

**Annual Report
2015-16 Academic Year
University of Alaska Southeast School of Education**

April 2017

M.Ed. Reading

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SPA: International Literacy Association

1. Program Overview

1.1. Degrees, diplomas, certificates, and/or minors and the mission and goals of each. Source: UAS Catalog.

The graduate programs in Reading offer a Masters of Education (M.Ed.) in Reading-Reading Specialist and a Graduate Certificate (and Alaska State Endorsement) in Reading

The M.Ed. in Reading program is designed specifically to deepen K-12 teachers' pedagogical content knowledge with the aim of improved student (K-12) literacy achievement. This program is delivered in face-to-face and e-Learning formats so that it is possible to complete the degree while teaching in one's own district. Technological tools facilitate course delivery, communication, and research. Enhancements include streamed video, braided discussions, audio conferencing, video reflections, and use of Internet resources. Students in the reading program focus on developmental, cognitive, and sociocultural aspects of reading acquisition, instruction, and assessment. Professional and caring attitudes and beliefs about teaching lead to responsive and rigorous instruction in reading and literacy for all K-12 students, including those who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Accomplished teaching professionals promote collaboration with students, colleagues, parents, families, and the larger community to improve literacy learning and student achievement in their contexts. Students prepare an exit portfolio in line with the goals of the School of Education and the program standards of the International Reading Association to demonstrate levels of knowledge and pedagogy commensurate with the skills and dispositions of highly competent advanced teaching professionals.

All reading courses are delivered via synchronous methodology, meeting once a week for two hours using Blackboard Collaborate. Additional professional interaction related to professional readings is required via a discussion board. One course requires participants to travel to Juneau for a summer supervised practicum course, where they study instruction and assessment, demonstrate their practical skills for assessment, and receive feedback to improve their pedagogical practice.

The Reading M.Ed. serves teachers throughout the state of Alaska who wish to know more about teaching reading and literacy, either to do a better job within the classroom assignment they already have, or to become a reading specialist. Reading specialists draw students school-wide who are struggling in reading achievement to provide extra instruction, and/or they coach teachers to improve their knowledge of instructional techniques to better serve the students they are teaching. The role of the reading specialist has been shifting nationally from solely that of additional instructor to being an instructional coach, or a mix of both. The UAS M.Ed. Reading program has shifted its content to reflect these professional trends and appropriately prepare its graduates.

The UAS Reading M.Ed. serves an important role in the State of Alaska. The ability to read effectively is a student's cornerstone to success. Those students who struggle with reading become frustrated and often do not wish to or are unable to complete a K-12 education. Alaska's K-12 reading scores are dismally lower than they should be. While many people assume that initial preparation for teaching should be sufficient training for a teacher to teach reading effectively, this is not the case. Especially in Alaska, students come to school with varied needs, and teachers require a depth of understanding that requires a substantial period of learning time. Teachers need continual learning to be effective in matching reading and writing instruction to student needs. Reading specialists are needed to act as coaches with classroom teachers in their building or their district, to facilitate the professional change needed by each teacher in order to provide effective reading instruction to their K-12 students.

2. Program Student Learning Outcomes

Each course throughout the program has specific learning outcomes aligned to the below standards that inform the overarching learning outcomes for the program as a whole.

International Reading Association 2010 Standards

STANDARD	ELEMENTS
Candidates understand the theoretical and evidence-based foundations of reading and writing processes and instruction.	1.1 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 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 Understand the role of professional judgment and practical knowledge for improving all students' reading development and achievement.
Candidates use instructional approaches, materials, and an integrated, comprehensive, balanced curriculum to support student learning in reading and writing.	2.1 Use foundational knowledge to design or implement an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced curriculum.

	<p>2.2 Use appropriate and varied instructional approaches, including those that develop word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading-writing connections.</p> <p>Reading specialists may have responsibilities for teaching students who struggle with learning to read and must also be able to support teachers in their efforts to provide effective instruction for all students. McKenne and Stahl (2009) define <i>reading</i> as including word recognition, language comprehension, and strategic knowledge....</p>
	2.3 Use a wide range of texts (e.g., narrative, expository, and poetry) from traditional print, digital, and online resources.
Candidates use a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading and writing instruction.	3.1 Understand types of assessments and their purposes, strengths, and limitations.
	3.2 Select, develop, administer, and interpret assessments, both traditional print and electronic, for specific purposes
	3.3 Uses assessment information to plan and evaluate instruction.
	3.4 Communicate assessment results and implications to a variety of audiences.
Candidates create and engage their students in literacy practices that develop awareness, understanding, respect, and a valuing of differences in our society.	4.1 Recognize, understand, and value the forms of diversity that exist in society and their importance in learning to read and write.
	4.2 Use a literacy curriculum and engage in instructional practices that positively impact students' knowledge, beliefs, and engagement with the features of diversity.
	4.3 Develop and implement strategies to advocate for equity.
Candidates create a literate environment that fosters reading and writing by integrating foundational knowledge, instructional practices, approaches and methods, curriculum materials, and the appropriate	5.1 Design the physical environment to optimize students' use of traditional print, digital, and online resources in reading and writing instruction.

