



Council for Aid to Education
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CAE TAPPED BY BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION TO CONDUCT COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ASSESSMENT RESEARCH

Final report anticipated for distribution in October 2012

New York, NY – CAE (The Council for Aid to Education) is in the process of concluding a two-year project examining the relationship between mastery of the Common Core State Standards and actual success in the first year of college. The project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will result in the development of complex performance tasks to assess aspects of the Common Core State Standards aligned with college readiness. Ultimately, the project aims to illustrate the effective use of performance tasks on a large scale and provide a clearer picture of what it means to be college ready.

To date, forty-five states have adopted the Common Core State Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts, and two multi-state consortia have received a combined \$330 million in Race to the Top Assessment grants to develop comprehensive assessment systems aligned with the standards.¹ These initiatives' potential impact on the national K-12 landscape comes with commensurate need to demonstrate that these standards and accompanying assessment programs represent a move in the right direction.

Related to these efforts, the first major goal of this project is to develop a suite of assessment tasks aligned with the Common Core State Standards. To this end, CAE has built upon its experience developing open-ended performance assessments to measure critical thinking and writing for the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the College & Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA). The experience gained through developing these new tasks, administering them to a large sample of students, and scoring them has provided a valuable picture of what effort and costs will be required to employ such tasks in a large-scale testing environment.

The second aspect of this project concerns the validation of the assessment tasks. The new tasks were administered to a large number of entering first-year college students in the fall semester of 2011. End-of-year outcomes such as grades and persistence were collected the following spring. These data are currently being analyzed to examine whether students who perform well on the assessments tend to have better first-year academic outcomes. Additional analyses will reveal whether performance on these assessments improves the prediction of first-year academic outcomes (over high school GPA and college admissions tests).

A final report on this study is planned for release in October 2012.

¹ CAE is among a collaborative of organizations that have been tapped to develop these assessments. See www.collegiatelearningassessment.org/smarterbalanced.pdf for more information.

About CAE

CAE is a non-profit organization founded in 1952 to advance corporate support of education and conduct policy research on higher education. Currently, CAE is best known for its work focusing on measuring and improving the quality of secondary and postsecondary education. CAE has two nationwide assessment programs—the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) and the College & Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA)—through which they provide member schools with tools to improve critical thinking and writing skills through the connection of effective teaching, learning, and assessment efforts framed through authentic performance-based practices.

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