

INITIAL TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAMS AT MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

Presented by

*Elizabeth J. Sandell, Ph. D., Assistant Professor
Department of Educational Studies: Elementary and Early Childhood
Minnesota State University, Mankato, Minnesota*

Abstract

Teacher preparation is a strong tradition of Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU, Mankato), located approximately 85 miles southwest of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The institution of higher education has been preparing teachers since 1868. Currently, initial teacher licensure programs in Elementary and Early Childhood (EEC) prepare graduates to be licensed as early childhood teachers, as elementary school teachers, and/or as middle school teachers. This article describes MSU, Mankato's programs in terms of its students, faculty members, academic programs, unique opportunities for students, and emphasis on preparing professionals to be leaders in education.

Краткий обзор

Подготовка будущих преподавателей является одной из самых сильных традиций Государственного университета штата Миннесота, г. Манкато (ГУМ, Манкато), расположенного приблизительно

в 85 милях на юго-западе от городов Миннеаполис и Сэнт-Пол штата Миннесота. Университет осуществляет подготовку преподавателей с 1868 года. За последнее время «Программа лицензирования начального и дошкольного образования» готовит лицензированных воспитателей дошкольных учреждений, учителей начальной и средней школы. Статья раскрывает существующие в ГУМ, Манката программы по подготовке студентов, работе с преподавателями; академические программы, уникальные возможности для студентов. Подробно рассмотрена подготовка профессионалов и будущих лидеров в системе образования.

Introduction

Teacher preparation is a strong tradition of Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU, Mankato), located approximately 85 miles southwest of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. The institution of higher education has been preparing teachers since 1868. Currently, initial teacher licensure programs in Elementary and Early Childhood (EEC) are offered through partnerships with more than 10 area school districts and more than 30 area early education and child care programs.

EEC Academic Programs

There are several degree programs that prepare teachers and leaders in education:

- Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education (with specializations in pre-primary education, middle school science, middle school math, or middle school communication arts)
- Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education
- Master of Science degree in Elementary Education
- Master of Science degree in Early Childhood Education
- Master of Science degree in Early Childhood Special Education
- Master of Science degree in Literacy
- Graduate Certificate in Reading

The department's academic programs exhibit quality as recognized by accreditation by the Minnesota Board of Teaching, the North Central Association of Colleges, and the National Council of Teacher Educators.

EEC Students and Graduates

Each year, EEC enrolls approximately 800 students, including more than 700 elementary education majors and almost 100 early childhood education majors. The Department graduates approximately 200 students each year, including more than 150 elementary education undergraduates, more than 20 early childhood education undergraduates, approximately 20 graduates with Reading certificates, and more than 10 graduates with Master's of Science degrees.

Department Faculty Members

The Department has 30 faculty and staff members, including 12 full-time, tenure-track instructional faculty members (100% with terminal degrees), several fixed-term faculty members, several graduate assistants, and more than 20 adjunct faculty members, including many community professionals with specialized training and experience. Each year, the EEC faculty members generate more than 9000 credit hours of undergraduate instruction and more than 400 credit hours of graduate instruction.

Full-time faculty members serve as academic advisers. Each faculty member is assigned between 60 and 80 students to advise each year.

Faculty members participate and lead in many professional and scholarly organizations, including

1. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and its Minnesota affiliate organization
2. Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
3. World Organization for Preschool Education (OMEP)
4. American Evaluation Association (AEA)
5. International Reading Association (IRA)
6. National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators (NAECTE) and its Minnesota affiliate organization
7. Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (NAMERA)
8. National Middle School Association (NMSA) and its Minnesota affiliate organization
9. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and its Minnesota affiliate organization
10. National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and its Minnesota affiliate organization
11. Council on Exceptional Children, Division of Early Childhood (DEC)
12. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and its Minnesota affiliate organization

Opportunities for Students

Practical Experience

Students have creative on-site learning opportunities through partnerships with more than 10 area school districts and more than 30 early education settings, including Minnesota Valley Action Council. Each year,

more than 500 students are placed in Elementary Education Field Sites and more than 300 students are placed in Early Childhood Education Field Sites.

Student Leadership

There are significant opportunities for student leadership through the Early Childhood and Elementary Education Club, the student honor society Kappa Delta Pi, and the student affiliate of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Student leaders also help guide program changes through serving on advisory committees and community councils.

Applied Research

EEC students have opportunities to work on applied research through the MSU Literacy Center, which is part of the EEC department. There are also applied research opportunities with English Language Learners and new immigrants.

