Masters of Sciences: Reading Program Assessment Plan

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Mission Statement

The University of Wisconsin-River Falls Graduate Reading Certificate and Master’s program is designed to develop Reading Teachers and Reading Specialists for elementary, middle school and secondary levels. We serve licensed teachers seeking Reading Teacher Licensure and Reading Specialist Licensure in Wisconsin and those seeking a Master’s Degree in Reading. The program is designed so that students will meet all of the requirements of PI 34 as well as the International Literacy Association Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals 2017.

Key components include:

- provides a certificate and eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Reading Teacher licensure for teachers at the elementary through secondary levels;
- provides a Master of Science in Education Degree in Reading and eligibility for Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Reading Specialist licensure for teachers at the elementary through secondary levels;
- meets the Minnesota Department of Education requirements for the Minnesota K-12 Teacher of Reading licensure endorsement;
- field experiences with elementary, middle-school, and secondary students are embedded throughout the program;
- blended coursework is offered year-round on Saturdays (approximately 25%) and online (approximately 75%). Summer courses may take place during the weekday.

Our program utilizes a cohort model, which requires students to proceed through a linear sequence of courses beginning in the fall. Traveling through the courses as a cohort contributes towards a strong sense of community and leads to opportunities for meaningful collaboration.

I. Program Learning Outcomes

Overview
The MSE Reading learning outcomes align with the current teacher standards of both the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction’s Content Guidelines and the International Literacy Association Standards for the Preparation of Literacy Professionals (2017). These standards (listed below) align with the University’s Strategic Goals and Initiatives, meet the
professional and intellectual needs of students, reflect the needs of stakeholders, and are measurably specific to the content outcomes of teacher preparation.

Learning Outcomes
Graduates of the MSE Reading program will be able to:

A. demonstrate knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language, the ways in which they interrelate, and the role of the reading/literacy specialist in schools. *ILA FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE #1; WI DPI #1, #2, #4, #5, #6*

B. use foundational knowledge to design literacy curricula to meet needs of learners, especially those who experience difficulty with literacy; design, implement, and evaluate small-group and individual evidence-based literacy instruction for learners; collaborate with teachers to implement effective literacy practices. *ILA CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION #2; WI DPI #3, #7*

C. understand, select, and use valid, reliable, fair, and appropriate assessment tools to screen, diagnose, and measure student literacy achievement; inform instruction and evaluate interventions; assist teachers in their understanding and use of assessment results; advocate for appropriate literacy practices to relevant stakeholders. *ILA ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION #3*

D. demonstrate knowledge of research, relevant theories, pedagogies, and essential concepts of diversity and equity; demonstrate an understanding of themselves and others as cultural beings; create classrooms and schools that are inclusive and affirming; advocate for equity at school, district, and community levels. *ILA DIVERSITY AND EQUITY #4, WI DPI #3, #8*

E. meet the developmental needs of all learners and collaborate with school personnel to use a variety of print and digital materials to engage and motivate all learners; integrate digital technologies in appropriate, safe, and effective ways; foster a positive climate that supports a literacy-rich learning environment. *ILA LEARNERS AND THE LITERACY ENVIRONMENT #5*

F. demonstrate the ability to be reflective literacy professionals, who apply their knowledge of adult learning to work collaboratively with colleagues; demonstrate their leadership and facilitation skills; advocate on behalf of teachers, students, families, and communities. *ILA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND LEADERSHIP #6*

G. complete supervised, integrated, extended practica/clinical experiences that include intervention work with students and working with their peers and experienced colleagues; practica include ongoing experiences in school-based setting(s); supervision includes observation and ongoing feedback by qualified supervisors. *ILA PRACTICUM/CLINICAL EXPERIENCES #7*
UWRF Strategic Goals and Initiatives

The MSE Reading program learning outcomes align with UWRF’s Strategic Goals and Initiatives: distinctive academic excellence, global education and engagement, and innovation and partnerships as articulate in the “Pathway to Distinction.”

Goal 1: Distinctive Academic Excellence

The rigor that is inherent in the requirements of the Reading Program and the stellar quality of the students enrolled assure academic excellence. All students in the MSE-Reading Program are licensed, experienced teachers with Bachelor’s degrees in related fields. Students enrolled in the Reading Program are conscientious practitioners seeking to enhance their knowledge of reading pedagogy so that they can deliver instruction more effectively to K-12 students and improve the quality of elementary and secondary reading instruction. They meet the requirements of the WI Department of Public Instruction, including a GPA of 2.75, and have successfully passed the Praxis exams. By the end of the program, students must pass the WI Foundations of Reading Exam, which has recently been added as a requirement for licensure. Reading courses were developed in accordance with nation standards of reading educators. Extensive research projects (Plan B papers) are required for the MSE-Reading. Students investigate current topics in reading education, collect data through original studies, and synthesize information to formulate meaningful conclusions that will inform their teaching of reading. Research is presented at an oral examination and published on the MINDS website. Additionally students participate in an annual symposium to share their findings and often present at state and national conferences.

