

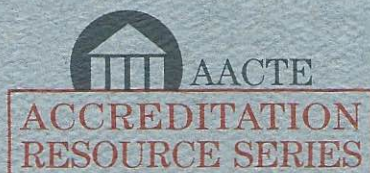
CAPTURING THE VISION

REFLECTIONS ON

NCATE'S REDESIGN

FIVE YEARS AFTER

Hendrik D. Gideonse
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One Dupont Circle ♦ Suite 610 ♦ Washington, DC 20036-1186
February 1993

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Capturing the Vision: Reflections on NCATE's Redesign Five Years After

may be ordered from:

AACTE Publications

One Dupont Circle, Suite 610

Washington, DC 20036-1186

Single copy (prepaid) \$12.00 for AACTE members, \$14.00 for nonmembers

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Printed in the United States of America

International Standard Book Number: 0-89333-105-8

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FOREWORD

This monograph, *Capturing the Vision*, is commended to teacher education institutions and other participants in the professional education enterprise by the AACTE Committee on Accreditation. It represents the first in a series of AACTE monographs and resources that will expand the thinking about the NCATE accreditation process, provide assistance with the operational aspects of accreditation review, and in a larger sense, help to propel the NCATE process toward its potential for improving teacher education.

Beginning with the initial implementation of the NCATE Redesign, the Committee on Accreditation has deliberated at length over numerous aspects of the accreditation process. Some of the discussions have focused on procedural dimensions of the NCATE process and the desire to promote sharing among institutions about effective and efficient ways of preparing for an accreditation review. The discussions have also been accompanied by a sense of the larger purposes of accreditation, namely, to be of real value to participating institutions as well as to schools, teachers, and students who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the process. *Capturing the Vision*, the document that begins this AACTE series on accreditation issues, serves this larger purpose well. In addition, the various chapters consider the many operational aspects of the NCATE accreditation process.

The spirit in which these resources are offered encompasses several specific objectives:

- ◆ To connect accreditation review to best practice rather than minimal or prescriptive standards;
- ◆ To share program development and documentation ideas across institutions, so that NCATE serves to promote and raise the level of professional dialogue;
- ◆ To share information and perspectives between the corporate NCATE system (representatives who serve on Board of Examiners, Unit Accreditation Board, and other NCATE roles) and faculty in the institutions that seek accreditation; and

- ◆ To use the resulting communication to promote equity of the NCATE system, to increase the value of NCATE review, and eventually to raise the quality of practice across institutions.

A final purpose of the resource series addresses the issue of constancy. As AACTE publishes this monograph, revisions to the original standards language of the Redesign are being considered by NCATE. Indeed, the Preface to *Capturing the Vision* notes that, "No sooner is a new set of understandings and formulations reached than it becomes the baseline for considering the next." Rather than outdating the usefulness of the current volume, this developmental process will underscore the need for institutions to base their approach to program development and NCATE review on qualitative factors that remain constant within the shifting emphases of new procedural frameworks. The three themes presented in this volume—conscience, intellectual vitality, and collaborative enterprise—are offered as starting points for that foundation.

With the initiation of this series, we would like to acknowledge the contributions and leadership of three former members of the Committee on Accreditation: Jimmie Applegate, Barbara Burch, and Mary Diez.

DENNIS HINKLE
Chair, AACTE Committee
on Accreditation, 1993

PREFACE

During the mid-1980s the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) transformed itself. The process began early in the decade when the constituent elements of the teaching profession then comprising NCATE re-examined the standards, processes, and structure for accrediting teacher education programs in the United States. In July 1986, NCATE implemented the new design; the next year it conducted pilot institutional reviews under the new standards. Through 1991, 221 institutions voluntarily submitted themselves to external review; 148 of those 221 units were accredited following initial review. Another 23 were accredited with stipulations.

After the substantive redesign decisions in mid-1985, NCATE implemented its redesign self-consciously; NCATE officials and other implementation participants referred to this self-consciousness as NCATE's "developmental posture." Believing that redesign implementation should lead to refined procedures and standards, the NCATE Executive Board, Unit Accreditation Board, Board of Examiners, and staff have carefully monitored the implementation process, systematically feeding back into practice what was learned from experience with the redesign.

This essay is part of that developmental process. Its seven coauthors have been involved in the formulation and/or implementation of NCATE's redesigned standards in the manners indicated for each:

- ◆ Edward R. Ducharme—Board of Examiners (*Professor of Education, School of Education, Drake University*)
- ◆ Mary Kluender Ducharme—NCATE/AACTE Joint Data Committee (*Associate Professor, School of Education, Drake University*)
- ◆ Hendrik D. Gideonse—Redesign; Unit Accreditation Board; Board of Examiners (*University Professor of Education and Policy Science, University of Cincinnati*)
- ◆ Donna Gollnick—Redesign; NCATE Staff (*Vice President, NCATE*)
- ◆ M. Stephen Lilly—Redesign; Unit Accreditation Board; Board of Examiners (*Dean, College of Education, California State University, San Marcos*)

- ◆ E. Lea Schelke—Board of Examiners (*Teacher, Trenton High School, and Chair, Professional Standards for Teachers Commission, Michigan*)
- ◆ Penny Smith—Unit Accreditation Board (*Principal, Griffin Middle School, High Point Schools, North Carolina*)

The activity culminating in this essay was organized in the fall of 1990. It was carried out through a series of weekend meetings in winter/spring, 1991. Although the financial demands of the project were modest, participants gratefully acknowledge the support available from their institutions, the Michigan Education Association, NCATE, and from one another. A June 1991 draft was shared with a small number of people across the country; comments received from Dale Scannell, Richard Wisniewski, and Art Wise were stimulating and helpful. During fall and winter 1991-92, further deliberations took place by phone and the final draft was completed at the February 1992 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in San Antonio, Texas.

Our aim has been to capture what we have learned as we individually participated in the formation and implementation of NCATE's redesign. The experience of the last five years offers solid evidence that NCATE is a substantially improved enterprise. The standards, overall, are better. The examiners who visit are far better prepared for their responsibilities. Furthermore, NCATE's processes enjoy greater rationality and stability, important signs of the maturity of the profession. We believe that much of importance has been learned and that its substance and implications should be recorded and widely disseminated.