Global Education

Students in EEC find many opportunities for global learning through international partnerships, faculty and student exchanges, student teaching, and short-term study. Current partnerships include: Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia (student teaching); North-Eastern State University, Magadan, Russian Federation (faculty exchange); and Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand (faculty exchange).

Regional Cross-Cultural Education

EEC students also have opportunities to experience diverse cultures through regional learning activities, including field experience placements in schools with diverse student populations, as well as campus-based and community-based international lectures and cultural events. Whenever possible, EEC students are placed in practicum settings so they can interact with and learn from children and families from cultures different than their own.

The Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education

Students who complete the Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education are qualified to take the state exams to be licensed as early childhood educators. Licensed teachers can work in a variety of settings, including child care centers, preschools, kindergartens, grades one and two in elementary school. The academic program includes:

- ~ 40 credits in general education requirements and electives (such as English composition, Speech, Math, Psychology, Biology, Art, Sign Language)
- ~ 16 credits in support courses (such as introduction to education, technology, theories of development, and health and nutrition)
- ~ 20 credits in methods courses (such as arts, music, literature, special education, and infant-toddler methods)
- ~ 10 credits in working with families (such as teacher-parent relationships, working with other professionals, child welfare services)
- ~ 10 credits in preprimary methods and materials
- ~ 12 credits in primary methods and materials
- ~ 12 credits of student teaching

The Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education

Students who complete the Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education are qualified to take the state exams to be licensed as elementary teachers. Licensed teachers can work in a variety of settings, including child care centers, preschools, kindergartens, elementary schools, and middle schools.

The Elementary Education academic program includes:

- ~ 30 credits in general education requirements and electives (such as English composition, Speech, Math, Psychology, Biology, Art)
- ~ 8 credits in support courses (such as introduction to education, technology, drug education)
- ~ 15 credits in methods courses (such as arts, music, special education, and geography)
- ~ 20 credits in literacy and social studies
- ~ 20 credits in science and mathematics
- ~ 15 credits in a specialization (such as primary education, middle school mathematics, middle school science, middle school world language)
- ~ 12 credits of student teaching

Emphasis on Planning and Preparation Skills

All initial teacher preparation programs emphasize planning and preparation skills. University students learn how to:

- Use knowledge of children's characteristics, skills, interest, knowledge, and cultural heritage.
- Align goals and objectives with educational tasks and activities that are appropriate for diverse students.
- Demonstrate knowledge of academic content.
- Relate learning objectives to learning activities, methods, materials, and resources
- Align evaluation with learning objectives and future planning.

Emphasis on Enhancing the Learning Environment

All initial teacher preparation programs emphasize enhancing the learning environments. University students learn how to:

- Treat children fairly and encourages fairness between students.
- Relate positively and respectfully to children.
- Creates high expectations for children's learning and achievements.
- Demonstrate expectations; uses preventive strategies; monitors and responds to children's misbehavior.
- Provide for safe arrangement of furniture and equipment; provides for accessible and safe physical resources.

Emphasis on Teaching for Student Learning

All initial teacher preparation programs emphasize teaching for student learning. University students learn how to:

- Communicate goals and procedures clearly and accurately in writing and verbally.
- Use appropriate instructional approaches to teach content clearly.
- Encourage children's critical and creative thinking.
- Provide quality, accurate, substantive, and constructive feedback that is specific to children.
- Allow time for maximum participation by all children.

Emphasis on Professional Attitudes and Behaviors

All initial teacher preparation programs emphasize professional attitudes and behaviors. University students learn how to:

- Reflect accurately on own teaching and can suggest valid improvements in future teaching.
- Seek and share teaching insight and is collaborative in planning with colleagues.
- Complete responsibilities on time and with quality.
- Show punctual attendance.
- Dress professionally.

Testimonies from Community Partners

"EEC students are better prepared every year." — cooperating Teacher in a local school district.

"EEC students are very professional." — cooperating Teacher on Special Assignment in a local school district.

"We enjoy working with the EEC faculty members and students." – Elementary School Principal in a local school district.

Sources

Academic Data Summaries, Minnesota State University, Mankato. Available on-line at <http://www.mnsu.edu/institutes/currentreports/>

Annual Reports, Department of Educational Studies: Elementary and Early Childhood, College of Education, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN.

Office of Field Placements, College of Education, Minnesota State University, Mankato, MN.

