

# Elementary Education

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW** The School of Education offers a strong professional program with a solid foundation in the arts and sciences, providing knowledge and perspective for disciplines taught in elementary schools. Within their educational program, elementary education students master a variety of methods of classroom instruction and assessment in courses that can lead to teacher certification in any state or Department of Defense schools globally. Drake students are also empowered to apply their learning through classroom experiences in some of Iowa's top schools in all four years of the program. In the junior year, elementary education students have a variety of field experiences that are tailored to extend the research-based coursework in reading, science, mathematics, and social studies by applying those methods in diverse elementary classrooms.

Because Drake University is a "hometown university" in a metropolitan area, School of Education students have the opportunity to interact with PK-12 students and their teachers all four years of their experience. The quality of Iowa teachers and Iowa schools offers a living lab that is matched by small classes and doctoral-level faculty members in the university setting. Although graduate students help organize the multiple practicum experiences for students, there are no graduate students teaching in the Drake University School of Education.

Program faculty serve also as advisors in order to move students swiftly and correctly through their programs. The junior-year experience with an expert teacher in a discipline (Teachers as Partners Program) is a unique on-site, special methods program. Collaboration, academic excellence, and social justice are principles stressed throughout the student-involved programs wherein student voices are sought and heard.

**FACULTY** All 11 faculty members have earned their doctoral degrees. Their research interests include technology integration, science methodology, reading innovations, gender issues, urban education, at-risk students, "I Have a Dream" assessment, qualitative research methods, ESL methods and assessment, emotional and behavioral disorders, juvenile justice, motivation, reading engagement, pre-service teacher dispositions, optimal environments for middle school, preparing all teachers for diverse students/classrooms.

**ACADEMIC PREPARATION** As preparation for the elementary education program, students should have a well-rounded, academic high school curriculum and an interest working with children. In addition, all students should have the disposition that all students can learn.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR MAJOR** In the first year, education students enroll in Introduction to Education, which involves both time in the college classroom and an observational component in the elementary or secondary classroom. During the sophomore year, students complete their pre-professional requirements: Foundations of Education (including a 40-hour elementary practicum placement), Human Development, and Introduction to Special Education. Junior and senior years, students complete professional requirements, including methods courses such as

Literacy Methods for the Primary Grades and Methods of Teaching Elementary Science, and one semester of full-time student teaching.

Approved endorsement programs are currently available in art, early childhood education, unified early childhood education (early childhood education with an emphasis in special education), English/language arts, health, English as a Second Language (ESL: K-12), history, mathematics, reading, rhetoric and communication studies/theatre, science, special education (2<sup>nd</sup> endorsement only), and social studies. Add-on endorsements are also available for middle school (6-8) and coaching (K-12). Other endorsement programs may become available. Specific requirements and program descriptions are available from the Teaching and Learning Department in the School of Education. Elementary majors also must have at least 53-54 credit hours in the School of Education, including the following Professional Education courses.

**DRAKE CURRICULUM** The Drake Curriculum, required of all undergraduates, is designed to help students meet personal and professional goals as they acquire fundamental knowledge and abilities in ten Areas of Inquiry, including communication, critical thinking, artistic experience, historical consciousness, information and technology literacy, international and multicultural experiences, scientific and quantitative literacy, values and ethics and engaged citizenship. Students work closely with their academic advisers to craft a program of study in general education that prepares students for civic and professional leadership.

The Drake Curriculum also requires first-year seminars, which foster development of critical thinking and written and oral communication skills through a topical focus; and a Senior Capstone, in which students demonstrate the capacity to bring information, skills and ideas to bear on one project.

**INTERNSHIPS & OPPORTUNITIES** Education majors begin observing working classrooms during their first year in order to experience a variety of educational settings at all levels of elementary certification (grades K-6). In their sophomore year, elementary education majors complete a 40-hour practicum at two levels in two local elementary classrooms. The variety of field experiences in the junior year give elementary students specialized methods instruction and prepares them for the education capstone experience—student teaching. During student teaching, elementary education students spend 15 weeks in Iowa PK-6 classrooms under the mentorship of an experienced teacher. The elementary education program at Drake follows a coaching model, including weekly contact with a university supervisor.

Students can gain additional enriching experiences through university or community organizations. For example, students can tutor adults as part of the Drake School of Education Adult Literacy Program, act as student mentors for the Drake Community Center, volunteer for the Des Moines Big Brother-Big Sister organizations, and even collaborate with faculty

on research projects through Undergraduate Research Assistantships. Other tutoring opportunities are available through area service agencies.

The Drake University School of Education has a state of the art Macintosh computer classroom for development as well as teaching and learning. Materials from an in-school curriculum library with samples from major textbook companies, important literature, and culture kits are available for two-week check-out.

**CAREER OPTIONS** With licensure in elementary education and an academic endorsement, elementary education graduates become teachers in a self-contained elementary classroom K-6 in all subjects except physical education. Elementary education graduates may also become teachers in an elementary or middle school that uses subject-specialty teachers in their endorsement area. In addition, many businesses seek education graduates because of their abilities to design plans, teach needed skills, solve problems, and communicate well.

**HONORS** The Kappa Delta Pi International Honor Society in Education recognizes scholarship and excellence in education.

**STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES** The DEA or Drake Education Association is the School of Education's chapter of the National Education Association, the largest teacher's union in the United States. All education students are invited to join and engage in fundraisers for local schools, social events, and activities for teacher appreciation day.

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## HOW TO REACH US

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