Understanding the Rigor/Relevance Framework®

The Rigor/Relevance Framework is a tool developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education to examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and is based on two dimensions: the Knowledge Taxonomy and the Application Model.

The Knowledge Taxonomy

First, a continuum of knowledge describes the increasingly complex ways in which we think. This Knowledge Taxonomy is based on the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy:

6. Creating
5. Evaluating
4. Analyzing
3. Applying
2. Understanding
1. Remembering

The Application Model

The second continuum, created by Dr. Bill Daggett, Founder and Chairman of the International Center for Leadership in Education, is known as the Application Model, which describes putting knowledge to use. The five levels of this continuum are:

1. Knowledge in one discipline
2. Apply in discipline
3. Apply across disciplines
4. Apply to real-world predictable situations
5. Apply to real-world unpredictable situations
The Rigor/Relevance Framework

The Rigor/Relevance Framework has four quadrants. Each of these four quadrants can be labeled with a term that characterizes learning or student performance.

- **Creating**: 6
- **Adaptation**: 5
- **Evaluating**: 4
- **Analyzing**: 3
- **Applying**: 2
- **Understanding**: 1
- **Remembering**: 0

Knowledge in one discipline  
Apply in discipline  
Apply across disciplines  
Apply to real-world predictable situations  
Apply to real-world unpredictable situations

**Characteristics of Student Performance**

The following chart describes characteristics of student performance for each of the four quadrants of the Rigor/Relevance Framework.

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<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>Students gather and store bits of knowledge and information. Students are primarily expected to remember or understand this knowledge.</td>
<td>Students use acquired knowledge to solve problems, design solutions, and complete work. The highest level of application is to apply knowledge to new and unpredictable situations.</td>
<td>Students extend and refine their acquired knowledge to be able to use that knowledge automatically and routinely to analyze and solve problems and create solutions.</td>
<td>Students think in complex ways and can apply their knowledge and skills. Even when confronted with perplexing unknowns, students can create solutions and take action that further develops their skills and knowledge.</td>
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For more information, see *Using Rigor and Relevance to Create Effective Instruction.*