



Introduction to the Profession

“By learning you will teach;
by teaching you will understand.” *Latin Proverb*

Interestingly enough, if you want to become a teacher in the State of Texas, you do not get a degree in education. In fact, Texas colleges and universities do not offer education degrees, but all traditional teacher candidates must graduate through an approved teacher education program from an accredited college or university. That means your “major” must be in an academic area like English, Science, Social Studies, or Mathematics. In addition to those content classes, you will take a “block” of courses which train you in pedagogy (teaching) and in professional responsibilities. These courses are highly regulated and supervised by the State of Texas and the degree-granting institution.

This book has been especially developed for the student at the community college who wishes to obtain a teaching degree. The route to certification by way of the community college is very simple: graduate with the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT), then transfer to a four-year institution to earn a baccalaureate degree. The four-year institution help the student complete teacher certification requirements.

At the end of the training, each student must pass state-designed competency exams (TExES) before the State issues certification. Most students will take a minimum of two tests: one in the content area, such as mathematics, and one in pedagogy and professional development. This textbook is designed with the Pedagogy and Professional Development (PPR) examination in mind.

Design of This Book

The State of Texas mandates that the **Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT)** “course content should be aligned as applicable with State Board for Educator Certification Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities standards”; therefore, the purpose for this book is to prepare students for the university preparation through chapters which align with the PPR.

The Associate of Arts in Teaching

The community college’s involvement in the teacher certification process is relatively new. In 2003, the State of Texas predicted severe shortages in teachers to staff the classrooms of Texas schools.

Teacher Job Outlook

The Texas Workforce Commission (as quoted on the State Board of Education web site) indicated that “Texas will need over 82,000 new teachers by 2008. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects teaching as one of the fastest growing occupations over the next 5–10 years and beyond, with demand and growth continuing to

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increase. The average teacher salary in Texas is \$38,857. Special programs and incentives are available to help people become and remain teachers.” Therefore, the challenge to the Coordinating Board was how to interest more students in becoming teachers? One of the creative and brilliant answers was to open up a new recruiting and training avenue for community college students who were thinking about teaching as a career—the AAT. In reality, the AAT consists of the “core curriculum” of the college and two courses in education: EDUC 1301: An Introduction to the Teaching Profession, and EDUC 2301, An Introduction to Special Populations. When taken in conjunction with the AAT, both courses transfer to the university and are accounted for in the student’s degree plan leading to graduation.

Although there are teaching positions in all areas and levels of public education in Texas, there are some teaching areas which have been designated as “High Needs Areas”: They are mathematics, science, bilingual education, special education, foreign languages, and technology applications. This means that the demand is greater than the supply of teachers. However, the demand will also depend upon the area of the state in which you apply for a job.

Why AAT? Its Mission

The mission of an education program at the community college is to provide pre-service courses rich in content that will help students assess their interest in a teaching career. This experience provides one of the strengths of community college preparation for teaching. At the university, students do not take a course in education until the junior year, and occasionally, students wind up in student teaching only to determine that they do not want to teach. To enhance the community college experience, THECB has determined that each of the two courses will require students to complete 16 hours of field-based experiences in P-12 schools. Students will observe and assist in Pre-Kindergarten through high school classrooms in order to determine which level they want to teach.

The AAT allows students to *try on* education in foundational courses by getting field experience hours in actual classrooms and participating in designing lesson plans and completing short teaching assignments. Some students seek even more opportunities to teach in programs such as Junior Achievement and public library reading programs, and literacy programs. While *trying on* education as a career, students learn a great deal about the State-designed competencies which all teachers must master before becoming certified.

Financial Assistance

With new attention focused on teacher shortages, financial assistance may be available to help you reach your goal. You can find a comprehensive list of possible funding sources on the SBOE web site. Some possibilities include: Teach for Texas: grants; Certified Educational Aide Exemption Program: tuition exemptions; Teach for America: cash awards to apply to student loans; Troops to Teachers: military veterans can transition to the classroom; Teacher Loan Forgiveness: Money is available for teachers in high-needs fields; Grow Your Own Programs: many ISDs provide monetary incentives for employees; Grants: THECB provides resources for teachers on their web site, G.I. Bill Benefits: reimbursement for some costs. Other resources may be available at your own schools, too.

Your first assignment in this book will be to visit the SBEC web site to learn a little more about how to become a teacher in Texas.