We also believe that NCATE, and professional education unit responses to NCATE, must improve still further. Indeed, defining and meeting standards in any field of professional preparation means riding a permanently rising escalator. No sooner is a new set of understandings and formulations reached than it becomes the baseline for considering the next. Standards for the preparation of the education profession are no exception. Through this essay we seek to contribute to that further improvement.

*"...for the letter killeth,
but the spirit giveth life."*

—II CORINTHIANS 3:6

INTRODUCTION



The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, a voluntary accreditation agency, is unique in the teaching profession. It is the only professional entity drawing corporate support from and formally including in its governance representatives of all the professional and policy groups of the teaching profession. NCATE is the one forum where the teaching profession unites to set and serve standards requisite for the formal recognition of quality in teacher preparation in participating institutions of higher education.

No profession can hope to sustain itself without responsible authority over the standards for entry, including the standards governing the units responsible for preservice preparation. Teaching is no exception. Every step to improve NCATE brings teaching closer to the desired professional condition—committed to state of the art performance, continuously self-correcting (both for individual functioning and in the aggregate), and committed to teaching's many clients and the core values which define our service to society. Said most simply, NCATE is *all of us*, not some distant other imposing itself upon us. It is all of us in the form of our collective professional conscience and aspiration, professional not merely as a matter of status, but in the character of our day-to-day performance and accomplishments.

The governance of NCATE purposefully reflects the complexity of the teaching profession. It embraces the main associations representing teachers, teacher education, content specialty groups, and policy/administrative leaders in the profession. Through the Unit Accreditation Board and its constituent entity, the Board of Examiners, NCATE's organization accommodates the generative processes of standards definition and the measurement of institutions against them. Through the Specialty Areas Studies Board and the State Recognition Board, NCATE ensures the contributions of and articulation with specialty organizations and state agencies in the processes of program review and program approval for licensure purposes. An NCATE review, therefore, means examination by peers from the professional community.

While the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education is insufficient for the full achievement of professional performance in teaching, in the long run a national accreditation entity is certainly necessary. Why is it so important?

All professions manifest concern over the deep, abiding societal values that they serve. Professions are also about specialized knowledge. The centrality of values and knowledge to professions points to the importance of systematic preparation of those entering a profession.

The overwhelming majority of candidates seek entry to professions through programs of study in postsecondary education because it is convenient, and the professions themselves seek to assure knowledge and skills are acquired prior to entry because those prerequisites to professional practice are extensive and often cumulative in character. Furthermore, socialization to the values embraced by a profession is a slow process, and it must occur in an environment permeated by those values.

Because establishing preparation standards involves delicate matters of credibility, agencies responsible for defining them must be comprised of persons who are knowledgeable in the requisite domains and who have themselves been socialized to the values of the profession; any other stance is professionally unconscionable. At the same time, such agencies must scrupulously avoid the assertion of unnecessary or unwarranted privilege by serving the narrower interests of the profession itself in place of the larger interests of their clients or society at large. In the end, the balance between these two potential flaws—standards set by those who are ignorant, on the one hand, and the assertion of unwarranted privilege, on the other—is decided by the amount of responsibility the profession shows in minding its affairs. That, in turn, is reflected in the degree of trust society has in the profession as displayed, to one degree or another, in society's willingness to have the profession play a controlling role in such decisions.

Education is a constitutional and financial responsibility of the states, thereby requiring special and shared relationships between the profession and government. In the past, the education profession showed neither the collective initiative nor the appropriate degree of responsibility in carrying out its duties relative to its own standards. The profession has thus proven vulnerable to precisely the kinds of adverse policy and standards-setting events—emergency licenses, bypasses to licensure, severe caps on professional preparation, belated and narrowly construed testing requirements on teachers and candidates for teaching—that have befallen teaching in various jurisdictions across the country.

All professions have obligations to themselves and their clients that require collective action. Professions entail collegial responsibility for standards for entry and for day-to-day performance. The professional collegium—those who by knowledge, experience, responsibility, and practice embody the appropriate expertise—is where

values are explored and articulated, where knowledge is pursued and affirmed. It is where the professionals shape and apply the instruments for the control and enhancement of quality in personnel and performance. Accreditation of professional education programs is a collective imperative, and participation in its processes is a contribution individuals and institutions make to the larger professional whole.

Defining the collegium for the teaching profession has proven difficult. Our constituent elements are diverse, as we embrace primary, secondary, and postsecondary education, all the curriculum content areas and professional specializations, an almost bewildering variety of institutional types in higher education, as well as the fifty-plus political jurisdictions responsible for initial licensure. Objectionable status hierarchies sometimes emerge among these elements. The complexity of the professional education task is daunting. Conflicting needs and desires, inadequate information about and empathy for differing circumstances and contexts, and less than perfect responsiveness of given constituents to others severely stress the formation and articulation of the collegium for teacher education and accreditation proceedings as well.

Structure is a corequisite to vision for effective action. Consensus on structure, however, is elusive especially with an absence of consensus on fundamental purpose. Where there is no agreement on fundamental purpose, full participation in the existing structures is incomplete. Incomplete membership and participation in a voluntary association committed to professional standards, either by the constituent associations or the professional preparation units, leads to two equally unhappy oppositional strategies: divide and conquer, or simply ignore. In the present decade of educational reform efforts, the well-intentioned but ignorant, as well as the overt opponents of the teaching profession, employ both. Consequently, teacher education has been neither challenged nor able to contribute as significantly to the improvement of educational practice in America as it might.

Improvement through accreditation is a long, complex process calling for the careful articulation of many diverse elements. It is hard, often frustrating work. When narrow self-interest, or mistaken beliefs of NCATE's irrelevance or the relative superiority of one's own strategies, or an unwillingness to look for a larger whole, or lack of awareness of how accreditation has transformed other professional fields are present, it may prove tempting for past or prospective participants in the collaboration to withdraw from what appears a constraining enterprise and strike off in different, perhaps lonely, directions. We believe such action implies a preference for chaos, if not a willingness to sacrifice the larger, more difficult benefit for the allure of short-term institutional gain. Such a position in no way mitigates NCATE's responsibility for professional challenge and dialogue.

