Teachers, school leaders, and central office leaders have many roles, but none as important as that of supporting the teaching and learning process. Through our collaborative work and a focus on research-based strategies, we are able to transform our classrooms into vibrant, engaging learning environments. Over 11,000 years of experience from teachers and administrators in MCS informed the focus of the 2013-2014 professional development as teachers and administrators identified characteristics of a great classroom.
Learning Targets:
~ I can review the MCS characteristics of a great classroom: a positive emotional climate with clear procedures and routines; an organized lesson built around clear, measurable learning targets; rigorous learning that is differentiated to meet the academic needs of all students; actively engaged and motivated students; meaningful and relevant learning for all students; performance feedback is abundant, immediate, and specific
~ I can discuss ways I have applied the information taught about positive emotional climate with clear procedures and routines and organized lesson built around clear, measurable learning targets
~ I can infuse rigor into all lessons in order to meet the needs of all students
~ I can describe the difference between difficulty and complexity.

Characteristics of Great Classrooms in Moore County Schools

1. A positive emotional climate with clear procedures and routines;
2. An organized lesson built around clear, measurable learning targets;
3. _______ learning that is ___________ to meet the academic needs of all students;
4. Actively engaged and motivated students;
5. Meaningful and relevant learning for all students;
6. Performance feedback is abundant, immediate, and specific.
Growing Great Classrooms

Individual Reflection

How did you apply the information related to the characteristic “Organized Lesson Built Around Clear, Measurable Learning Targets” in your school or classroom?

Record your response below. Be ready to share in 3 minutes.

A. Share a few examples of clear learning targets you created and shared with students. Discuss how you created the learning targets, where you displayed them in your classroom, and how you referenced them throughout your lesson to set the purpose for the lesson.

B. Using the clear learning targets mentioned above, describe the information modeled and taught to students, questions you asked, and activities students completed during the lesson. How did you use the Gradual Release of Responsibility model to teach the content?
I. Looks Like/Doesn’t Look Like:

**Looks Like…**

- Student to student discussion and extension, problem solving, use of critical thinking
- Rigor is the result of weaving together the elements of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to maximize the learning of every student.
- High expectations that every student possesses the potential to be his or her best, no matter what.
- Open-ended questions that are at the higher levels of thinking are asked and student responses are at high levels.
- Lessons are designed to promote positive student engagement and high levels of student accountability for demonstrating learning.
- Lessons are designed to move students to more challenging work while simultaneously providing ongoing scaffolding to support students as they move to the higher levels.
- Rigor for the 21st century includes a focus on skills for life: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and leadership, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, accessing and analyzing information, and curiosity and imagination.
- Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding. This may occur through a “not yet” grading policy or through opportunities to rework missed questions of a test for partial credit.

**Doesn’t look like…**

- When the teacher asks a question, students are called on one at a time to respond.
- Students are expected to demonstrate learning the same way with the same product.
- Low level questioning
- Piling on more homework, more novels, more labs, more research projects.
- Using a 9th grade Social Studies book to teach 8th graders.
- Covering as much content as possible.
- Taking students through every single step of Bloom’s Taxonomy
- Giving students trivial facts of knowledge only
- whole-class-directed instruction, e.g., lecturing and taking notes from Powerpoint for 30 min.
- student passivity: sitting, listening, receiving, and absorbing information
- classroom time devoted to fill-in-the-blank worksheets, dittos, workbooks, and other “seatwork”
- rote memorization of facts and details
II. Academically Responsive Classrooms:
A classroom where differentiation is a _______________ practice because the teacher understands that students ___________ and does whatever it takes to hook the whole range of students on learning while ensuring the learning is ___________ for all.

A. What is Differentiation?
My definition: ____________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________

My partner’s ideas: ________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
B. Defining Differentiation Using Multiple Modalities:

Sharing Consensus:
Teacher determines pairs and announces a topic.
“A” shares an idea.
“B” agrees/disagrees.
Once consensus is reached on the topic, “A’s” write the information on the paper.
Switch roles.
Continue until the teacher calls time.

C. Multiple Paths of Differentiation:
Students must have multiple paths available to achieve success.

How was the vocabulary activity differentiated?

_____________ Differentiation
_____________ Differentiation
_____________ Differentiation
_____________ Differentiation
D. Differentiation and Rigor In Action……Content

- Reading Partners / Reading Buddies
  - Read/Summarize
  - Read/Question/Answer
  - Visual Organizer/Summarizer
  - Parallel Reading with Teacher Prompt
- Choral Reading
- Split Journals (Double Entry – Triple Entry)
- Books on Tape/iPod
- Highlights on Digital Selection
- Digests/ “Cliff Notes”
- Note taking Organizers such as Cornell Notes
- Varied Leveled Texts Based on Student Reading Level
- Varied Supplementary Materials
- Highlighted Texts
- Guided Notes

E. Differentiation and Rigor In Action……Process

- Tiered Tasks and Products
- Compacting
- Learning Contracts
- Problem Based Learning
- Inquiry
- Multiple types of Assessments
- Interest Activities
- Group Investigation
- Choice Boards
- Multiple Intelligences Options
- Use of examples, stories, analogies, illustrations
Growing Great Classrooms
Rigorous Learning that is Differentiated to Meet the Needs of All Students

