

**NCATE Standards:
Restructuring Teacher Education**

By Kenneth D. Moore, Scott Hopkins, and Richard Tullis

The spirit of reform in education continues to thrive. The concerns described in *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) and reflected by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) (1985), the Holmes Group (1986), and the Carnegie Forum (1986) have permeated higher education institutions responsible for preparing teachers.

The movement toward excellence in public education has resulted in demands for a nationally recognized set of standards which can be used to judge teacher education programs. The accreditation agency which has emerged as the primary accrediting agency for professional teacher education programs is the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

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NCATE emerged as an organization following a 1951 Conference on Accrediting attended by representatives of AACTE, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (Roames, 1987). However, AACTE proved to be the dominant force in NCATE, with the earliest NCATE accreditation standards being based upon the accreditation standards

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adopted by AACTE in 1951. These standards were revised and expanded in 1955, 1957, and 1960.

In 1965, NCATE approved a new constitution which gave AACTE more representation on the NCATE Council and delegated the responsibility for adopting new NCATE Standards to AACTE. The Evaluative Criteria Study Committee (ECSC) of AACTE began its task in 1966 (ECSC, 1967) and the new standards were adopted in January, 1970. These original standards had five areas and were later expanded to six. As a result of the dominating influence of AACTE, the National Education Association (NEA) indicated that its involvement and support of NCATE would be terminated unless parity between NEA and AACTE was established. In response, NCATE began to develop more autonomy and added practitioners and students to the visitation teams.

AACTE realized that the existing standards were ambiguous and unevenly applied by the visitation teams, that visitation teams were too large and expensive, and that the existing standards ignored essential factors in the success of a teacher education program. Therefore, AACTE told NCATE in 1978 that unless major changes were made within five years, AACTE would push for a new voluntary accrediting agency (Gollnick & Kunkel, 1986). As a result, an NCATE redesign process was implemented. Concerns immediately began to emerge regarding the value of NCATE membership. This was exacerbated by criteria which could have serious consequences for institutions. One such example, which would have been financially unfeasible, was a 12-to-1 faculty-student ratio in basic programs. NCATE indicated its willingness to be responsive to its constituency and deleted this requirement. Eventually, guidelines for establishing accreditation standards were established in 1983 and a new organizational structure was approved in 1986. The new organization united teacher educators, practitioners, state governments and policy makers, and specialty associations into one group to become the umbrella for approval of teacher education programs. This uniting of groups was the first attempt to bring significant regulatory and stimulatory incentives to teacher education and the teaching profession (Kunkel, 1985).

In 1983, NCATE adopted six principles to direct its redesign. These principles required that accreditation be given to the unit instead of programs, introduced a concept of continued accreditation, required closer articulation between state approval and NCATE accreditation, required smaller visitation teams consisting of highly trained members of a new NCATE Board of Examiners (BOE), limited the categories to five, and changed the method of reporting the status of institutions published in the NCATE annual list. Professional organizations which had not been heavily involved, such as the NEA and CCSSO, began to offer support to the concept, and were joined by specialty organizations such as the National Council for the Social Studies and the National Council of Teachers of English (Gollnick & Kunkel, 1986).

Five categories and 18 standards were developed to be sufficiently descriptive

for valid evaluation, but still allow institutions to develop teacher education programs consistent with the institution's mission. The five categories, with specific standards under each category, were: Knowledge Base for Professional Education; Relationship to the World of Practice; Students; Faculty; and Governance and Resources (NCATE, 1987). The previous category of Governance closely paralleled the new category of Governance. Conversely, the previous category of Curricula was very different from the two categories of Knowledge Base for Professional Education and Relationship to the World of Practice (Roth, 1987). Key elements (NCATE, 1987) of these standards are:

1. Current research about effective teaching in education courses.
2. Strong Background in liberal arts and general studies.
3. Rigorous academic studies in area of expertise.
4. Minimum of 10 weeks of student teaching.
5. Graduates followed into the first year of practice.
6. Practitioners assist in program development.
7. Testing to monitor basic skills.
8. 2.5 GPA required for admission to program.
9. Documentation of competencies upon program completion.
10. Ratio of faculty to students for clinical and field-based teaching experiences.
11. Total institution responsible for high quality of professional education.

To obtain NCATE Accreditation, a unit would provide documentation that its professional teacher education program was meeting the Standards through an on-site visit, obtain positive recommendations from the visiting team, and finally receive approval by the Unit Accreditation Board.

Much has been written about the redesign of the NCATE Accreditation process (Jacobson, 1985; Lilly, 1983; Moore, 1982; Scannell, 1983; and Tom, 1987) and how uniform standards would strengthen the profession as well as the image of teacher education. However, very little concern has been expressed about those who are most responsible for implementing any program changes to meet NCATE Standards—the professional teacher education faculty. In order for NCATE Standards to accomplish their designed function, the faculty members charged with implementing the program must be committed to developing a teacher education program which is consistent with these standards. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine teacher educators' view of the "ideal" and "real" practicability of the new NCATE Standards as guidelines for the establishment of excellence in teacher preparation. Additionally, the study was designed to determine educators' perceptions of the relative value of the five categories of NCATE Standards as program guidelines.

