## ws Education psychology aides assisting 'special' children

The small, fragile child sits on the om green carpet on the floor in e middle of the huge schoolroom d clutches wooden blocks of varycolor and size. Next to her on floor sits the instructor who is ng her five or six special stu-

The child occasionally identifies the color of the blocks aloud and reves praise in return. Her small coordinated fingers run quickly ugh the pile of playthings in the ox. Minutes later her eyes are lmy and her lips pursed. The child nes. The instructor's compassion-te hand consoles her, brushing ssled hair once again out of her

Such is the scene in a special edu-ation class in the A&M Consoli-ated School District. The instrucor is an aide, Terry Swanson, a mior in elementary education at exas A&M University taking edu-ational psychology (EPSY) 111 this

The course was designed for uniessity students to get practical exercine working with handicapped of retarded children in the public ools, says Dr. Marty Abramson. course instructor. He says these ollege students work with special ducation teachers for three hours a eek and do whatever tasks are asmed them. The duties vary, from thing out pumpkins for Halloween corations to tutoring a slow stunt in spelling or math.

Cynthia Sage, a sophomore in ementary education, works at uth Knoll Elementary School me hours a week. Special (meangmentally slow, handicapped or sically disabled) children are streamed into a regular class. e says she sits with two students no need help the most and tries to sep them interested in what the her is saying. This is her first erience with working with spe-Istudents and she says, "I can see ogress in my kids already."
Some students just observe the

acher. Edna Ramsey, a junior ychology major, says that she obhildren most of the time, but she pasionally helps the students with eir reading.

Ramsey says that EPSY 111 is lable because of the experience udents are getting with special aldren, but that the course should ve more than one hour credit. She says that special students are ven more freedom to move around

nd more encouragement to play Phyllis Perkins, coordinator for pecial education in the A&M Con-bidated schools, says there are 15 ides from EPSY 111 on four camses in this district. Most of them

are placed with special education teachers, she says, and they are expected to perform the duties of a paid aide. They make teaching terials, decorate bulletin boards d tutor individual children. Perkins says that having these des has improved the special edu-

ation program because it decreases teratio of students to teachers. She says the experience is helping the AKM students involved as well beuse they learn more about special ducation by working in schools an they can by sitting in a classom listening to a lecture. Most EPSY 111 students agreed hat the experience of working with

ese students is valuable. "We want these volunteer aides do with the children what we do nd in the way we do it," says Jane

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Barry, teacher of the severely hand-icapped students. She says that she has a method of dealing with each child and wants the aides to handle the children in the same way.

Lisa Clifton, a student in EPSY
111 and aide to Barry, is assigned to
work with one handicapped child
within a class of six students. Clifton is studying the child and developing programs for the child's development, Barry says. Each child is given goals to achieve, like eating with a spoon, neatly drinking from a cup, walking while holding on to a bar with one hand, staying dry, and

Occasionally Barry's class goes outside to gather leaves that have fallen from trees. Some children sit motionless, moaning or perhaps trying to form a word, while aides gather leaves for them. Other children slowly stuff the red, brown and yellow treasures into their wrinkled sacks, smiling proudly. These field trips would not be taken without the extra pair of hands that the student

aides offer, Barry says.

The children are thrilled at having these aides working with them, says Perkins.

Next semester, however, EPSY 111 will be changed to a lecture, course and students will not enter

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the public schools as aides.

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"Special students are given more freedom to move around and more encouragement to play together than normal students.'

number of slots that students can go

public schools because we are going to fill up the public schools too quickly. We have only a certain this time but we want to give them skills and knowledge gradually and work them up to the student teaching plane," Abramson says.

The generic special education program at Texas A&M, which is in its first year, has three faculty mem-bers and enrollment will stay small,

With individualized instruction, Texas A&M can produce a better quality of special education teacher,

number of slots that students can go into. We don't want to shove them into schools right away as we did "We think a special education teacher is special so therefore we want the better students," he says.

## Book wins regional award

Associations's 1977 Southwest Book Award for Nonfiction.

The 179-page folklore book was written by the professor of English at Sul Ross State University and former president of the Texas

Miles and the Texas A&M University Press will be formally cited at the association's annual awards

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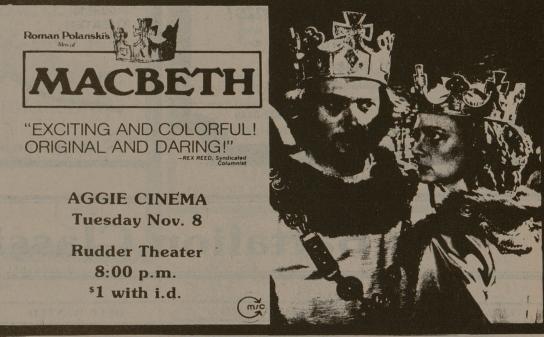
"Tales of the Big Bend," by Elton
Miles and published by the Texas
A&M University Press, is the winner of the Border Regional Library

Many of the tales in "Tales of the Big Bend" are presented in different and often conflicting versions. In addition to chapters devoted to water witching and the legendary Marfa Lights, the book includes the first written account of the bloody history of scalp hunter John Glanton. It also describes Mexican-American legends about the devil's assault of the Big Bend and the

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