REVIEW OF THE M.S.ED. IN READING

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 13.1315
Reading Teacher Education

OVERVIEW

The M.S.Ed. in Reading program at Illinois State University is housed in the School of Teaching and Learning within the College of Education. The School of Teaching and Learning awards degrees in the following programs: Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Middle Level Education. A teacher candidate is able to earn additional endorsements on their professional education license. Early Childhood teacher candidates may earn the following endorsements: bilingual, reading teacher, and/or English as a second language (ESL). Middle level candidates must choose two of the following endorsements for their plans of study: language arts, math, science, social science, or English as a second language (ESL). In addition to the above-mentioned endorsements, Early Childhood candidates may pursue a Special Educator Letter of Approval that is highly desired by Illinois districts, and they may also pursue a minor in bilingual education. The School of Teaching and Learning provides a professional educator sequence for many secondary education programs. Finally, the School offers graduate programs which include: a Master's in Teaching and Learning, a Master's in Reading, and an Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning. The School also offers a post-baccalaureate program for the Library Information Specialist endorsement. The last review of the M.S.Ed. in Reading program occurred in 2012-2013.

The M.S.Ed. in Education in Reading is designed for educators who teach reading and writing in kindergarten through 12th grade. The program prepares teachers to assume roles such as reading specialist, literacy coach, and reading teacher interventionist. Candidates complete coursework in literacy theory, content area literacy, and instructional strategies. The program prepares teachers to plan reading and writing curriculum, implement language-centered instructional strategies, and design effective assessment programs.

This program leads to the Reading Specialist Certification by the Illinois State Board of Education. In addition to the coursework, the students must have two years of teaching experience and pass a certification exam to be eligible for the Reading Specialist Certification.

Enrollment and Degrees Conferred, 2012-2019
M.S.Ed. in Reading, Illinois State University
First Majors Only

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Enrollments, fall census day	53	44	49	65	35	29	26	29
Degrees conferred, graduating fiscal year	28	19	13	16	13	33	17	9

Table notes:
Graduating Fiscal Year consists of summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order. For example, Graduating Fiscal Year 2018 consists of the following terms: summer 2017, fall 2017, and spring 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Program goals

The program goals were developed from the Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals of the International Reading Association (IRA) which are the standards which are held as true indicators of quality by the profession. The program curriculum is designed to give students a core of relevant courses that form a foundation in literacy research, leadership, and preparing and certifying literacy professionals.

<u>Students learning outcomes</u>

International Reading Association (IRA) Standards for Reading

IRA Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge - Candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.

    1.1 Candidates understand major theories and empirical research that describe the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development, processes, and components, including word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading-writing connections.

    1.2 Candidates understand the historically shared knowledge of the profession and changes over time in the perceptions of reading and writing development, processes, and components.

    1.3 Candidates understand the role of professional judgment and practical knowledge for improving all students' reading development and achievement.

IRA Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction - Candidates use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing.

    2.1 Candidates use foundational knowledge to design or implement an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced curriculum.

    2.2 Candidates use appropriate and varied instructional approaches, including those that develop word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading-writing connections.

    2.3 Candidates use a wide range of texts (e.g., narrative, expository, and poetry) from traditional print, digital, and online resources.

IRA Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation Candidates use a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading and writing instruction.

    3.1 Candidates understand types of assessments and their purposes, strengths, and limitations.

    3.2 Candidates select, develop, administer, and interpret assessments, both traditional print and electronic, for specific purposes.

    3.3 Candidates use assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction.

    3.4 Candidates communicate assessment results and implications to a variety of audiences.

IRA Standard 4: Diversity Candidates create and engage their students in literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect, and a valuing of differences in our society.

    4.1 Candidates recognize, understand, and value the forms of diversity that exist in society and their importance in learning to read and write.

    4.2 Candidates use a literacy curriculum and engage in instructional practices that positively impact students' knowledge, beliefs, and engagement with the features of diversity.4.3Candidates develop and implement strategies to advocate for equity.

IRA Standard 5: Literate Environment Candidates create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate use of assessments.

    5.1 Candidates design the physical environment to optimize students' use of traditional print, digital, and online resources in reading and writing instruction.

    5.2 Candidates design a social environment that is low risk and includes choice, motivation, and scaffolded support to optimize students' opportunities for learning to read and write.

    5.3 Candidates use routines to support reading and writing instruction (e.g., time allocation, transitions from one activity to another, discussions, and peer feedback).5.4 Candidates use a variety of classroom configurations (i.e., whole class, small group, and individual) to differentiate instruction.

IRA Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership Candidates recognize the importance of, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.

    6.1 Candidates demonstrate foundational knowledge of adult learning theories and related research about organizational change, professional development, and school culture.

    6.2 Candidates display positive dispositions related to their own reading and writing and the teaching of reading and writing, and pursue the development of individual professional knowledge and behaviors.

    6.3 Candidates participate in, design, facilitate, lead, and evaluate effective and differentiated professional development programs.

    6.4 Candidates understand and influence local, state, or national policy decisions.

<u>Program curriculum</u> (2018-2019)

The M.S.Ed. in Reading requires 36 credit hours. This includes 27 credit hours of core courses, 6 credit hours of professional research experience, and 3 credit hours of electives.

