

Community College Teacher Education Myths & Realities

Myths . . .

- 1. Community Colleges do not play a role in the preparation of teachers.**

Realities . . .

Community colleges have always played a critical role in teacher preparation by providing the foundation for upper division coursework. In recent years, community colleges have expanded their programs in the field of teacher education to provide additional options for preparing future teachers.

In addition to offering the first two years of requirements for a baccalaureate degree, community colleges have added coordinated programs for transfer, new certificate and associate degree programs, and augmented support services, all of which have increased student access to and completion of teacher preparation programs.

Community colleges have the capacity to increase the diversity of the teaching force.

Source: Teaching by Choice: Community College Science and Mathematics Preparation of K-12 Teachers (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>); Durdella, N. R. (2003). The Status of Teacher Education in Community Colleges (<files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED480193.pdf>); Townsend, B.K. & Ignash, J.M. (2003). Community college roles in teacher education: Current approaches and future possibilities. *New Directions for Community Colleges* (<files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED476835.pdf>)

- 2. Community college teacher education programs have been in existence for only a few years.**

While many community colleges have just recently started teacher education programs, some programs have been around for a decade or more – providing a foundation for new and developing programs and making use of technology, student experience and content knowledge.

Source: American Association of Community Colleges (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>); Townsend, B.K. (2007). Pre-service teacher education in the community college. *Community College Review* (Doi: 10.1177/0091552107302212)

- 3. Community college faculty do not have adequate academic preparation backgrounds to teach future teachers.**

In 1997, nearly two-thirds of full-time faculty in public community colleges had a master's degree and about one-fifth a doctoral degree. Some community colleges have moved to hiring instructors with K-12 teaching experience.

As long as the community college continues to provide a variety of educational services, including developmental, collegiate, Career Technical Education, and adult basic education, the academic backgrounds of the faculty are likely to continue to span the entire educational and vocational spectrum.

Community college faculty are primarily rewarded for the quality of the teaching and learning in their classrooms, rather than for research and publishing. They are experts in the teaching and learning process. Community colleges do not use teaching assistants as instructors.

Source: American Association of Community Colleges (<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>); Rifkin, T. (2000). Public Community College Faculty (eclp.mior.ca/Reference%20Shelf/PDF_OISE/College%20Faculty.pdf)



4. Community colleges do not prepare future teachers to teacher with technology.

Community colleges have a well-established history and reputation for providing responsive solutions to the needs of their stakeholders in a variety of industries. Since open access requires that faculty be trained in instructional delivery techniques to address the educational needs of a wide range of learners, community colleges have multiple ways of delivering instruction and services to students through digital teaching and learning strategies and resources, course management systems, database services, library systems and online help desks. In order to meet the ever-changing requirements of K-12 education, teacher educators must not only continually develop new knowledge and skills to teach with technology but must also create learning environments for future teachers to do the same. With the focus on the classroom, and the commitment to acquiring and maintaining the IT infrastructure, teacher preparation programs at the community college are well positioned to equip future teachers with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to educate k-12 students in the 21st century.

Source: Coulter, T. & Vandal, B. (2017). Issue Paper. Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation: Roles, Issues, and Opportunities. MAY 2007 – Education Commission of the States. (<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/74/01/7401.pdf>); O'Brien, J. & Milliron, M. (2019). Catching the Waves: Technology and the Community College. *Educause Review*, 69-87. (<https://er.educause.edu/articles/2019/10/catching-the-waves-technology-and-the-community-college>)

5. Community college educators do not participate in national research, grants, and scholarship.

Community college faculty and deans regularly publish research work in national journals and participate in scholarship initiatives such as Fulbright and doctoral theses research. Community colleges are also active grant participants, serving both as principal investigators and co-principal investigators in grants such as those through the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Education (DoE). In fact, many national grantors now seek out community college/university partnerships and enhance awards based on collaboration.

