

## Advising Information for Elementary Education Students

### I. Majors, degrees, certificates and endorsements

Your major is Elementary Education; you will receive a BA in Elementary Education. Your major has three categories of courses: Education courses, non-Education courses, and your content area. Each of these categories is reviewed below. It is important to remember that universities grant degrees, majors, and minors while the state grants certificates and endorsements. They are not the same thing, so pay attention to what the catalog says and then confirm that information with your Education advisor. Note: The State of Washington may change certification requirements at anytime and is under no obligation to follow Whitworth's catalog. Also, the Federal government, through the No Child Left Behind (NCLB), may also change how teachers are qualified. They also do not have to follow the catalog. The lesson here is to check and double-check with your advisor on certification and endorsement requirements.

### II. Endorsements and certificates

Your teaching certificate will show the academic areas in which you are legally qualified to teach in the State of Washington; these areas are called endorsements. The requirements for each of the endorsement areas are available from the Department of Teacher Education or from the catalog. Each endorsement requires certain content courses, methods course(s), and field experiences for each endorsement area. Candidates must also pass the WEST-E, a Washington State exam for each endorsement area.

When you complete all the Elementary Education program requirements, you will receive a Residency Certificate from the State of Washington with an endorsement to teach kindergarten through the eighth grade (K-8). In addition to your K-8 endorsement, you may also complete endorsements in other areas. This is explained below in the Content Area section. Even though you're certified to teach K-8, you will most likely not be considered "highly qualified" under Federal guidelines in NCLB legislation unless you have an additional endorsement in a content area. Such areas could be math, English/Language Arts, and art for example. See Section V below.

### III. Education Courses (see Elementary Certification Plan)

Sophomore standing is required to take Education courses. First year students at Whitworth who have transferred in credits through Running Start or AP credit may not take Education courses in their first semester and are strongly encouraged to wait until their second year to begin the program. See your advisor for the best approach regarding starting the program.

The general education requirements for Oral Communication and American and Global Diversity are fulfilled through the Elementary Education program.

### IV. Non-Education courses (see Elementary Certification Plan)

You are required to take a number of courses outside of Education to fulfill state content requirements. These courses may be started as a freshman and do not require admission into the program. A number of these courses also meet general college requirements.

Math: MA 221 and MA 222, Math for Elementary Teachers I and II, are required and fulfill the university math requirement.

Science: We have designed two courses to meet the required science knowledge for elementary majors: NS 101, Earth and Sky and BI 102, Introduction to Biology. Transfer students may work with the chair of the department to petition that other science courses substitute for these courses.

Social Science: You are required to take a US History course and a US Government course (Political Studies); both of which fulfill the social science requirement. Remember any of these non-Education courses can be used in your Content Area (see below).

## V. Content Area (this can be confusing so read carefully)

**The basic requirement:** You must complete a minimum of 20 semester credits in one teaching area (endorsement). English Language Learners (ELL) and Reading cannot be used for your content area, nor can areas such as Business and Religion because there are no state endorsements in these academic areas (sorry--state law).

You have five options for completing your 20 semester credit content area. As you'll see below, some of these options overlap.

1. You can take **any 20 semester credits** in one endorsement area. For example, you could take any 20 semester credits in English or you could take all your 20 credits in math. This option gives you lots of freedom to choose courses, but does not lead to completing an endorsement or a minor. *Under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, elementary certified teachers should consider completing an endorsement in addition to elementary education in a commonly taught area if they are considering middle level teaching.*
2. Instead of any 20 semester credits in one endorsement area, you could follow the requirements for a **minor**. The advantage of this option is that a minor will show up on your transcript and looks academically stronger than the "any 20 credits" option. Note: some minors are less than 20 credits, but you will still need to complete at least 20 credits in one area to fulfill state law. You can use the Special Education minor in this area, but remember the minor in special education does not lead to an endorsement (see point #5).
3. You could use your content area to fulfill the requirements for an **endorsement**. In a number of cases, doing the minor is the same as doing the requirements for an endorsement. For example, completing the minor in math is the same as completing the requirements for an endorsement in math. In some academic areas, such as Spanish, you will see that the minor requirements are different than the requirement for the endorsement.