Program delivery

The program is offered on the Normal campus.
The program is delivered primarily through face-to-face or blended face-to-face/online instruction. The program is currently transitioning to be an online program. Fall 2019 will be the first semester in which all classes will be offered online. It will be several years before all of the courses are offered as online courses.

Department faculty (Fall 2019)

42 tenure track faculty members (12 Professors, 16 Associate Professors, and 14 Assistant Professors)
75 non-tenure track faculty members (12 full-time, 63 part-time, totaling 35.50 FTE)
Undergraduate student to faculty ratio: 22 to 1
Undergraduate student to tenure-line faculty ratio: 40 to 1

Specialized accreditation

Previously, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) served as an accreditor of this program. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) has taken on the role of accreditation for teacher education and because this program leads to advanced teacher certification it will be included in CAEP Accreditation. However, because the Advanced Program standards were not finalized in time for the undergraduate CAEP Accreditation visit last year, this program was not included. The program faculty are planning to seek CAEP accreditation for this advanced program in the next mid-cycle review.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand

There have been no major changes in the academic discipline or the profession that would impact this program. The demand for this program is based on the need for teacher continuing education for licensure reasons and pay increases that come with additional coursework and advanced degrees. One change that the program has seen is a greater demand for online courses/programs. Many of the competitor programs began to offer online degrees and for that reason, among other, the faculty have begun to shift toward an online program.

Responses to previous program review recommendations

The 2012-2013 program review resulted in three recommendations.
1. *As resources permit, continue to seek opportunities for off-campus cohorts to build enrollment and to diversify the student population.* There has been one off-campus cohort in Pekin since the previous program review. The School of Teaching and Learning has spoken with several additional districts about cohorts, but none have materialized. It is uncommon that a school district has the financial resources to pay for a cohort. However, the online program in Teaching and Learning has allowed the School to reach more students than a cohort typically does, so the faculty have invested the program faculty's time and energy into developing the online program for the Reading Master's degree.
2. *Continue to review the program and assessment and revise them as necessary to ensure alignment with 2010 IRA standards*. The current program assessments were redesigned in 2013 to align with both NCATE and ILA (formerly IRA) standards.
3. *Continue to develop and monitor coaching experiences for student, and devise performance-based assessment to document student performance in working with teachers in their schools*. One of the assessments in the current assessment plan is a Portrait of a Literacy Coach. This assessment focuses on learning the roles related to the position of a literacy coach and the coaching cycle. In this assessment, students are expected to work with other educators to coach them through a literacy event including pre and post conferencing.

Major findings

Based on the program self-study, the program faculty are pleased with the M.S.Ed. in Reading program. Program alumni and current students seem to be pleased with the program and their experiences in the School. All of the students and alumni that responded to the survey answered that they were pleased with the program. The alumni especially believe that the faculty were knowledgeable and that the year-long action research sequence at the end of the program was beneficial. The program faculty believe that the program is well-designed and avoids duplication of content and experiences throughout the program. The faculty also believe that the expertise in the areas addressed by the Reading Master's program is very strong, especially if the program were better connected to the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy. Students also have a good pass rate on the Reading Specialist exam, once they have completed the program.

While the faculty are proud of the program, there are some areas for improvement to better meet the needs of the students. The program faculty believe that revising the program to be a 30-hour program and moving the program to an online format (with both synchronous and asynchronous courses) will make the program more attractive to students and will grow the size of the program. The faculty also recognize the need to revise the program's assessment plan to reflect new external standards and accreditation needs. There is a continued demand for the program and that, and with the changes listed above, this program will better meet student needs and will attract additional new students.

Initiatives and plans

The main actions that the program faculty intend to take in the next program review cycle are to:
• Transition the program to be a fully online program.
• Revise the assessment plan to meet the needs of accreditation and to generate data that is useful for program review and revision.
• Plan and implement recruitment strategies to increase the size and diversity of the program.
• Find ways to better connect the program with the Mary and Jean Borg Center for Reading and Literacy.

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**PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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Review Outcome: The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the M.S.Ed. in Reading to be in <u>Good Standing</u>.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks the program for a concise and critical self-study report. The M.S.Ed. in Reading program is committed to preparing teachers to plan and implement curriculum, instructional environments, and evaluation programs that ensure literacy learning of all children. The program serves students interested in advanced work in language and literacy education (e.g., classroom teachers and reading specialists) and provides course support for students enrolled in other university programs including those in Special Education, Teaching and Learning, and English. The program leads to a Reading Specialist Certification by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The committee commends the program faculty's efforts to substantially revise the program curriculum, both with respect to content and delivery. The committee applauds the addition of three new courses that focus on literacy evaluation leadership, social and cultural diversity, and learner diversity. The committee commends the faculty's participation in the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology's (CTLT) Define, Align, Refine, and Teach (DART) program to facilitate the transition of their courses to the new online format. We encourage the program faculty continue these efforts through CTLT's Align, Improve, and Meet (AIM) Online program.

