

NCATE

The Standard of Excellence in Teacher Preparation

QUALITY

teaching

Guaranteeing Quality Teaching: Leaving No Child Behind

*Arthur E. Wise*

Every fall, when children enter school, parents want to know (1) Does the teacher know the subject matter he or she is teaching? An even more pressing question is on their minds: (2) Can this teacher teach so that my child will learn? Does the teacher genuinely like children and can the teacher relate to them to motivate and inspire their interest in learning?

We have a system of licensing that

falls far short of revealing whether each and every teacher has what it takes to teach effectively. We also have low incentives to teach, meaning that all schools are not achieving the goal of every child having a competent and well qualified teacher. There simply aren't enough of them to go around. What we do have in place is a functioning system of accreditation that tells us which institutions are preparing candidates who are well qualified.

NCATE's accreditation system is performance-based. That means colleges are accredited and remain accredited to the degree to which they in fact produce teachers and other school specialists

who can demonstrate that they have the knowledge and skill to teach so that children learn. That is the cornerstone of the NCATE system, and it is standard number one.

The second standard requires institutions to establish an assessment system so that they can better manage themselves and their candidates. As a byproduct of this system, they can also

demonstrate to the public and to NCATE that their institution produces competent candidates.

The institution's assessment system must track candidates from admission to graduation. Institutions will track the performance of graduates in order to generate a rich database to help determine that the college's programs are successful in preparing people to teach.

In the NCATE standards, the clinical program becomes virtually the joint responsibility of the college of education and the P-12 schools with which they work. P-12 schools and colleges

continued on page 2

Arthur E. Wise is president of NCATE.

contents

Arthur E. Wise
*guaranteeing
quality teaching:
leaving no child
behind*
cover story

**Calvin
Johnson**
*state legislator and
dean: a powerful
mix*
page 3

**NCATE's BOE:
the field of
education at
work**
page 4

BOE Profiles:
Blake West
page 4
Loren Blanchard
page 6
Eric Witherspoon
page 7
Susan Adler
page 8
Gail Morrison
page 8

In the News
page 9

presidential perspectives

We have a system of licensing that falls far short of realizing whether each and every teacher has what it takes to teach effectively. What we do have in place is a functioning system of accreditation that tells us which institutions are preparing candidates who are well qualified.

continued from cover

of education work together collegially in planning and implementing the clinical program of study for candidates. Although NCATE does not require institutions to have professional development schools, its expectations for the clinical experiences for candidates have been heavily influenced by research and inquiry into PDSs.

In terms of diversity expectations, as candidates leave the institution, have they been prepared to work with children of varied ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds who now comprise the school population? Have they had diverse clinical experiences working with children of different backgrounds and developmental levels? Can they help *all* children learn?

The faculty performance standard has undergone transformation as well. NCATE used to look primarily at whether university faculty members had degrees in the disciplines they were teaching. It now has a different priority. Do faculty members teach candidates how to teach effectively, and do they, in their own teaching, model a variety of effective teaching behaviors and practices? Do they use technology in instruction just as we now expect candidates to be able to integrate technology into instruction?

The Shortage

Although NCATE accredited institutions are producing high quality teacher graduates, there are not enough to go around. When the private sector cannot recruit enough individuals to fill positions, it raises salaries and otherwise makes jobs more attractive. This common sense strategy is not being pursued. Aside from the salary issue, we are not keeping the teachers that we do have. The teaching profession suffers from extraordinary turnover. The more that we resort to emergency licensing to bring warm bodies into the classroom, the higher the attrition is going to be, and we'll be running faster and faster to stay in a perpetual shortage condition.

With more unqualified people in the classrooms, the difference between high performing and low performing students continues to grow. While our suburban students usually do well on standardized achievement tests, urban and rural schools experience the opposite. Not surprisingly, our urban and rural schools are the ones experiencing the inability to find high quality teachers. When untrained and unprepared individuals work

Right now the system does its best to obscure the teaching crisis by calling everyone by the same title.

with children most in need, it is not surprising that the cycle of increasing failure continues.

At the same time we want to hold teachers to high standards, we are apparently willing to put unprepared and unlicensed people into the schools. How can we hold them accountable, if they are not in fact expected to be knowledgeable from the beginning as to what it is

they're doing? Many children will go through schools being taught by a first-year teacher. Some children will never take a math course from a person qualified to teach mathematics. In larger urban districts the probability is 50-50 that a math teacher is qualified. We know from the research of William Sanders that it's 'three strikes and you're out': three years of ineffective teachers pretty much dooms a child to failure. Yet we have a system that allows this practice to continue in low performing schools.