Goal 2: Global Education and Engagement

Because of the nature of the Reading Program, there are not many international students enrolled. However instruction in all courses highlights culturally relevant pedagogy and students are prepared to teach the diverse populations that they encounter in their elementary and secondary schools. Additionally students are exposed to multicultural perspectives through children’s literature from around the world. Research in literacy education has roots in international venues, drawing specifically from a vast body of knowledge generated in Australia and New Zealand. Professors in the Reading program have also presented at international conferences.

Goal 3: Innovation and Partnerships

Many courses in the Reading Program have a field experience component, which facilitates partnerships with local elementary and secondary schools. Students teach authentic lessons in elementary classrooms and for Upward
Bound students, create learning environments for the River Falls Kids Club, and tutor middle school children. One of the culminating experiences is a Reading Clinic during which program participants spend five weeks working with struggling readers in local school districts. This extensive collaboration serves both groups of students and builds meaningful partnerships with classroom teachers and school personnel.

**Professional and Intellectual Needs**

The MSE Reading learning outcomes reflect the professional and intellectual needs of teachers. Specifically, the learning outcomes reflect the professional standards for literacy leaders as described by the Wisconsin DPI and International Literacy Association.

**Stakeholders**

The MSE Reading learning outcomes reflect the needs, interests, and requirements of external stakeholders. Specifically, these learning outcomes align with both the WI DPI and International Literacy Association. This alignment ensures that potential employers, including local and regional school districts, will know that our graduates are clearly qualified to perform as literacy leaders.

The Educator Preparation Program External Advisory Council (EPPEAC) is another external stakeholder for all licensure programs including the MSE Reading. There are approximately 30 members with a mix of administrators and teacher from Minnesota and Wisconsin. The role of the EPPEAC is to

- Provide the UWRF Educator Preparation Program an outside perspective on issues related to education.
- Communicate the needs of the education community so that our graduates have the knowledge, skills and dispositions to positively impact student learning.
- Assist in the development of strategic partnerships and external relations.
- Serve as a sounding board for new initiatives and external activities.
- Offer counsel to the EPP on recruiting students into teacher education.
- Provide feedback on our degree and certificate programs as to their relevance for preparing future educators.

The MSE Reading program also works with a small group of stakeholders acting as a focus group to consult on program issues on an as-needed basis. The members of this group are mostly graduates of the Reading program who are now serving as Reading Teachers and Reading Specialists in Wisconsin and Minnesota.
II. Profile of Where Learning Outcomes are Being Achieved

Learning outcomes are achieved through coursework, both on-campus and online, and K-12 school-based field experiences.

**Course-based Learning Experiences**

Most objectives are introduced in a “foundations” course and then subsequently reinforced and enhanced in the context of other courses. Table 1 illustrates our course map depicting each learning outcome, each course in the program, and the level at which the skills is being developed.
Table 1. Course Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Teacher license</th>
<th>Reading Specialist license + MSE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall Semester 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring Semester 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READ 700</td>
<td>READ 705</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations of Literacy</td>
<td>Elementary Language Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>READ 722</td>
<td>READ 700</td>
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<td>READ 730</td>
<td>READ 765</td>
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<td>READ 750</td>
<td>READ 766</td>
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<tr>
<td>READ 785</td>
<td>READ 786</td>
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</table>

**Learning Outcomes**

- **Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge**
  - I = Introduced, R = Reinforced, P = Professionally Practiced

- **Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction**

- **Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation**

- **Standard 4: Diversity and Equity**

- **Standard 5: Learners and the Literacy Environment**

- **Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership**

- **Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences**
Field-based Learning Experiences

Students enact teaching practices in their own K-12 classrooms and also have the opportunity to work in other schools and with children at a variety of aged and developmental levels. The field experiences are related to the learning outcomes, essential in the preparation of literacy leaders, expected by potential employers of our graduates, and required of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for Reading licensure candidates. Graduates will demonstrate mastery of program learning outcomes in these field experiences through identified artifacts.

Table 2. K-12 School-based Field Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Min. Hours</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Learner Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 1</td>
<td>READ 705 Elem Lang Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teach lessons, evaluate, and reflect</td>
<td>2, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 1</td>
<td>READ 722 Content Area Reading in Secondary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Observe classrooms and reflect</td>
<td>2, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 1</td>
<td>READ 765 Appraisal and Intervention</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tutoring – assess, plan, teach, reflect</td>
<td>3, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>READ 730 Teaching Students with Reading Difficulties</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Tutoring – assess, plan, teach, reflect</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2</td>
<td>READ 766 Administration and Supervision</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Enact literacy project in school setting</td>
<td>4, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2</td>
<td>READ 770 Professional Development in Literacy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Plan and enact professional development experiences in school</td>
<td>6, 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Venues for Assessing Learning Outcomes

The MSE Reading program learning outcomes are assessed both formatively and summatively in a variety of ways (traditional, performance) throughout the program. Additionally, students complete reading teacher administrator certification portfolios documenting their progress throughout the program.