Through this essay we seek to provide a measure of the challenge NCATE's redesign has raised to the teacher education community. Accreditation processes, at their best, offer a stimulus to think together about the highest aspirations for the profession. They induce us to address the essence, the meaning, and the character of quality in teacher education. Readers who come to this essay, therefore, in search of a "how-to" manual for addressing unit approaches to fulfilling NCATE's accreditation requirements should adjust their expectations.

Robert Penn Warren, in *All the King's Men*, developed the metaphor of a spider web to describe the interrelatedness of life. However lightly one touches any portion, the entire web moves. Our experiences convince us that the quality the profession seeks to achieve through NCATE can only be achieved through a similarly complex, articulated view of NCATE's standards and criteria.

We begin our essay, then, with a statement of vision for teacher education units. As we have worked on the implementation of the new NCATE standards, we have observed teacher education units and the documentation developed in connection with their quest for accreditation. We are persuaded it is important to articulate common themes and aspirations, which we believe are, in fact, driving units' efforts to reach the standards as defined. It is a vision that constitutes, in effect, an underpinning rationale for the standards, which informs their interactive power, and begins to show how "webs" of evidence keyed to standards and criteria for compliance offer convincing proof of a teacher education unit's inherent quality. The vision is not so much that of the authors alone. We have sought to articulate only what we believe undergirds the work of many professionals in creating and implementing NCATE, and of many individuals and institutions that have successfully measured themselves against NCATE's standards. The sense of vision infuses the search for quality in teacher education, gives meaning to actions, and ties together what might otherwise seem an exhaustive list of discrete criteria and standards. Units guided by these kinds of themes, operating daily over time according to their impetus, will, in the final analysis, be successful in their quest for accreditation and make their contribution to the profession.

We begin with a brief statement of the three constituent elements of a vision of quality for teacher education—that education units be places of conscience, intellectual vitality, and collaborative enterprise. This is followed by more extensive treatments of each of these themes in the context of NCATE's standards and criteria for compliance.

*“Where there is no vision,
the people perish.”*

—PROVERBS 29:18

A VISION OF QUALITY



Our common vision of quality for America's teacher education institutions embraces interacting themes, but it rests upon a single, overriding premise: America's schools are as strong and effective as their teachers make them. Educational effectiveness and reform, therefore, depend on the quality, preparation, and commitment of the professionals staffing our schools. Since formal programs prepare the overwhelming majority of America's education professionals, the units responsible for those programs have major leadership responsibilities for the improvement and long-term health of America's schools.

First and foremost, quality teacher education units must be places of active conscience. The professional commitment to social justice and the power of the ethics of equity and diversity in American culture must be palpable. Teacher education units must exhibit a responsiveness to all learners, operationalizing beliefs in the capability of all individuals to learn and a professional obligation to work always toward that end. A commitment to principled caring about the clients of teaching must be manifest.

Teacher education units must also be places of intellectual vitality. Within themselves, individually and organizationally, they must subject themselves to constant challenge. They must be places where students and faculty value and engage in systematic inquiry, attend to the issues of teaching and learning (in the schools *and* in the unit), and display constant responsiveness to new demands and realities. Teacher education units must be deeply reflective. They must be willing to examine data and assumptions, applying the principles of reasoning, problem solving, and sound judgment, all the while prizing intuition and the inherent satisfactions and value of a sense of the aesthetic. They must be places tolerant of ambiguity, constructive conflict, and risk-taking. All individuals associated with them must value ideas for their power, clarity, and resourcefulness.

Quality teacher education units must be places where the entire professional community of teaching is defined and cultivated. Its members vigorously manifest their commitment to professionalism (as Hugh Sockett, 1990, defines the term¹) and the interconnectedness of the professional community of education. The complex obligations of teacher education and the great diversity of its intellectual and institutional resources require recognition that quality units exhibit core values and beliefs that transcend the mere aggregation of the strengths and qualities of the individual members and affiliates of the unit. The unit must exhibit a deep, abiding sense of itself as a distinct community. Quality units, therefore, are cohesive and coherent, and present clear evidence of sustained collaboration with a variety of settings and constituencies. The profession, in other words, becomes a common enterprise inclusive of the many constituent elements.

Units dedicated to the themes of conscience, intellectual vitality, and professional community prize their own integrity, match intent to performance, and model the power of the faculty as teachers and as professionals.

NOTES

1. Hugh Sockett (1990) defines *professionalism* as describing the quality of practice, that is, "conduct within an occupation—how members integrate their obligations with their knowledge and skill in a context of collegiality and contractual and ethical relations with clients" (226).

*"I asked not my Heart what it
could, but what it ought to do."*

—ABIGAIL ADAMS

PLACES OF CONSCIENCE



While professions are about expertise, specialized knowledge, intellect, and technical skill, they are also about deep and abiding values. Medicine, for example, pursues health and wellness; the law, due process and justice; and engineering, safety of life, structure, and manufactured goods.

Teaching is no exception in its service to values. Indeed, because of the profoundly political and moral purposes of education, the teaching profession ranks almost at the top of all professions in the relative importance of its value roots. Until now, however, neither teacher education programs nor individual faculty have socialized teacher candidates to the values of the profession in the same way or to the same degree as have the well-established professions. Throughout their preparation programs, for example, lawyers learn to value justice and how to think like lawyers, doctors to value human life and the problem-finding and -solving skills of diagnosis, and architects to appreciate and use the principles of design balanced by the necessities of engineering. One seldom finds analogous themes in the preparation of teachers beyond banalities such as "liking children."

When education units undertake their preparation responsibilities, they cannot avoid the intrinsic connection of values with the purposes and processes of the education profession. Any teacher education unit striving for quality, therefore, collectively recognizes the centrality of value issues, struggles with them, and makes and acts on the resulting commitments.

