The Department of Curriculum and Instruction offers coursework leading to a Master of Science in Education with a major in Reading. Within this major, elementary and secondary teachers gain a comprehensive perspective on literacy development. Both the Reading Specialist and the Reading Teacher emphases are designed for teachers who wish to increase their knowledge and skills in delivering reading instruction for students in grades K-12. The Reading Specialist emphasis is designed for those who wish to become leaders in improving reading instruction by providing technical assistance or professional development in their school districts.

Admission Requirements
Applicants for admission to the Master of Science in Education (MSEd) degree program with a major in Reading must have earned a bachelor’s degree from an accredited institution, hold an appropriate teaching license, and be accepted by the School of Graduate Studies with a cumulative undergraduate GPA of 2.75 or 3.0 in the last two years.

Degree Requirements
The MSEd degree in Reading requires a minimum of 33 semester hours (sh) of coursework. Fifteen of the 33 sh include the following core requirements: Literature and the Reader, Integrating Literacy Instruction in the Elementary Curriculum, Psychology of Reading, Leadership in Reading, and Methods of Research. In addition to the core courses, candidates select from one of the following areas: Reading Specialist emphasis or Reading Teacher emphasis.

Reading Specialist Emphasis
The Reading Specialist emphasis is designed for professionals who wish to pursue advanced preparation and experience in literacy instruction, leadership, and diagnosis and assessment. This emphasis is designed to meet the requirements established by the State of Illinois for licensure as a Reading Specialist Teacher. After the 15 sh core curriculum, candidates complete coursework in reading development, reading difficulties and interventions for diverse learners, use of research to inform instruction, literacy coaching, as well as practicum placements.

Reading Teacher Emphasis
The Reading Teacher emphasis is designed for individuals who wish to enhance their knowledge of literacy so they are more effective classroom teachers. Candidates select either an early literacy (birth to grade 5) or middle childhood/adolescent (grades 5-12) concentration. After the 15 sh core curriculum, candidates take 9 sh sequence courses in an area of concentration that includes practicum placements and an additional 9 sh of approved elective courses.

Requirements for the Reading Specialist Endorsement
- Master’s or higher degree
- Two years teaching experience, which can be completed during the program
- Successful completion of the Reading Specialist content test and the appropriate Assessment of Professional Teaching (APT)
- Completion of an approved reading specialist program

Career Opportunities
Graduates of the MSEd program are prepared for a variety of professional positions: as effective elementary and secondary classroom teachers, as reading specialists endorsed to teach in specialized reading programs such as Title I at either the elementary or secondary level, and as K-12 reading specialists and literacy coaches.

Faculty Expertise
The faculty members in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction have a strong interest in helping teachers enhance their effectiveness and their ability to promote student learning. All faculty have practical experience in public schools. Professors in the department have a doctorate in their field. Faculty are actively involved in a variety of professional organizations; provide continuing education workshops for teachers; and publish books and articles in state, national, and international journals. The Illinois Reading Council Journal is housed in our department, and our literacy faculty author the monthly columns for the publication.
Assistantship Opportunities

Graduate assistantships are available for those pursuing an MSEd degree with a major in Reading. This position offers the opportunity for graduate students to provide instructional, research, and clerical support for faculty. A graduate assistant completes at least 9 sht of coursework each semester and works with one or more faculty members for 20 hours each week. Graduate assistants do not pay tuition for these courses and receive a monthly stipend. Assistantships are awarded for a single year but may be renewed for one additional year. Positions are available on both the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses.

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to, minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, and veteran status.

Distinctive Features

Teachers completing this program and appropriate coursework are eligible to apply for a Reading Specialist or Reading Teacher Endorsement in Illinois or Iowa. The MSEd degree in Reading combines the rigor of an outstanding academic program with the personal attention of caring departmental faculty. Courses are offered on the Macomb and Quad Cities campuses. Most courses are offered one evening each week; however, courses are occasionally offered in a six Saturday format.

The Reading Specialist emphasis prepares candidates to not only work with struggling readers in the elementary school, but in middle and high schools as well. Candidates will complete an elementary and a middle/high school reading methods course and a literature course.

The Reading Teacher emphasis prepares candidates to work with their desired age group of struggling readers in the elementary schools or in the middle/high schools. Coursework will focus on the grade-level span chosen by the candidate.

Accreditation

The Graduate Reading Program is accredited through the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the International Reading Association. This program has been approved by the Illinois State Board of Education. Western Illinois University’s certification officer is authorized to verify coursework for those individuals seeking the Iowa Reading Specialist and Reading Teacher Endorsements.

Contact Information

For admissions process and general program information, contact the School of Graduate Studies, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 298-1806, (877) WIU GRAD toll-free, Grad-Office@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/grad.

For specific program questions, contact Dr. Marie Cheak, Graduate Coordinator, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455, (309) 762-3999 ext. 62264, MJ-Cheak@wiu.edu, wiu.edu/curriculum_and_instruction.

“I am very glad I chose WIU’s Reading Program. The faculty is wonderful, and all of my classes prepared me for teaching reading.”

— Sarah Youngblood

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