

MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY
PROGRAM REVIEW

MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION WITH A
READING/WRITING SPECIALIST ENDORSEMENT, P-12
(leads to Rank II certification and Reading/Writing Endorsement P-12)

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INTRODUCTION

Morehead State University's graduate programs in education are based on the premise that mastery of the discipline of teaching is an on-going, life-long process. The university's role in the process is to provide graduate education programs designed to 1) deepen experienced teachers' knowledge in their area of specialization; 2) increase their understanding of the developmental and learning needs of their students; and 3) enable them to become conversant with the research literature in their area. The sum of this enterprise is to enhance their career long efforts to become more effective self-reflective practitioners. The Master of Arts in Education with a Reading/Writing Specialist Endorsement exemplifies this premise.

Current research in the area of reading and writing reinforces and confirms the complimentary nature of the reading and writing processes. "Reading and writing are meaning constructing activities, but they are dependent on words" (Allington & Cunningham, 1996, p.49). Given this understanding, the Master of Arts in Education with a Reading/Writing Endorsement strongly emphasizes the close relationship of these key components of the language arts.

Further, effective current practices in both reading and writing which reflect a constructivist approach to learning are presented for investigation. For instance, the reading-writing workshop encourages learners to identify materials, genres, and topics with which to interact in a supported environment (Atwell, 1998; Routman, 1999). Literature circles provide opportunities for discussion of self-selected reading materials, thus allowing for a richer understanding and deeper comprehension of the text (Daniels, 2002). Cunningham's making words strategies (1999) allow for learners to manipulate letter cards to create words using word patterns and word families. This practice acknowledges the variety of learners in a typical classroom and makes it possible for several senses to be used in constructing words.

Given the uniqueness of each learner and the varied backgrounds brought to both reading and writing, use of multiple texts (trade books, newspapers, magazines, etc.), text formats (books, web-based information, etc.), and response forms (journaling, drawing/art, drama, etc.) are encouraged to assist learners in their quests for gaining understanding. Middle and secondary teachers receive additional strategy instruction in ways to integrate the process and the product to produce mature, independent readers and writers (Vacca & Vacca, 2002).

Candidates in this program are provided with opportunities for exploring the research basis for this belief as well as developing a thorough understanding of its application in authentic classroom situations. Such an understanding includes meaningful ways to integrate reading and writing in the classroom using appropriate materials for the wide range of learners found there, the uniqueness of content area reading and writing, and means for assessing and planning for future instruction.

I. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Master of Arts in Education with a Reading/Writing Specialist Endorsement is integrated into the conceptual schema provided by the College of Education's framework of *Educators as Architects: Designing environments where students construct knowledge and develop skills*. Within this conceptual model the graduate programs in the Department of Elementary, Reading, and Special Education build on the foundation of teacher preparation to nurture the development of mature and effective experienced teachers. Central to this developmental process is demonstrated growth in mastery of the areas of knowledge and skills outlined in the Experienced Teacher Standards (Kentucky Department of Education, 1994). These standards provide a valuable framework for the ongoing professional development of teachers by underscoring that the best teachers:

1. Provide professional leadership within the school, community, and education profession to improve student learning and well being;
2. Demonstrate content knowledge within their own discipline(s) and in application(s) to other disciplines;
3. Design/plan instruction that develops student abilities related to the core academic expectations;
4. Create/maintain learning climates that support the development of student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge;
5. Introduce/implement/manage instruction that develops student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge;
6. Assess learning and communicate learning results to students and others with respect to student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge;
7. Reflect on and evaluate teaching and learning;
8. Collaborate with colleagues, parents, and others to design, implement, and support learning programs that develop student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge; and
9. Evaluate their own overall performance in relation to Kentucky's learner goals and implement a professional development plan.
10. Uses technology to support instruction; access and manipulate data; enhance professional growth and productivity; communicate and collaborate with colleagues, parents, and the community; and conduct research.

To perform these complex and interrelated functions, a range of knowledge and experiences are required. The program is structured around three areas designed to develop the experienced candidate's base of knowledge:

1. Professional Education: Studies dealing with research, curriculum development, and foundations;
2. Discipline - Specialized Area of Literacy: Studies designed to contribute to substantial growth and development of knowledge and skills in the field of literacy and which provide meaningful on-site experiences to develop and document their ability to infuse theory with practice; and
3. Supportive Courses: Studies which support learning theory and integrate that knowledge with current theory related to the development and growth of literacy.

