I am glad you have expressed an interest in pursuing a Professional Reading Specialist Certification Master’s Degree through the Elementary Education Department at SFASU.

You first need to apply to the SFA Graduate School through ApplyTexas. Please be sure to check Reading Specialist so it gets routed to my department! Once your file is complete in the graduate office, it will be routed to me. I will then fill out a Notice of Admission and I will make contact with you and we will begin filling out a degree plan. You will need to send me a copy of your Teaching Certificate PRIOR to being advised. This is a process and may take some time, so please allow at least a month prior to the start of the semester.

You will be taking eight courses in Reading, with the remaining four courses in Early Childhood (ECH), Middle Level Grades (MLG), or Elementary Education (ELE). You may choose which four courses to take, depending on availability during the semester you need electives. This will bring your total hours to 36 credit hours. With taking two courses each semester and each summer session, you can complete this degree within one and a half years.

While a normal course load at the undergraduate level is 12 hours (4 courses), a normal load at the graduate level is 9 hours (3 courses). That is considered full time for financial aid purposes. I highly recommend only taking two classes at a time.

If you are wishing to one day teach at the Junior College, you need 18 hours in a content area to teach. You will have 24 hours in Reading. If you want to teach at the University level, you will want to pursue your Doctorate degree and continue your studies further in the area of Reading. Most doctoral programs are around 72 hours, including dissertation hours.

After you take the Reading Specialist TExES exam, you may not be recommended for certification until you have two full years of teaching on your service record. The SFA Certification office will contact you for verification (Texas Administrative Code §239.93)

Please remember that I am a faculty member, not a full time advisor like you may have had during your undergraduate studies. This means that I am not in my office 8-5 M-F. I usually only ‘advise’ once a week. I am always available for questions, but I also teach, do service, and conduct research as part of my faculty responsibilities.

This certification is recognized nationally and is aligned to the standards that the International Reading Association sets forth for Reading Specialists. It is understood that you have had training in the instruction, diagnosis, and remediation, of reading difficulties, as well as training in literacy coaching and how to be a literacy leader on your campus. If you have any questions, please ask! Reading can change lives!

~ Dr. Welsh, Undergraduate & Graduate Reading Coordinator welshka@sfasu.edu ~