Direct Assessments (Tools, Artifacts, and Methods) and Corresponding Courses

*Table 3 indicates the direct tools, artifacts, and methods used to measure student progress in relation to the learning outcomes by course.* For each course, instructors assess student progress and successful completion of activities identified in Table 3 using their own rubrics and evaluation schemes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>READ 700</th>
<th>READ 705</th>
<th>READ 765</th>
<th>READ 722</th>
<th>READ 730</th>
<th>READ 750</th>
<th>READ 785</th>
<th>READ 766</th>
<th>READ 786</th>
<th>READ 770</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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<td>PD projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction</td>
<td>Evaluation and adaptation of evidence-</td>
<td>Lesson plans and text set</td>
<td>Lesson plans and reflections</td>
<td>Children’s Literature Resource File</td>
<td>2-year literacy plan</td>
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<td>PD projects</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation</td>
<td>READ 700</td>
<td>READ 705</td>
<td>READ 765</td>
<td>READ 722</td>
<td>READ 730</td>
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<td>READ 785</td>
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<td>Foundations of Literacy</td>
<td>Elementary Language Arts</td>
<td>Appraisal and Intervention</td>
<td>Content Area Reading in Secondary</td>
<td>Teaching Students with Reading Difficulties</td>
<td>Children’s Literature in the Reading Program</td>
<td>Literacy Research</td>
<td>Administration and Supervision of the Reading Program</td>
<td>Teacher Research in Literacy</td>
<td>Professional Development in Literacy</td>
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<td>based curricula</td>
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<td>Standard 4: Diversity and Equity</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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<td>Standard 5: Learners and the Literacy Environment</td>
<td>Lesson plans and reflection</td>
<td>Lesson plans and text set</td>
<td>Lesson plans and reflections</td>
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<td>Children’s Literature Resource File</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Data team reflection</td>
<td>Lesson plans and reflections</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Administrative portfolio</td>
<td>Research paper and defense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences</td>
<td>Lesson plans, teaching videos, reflections</td>
<td>Lesson plans, teaching videos, reflection</td>
<td>Lesson plans and text set</td>
<td>Lesson plans, reflections, tutoring report</td>
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PD projects
In addition to the assessments corresponding to courses, candidates complete several summative assessments throughout the program. First, they must take and pass the WI Foundations of Reading Exam. This exam aligns with ILA standards 1-5. Candidates also assemble two portfolios—one for the reading teacher and one for the reading specialist—as outlined by WI DPI. These portfolios align with all of the ILA standards. Finally, in their last semester, candidates complete an action research study in their own classrooms and an oral defense presentation. This culminating project assesses standard 6 and 1 and possibly many of the other standards depending on the focus of the study.

Assessments (Tools, Artifacts, and Methods) for Out-of-class Experiences
The MSE Reading program uses a variety of direct and indirect tools, artifacts, and methods to evaluate out-of-class experiences that occur in school-based field placements.

First, each course incorporates the out-of-class learning experiences within the framework of the course. Therefore, the direct assessment tools, artifacts, and methods listed above also assess the out-of-class learning. Each course and instructor uses their own method of evaluating these assignments.

Second, in the practica experiences linked with READ 730 and READ 766, each student is evaluated by a school administrator/literacy specialist and their instructor per DPI guidelines.

Indirect Assessments
The Reading Program also assesses student learning through indirect assessments. Current students are surveyed each semester to elicit their level of satisfaction with the program and elicit recommendations. Upon graduation, they are also surveyed.

Connection to UWRF Strategic Initiatives
These methods support UWRF strategic initiatives of Distinctive Academic Excellence by ensuring that students maintain standards of excellence as required at national, state and local levels and that they engage in professional activities that demonstrate their expertise.

These methods support UWRF strategic initiatives of Global Education and Engagement by ensuring students are able to plan for a variety of students (developmentally and culturally).

These methods support UWRF strategic initiatives of Innovation and Partnership by ensuring students are observed and evaluated on their abilities to communicate and collaborate with a variety of partners (students, teachers, administration, parents, community, and educational agencies).
IV. Process for Assessment
Learning outcomes are assessed using the identified artifacts each semester the course is offered. All courses are offered once each year.

