

UNDERSTANDING AND DESIGNING RIGOROUS LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Jolly, J.L. *Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA, USA*

Building on previous research conducted on teachers' perceptions of rigor, this presentation turns to the gifted learner. Lost in conversations about rigorous curriculum and education are students' perceptions and experiences. What are students' perceptions of rigor? What makes their school experience rigorous?

Findings from our earlier study indicate teachers' perceptions of rigor were varied and confused with a disconnect between definition and practice. Definitions of rigorous curriculum include challenging, higher order thinking skills, and depth and complexity. However, when asked to describe rigorous student work and actual assignments, teachers used descriptors such as "more work" and "time to be spent outside of class to complete assignments." Many teachers equated rigor with challenge and equate challenge to hard. However, we would argue that there is no relationship between rigor and the "hardness" of curricula, especially when rigor is defined as the intersection of the upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy with real world problems (Daggett, 2005). This presentation seeks to answer if and when students perceive their learning experiences to be rigorous and if distinctions can be made between rigorous, challenging, and hard.

The intended audience for this presentation includes program coordinators, administrators, classroom teachers, and university professionals.