

Practices that Increase Rigor at the Classroom Level

Unit Planning

1. Defined set of standards for course and units.
2. Unit objectives are aligned to the standards.
3. Assessment tasks are aligned to the unit objectives.
4. Instructional activities are aligned to the assessment tasks, objectives and standards.
5. Assignments are broad enough in scope to provide adequate evidence that students have reached proficiency in related standards.
6. Assignments are at an appropriate level of cognitive demand.
7. Assignments include meaningful homework.
8. All elements are aligned to an appropriate level of cognitive demand.

Explaining Expectations and Making Assignments

9. Each student clearly understands exactly what it takes to earn an A or a B.
10. Samples of quality work in relation to standards are reviewed by teachers and posted in the classroom for students.
11. Teachers' questions align to the complexity of learning expected by the standards.
12. Assignments are sequenced so that students turn in drafts of work as part of the total assignment grade. All students are expected to re-do work before the final draft is completed.

Providing Feedback

13. Students are provided with extensive and specific feedback.
14. Teachers and peers review and provide feedback on work.
15. Parents are involved in checking and responding to student work.

Working Toward Mastery for All Students

16. Instruction is differentiated to challenge students working at all levels of cognitive demand.
17. Adequate time and additional instruction is provided (without penalty) for students to re-do work/re-take assessments until standards are met.
18. Students may re-do assignments and assessments to work toward mastery.
19. Students who re-do work receive a grade that reflects their best/final work (although there may still be a penalty for not doing complete and accurate work the first time).
20. A system of interventions is in place that is triggered when a student falls below a C.
21. Extra help is structured to meet specific student needs.
22. Students receive information on when, where and how extra help can be obtained and what the student must do to get it.

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Directions: For each section of practices listed on the previous pages, discuss the following questions in your table groups.

Unit Planning

- In what ways do these practices reflect a desire to increase rigor?
- Which of these are likely to have a great deal of impact?
- What additional items would you add to this list?
- What additional information would you need to add to provide clarity to these items and make them meaningful and measurable in your school?

Explaining Expectations and Making Assignments

- In what ways do these practices reflect a desire to increase rigor?
- Which of these are likely to have a great deal of impact?
- What additional items would you add to this list?
- What additional information would you need to add to provide clarity to these items?

Providing Feedback

- In what ways do these practices reflect a desire to increase rigor?
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Working Toward Mastery for All Students

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