External Professional Accreditation
This program is not accredited by an external professional organization, but is approved by the WI DPI. The program also falls under the umbrella of “Continuous Review of Program, (CRP)” in Teacher Education for the WI DPI, in which data is collated, reviewed, and reported.

Assessment Cycle
See Figure 1 for the Reading program assessment plan cycle.
Figure 1: MSE Reading Program Assessment Cycle

- **Summer prior to entry:** Review student applications
- **Fall 1:** Instruction and assessment READ 700, 705
- **January:** WI DPI Continuous review of programs
- **Fall 2:** Instruction and assessment READ 785, 766
- **Spring 2:** Instruction and assessment READ 786, 770
- **End of Spring 2:** MSE oral exam, Assess Reading Specialist portfolio, Ensure students are qualified for 5017 license
- **Summer 1:** Instruction and assessment READ 730, 750
- **Prior to Fall:** Assess Reading Teacher portfolio, FORT, Ensure students are qualified for 0316 license
- **Spring 1:** Instruction and assessment READ 760, 722
Comparability
Given the cohort model of the program, all students attend class in the same course section; therefore, comparisons between course sections that vary by mode of delivery, location, and duration are impossible.

Accountability Structure
The MSE Reading program has a multi-layered accountability structure and sequence. The structure includes students, faculty, administrative, programmatic, and WI DPI accountability structures. The accountability structure aligns with the Assessment Cycle presented Figure 3.

Students are held accountable to maintain an acceptable GPA (3.0 out of 4.0: Graduate Studies policy) while in the program and pass all tests and requirements (i.e., DPI portfolios and Foundations of Reading Exam) in order to continue the program. Students who fail to meet these expectations are consulted and dismissed from the program.

All faculty who teach in the MSE Reading program are members on the Reading Program Committee which meets monthly throughout the academic school year. The faculty are held accountable by both the students they teach (by being prepared to teach, etc. and through student evaluations of teaching) and by the MSE Reading Program Director. The program coordinator plans and facilitates meetings.

The MSE Reading Program Director is responsible for ensure student needs and concerns are being addressed and resolved. The Program Director reports to various individuals based on subject matter: TED Department Chair (re: staffing, assessment reports, misc.), Continuous Education/Outreach Director (re: enrollment/recruitment, student fees), College of Education and Professional Studies Assistant Dean (re: Continuous Program Evaluations).

The MSE Reading Program is held accountable to the WI DPI pending any required changes in certification requirements.

Reviewing, Aggregating, and Analyzing Assessment Findings
Program data is evaluated and reviewed by the faculty every semester. At the beginning of the fall semester, faculty will review Foundations of Reading Exam data (from the previous spring) to determine strengths and weaknesses of student performance. Additionally, faculty will review surveys from alumni. This data will be used to determine which changes, if any, need to be made to the program.
Data Maintenance and Documentation
Course data are maintained and secured digitally by respective course instructors via the UWRF learning management system (LMS). The LMS is maintained and serviced by the Division of Technology Services. According to DoTS, courses and their respective data (i.e., grades, students work) are scheduled for decommission/removal periodically (approximately every 4+ years). Survey data of current students and graduates is maintained digitally by Outreach and the Program Director. FORT test scores are maintained digitally by the Teacher Certification Officer and are kept in perpetuity.

Processes for Programmatic Changes and Improvement (Action Plans)
Proposed changes to the program must originate from invested individuals (e.g., Accountability Structure) based on the data gathered during the assessment cycle or based on changes required by WI DPI or by the University of Wisconsin-Board of Regents.

All major proposed course changes (i.e., change in course credits, course title, or course description) will be discussed and approved in the Reading Program Committee. Proposed programmatic changes will then be forwarded onto the full Teacher Education Department for review. If approved, proposed programmatic changes will then be forwarded to the CEPS Dean for review. The proposed program changes will then face review by the Graduate Studies Curriculum Committee. Barring no further revisions, the proposed program changes will then face review by Academic Senate’s Academic and Policy Subcommittee. Finally, barring no revisions, the full Academic Senate will review and approve any programmatic changes.

Process for Obtaining Assessment Results and Action Plans
Internal and external stakeholders may only access certain data produced by the program. In general, stakeholders may only access Level 0 data (i.e., publicly available data) or to aggregated, de-identified data (Level 1). Stakeholders are not permitted to access to identified student data (Level 1, 2 or 3). Access to pertinent data is granted by the relevant “gatekeeper” listed under “Data Maintenance and Documentation.” All meetings are open per Wisconsin Law. All programmatic outcomes, as listed under “Learning Outcomes” are posted on UWRF’s Program Learning Outcomes website. The review of this assessment plan is due every 3 years per UWRF Academic Senate’s Assessment Plan. Further information about the program, programmatic learning outcomes, courses, student teaching, or assessment can be obtained by contacting the Reading Program Director.