

Chapter 11

The Online Exhibit Room: Complement to NCATE Accreditation

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ABSTRACT

National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) reviews offers a serious challenge for many educational institutions. The educational program must provide, through the Internet, documentation for the six NCATE standards. What should be included, when should the process begin, and how is it accomplished? This chapter will provide detailed development of Americans with Disability Act compliant Web (Section 508) sites, detail technical construction of Web sites for an online exhibit room, and examine features such as Adobe Flash animation and appropriate online databases. This chapter gives special attention to the construction of sites that welcome prospective students, highlight the cultural diversity of its campus/institution, and provide relevant information quickly to any site visitors. This chapter represents the best ideals and practices of NCATE-accredited Web sites, and will effectively instruct teacher education candidates and instructors in appropriate electronic methods.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will provide detailed development of Americans with Disability Act compliant Web (Section 508) sites, detail technical construction of Web sites for an online exhibit room, and also discuss additional Web features such as Adobe Flash animation and appropriate, accessible online databases. A National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher

Education (NCATE) site should have multiple purposes including marketing and current educational unit news. The authors pay special attention to the development of Web sites that welcome the visitor with culturally diverse, relevant content. This chapter represents the best ideals and practices of NCATE accreditation Web sites, and will effectively instruct teacher education candidates and instructors in appropriate electronic methods.

This chapter will also explore how, with the appropriate application of technology and artifacts,

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a Web page can become an engaging tool that enables visitors to delve into the unique heritage of a region that is directly responsible for shaping university practices and student life. However, these pages need not be limited to the accreditation committee. A Web site is a unique marketing tool to both recruit potential candidates and retain graduate candidates. In circumstances where a campus visit is inadvisable geographically, potential candidates would need only to browse the Web to find the latest news, program, and faculty information.

NCATE BACKGROUND AND REQUIREMENTS

Educational reform in the United States includes transformation of teacher preparation programs as a basic tenet. NCATE is the accrediting body for American teacher education institutions. Founded in 1954, NCATE standards hold that all children can and should learn, and all recent graduates from teacher education programs should be able to professionally assist P-12 children in learning. Teacher education candidates should receive a “foundation of professional and pedagogical knowledge upon which to base instructional decisions” (Professional Standards, 2008, p. 4) regarding teaching issues and curriculum including the areas of diversity, assessment, and up-to-date content knowledge.

Five groups worked together to create the agency: the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC), the National Education Association (NEA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). “NCATE accredits schools, colleges, and departments of education (professional education units) in American colleges and universities as well as

non-university entities that prepare educators” (Professional Standards, 2008, p. 5).

The organizations do not actually certify teachers; they recommend that an individual receive teacher certification from the state agency because the candidate has met the institutional, state, and national criteria for beginning teachers. American teacher education institutions usually operate under both national accreditation guidelines and state regulations. Not all are required to have national accreditation, but they must meet state regulations for recommending candidates to receive teacher certification.

Any school of education can volunteer for NCATE review and accreditation, but all of them must have state accreditation through a board of examiners. In many states, such as Kentucky, NCATE functions as an educational partner. The state educational review board, or the Board of Examiners, conducts joint review with NCATE of that organization. While the state may have separate standards, it must also satisfy basic NCATE accreditation standards.

In an atmosphere of change fueled by the need for national teacher certification, NCATE is evolving to focus more on content preparation and clinical experiences. Schools of education must prepare teachers to work collaboratively among many levels of professionals rather than as isolated teachers. This changing atmosphere also demands national preparation to ensure that teachers receive rigorous, quality preparation in content, pedagogy, and research analysis.

The school’s conceptual framework and continuous assessment plan will set the tone for educational programs. The ways in which the mission and goals of the conceptual framework are actually achieved is of great importance to the NCATE accrediting team. The NCATE standards must be addressed in the conceptual framework and create a full description of all experiences a teacher education candidate will have within a program of study (see Appendix 1: NCATE

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