use of assessments.	
	5.2 Design a social environment that is low risk, includes choice, motivation, and scaffolded support to optimize students; opportunities for learning to read and write.
	5.3 Use routines to support reading and writing instruction (e.g., time allocation, transitions from one activity to another; discussions, and peer feedback.
	5.4 Use a variety of classroom configurations (i.e., whole class, small group, and individual) to differentiate instruction.
Candidates recognize the importance of, demonstrate, and facilitate professional learning and leadership as a career-long effort and responsibility.	6.1 Demonstrate foundational knowledge of adult learning theories and related research about organizational change, professional development, and school culture
	6.2 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 Participate in, design, facilitate, lead, and evaluate effective and differentiated professional development programs.
	6.4 Understand and influence local, state, or national policy decisions.

3. How Data Are Collected

Assignments aligned with the learning outcomes (ILA 2010 Standards) are designed with corresponding rubrics. These assessments are directly linked to standards. Program data are collected at several junctures, according to CAEP and ILA. The assessments most recently used for reporting and analysis are as follows:

1	Licensure assessment, or other content-based assessment	Foundations Essay		Early program
2	Assessment of Content Knowledge	Portfolio	EDRE698	End of program
3	Assessment of Candidate ability to plan instruction	Classroom-Based Reading Program Plan	EDRE676	Mid-Program Review
4	Assessment of internship, practicum, or other clinical experience	Teaching Video & Reflection Project	EDRE677	mid-program
5	Assessment of candidate effect on student learning	Instructional Case Study	EDRE676	Mid-Program Review

8	Book Selectio n Project						X						X	X						
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3. Data Collected

Data collected from each course, as listed in the above eight assessments inform the below evaluation. Additionally, student grades and qualitative responses to mid-semester reflections and end of course reflections are drawn on to continue to refine and improve practice.

Data in relation to the final portfolio is included in this report. (Appendix A). The discussion below, however, incorporates analysis of additional data sources.

4. Data Evaluation

Use of Assessment Results to Improve Program:

It is important to note that these overarching findings in the assessment data are triangulated with observations of students' performance and discussion in class, looking closely at student work, as well as student reflections and feedback (both informal and through course evaluations).

Overall, data indicate that candidates are able to meet the standards (IRA 2010). Because each of the candidates is a practicing teacher, opportunities to try out the ideas examined in the courses in real time, is a powerful learning tool. This field-based approach to the entire program, and the opportunity to continually apply theory and practice is essential. Each course has at least one or more field-based assessments. As we have moved forward, additional opportunities to engage in video practicum experiences (instructional, coaching, and leadership) continues to deepen their ability to reflect on practice and these experiences. These experiences have supported and extended teachers' proficiencies, as indicated by the data.

A. Content Knowledge

Summary of the Findings

In multiple assessments (Foundations Essay and Portfolio) evidence indicated that students needed a stronger understanding of not only the different Foundational Theories (IRA Standard 1) that shape the field, but the ways in which these theories influence research, and the ways in which they have been in conversation with one another over time. Policy influences that have resulted from these different theories have also been underrepresented in course content, as evidenced by students' demonstrated understandings.

Changes Made or Planned For

Course text selections have been adjusted to provide a wider and deeper range of readings. The addition of a reflective reading response journal to four of the courses (EDRE 671, 674, 675, 679) provides additional support for students' processing of the readings, as well as a space for increased interaction with instructors. These dialogue journals have shown good results in the depth of in-class discussion, and as prewriting for different writing tasks.

Additionally, an increase in time spent examining theories of adult learning and systems thinking (IRA Standard 6) were added to the leadership course for the 2015-16 school year. Students were asked to provide more explicit evidence in their different assessments related to work with colleagues. The role of the reading specialist as an interventionist had a prominent presence in the program, however, the role of the Reading Specialist as a coach or program leader has been present, but there had previously been fewer opportunities to build a strong knowledge base in relation to these roles. Increasing the amount of preparation for these experiences, has been a goal for the past two years (based on observed quality in products and not only the scores). Additional video analysis (for both the mentoring work and the professional development design) has provided additional opportunities for feedback and analysis, while also providing opportunities for increased discussion and connection to research.

B. Professional Knowledge, Skill and Dispositions

Summary of the Findings

Teachers' professional knowledge has been strong throughout the assessments, and an area of growth is the continued connection between theory and practice. With deeper understandings of foundational theories, teachers are able to continue to explicitly connect their judgment and the instructional decisions they make to the research they are engaged with in course work. The reading journal provides one avenue for this as an ongoing and regular practice.

Changes Made or Planned For

For the past few years there has not been a dispositions assessment beyond what has been noted within other assessments or in the portfolio (IRA Standard 6). Adding a mid-program reflection and dispositions questionnaire back into the program allows for additional data in this area, as has regular and ongoing analysis of online discussion. These measures provide additional data for both the students and instructors (IRA Standard 6.2).