The values circumscribing and informing the preparation of education professionals establish the frames within which professional conscience comes into play. Conscience is not segmented, its formation or expression simply a "strand" in each program curriculum or a solitary characteristic of a curricular unit. Conscience is a phenomenon far more pervasive. Philosopher Thomas Green (1984) persuasively suggested the development of conscience involves the orchestration of a number of different "voices" including those of craft, membership, sacrifice, memory, and imagination.

Understood in this way, the exercise of professional conscience is a far richer and more demanding obligation than the assertion of an injunction to “be conscientious.” Green’s rich formulation reinforces the sense of the complexity and pervasiveness of what we believe quality requires.

What, then, can we say of the values that ought to inform the exercise of conscience for the teaching profession? The centrality of value considerations to the pursuit of quality in professional education leads us to endorse Kenneth Sirotnik’s (1990) synthesis of the five ethical foundations for teaching:

- ◆ The commitment to nurturing and exercising the capability for human *inquiry*. Inquiry is the end of learning, but it is also its means, its very process. If we are committed to inquiry, then we will equip our students (so that they may do the same with *theirs*) with the capacity for their own future learning.
- ◆ The commitment to *knowledge* gained from inquiry, that is, what we learn through explanation, interpretation, and understanding, what we make of the information at our disposal. If we are committed to knowledge, we will represent the standards against which learning must be judged.
- ◆ The commitment to *competence*, learning to do and doing things well. Competence is a natural aspiration for human beings; we seek to achieve and reward excellence and success, not failure and mediocrity. But it is also good policy, for without competence society cannot survive. If we are committed to competence, we will demand quality of our students.
- ◆ The commitment to *caring*, to connectedness, to deep relationships based on mutuality, respect, relatedness, receptivity, and trust. Human beings who care, especially in a society dependent upon individuals freely fulfilling their individual responsibilities, appreciate that we are directly and indirectly dependent on one another. The success of teaching is contingent upon the depth of care its practitioners have for all those for whom they are responsible. If we care, we can expect the trust of our clients.
- ◆ The commitment to individual freedom and individual well-being, in sum, to *social justice*. Freedom and well-being are essential in our society. At the same time, humans are manifestly the most dangerous of earth’s creatures. We prize freedom, but also protect against physical, emotional, social, psychological, economic, and political dangers. Our search for well-being balances delicately with our desire for freedom, thus the conception of social justice that, by preserving, protecting, and defending the interests of all *individuals*, also accomplishes the same ends for the larger *community*. If we serve the larger cause of social justice, we continuously reinvent the free society and its noblest aspirations.

We find these themes persuasive and reflected in the best of the units and programs we have been privileged to review and accredit. Acting on these values captures the best of what we should demand of ourselves. These values help define quality in professional education and establish the substantive frames in which our professional ethics and integrity are defined. More importantly, these themes are embedded in NCATE's standards in the form that they now take.

CONSCIENCE AS A SUBTEXT IN NCATE'S STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

Our belief in the importance of professional conscience in the achievement of quality and of units being places where conscience must be vigorously exercised arises from two considerations. The concept of professional conscience underpins the NCATE standards and criteria for compliance as unstated rationale, and conscience transcends the standards as the deeper purpose guiding all our particular roles and responsibilities in the education profession.

The dependence of NCATE's standards and criteria for compliance on value commitments to inquiry and knowledge are more extensively treated in the following section on intellectual vitality. The primacy of the "ethics" of inquiry and knowledge, however, resides in their inclusion in each of the five groups of standards. Knowledge, inquiry, research, scholarship, and evaluation are prized throughout.

The concern for competence is particularly manifest in the two groups of standards focusing on students and faculty. It is also distinctly visible in the knowledge base standards and in those pertaining to the relationship to the world of practice.

The value commitments to caring and social justice may, at first, appear less pervasive, less fully articulated in the standards, but important elements are clearly present. They are in the unit's obligations to help and assist students, especially those having difficulty or those who are underprepared. They are in the emphases on diverse placements; on cultural diversity, pluralism, and global perspectives in program, students, and faculty; in the injunction on behalf of due process for both students and faculty; and in the provisions for full faculty participation in the design, development, and governance of program and policy.

The values, norms, and dispositions that define the domains and judgments of professional conscience give life, meaning, and direction to NCATE's standards. For example, units promote cultural diversity, not because it is imbedded in the standards, but because we professionally believe in diversity and recognize the match between that belief and the external reality of the publics we serve. We inquire and build on knowledge, not because the standards ask it of us, but because we are professionally

committed to it. We display congruence between our prescriptions and our practices, not because Standard I-B obliges us to, but because we know that without that kind of integrity we will not generate the trust of our students, our practitioner clients, and the public. Absent trust, credibility fades and effectiveness is compromised. Even if there were no NCATE, we would hope we would be moved by such concerns. Through the mechanism of NCATE, however, we make promises to the public and to ourselves as a profession that we will keep.

*“The vitality of thought is in
adventure. Ideas won’t keep. Something
must be done about them. When the idea
is new, its custodians have fervor, live
for it, and, if need be, die for it.”*

—ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

INTELLECTUAL VITALITY



A major test of quality is the intellectual vitality of those engaged in the educational enterprise. In programs for the preparation of school personnel, this vitality is found in the actions of faculty, administrators, cooperating teachers, student teacher supervisors, and the teacher candidates themselves.

Intellectual vitality includes constant questioning of what one is doing and of what is occurring within the system of which one is a part. It requires investigation of current practices, both those that are effective and those that are problematic. It demands reflection about the future and how to make it better. Intellectually vital units embrace the challenge of the potential for reform rather than accept the status quo.

Intellectual vitality is characterized by a willingness to find and investigate dilemmas and explore options. The driving force is care about students and their schools. The challenge to teach all students effectively, for example, is paramount. Faculty extend the settings for their work beyond the schools from which most students go on to college. They are challenged to determine how to deliver better education to students in drug-infested communities, in poverty belts, from homeless families, from non-English-speaking communities, and from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Within professional education units, faculty actively engage in dialogue about the content of instructional programs. Regular and systematic reviews lead to revisions of courses, field experiences, and structures for preparing teachers.

