

COMMISSION FOR TEACHER PREPARATION AND LICENSING

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TO: Deans and Directors of Teacher Education
FROM: Peter L. LoPresti, Executive Secretary *[Signature]*
SUBJECT: Quality Issue in External Assessment

The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing, at its September 1977 meeting, requested that the enclosed paper, "Discrepancy Evaluation and Assessment of Quality", be distributed to the field. While this paper does not necessarily represent the official position of the Commission, its members felt that it would be conducive to generating further discussion of a topic of much interest to the Commission and others involved in the External Assessment process.

Hopefully this paper will provide assistance in clarifying the issue of Quality and its interrelationship with External Assessment.

Enc.

WORK STUDY PROPOSAL
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DISCREPANCY EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY

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INTRODUCTION

The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing is entering into Phase IV of a process termed External Assessment. This process, based upon discrepancy evaluation, has been criticized as not addressing itself to questions of "quality" in teacher preparation. The Commission, since the question of "quality" was first raised, has engaged in a great deal of discussion and effort in attempting to respond to this issue. This paper is an attempt to put the issue into perspective, and will attempt to demonstrate that, contrary to some claims made, discrepancy evaluation does serve to ensure quality.

The Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing became fully operational in August of 1971. In addressing its responsibility to implement the Ryan Act, which required "that within the framework of State control, school districts and teacher preparation institutions will develop programs which realistically meet the needs and resources of pupils, teacher candidates, school districts, and teacher preparation institutions", the Commission moved to an approach which required that institutions develop specific designs for their programs of teacher preparation; these program designs to be reviewed and approved by the Commission, prior to program implementation. An additional requirement was that the Commission, as a regulatory agency, verify program implementation to be in compliance with the approved program design. It was this latter requirement that led to the introduction of discrepancy evaluation into the teacher education field. The question now being raised is whether or not discrepancy evaluation assures quality; a question which indirectly addresses itself to the impact of the Commission's program development approach on quality.

According to Webster, quality is defined as follows:

qual-i-ty: 1a: peculiar and essential character: NATURE
b: an inherent feature: PROPERTY c: CAPACITY,
ROLE 2a: degree of excellence: GRADE b: superiority in kind 3a: social status: RANK b: ARISTOCRACY 4a: a distinguishing attribute: CHARACTERISTIC b: the character in a logical proposition of being affirmative or negative c: archaic: ACCOMPLISHMENT 5a: vividness of hue b: TIMBRE c: the identifying character of a vowel sound determined chiefly by the resonance of the vocal chambers in uttering it.

The variety of definitions of the term "quality" has been compounded by the variety of ways in which the term may be applied, at least in

attempting to respond to questions being initiated regarding teacher education and evaluation. For example, if we were to accept Webster's definition 2a "degree of excellence", we might speak of "the quality of the teacher education program"; however, does this mean the "degree of excellence of the program's graduates? (And if so, as Measured by What?)" ; or, does this mean the degree of excellence in terms of complying to their specified design (and if so, as Measured by What?)?

In attempting to address this issue, this writer has taken the liberty to assume that all well-meaning participants in the dialogue concerning "quality" are using the term to mean "the degree of excellence of both the product and the process". Having made this assumption, this writer will attempt to demonstrate that discrepancy evaluation, and the program development approach utilized by the Commission, does in fact, assure quality, as was the intent of the Commission since its inception. This assurance, however, is dependent upon the integrity of all involved in the application of the approach.

In moving to implement the Ryan Act, the Commission, responding to a perceived requirement that it and Teacher Preparation be accountable to the profession and the public, actively involved professional teacher educators, subject matter experts, and practitioners from the various credential fields. This involvement initially focused upon the identification of those ingredients perceived as essential for inclusion in any program preparing credential candidates. This wide-scale involvement in the identification, (and through the extensive use of public hearings in the evaluation) of required program elements WAS AN INITIAL VENTURE INTO THE ASSURANCE OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHER PREPARATION.

The Commission, in attempting to further ASSURE EXCELLENCE, required the institutions to prepare written program plans designed to meet the broad requirements developed by the profession. Institutions, in the preparation of their program plans, were actively encouraged to address the broad requirements through the specification of definitive program outcomes and procedures reflective of each institution's particular educational philosophy. This encouragement, by the Commission, for "locally" developed programs was reinforced by the following requirements for the preparation of the program plans:

- 1.0. That the institution provide evidence of broad institutional on-going involvement in the design and implementation of the programs, in their adaptation to the broad statewide requirements.
- 2.0. That the institutions provide evidence of having broad on-going involvement of practitioners from the field, and others, including members of the lay community of the local service area, in the design and implementation of their programs, in adapting to the broad statewide requirements.

- 3.0. That the program plans provide specification of objectives and procedures demonstrating that graduates will possess specific skills and knowledges reflective of those ingredients, or guidelines, identified as being essential for candidates entering into the field of public education in California. (It was a basic assumption that active utilization of the populations identified in 1.0 and 2.0 would assure specification of skills, knowledges and procedures of the highest EXCELLENCE possible, in terms of both statewide and individual institutional requirements, constraints, and aspirations.)
- 4.0. That the institution's program plans provide for a comprehensive evaluation system, offering assurance that the program's implementation would be in accordance with the objectives and procedures specified in the design; or that changes to these procedures, and/or objectives, would be made, as dictated by evaluation results, to maintain the standards of excellence aspired to by the institution in meeting the standards established by the Commission.

