The elementary education team partners with community organizations, and our graduates end up being offered teaching positions by the schools in the Madison area. The elementary education program has multiple field experiences in K-9 schools, culminating in a full-time student teaching experience sharing a classroom with a cooperating teacher. The connection between the teacher candidate, their field supervisor, and the cooperating classroom teacher in the Madison-area schools provides a high level of support for our students from the first day forward. Many of our graduates end up being offered teaching positions by the schools in which they did their fieldwork.

Partnersing with Community Organizations

The elementary education team partners with non-profit organizations and area businesses. Our teacher candidates:

- Volunteer with Girls on the Run, a program designed to inspire girls of all abilities to embrace their inner strength and build healthy social, emotional, and physical skills.
- Work at the Cooperative Children's Book Center (CCBC)
- Conduct research at UW’s Child Development Lab
- Volunteer at local school fairs and activities
- Plan and run educational events and panels with schools and university professors
- Intern at the Boys and Girls Club, the Lussier Community Education Center, and the Goodman Community Center

Participation with Professional Organizations

Our teacher candidates attend and/or present at educational conferences such as:

- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- National K-8 Literacy and Reading Recovery Conference (LitCon)
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

Guest Speakers

Faculty in the Elementary Education Program bring speakers from a variety of community organizations into the classrooms and seminars:

- Teachers, principals, and superintendents from area school districts to share information about school life and provide tips on the interview process
- Madison's Preschool to Prison pipeline with a focus on teaching for social justice
- PBS Wisconsin to introduce technology and teaching resources
- Wisconsin Education Association (WEAC) to introduce programs such as "Ambassadors for Equity" and "Early Career Educators"
- WIDA to introduce English Language Development Standards and to practice administering the ACCESS for ELLs assessment to K-9 students who may need academic English language support

Seeking Out Community Experiences

We encourage our students to venture outside the classroom and get to know the families and communities of their pupils by attending a community activity such as a worship service or a community potluck. Students spend time in and around the attendance area of their schools to develop an understanding of the places, people, spaces, and experiences that influence their pupils and consequently are brought to school.

Field Trips


Study Abroad

Teacher candidates are encouraged to explore cultures other than their own by participating in one of the School of Education's exciting study abroad programs. The Curriculum & Instruction department offers a three-week course in June entitled "Diversity and Community in the Galapagos Islands" led by faculty in Elementary Education.

Additional Certifications, Majors, Minors, and Certificates

Many students in the K-9 elementary education program also complete programs in other areas of interest. Certification minors in Early Childhood Education and/or English as a Second Language can be combined with the core K-9 program. The most popular additional majors are in Spanish, Environmental Studies, Education Studies, Psychology, and History. Certificate in Educational Policy Studies, Disability Rights and Services, Chicano and Latino Studies, and Environmental Studies are very popular, as are minors in Social Studies, English Language Arts, Math, and Science. These options complement the skills and knowledge acquired through elementary education coursework.
Student Clubs and Organizations
Elementary education students have multiple opportunities to participate in related organizations and activities such as Aspiring Educators of Wisconsin (https://www.facebook.com/AspiringEducatorsUWMadison/) and Game Design and Development (https://games.education.wisc.edu/lab/).