
Learn the Lingo

Context: Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) is grounded in brain research. The research indicates that we learn best when we see meaning in new tasks. We can then connect new information with existing knowledge and experience.

CTL includes:

- Making connections that help students see the whole picture, not isolated pieces
- Integrated subjects that require students to think at a higher level
- Making learning more meaningful through practical application

A contextual learning experience:

- Is problem based
- Uses interdependent learning groups
- Contributes to the improvement of academic achievement

Academic Rigor: Rigor requires students to be engaged in the learning process. Students prepare for life, not just a test.

An academically rigorous curriculum:

- Has a clear set of goals that reflect an in depth understanding of subjects
- Emphasizes real-world applications where answers aren't apparent
- Uses multiple strategies to help students understand and transfer what they learn to new contexts

An academically rigorous curriculum:

- Does not have to be painful or difficult
- Is not shallow or fragmented
- Is not a race to cover and memorize material

Academic Relevance: Relevance in the classroom comes from real life experiences. It gives students a reason for learning.

A relevant curriculum is:

- Essential
- Meaningful
- Significant
- Important

Academic Standards: Academic standards are published statements that describe what students should know and be able to do. In addition to national and state standards, some local school districts have created their own standards.

Standards:

- Are public, written statements of expectations
- Provide a focus for instruction