New Titles, Roles, and Responsibilities

We continue to have qualified teachers teaching in suburban schools and many unqualified teachers teaching in urban schools. We cover this up by playing language games with the very important title of "teacher". We have licensed teachers, but we also have "emergency licensed" teachers and "temporary licensed" teachers. Right now the system does its best to obscure the teaching crisis by calling everyone by the same title.

The No Child Left Behind Act does address this issue. The Act ensures that if parents request it, the qualifications of their child's teacher be made available. We would go one step further, and ask that each school make available routinely the licensing status, college major, and degree for all teachers in that school. Let's call those who are qualified, "teachers," and let's find another way to address those who are not—"associates," "assistants," or "instructors" are possible titles. This will send a signal to the public that the teaching force is not uniformly qualified, contrary to what most members of the public assume. Some interesting political repercussions would then be felt; this political fallout would generate support for real change.

In addition to different titles, schools and districts could figure out new roles and responsibilities

continued on page 10

State Legislator, NCATE Board Member, and Dean: A Powerful Mix

Calvin Johnson, vice chair of the Arkansas House Education Committee, dean of the school of education at the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff, and a current member of NCATE's Unit Accreditation Board, answers questions about the many hats he wears as an advocate of teacher preparation.

QT: *Being Vice Chair of the Arkansas House Education Committee, a local school board member, and a dean is an unusual mix. What advice would you give to deans who want to become more involved in state legislative activity as you have done?*

Johnson: More educators need to become involved in the political process. Deans generally have a good perspective on the big picture in education. Education is one of the most important issues facing most states. Most politicians appreciate reliable sources of information and input since they are a part of the educational decision making process.

The place to start, in my opinion, is in one's own community. My first community-wide leadership activity was to serve as chairperson of the community development committee. As a teacher, my interest was naturally directed toward our schools. This is where my first interest in school boards started. That interest led to my first elected position. This was followed by appointments to boards, commissions, etc. These appointments and services helped to prepare me for my role as a legislator. Was becoming a legislator an original goal? No!

QT: *It must be gratifying to see changes in legislation in which you have played a part. What changes have you been able to see through in the legislature that have positively impacted teacher education?*

Johnson: My greatest impact on educational issues has evolved from collaborating with fellow legislators about issues (potential legislation). As a legislator, I have immediate access to information and people. Examples of specific areas of interest in education that resulted in legislation are (1) scholarships for minority students in teacher education, (2) recruitment and retention of minority faculty and students, (3) several bills to address the critical teacher shortage, (4) a monitoring program for GED students, and (5) a resolution to study the impact on instruction of extra duties assigned to teachers.

QT: *In many cases, there has been a lack of direct communication between teacher educators and state legislators. What can be done to increase communication between these two groups? What practical steps can deans take to get their messages to state political leaders?*

Johnson: Deans need to become proactive regarding educational issues. Deans and other higher education administrators are often criticized by legislators because of misconceptions about teacher preparation in colleges of education. Deans can help to change these mindsets by talking to their local legislators, attending meetings, and getting involved when educational issues are being discussed or need to be discussed. Deans should help to keep their legislators informed on a regular basis about best practices, educational research, and possible solutions to educational problems based on that research.



Calvin Johnson

Who is NCATE? Calvin Johnson is NCATE. NCATE is the more than 2,000 education professionals and policymakers across the nation who contribute their time and talents to make the accrediting body for teacher preparation work. Several of them are featured in this issue of *Quality Teaching*.

QT: *So often, it seems that some legislators remember a story from years ago, before the current reforms in teacher preparation. What can teacher educators do to dispel these misconceptions?*

Johnson: Deans might consider (1) inviting their local legislators to serve on advisory groups, (2) inviting local and statewide legislative committees to meet on the University Campus, especially the Education Committees, and (3) showcasing best practice: collaborations involving the school of education, public schools, and business and community partners and demonstrate effective teaching and learning. Most legislators are not currently enrolled in teacher education programs; therefore what they know is from past experience or what they are told. Who could do a better job than the

continued on page 10

NCATE's Board of Examiners: The Field of Education at Work

Who is NCATE? NCATE is the field of education at large—teachers, teacher educators, local and state policymakers, and school specialists, all working together to strengthen teacher preparation. NCATE's Board of Examiners plays a unique role in achieving this mission. Teams of examiners—usually five to six individuals—conduct the heart of the accreditation enterprise—on-site visits to institutions to determine if they measure up to NCATE's rigorous standards. For many of the faculty in higher education and P–12 schools, the examining team is their entire experience of NCATE.