The Commission, in continuing to be concerned with the questions of EXCELLENCE, or QUALITY, tendered conditional approval to program plans reviewed and considered to be in compliance with the standards established by the field. All institutions granted approval agreed to meet the following general conditions:

1. The institution agrees to provide sufficient and adequate resources; human, material, and financial, to operate the professional preparation program described in the Program Approval Review Document submitted to the Commission.
2. The program, when in operation during the period of this approval, will be maintained at or above the QUALITY LEVEL* indicated in the Program Approval Review Document submitted to the Commission.
3. The institution agrees to subsequent verification of the professional preparation programs and plans, including those elements specified to begin in (date) as described in the program Approval Review Document submitted to the Commission.
4. The institution agrees that any and all programs of preparation will be operated consistent with that described in the Program Approval Review Document submitted to the Commission. Programs not consistent with the Program Approval Review document must have separate Commission approval.
5. The stated objectives, competencies, experiences, and performance criteria presented in your program plan are conditionally accepted at this time. As your plans are implemented, on-going modification and refinement of objectives, competencies, experiences, and performance criteria will be made based upon the results from your evaluation of candidates, graduates, and the total program*

* (Emphasis added)

Earlier this writer had raised the question of "As Measured by What?", in terms of attempting to determine what is meant in using the term quality. It is submitted that the Commission has utilized the Program Approval Review Document (PARD), submitted by each institution, as a measure of the quality of that institution's program; viewing the PARD as the institution's perception as to the "best program design and program the institution could offer." Thus the initial specification of "degree of quality" depended upon the integrity of the institution submitting a program plan for Commission approval.

It is asserted that "discrepancy evaluation", as applied to programs of teacher preparation, does serve to "assure quality" of those programs when the discrepancy is measured or identified against the benchmark of what it is the institution said it would do. This measure of "quality/excellence" is based upon the assumption that:

1. The identification of discrepancies between program implementation and approved program design, represents a difference between the quality of the program, as compared to the degree of quality aspired to in its design of the program,
2. discrepancies are not necessarily "negative"; rather, their identification serves to point out differences existing between program implementation and institutional statements of aspiration to excellence, as contained in the program design. Where the discrepancies, or differences, represent program implementation to a degree less than the level of excellence aspired to, their identification provides the institution with the opportunity to modify their implementation procedures to attain the original level of excellence desired. Where the discrepancies, or differences, represent program implementation in excess of, or equal to, original aspirations of excellence, the institution has the opportunity to modify its program design to reflect this different aspiration.

While discrepancy evaluation represents a conscious effort by the Commission to refrain from imposing external "value" judgments upon local institutions, the Commission does recognize the need for the inclusion of "values" in both the design and evaluation of programs. Requirements by the Commission that the institutions utilize a broad base of populations in their design and on-going implementation of programs constituted Commission encouragement that the institutions provide the opportunity for value input into their programs. The opportunity for additional input of values, or professional judgment, was also provided institutions in terms of the manner in which they desired to evaluate their own programs. This opportunity is expressed through the following example:

Institution A, believing strongly that peer evaluation constitutes the major reliable process for evaluating and improving programs, provides in its institutional evaluation plan for the inclusion of "Recognized Experts". This inclusion represents Institution A's perception of the highest degree of excellence possible, within the constraints of its own available resources, for its program's evaluation plan or design. Given the Commission's general conditions, or expectations, that program implementation would provide for "on-going modification and refinement of objectives, competencies, experiences, and performance criteria..." This utilization of external experts would result in such modification, based upon the value system of those involved. This involvement, however, is based upon the type of values desired by the institution, not a value system imposed by the Commission.

Given that the above occurs, discrepancy evaluation serves to identify whether Institution A, in implementing its evaluation design, has evaluated its program in the manner defined. If there is a discrepancy between the implementation and the design, this represents a difference between the quality of the institution's own evaluation, and the degree of excellence aspired to by that institution. This identification of discrepancy thus requires (a) implementation of the peer evaluation, as designed, or (b) modification of the evaluation design to reflect a different institutional specification of its aspiration for quality in its program evaluation. The discrepancy evaluation is not imposing a value as to whether what is occurring is "good" or "bad"; it merely has pointed out that the institution is not meeting its own specification of excellence. This concept, of course, is not limited to the evaluation aspect to programs; it is central to the total concept of discrepancy evaluation across all program elements.

Summary:

It has not been the purpose of this paper to denigrate the question of quality; rather it has been an attempt to place the issue in proper perspective. While the author has attempted to demonstrate that the real measure of quality rests with the degree of excellence aspired to by the institutions, in their program design; this is not to infer that the Commission has not been, nor is not, concerned with quality.

The Commission has, from its inception, demonstrated such concern through the openness of its procedures and through its utilization of broad constituent representation in the establishment of standards. Given the program development approach utilized to date, and the Commission's reliance upon the integrity of the institutions as part of this approach, discrepancy evaluation is an appropriate and logical method of assessment. Should other measures of "quality" be desired, program development requirements must be changed in order to provide the basis for such evaluation as part of the program design. To attempt to use the present assessment system to assess measures which were not designed for such measurement, is to corrupt the evaluation design and may invalidate its total results.