Beyond Assumptions: Putting Research into Practice to Document Quality Learning Experiences

* “Translating rhetoric about rigor into classroom reality will not be easy…”
* [Hechinger Institute](http://hechinger.tc.columbia.edu/primers/Hechinger_Institute_Rigor_Primer.pdf)

Andria F. Schwegler, Texas A&M University Central Texas, schwegler@tamuct.edu

1. How do you define a quality learning context?

2. In your definition, where in the educational landscape does academic rigor reside (e.g., with teachers, students, administrators, curriculum, assessment)?

3. How can you help document the definition of quality learning for your stakeholders?

1. Assumptions about what makes for a quality learning environment abound. Many times, we don’t question them though research evidence refutes them.

2. To craft a quality learning environment, academic rigor has been variously defined, but few definitions state the role of the teacher in making it happen. A measurable definition allows teachers to research, plan, deliver, enforce, assess, and continuously improve their work.

3. Academic rigor is defined as intentionally crafted and sequenced learning activities and interactions that are supported by research and provide students the opportunity to create and demonstrate their own understanding or interpretation of information and support it with evidence ([Schwegler, 2019](https://www.qualitymatters.org/qa-resources/resource-center/articles-resources/academic-rigor-white-paper-part-one)).

4. Existing institutional processes may not be well aligned with a measurable definition of academic rigor. Revisions may help teachers improve the context to facilitate student learning.

REFLECT

Takeaways

Acknowledge the assumptions you hear about quality learning and examine what research, if any, supports or refutes them.

Engage with colleagues and students to define a quality learning environment and academic rigor.

Look to research, not tradition, for revising teaching strategies.

Apply the definition of academic rigor in your learning contexts and evaluate whether it allows for new insights.

Examine your institutional processes and evaluate whether revisions are needed.

Design a study using your learning context to fill gaps in the research literature.

1. How can you expand your knowledge of research on human learning to improve instruction?

2. How can we improve the definition of academic rigor and its measurement?

3. What gaps in research need to be addressed to help you improve student learning?

To-Do’s

Questions

Don’t Forget