

# EDUCATION MATTERS

A publication of the Association of American Educators Foundation

## Tougher Requirements Ahead for Teacher Prep:

### Accrediting body poised to adopt new standards

A panel tapped by the national accreditation body for teacher preparation has finalized a set of standards that, for the first time, establishes minimum admissions criteria and requires programs to use much-debated “value-added” measures, where available.

**T**he action promises to have major ramifications for how programs select, prepare, and gauge the success of new teachers. Already, programs planning to seek the seal of approval from the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) say the standards are significantly more demanding than those used by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, one of two accreditors that preceded CAEP.

By Stephen Sawchuk



“These standards, when you get down to it, are really different, and they are much more challenging,” said Michael J. Maher, the assistant dean of the education school at North Carolina State University in Raleigh. “Even as a college that’s been NCATE-accredited and made our way through that process, we clearly see some new things we’re going to have to do.”

The commission finalized the CAEP standards over a two-day period last month. CAEP’s board is expected to sign off on them next month.

With its inclusion of performance measures and requirements for surveying graduates and employers on program quality, the draft embraces some of the very same concepts that many higher education representatives opposed during a 2012 attempt by the U.S. Department of Education to negotiate revisions to the federal accountability rules for teacher preparation.

Observers said the CAEP standards’ specificity and emphasis on performance were unusual in accreditation circles.

distribution on a nationally normed achievement test. The panel approved the language, despite concerns that such stipulations might harm the diversity of the teaching force.

The requirement will apply to all teacher-candidates, even if they have been out of high school or college for some time. CAEP will phase in the entry standard over several years, but it will nevertheless be a stretch for some programs.

“If you have an open-admissions policy, you are not going to be accredited,” noted Mary Brabeck, the dean of New York University’s education school and the chairwoman of the subcommittee that drafted the standard on selection.

And although the draft standards’ proposal to highlight a small number of “gold standard” programs that excel on the five standards got a chilly reception from the field, the commission held firm to the initiative.

The stickiest point for the panel proved to be reconciling different opinions about using student-achievement measures to help gauge program quality. Representatives of the national teachers’ unions feared such measures might be misused, or could dominate other considerations.

## “The stickiest point for the panel proved to be reconciling different opinions about using student-achievement measures to help gauge program quality.”

“This is the most measured and evidence-heavy proposed accreditation process I’ve ever been privy to,” Peter Ewell, the vice president at the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, a research center that works to improve college efficiency, told the panel during a meeting last month. “You are being very gutsy.”

The new standards fall into five broad categories: equipping candidates with content knowledge and appropriate pedagogical tools; working in partnership with districts to provide strong student-teaching practice and feedback; recruiting a diverse and academically strong group of candidates; demonstrating that graduates are successful in boosting P-12 students’ academic achievement; and maintaining a quality-assurance system.

Preparation programs would be assessed on the evidence they produced to meet each standard.

### Sticky Wicket

Although several of the panel’s proposals were controversial, most were preserved. The panel kept a requirement for programs to set minimum entry requirements for each cohort of candidates, including a cohort minimum GPA average of 3.0 and an average score in the top third of the

“We don’t want our institutions of higher education to change things that have been put in place that are not serving our kids or our teachers,” said Becky Pringle, the vice president of the National Education Association. “I don’t want us to build on top of things that were not done well.”

The finalized draft makes more explicit that programs must take multiple measures into account in determining how well graduates fare in the field. But they must still consider “all available growth measures,” including value-added ones, used by the state for evaluating teachers.

“It is a remarkable thing to say that a professional program is going to trace its graduates into the field,” said Richard De Lisi, a panelist and the dean of the graduate school of education at Rutgers University in New Jersey. “I don’t think any other field does this to its graduates. It’s absolutely path-breaking.”

The commission also established eight criteria that programs would have to report annually, such as graduation rates and teaching effectiveness. Because accreditation typically occurs only once every seven years, the annual report will help gauge programs’ shorter-term changes, panelists said.

## New Role, New Questions

The finalized standards brought a variety of opinions about how they will play out on the ground.