At the same time, active inquirers look to the past for what can be learned and what should be valued. The study of research in one’s specific field and teacher education in general provides essential background for understanding the realities of schools, communities, and universities. All faculty, including cooperating teachers and administrators, model inquiry and recognize questions or dilemmas that need further

investigation. They realize when teaching strategies are not working and are able to suggest or implement corrective measures. They are avid readers of professional journals and books, able to reflect on their own teaching, and able to help others do the same. Questioning of their own and others' actions, writings, and philosophies is valued and encouraged.

Intellectual communities respect conflict and risk taking. Whereas everyone never agrees on all topics and issues, an intellectually active community encourages its members to take risks, to propose and try new or different ways of looking at situations and ideas. Conflict over ideas and possible actions may result, but the ensuing dialogue helps participants become more articulate in their thoughts and arguments. Such dialogue is likely to lead to further investigation of the literature. New research questions may evolve. New and better ways of improving the teaching and learning process may result. An important aspect of the process, however, is respect for the range of views, especially when they are built on defensible knowledge bases. Rather than considering as irritants those who dare to question what is happening, colleagues listen and consider. Questions stimulate dialogue, thus helping all of us think about current practice.

Ambiguity is inherent in the field of education. Intellectual vitality not only tolerates ambiguity; it *fosters* it. Grappling with the unknown and the difficult to understand is an intellectual challenge worth time and effort. In intellectually vital units, teacher candidates evolve an understanding of the complexity of teaching. Complexity arises in part from the nested layers of clients and contexts characterizing the work of teaching. This complexity means single, simple answers to the challenges in education do not exist. Quality units, however, are not intimidated by a lack of answers. They are motivated to plumb the various dimensions of educational issues and explore ways of dealing with the challenges.

Intellectual vitality is reflected in the research of faculty and candidates. Inquiry, however, too often is viewed as synonymous with basic research. Intellectually vital units (and the institutions of which they are a part) espouse broad definitions of scholarship (Boyer 1990). Knowledge integration, knowledge application, and teaching are bona fide scholarly activities at least equal in importance to "knowledge production" as many academics define research. Interpreting research into meaningful action in schools is a crucial component of our professional work. Working in schools requires one to reflect on current practices and to purposefully explore better options. Looking for supportive and new knowledge to clarify one's thoughts about the profession, instruction, management, etc. is part of inquiry. The capacity to transform knowledge and concepts so that they can be learned by novices to a field of study, thus empowering our students to use information and conceptual schema to adapt to and/or create new realities, is among the highest forms of scholarship.

An important part of scholarship is capturing ideas (on paper or electronic media) so that they can be shared with others. This sharing includes presentations at meetings at which research findings are discussed. However, knowledge can be lost if it is not also recorded as part of a permanent record. Professional writing and recording thus manifest intellectual vitality within the unit. Some institutions define this need so narrowly, however, that it is interpreted as "publish or perish." We view this as too narrow an interpretation of the necessity for scholarship.

Teaching also reflects intellectual vitality. Teaching is complex. No simple recipes guide a teacher in all situations, as students and communities vary greatly in their needs. Utilizing skills and knowledge from sociology, anthropology, and psychology, to cite just three fields, educators draw on diverse academic resources to function effectively in the nation's schools. In addition, intuition, reasoning, problem solving, and sound judgment are part of the repertoire of the effective teacher. The abilities to recognize new demands, to seek options, and to respond appropriately are necessary in school settings.

Teaching is thus a reflective activity, conceptual rather than mechanical. It demands a clear and enthusiastic embracing of the concept of lifelong learning. The art of teaching can only be taught effectively to others by individuals who are themselves curious, inquiring people. It is for this reason, rather than some mechanistic acceptance of the "research" mission of higher education, that education units must be places of intellectual vitality. Inquiry cannot be just an occasional foray into research by some faculty, but must be a part of the everyday interactions among all faculty and students of a unit.

Intellectual vitality is reflected in the ways by which the teaching of faculty and teacher candidates is assessed. The careful observer does not depend solely on pencil-and-paper instruments to determine whether effective teaching is taking place. Critical factors include how teachers value students and their cultural backgrounds, how they value learning and knowledge. But the expected values are exemplified in behaviors that can be observed, described, sometimes counted, and analyzed. Assessment of faculty and teacher candidates' teaching is not limited to quantitative measures, of course; intuition and judgment are honored as well.

Evaluations of teaching and of programs provide valuable feedback for improving our work. Faculty receptiveness to these insights is an indication of how much they value intellectual vitality, which informs and stimulates discussions among faculty; provides alterations in courses, field experiences, and teaching; and precipitates scholarly inquiry. As we question contributions to the preparation of school personnel within the common framework of the unit, we also ask what difference our work makes to the profession at large and to the quality of life for students and teachers in schools.

Finally, intellectual vitality includes paying attention to the aesthetics of our work. Form and beauty are not frills to be ignored in the quest for quality in education. *Why should* America's corporate lobbies and offices be so far more aesthetically pleasing than school classrooms or faculty offices. Teaching also reflects aesthetic qualities through imagination and excitement, and through an awareness of literature and experience beyond that generated by our own professional colleagues. Intellectual vitality is reflected in aesthetic forms that are likely to expand visions of the profession.

INTELLECTUAL VITALITY AS A SUBTEXT IN NCATE'S STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

The concept of intellectual vitality suffuses NCATE's standards and criteria for compliance. The knowledge base standards require the professional education unit to ensure that its programs have a conceptual framework or model, that program content be coherent, and that faculty in the unit collaborate with each other, with general studies faculty, and with specialty studies faculty in the design and delivery of programs. When intellectual vitality pervades a professional education unit, these concerns are most likely being addressed. To carry them out effectively, faculty talk about the education of school personnel with faculty in other units of the university, practitioners in schools, candidates in programs, and each other. Participants in the dialogue read the professional literature, discuss it, argue about it, and try to reach consensus about the conceptual framework for their own professional and specialty cores. Libraries and curriculum laboratories become centers for broadly defined learning and scholarship.