II. PROGRAM EXPERIENCES

Graduates of this program must demonstrate substantial growth in the skill and knowledge base of the Experienced Teacher Standards for Preparation (Kentucky Department of Education, 1994) and *Standards for Reading Professionals: Revised* (International Reading Association, 1998). For the experienced teacher, growth in the profession is a holistic undertaking that cannot be narrowly confined to a single aspect of professional development. Hence, it cannot realistically be said that a single graduate course will lead to mastery of a Standard; nor should an effective graduate course narrowly focus on only one of the Standards. In truth, any effective graduate course in education should continually nurture critical reflection and growth across the full spectrum of behaviors associated with quality teaching. The program at Morehead State University aims for this comprehensive approach to professional growth for its graduate candidates. This comprehensive approach includes not only knowledge regarding current and important research in these areas but the necessary ability to appropriately and effectively apply this knowledge in K-12 classroom situations. This application step is critical for the authentic learning of both the graduate student as well as those K-12 learners whom they serve and is accomplished through field experiences in public school classrooms. The subsequent reflection on these teaching/learning experiences brings the learning situation full circle as emerging questions and concerns can be addressed through further inquiry into research and practice. Thus individual focus and professional growth are required for all candidates in this program.

Field Experiences

Field experiences are an integral part of this program; candidates are required to implement, in their classrooms, the practices they are learning in the courses they take. Candidates who are not currently practicing classroom teachers are required to find classrooms in which they can implement practices. Because the university's service region spans twenty-two counties in Eastern Kentucky and some classrooms are more than two hours from campus, lesson plans, in-depth self-reflections, student work samples, logs, and video tapes are used as means of supervising these experiences.

The culminating course in the program, EDEL 624 Practicum in Reading, provides the opportunity for candidates to integrate and apply knowledge and practice from their previous course work as they teach students who have deficiencies in reading and writing. The Practicum requires that a minimum of 34 hours be spent in working with such students; a university professor supervises the course.

The following matrix outlines the field experiences in the program.

FIELD EXPERIENCES

Course: Experience/Amount of Time	Supervision
<p>EDEL 627 Reading in the Elementary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolding of instruction is presented by classroom teachers in three different ways via CD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed Reading Lesson for prereading activities and during reading activities : 15 minutes • Four Block Method activating prior knowledge, vocabulary development, modeling with big book: 45 minutes • DR-TA with beginning readers: 30 minutes • Candidates then write lesson plans to scaffold reading instruction and implement the plans with their students. They use strategies throughout the semester: 5 hours <p style="text-align: center;"><u>or</u></p> <p>EDEL 677 Reading in the Content Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content area strategies are modeled throughout the course: 7 hours • Candidates write five lesson plans to implement interactive strategies with content area text: metacognition, vocabulary development, prior knowledge, study guide, cognitive map/matrix. Plans are implemented with their students: 5 hours 	<p>Reflections on the CD lessons.</p> <p>Lesson plans, videotape of the lesson they taught, reflections of lessons, logs kept throughout the semester of strategies implemented in their classrooms.</p> <p>Observation by instructor</p> <p>Lesson plans, reflections, student work samples</p>
Course: Experience/Amount of Time	Supervision
<p>EDEL 662 Remedial Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment: Candidates administer and analyze the results of visual and auditory screening tests, standardized tests, diagnostic tests, analytical tests, informal tests: 30 hours • Parental Interview • Interview of student 	<p>Fully analyzed and interpreted test results in formal write-ups</p> <p>Description of interview Description of interview</p>
<p>EDEL 624 Practicum in Reading Candidates assess and instruct students who have reading difficulties for: 34 hours</p>	<p>Instructor, lesson plans, case study</p>

It must be noted that each course in a graduate program has a point of emphasis, which enables the student to focus a bit more discretely on growth in the skills associated with specific standards. The following matrix in outlines those courses or program components that place a particular emphasis on specific Experienced Teacher Standards. The flexibility associated with certain aspects of graduate education means it is not always feasible to associate growth on a standard with a particular course. In these cases there is a range of opportunities for professional growth that will be available through a group of elective courses. These elective options are shown on the Experience Teachers Standards matrix and the course options outlined in the program planning check sheet included at the end of this review.