“Some institutions either won’t be able to meet the standards, or they’ll look at it and say it’s too cost-intensive, labor-intensive, requires too many changes, or that they don’t have the high-quality candidates needed,” Mr. Maher said. “You may see some closing of programs.”

He said his university, which produces about four hundred teachers each year, will retool the surveys it sends to employers, use value-added measures and performance-assessment data to judge programs’ impact, and raise its own admissions standard, even though it’s already at the 3.0 mark.

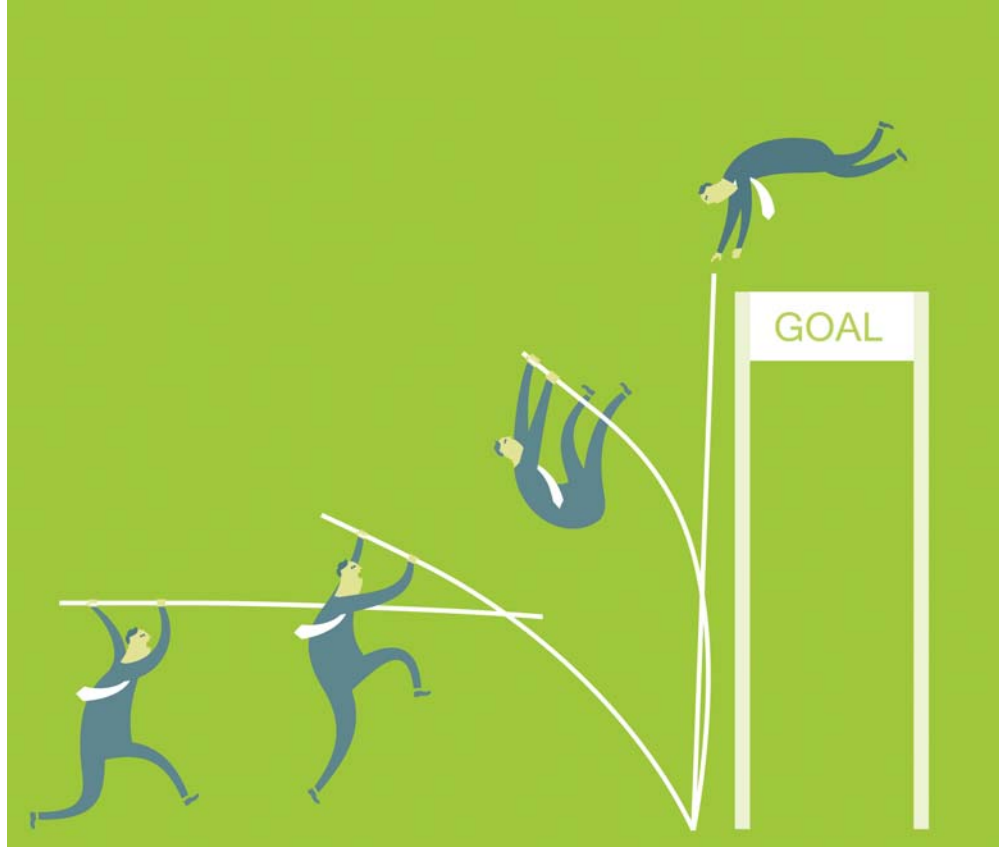
Sam Evans, the dean of the school of education at Western Kentucky University, said some of the new measures will have to be approached cautiously. For instance, he noted that most student-growth data are limited to reading and math, even though colleges produce teachers in dozens of subjects.

“The standard on student-teaching,” he added, “will require colleges and school districts to take their work together more seriously,” he said. “But overall, I see this as an opportunity, not a challenge. We have to keep our P-12 students foremost in our work.”

Robert C. Pianta, the dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, said he wished the commission had elaborated on some of the implications of the standards’ focus on evidence.

“Programs will struggle in terms of defining evidence, the technical properties for collecting evidence, selecting reliable and valid indicators, and the use of the evidence,” he said. “And there’s not a lot of guidance on that.”

