NCATE
The Standard of Excellence in Teacher Preparation

QUALITY *teaching*

NCATE: A CORNERSTONE IN AN EMERGING DATA SYSTEM IN EDUCATION

Arthur E. Wise

This issue of *Quality Teaching* features a growing trend—an associate dean who was tapped by her president to become the institution's associate provost for assessment and accreditation. Drawing on the expertise of NCATE accredited schools of education for information on developing assessment systems is become more frequent at colleges and universities these days. Barbara Buckner relays her story of how NCATE's expectations for assessment have impacted her school of education…and her personally.

Moving from a personal and individual university context to a macro context, Emerson Elliot describes the Data Quality Campaign, a Gates Foundation project currently developing more robust P-12 school data quality systems and now also starting to develop complementary postsecondary data quality systems; NCATE has endorsed the project. When fully operational, the project should provide data on the performance of P-12 students, matched to the teacher preparation institutions from which their teachers graduate. Educators need to be fully involved partners in the discussions taking place at the state level to

presidential perspectives

ensure that the data systems include all needed information and that the information collected is valid and reliable. NCATE institutions have been in the forefront of the development of assessment systems to track performance.

NCATE's newest initiative is a streamlining process. As NCATE has reviewed both units and programs under its performance-based system, we have found that program data can also be used for unit review. This ties unit and program review together in a more coherent system. We want to eliminate unnecessary duplication between unit and program review, so that institutions have an efficient and useful accreditation experience.

Accreditation is about accountability, but also learning and improvement. Institutions should analyze candidate information compiled for accreditation to improve programs. NCATE is a learning organization, and we are using your feedback to make changes to improve the accreditation process. Donna Gollnick describes the efforts to date, and more will be forthcoming. We look forward to hearing from you. Feel free to email *donna@ncate.org* with your ideas on streamlining the NCATE process.

Arthur E. Wise is president of NCATE.

contents

NCATE: A LEARNING ORGANIZATION
Streamlining NCATE Accreditation

Donna M. Gollnick

Senior Vice President, NCATE

We heard you!

"We heard your call for a more streamlined and collegial process...Your participation will help ensure we reach the goal."

- Donna Gollnick

We heard you! We heard your call for a more streamlined and collegial process, and many of you are working hard to bring this to fruition. AACTE's Committee on Professional Preparation and Accountability as well as AACTE's representatives on NCATE's Executive Board stimulated these efforts in 2006. NCATE board members, state representatives, and staff have worked over the past year to formulate specific proposals. Some changes were approved this spring and others require approval at NCATE's fall 2007 meeting. The goal is to maintain rigor while decreasing the amount of time and paperwork involved in accreditation. NCATE standards and policies belong to all in the profession. Our goal is to operate a process that can be and is embraced by all. Your participation will help ensure that we reach the goal!

NCATE will pilot the revised process in spring 2008 with 34 institutions participating, and will fine-tune it from the feedback from those institutions. The revised process will be used by all institutions in fall 2008 when the second cycle of visits under NCATE's performance-based standards begins.

The streamlined system will Include

› **a more formative program review process**

› **a shorter institutional report (IR) that will be web-based with prompts**

› **limited and clearly specified exhibits**

› **the use of assessments and data already included in national or state program reviews to reduce duplication of effort revised template for the on-site visit**

› **a briefer and more succinct Board of Examiners (BOE) report**

The new institutional report (IR) includes prompts to which institutions respond for each standard element. The IR form follows the same pattern as the current BOE report template used by teams as they write their reports, but with a fewer number of prompts. Required tables are included for selected elements. By fall 2008, institutions will be able to write IRs in a web-based form similar to the online form now used for program reports.

Institutions will no longer need to discuss in Standard 1 the assessments and data for programs that have been nationally reviewed by NCATE. They will report the data only for programs not nationally reviewed such as master's programs for licensed teachers and programs for which there are no professional standards. Institutions in states that conduct their own program reviews will not need to report data on programs that have been favorably reviewed by the state, if the state conducts the reviews using aligned assessments and assessment data. NCATE will be working with states to determine whether their program review processes depend on data similar to the national process for program review.

NCATE has developed a list of suggested exhibits that has been vetted by BOE members and institutions. This list is designed to provide institutions and BOE members with guidance about the documents teams need to make informed recommendations. Because the list includes suggested exhibits, institutions still have the flexibility, but not a requirement, to provide other evidence to demonstrate that they are meeting the standards. Institutions and BOE teams will pro-

vide additional feedback on the appropriateness of the documents on this list before, during, and after the visit. This feedback will lead to the development of a list that will guide all visits for the next several years.

BOE members will be strongly encouraged to review electronic exhibits prior to arriving on campus, shifting the focus of the visit to a more collaborative review of the unit. The length of visits and size of team will remain the same for the pilot visits in spring 2008. However, institutions and BOE members are working with NCATE staff to revise the visit template to provide more time for team evaluation and discussion of the units' strengths and challenges as they relate to the NCATE unit standards. Institutional representatives from the pilot institutions are meeting periodically via NCATE's web seminars to plan the visits.

The streamlined accreditation process includes a tighter, leaner BOE report. The new BOE report is designed to be half its current size. The report outline mirrors the current BOE report in that it will include an introduction, summary of the conceptual framework, and a discussion of the elements for each of the six standards. Areas for improvement (AFIs) will continue to be cited when they exist, as well as rationales for why AFIs are cited. The similarity with the current report stops there. For each standard, teams will indicate whether the exhibits and interviews validate the descriptions of how standards are met in the IR. Teams will indicate the level (i.e., unacceptable, acceptable, or target) at which they think the elements of each standard are met and write a 1-3 paragraph summary of why they made that decision. BOE teams will also write a one paragraph summary of the unit's strengths in addressing each standard. The shorter BOE reports are expected to lead to (1) more time for the teams to learn about and understand an institution; (2) a clearer description of the levels at which an institution meets the standards; (3) more succinct summaries of why the team arrived at its recommendations and; (4) less work for team chairs as they finalize the reports.

In addition, the Specialty Areas Studies Board (SASB) will consider ways of streamlining the na-

tional program review process at its October board meeting. Under consideration will be a common template for reporting grades as one of the content knowledge assessments. Another major proposal calls for the system to become more formative by allowing programs to submit revised reports through the semester of their visits. If a program is initially submitted for review one year before the on-site visit to the institution, two revised reports could be submitted before the UAB meeting, allowing a program several opportunities to present assessments and data for full recognition or conditional recognition.

Institutions Pilot Testing Streamlined Accreditation Visits
in Spring 2008 as of 9/15/2007

- Alaska Pacific University
- Augustana College *(SD)*
- Benedict College *(SC)*
- Buffalo State College *(NY)*
- Concordia University St. Paul *(MN)*
- Fontbonne University *(MO)*
- Harding University *(AR)*
- Indiana State University
- Iona College *(NY)*
- The Johns Hopkins University *(MD)*
- Liberty University *(VA)*
- Lincoln University *(MO)*
- Mayville State University *(ND)*
- Missouri Western State University
- Morgan State University *(MD)*
- The Ohio State University
- Oregon State University
- Queens University of Charlotte *(NC)*
- St. Cloud State University *(MN)*
- Salem College *(NC)*
- Slippery Rock University *(PA)*
- Southeastern Louisiana University
- Southwestern College *(KS)*
- State University of New York at New Paltz
- State University of New York at Brockport
- Tuskegee University *(AL)*
- University of Alabama
- University of Colorado at Colorado Springs
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Memphis *(TN)*
- University of North Dakota
- University of Rhode Island
- University of Southern Mississippi
- University of Wyoming
- Wittenberg University *(OH)*

Institutions Pilot Testing New BOE Report
in Fall 2007 Visits as of 9/15/2007

- Alabama State University
- Cardinal Stritch University (WI)
- The Citadel (SC)
- College of Staten Island/CUNY
- Evangel University (MO)
- Kansas Wesleyan University
- McPherson College (KS)
- Notre Dame College of Ohio
- Oakwood College (AL)
- Seattle University (WA)
- University of Maryland College Park
- The University of North Carolina at Pembroke
- Wesley College (DE)
- Western Carolina University (NC)
- Western Oregon University
- Wheelock College (MA)

THE PROPHESY FULFILLED:
Teacher Educators Become Campus Leaders

Barbara Chesler Buckner

Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation,

Coastal Carolina University

"...we learned to use the results of our efforts for continuous improvement of our programs, our candidates and ourselves."

- Barbara Chesler Buckner

Since the birth of NCATE 2000, NCATE's performance-based accreditation system, faculty in schools of education have been under scrutiny to produce evidence to demonstrate that their candidates know and are able to teach all students. This means that all colleges of education desiring national accreditation need to develop accountability systems featuring assessments that are aligned with standards. This has created a huge paradigm shift. Schools of education have moved away from reporting inputs (sequence of program courses, topics covered in courses) to reporting outcomes. Schools of education are now focused on what candidates know and are able to do and the candidates' actual performance in the classroom in helping to impact P-12 student learning. For most of us, having to produce evidence of candidate performance brought assessment of our candidates, our courses, our programs to a different level as we aligned assessments with standards. Assessment became something that just didn't seem to go away, and designing and using rubrics became a natural part of teacher education.

Because NCATE 2000 required faculty to shift to a performance-based process and design assessments that evaluate the knowledge and skills for effective teaching, education faculty needed to determine how to explicitly measure candidate knowledge, skills, dispositions, teaching performance, and the impact their candidates have on P-12 school student achievement. The biggest challenge came in learning how to identify useful criteria that would align with standards, define and describe levels of candidate performance, and use the information to design useful and meaningful assessment instruments. As assessment instruments were designed, faculty benchmarked examples of student work to provide illustrations of faculty expectations and to assist in content validity studies.

In order to measure the performance of candidates, multiple assessments have been designed to show how candidates are meeting a plethora of standards and candidate proficiencies. For education faculty, candidate proficiencies are defined by an institution's conceptual framework, and standards come from more than one source. Program standards come from a number of specialty professional associations (SPA), unit standards come from NCATE, most advanced programs use National Board standards, and depending on the state, there may be additional requirements for licensure. Developing an assessment system that does the above has been sometimes overwhelming and definitely daunting, yet 650 NCATE accredited colleges of education have successfully met the challenge.

NCATE's performance-based system pushed education faculty to unpack standards and to think systematically about aligning assessments with curriculum. In the process, faculty learned that the content of an assessment needed to be congruent with the content of the standards, and the cognitive and skill demands of the assessment need to match the expectations defined in the standards. Thus, faculty have grown in the area of assessment and have become what Stiggens states candidates need to become - assessment literate. In a very short time, education faculty have been forced to design multiple assessments that show clear pur-

pose, focus on achievement targets, and provide data. But most importantly we learned how to design assessments that are clear, fair, consistent, and unbiased. And we learned to use the results of our efforts for continuous improvement of our programs, our candidates and ourselves.

NCATE 2000 standards established a review process that regularly gathers and reports concrete evidence about what candidates know and are able to do in terms of candidate/student learning outcomes. This evidence supplements other information that is reported as unit operations – quality of field experiences, graduation rate, retention, job placement, faculty qualifications, and institutional governance and resources – in demonstrating institutional effectiveness.

As NCATE was developing as an accreditation leader in performance-based assessment, some of us in teacher education began to delve further into the area of assessment and accountability and became leaders in our disciplines, our departments, our colleges, and more recently our universities.

> **"...education faculty are poised to be leaders at their institutions in establishing assessments of student learning outcomes."**
>
> - Barbara Chesler Buckner

In spring 2001, NCATE explained the new standards and reporting process in its biannual training session for institutions, which I attended. At that time, I was co-chair of the International Reading Association's (IRA) Professional Standards and Ethics Committee and was asked to represent IRA at the NCATE meetings to learn and stay informed. This committee is also responsible for writing the *Standards for Reading Professionals* and, as a member since 1995, I was familiar with the previous NCATE process. While sitting at many of these meetings I found myself naturally wearing two hats, one for IRA and one for my institution, and I began to use two notebooks in which to take notes. I was able to bring back valuable information to be applied for both groups. Not only was I staying informed about NCATE, but I was being educated about the assessment of student learning, how to develop quality assessment instruments, how to align assessments to standards, and the process of developing an assessment plan that would create a qual-

ity assessment system used for continuous improvement. NCATE training has been invaluable and an important part of my professional development.

Currently, institutions of higher education find themselves in an environment where they are being asked to become more "transparent" to students and the public. Federal and state government officials want to make institutional-level comparisons about results and campus efficiency, and the public wants assurance that students graduate with the competencies to be successful in the job market. Thus, institutions are being asked to develop assessment systems that report on institutional capacity, effectiveness, productivity, and student learning outcomes.

One important measure of institutional accountability is accreditation. Regional and specialized accrediting agencies have always been committed to student learning but have not always reported it in ways that are easily accessible and understandable. Secretary Spellings' commission recommends that accreditation reports should consist of aggregated data, including level of attainment, and assessment of student learning outcomes, to bring transparency to institutional effectiveness. Does this sound familiar?

Being involved in the NCATE process has allowed education faculty to be in the forefront with the national agenda that is currently being formed by members of the state legislatures, the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Therefore, education faculty are poised to be leaders at their institutions in establishing assessments of student learning outcomes.

This spring semester I found myself in this position. I was in the office of the Provost, now President David De-Cenzo, and was totally taken off guard when he asked me if I would be interested in a new position he was creating - Associate Provost for Assessment and Accountability. He attributed my work with NCATE as the reason for offering me the job and stated that he valued my ability to link curriculum and assessment and my understanding of assessment systems. In my mind's eye I could

BETTER DATA for INFORMED DECISIONS

Emerson J. Elliott

Director, Special Projects, NCATE

"NCATE, itself, stands for high quality data in education so that decisions will be well informed."

- Emerson Elliott

NCATE has joined a national effort that advocates strong education data to inform policymaker decisions by becoming an endorsing partner in the Data Quality Campaign (DQC).

The Data Quality Campaign is a Gates Foundation initiative managed by the National Center for Educational Accountability. Its purposes are to encourage all 50 states to create longitudinal data systems by 2009 and to "change the culture surrounding data use in education." Longitudinal data make it possible to measure changes over time and to study relationships, for example, between course taking and grades. A longitudinal data system is necessary for reliable tracking of academic progress, school effectiveness, teacher preparation, retention, and post graduation success.

Longitudinal data systems are expensive and the primary financing for them has come from the states themselves and from the Department of Education. The systems are developing rapidly, although with more state progress for some characteristics than others. The DQC has outlined ten "essential elements" for a state longitudinal data system, starting with unique statewide student identification numbers—a threshold condition (42 states had these last year, up from 36 in 2005). Other essential elements include information on student enrollment, demographic and program participation (46 states); a teacher identifier system that permits matching teacher data with students (16 states); ability to match individual student test records from year to year (41 states); student transcript, courses, and grades information (12 states); college entrance test scores (9 states); graduation and dropout data (40 states); and links between P-12 and postsecondary systems (18 states).

The Campaign is currently mapping plans to extend its compass to postsecondary data systems, another area in which states have taken considerable initiative recently. As many as 42 states have at least some components in place, such as a unique student identifier and demographic and course information. But as readers of *Quality Teaching* know, higher education exhibits enormous diversity not only in mission, but in governance, standards, and accountability. These are complicating factors when policymakers try to create comprehensive data systems. The Federal privacy laws have been interpreted by the attorneys general in some states to prohibit not just disclosure of identifiable data, but even the collection of it. But over time, a new higher education law, or, sad to say, a Virginia Tech tragedy, will shift some of the barriers and motivations for these systems so that more comprehensive data content and accessibility can be achieved.

