Educator Preparation at UTA

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Sustainable Urban Communities

Health & Human Condition

Data-Driven Discovery

Global Environmental Impact

EDUCATOR PREPARATION

KEY VALUES:
- Professionalism
- Collaboration
- Advancement
- Leadership

The Core of Professional Preparation

Initial Preparation
- Understands learner development, learning differences, and learning environments
- Focus on the learner and assess growth and outcomes
- Teach effectively by integrating content and pedagogy
- Differentiates instruction to diverse learners
- Apply current and emerging technologies
- Engage in early and articulated field experiences
- Collaborate with teachers, parents and community
- Commit to diversity
- Think critically and reflectively

Advanced Preparation
- Communicate knowledge
- Synthesize knowledge
- Create and discover knowledge
- Engage in professional development
- Participate actively in the profession
A shared vision of Educator Preparation at The University of Texas at Arlington was developed in collaboration with colleagues across four academic colleges, colleagues in PK-12 education, and other stakeholders. This shared vision is rooted in the mission of UTA to serve the citizens of Texas, the United States, and the world through research, teaching, and service. The large scales of these visions and missions reflect the scope of the university and its educator preparation programs. The educator preparation programs are dedicated to the development of education professionals who are intellectual leaders; who are prepared to participate in professional, social, and technological change; who are collaborative with PK-12 education colleagues and others who are committed to improving learner outcomes; who promote the advancement of the field through ongoing professional development, the use of evidence-based practices, the confidence to question and use innovative instructional strategies, and the skill to assess their impact on student learning; who advocate on behalf of all learners and the education profession; and who are education leaders in their classroom, school, and community.

Because educator preparation at UTA is a large, complex, and strategic enterprise, the dean of the College of Education is administratively responsible for the preparation of all candidates in educator preparation. Although much of the responsibility for educator preparation is vested in the faculty of the College of Education, who have a primary mission to prepare education professionals, educator preparation also is a function of three other academic colleges: Liberal Arts; Nursing and Health Innovations; and Science as well as our PK-12 partners. A campus-wide entity known as the Education Professions Council (EPC) serves as the curriculum review authority for all programs leading to licensure and as a policy advisory board to the College of Education dean.
Educator preparation programs at UTA view schools as complex social, political, cultural, and interpersonal organizations and teaching as a highly complex activity in which teachers apply knowledge to develop curriculum, carry out instruction, and assess learning. Prospective teachers must develop subject matter knowledge, a core strength of educator preparation at UTA, pedagogical knowledge, and knowledge of context. From this foundation they can form pedagogical content knowledge, the knowledge about how to teach specific subject matter (Harris & Hofer, 2014). Together, these competencies distinguish teachers from subject matter specialists (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). An inquiry-oriented approach to educator preparation, where teaching is made problematic and students of teaching engage in reflection to develop their understandings of teaching and learning, characterizes UTA's programs (e.g., Calderhead, 2012; Savery, 2015).

In addition to developing knowledge of content and pedagogy, candidates are expected to develop the dispositions to become caring and dedicated education professionals who are sensitive to community and cultural norms, demonstrate willingness to work with others, take responsibility for establishing a positive climate, respect students as individuals, treat students fairly, show concern for students' well-being, and demonstrate appropriate professional practice (e.g., Kea, Campbell-Whatley, & Richards, 2006; Nelson, 2014). We also expect our candidates to think critically and engage in discovery (research) and the use of evidence-based practices, be responsive to education issues related to social justice and diversity, and integrate technology literacy throughout. These commitments and dispositions are reflected in institutional, state, and professional standards by which candidates are informed and assessed (e.g., CAEP, 2013; InTASC, 2011; NBPTS, 1994). This conceptual framework embodies educator preparation at UTA’s commitment to these principles.

Sustainable Urban Communities is one primary theme woven across programs that guides educator preparation at UTA. Located in the heart of the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex, UTA is a Hispanic-serving urban institution. Our faculty, staff, and students value this urban community and seek to harness its diverse population and geographic advantage to strengthen educator preparation and prepare education professionals skilled in educating PK-12 children, supporting local families, and ensuring that every student is college or career ready following secondary education. To ensure sustainable urban communities, a UTA student body equipped to serve in such settings must be developed. Thus, faculty and staff at UTA are committed to leading the nation in the preparation of education professionals skilled in bilingual and ESL education. As well, preparing education professionals who are highly skilled to serve children in grades PK through 12 and education leaders in urban settings are hallmarks of UTA’s College of Education.
Our programs also embrace three additional UTA strategic themes:

**Health and Human Condition,** in which educated populations are physically healthier. The preparation of highly skilled education professionals who serve our local schools and Texas results in educated communities who are equipped to meet their health needs and improve overall human conditions.

**Data-Driven Discovery,** in which education professionals create knowledge through research and discovery and use evidence-based practices in their daily lives. They also assess their effectiveness through analysis of their practices and the learning and behavioral outcomes of their students.

**Global Environmental Impact,** where instructional innovations derived from data-driven discovery are examined, replicated, and disseminated globally to positively impact educational practices.

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**KEY VALUES**

Four key values are integrated throughout programs and guide educator preparation at UTA:

**Professionalism** represents the expectation that candidates develop an expertise and specialized knowledge of their field. A high quality of work, standard of professional ethics and behaviors, as well as work morale and motivation are all necessary factors of a developed interest and desire to excel in job performance.

**Collaboration** is the cornerstone of our educator preparation program. Our partnerships with PK-12 education colleagues foster collaborative planning and experiences for future and current teachers (CAEP, 2013, Standard 2) and education leaders. This collaboration extends to include research and professional development with our PK-12 partners to improve learner outcomes.