The committee recognizes that enrollment rates have increased since the program has begun the transition to online delivery and notes that the enrollments have stabilized near the program's current target. The committee commends the program on its ability to cap enrollments in their courses to ensure the quality of the students' experiences. Additionally, time to degree statistics suggest that most of the students are completing the program within three years.

The committee commends faculty members of the program for their scholarly contributions to the M.S.Ed. in Reading program. All tenure track faculty members in the School of Teaching and Learning are members of the graduate faculty. Accordingly, all tenure track faculty members teach graduate courses, supervise and advise graduate students, and serve on thesis/dissertation committees. Faculty members are active researchers who publish in international peer-reviewed journals. The committee recommends that the program faculty develop further opportunities for their students to present their scholarly activities (e.g., explore research symposia using an online format for their action research projects).

Follow-up Reports.
Assessment Plan. The Academic Planning Committee recognizes faculty efforts in developing an assessment plan that aligns with the standards of external bodies such as ISBE and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). However, the program faculty report that the assessment plan has not been revised since 2013 and needs to be updated to reflect current standards. The committee asks that the program work with University Assessment Services to revise the existing plan so that it not only aligns with these new standards, but also provides meaningful information to guide faculty in their program revisions. The committee also asks the faculty to implement the revised plan by collecting and analyzing data, utilizing findings to inform programmatic decisions, and documenting decisions made and the rationale for them. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to submit a revised assessment plan to the Office of the Provost by May 1, 2021, and to submit a report to the Office of the Provost regarding implementation of the plan and any actions plans that have resulted from the data collected by May 1, 2022.

Comparator Programs. The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational institutions in the self-study report guidelines to provide faculty with opportunities to consider the niche their program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The committee commends the program on their aspirational analysis. However, the committee asks the program to revisit the comparator section of the self-study. Although the faculty did provide a table of metrics from comparator institutions, no analysis or interpretation of these metrics was presented. In a subsequent follow-up report, the committee suggests the faculty address this section through an expanded analyses of comparator programs that include a discussion of how these comparisons have informed the strategic planning of the program. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of comparator institutions and to summarize the findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 1, 2021.

Recommendations.
The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty members of the M.S. Ed. in Reading program for the opportunity to provide input regarding advanced educator preparation in Reading at Illinois State University through consideration of the self-study report submitted by faculty. The following committee recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with Reading faculty members. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2027, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Develop a plan to monitor and assess the impact of the transition to online program. The committee recognizes that the program's transition to a primarily online program requires thoughtful planning and recommends that faculty members closely monitor and evaluate the impacts of the online plan of study on student recruitment, retention, graduation, licensure, and job placement. Comparability of program requirements across delivery modes is required and monitored by university, state, and Higher Learning Commission (the University's regional accreditation body) policies, and the committee suggests that faculty consider how to deliver the program online to meet student needs without sacrificing program quality and the extent and strength of relations with program alumni. Findings from the implementation of this plan and student learning outcomes assessment processes embedded in the program can aid faculty in conducting its analyses and identifying the need for subsequent curriculum revisions. The committee suggests that the program broaden the scope of their planning to include feedback from additional key stakeholders beyond alumni (e.g., students, districts that employ their graduates) for guidance during this transition. The committee also urges faculty to look to experiences of other public universities with delivery of online sequences. By studying those programs, faculty might identify practices that could be implemented in the Master's in Reading program at Illinois State.

Develop a plan for recruitment and enrollment growth. According to the self-study report, target enrollment for the program is 20 students per year, but the program faculty states an interest in growing the program to levels closer to their comparator programs. The committee supports faculty efforts to explore further expansion of program enrollment during the next program review cycle and concurs with faculty that additional enrollment growth may be possible given that the plan of study is offered online. The committee encourages the program to develop and implement a plan for student recruitment and retention, including strategies for increasing enrollment by students from racial and ethnic groups traditionally underrepresented in the program and discipline. Some elements of a recruitment plan have already been identified by faculty in its self-study report, including advertising at state-level teacher conferences and the development of a listserv for alumni. The committee recommends that the program work with University Marketing and Communications to pursue additional methods of recruiting. The committee also urges the program faculty to evaluate the effects of recruitment efforts on enrollment and, in turn, on the ability of the college to provide high-quality master's-level reading education.

Continue to focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. As indicated in the self-study report, the committee encourages the program to pursue its goals related to further developing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment that effectively supports students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Develop a plan for alumni tracking and engagement. The committee concurs with faculty in its plan to design and implement a system for tracking program alumni and then using the system to enhance alumni networking. The alumni survey is a good start but developing a broader plan may further strengthen alumni relations through more frequent surveys, an alumni advisory board, newsletters and other web-based information, and special events such as online alumni seminars and research symposia. These activities may become even more important in the years ahead as the program becomes fully online and the program's alumni become more diverse. The program could benefit from increased involvement of its alumni in providing input regarding the program and in mentoring students. Additionally, such a tracking system could be used to better monitor the types of job placements and job placement rates of program graduates.

Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan. After the program has revised its existing plan, the committee encourages faculty to continue its implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize information gathered through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done. The committee encourages faculty to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in assessing student learning to identify any modifications to the plan faculty may deem necessary.