As units address the knowledge base standards, their experiences challenge the idea that discussion of these matters, by itself, always increases commonality of understanding or agreement. The standard on design of the curriculum, for example, is difficult despite the excellent source materials that have been published in recent years (Wittrock 1986; Richardson-Koehler 1987; Gideonse 1989; Reynolds 1989; Houston 1990; Jackson 1992). The primary reason that this standard has a high rate of failure is that it demands more of units, in terms of continuing reflection, decision, and change, than any other standard.

We are persuaded that the reason units have difficulty in the knowledge base area is not due to a lack of good information on the issue. Rather, the primary difficulties are in engagement, interpretation, and internalization of its implications by unit faculty. Many units have been operating teacher education programs for decades without a knowledge base—if it is defined as a core set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that guide all teacher education efforts in the unit. Even if a more “forgiving” definition is used, one calling for knowledge bases within each program area in the unit,

many extant programs will fail the test. And, if a unit takes seriously the knowledge base standards and sets out to determine in a collective way the basic beliefs and values that undergird teacher education, it produces the types of conceptual disagreements and arguments that university faculty often bury under the rug of academic freedom.

So much has been written elsewhere about definitions and conceptualizations of a knowledge base that it need not be repeated here. Too many units engage in "development of a knowledge base" solely for the purpose of convincing an NCATE Board of Examiners team that the unit meets these standards. We are convinced that a unit cannot prepare to meet the knowledge base standards in isolation from the ordinary intellectual discourse that should occur in a unit.

The continuous discussion of professional knowledge base issues in a unit must be combined with attention to the instructional integrity of the unit itself. The standard on delivery of curriculum calls for faculty members to learn and apply what is known about pedagogy, and to reflect the unit's model systematically in their own teaching. Professional education faculty, in other words, are students not only of pedagogy in P-12 schools, but also of pedagogy in professional education. If a unit attends to the application of the shared knowledge base in its own programs, then instruction will vary systematically, but not just for the sake of variety. Faculty, having engaged in ongoing discussion of the best way to prepare education professionals, will want to assure themselves that the considerable variety of instructional aims and purposes of professional education programs are, in fact, served by the instructionally appropriate strategies required by that variety.

The key, then, to the standard on delivery of curriculum is not "systematic variation" or "consistent superiority," but self-conscious application of the knowledge base in planning the delivery and evaluation of professional education programs. As with the standard on curriculum design, such application and integration is the result of continuous dialogue, not activities undertaken for an NCATE self-study report.

The concept of intellectual vitality is not confined to simply the knowledge base standards *per se*. It underpins all the NCATE standards (to say nothing of the process of reforming the preparation of school personnel in colleges and universities). The standards on the relationship to the world of practice are met, in part, by faculty, teachers, and candidates cooperatively observing schools and classrooms and developing research questions for further exploration. Units are obliged to maintain currency on evaluation techniques, conduct evaluation studies, and use the findings to improve programs. Working with schools, units are expected to help advance the goals of the profession and improve the profession's capacity to delivery quality schooling. All of these require intellectual vitality.

The standards on students demand that the processes for admitting, monitoring progress, advising, and recommending completion be systematically evaluated and improved. A part of intellectual vitality is the critical review of existing procedures and practices.

Faculty standards are replete with expectations for faculty to be intellectually engaged in the profession. The unit must assure that faculty have time to teach effectively and to be involved in other scholarly activity by controlling their teaching load assignments. In addition, the unit must provide faculty development activities that will help faculty, including cooperating teachers, to keep abreast of advances in their fields and to encourage dialogue with colleagues in other colleges and universities through attendance at professional meetings. The unit is expected to evaluate the effectiveness of faculty's teaching, scholarly activity, and service.

Finally, the intellectual vitality of the unit is reflected in its governance structure and its resources. Governance is the instrument that fairly and appropriately invites participation, deliberates, monitors, plans, links, decides, allocates, prioritizes, and administers to achieve the collective end. A unit with intellectual vitality encourages collegial actions and consensus decision-making; it values expertise as a key element in shared leadership among faculty, between them and administrators, with the P-12 schools working with the unit, and with the individuals and institutions providing practicum settings in public and private arenas. The goals and policies of the unit guide the use of resources to ensure programs fulfill their commitments to preparing candidates according to the unit's vision.

A place of intellectual vitality continuously applies the expertise of its faculty and its resources to the thoughtful design, delivery, assessment, and renewal of its programs. Budgetary decisions, especially any necessitated by decline of allocations to a unit, are occasions for engaging the faculty and administration in serious discussion, inquiry, and decision-making that maintains the unit's *vision*, not simply positions, materials, and student enrollment levels. Such a stance and commitment to the application of collegial inquiry—what Robert Browning referred to as “prizing the doubt that low kinds live without”—is natural, continuous, and valued in those units with intellectual vitality.

"Everything is one."

—BARBARA MCCLINTOCK

*"No man is an island, entire
of itself; every man is a
piece of the Continent, a
part of the Main."*

—JOHN DONNE

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY



The third theme in the vision of quality is conceptualizing and building the professional community for teacher education. What do we mean by community? Which constituent elements are to be embraced by the concept? What instruments and approaches give promise of realizing its benefits fully?

By community we mean our recognition of relatedness, of dependency, of worth, of shared resolve and aspiration. We mean a relationship of mutual benefit, of almost automatic consultation and deliberation, of a common stake. Community is achieved among those elements whose engagement, either actually or representationally, is assured as a matter of course, both by structure and by the "settings of the automatic pilots" of the individual professionals involved regardless of their primary affiliation.

The professional community engaged in the preparation of educators includes not only professors in education units but also educators in preschool through grade twelve settings, educational policymakers, higher education administrators, professors in the academic specializations, and the teacher candidates themselves. Together they influence the quality of the future teaching force. Practitioners supervise internships and other field experiences and participate on advisory boards to the unit. National, state, and local policymakers and administrators affect the conditions in which we work. Professors of mathematics, physics, history, psychology, and literature, to name a few, provide the general education underpinnings for professional education, the subject matter content, and model, one way or another, the teaching of their specialties. Candidates are active participants in their own learning about how to be members of this professional community.