The role of teasing out best practices, disseminating them, and



helping institutions work together to inculcate them may well fall to CAEP itself.

“This is a cultural shift for our field, and we won’t be able to make it successfully unless we engage programs to become more sophisticated as to the use of evidence,” CAEP President James G. Cibulka acknowledged during the meeting.

Finally, panelists and observers alike said CAEP will need to show that it will hold institutions to meeting the higher standards—a delicate balancing act for an organization whose revenue is generated largely by the programs it assesses.

Between 2007 and 2013, NCATE denied or revoked accreditation only eleven times, records show.

If the CAEP standards are enforced, “it will mean some people will no longer be in the business of preparing teachers,” said Mr. Evans. “Anything less than quality is not acceptable, and I think for too long we’ve pulled people through the knothole and allowed programs to receive accreditation.”

Added Ms. Brabek of NYU: “Ultimately, we have to believe that the accreditor is going to uphold the standard.” ■

As first appeared in *Education Week*, July 10, 2013. Reprinted with permission from Editorial Projects in Education.



**Stephen Sawchuk** is an assistant editor at *Education Week*, the K-12 newspaper of record. He reports on the teaching profession, including preparation, evaluation, pay, and the teachers’ unions, and is the author of the popular [edweek.org](http://edweek.org) blog Teacher Beat. He holds degrees from Georgetown and Columbia universities.

# How (and Why) to Flip Your Classroom

It's no secret that interacting with students on an individual level can drastically improve the learning process. Having the capacity to reach all of your students one-on-one is certainly ideal, but large class sizes can understandably make this challenging. Moreover, the traditional teaching method—students sitting in class, taking notes, fighting to stay awake—is not conducive to an interactive style. So, how can you use your class time more efficiently?

## Keep the Breakthroughs Going

To reach the students who are used to treating class time as nap time, flip your classroom information intake routine. Instead of using class time to lecture, have students do the intake of information at home. This will allow classes to be spent in a more engaging manner where you can promote understanding, hold discussions, and analyze concepts.

Let's flip your basic Tuesday morning math class. Students can do their assigned reading on Monday night, so Tuesday's class can be spent working on a set of math problems related to the reading. While students are working on the problems, teachers can devote attention to those who are really struggling with the lesson. The other students won't get bored because they won't have to wait for others to catch up—they can move

right along to the next problem and are free to discuss methods with their peers and act as private tutors.

The conventional method of homework involves students struggling to figure it out by themselves. The flipped method puts an emphasis on student understanding in the classroom, rather than students needing to complete a set of questions on their own. Flipping the classroom allows students to grasp the material at their own pace, which is something the conventional style ignores.

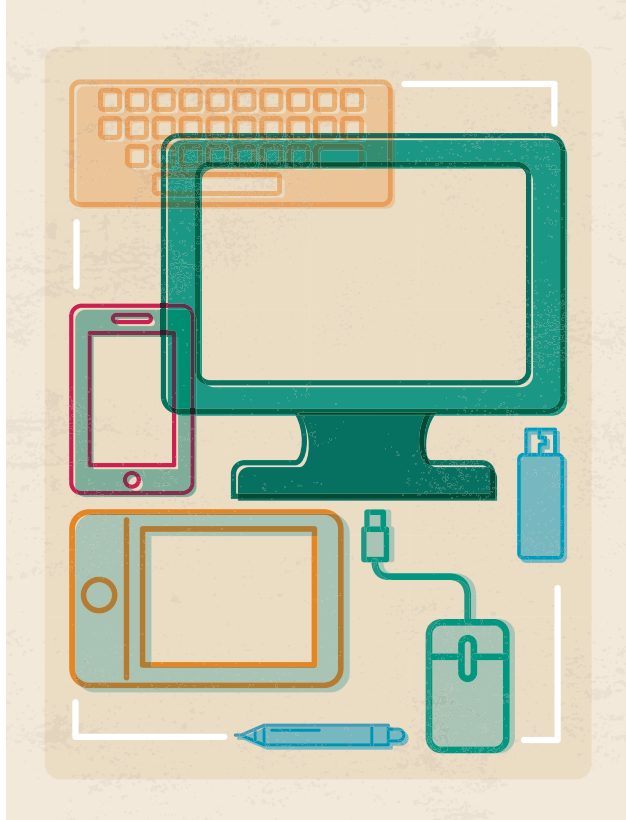
## Teacher Benefits

The flipped method not only makes learning more accessible to students, but it also helps teachers do their job as well. If done effectively, it can play to the strengths of teachers by helping them guide students' specific ideas.

Since students can watch a relevant PowerPoint or video outside of class, teachers can use their class time to clear up any confusion, pose questions of greater depth, or suggest new areas of exploration.

However, perhaps the biggest perk of the flipped method is that it allows teachers to truly assess student understanding. You can identify what kinds of challenges each student is encountering, and then forge the appropriate learning connections for them.





## Brought to You by Technology

Access to technology is a key component in making flipped education a success, both in and out of the classroom. Here's why:

**Instant Access:** Many students have immediate access to the Internet via smartphones. While this can distract from the in-class learning process, it can also help students learn whenever and wherever they want. If a student doesn't understand a topic during the morning lecture, he or she can go online and review that topic later at home—or at the mall, the park, etc.

**The Latest Access:** Using the latest technology keeps students aware of the latest technology. Simply reading about an iPad is a world away from being able to actually use it to see a red blood cell in action. Hands-on knowledge of the latest gadgets is incredibly beneficial to student understanding.

**Complete Access:** Using the Internet at home allows students far more time to explore their own interests, thus promoting independent learning. At school, teachers can use technology to guide students to explore these interests in greater depth. Having access to the information in both places means students can learn at absolutely any time.

Clearly, technology is a huge factor in ensuring the success of flipped education. However, it is important

to note that not every student is going to have Internet access at home. Therefore, it is highly encouraged for schools to provide access to technology—and make that access easy—by doing the following:

## Ensuring Participation

Of course, not every student is miraculously going to be motivated enough to do this necessary intake outside of class. Here are three tricks of the flipped trend to ensure full participation:

**Interactive Quizzes:** Include these in any online videos. You can even structure it so a student has to take the quiz before watching the video lecture. Quizzes are a great way to track each student's personal progress.

**In-Class Assessments:** Implement a short entry quiz at the beginning of each class, or a warm-up exercise designed to go over the preceding night's assigned video. Additionally, class-wide discussions can help students review the material, as well as give them a solid chance to present and discuss their perspectives.

**Online Discussion Forums:** Create a forum and award points based on participation via the posting of comments. Think of it as Facebook, but for student credit.

## Now, Flip It

By flipping the learning process, large classes become capable of being highly interactive. Students can stop snoozing through a PowerPoint and instead use their teachers and peers as sounding boards for in-class writing and other projects.

Flipping classes ensures that the resources offered—teachers, other students, and online information—are regularly available and easily accessed in the best places for maximum learning. Before too long, the light bulbs above your students' heads will be switching on all throughout the classroom. ■



**Chuck Cohn** is founder and CEO of Varsity Tutors, a private, one-on-one tutoring and test prep company that serves students of all ages and education level from pre-K to graduate school.

# A Special Invitation for Educators: **Value Driven Professional Development Online Course**

**RACHEL'S CHALLENGE**  
New online course begins every Monday

3 Graduate Professional Development Units offered through Brandman University

**Value Driven**  
Core Values that Define and Ignite You  
Core Ethical Virtues that Significantly Impact the School Culture  
Comprehensive Character Development for Schools Pre-K Through University  
www.RachelsChallenge.org

**Character Performance Traits**  
Respect, Responsibility, Initiative, Integrity, Compassion, Perseverance, Positive Mental Attitude, Cooperation

"Creative Classroom Activities" and "Video Connections" for your IPADs and Classroom use!  
A program that equips teachers and changes students forever!  
**Classes Offered-**  
Each Monday throughout school year Register  
[www.rachelschallenge.org](http://www.rachelschallenge.org)

## **You matter, your kids matter!**

Each student needs to know we need and value them and their unique perspectives. This course was designed for teachers and their students to strengthen and invite them on a Value Driven Journey that will change the school culture and climate where people are connected, caring, and capable. Proven classroom tools and strategies are provided throughout the course.

