

A VOLUME IN ADULT LEARNING IN PROFESSIONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND COMMUNITY SETTINGS

A Guide to College Success *for* Post-Traditional Students *Second Edition*



Henry S. Merrill

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Second Edition

A volume in
Adult Learning in Professional, Organizational, and Community Settings
Carrie J. Boden, Series Editor

**Adult Learning in Professional, Organizational,
and Community Settings**

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A Guide to College Success for Post-Traditional Students

Second Edition

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Foreword and Acknowledgments

The purpose of this book is to assist students to achieve success in the Occupational, Workforce, and Leadership Studies (OWLS) Department and earn the BAAS Degree at Texas State University. The idea for this text emerged in a fall retreat workshop to revise the BAAS curriculum. Patricia Brewer, the workshop facilitator, asked the questions, “What do we want to build together?” and “What do students in the BAAS program need?” The following text offers the best thinking of the OWLS faculty and staff in regard to these questions. A two day workshop turned into a two year project, the addition of two new courses in the BAAS program (OCED 3350 Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies for the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences Degree and OCED 4111 Independent Study in Occupational Education), and significant revisions to all other required courses in the program (OCED 4350 Adult Development and Career Planning and OCED 4360 Cooperative OCED Readiness, and 4361 Capstone in Cooperative OCED).

The writing and publication of the book is part of a process of OWLS course and curriculum revision under the direction of Dr. Carrie Boden, Former Chair of the OWLS Department. Dr. Henry S. Merrill served as an external consultant assisting with the curriculum revision process and guiding the development of the book in collaboration with OWLS faculty colleagues Dr. Shetay Ashford, Dr. Carrie J. Boden, Dr. Catherine A. Cherrstrom, Dr. Matthew Eichler, Dr. Patricia Gibson, Ms. Portia Gottschall, Dr. Omar Lopez, Dr. Todd Sherron, and Ms. Barbara Wilson.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) Program!

Welcome to the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) program in the Department of Occupational, Workforce, and Leadership Studies (OWLS) at Texas State University. The program is designed to serve adult learners like you (also called non-traditional or post-traditional students), who may meet some or all of the following criteria: 25 years old or older, attend school part time, work full-time, financially independent, have dependents, and/or did not receive a standard high school diploma.

For many post-traditional learners, completing a college degree is a lifelong dream that leads to upward economic mobility. According to the most recent U.S. Census bureau data, workers who earn a bachelor's degree earn 45.45% more than those who hold only a high school diploma (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). In the OWLS Department, our mission includes helping you reach your earning and professional potential by providing a flexible, interdisciplinary plan of study in which you choose courses that meet your needs and interests. These hybrid and online courses feature active learning, experiential learning, critical reflection and self-reflection, as well as interaction with course content and peers in subjects relevant to career and other goals. Last, the BAAS degree includes an option to participate in prior learning assessment (PLA), a process that allows you to apply for credit for prior college-level learning in the workplace. According to

“Those professors are remarkable, they are second to none. They value your experiences that you’ve had out in the world, and not just in your first class, but throughout the classes. They’re just as diverse as the student body.”

- Sandra Brooks, BAAS, MSIS

Figure I.1 Sandra Brooks testimonial.

alumni feedback and testimonials, the BAAS program has been transformational in the lives of students, as described in Figure I.1.

Conceptually, the BAAS plan of study includes five major components: the foundational, cornerstone, occupational emphasis, professional development, and capstone modules (See Table I.1). The foundational module is not so much a set of courses, but rather an introduction to the philosophy and practice of the degree, including individualized degree planning. The BAAS differs from other degree programs in that you, in consultation with an advisor, will create your own unique plan of study, including an applied capstone project. As an advocate and ally, this advisor will help you select the best set of courses to reach personal and professional goals. You are encouraged to consult with Texas State’s Career Services counselors to discuss professional goals. Next, in the cornerstone module, you will complete 42-44 semester hours, including the general education core curriculum, science and foreign language requirement courses. The Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies for the BAAS Degree and Adult Development and Career Planning courses are in the occupational education module.

The program builds from this cornerstone to the occupational emphasis, professional development, and capstone modules. In the occupational emphasis module, you will complete 48 semester hours focused on past or current work experience and one optional course, OCED 4111 Independent Study in Prior Learning Assessment, where you may complete a portfolio to apply for credit for college-level learning in the workplace. In the professional development model, you will select courses to build knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet personal and professional goals. As a key part of an interdisciplinary program of study, this module contains three areas of emphasis totaling 21 semester credit hours. Finally, in the capstone

TABLE I.1 Texas State University’s Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) Program

Texas State University’s Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) Program (120 SCH)	
Foundation <i>What do you need to be successful in the BAAS program?</i>	
Designed for you—an adult learner (also called non-traditional or post-traditional student)	
Accelerated, active, applied, experiential and, interactive learning. Critical reflection and self-reflection embedded in curriculum design	
Individualized degree plan and advising	
Cornerstone (42-44 SCH) <i>Why are you here? What is the program about? What will you learn?</i>	
General education core curriculum	
Foreign language requirement	
Occupational Emphasis Module (48 SCH) <i>Where have you been?</i>	
CTE 3313E	Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies
OCED 4350	Adult Development and Career Planning
OCED 4111	Independent Study in Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
Optional	
Acceptable transfer credits, military credits, PLA, CLEP/DSST exams, correspondence, extension and new courses as needed.	
Professional Development Module (21 SCH) <i>Where do you want to go? What knowledge, skills, and abilities to you need to get there?</i>	
Interdisciplinary, upper division courses related to your career goals	
Capstone Module (6 SCH) <i>What learning can you demonstrate?</i>	
OCED 4360	BAAS Capstone Part 1
OCED 4361	BAAS Capstone Part 2

module, you will apply what you have learned in an organizational setting. The capstone includes two courses in which you will design and complete an applied project related to your professional development module. The capstone projects are validated by on site-supervisors and experts.

The faculty and staff in the OWLS program are here to guide and support you on the journey toward completing your degree.

The BAAS degree prepares students for workplace success. We accomplish this mission through an accelerated, applied, undergraduate degree-completion program and graduate programs, including working with students who seek a non-traditional approach in completing a degree. In addition, we value discovery and understanding and accomplish