Activating the Rigor in Your Curriculum Implementation: A Series for District Leaders

A leader in Midland, Texas, works with an Instructional Empowerment Coach on increasing rigor in classrooms.

The *Activating Rigor* series addresses a critical question: **Why aren't all students experiencing deeper learning and rigor, even with a high-quality curriculum in place?**

A strong curriculum is essential, but **your model of instruction ultimately determines the impact of curriculum**. Even the best materials won't transform

learning if instruction remains rooted in a traditional teacher-directed model, where students passively receive information instead of deeply engaging with it.

The Applied Research Center has identified the teacher-directed model as **the most prevalent approach** to curriculum implementation in classrooms today. This traditional model is often characterized by:

- **Low rigor:** Focus on memorization and recall that covers the content at a surface level only. Students have limited opportunities for critical thinking and reasoning.

- **Low engagement:** Heavy reliance on lectures, worksheets, and independent practice with few opportunities for collaborative deeper learning. When there is a class discussion, typically only a handful of students participate.

- **Low agency:** Lack of opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning within a structure. Students are often overly dependent on the teacher for support.

To fully realize the impact of your rigorous curriculum, instruction must shift to a **student-led model of instruction**.

In this series, we explore what rigorous curriculum implementation looks like across different subject areas—and why the model of instruction matters. You will see **concrete examples of standards-based tasks** in both teacher-directed and student-led classrooms to compare their impact.

Explore the series below and discover insights to bring rigor and engagement to your district.

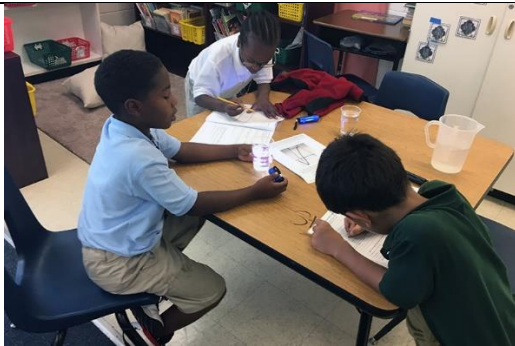## Subscribe for research-based approaches delivered to your inbox every two weeks!

Read the Series

ELA	**Math**
Science (NGSS)	**English Learners & Students in Special Education**

Model of Instruction for Deeper Learning ™ is a registered trademark of Instructional Empowerment and is research-validated.