

Submissions on Academic Rigor and Guiding Principles

Submission #1

Principles of Academic Rigor

1. Skills are a necessary part of learning. Skills acquisition is usually a lower level of learning. The amount of skills acquisition may lower as academic rigor rises, according to student age. For instance, a 1st grader may spend 80% of their academic time in skills acquisition and 20% in rigorous activities. A 10th grader is more likely to spend 80% of their school day in rigorous activities and only 20% on skills acquisition.
2. Rigor utilizes the higher levels of thinking, including Application, Analysis, Evaluating and Creating (Bloom's Taxonomy).
3. Rigor is NOT necessarily more time, more work, more difficulty.
4. Rigorous learning activities are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging.
5. Rigor causes students to think more deeply, often making personal connections or judgement calls on academic content.
6. Academic projects are less likely to result in right and wrong answers as students think more deeply about content, compared to activities such as a multiple-choice test, for example, or other lower level of thinking or skills-based activities.
7. Rigorous activities have the goal of changing the role of the student in the classroom. The students use language and precise vocabulary to show a deeper understanding of the content. They develop their own goals and their own criteria for assessment, as they become more engaged and take responsibility for their learning.
8. Rigorous activities result in students who are more highly engaged and on task in school. (Antonetti). They become motivated, lifelong learners with a strong foundation for future success.

Submission #2

Academic rigor must be understood not as a method for learning, but rather, as a concept for pursuit of foundational and concrete knowledge, truth and wisdom in a world awash in fashionable falsehoods. Life is relentless, and so, our pursuit of truth ought to be equally relentless. Academic rigor should be the hard work of training mind and body, through consistent and sustained practice, to grow in knowledge and understanding so that we learn how to think, rather than what to think. As an institution, our focus ought to be on repetitiously promulgating fundamental building blocks of knowledge so that our students have a firm foundation from which to take on the world.

Submission #3

Guiding Principles for Academic Rigor:

- Productive cognitive struggle
- Skill development
- Critical thinking
- Application of knowledge
- Love of learning

Submission #4

My focus is on providing guiding principles that gives school leaders a clear definition to share with parents and teachers to eliminate confusion and ambiguity around expectations of academic rigor.

Always Learning: Jefferson Academy will create, foster, and maintain a learning environment for students that exceeds required standards of academic proficiency. Students at all grade levels will be required to be productive and innovative learners routinely demonstrating their commitment to learning and understanding of the core knowledge curriculum.

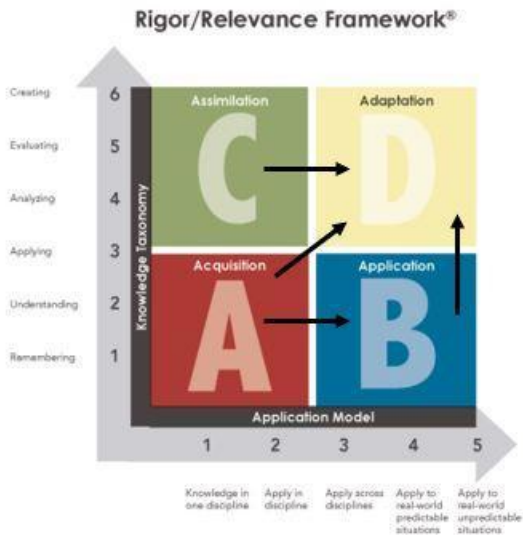
Community: Jefferson Academy is a community of school leaders, teachers, and parents that actively support an academic learning environment designed to exceed standards of academic proficiency. The whole JA community fosters a positive and productive learning environment.

Modeling Success: The school leaders and teachers at Jefferson Academy foster success by providing numerous, and diverse opportunities for students to reach their highest academic and character potential with the goal of preparing students for success in college or life after Jefferson Academy. Parents and students follow the model of success created and designed by school leaders and teachers.

