

**GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY**
PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT
KNOWLEDGE FOR
ELEMENTARY TEACHING

Introduction

Welcome to the PCKET major! Grand Valley’s elementary teacher education program is actually a double major: PCKET and Education Studies or Special Education. The PCKET major is housed in CLAS (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), while the Education Studies or Special Education majors are housed in CECEI (College of Education and Community Innovation).

What makes GVSU’s elementary teacher education program unique? You have choices! You have a lot of autonomy in how you design your major.

Choose One Grade Band	Choose Both Grade Bands	Choose One or Two Grade Bands, plus an endorsement	Estimated Time to Graduation
PK-3 or 3-6 + Education Studies			4 years
	PK-3 and 3-6 + Education Studies		4 + years
		PK-3 and/or 3-6 + Education Studies + ESL	4 ½ years
		PK-3 and/or 3-6 + Education Studies + Spanish	5 years
		PK-3 and/or 3-6 + Special Education	5 years

What is the PCKET Major?

PCKET stands for “Pedagogical Content Knowledge for Elementary Teachers.” The PCKET major is an interdisciplinary major between math, English, science, social studies, art, music, and health/PE. In the PCKET major you gain both content knowledge (knowledge that will improve your own understanding of those seven disciplines), as well as pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge that is unique to teaching those subjects to children). The content of the elementary curriculum is math, English, science, social studies, art, music, and health/ PE, and in the PCKET major you will both deepen your own knowledge of those subjects and learn how to teach them to children. Essentially, in the PCKET major, you learn to teach the content of the elementary curriculum.

Dr. Lee Schulman (1986) coined the term “pedagogical content knowledge” (PCK) and explains that it is a specialized type of knowledge that is unique to teachers and is based on how teachers synthesize their pedagogical knowledge with their subject matter knowledge.

In other words, teachers have specialized knowledge on both content and how to best teach that content to children.

PKET Major

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS)

+

Education Studies Major or Special Education Major

College of Education & Community Innovation (CECI)

Courses

↓

Liberal Arts Model of Teacher Education	
Math (MTH)	MTH 126 MTH 226 MTH 326 MTH 328 MTH 428
English (ENG)	ENG 201 ENG 301 ENG 355 ENG 403 (+ EDR 320)
Science (SCI)	SCI 225 SCI 226 SCI 227
Social Studies (HST/SST)	HST 209 SST 308 SST 309
Health and Physical Education (HPE)	HPE 267
Art/Music (ART/MUS)	ART 231 or MUS 128
Statistics (STA)	STA 126
PKET Capstone (PCK)	PCK 495

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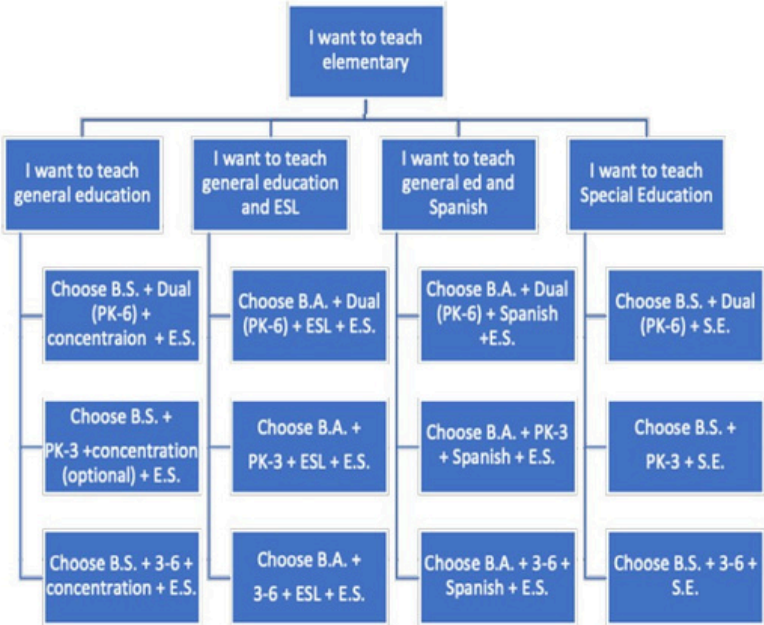
Capstone

The capstone provides an opportunity to deeply explore a disciplinary or interdisciplinary topic through writing a significant research paper and presenting your ideas at the Capstone Conference.

Note: If you are a special ed major, you do not take the PKET capstone.

How should I design my focus (PK-3; 3-6; PK-6; ESL; Spanish)?

