SPA Specific Guidelines for IRA Program Reports

The Roles of the Contemporary Reading Professional
Reading Specialists/Literacy Coaches are professionals whose goal is to improve reading achievement in their assigned school or district positions. Their responsibilities and titles often differ based on the context in which they work, and their teaching and educational experiences. Their responsibilities may include teaching, coaching, and leading school reading programs. Reading Specialists/Literacy Coaches may also serve as a resource in reading and writing for educational support personnel, administrators, teachers, and the community, provide professional development based on historical and current literature and research, work collaboratively with other professionals to build and implement reading programs for individuals and groups of students, and serve as advocates for students who struggle with reading. Many of these professionals have a specific focus that further defines their duties, such as serving as a teacher for students experiencing reading difficulties, as a reading or literacy coach, as a coordinator of reading and writing programs at the school or district level, or in several combinations of these roles. Explanations for these roles follow:

- The Reading Specialist/Literacy Coach may have primary responsibility for working with students who struggle with reading (interventionist).
- The specialist may have primary responsibility for supporting teacher learning (coach).
- The specialist may have primary responsibility for developing, leading, or evaluating the school or district pre-K–12 reading and writing program (leader).

See Standards for Reading Professionals-Revised 2010 for a complete description on the reading specialist/literacy coach role.

Who Should Submit A Program Report?
Graduate reading and/or literacy programs that lead to a Master’s degree with a concentration in reading and writing education. Typically, programs should have the equivalent of 21–27 graduate semester hours in reading, language arts, and related courses. The program must include a supervised practicum experience, typically the equivalent of 6 semester hours.

Which Program Report Format?
- Option A, The current process will continue to be an option. This option requires that the program select 6 to 8 key assessments required of all candidates.
- Option B, This option provides institutions greater flexibility to choose their own assessments (up to a maximum of 8) and take responsibility to demonstrate the collection demonstrates candidate mastery of the SPA standards.
- Option C, This option is available to programs that, during their previous review cycle, were recognized using the 6 to 8 key assessment model with the 2003 standards and are submitting through spring 2012. Option C is not available at this time for those using the 2010 standards.
- Option D, Validity and Reliability Studies Option.

Will IRA accept grades as one of the assessments?
CAEP policy is that all SPAs will accept course grades as one of the 6 to 8 key assessments and provides guidelines if grades are being submitted. IRA strongly recommends that course grades not be submitted because grades make it difficult to determine that Standards are being addressed at the reading specialist/literacy coach level. IRA strongly recommends submitting rubrics aligned to IRA Standards at the reading specialist/literacy coach level for all performance-based assessments. Grades and test scores can be submitted for State licensure exams and comprehensive examinations.

Additional Guidelines:
- IRA strongly recommends institutions submit assessments that take place in a variety of courses throughout the program rather than focusing multiple assessments on a single course.
• Literacy coaching experiences provided in graduate courses are appropriate as candidates develop competencies as literacy coaches at the novice level. In addition IRA requires literacy coaching experiences in authentic public and/or private school settings. Multiple coaching experiences should occur in a variety of assessments.

• In addition to the required assessment types, IRA strongly recommends institutions submit the 1-2 optional assessments permitted by CAEP to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the program.

Resources:

• IRA Website of Assessment Resources 
  http://www.reading.org/Resources/ProfessionalDevelopment/Accreditation/Support.aspx

• CAEP’s SPA Assessment Library (Assessment Models for IRA),
  http://www.CAEP.org/Accreditation/ProgramReview/ProgramReviewResources/SPAAssessmentLibrary/tabid/460/Default.aspx [12/7/10]

• CAEP’s Link to Program Standards and Report Forms,

• IRA Position Statements on the Role of the Reading Specialist and The Reading Coach 