

Final Reflections Summary Report

Presenter: Cees van der Vleuten, PhD
*Scientific Director of the School of Health Professions Education
University of Maastricht*

Dr. Cees van der Vleuten initiated the Final Reflections portion of the conference by asking members of the audience to share “aha moments, little epiphanies.” Among the observations shared was an acknowledgement that “there are a number of issues important to the Boards that have not been addressed by certification. We don’t have the relationship with diplomates that we need to have.” There was also an admission that one of the barriers to change has been the mindset that “it’s the way we’ve always done it.” In order to move forward, a member of the audience suggested that “the Board needs to have a good understanding of what its role is.”

Dr. van der Vleuten noted that “in assessment intentions are good, and then things fall apart,” particularly when we put metrics on things. “Then the instrument becomes the purpose,” he noted. Instead, he encouraged the audience to imagine a system in which physicians wanted to do more. He noted that research shows that engagement leads to greater productivity. If physicians only have to comply with requirements, it leads to burnout rather than engagement. Another question from the audience considered the possibility that the Boards could be both regulators and promoters of learning, but there was a concern that they might lose their authority. Dr. van der Vleuten noted that it was important that “regulators regulate that learning occurs.” He encouraged the development of a system that helps “get rid of the bad apples and polish the good ones.”

Virginia Moyer, MD, the ABP's Vice President of Maintenance of Certification and Quality, asked the group to consider, “beginning with the end in mind, what’s the purpose of certification?” Board certification should be about being meaningfully engaged in the lifelong pursuit of learning and in furthering the health of children.

Finally, Dr. van der Vleuten encouraged the group to consider next steps. Ultimately, it comes down to strategic thinking, he suggested. He encouraged the development of a model that ensures buy-in from stakeholders. “Don’t do this on your own,” he intoned. “Have stakeholders involved. Have diplomates involved. Get critical mass, buy-in, and involve people in the design.” In conclusion, he noted that the goals need to be clarified, and there must be a consensus reached about the *why* questions.