

# Increasing Growth in Student Learning: Rigorous Tasks and Assessments

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*Goal: To increase student learning and achievement by assessing the level of rigor of tasks and assessments and improving them as needed.*



Process: The original design is teacher-based, with support and direction from school and district leaders. A distributed leadership model follows. For best implementation, sessions are distributed over time to allow for reflection and application.

## Session One (One Hour)

After participating in an interactive introductory session on instructional rigor, teachers and leaders are introduced to the **Rigor Check**, a detailed rubric that provides criteria for rigorous work. Working in small groups, participants review sample tasks and assessments from Dr. Blackburn that are appropriate to their

grade(s) and subject area(s). The whole group then debriefs with a focus on understanding the **Rigor Check**.



### Session Two (One Hour)

A quick review and question and answer time is followed by additional practice with the **Rigor Check**, following the same sequence as Session One. Once again, tasks for specific grade levels and subject areas are provided.

### Session Three (Time Dependent on Group Size)

Prior to the third session, teachers identify and/or adapt a task or assignment they believe is rigorous. Samples are sent to Dr. Blackburn, and she leads a discussion of their work samples, providing appropriate feedback and suggestions. These sessions are often for smaller groups, such as a grade range or subject area. This session can be repeated as desired.



## **Adaptation: Distributed Leadership Model**

Many schools and districts prefer to use a distributed leadership model. In this design, Dr. Blackburn provides an initial, interactive professional development on understanding instructional rigor. She finishes by introducing the **Rigor Check** and guiding participants through one set of samples.

For the following sessions, Dr. Blackburn works with identified leaders to guide them through the samples described above. Her goal is that they have a thorough understanding of the **Rigor Check** and its application to the work samples so they can confidently lead the process with their teachers. The teacher samples are sent to Dr. Blackburn for review and discussion with the identified leaders.

Two advantages to the distributed leadership model are creating ownership among stakeholders and developing long-term sustainability. Additionally, you receive ongoing support from Dr. Blackburn to ensure success.