F. Differentiation and Rigor In Action...... Product

- Map
- Lecture
- Puzzle
- Diagram
- Editorial
- Model
- Sculpture
- Painting
- Timeline
- Discussion
- Costume
- Article
- Demonstration
- Placemat
- Diary
- Poem
- Blueprint
- Poster
- Profile
- Catalogue
- Magazine
- Chart
- Dialogue
- Terrarium
- Play
- Newspaper
- Petition Drive
- Dance
- Questionnaire
- Prototype
- Campaign
- Flag
- Speech
- Storytelling
- Scrapbook
- Cartoon
- Quiz Show
- Graph
- Invention
- Banner
- Debate
- Song Lyrics
- Brochure
- Museum
- Riddle
- Debate
- Advertisement
- Speech
- Flow Chart
- Mock Trial
- Greeting Card
- Tour Guide Script
- Multimedia Pres.
- Trip Itinerary
- Political Cartoon
- Prezi
- Commentary
- New Laws
- Animated Story
- Press
- Essay

PRODUCT
CHOICE
G. Differentiation and Rigor In Action…….Environment

Flexible learning spaces and options
Whole Group (lecture, multimedia presentation, demonstration, video, guest speaker)
Work alone
Work with a partner (random, interest, task)
Work in a cooperative group (heterogeneous, homogeneous, task oriented, constructed, random, interest)
Vary teacher mode of presentation (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, concrete, abstract, multi-sensory)
Adjust for gender, culture, language differences

Differentiated instruction is not synonymous with ______________ instruction. Differentiated instruction does not mean you must provide a different __________ or allow for different products for every single learner or every single lesson. The standards tell us what to teach while differentiation guides us in ________ to teach to ensure each learner can access the content and achieve the ______________ desired outcomes.

Students in an academically responsive classroom are assessed from the same rubric or expectations aligned with the grade level content standard. “How” students demonstrate mastery is differentiated.
III. The Silent Epidemic: A National Perspective
Focus group responses and interviews of approximately 500 dropouts revealed ______ were not failing and 70% believed they could have graduated. What went wrong?

A. National Perspectives of High School Dropouts (www.civicenterprizes.net)
1. _______ of dropouts said classes weren’t interesting.
2. _______ missed too many days of school and couldn’t catch up.
3. _______ were not motivated to work hard.
4. _______ would have worked harder if more had been demanded of them.

B. National Rigor-Related Recommendations from Dropouts:
1. _____ percent of students recommend making school more interesting.
2. _____ percent of students said there should be help for students who have trouble learning.
3. _____ percent called for more “real world” learning opportunities.
4. _____ percent of students wanted smaller classes with more individual instruction.

IV. Rigor Defined
Rigor is creating a challenging environment in which each student is expected to learn at high levels, each student is supported so he or she can learn at high levels, and each student demonstrates critical thinking skills and assumes responsibility for learning at high levels.
V. Digging Into Rigor:
   A. What is Rigor?
   B. What Rigor is Not!
      (Dueling Charts)

   Challenging, complex thinking that is student facilitated

   Depth of content which encourages critical thinking

   Drawing conclusions and problem solving

   High teacher support which fosters greater sustained effort from students

   1. __aise the level of content
   2. __ncrase text complexity
   3. __ive appropriate support and guidance
   4. __pen the focus (questions, assignments, choices)
   5. __aise expectations

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Rigorous Learning that is Differentiated to Meet the Needs of All Students

Foci

C. Ways to Increase Rigor (Barbara Blackburn, Rigor Is Not a Four-Letter Word)
VI. R……Raise the Level of Content

Value Depth:
Focus on depth of understanding, not breadth of coverage.

Increase Complexity:
Increasing the complexity of a task causes the students to change the way they mentally process the task. Compare and contrast as well as defending choices are examples of complexity.

Reviewing, not Repeating:
Repeating the same information over and over again does not work. Sometimes the more rigorous authentic activity is easier for students because it makes sense. At times, the best explanation can also come from another student.

Evaluate Content Expectations:
Determine what your content expectations are for students and set high expectations for their work.

Create Connections:
Connect content through interdisciplinary lessons or units.
Complexity versus Difficulty………

“Teachers are more likely to increase ________, rather than ____________, when attempting to raise student thinking.”

David Sousa, How the Brain Learns

 Complexity establishes the level of ______________.

Difficulty determines the amount of ______________ the learner must expend within each level of complexity.

Increasing the ____________ of a task causes students to change the way they mentally process the task. Compare and contrast and defending choices are examples of complexity.

Increasing the ____________ of a task adds to the students’ efforts without increasing the level of their thinking process. Repetition and drill tend to increase difficulty.
All students benefit when teachers include activities that engage them at the upper levels of analyzing, generating, integrating and evaluating. These levels of thinking are associated with ____________ or creative thinking.

Pair Discussion……………..

Which question is more complex? Why?

- What is the capital of Rhode Island?
- What is meant by a state capital?
It is possible for a learning activity to become increasingly _________ without becoming more complex.

Pair Discussion………………

Which question is more difficult? Why?

- Name the states of the Union.
- Name the states of the Union and their capitals.
### Growing Great Classrooms
**Rigorous Learning that is Differentiated to Meet the Needs of All Students**

#### C. Complexity or Difficulty???

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“A”</th>
<th>“B”</th>
<th>Increased Complexity or Difficulty?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use a dictionary to write the meaning of your 20 vocabulary words for this week.</td>
<td>Write an essay about a current event using 10 of your vocabulary words in context.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choose one character in the story you would like to be and explain your choice.</td>
<td>Choose two characters in the story you would like to be and explain your choice.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Label the parts of a plant cell and tell the function of each part.</td>
<td>Describe in your own words how the different parts of a cell benefit plants.</td>
<td>?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>