Program Overview
The School of Education offers coursework leading to a Master of Science in Education degree with a major in Reading. The Reading graduate program at WIU is a nationally recognized program, accredited by CAEP adhering to standards set by the International Literacy Association. Candidates may complete an emphasis that leads to the Reading Specialist endorsement or an emphasis that leads to the Reading Teacher endorsement. Both programs are offered fully online. Either emphasis can be completed by teachers who are only interested in earning a master’s degree in reading and do not plan to seek an endorsement. Candidates complete one or more supervised practicum experiences arranged by University faculty. The practicum experiences are online, so teachers arrange their own experience, identifying the student to be tutored. In addition to one or more practicum courses, candidates complete projects with students in many of the courses in the program. Opportunities for providing leadership to improve reading instruction are included in each emphasis of the program.

Admission Requirements
Applicants for admission to the Western Illinois University 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 WIU School of Graduate Studies, with a cumulative undergraduate grade point average of at least 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 K-12 Reading Specialist emphasis is designed for professionals who wish to pursue advanced preparation and experience in literacy instruction, leadership and diagnosis and assessment, with a special emphasis in preparing candidates for leadership roles. This emphasis is designed to meet the requirements established by the state of Illinois for licensure as a K-12 Reading Specialist Teacher. After the 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. 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.

Contact Information
Questions about the program:
School of Education
Professor Melissa Stinnett, graduate coordinator
(309) 298-2033
M-Stinnett@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/curriculum

General admission questions:
School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad
Requirements for the Iowa Reading Specialist Endorsement

- Master’s degree
- Teaching license in Iowa
- One year of teaching experience, which includes the teaching of reading as a significant responsibility

Career Opportunities
Candidates earning the degree are eligible to apply for the reading specialist endorsement in Iowa or Illinois, or the reading teacher endorsement in Illinois. Teachers with a master’s degree in reading are also hired as literacy coaches.

Why Choose Reading at WIU
Teachers can complete coursework leading to the Reading Specialist endorsement in Illinois or Iowa or the Reading Teacher endorsement in Illinois. The program prepares candidates to work with struggling readers in individual, small group or whole class settings. Candidates seeking the reading specialist endorsement complete coursework and a practicum appropriate for the level of the desired endorsement. Although not required for the master’s degree, candidates score well on the Illinois Reading Specialist and Reading Teacher content tests. WIU is an accredited institution. Both the Reading Specialist and Reading Teacher programs are 100 percent online.

Our Faculty
Faculty members in the WIU School of Education 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 and 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, including the Illinois Reading Council Journal.

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.

Our commitment to diversity
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. Most courses are offered online.

The Reading Specialist emphasis prepares candidates to work with all students to develop literacy skills and to develop leadership skills that include attention to diversity and a culturally responsive learning environment. 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 school 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 Literacy 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.

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

— Sarah Youngblood, MSEd ’07