Although their travel and other expenses are paid, Board of Examiner members are not otherwise reimbursed financially for their time, effort, and professional contributions. P–12 teachers who are BOE members must take time off from their classrooms; professors, deans, administrators and other school specialists must also take time from their busy schedules to conduct an on-site visit. Team members fly to an institution on Saturday and stay through mid-day the following Wednesday. During that time, they are engaged in a continual round of interviews with faculty, students, and administrators in the college or university they are evaluating, as well as examining and gathering data from institutional records and files. They have no free evenings; teams meet to review and evaluate the data they have gathered, and to begin writing their report on how the institution meets, or does not meet, the standards. The team will cite any areas for improvement or unmet standards in its report, along with a rationale for their recommendations.

Board of Examiner members have undergone extensive training for their volunteer positions. They all have taken a week of leave from their 'real' jobs to receive training in the application of the NCATE standards and in procedures for an on-site visit. They conduct a mock visit at an institution recently accredited that has agreed to host the training visit. NCATE rates trainees and those who make the grade are then scheduled for upcoming visits. Terms for BOE members are three years; members must agree to be available during those years to make on-site visits. There are approximately 400 trained members on the Board in any given year. About 100 individuals are trained each year. NCATE reviews anywhere from 50 to 70 institutions each semester, and thus a significant portion of the Board is called to participate in a visit twice a year.

How are members nominated to become Board of Examiner members? NCATE's 33 member organizations nominate these individuals to the Board. Those individuals who show exceptional leadership are identified as potential BOE team chairs; the chair of the visit works closely with the institutional representative and the state representative to plan the visit so that it will run smoothly and efficiently. Chairs also receive training for their positions.

Being a Board of Examiner member is a professional honor. BOE members give generously of their time and expertise to help advance the entire profession of teaching. Let's salute these true leaders in education. Following are profiles of five BOE members who represent the four groups of NCATE member organizations—teachers, teacher educators, school specialists, and state and local policymakers.

Blake West, Mathematics Teacher



Blake West

Blake West has been a teacher for over 20 years. Most of these years were spent teaching mathematics and computer science at the high school level. In the fall of 2001, he began a leave of absence to serve full-time as the Vice President of the Kansas NEA.

QT: *Becoming a BOE member involves a lot of time, travel, and effort. What inspires you to take this step?*

West: Classroom teachers cannot leave to chance many things we have often taken for granted. In this time of "alternative routes" and of accountability, we have a vested interest in ensuring the quality of the colleagues that will join us in our work. Similarly, we have a vested interest in making sure adequate funding is available for schools and higher

education. We can't sit on the sidelines, we have to assume leadership for our profession and for the students with whom we work.

QT: *Has being a member of the BOE changed your perspective on teacher preparation and teaching in general? How?*

West: Frankly, I'm greatly impressed with the improvements many institutions have made in teacher preparation. Early and ongoing field experience, pedagogy in context with practice, considering each learner's needs, reflection and collaboration are all developments I missed 25 years ago. The teaching profession (and schools) will be in excellent hands as the next generation of collaborative, reflective practitioners enter the field with a commitment to professional growth (lifelong learning)

and the use of data to help individual students and to improve their teaching.

QT: *What does your unique perspective as a teacher lend to the accreditation visit (or accreditation in general)?*

West: Hopefully all members of the BOE have an understanding of the life and work of educators in the various roles in our schools. A P–12 teacher brings a richness to that perspective, though, and adds a credibility to the work of the team. During interviews teacher candidates have expressed an appreciation of having “real teachers” on the team, realizing that the team’s questions were relevant to their real-world practice—not just theoretical or esoteric.

