

Elementary Education

As fulfilling as a teaching career is, teaching children in elementary school comes with the unique reward of cultivating young, eager minds in their most formative years. As an elementary teacher, you have the opportunity to instill in children a love of and enthusiasm for learning they'll take with them through their lives.

Contact us

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 Visit the Teacher Education Program
 Web site at www.sau.edu/education
 For general information about
 St. Ambrose or how to apply:
 Admissions Office
 563/333-6300 or 800/383-2627
 email: admit@sau.edu
www.sau.edu

Degrees offered and requirements

St. Ambrose offers a Bachelor of Arts in Education with an endorsement in Elementary Education. A Bachelor of Education degree also is offered for the individual who already has a bachelor's or master's degree and is seeking teacher licensure. Since these students already have earned a degree, they are exempt from having to take the general education requirements. All other requirements in the Teacher Education Program apply.

Before gaining full admission to the Teacher Education Program, students must have a 2.7 cumulative GPA, maintain a 3.00 or B average in their major and provide documentation of meeting the College Basic Academic Subjects Examination (C-BASE) requirements.

The requirements specific to the Elementary Education endorsement are:

- Completion of 15 designated courses in education and special education, and courses in psychology, math and English.
- Three methods courses in the areas of art, physical education, music or health education.
- A course in U.S. history or government.
- Completing 7 credit hours in science.
- A minimum of 190 clock hours of field experience and practicum work in schools before student teaching.
- An approved area of concentration in one of the following areas: English/language arts, mathematics, reading, science, social studies, foreign language or Special Education Instructional Strategist I mild/moderate program. Designated courses are also required in the area of concentration that is chosen.

Program highlights and courses

The St. Ambrose Education Department emphasizes both course work and field experience that allows students to begin working with children early in their college career. The department has strong, established relationships with area schools, providing students the opportunity to work closely with experienced educators. As a result, the program enjoys a regional reputation for graduating exceptional teachers who have the comprehensive skills and experience that allow them to be effective from their very first day in the classroom.

The Teacher Education Program at St. Ambrose includes areas of study necessary to prepare competent and professional classroom teachers and enables students to receive an initial license to teach in Iowa agencies and schools. The program is approved by the Iowa Department of Education. Through agreements with other states, graduates may apply for certification after receiving an Iowa license.

Both Iowa and Illinois classify fifth- through eighth-grades as middle school. Illinois requires a middle school endorsement for those wishing to teach at those levels (with additional coursework required). Iowa encourages coursework with middle school emphasis, but it is optional. St. Ambrose offers the middle school endorsement coursework to education students.

Elementary Education majors gain a foundation in liberal arts subjects, learn a variety of methods for understanding how and why children develop socially and intellectually, and get professional experience that includes research in teaching and learning. In addition to the required education classes, courses in psychology, special education, English, science, history/government, and math also are required.

Typical courses include Child and Adolescent Psychology; History and Philosophy of Education; Educational Technology; Methods of Teaching; Child and Adolescent Literature; Diversity Education; and Diagnostic and Prescriptive Techniques of Teaching Reading.

Field experience/practicum experience and student teaching

Field experience begins early in the Elementary Education major's career through time spent in the classroom observing and working with children. Later practicum experiences require students to prepare and teach lessons in a variety of K-6 classroom settings.

Elementary education students earn 12 to 15 credit hours for student teaching, which is usually in the last semester before graduation. The placement is all day, every day, for one semester, and additional coursework or employment during this final semester is discouraged. The field experience and student teaching assignments are made by the Teacher Education Program to public or private schools in the Quad Cities area.

Resources and co-curricular activities

Students interested in pursuing teaching as a career also are encouraged to seek admission to Kappa Delta Pi, an honorary educational association designed to recognize those who have contributed to the field of education.

Teacher Education students at St. Ambrose can belong to the student chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The overall purpose of the CEC professional organization is to promote future leaders in the education of children and youth with exceptionalities, as well as promote programs designed to inform students of special education and encourage them to become involved with their peers.

Career prospects

According to the Iowa Department of Education, 41 percent of Iowa's teachers are eligible to retire within the next ten years, and there is a growing shortage of teachers in areas such as mathematics, science, special education and English as a second language. Of the St. Ambrose Education majors who responded to a post-graduation questionnaire, those seeking employment as teachers enjoyed a 95 percent placement rate over the past four years.

Education graduates not only teach in classrooms but are also employed as reading specialists, curriculum specialists and guidance counselors.

About the faculty

Brenda Boleyn PhD, Associate Professor

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Prof. Boleyn's primary areas of interests are early childhood and elementary education. Prof. Boleyn teaches courses in

curriculum development, early literacy, and reading/language arts. She holds a PhD in language and literacy from the University of Iowa and joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 1997.

Tracy Schuster-Matlock PhD, Associate Professor

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Prof. Schuster-Matlock's interests include the foundations of education. She teaches education courses in Ecuador during winter intersession. She received her PhD in the foundations of education from the University of South Carolina and joined the Education Department faculty in 2001.

Rachel Serianz PhD, Professor

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Prof. Serianz's interests include elementary science, social studies and developing science in-service experiences for practicing teachers, as well as developmental psychology. She holds a PhD in education from the University of Iowa and joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 1991.

Deanna Stoube MEd, Assistant Professor, Reading Clinic Director

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Prof. Stoube's research interests include teacher perceptions of reading instruction at the middle level and the use of literacy centers in upper elementary classrooms. She received her MEd from St. Ambrose and currently is working on her PhD in elementary education at the University of Iowa. She joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 2001.

Barbara Wiese PhD, Associate Professor

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Prof. Wiese's research interests involve exploring ways to support students with special needs general education classrooms and how to include the use of paraeducators in the classroom environment. She holds a PhD in special education from the University of Iowa. Prof. Wiese joined the faculty in 1999.

Tanya Volkova MS, Assistant Professor

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Prof. Volkova's research interests revolve around aspects related to cognitive processes students use while learning mathematics. She received her doctorate in Mathematics Education from Illinois State University in 2006 and joined the St. Ambrose faculty in 2006.

Additional education faculty

Debra Brownson, Director, Children's Campus

Catherine Daters PhD, Professor and Chair,

Secondary Education

Richard Hanzelka PhD, Associate Professor and Eastern

Iowa Writing Project Director

William Hitchings PhD, Professor and Chair, Special Education

Jeanne Keeney Roller EdD, Professor

Carol Lyon EdD, Professor

Dean Marple EdD, Professor

Robert Ristow PhD, Professor and Dean