Increased opportunities for collaborative inquiry into classroom practice and looking at student work (using a variety of methods and protocols) are being woven throughout the courses (IRA Standard 2). In addition to providing learning opportunities to influence classroom practice, these sessions also support students in developing proficiencies for Coaching and Leadership.

Although there is indication that teachers have developed facility with selecting narrative literature for their students, there is limited evidence that they are able to exceed the standard for use of a wide variety of text (IRA 2.3). An assignment has been added to the content literacy course (EDRE 679) that supported students in developing more extensive views of texts and how they might be used in classrooms. This focus on developing a Materials Collection, with a focus on ancillary texts (expository, print, digital, poetry, visual) to work in conjunction with more traditional texts provides students a chance to explore how these texts might work in conjunction with one another to support students' literacy learning (IRA 2.3)

C. Student Learning

Summary of the Findings

Growth in student learning is evidenced as we look at the assessments from early in the program to those later in the program. Students' grades throughout the program (See Appendix A) also indicate that students' learning and performance is ongoing. Growth in academic writing skill, ability to apply learning, and growth in understandings that are documented in students' ability to plan and implement instruction based on what has been learned is noticeable throughout.

Leadership (IRA Standard 6) remains an area for growth—as we see the evidence that students are becoming increasingly proficient in their own classrooms, and as we see their understandings of instructional practices and assessment increase, the next step will be to support them in developing the increased confidence for leadership capacity.

Changes Made or Planned For

The summer practicum course, which had traditionally been focused solely on the role of the Reading Specialist as Interventionist, is a course that now includes additional opportunities for both coaching and leadership. These capacities are continually developed from the mid-point of the program through the candidates' progression through EDRE 677 and EDRE 696.

Additionally, an increased emphasis on data collection and analysis during the practicum, as well as peer feedback on instruction has been emphasized during the summer practicum and extended through the rest of the coursework that follows. Growth in students' capacity to provide one another with effective feedback on instructional practices, as well as their capacity to ground their instructional decisions in student data has been apparent. Opportunities to build on the practicum, in EDRE 677 and EDRE 696 to incorporate site visits by faculty to EDRE students would further deepen this process.

Course assessments and students' grades are directly tied to the IRA 2010 Standards. Students are supported to revise and resubmit assessments that do not meet the standards, to insure that student learning is commensurate with course content.

5. Future Plans

As the University of Alaska College of Education is designed, it will be exciting to see how the Reading Specialist M.Ed. might become more prominent in the menu of M.Ed. programs, and to extend faculty participation across all three campuses. This collaboration could benefit not only the students in the program, but create a culture of collaboration among faculty, for both research and practice in the Literacy field.

Appendix A

2015 N=8

	Not Met (1 pts)	Met (2 pts)	Exceeds (3 pts)	Mean	Mode	Stdev
Foundational Knowledge 1.1A	1	4	11	2.625	3.000	0.599
Foundational Knowledge 1.1B	1	3	12	2.688	3.000	0.583
Foundational Knowledge 1.2	0	2	14	2.875	3.000	0.331
Foundational Knowledge 1.3	1	1	14	2.812	3.000	0.527
Curriculum & Instruction 2.1	0	6	10	2.625	3.000	0.484
Curriculum & Instruction 2.2	0	7	9	2.562	3.000	0.496
Curriculum & Instruction 2.3	1	5	10	2.562	3.000	0.609
Assessment and Evaluation 3.1	0	4	12	2.750	3.000	0.433
Assessment and Evaluation 3.2	0	3	13	2.812	3.000	0.390
Assessment and Evaluation 3.3	0	2	14	2.875	3.000	0.331
Assessment and Evaluation 3.4	0	5	11	2.688	3.000	0.464
Diversity 4.1	0	4	12	2.750	3.000	0.433
Diversity 4.2	0	6	10	2.625	3.000	0.484
Diversity 4.3	0	1	15	2.938	3.000	0.242
Literate Environment 5.1	0	0	16	3.000	3.000	0.000
Literate Environment 5.2	0	2	14	2.875	3.000	0.331
Literate Environment 5.3	0	1	15	2.938	3.000	0.242
Literate Environment 5.4	0	3	13	2.812	3.000	0.390
Technology	0	0	16	3.000	3.000	0.000
Professional Learning and Leadership 6.1	0	2	14	2.875	3.000	0.331
Professional Learning and Leadership 6.2	0	4	12	2.750	3.000	0.433
Professional Learning and Leadership 6.3	0	1	15	2.938	3.000	0.242
Professional Learning and Leadership 6.4	0	1	15	2.938	3.000	0.242

2016

N=4

A Live Text report is not currently available for Summer 2016 portfolios. However, each student scored a 2 or higher on the individual sections of the portfolio and each received a passing score.

NOTE: Because of the 2 or 3 year options for students, graduation numbers can fluctuate. This year (2017) we have 11 candidates who will be completing their final portfolio for graduation.