This professional collective, with its varied membership, creates schools that are vibrant centers of learning, challenging and provocative communities that foster the education and growth of all students attending them. Given differences in work settings, audiences, and daily tasks of the members of the professional community, this larger goal of educating all students may sometimes be obscured. But the work of the many elements of the larger education profession is inextricably linked; it is work in which all participants view themselves as partners.

While the overarching goal of teaching's professional community is to maintain and continuously improve high-functioning schools, the community is also collectively responsible for preparing the educators who will staff those schools. It would be unconscionable for teacher educators to design a vision for teacher education in isolation from the larger aim. Other partners in delivering the vision—practitioners, candidate teachers, and colleagues in other parts of the academy—have valuable insights to contribute to the creative team from development through implementation and evaluation. Otherwise, anarchy and failure are predicted, for once a section of the web is disengaged, the vision of quality is disrupted.

It is easy to call for collaboration, but much harder to make it work. Wisniewski and Ducharme (1989) observe:

Collaboration is a much used and abused word. Unexamined, it suggests that whatever tasks are to be done can be done equally by all participants. It has often been a catch-word for education professors bringing their ideas to schools and telling teachers what to do. We mean neither an unthinking acceptance of the view that all partners in an activity are equally fit to do all things, nor an elitist view that one group has wisdom and experience superior to the other. We posit an ideal yet to be realized: collaboration that capitalizes on the research and experience of the best professors in the academy and on the expertise and experience of the best teachers in the schools, recognizing that valuable attributes reside in both places. (151)

The above approach provides opportunity for a wide range of activities honoring the skills, knowledge, and talents of individuals from both higher education and P-12 education in collaborative, complementary ways.

In a professional community, an education unit and the schools with which it collaborates *share* a vision about teacher preparation and development. The leadership and those directly involved in day-to-day collaborative efforts agree on assumptions about teaching and learning, goals for education, and the research and knowledge that inform both teacher education and the schools. Issues important to the education unit are also important to the schools, and vice versa; they are partners in the continuum of professional growth, from the earliest preparation of teacher candidates through the continued development of experienced professionals. Above all, teacher

education units and their collaborating schools engage in a common enterprise: the improvement of learning opportunities for all the individuals with whom they work—children, teachers, and parents.

Institutional collaboration requires time so that institutions and individuals can learn about each other, their unique strengths and needs, the contexts in which they operate, and their shared assumptions and values. Collaboration also requires trust and understanding. Individuals within the institutions make long-term commitments to collaborative efforts, for ultimately it is the commitment and work of individuals that result in permanent ties and understandings among the institutions.

In a true community effort, higher education faculty view schools as more than mere sites for student-teacher placement; and practitioners view teacher education programs as more than mere sources of theory. The schools are natural centers for professional inquiry, teachers co-researchers with professors, and professors active contributors to the knowledge of the world of practice. Professors and teachers see themselves as mutually valued contributors to personnel and program development, and to the accomplishment of shared purposes.

This assumption of collective responsibility generates in both schools and education units a need for data and information, whose ultimate purpose is better-prepared educators and enhanced experiences for learners. To these ends, participants gather information and data about collaborative efforts, thus contributing to the shared vision. The participants establish clear and appropriate agendas, so that all parties understand what the collaborative relationship is about and how it will be achieved.

A professional community also addresses the inequalities that affect the active participation of its members. Current school structure constrains the participation of practitioners, for example. Whereas professors control their schedules, most teachers do not; but working together we can overcome teachers' lack of autonomy and logistical support that impedes their full participation.

Attending to the professional community is not solely a matter of achieving effective interface with practitioners. Two delicate but vital requirements exist within the higher education institution itself. First is the need to interface with the arts and sciences faculty in program conceptualization and implementation where their participation is crucial—general education, subject matter content, and instructional practices associated with that specific content. There is important work, developmental and substantive, to be done with respect to arts and sciences at virtually all institutions of higher education.

Second, what applies to arts and sciences faculty applies equally to faculty *within* professional education units. The modern era, with its propensity to specialization, has created tendencies for distances to develop, even within the teacher education

unit *per se*. The importance of bringing *all* pertinent expertise to bear on matters of program design, implementation, and evaluation, and of maintaining current understandings of emergent professional issues, points to the need, especially in moderate- and larger-size units, to work at maintaining and enhancing professional community *within* the professional education unit.

Leaders demonstrate the importance of collaboration both within the professional community and within and outside the higher education setting, through resource allocation, joint planning, shared goals, and assignment of key personnel. They encourage empowerment of the profession and honor the relationships among the members of the community. They recognize that collaborative partnerships mean shared authority in decision-making, resulting in a loss of some of their autonomy. Effective, and often new, leadership is required.

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY AS A SUBTEXT IN NCATE'S STANDARDS AND CRITERIA

As with the themes of conscience and intellectual vitality, the concept of professional community and its implications suffuse NCATE's standards and criteria for compliance. Relationships among teacher educators, faculty in other units, and practitioners in schools are an essential element of the NCATE redesign conception. Teacher education's purpose and identity emanate from the fundamental task of improving learning opportunities for all learners. When education units see their purpose as derived from the larger collaborative goals, their sense of professional community becomes a crucial element in realizing the goals.

The initiation of honest and open dialogue among the members of the professional community is a necessary beginning. The resulting collegium allows ideas to be shared and tested; options to be explored, adopted, or eliminated; and a vision of quality teacher education to emerge. It is not an easy process. If successful, it is most likely to forge change in what currently exists as teacher education. Involving the various members of the community in the collegium also increases their collective responsibility for implementing the shared vision.

The concept of professional community is central to the application of NCATE's knowledge base standards. Teacher educators are expected to work with practitioners, teacher candidates, and colleagues in other units to determine the conceptual frameworks for the unit's programs. Participation in governance councils, needs assessments, the detailed work of program development, systematic debriefings and other program evaluation activities, and the ongoing work of program implementation are all examples of where collaboration occurs.

After the education unit decides the kind of educator who will complete its programs, it requires the help of all constituent elements of the professional community. Both the academic and the education faculties must contribute to the development of that teacher candidate through their curricula and their modeling of expected outcomes. Teachers and other internship supervisors must support the unit's vision, model expected outcomes, and help the candidate become the educator envisioned by the unit. To guarantee coherence throughout the candidate's preparation requires, at a minimum, the involvement of all these parties, from conceptualization, through implementation of the unit's vision of quality, to evaluation and assessment of the results.

