

MOLLOY UNIVERSITY

School of Education and Human Services

Department of Teacher Education

Turning the Page for Your Next Chapter:
From Classroom Teacher to Reading Specialist

(3 credits)

Semester Year: Summer 2026

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Office hours: TBD

Course Description:

So, you want to be a reading specialist! Many classroom teachers reach a point in their careers when they decide to specialize in one instructional area, such as literacy. Making the shift from classroom teacher to reading specialist can be exciting, but also challenging when thinking about making such a meaningful career pivot!

In this course, we will explore the steps to seamlessly transition into a literacy specialist role. Together, we will navigate how to “turn the page” and embrace the next chapter in your professional journey while redefining your instructional identity. In addition, we will take a deep dive into how to adjust to the change from whole-class to small group and individualized instruction, as well as how to build strong relationships with classroom teachers and administrative teams.

Students in this course will learn about the many instructional avenues that can be taken with a literacy certification. Through reflection, discussion, and real life experiences from an instructor who made the pivot herself, students will grasp how to gain confidence as a literacy leader, while also growing their passion to help students improve their reading confidence and ability.

As Molloy University now offers both an advanced certificate in literacy as well as a masters program, this course serves as an excellent introduction for educators who are considering these programs or exploring new opportunities in the field of literacy.

Shared Vision

The Molloy University Teacher Education faculty has derived its vision for the exemplary teacher from the University's mission statement, the four pillars of the Dominican tradition, comments and input from the Professional Education Unit's Advisory Board and degree candidates as well as numerous faculty discussions rooted in the department's knowledge base which undergirds the initial and advanced programs' curriculum, pedagogy, and values.

The teaching professionals who complete Molloy's teacher preparation programs are distinguished by their ability to exemplify and promote core values in their own teaching.

These values include:

- ☐ Belief that all children can learn
- ☐ Learner-centered and value-centered curriculum and pedagogy
- ☐ Ethics and spirituality
- ☐ Intellectual curiosity
- ☐ Independence and risk taking, while promoting collective identity and responsibility
- ☐ Diversity, multiculturalism and pluralism, including divergent thinking
- ☐ Passion for teaching
- ☐ Commitment to students and their communities
- ☐ Civic responsibility through the promotion of social justice and interdependence
- ☐ Commitment to democracy

Course Objectives:

- Students will **identify key roles, responsibilities, and instructional approaches** of a reading specialist compared to those of a classroom teacher.
- Students will **develop strategies** to transition from whole-classroom instruction to small-group and individualized literacy support that meets diverse student needs.
- Students will identify and apply **evidence-based literacy practices** to design and deliver effective reading interventions.

- Students will **develop skills** to build collaborative building relationships with staff.
- Students will **create a plan** to support next steps as future literacy leaders.

Course Format:

This course will be offered online through Canvas, Molloy's learning management system. The course will open two days before the start date and close one week after the last day of class. This section is offered (dates TBD). There will be daily activities and discussions that must be completed at the end of each day. Responses to the discussions will be due the following day by noon. An extra week will be allotted for the completion of the final project (due by date TBD).

Required Readings, Videos, and Other Materials:

All materials will be provided throughout the course.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

Discussion #1/Student Introductions (10 pts):

- ☐ Introduce yourself and your teaching background. What sparked your interest in being a reading specialist?
- ☐ What do you hope to gain from taking this course?

Assignment #1 (10pts): Podcast Reflection & Personal Reflection:

- ☐ Summarize the podcast and reflect on your biggest takeaway.
- ☐ Analyze the key differences between a classroom teacher and reading specialist role.

Discussion #2 (10 pts): Classroom Teacher and Literacy Specialist Pros and Cons:

- ☐ Reflect on how a literacy role differs from one of a classroom teacher. What excites you to potentially make this shift? What aspects are challenging or make you feel uncertain?

- ☐ Comment to a peer by offering one suggestion or piece of advice from today's instructional materials that can help support their transition to a new role!

Assignment #2 (10 pts): Roadmap of your Journey:

- ☐ Create a *professional roadmap* outlining your path to becoming a reading specialist. Include a little bit about your career thus far, your motivation, your short-term goals, long-term goals, certification plan and professional learning needs.
- ☐ This assignment would serve as a transition plan for your literacy-focused role.

Discussion #3 (10 pts): Collaboration and Communication:

- ☐ Reading specialists must build strong relationships with students, staff, administration, and families. Based on the articles provided, what strategies and approaches would be most effective to help foster these relationships?
- ☐ Share an experience you have had where strong collaboration and communication led to strong student outcomes.

Assignment #3 (10 pts): Supportive Teacher Plan

- ☐ Using today's instructional tools as a guide, create a plan you would give a teacher who is struggling to provide strong differentiated instruction in the classroom.
- ☐ Be sure to include how you would communicate the plan, how you could target specific student needs within tier 1 instruction, co-planning ideas, and progress monitoring methods.

Discussion #4 (10 pts): Building Confident and Successful Readers!

- ☐ Following today's readings, think about an experience you have had with a student who has struggled yet made progress. What helped them grow?
- ☐ As a reading specialist, how will you develop student confidence but also help develop the joy of reading?

Assignment #4 (10 pts): Reading Intervention Lesson:

- ☐ Following the lesson plan template provided, design a small group or 1:1 reading lesson using engaging, evidence-based practices.

- ☐ Please attach all lesson materials to your plan!

Final Project (20 pts): Reading Specialist Portfolio

- ☐ Using Canva or Google Slides, create your own digital portfolio that showcases your growth throughout this course! Your portfolio should include a reflection, your “goal” as a literacy leader, and examples of 3 sample activities you are excited to put into practice as a reading specialist!
- ☐ Use the model provided as a guide, but please make your portfolio unique to “you” and your mission and vision for this potential career shift. You WILL make a difference for our future readers.

Molloy University and School of Education and Human Services Policies and Supports:

Expectations of Academic Integrity for All Students

[Honor Pledge and Academic Honesty Policy](#)

Course Withdrawals

View [Withdrawal Policy](#) for potential financial implications

View [the Academic Calendar](#) and/or the course syllabus for the last day to withdraw dates

Incompletes

[Incompletes Policy](#)

Health and Wellness

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Counseling Center \(SCC\)](#)

Center for Access and Disability (Access)

[Center for Access and Disability](#)

Technical Support

[Student Account, Technology and Canvas](#)

Ally for Canvas

[Supportive Tools and Resources/ Ally](#)

Use of Proctorio for Exams/Quizzes (if applicable)

[Proctorio Resources for Students](#)

Email Accounts

Students are to communicate via their Molloy e-mail account or via Canvas throughout the semester. Those who use a non-Molloy account may miss important messages. Students are responsible for responding to all methods of communication relating to this course in a timely fashion. Instructors will respond to emails from students within 24 hours. When/ if you email the instructor(s), please indicate what course you are in with the course number and section.

APA Manuscript Style

All manuscripts in the field of education are written in the style format of the American Psychological Association. Candidates in the Graduate Education Programs are required to purchase the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.). (2010). American Psychological Association.

All papers written in every course must adhere to the manuscript prescriptions defined in this manual.