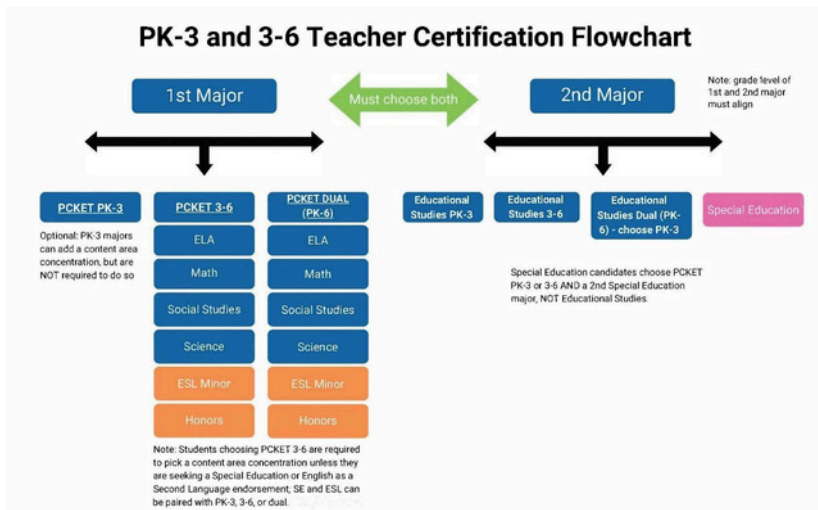
In PCKET, there are several ways to design your degree.



What is a concentration?

If you choose the PK-6 dual grade band or the 3-6 grade band and prepare to only teach general education, you will need a concentration in math, English, integrated science, or social studies. If you choose ESL, Spanish, or special education, then you do not need a concentration. Furthermore, if you are in the honors program, there is a built-in concentration within, so you do not need a separate concentration.

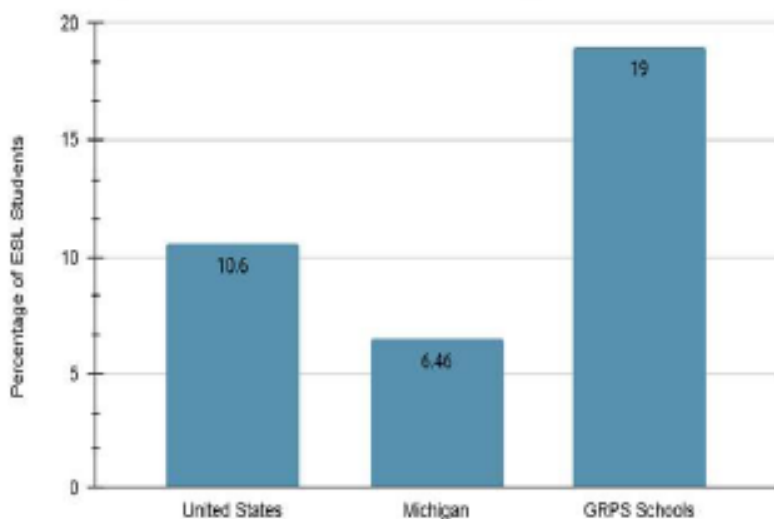
A concentration comprises a small number of courses with an academic focus to improve your content knowledge of that subject. By deepening your knowledge of one discipline, you will not only be a better teacher of that subject, but you will also potentially set yourself up to be a content leader in your school.



What are the benefits to getting an ESL endorsement?

Public schools in the US are always changing—this is nothing new. As teachers, it is important to research the school where you will be teaching to learn about the demographics of your classroom. One demographic that is growing in the United States are English learners (EL). These students are learning English as a new or second language (ESL). Here is a general breakdown of the number of ESL students in US schools, Michigan schools, and Grand Rapids Public Schools:

Percentage of ESL Students in The US/Michigan/GRPS Schools



Source: NCES, CRC-Michigan, U.S. News & World Report

As you can see, the ESL demographic is significant across the country, including in Michigan and in GRPS. Many school districts encourage their teachers to get ESL certified to be better prepared and more informed classroom teachers. If you decide to go back to get your ESL endorsement after graduation, many programs are at the graduate level. This means you will need an M.Ed. or M.A. in ESL. However, you can get the endorsement at GVSU at the undergraduate level in approximately one additional semester, saving you significant time and money.

How does the PCKET major relate to the CLAS Voyage?

CLAS (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) Voyage was created to provide students with an engaging educational experience. All students engage in high-impact practices as a foundation for their educational journey.

CLAS Voyage's mission directly aligns with the PCKET curriculum. Inquiry and community-based learning and global experiences are highly valued in both the PCKET major and CLAS Voyage.

Will I get opportunities to practice what I'm learning with actual children?

Yes! Grand Valley's program incorporates several field experiences throughout the program. We do not wait for your apprenticeship semester! Currently, most of the field experiences are housed in math and English, but you may have an experience with any of your classes!