Procedures

Instrumentation

There were no instruments available which had sufficient reliability and validity for the purposes of the study, so the Teacher Inventory of Program Standards (TIPS) was developed. In order not to contaminate the results by using the actual NCATE Standards, which most likely would have been recognized by many respondents, and thus their responses would have been what they thought should have been their perceptions (Gay, 1989), the TIPS was developed so that the statements paraphrased these standards.

The initial step in the development of the TIPS involved a careful analysis of the 18 NCATE standards, with each standard being paraphrased by a committee very familiar with the Standards. Expert judge validity was provided by mailing these statements to fellow teacher educators who were members of the NCATE Steering Committees at their respective institutions. The written comments were used to improve the relationship between the NCATE Standards and the 18 statements in the TIPS. Once the TIPS was further modified, it was sent to 100 randomly selected BOE members from a list supplied by NCATE. Each BOE member was asked to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 how closely the numbered statement came to meeting the spirit of the similarly numbered NCATE Standard and to provide written comments on the wording. The BOE members' mean responses to the 18 TIPS statements ranged from 4.20 to 4.69. After a careful examination of the mean values and written comments, it was determined that the instrument was valid.

The TIPS reliability was determined through the use of the Kuder-Richardson Test of Reliability using the KR-20 procedure in the SPSS-X (SPSS-X, 1988) Statistical Package. This yielded a reliability coefficient of .87.

Once the TIPS was determined to be valid and reliable, the final form was constructed. In its final form, the TIPS consists of 18 statements with an "ideal" response section and a "real" response section. Both response sections form a continuum of from one to five, whereby the respondent can indicate whether the statement is perceived as being of very little importance, little importance, somewhat important, or extremely important in a real and in an ideal situation. Provisions are also made through the addition of a section containing a series of questions to obtain desired demographic information. Finally, a third section asks the respondents to rank the five standard categories with respect to their importance to a successful teacher education program.

The final form of the TIPS, along with a self-addressed envelope, was mailed to a national random sample of 834 educators. The mailing list of educators was obtained by getting a random list of approximately one-third of the active members

of the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) who were identified as working in higher education. According to Watts (1989) and Roth (1989), Texas, Virginia, and California have state guidelines or regulations which appear to be in opposition to NCATE Standards. Therefore, educators from these three states were eliminated from the sample to avoid the possible negative impact of the responses.

The study mailing list was sorted by zip code and an identification number was assigned to each TIPS for use in a follow-up and in data analysis. The TIPS was mailed to the ATE members in February, 1990. After six weeks, those subjects who failed to return the TIPS were sent a follow-up card.

Data Collection

Returns were received from 397 teacher educators, which represented 48 percent of the sample. An analysis of the returns with regard to distribution within the sample revealed that most respondents were higher education representatives (79%). Further analysis of the demographic data of the higher education respondent returns indicated that the returns were fairly evenly distributed with respect to faculty rank, primary assignment (faculty versus administrative), teaching assignment (undergraduate versus graduate), and type of institution (public versus private). Fifty-nine respondents (14.9%) were not in higher education; but were representative of public, private, and parochial schools, and state or federal agencies.

Since the ATE membership consists of approximately 75 percent higher education and 25 percent non higher education educators, the returns were judged to be fairly representative of the total ATE membership. Thus, the return responses were judged to reflect the views of the ATE membership. Moreover, inasmuch as the returns were representative of the total ATE membership, the fact that 52 percent of the sample failed to respond was not judged to be a serious limitation to the conclusions reached.

Analysis and Results

T-tests for correlated means were used to test for a statistical significant difference between respondents' "ideal" and "real" perceptions of the NCATE Standards as guidelines for judging the excellence of teacher education programs and units. The means, standard deviations, and t-values that resulted from an analysis of the educators' "ideal" and "real" perceptions of the standard statements as guidelines are presented in Table 1. An inspection of the t-values reveals that the differences in means were statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) on all 18 statements. A closer inspection of the ideal means presented in Table 1 reveals that all values were greater than 4.30. These findings suggest that ideally the educators view the standards as being viable guidelines for judging the quality of a teacher education program. However, an examination of the real means reveals that they were all below 3.91, which suggest that in reality the standards are difficult to implement and

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Table 1
Standard Statements and Comparisons Between Ideal
and Real Practicability of Standards as Guidelines

Teacher Inventory of Program Standards Statement	Ideal ^a Mean (N=397)	Real ^a Mean (N=397)	Diff ^b (I-R)	t Value
1. Teacher education programs are based on essential knowledge and are designed using consistent research findings to provide congruence between stated expectations and outcomes.	4.59 (.20)	3.45 (.47)	1.14 (7.5)	23.02*
2. The curriculum design, instruction, and evaluation of teacher education programs is exemplary and knowledge bases and best professional practice are reflected in courses offered.	4.71 (.19)	3.35 (.42)	1.36 (6)	25.67*
3. The general education coursework for teacher education students provides an integrated program with both breadth and depth of study.	4.54 (.20)	3.51 (.44)	1.02 (11)	17.74*
4. Completion of coursework comprising the major fields of study results in students' mastery of their field(s) of specialization.	4.50 (.21)	3.61 (.48)	.89 (12.5)	16.67*
5. Professional education coursework of teacher education programs adequately prepares students for careers as successful teachers.	4.63 (.19)	3.74 (.39)	.89 (12.5)	17.19*
6. Field-based and clinical teacher education program experiences prepare students to work effectively in specific education roles.	4.64 (.20)	3.90 (.40)	.74 (16)	16.26*