Submission #5

Guiding Principles for Academic Rigor

1. JA embraces educational practices and curricula that elevate student learning from acquisition to adaptation as shown below:



2. JA fosters growth and learning by teaching all students to engage in productive struggles and critical thinking.
3. Educational practices and curricula at JA develop a strong shared knowledge foundation, expand knowledge through in-depth explorations and applications, and encourage diversity of thought.
4. JA fosters life-long learning by extending our knowledge base to real-world applications and engagement in our community.
5. JA holds all staff, students, and parents accountable to upholding a learning community that promotes self-identity and awareness, social and emotional support, and intellectual curiosity.

Submission #6

Guiding Principles of Academic Rigor

- We are a community whose foundation is built on *core knowledge*
- We develop *critical thinkers* who absorb, evaluate, synthesize, and apply
- We are a college prep school that develops *high performers* regardless of their path
- We provide *social and emotional support* to grow the students holistically
- We thrive on parent, teacher, student, staff, and administration *engagement*
- We generate a *love of learning* that transcends our curriculum
- We encourage and embrace *diversity* of thought and perspective

Guiding Principles to Reach Academic Rigor #7

Academic rigor is rooted in offering challenging academics through an exchange of diverse perspectives, experiences, and robust goals for growth and development of an inquisitive mindset, creativity, resilience, and problem solving.

Academically rigorous programs focus on

- the development of deeper thinking,
- an ability to formulate questions,
- providing a toolkit for researching answers, and
- teaching the ability to arrive at a clearly articulated conclusion/ solution embedded in a solid understanding of the subject matter.

This academically rigorous program requires a partnership of three parties: students, teachers, and parents.

- Students in academically rigorous programs are engaged in learning and experience the complexity of their lessons without struggling to achieve unreasonably set goals - they are challenged, but not discouraged.
- Teachers are empowered to assess students' potential and can recommend them into appropriate academic placements. Teachers are engaged in developing programs that gradually increases in complexity and requirements to ensure that foundational competence is acquired by the students.
- Parents observe their children growing academically, developing foundational knowledge for the next level of education, and being able to apply analytical skills to everyday life situations.

Academic Rigor - Submission #8

Given that that term rigor is widely-used in education and applied in several different contexts, the Great Schools Partnership along with the Nellie Mae Education Foundation and Education Writers Association created a Glossary of Education Reform which is a “comprehensive online resource of widely-used school-improvement terms, concepts, and strategies for journalists, parents, and community members.” (edglossary.org/about/)

Their definition of rigor is, “The term **rigor** is widely used by educators to describe instruction, schoolwork, [learning experiences](#), and educational expectations that are academically, intellectually, and personally challenging. Rigorous learning experiences, for example, help students understand knowledge and concepts that are complex, ambiguous, or contentious,

and they help students acquire skills that can be applied in a variety of educational, career, and civic contexts throughout their lives.”

The secondary school faculty believes that we are instructing in a rigorous manner and hold all students to a high expectation of rigor. We believe that communication about what rigor looks like is key to building understanding. So, there are a few hallmarks, guiding principles, that we believe are present within a rigorous environment:

Instructors/teachers will define the tasks and learning objectives so that students are presented with rich and plentiful opportunities to learn, practice, master, and demonstrate the following:

Targets of Rigor	Practices of Rigor
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Mastery of content knowledge2) Critical reasoning skills3) Originality in thought and produced work4) Attention to detail5) Academic integrity6) Strong Work ethic7) Outstanding time management skills with the ability to prioritize and meet deadlines8) Self-advocacy9) Efficient and effective collaboration with peers10) Clear, consistent communication	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11) Establishes deep, meaningful connections with the material they are currently learning and studying, often independently through facilitation rather than direct instruction.12) Synthesizes and applies classroom learning to prior knowledge or novel scenarios13) Understands the value of high performance and the need for reflection on summative assessments14) Present/communicate ideas, learning, and thinking in an organized, thorough manner.15) Shares knowledge and ideas in a new or innovative way16) Understands how each person contributes to the classroom culture and the need for the culture to be safe, positive, and growth-oriented17) Understands the impact of setting, meeting, and exceeding high expectations18) Perseveres through challenging content or material19) Understands and values timeliness and deadlines20) Reflects on a process and applies towards a goal for improvement