QT: *Has your practice as a teacher changed since you have become an NCATE BOE member? If so, how?*

West: Being a BOE member encourages me to stay current with developments in teaching and learning. I hope this would be true even if I were not on the BOE, but it is a prerequisite for the BOE task. More than anything, service on the BOE has increased my commitment to encourage classroom teacher colleagues to advance their professional knowledge and to become leaders of teacher quality and school improvement efforts. The continuum of our profession does not stop with being an accomplished teacher—ideally, it moves to mentoring, advocacy for the profession and school quality, and to leadership. Moving into these areas should not necessarily mean that a teacher must leave day-to-day work in a classroom...but it might.

QT: *Why is accreditation important to you? What do you think it means on a practical level?*

West: Accreditation serves two important functions. First, it provides some assurance to me that the colleagues joining me in the teaching profession will have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will contribute to the success of our schools. While it is true that mentoring and induction programs are critical to support new teachers, they need to come with a basic level of competence on which to build. A second reason for accreditation is to protect the “consumer” – the teacher education candidates and P–12 students. I wouldn’t encourage anyone to pursue teaching licensure except at an NCATE-accredited institution.

QT: *If you have gone on a visit under the new standards, what difference in the visit do you find in evaluating an institution under the new performance-based standards and under the previous set of standards? What differences do you find in the institutions as they meet the new standards?*

West: In the past, institutions collected and reported several key pieces of data about their candidates (e.g., performance on some test, GPA) but they are now being much more systematic in examining the alignment between their entire conceptual

framework and data they collect about their candidates/graduates. They are 1) looking at the depth of their vision for the kind of teachers they wish to develop, 2) trying to find meaningful ways to assess that development and 3) to use this data both to assist individual candidate development and to inform program improvement. I believe institutions can point with much greater assurance to their data as evidence that they are truly successful in teacher preparation.

QT: *What if anything could NCATE be doing differently? More of?*

West: I believe NCATE could begin to serve as a database for effective practices and programs. We go on visits and do not share advice or make recommendations. While this is completely appropriate, the exemplary programs we see could serve to generate creative and contextually-appropriate new models based on the examples NCATE has collected and could make available.

QT: *So many individuals are coming into teaching from a variety of alternate routes. How do you see NCATE’s role in the future?*

West: NCATE has never been more critical to the future of quality schools than during this time of pushing for alternative routes. These routes need to be judged by the same system that NCATE provides for schools of education—we must look at the results of these programs in successfully preparing teachers who positively affect student learning; we need to ensure that they really have systems to collect this data; we need to ensure that candidates have experiences in classrooms BEFORE hiring to develop their skills and understand both learning and social issues; we need systems that reach out to broaden the diversity of the teaching corps; we need qualified people to develop the new teachers; and we need to ensure sufficient resources are in place to support all of this. In an ideal world, alternative routes to certification would involve schools of education, at least as partners, and NCATE would evaluate them either directly or indirectly through the partner institutions.

NCATE’s task is truly daunting in the face of some “anyone can teach” and “any preparation program is good enough” proponents. It is also the task of the supporting professional organizations of educators to advocate for quality (and sanity) in the face of both a teaching shortage and increasing calls for accountability. ■

NCATE has never been more critical to the future of quality schools than during this time of increasing numbers of alternative routes into teaching. These routes need to be judged by the same system that NCATE provides...

Loren Blanchard, Vice President



Loren Blanchard

It is imperative that an institution is able to effectively demonstrate its commitment to quality teacher preparation. NCATE accreditation evinces this commitment.

Dr. Loren J. Blanchard has recently been named Assistant Vice President for Accreditation and Accountability for the University of Louisiana System of Colleges and Universities. Blanchard formerly served as an Associate Professor and Assistant Chair of the Division of Education at Xavier University of Louisiana.

QT: *Being on BOE teams involves a lot of time, travel, and effort. What inspired you to become a BOE member?*

Blanchard: There are essentially three reasons why I enjoy being a BOE member, in spite of the time, travel and effort: (1) the professional collegiality with other BOEs; (2) the opportunity to experience and learn from the strong work and best practices in teacher education that institutions are engaged nationally; and (3) the opportunity to hear anecdotes of the transformational process that units have undergone to arrive at being a national teacher preparation program of excellence.

QT: *Has being a member of the BOE changed your perspective on teacher preparation and teaching in general?*

Blanchard: My perspectives on teacher preparation and teaching itself have definitely changed. First, my focus now is discerning how teacher preparation can improve to ensure the highest quality professional educator. Secondly, I think more about what state agencies can do to support programs in their efforts to improve the quality of teacher preparation. Finally, I find myself spending far more time in K-12 classrooms observing teaching and students to learn first-hand what the educational agenda should be for SCDEs in order for them to empower candidates with the relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions to significantly impact student learning.