We know that quality teacher preparation must involve a clinically rich program of study by providing candidates with a deliberate series of structured clinical experiences that:

- Connect teacher preparation coursework to PK-6 students and schools
- Connect theory to practice from an immersion into the materials and practices of teaching

It is important to note that there are minimum field hour requirements, but your professor can require additional hours. You can be assured that GVSU's program exceeds the state standards for field experiences because we know that you will be better prepared to teach children by practicing with actual children.

Courses with field experiences:

PCKET	E.S. or S.E.
MTH 126 2+ hours	EDF 115 30+ hours
ENG 301 10+ hours	EDI 317 20+ hours
MTH 226 9+ hours	EDR 320 6+ hours
ENG 355 5+ hours	EDS 318 6+ hours
MTH 326 9+ hours	EDS/EDR 323 6+ hours

Are there opportunities to study abroad?





Yes! The PCKET program provides several opportunities for students to earn credits in their major and 3-6 concentrations. The benefits of studying abroad include experiencing different cultures, expanding your worldview, building relationships, and learning about yourself. Having a study abroad program on your resume can help your marketability in the job market.

Students can earn a “Certificate of International Teaching Experience” when participating in approved study abroad programs with a school field experience in the destination country. In addition to the study abroad experience, you would enroll in PCK/EDI 320 for 1-3 credits to earn the certificate. Your study abroad director can help advise you about the appropriate process.



Where can I study abroad?

There are several places where students can study abroad. Below is a simple layout of what to expect from each study abroad program.

Country	Term	Length	Course(s)
Ghana 	Spring	4 weeks	ENG 301 ENG 401
Tanzania 	Spring	4 weeks	PCK 495
Netherlands 	Spring	4 weeks	ENG 355 ENG 401
Ireland 	Internship (FA or WI)- Student Teaching	6 weeks	EDI 432

Are classes only online in the summer?

No! In fact, very few PCKET classes are offered fully online (asynchronous). Some are offered in a hybrid manner, partially online and partially in person. Some are offered online, but you have to meet via Zoom. While we value flexibility for students to be able to return home and work during the summer, we also want to assure that you have a quality education, and many of our classes need more professor guidance than can be attained in a completely online, asynchronous format. Students often find it more valuable to stay at GVSU for the first spring term to take 1-2 classes and then return home to work the rest of the summer.

What is a capstone class?

At the very end of your PCKET coursework, you will take a capstone course, PCK 495. In this course you will write a substantial independent research paper where you will investigate a disciplinary or interdisciplinary problem of practice in education. Many students start thinking about their topic while they move through the program. Oftentimes students' topics grow out of the questions from your PCKET courses. What are you wondering about? Consider keeping a notebook of questions as you move through this program. What are you curious about? Note that if you are a special education double major, you will not take this class because you will take a specific capstone class related to special education.

What are Core Teaching Practices (CTPs)? Michigan has identified seven core teaching practices (CTPs) that all candidates must learn to the level of proficiency. You will learn about these seven CTPs in both your PCKET and ES or SE majors and have an opportunity to practice and reflect on these CTPs in your field experiences. Originally called "high leverage practices," CTPs are evidence-based and frequently used practices that when implemented successfully can improve learning for all students, particularly struggling learners.

While there are 19 CTPs, the state of Michigan has focused on the following seven (identifying the first four as most important, which is why they are in bold):

1.	Leading a group discussion;
2.	Explaining and modeling content;
3.	Eliciting and interpreting student thinking;
4.	Building respectful relationships with students;
5.	Setting up and managing small group work;
6.	Learning about students' cultural, religious, family, intellectual, personal experiences and resources for use in instruction;
7.	Checking student understanding during the conclusion of les sons.

How does PCKET connect to our second major in education?

PCKET is offered through CLAS and is a stand-alone major. This means that you can graduate with a PCKET degree if you decide you do not want to be a teacher. However, if you want to be a teacher, you must also graduate with a second major in either Education Studies (ES) or Special Education (SE).

Your second major leads to your teacher certification. The double-major was designed in collaboration between CLAS and CECI faculty. We work closely together to align our courses to assure that you receive an excellent education and are well-prepared to teach. Courses with the prefix ED are your education courses (EDI, EDR, EDF, etc.). Courses with other prefixes are your PCKET courses (ENG, HST, MTH, SCI, HPE, MUS, ART, etc.).

The courses within the majors and across the majors build on each other and you should notice some concepts that are introduced in one class, further developed in another class, and eventually addressed to the point of leading you to mastery. It is a good idea to save all of your syllabi to help you study for your MTTC exam for certification.

My Notes: