform, but it must be informed by science. We must never stop learning, questioning, and honing our skills. This is important work, and we are at a tipping point. We have an opportunity to use this momentum to change reading outcomes! We just have to seize the opportunity and stay the course...until every child can read.” – Amanda Nickerson, Stark County ESC