QT: *What does your unique perspective as a teacher educator lend to the accreditation visit?*

Blanchard: As a trained educational administrator and psychologist, the foundation of my professional work has centered on achievement motivation and learning/assessment issues of students. As such, the contributions I offer to an accreditation team are usually concentrated on the knowledge base and skills of teacher candidates and the systematic means by which teacher education units ensure that candidates are professionally prepared to positively impact student achievement.

QT: *Why is accreditation important to you? What do you think it means on a practical level?*

Blanchard: Accreditation is the means by which a unit can publicly demonstrate that it offers high quality programs. In the era in which we now live where SCDEs are being held highly accountable for K-12 student achievement and when public

scrutiny of teacher preparation is at its peak, it is imperative that an institution is able to effectively demonstrate its commitment to quality teacher preparation. NCATE accreditation evinces this commitment.

QT: *If you have gone on a visit under the new standards, what difference in the visit do you find in evaluating an institution under the new performance-based standards and under the previous set of standards?*

Blanchard: One glaring difference is that it certainly takes more time for the BOEs to review exhibits. This is mainly because there is generally more documentation and that the documentation is far more performance-based hence taking additional time to study. Moreover, we spend quite a bit of time discerning the knowledge, skills and dispositions of candidates and faculty through interviews and classroom visits. Institutions have expended a considerable amount of effort in developing aggregate reports for all types of data collected and analyzed on candidates and faculty (trend data). There are also more poster presentations, technology projects, and portfolios that are on display for BOE review. Finally, there are assessments available for virtually every academic requirement designed to assist the teacher candidate in developing knowledge, skills and dispositions for effective practice.

QT: *What if anything could NCATE be doing differently?*

Blanchard: The one area in which many institutions appear to be struggling is the development of their assessment systems. NCATE should attempt to maintain an educative posture with institutions so that as BOE teams are going out to conduct visits and are finding well-developed assessment systems, NCATE should find a way to showcase the systems through its website or newsletter.

QT: *So many individuals are coming into teaching from a variety of alternate routes. How do you see NCATE's role in the future?*

Blanchard: It is likely that with the surge of private providers offering alternative certification programs and community colleges offering associate degrees in teacher education, that NCATE and its state partners are going to have to give consideration to how it can hold these institutions as accountable for high quality programming as four-year institutions are. Many four-year institutions are finding themselves competing for the same population of teacher candidates as private providers and community colleges are and yet are being held to different accreditation and accountability criteria. ■

Dr. Eric Witherspoon is the Superintendent of Schools in Des Moines Iowa. He also served for three years as a primary consultant and trainer with the Chicago Public Schools. In September 2001, the School Administrators of Iowa named Dr. Witherspoon Iowa Superintendent of the Year.

QT: *Being a member of the BOE involves a lot of time, travel, and effort. What inspired you to make this commitment?*

Witherspoon: The key to high student achievement and quality education is the quality of teaching. Top-flight teacher preparation programs prepare top-flight teachers.

As a BOE member, I can contribute to the accreditation of teacher education programs and help assure that classrooms in the future will have teachers with the best preparation to teach well.

The time, travel and effort to serve as a BOE member is a commitment I am honored to make. Serving as a BOE member is important work.

QT: *Has being a member of the BOE team changed your perspective on teacher preparation and teaching in general? How?*

Witherspoon: Being a BOE member has taught me how to recognize the high standards required in excellent teacher preparation programs. I have seen firsthand the strong relationship between good teacher preparation programs and good teaching. I have seen how much better first and second-year teachers do in the classroom, and how much more their students learn when they enter the profession with the best teaching tools, training, knowledge and pre-service experiences. Each year our school district hires approximately 350 new teachers, and my experience as a BOE member has proved to me how important it is that we hire the best teachers with the best teacher preparation.

QT: *The training to become a BOE member that you received was intensive. Has it been useful in your regular professional life? In what way?*

Witherspoon: The rigorous BOE training has been very useful in my professional life. The BOE training has helped me in other job responsibilities as we provide training for staff in our school district, as we set clear and high standards for our programs, and as we evaluate the effectiveness of our programs based on the high standards we have established. I am certain I am a better superintendent because I have had the BOE training and have been able to transfer that learning to my other areas of responsibility.

QT: *What does your unique perspective as a superintendent lend to the accreditation visit?*

Witherspoon: As a superintendent, I am a consumer of teacher preparation programs. We hire the graduates and entrust our students to their teaching. Graduates of teacher education programs apply by the thousands to our school district each year. And as a consumer, I can bring that perspective to the accreditation visit. I can ask questions and review documentation that helps me better understand how standards are being met to produce the best teachers.

QT: *Has your practice as a superintendent changed since you have become an NCATE Board of Examiners member? If so, how?*

Witherspoon: My experience as a BOE member has taught me the importance of employing teachers who have succeeded in a quality teacher preparation program. We place a great deal of emphasis on identifying prospective teachers who have the best training, and we invest heavily in recruiting, identifying, selecting and inducting teachers with the best preparation. We do not hire teachers who have not received excellent teacher training. NCATE has strengthened that belief for me.

QT: *Why is accreditation important to you? What do you think it means on a practical level?*

Witherspoon: Accreditation is vital. Programs need to be developed around high standards, continuously improved, and assessed using those standards. Accreditation provides quality assurance.

QT: *What if anything could NCATE be doing differently? More of?*

Witherspoon: NCATE is doing a great job. The staff is supportive. The training is excellent. The materials are comprehensive. NCATE uses technology as an effective training tool, too.

QT: *So many individuals are coming into teaching from a variety of alternate routes. How do you see NCATE's role in the future?*

Witherspoon: NCATE should play a larger role in the future as more individuals come into teaching from a variety of routes. It will be more important than ever to assure excellent teacher preparation. No matter how an individual enters teaching, quality control is vitally important. NCATE has developed an accreditation system that is outstanding for existing higher education programs. NCATE will need to develop a system for accrediting the preparation of individuals entering teaching by alternate routes. Consumers for accrediting alternate preparation may be state departments of education or local school districts. I do not have a clue how that will look, but I am certain NCATE will figure it out. ■



Eric Witherspoon

The training is excellent. The materials are comprehensive. NCATE uses technology as an effective training tool. NCATE is doing a great job...

Susan Adler, Social Studies Specialist



Susan Adler

Dr. Susan Adler is currently an Associate Professor of Education at the University of Missouri, Kansas City and former chair of the Division of Teacher Education. She is the immediate past-president of the National Council for the Social Studies and is a member of a number of professional associations, including the Association for Teacher Education (ATE) and the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

QT: *Becoming a BOE member involves a lot of time, travel, and effort. What inspired you to take this step?*

Adler: My interest in and commitment to teacher education (preservice and inservice) are the motivating factors underlying my work as a BOE member. My work as a BOE member is both a service opportunity and a learning opportunity. That is, it is a way of “giving” to the profession, but also a way of learning and growing.

QT: *Has being a member of the BOE changed your perspective on teacher preparation and teaching in general? How?*

Adler: My work on the BOE has made me more aware of, and committed to, some level of professional

consensus on what constitutes professional education, and to the professional oversight of those standards. Education is a political process, and those outside the profession demand accountability and results. Such demands can often lead to a political, rather than an informed response. As professional educators, we have the responsibility to continually seek to understand what constitutes effective teacher education and to be a voice of reason in the political debates. I don't believe the answers are ever easy or clear-cut, but, in my mind, NCATE is committed to the ongoing process of making reasoned judgments leading to better education.

QT: *What does your unique perspective as a teacher educator lend to the accreditation visit? (or accreditation in general?)*

Adler: My professional life, teaching, research, and program development is focused on the education of teachers (especially social studies teachers). My understanding (albeit imperfect) of the issues and concerns of teacher educators help to make me more sensitive to the concerns of the institutions I visit. (I hope.) ■

Gail Morrison, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education



Gail Morrison

After serving as Department Chairmen for the English and Fine Arts Department at Midlands Technical College in South Carolina, Dr. Morrison moved to the S.C. Commission on Higher Education, where she is now Director of the Division of Academic Affairs and Licensing.

QT: *Has being a Board of Examiner member changed your perspective on teacher preparation?*

Morrison: Being a BOE member is unquestionably a broadening and enriching experience. It results in exposure to a wide variety of preparation programs across the spectrum of nearly all the states, all bound together by a common set of rigorous standards, but all working toward them in an incredibly rich, diverse, and creative array of approaches. It is this exposure to different solutions to common problems, at both the program and state level, that has been so stimulating and enriching.

QT: *In what ways has NCATE influenced teacher preparation in South Carolina?*

Morrison: Our entry into a three-way (SC Department of Education, SC Commission on Higher Education and NCATE) State partnership with NCATE has been transformative. Because so few of our programs were NCATE-accredited in 1994, many if not most of our programs have had to redesign themselves in order to meet NCATE

1995 standards and comply with the Commission on Higher Education's mandate that all public institutions would become NCATE-accredited by 1999. This transformation has continued as all public institutions (all of which achieved accreditation) now move to meet NCATE's standards and redesign themselves again around performance-based assessments and standards. Given the positive changes occurring in the public sector because of the NCATE affiliation, several private institutions have become accredited, and others are in candidacy status. Finally, and most recently, the State spent over a year examining the NCATE standards and modeled its own program approval standards on the NCATE standards so that they are virtually identical. NCATE has reached into both the public and private sectors and constituted the basis for the first substantive State level redefinition of SC program approval standards in almost 20 years.

QT: *Do you think NCATE has had a nationwide impact on teacher preparation? Describe.*

Morrison: Through the expansion of state partnerships and the inclusion of almost all fifty of the states, NCATE has certainly had a nationwide impact in raising the bar around carefully developed and thoroughly tested standards that promote rigorous preparation. The NCATE standards'

emphasis on performance-based assessment and outcomes measures has also had an influence on states' licensing systems, undergirding those states already moving toward performance-based licensure and facilitating the movement of other states toward that kind of licensure. Further, such initiatives as the Professional Development School standards and the grappling with performance-based standards have extended NCATE's reach into districts and other accrediting entities and specialty organizations.

QT: *So many individuals are coming into teaching from alternate route programs of all types. How do you see NCATE's role in the future vis-à-vis these types of programs? And how do you see NCATE and the States collaborating in this area?*

Morrison: Alternative route programs clearly constitute all kinds of challenges since there are so many players. It is unlikely that NCATE will be able to interface with all of these extraordinarily diverse program providers, nor will there likely be much political support for requiring NCATE accreditation of alternate routes given the forcefulness and ambitiousness of federal and state mandates to fill classrooms with "qualified" teachers. Perhaps the most constructive collaboration between NCATE and States regarding alternate route programs is for NCATE to continue to develop appropriate data bases around such variables as retention, length of service, test scores, and so on to compare the effects of the two different kinds of preparation. Another strategy might be for NCATE to develop a model evaluation and assessment system that States might require to be incorporated into an alternate route program. Certainly NCATE should consider developing an accreditation protocol for alternate route programs (e.g., school districts offering alternate route programs).

QT: *Does NCATE make a difference? How can educators get that message across, if the answer is yes?*

Morrison: As I said, NCATE has certainly made a difference in South Carolina in that it has promoted an intense and intensive examination of both the teacher education unit and individual programs. But the missing link is still, clearly, student achievement. Once NCATE assessment systems are fully implemented, some potentially useful data compilation around outcomes measures will be possible and should be explored around some standardized grouping of elements. What we need to know more about are how NCATE-prepared teachers compare to non-NCATE prepared teachers (through traditional and non-traditional avenues including distance-delivered programs and alternate route programs) in terms of performance in the classroom. Studies that examine this question in a variety of school districts with a variety of teacher preparation providers would undoubtedly be helpful, however difficult they might be to produce. Development of an evaluation/assessment instrument around common elements consistent with NCATE standards for districts to use for each teacher might be a way to begin to collect such data, particularly if one or more districts could be enlisted in a pilot program to do so. Another possibly useful strategy from the perspective of "spreading the word," might be the human interest stories that are possible through a case study methodology—perhaps a monograph that follows actual candidates through several different program types along the lines of Tobias' "*They're Not Dumb, They're Different*" or Hirsch's "*A Tribe Apart*," for example. ■

In the News:

