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), employment in this field is expected to grow 14.2% from 2007 to 2017. This growth rate is about the average for all occupations.

Schools need bi-lingual teachers so taking classes to learn another language will 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 mean for entry level teaching salaries in Washington is $41,855. For all elementary education teachers the mean salary is $54,886.

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  
Eastern Washington U. Antioch University  
Western Washington U. City University  
*U. of Washington Seattle University  
*U. of Washington Bothell University  
*U. of Washington Tacoma Whitworth University  
Washington State U.  
*University/college offers Elementary Education only as a post-Baccalaureate program only.

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*
- Anthropology& 206
- A U.S History class
- A Geography class
- Two Lab Science classes
- Education& 115
- 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. (http://www.west.nesinc.com)

Where can I get more information on this career?

WEB Resources:
- National Center for Education Information http://ncei.com
- Washington Education Association
- National Science Teachers Association http://nsta.org
- www.teachwashington.org
- Washington Federation of Teachers http://wa.aft.org/
- http://www.washingtone.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/