Awareness of professional community is essential to meeting the standards on the relationship to the world of practice, because a candidate's experiences in the field must support the vision articulated in the program model. Effective teacher educators select sites systematically, emphasizing a common vision of teaching and learning between themselves and those in the sites. Geographical proximity is certainly a criterion for site selection, but diversity, potential for change and growth, and match to programmatic design and intent are more important. Within sites, teacher education faculty work with practitioners to model the goals, behaviors, and values of the teacher education unit. Effective units select sites and personnel purposefully and withdraw from sites and placements that prove inappropriate for effective teacher development, student learning, and program goals.

Both education units and schools are expected to invest in the professional development of the educators and sites for field work beyond the traditional orientation and inservice activities characterizing most relationships. Teacher educators, faculty in other units, and practitioners must engage in dialogue about program outcomes and philosophy, about relationships between what is espoused in the preparation programs and what is actually done in classrooms with teacher candidates. They build upon teachers' perceived needs rather than solely on the teacher education agenda. Professional development is part of both sets of institutions' commitment to the knowledge bases that undergird the preparation of educators and the maintenance of sound instructional and school practice. Thus, the development of each site, through collaboration and purposeful professional development, enhances the total teacher education unit while addressing specific issues of the site and the team working with the teacher candidates.

Formal agreements to persevere in collaborating with schools help assure time and the sustained commitment requisite for the relationship to develop and prosper. In the past, extravagant hopes often were vested in partnerships with short, planned lifetimes, often no more than a year. However, projects directed toward such possibilities as institutional change and development cannot succeed in such short time

frames. Inadequate time results in participant disillusionment. Partnerships flounder; some fail. There is no magic, specific time allotment appropriate for all partnerships, but those planning such ventures are expected to think in terms of a continuing relationship, not one that is bound by time constraints.

The standards on students and faculty also are similarly dependent on the concept of professional community. Faculty in the academic areas must know teacher candidates well enough to recommend them for admission to both basic and advanced education programs. Practitioners must be involved in monitoring candidates' progress and making recommendations regarding their ability to perform successfully in classrooms and schools. In fact, NCATE considers those who supervise internships to be members of the professional education faculty. NCATE holds expectations that supervisors as well as professors be qualified to carry out their assignments. Thus the education unit is expected to extend its faculty development activities to the practitioners performing responsibilities in the preparation of education professionals.

Governance structures guarantee the involvement of all the members of the professional community in program conceptualization and decision. They define appropriate leadership roles and help assure the active and meaningful participation of all members or representatives of the extended professional community. Similarly, resources available to the unit are significantly affected by the implications of a fundamental commitment to professional community. For example, the time requirements of collaborative effort across institutions and across professional roles are substantial; but adequate time is critical to the development of an education unit's cohesive vision of program quality. In the final analysis, an institution proclaims its true values in its decisions about expenditures of time, resources, and energy.

Institutions serious about professional community use partnerships, collaboration, and empowerment as driving forces in their development. In a sense, each teacher education unit takes on responsibility defining anew, in its own setting and circumstance, what the teaching profession means, what its constituent elements are, and how these relate to one another. In the current heated-policy climate that surrounds schooling, efforts to address such matters are as important as they are difficult, but any unit that rises to this responsibility will be in hot pursuit of a theme, like those of professional conscience and intellectual vitality, whose impact will touch all five categories of NCATE's standards.

*"He learned that the world is like
an enormous spider web and if you
touch it, however lightly, at any
point, the vibration ripples to the
remotest perimeter..."*

—ROBERT PENN WARREN

CAPTURING THE VISION



We began our quest, whose chronicling this essay is meant to record, firm in the belief that NCATE's implementation of redesign since 1986 contains experiences and understandings on which even greater achievement might come to rest. Accreditation in any field is demanding, expensive, and sometimes cumbersome; teacher education is no exception. And like other fields, serious effort must be undertaken always to diminish the onerous in order that the establishment and maintenance of high standards against which professional performance may be judged remain central in our field of vision.

Drawing from our collective experience as participants in the NCATE process, we found firm evidence to justify our belief. The evidence is not so much in the particulars; in fact, in some respects addressing what to many is a plethora of particulars is one of the central needs still facing NCATE. The evidence, instead, lies in the ability to see and articulate three great, unifying, holistic themes that undergird and interweave throughout the eighteen standards and ninety-four criteria for compliance. Quality for teacher education, as indeed for all professional fields, means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; to recognize quality is to have to make a professional judgment, to seek holistic assessments of essence, always looking for interlinkages, for the webbing that ties together what would otherwise be disparate elements.

In this essay we expressed three fundamental themes we believe implicitly underlay the formulation of the NCATE redesign standards. We have seen these themes in the strongest of the teacher education units presenting themselves for review since 1986. Professional conscience speaks to the central purposes of schooling and teaching, and to our obligations as educators to society. Intellectual vitality speaks simultaneously to the sources of our expertise and to the model of what successful teaching and learning are all about. Defining and empowering the larger professional

community ultimately responsible for conceptualizing and operating teacher education programs remains a matter of central importance.

Our conversations together over the past year have deepened our conviction that seeking out review by one's peers in the context of national accreditation should be seen less in terms of the potential benefit to the institution and more as a *contribution* units make to the concept of profession. Under that view, institutions that do not make the commitment to participate in NCATE are, in effect, saying they choose *not* to make their contributions to profession. We believe each should expect to be held morally accountable to the rest of us for their decision. With due allowance for the social utility of different drummers, professional identity and professional performance ultimately are achievable only through collaboration and cohesion.

Finally, we are convinced that units living the three themes deeply will not have difficulty meeting NCATE's standards. Furthermore, any unit doing so, will experience getting ready for NCATE a relatively straightforward and simple proposition *because it will have already done, and continue to be doing, all the things it needs to do*. All that will remain is ordering files, making copies, and writing a report that provides examiners and the accreditation board with the road map needed to make an affirmative judgment.

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