What does an elementary teacher do?

If you are interested in working with children in a teaching and learning environment, then elementary education may be the field for you. Typically, elementary teachers are responsible for a classroom of 18-30 students.

Teachers develop a curriculum based on school, district and state standards. In addition, teachers assess student’s progress. Besides the daily contact with students, teachers meet with family members to discuss their student’s progress. On a regular basis teachers meet with teaching staff, educational specialists and school volunteers to discuss school issues or the needs of individual students.

To teach in public schools requires a minimum of a baccalaureate degree. To be licensed by the state, public teachers are required to have earned a teacher certification and to have successfully completed the WEST-E Exam.

According to the Washington Occupational Information System (WOIS), between 2010 and 2020, it is estimated that there will be 331 openings annually due to new positions and 647 openings annually from workers leaving this occupation. Available teaching openings vary widely depending on the school district location.

Schools need bi-lingual teachers so learning another language will likely improve your opportunities for employment. You can also be more competitive for employment and advancement by focusing on some of the high need subject areas. Currently there is a strong need for elementary teachers prepared in the following disciplines: ESL and Special Education. Significant coursework in the Science and Math disciplines can be helpful in employment too.

The average for entry level teaching salaries in Washington is $45,314. For all elementary education teachers the mean salary is $58,956 (WOIS).

Salaries for teachers are generally based on the number of years a teacher has taught and the number of classes the teacher has completed beyond the initial BA or BS degree. Check www.aft.org for salary details.
What Washington universities offer Elementary Education?

Central Washington U.  *Evergreen State College  Saint Martin's University
Eastern Washington U. *Antioch University  *Seattle University
Western Washington U.  City University  Seattle Pacific University
*U. of Washington Seattle  Gonzaga University  *University of Puget Sound
*U. of Washington Bothell  Heritage University  Walla Walla College
*U. of Washington Tacoma  Northwest University  Western Governors Univ.
Washington State U.  Pacific Lutheran University  Whitworth University

* University/college offers Elementary Education only as a post-Baccalaureate program or Certifications.
If Master's only, you will need to select a major in a subject area – not Education.

How do I prepare for this major?

Most Elementary Education programs will honor the Associate of Arts degree for admission. Check with the colleges you are interested in for degree and class recommendations. While attending Highline, the following classes are generally recommended:

- English & 101 and 205
- Communications & 220
- Psychology & 100 and 200
- Math 180 and 181*
- A U.S History class
- A Geography class
- Two Lab Science classes
- Education & 115 and 202
- Education 140/240*
- PE 160 (CPR/First Aid can be helpful)

*Check with the university program for class selection.
Admission to most education programs will require a cumulative GPA of a 2.75 or higher and successful completion of the WEST-B. (www.west.nesinc.com)

Where can I get more information on this career?

WEB Resources
- OSPI (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction — Washington)
  www.K12.wa.us
- National Center for Education Information
  www.ncei.com
- Washington Education Association
  www.washingtoneoa.org
- National Science Teachers Association
  www.nsta.org
- www.teachwashington.org
- Washington Federation of Teachers
  www.wa.aft.org/

How do I get a faculty advisor?
To request a faculty advisor, go to: http://edplanning.highline.edu/request.advisor.php or drop in at the Educational Planning and Advising Center (EPAC) in Building 6.
For our hours of operation, go to http://edplanning.highline.edu/