## **Special Coupon Discount for AAE Members**

Provide your school name and email to  
[ValueDriven@cox.net](mailto:ValueDriven@cox.net)

Registration now open for  
**Value Driven Professional Development Online Course** at:  
<https://rachelschallenge.digitalchalk.com/dc/guest/login>

**A new class begins every Monday!**

# Member Mention: AAE Members Reach New Heights

Situated on a mountain ridge above Sacred Valley 80 kilometers (50 miles) northwest of Cuzco, Peru lay the beautiful ruins of ancient Machu Picchu. For two teachers at Indiana's International School of Columbus (ISC), Lynnette Olibo and Jonah Sims, Head of School, leading a life-changing trip to this historical landmark is simply part of the job description.

"A few years ago, a parent, another staff member and myself were talking about the name of our school. We agreed that an International School should take an International trip. With my experience in domestic field trips and experiential learning component in the IB diploma requirements, it was an easy decision to get this experience started," said Lynnette.



Lynnette, Jonah, seven students, and a handful of parents flew to the city of Cuzco, where they took a bus to Soraypampa at the foot of the Salkantay Mountain to begin their trek to Machu Picchu. For three days they hiked on the Salkantay Trail, an ancient and remote foot-path which meets up with the Inca trail. It is an impressive trek where massive snowcapped mountains collide with lush tropical rain forests.

At the end of their first day of hiking, the group reached an elevation of 4600 m (15,253 ft.). "I believe the most important lesson I learned is the determination required to overcome great challenges. The first day of hiking was treacherous. We hiked through a blizzard up a mountain pass. This required a great deal of willpower and determination alone, not to mention the rest of the trip," reflected Maclane Speer, a student at ISC.

During the days, two hiking guides directed the group;



each night they slept in tents. The guides shared much information about Peruvian and Incan culture and provided meals consisting of Peruvian pancakes with caramel sauce, quinoa and oatmeal, and soups for dinner (chicken, vegetable, rice, and fish). While pack horses carried the tents and sleeping bags, each hiker carried a pack with his or her own gear. One particular morning, the hikers were treated to fresh roasted and ground coffee for breakfast when they stopped at a coffee bean farm.

"Arriving at Machu Picchu was the goal of this trip for me," said Lynnette. "Along the way, I stopped and met a great family in Lima, I was able to trek up a mountain that was over 15,000 feet above sea level, and I made new and deeper friendships with parents and students within our school system. Now as I teach, I will continue to set goals but I will also emphasize not to overlook the adventure that it takes to obtain the goals."

"The IB (International Baccalaureate) works to make the world 'smaller' by making students aware of the people and cultures which are different from them. That is exactly what happened as I watched the students interact with the Peruvian people and embrace their ancient culture," commented Jill Newell, Director of Membership & Outreach at AAE who joined ISC in their adventure.

Congratulations Jonah and Lynnette for leading and teaching students even outside the classroom! ■





The Association of American Educators Foundation  
27405 Puerta Real, Suite 230  
Mission Viejo, CA 92691-6388

Presorted Standard  
US Postage Paid  
#400  
Laguna Niguel, CA

Education Matters is a publication of the Association of American Educators Foundation (AAEF)

aaeteachers.org • editor@aaeteachers.org • 800.704.7799

**Gary Beckner**, *Executive Editor*  
**Alexandra Freeze**, *Managing Editor*  
**Ruthie Borrelli**, *Coordinating Editor*  
**Debbie Brown**, *Editorial Assistant*  
**Diane Meyer**, *Editorial Assistant*

# AAE New Teacher Matters Promotion

Are you a new member? Are you new to the classroom? Do you have colleagues who are beginning their first year of teaching? Check out AAE's newest publication, *New Teachers Matter!* Email [profdev@aaeteachers.org](mailto:profdev@aaeteachers.org) to receive your free copy.

