

Component	2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning
<p><i>2b: Establishing a culture for learning</i></p>	<p>“A culture for learning” refers to the atmosphere in the classroom that reflects the educational importance of the work undertaken by both students and teacher. It describes the norms that govern the interactions among individuals about the activities and assignments, the value of hard work and perseverance, and the general tone of the class. The classroom is characterized by high cognitive energy, by a sense that what is happening there is important, and that it is essential to get it right. There are high expectations for all students. The classroom is a place where the teacher and students value learning and hard work.</p> <p>Elements of component 2b are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance of the content and of learning <i>In a classroom with a strong culture for learning, teachers convey the educational value of what the students are learning.</i> • Expectations for learning and achievement <i>In classrooms with robust cultures for learning, all students receive the message that, while the work is challenging, they are capable of achieving it if they are prepared to work hard.</i> • Student pride in work <i>When students are convinced of their capabilities, they are willing to devote energy to the task at hand, and they take pride in their accomplishments. This pride is reflected in their interactions with classmates and with the teacher.</i> <p>Indicators include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Belief in the value of the work</i> • <i>Expectations are high and supported through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors</i> • <i>Quality is expected and recognized</i> • <i>Effort and persistence are expected and recognized</i> • <i>Confidence in ability is evidenced by teacher and students language and behaviors</i> • <i>Expectation for all students to participate</i>

	Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<i>2b: Establishing a culture for learning</i>	The classroom culture is characterized by a lack of teacher or student commitment to learning, and/or little or no investment of student energy into the task at hand. Hard work is not expected or valued. Medium to low expectations for student achievement are the norm with high expectations for learning reserved for only one or two students.	The classroom culture is characterized by little commitment to learning by teacher or students. The teacher appears to be only “going through the motions,” and students indicate that they are interested in completion of a task, rather than quality. The teacher conveys that student success is the result of natural ability rather than hard work; high expectations for learning are reserved for those students thought to have a natural aptitude for the subject.	The classroom culture is a cognitively busy place where learning is valued by all with high expectations for learning the norm for most students. The teacher conveys that with hard work students can be successful; students understand their role as learners and consistently expend effort to learn. Classroom interactions support learning and hard work.	The classroom culture is a cognitively vibrant place, characterized by a shared belief in the importance of learning. The teacher conveys high expectations for learning by all students and insists on hard work; students assume responsibility for high quality by initiating improvements, making revisions, adding detail and/or helping peers.
Critical Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher conveys that the reasons for the work are external or trivializes the learning goals and assignments. • The teacher conveys to at least some students that the work is too challenging for them. • Students exhibit little or no pride in their work. • Class time is devoted more to socializing than to learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher’s energy for the work is neutral: indicating neither a high level of commitment nor “blowing it off.” • The teacher conveys high expectations for only some students. • Students comply with the teacher’s expectations for learning, but don’t indicate commitment on their own initiative for the work. • Many students indicate that they are looking for an “easy path.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher communicates the importance of learning, and that with hard work all students can be successful in it. • The teacher demonstrates a high regard for student abilities. • Teacher conveys an expectation of high levels of student effort. • Students expend good effort to complete work of high quality. 	<p>In addition to the characteristics of “Proficient,”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher communicates a genuine passion for the subject. • Students indicate that they are not satisfied unless they have complete understanding. • Student questions and comments indicate a desire to understand the content, rather than, for example, simply learning a procedure for getting the correct answer. • Students recognize the efforts of their classmates. • Students take initiative in improving the quality of their work.
Possible Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher tells students that they’re doing a lesson because it’s on the test, in the book, or is district directed. • Teacher says to a student: “Why don’t you try this easier problem?” • Students turn in sloppy or incomplete work. • Students don’t engage in work and the teacher ignores it. • Students have not completed their homework and the teacher does not respond. • Almost all of the activities are “busy work.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher says: “Let’s get through this.” • Teacher says: “I think most of you will be able to do this.” • Students consult with one another to determine how to fill in a worksheet, without challenging classmates’ thinking. • Teacher does not encourage students who are struggling. • Some students get to work after an assignment is given or after entering the room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher says: “This is important; you’ll need to speak grammatical English when you apply for a job.” • Teacher says: “This idea is really important! It’s central to our understanding of history.” • Teacher says: “Let’s work on this together: it’s hard, but you all will be able to do it well.” • Teacher hands a paper back to a student, saying “I know you can do a better job on this.” The student accepts it without complaint. • Students get right to work right away when an assignment is given or after entering the room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher says “It’s really fun to find the patterns for factoring polynomials.” • Student asks a classmate to explain a concept or procedure since s/he didn’t quite follow the teacher’s explanation. • Students question one another on answers. • Student asks the teacher whether s/he can re-do a piece of work since s/he now sees how it could be strengthened. • Students work even when the teacher isn’t working with them or directing their efforts.