**Advancement** ensures that our candidates engage in reflective practices and continuously seek to improve their skills as education professionals. This includes a commitment to ongoing professional development, the use of evidence-based practices, the confidence to question the validity of practices and the ability to use innovative instructional strategies, and the skill to assess their impact on student learning.

**Leadership** development prepares our candidates not only to serve as leaders in their classroom, but also their school and across a global community as they advocate for their students and the profession. Leadership also represents a candidate’s ability to organize, assist, and support others in the achievement of a common task. Candidates develop and refine their leadership skills within the context of their interactions with PK-20 students, curricula, faculty, and other professionals.
Initial teacher preparation programs are based on performance-based standards including the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) principles and the Texas Teacher Standards (Texas Education Association, TEA). In addition to these standards, faculty of the various program areas use professional standards in the development of specific programs, such as those included as Specialized Professional Association (SPAs), the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The Core of Professional Preparation

In addition to the key programmatic features, the professional preparation programs highlight key features and programmatic emphases that are interrelated and addressed throughout. All of the components of the educator preparation programs include professional, state, and institutional standards.

Academic content and evidence-based-practice are the core of professional preparation:

In addition to the core principles, nine areas of competency are emphasized during the initial preparation programs:

**Understands learner development, learning differences, and learning environments:** Candidates understand how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas and designs and implement developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences (InTASC, 2011, Standard #1). Candidates use understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards (InTASC, 2011, Standard #2). Candidates work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation (InTASC, 2011, Standard #3). Candidates work to ensure high levels of learning, social-emotional development, and achievement outcomes for all students, taking into consideration each student's educational and developmental backgrounds and focusing on each student's needs and teachers interact with students in respectful ways at all times, maintaining a physically and emotionally safe, supportive learning environment that is characterized by efficient and effective routines, clear expectations for student behavior, and organization that maximizes student learning (TEA, 2014, Standards 2 and 4).
Focus on the learner and assess growth and outcomes: The candidate understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher’s and learner’s decision making (InTASC, 2011, Standard #6). Candidates use formal and informal methods to assess student growth aligned to instructional goals and course objectives and regularly review and analyze multiple sources of data to measure student progress and adjust instructional strategies and content delivery as needed (TEA, 2014, Standard 5).

Teach effectively by integrating content and pedagogy: The candidate understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues (InTASC, 2011, Standard #5). The candidate understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways (InTASC, 2011, Standard #8). Candidates demonstrate their understanding of instructional planning and delivery by providing standards-based, data-driven, differentiated instruction that engages students and makes appropriate use of technology, and makes learning relevant for today’s learners. Candidates also exhibit a comprehensive understanding of their content, discipline, and related pedagogy as demonstrated through the quality of the design and execution of lessons and their ability to match objectives and activities to relevant state standards (TEA, 2014, Standards 1 and 3).

Differentiates instruction to diverse learners: The candidate engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner (InTASC, 2011, Standard #9). The candidate uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards (InTASC 2011, Standard #2).

Apply current and emerging technologies: The candidate effectively applies relevant technologies to enhance students’ learning experiences, and actively seeks out opportunities to capitalize on emerging technologies (InTASC, 2011, Standards 3g, 3m, 4g, 5l, 6i, 7k, 8g, 9d, 9f, 10g).

Engage in early and articulated field experiences: The candidate is actively engaged in early and articulated field experiences throughout key elements of the program (CAEP 2013, Standard #2).

Collaborate with teachers, parents and community: The candidate seeks opportunities to take responsibility for student learning and development, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession (InTASC 2011, Standard #10). Candidates consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development, pursue leadership opportunities, collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders, maintain professional relationships, comply with all campus and school district policies, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity (TEA, 2014, Standard 6).

Commit to diversity: The candidate understands how learner diversity can affect communication and knows how to communicate effectively in differing environments (InTASC, 2011, Standard 3[i]). The candidate understands learning theory, human development, cultural diversity, and individual differences and how these impact ongoing planning (InTASC, 2011, Standard 7[i]).

Think critically and reflectively: The candidate is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community). (InTASC, 2011, Principle #4; NBPTS, 1994, Proposition #4)
Advanced programs are designed to help experienced practitioners move beyond the basic mastery of content and practice that characterizes initial licensure to develop deeper understandings, more sophisticated practice, and the knowledge and dispositions that characterize leaders in the educational community. Upon completion of an advanced program of study, candidates are accomplished educators whose practices are consistent with the standards of professional associations and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Advanced preparation extends initial preparation and emphasizes five more areas:

**Communicate knowledge:** The advanced candidate speaks, writes, and employs relevant media to effectively communicate knowledge on substantive topics to others (InTASC, 2011, Standards 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10).

**Synthesize knowledge:** The candidate integrates knowledge from multiple sources to address pertinent questions and issues (InTASC, 2011).

**Create and discover knowledge:** The candidate creates and discovers knowledge to further the state of the art and science of education (Boyer, 1990).

**Engage in professional development:** The candidate actively seeks out learning opportunities to grow professionally. (INTASC, 2011, Standard #9) and teachers consistently hold themselves to a high standard for individual development, pursue leadership opportunities, collaborate with other educational professionals, communicate regularly with stakeholders, maintain professional relationships, comply with all campus and school district policies, and conduct themselves ethically and with integrity (TEA, 2014, Standard 6).

**Participate actively in the profession:** The candidate actively participates in the profession through communicating scholarly discoveries, offering learning opportunities to others, and engaging in efforts to promote social justice and equity in educational opportunities and outcomes (NBPTS, 1994, Proposition #5).
References


National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). (1994). *What teachers should know and be able to do*. Washington, DC


