

Good morning Madame Chair and committee members,

I am Dr. Russell Swanson, Assistant Professor at Emporia State University. My experience in education includes graduating from ESU with a BSE and master's degree, teaching in Emporia Public Schools, graduating from Kansas State University with my PhD in Curriculum and Instruction as well as working at Emporia State. I am honored to share information with you today about our teacher education requirements for elementary and secondary education students at Emporia State as we prepare students to become amazing teachers.

Emporia State University has been preparing teachers since the founding of our institution in 1863. In 1863, the Kansas State Normal School, the original name of Emporia State, began its rich history of educator preparation. By 1889, Kansas State Normal School had become the largest school in the state and the largest normal, or teacher preparation school, in the country. The name of the university has changed four times, since its founding, in response to the university's growth and the increased advantages it provides to students in the state of Kansas.

Our goal at ESU is to provide an education for our students to be prepared to walk into their own classroom after graduation with the knowledge and practical experience to confidentially begin their teaching career. This is achieved in several ways. A few of those ways include:

- Year-long experiences in student teaching including 4 week student teaching opportunities which develops the student teacher's skills to meaningfully connect with families
- Strategic selection of mentor teachers for the student teaching experience
- Incorporating best practice in pedagogy and content including the science of reading
- Quality Assurance Program

Teaching is a career that requires development of specialized skills. Our elementary education students work in two different grade levels with K-6 students. In their Block 2 semester, students attend classes on campus at Emporia State for two days a week and are in the public schools for 3 days a week. This schedule continues for the first 10 weeks of the semester. Students learn methodologies and skills in their courses and are able to apply these newly acquired skills immediately in the classroom. During their Block 3 semester, students are out in the K-6 classrooms every day during this typical student teaching semester. During this year-long student teaching, students experience the entire school year including professional development for teachers, classroom set up, Back-to-School parent nights, the first day of school, parent-teacher conferences, music programs, math and science nights, classroom community building, holiday programs, classroom celebrations, and a host of other events.

Our secondary education students have a similar experience through our STEP program. During their Phase I semester which is typically the first semester of their senior year, students attend classes on campus for 4 weeks at ESU. Then students observe in a middle level or high school level classroom for 10 days. This allows students the ability to observe newly acquired methodologies and skills in a practical situation. Students then return to their coursework at ESU for four weeks and then observe and teach in a different middle level or high school level classroom for 10 days. During this During the Phase II semester, students are out in the 6-12 classrooms every day during this typical student teaching semester.

A well-rounded student teacher becomes a well-rounded Kansas first-year teacher. ESU provides our student teachers with expanded student teaching experiences during their student teaching semester. These “4-week opportunities” are developed to expand the professional opportunities and diversify student teaching experience by completing 12 weeks of student teaching at a public school in Kansas, then apply their skills and experience further with a special four-week placement opportunity to conclude the semester. Students must apply for these experiences and have several opportunities to select from including:

- Student teach abroad in Paraguay, Finland, Germany, Denmark, or Indonesia
- Student teach with a member of the National Teachers Hall of Fame
- Student teach in a private Kansas school or a Kansas Charter school
- Substitute teach in any school district in Kansas

Mentor teachers are the key to the student teaching experience. Mentor teachers are recommended by school district administrators and co-selected with ESU. The mentor models positive teaching behaviors and skills so student teachers can integrate these into their own teaching practice. Mentor teachers must meet the following qualifications:

- Hold a bachelor’s degree and a valid, renewable professional license in the content area in which the intern is preparing to teach
- Demonstrate highly effective skills as a teacher and have at least three years’ experience
 - For elementary mentor teachers, the three years minimum experience must be within the host district with at least one year at the grade level in the host school
 - Secondary mentor teachers must be licensed and teaching in the content area in which they are supervising the intern, and they must have a minimum of one semester in the host district
- Receive a recommendation from the school principal and/or district administrator
- Participate in continuing professional growth, including advanced study and other professional activities
- Demonstrate mastery of subject matter
- Employ evidence-based teaching practices, including differentiation, strategies for student engagement, and the integration of academic subjects
- Demonstrate effective mentoring and supervisory skills, including effective communication skills
- Accept the intern as part of the teaching staff and acquaint them with school facilities and policies
- Complete mentor teacher training

Emporia State University recognizes that a mentor teacher's first responsibility is to the students in their classroom and will not knowingly assign an intern to any teacher who has not expressed a willingness to host and mentor an intern.

The Science of Reading continues to be embedded into our elementary education program. ESU students receive explicit instruction in the science of reading through their coursework and then apply their learning with K-6 students in the classroom during their year-long student teaching experience. Several courses encompass the development and understanding of the science of reading. This begins in the course Foundations of Elementary English Language Arts as students focus on reading acquisition, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics. Students typically take this course in their junior year. In the course, Reading Methods I, students review Gough & Tunmer's Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Reading Rope, Tolman's Hourglass, Vowel and Consonant speech and print patterns of English with emphasis placed on the 6 syllable types.

In Reading Methods II, students continue their learning as they apply their knowledge about the following concepts: identifying reading profiles, Ehri's Stages of Word Recognition, Orthographic Mapping, structured literacy lesson plan, and implementation that includes multisensory elements. Taken in conjunction with Reading Methods II, our Reading Practicum course allows students to apply the learning while working with one specific student in their classroom. Students write and teach two lessons plan; one using Gough & Tunmer's Simple View of Reading component of word recognition and one for language comprehension. The instruction is diagnostic (based on data gathered from diagnostic assessments while working with elementary students in the classroom) and the lesson plan is structured literacy following all its elements and principles. The lesson plan addresses phonological awareness/phonemic awareness and phonics. These two courses are taken during Block 2 of our program where students spend 2 days on campus in courses, and three days in an elementary classroom to apply learning in a timely manner.

We believe strongly our new graduates will be great teachers in the state of Kansas. One of our stamps of approval is our Quality Assurance Program. If the new teacher's work is deemed unsatisfactory by a school district, Emporia State provides, free of charge, assistance to the teacher and district.

Thank you for this opportunity today for us to highlight some of our preparation for student teachers. I am happy to answer questions you may have on this topic.