Table 1 - continued

Teacher Inventory of Program Standards Statement	Ideal ^a Mean (N=397)	Real ^a Mean (N=397)	Diff ^b (I-R)	t Value
7. Program quality is ascertained through use of follow-up studies and the provision of assistance during the first year of teaching.	4.31 (.21)	2.66 (.78)	2.39 (1)	22.41*
8. Positive working relationships with public schools promote effective preparation of professional educators and help advance goals of the profession.	4.66 (.19)	3.81 (.43)	.85 (14)	16.73*
9. Admission procedures recruit quality candidates representing a culturally diverse population.	4.41 (.20)	2.91 (.74)	1.50 (4)	23.43*
10. Teacher education students' progress is monitored throughout their professional education program.	4.55 (.18)	3.73 (.39)	.82 (15)	14.09*
11. Teacher education students have access to systematic academic and professional advising services.	4.55 (.17)	3.84 (.41)	.71 (17)	13.42*
12. The competence of teacher education students is assessed prior to licensure/certification.	4.47 (.19)	3.80 (.40)	.67 (18)	12.03*
13. Professional teacher education faculty are qualified and reflect cultural diversity.	4.57 (.16)	3.43 (.51)	1.14 (7.5)	18.85*
14. Professional teacher education faculty have opportunities for teaching, scholarship, and service.	4.59 (.17)	3.56 (.45)	1.03 (9.5)	16.85*

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Table 1 - continued

Teacher Inventory of Program Standards Statement	Ideal ^a Mean (N=397)	Real ^b Mean (N=397)	Diff ^b (I-R)	t Value
15. Professional teacher education faculty participate in systematic faculty development.	4.47 (.18)	3.02 (.50)	1.45 (5)	22.27*
16. The teacher education faculty evaluation system is designed to improve teaching, scholarly activities, and service.	4.40 (.21)	2.82 (.80)	1.58 (3)	22.39*
17. Professional teacher education programs are organized, unified, and coordinated to fulfill the institutional mission.	4.43 (.21)	3.40 (.43)	1.03 (9.5)	17.42*
18. Professional teacher education programs are provided resources in the areas of personnel, funding, physical facilities, library, equipment, materials, and supplies to fulfill their mission and offer quality programs.	4.67 (.20)	2.87 (.39)	1.80 (2)	25.82*

*Standard deviations are in parentheses.
^bRank order of differences are in parentheses.
*Significant at .01.

**Table 2
Friedman Mean Ranking of Standards Categories**

<u>Category</u>	<u>Mean Ranking</u>	<u>Chi Square</u>
Knowledge Bases for Professional Education	2.57	
Relationship to World of Practice	2.77	
Students	2.69	288.19*
Faculty	2.68	
Governance and Resources	4.29	

* Significant at .01 level.

use as guidelines. The relatively low mean of the real scale for several TIPS items further suggests that institutions are having difficulty with the practical application of some of the standards.

Inspection of the individual means for each statement on the real scale indicates that institutions are having the most difficulty (difference greater than 1.5) in using follow-up studies and the provision of first-year teacher assistance in ascertaining program quality (item 7), recruiting minority candidates (item 9), implementing faculty evaluation system (item 16), and obtaining the necessary resources and personnel to offer quality programs (item 18).

The Friedman (SPSS-X, 1988) mean respondent rankings of the five standard categories are presented in Table 2. The chi-square differences in rankings was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). An examination of the mean rankings shows that there was little discrimination among the rankings of categories 1 through 4. However, the category "Knowledge Bases for Professional Education" tended to be viewed as being most important. There was agreement, however, that the category "Governance and Resources" was the least important.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate teacher educators recognize the quality that NCATE Standards would bring to a teacher education program as indicated by the high rating of the TIPS statements in an "ideal" situation. Contrastingly, they also recognize that many of their own programs did not meet NCATE Standards at the time of this study, as indicated by the significantly lower rating of the TIPS statements in a "real" situation. The hallmark of NCATE Standards is that the locus of control must rest with those responsible for teacher education, the teacher educators. Teacher educators must focus attention on changing the fundamental aspects of teacher education programs of study, as well as institutional commitment to teacher education.

The underlying challenge for excellence in teacher preparation should be to restructure programs to better meet external standards such as those developed by NCATE. Perhaps teacher education needs to be reorganized or totally revamped as advocated by Goodlad (1990). Teacher educators should systematically evaluate all program aspects and establish greater unity through team building of a common goal of quality assessment. The surest and most logical way of accomplishing this task is by meeting external criteria that are consistently applied and viable for the continued improvement of teacher education.

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