The benefits from these data systems are not just theoretical for NCATE and its accredited institutions. When fully in place, their potential is to provide high quality information on performance of an institution's former teacher candidates–even including assessment data from P-12 students–that can be associated with institutional preparation programs. The linkage arrangements that are critical design features of these longitudinal data sets will permit deans and faculty to obtain consistent information from teacher employers, perhaps eventually even across state lines, for judging strengths of their graduates and identifying parts of preparation programs that need shoring up.

> **"The linkage arrangements that are critical design features of these longitudinal data sets will permit deans and faculty to obtain consistent information from teacher employers..."**
>
> **- Emerson Elliott**

The specific features of these data systems can be influenced in your own state as efforts are undertaken to design and implement their features, and then to analyze the data and make it available for institutional and other users. The deans and faculty of NCATE institutions should have, or create, opportunities to play leading roles while governors, legislators, state education agencies, and state higher education offices undertake these tasks. That way, they can help assure that these new and costly data systems include the complete information they need, that the definitions for data items are accurate, that data respondents will be able to reply consistently, and that deans and faculty will have access to the reported data. These developmental discussions are key steps along the road and the leadership of education units should not permit themselves to be excluded or opt to be left out.

NCATE, itself, stands for high quality data in education so that decisions will be well informed, and the DQC not only shares that advocacy perspective, but is working with states to bring it about.

Emerson Elliott is Director, Special Projects at NCATE. He formerly served as Commissioner, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.

Coming Soon! Late 2007 New Release

IT'S ALL ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING:

Assessing Teacher Candidates' Ability to Impact P-12 Students

You'll want to watch for this forthcoming publication!

It will provide practical assistance for institutions designing or revising assessment systems or individual assessments for use by units or programs. The publication includes:

› Discussion of performance assessments currently used by teacher preparation institutions and consortia (the Performance Assessment for California Teachers, the Renaissance Partnership, and the Teacher Quality Partnership in Ohio) to measure candidates' ability to assess P-12 student learning, including challenges faced and lessons learned.

› Actual assessment instruments and links to additional resources online.

› A variety of assessments: program-specific; student teaching assessments; focused assessments on a single P-12 student; examples of Teacher Work Sample methodology.

› Opening essay by Hilda Rosselli of Western Oregon University on the current practice of assessment in schools, colleges, and departments of education.

Coming late fall 2007; watch the NCATE website for details.

Arthur E. Wise, Pamela M. Ehrenberg, and **Jane Leibbrand**, *Editors*

TOP 3 SCHOOLS
in *US News* rankings are
NCATE ACCREDITED

#1 Teachers College, Columbia University

#2 Stanford University School of Education

#3 Vanderbilt University, Peabody College of Education

(tied for #3 with Harvard University Graduate School of Education -not NCATE accredited)

The Prophesy Fulfilled, *continued from page 3*

feel a smile take shape. I found myself thinking back to a recent NCATE board meeting where Art Wise stated that education faculty would become individuals who would be called on to lead their institutions in assessment, accreditation, and accountability. I started my new job this July welcoming the challenge.

NCATE: A Learning Organization, *continued from page 5*

Thirty-five institutions with visits in spring 2008 have volunteered to pilot the new process. Many of these institutions will also be reviewed with the recently revised Unit Standards, which will become effective for all institutions with visits in fall 2008. Seventeen institutions will test the briefer Board of Examiners report in their fall 2007 visits.

Click on *www.ncate.org/public/streamlining07.asp* for a look at NCATE's Streamlining Initiative. Send your reactions and recommendations to Donna M. Gollnick at *donna@ncate.org* and be a part of the Streamlining Initiative Team!

A coalition of over 30 organizations of teachers, teacher educators, policymakers and school specialists committed to quality teaching

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C.
20036-1023
Voice: 202.466.7496
Fax: 202.296.6620

www.ncate.org