

Office of the Provost and
Vice President for Academic Affairs

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**NEW DEGREE PROGRAM PLANNING NOTIFICATION OF INTENT
(PLANNING NOI)**

Program Information

Program Name: **Bachelor Degree in Education: Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies**

Institution Name: Western Washington University

Degree Granting Unit: Woodring College of Education

Degree: BA Education Level: Bachelor Type: Education

Major: Language, Literacy and Cultural Studies CIP Code: 13.1202

Concentration(s): N/A Minor: N/A

Proposed Start Date: January 5, 2010

Projected Enrollment (FTE) in Year One: 45 At Full Enrollment by Year: 2011: 90

Proposed New Funding: No new funding needed

Funding Source: State FTE

Mode of Delivery


Single Campus Delivery: Bellingham Main Campus Program

Substantive Statement of Need

See attached.

Contact Information (Academic Department Representative)

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3/3/09

Endorsement by Chief Academic Officer

Date

Substantive Statement of Need

Background

Western Washington University has been delivering innovative, research-based professional education programs at the elementary level since 1899. Currently, the department of elementary education in the Woodring College of Education offers undergraduate professional programs in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education, majors in Elementary Education Studies and Early Childhood Education, and additional endorsement programs in Bilingual Education, English Language Learners and Reading.

The Elementary Education professional program in combination with one of 19 pre-approved academic majors leads to a Washington State teaching certificate endorsed in Elementary Education. Many candidates complete additional endorsement programs, and of those who do, most choose to earn an endorsement in English Language Learners or Reading.

Resources for the delivery of a new major designed around English language learners, literacy, and cultural studies are in place. Faculty in the department of elementary education have expertise in the content, content pedagogy, and professional and pedagogical knowledge and skills needed by elementary teachers in these fields. Established collaborative relationships with academic units and faculty across the University also contribute to the preparation of elementary teachers. Faculty from the departments of English and American cultural studies specifically, bring additional expertise to the proposed Language, Literacy, and Cultural Studies major. This new major not only prepares elementary teachers in high-need areas, but does so more efficiently through a major that incorporates endorsement competencies previously available only through our additional endorsement programs.

Statement of Need

Deep knowledge and understanding related to the instruction of English Language Learners (ELLs) in K-8 classrooms is an area identified by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction with a shortage in credentialed teachers.¹ Another source that identifies the need for ELL teachers is the Higher Education Coordinating Board's most recently published needs assessment report.²

Because of this shortage, the Professional Educator's Standard Board allocated funding in AY 2008-09 for certificated teachers to add an endorsement in ELL through the Educator Retooling Program. We are helping to meet the shortage by offering our candidates the option of earning an endorsement in ELL while completing their initial teacher preparation. The endorsement in Reading, a related area, is also highly sought by schools employing K-8 teachers. Reading and writing, both areas of focus within these courses, are seen as vehicles to achievement and success for K-8 students across the content areas.

Meeting the needs of culturally diverse students in K-8 schools has long been of concern. Culturally diverse students continue to be found at the lower end of a perceived achievement gap, partially due to a lack of cultural knowledge held by the K-8 teachers charged with their education. The focus on culture will provide a deeper understanding of and respect for the rich diversity in our K-8 students. It will also better address criteria and outcomes of the state's new program approval Standard 5.3: Knowledge of Learners and their Development in Social Context:

¹ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Educator Supply and Demand in Washington State 2006 Report*, 2007, p.12

² Higher Education Coordinating Board, *State and Regional Needs Assessment Report*, 2006, p. 113

- A. **Learner centered.** All students engage in a variety of culturally responsive, developmentally, and age appropriate strategies.
- B. **Classroom/school centered.** Student learning is connected to communities within the classroom and the school, including knowledge and skills for working with others.
- C. **Family/Neighborhood centered.** Student learning is informed by collaboration with families and neighborhoods.
- D. **Contextual community centered.** All students are prepared to be responsible citizens for an environmentally sustainable, globally interconnected, and diverse society.

This major also fits with the diversity goal of the university. As stated by the President of Western Washington University, "Diversity is central to Western's Mission and Strategic Planning Goals, and is considered to be an integral component of a quality education. Our goals recognize the changing composition of society as a whole, and its impact on the world for which students are educated."

The Western Washington University Director of the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages program fully endorses this major. The Professor of Elementary English Education has been consulted and is able to accommodate the students into the associated English Education courses. The Director and faculty of American Cultural Studies (ACS) also support the new program. The new program should not impact the department of ACS because of the multiple course options available to fulfill the area in cultural understandings.

The proposed major should also assist students in less time to degree. At the present time approximately 30 students a year are extending their undergraduate degrees in order to complete the extra requirements for an endorsement in Reading. An equivalent, and growing number of students are extending in order to add the endorsement in ELL, and several are extending time to add both endorsements. Our goal with this major is to reduce time to degree while providing our students with the skills, knowledge, and understandings in language, literacy, and culture that will enhance their roles in their future professions.

This major draws on courses already offered, comes at no extra cost to the university, and provides benefits to K-8 schools, our students, and our university. Graduates who leave our institution with a deeper understanding of language, literacy, and cultural diversity not only will better meet the needs of K-8 students, they will be more highly sought in the increasingly competitive jobs in the teaching profession.