An endorsement in addition to your elementary certificate is a good option since it endorses you to teach in an area beyond your Elementary Education Endorsement. This option is particularly attractive for those who are interested in teaching in **middle school**. Many middle school principals prefer to hire teachers who have an Elementary Education background with at least one additional endorsement area. This combination allows them to hire you for teaching all subjects through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and with the additional endorsement you are "highly qualified" for another subject in higher grades.

Are you required to have an additional endorsement to go with elementary? No, but we strongly suggest you add Reading and/or ELL to your Elementary Education certificate.

4. This option is confusing, so read carefully. You can also complete your 20 semester credits in an area of concentration. There are three: Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science. That means you could fulfill the 20 semester credit content requirement by taking credits from the academic areas that fall under these broad areas. For Language Arts, you can choose your 20 credits from English, Journalism, Speech, and Drama. For Social Studies, you choose your 20 credits from Anthropology, History, Political Studies, Sociology, Psychology, and Economics. For Science, you could choose your 20 credits from Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Geology (Earth Science.) The advantage is the development of breadth in one area. The disadvantage is the lack of depth and the lack of a minor or endorsement. This option is most attractive to transfer students who have not started their content areas before coming to Whitworth and can combine courses from their community college work under one of these broad areas. Remember: this option does not lead to an endorsement.

5. The last option is to double major in Elementary Education and another area. The advantage is a deeper academic preparation and a major in an area besides Elementary Education. The obvious disadvantage is that this will require more time and coursework; the obvious advantage is that you will be more deeply educated and the full major may open other doors for you. Many students at Whitworth put together Elementary Education with another major and, we seriously encourage you to consider this option. The major most often chosen is Special Education. You can use Special Education in your 20 semester credit content area, so completing the major doesn't require that many more courses. The advantage of combining elementary education and special education is that you will be endorsed in two areas and greatly increase your marketability.

## **VI. English Language Learners (ELL) Endorsement**

The English Language Learners endorsement (formerly English as a Second Language) is expected in some states such as California, Arizona, and Nevada. Students who are thinking they may want to teach in these areas are strongly encouraged to complete the ELL endorsement/minor as a part of their program.

## **VII. Reading Endorsement**

There are enough courses in literacy in the Elementary Education program that it only takes a few more courses to be eligible for the Reading Endorsement. Meeting the endorsement requirements is one course short of completing the minor in Reading. See the Reading Certification Plan or catalog for details.

### **Frequently Asked Questions on Elementary Education Advising:**

- **When can I start taking Education courses?** When you reach sophomore standing or with permission of the chair of Teacher Education.
- **What can I take as a freshman?** You can take MA 221, MA 222, NS201, BI 102, HI 131/132/181/182, PO 102 and begin work on your 20 semester credits of content area.
- **Does ELL or Reading work for my 20 semester credits?** No.
- **Do I take EDU 321 right after EDU 320?** 320 is a prerequisite for 321, but they do not have to be sequential.
- **Can I use Religion or Business for my 20 semester credits?** No.
- **When do I get an Education Advisor?** After you have completed EDU 201, 202, 203, you will apply for the program and then be assigned an advisor.
- **What should I do for advising before I am admitted?** Any education faculty in the undergraduate program will gladly assist you until you are admitted and given an advisor. Just come to the second and third floors of Dixon and ask for assistance in advising.
- **When do I start my blocks in the elementary program?** You can start these in either the fall or spring semester of your junior year.
- **When do I take all the other Education courses?** Once you have been admitted and have completed EDU 320, you may take courses such as EDU 321, 343, 344, and 401. These courses do not have a specific time frame in which to be taken.