Source: National Science Foundation ([nsf.gov/funding/aboutfunding.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/funding/aboutfunding.jsp)); United State Department of Education (www2.ed.gov/fund/grants-apply.html?src=pn)

6. Community colleges are not allowed to grant teaching certificates or degrees in education.

While most community college programs provide only the first two years of a four- or five-year teacher preparation program, some states are allowing community colleges to offer the full certification program to meet critical shortages. In addition, some colleges and universities are offering their teacher preparation program at community college campuses.

The community college baccalaureate has developed in response to increased demands for higher education, combined with cost and capacity concerns associated with four-year institutions. In nearly half of the country (23 states), community colleges are now awarding baccalaureate degrees.

Source:Floyd, D. (2006). Achieving the baccalaureate through the community college. *New Directions for Community Colleges*. (Doi:10.1002/cc.248); St. Amour, M. (2019). Bachelor's



Degrees at Community Colleges. *Inside Higher Ed*.
(<https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/12/03/bachelors-degrees-community-colleges>)

7. Only a very small percentage of teacher education students attend community colleges.

Studies have shown more than 50% of teachers attended a community college for at least part of their education. In California alone, 60% of California State University teacher program graduates started at community colleges. It is estimated that four out of ten teachers in the U.S. have completed some or all of their math and science coursework at a community college.

Source: California Community College Teacher Preparation Programs (teacherprepprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/TPP_DWM_Factsheet_Template.19.pdf); Hampton, J. & Selsler, M. (2006). Community College and Teacher Preparation: A Powerful Partnership (files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED481532.pdf); Investing in Tomorrow's Teachers: The Integral Role of Two-Year Colleges in the Science and Mathematics Preparation of Prospective Teachers (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1999/nsf9949/nsf9949.pdf>)

8. Teacher education programs at the community college do not transfer to four-year institutions.

Many states have adopted statewide transfer agreements in the teacher preparation field. This includes common course numbering systems and articulated coursework. Community college teacher preparation programs are at the forefront of the Guided Pathways academic movement.

Joint admissions programs are another related practice to facilitate seamless transfer. In this arrangement, a community college student who ultimately intends to transfer is accepted concurrently at the community college and the partnering university. Evolving from traditional 2+2 programs are associate degree programs such as the Associate of Arts in Teaching. These programs negotiate a single set of standards and courses in teacher education that are articulated among participating public and private two- and four-year institutions statewide.

Source: Kisker, C.B. & Wagoner, R.L. (2013). Implementing Transfer Associate Degrees: Perspectives from the States. (Doi: 10.1002/cc.20032)

9. Future teachers cannot complete their post-baccalaureate education at a community college.

Some community colleges provide pathways for individuals who already have bachelor's degrees in another profession to switch careers and become certified as teachers. These programs help to recruit mid-career professionals who may have been laid-off or are considering a career change into the teaching profession.

Source: Teach-Now (moreland.edu/teacher-certification)

10. Community colleges do not offer in-service or professional development courses or programs for current teachers.

Combined with its geographic accessibility and affordability, community colleges play an enhanced role in teacher in-service or professional development by offering focused courses that boost teacher competency in areas related to education reform efforts, especially in math and science. Community colleges also develop agreements with local school districts to provide technology training for teachers and offer courses, workshops, and institutes that enhance teacher competency in math and science, English as a second language, and reading specialist skills.



Collaborative professional development with K-12 school districts, universities, and intermediate school districts often involve community colleges. Various models of collaboration occur within community colleges in the U.S.

Source: Education Commission of the States
(<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/49/59/4959.pdf>); Loucks-Horsley, S., Bybee, R.W., & Wild, E/L/C/ (1996). The Role of Community Colleges in the Professional Development of Science Teachers. *Journal of College Science Teaching* (26:2), 130-134.
(www.jstor.org/stable/42990859); Ostos, R.A. (2010). Community Colleges play critical role in teacher preparation and professional development. *Community College Week*, 4.
(link.gale.com/apps/doc/A218606068)

As community colleges emerge as a solution to the teacher quality and shortage issue, the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) created this document in an attempt to dispel any misperceptions individuals may have about the community college role in teacher education. *Community College Teacher Education Myths and Realities* can be used as an informational tool for future educators, current preK-12 educators, NACCTEP members, educational organizations, and community and business representatives.

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