According to this year's U S News' *Best Graduate Schools* publication, three-fourths of the Nation's 188 doctoral-degree granting institutions may soon be NCATE-accredited. Currently, two-thirds of the institutions in this influential segment of higher education are accredited. However ten more of these institutions are pre-candidates or candidates for accreditation. If they are successful, then a major milestone will have been reached. Of those 54 institutions rated "best" by U S News, sixty per cent are NCATE-accredited. In its publication, U S News identifies which institutions are NCATE accredited; It should be noted, however, that neither NCATE accreditation status nor any measure of the quality of teacher preparation was used to identify the "best" graduate schools of education. NCATE welcomes U S News' incorporation of NCATE accreditation status as an indicator of the quality of preparation programs. Both prospective students and employers want to know whether graduates have the knowledge and skill necessary to help all students learn. (*U S News & World Report*, "Best Graduate Schools", 2003 Edition, www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/grad/rankings/edu/brief/teaprep.htm)



Quality Teaching

Volume 10, Issue 2
Spring 2002

a publication of the

NATIONAL
COUNCIL
FOR
ACCREDITATION
OF TEACHER
EDUCATION

Arthur E. Wise
President

Donna M. Gollnick
Senior Vice President

Jane Leibbrand
Vice President for
Communications
and Editor

Leaving No Child Behind

At the same time we want to hold teachers to high standards, we are apparently willing to put unprepared and unlicensed people into the schools.

Presidential Perspectives continued from page 2

that correspond to the qualifications of the teaching staff. Rochester, NY has a system of interns, residents, professional teachers, and lead teachers. Other schools use phrases like masters, mentors, and associates, to reveal that not all teachers have the same qualifications.

Breaking Up the Egg Crate Model

New titles and corresponding roles and responsibilities would provide a new way to organize a school's human resources. Mentor or lead teachers would not simply teach one set of children, while other children get the unqualified and suffer throughout the year. The school could use lead teachers to supervise the untrained so that interns and residents are not left on their own with children falling through the cracks. It's time to break up the 'egg crate' model of schooling where one person alone—for good or for ill—works with a class of children. With so many untrained, unqualified people now staffing classrooms, we need to develop a different instructional model to protect those children who would end up with the untrained person as their instructor. It is time

to develop schools in which instructional teamwork is a given. Some on the team are experts and some are in various stages of preparation and training. However we do it, we must ensure that every child is attended to and that, truly, no child is left behind. Just as in the medical profession we have people working in teams to deliver health care to patients—doctors, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and nurse's aides—we can reorganize the teaching force to ensure delivery of high quality instruction to all children—not just those who are lucky enough to have a well prepared teacher in their classroom.

It's time to break down the egg crate model and build a new one which requires interdependence and teamwork on the part of the school faculty and management. This model could be used anywhere, but could be especially useful in urban and rural schools where many untrained and unprepared teachers land.

We can figure out a way to educate our children well and staff our schools with integrity, if we just focus on reorganizing, teamwork, accountability, and roles and responsibilities in keeping with teachers' knowledge and skill levels. ■

Johnson Q & A continued from page 3

Dean of Education in helping to inform legislators and legislation? Not many!

QT: *How has being involved in NCATE, first as a Board of Examiners member, and now as a Unit Accreditation Board member, changed your practice as a dean?*

Johnson: As a BOE member, I was afforded training that helped me to develop a new way of viewing and evaluating my own teacher education program. Also, as a BOE member I gained a better understanding of each standard and was able to see first hand the many different approaches taken by a variety of programs to accomplish the same objectives. Overall, my role as a BOE member has helped me to translate NCATE language and standards to program practice. My role as a UAB member is enhanced by the experience that I gained as a BOE member. Serving on the UAB is an enriching educational experience, as we discuss policy with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and educational

NCATE standards help to move faculty, staff, students, and administrators to a new level of accountability.

experiences. Because of my roles on the BOE and UAB, and as dean of an NCATE accredited program, I have a wonderful opportunity to continue my education and provide the best opportunity for our teacher candidates to learn and prepare for their roles as effective educators.

QT: *Does NCATE accreditation change anything or anybody? How?*

Johnson: NCATE changes everything and everybody. Arkansas is one of a few states that required all public institutions of higher education to be NCATE accredited years ago. NCATE accredited programs have the advantage of responding to a set of nationally recognized high standards. Institutions that accept the challenge to become NCATE accredited are rewarded by joining other programs that are knowledge-based, and are supported by research, best practice and scholarly activities. These activities enable NCATE accredited institutions to prepare and graduate teachers that are among the best in our nation. NCATE standards help to move faculty, staff, students, and administrators to a new level of accountability. ■