

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

7.5 Classroom instruction is designed to intentionally address the affective dimensions of learning, such as intellectual and social dispositions, relationship building, and habits of mind.

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

“The Catholic philosophy of education has always paid special attention to the quality of interpersonal relations in the school community, especially those between teachers and students. This concern ensures that the student is seen as a person whose intellectual growth is harmonized with spiritual, religious, emotional, and social growth.”

-The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools – 2006

Benchmark 7.5 is about the impact of social-emotional learning on academic success. Education today must serve a threefold purpose: information learning, critical thinking, and preparation for life. Teachers look at the content and techniques utilized and review the underlying relationships and structures that support risk taking in the classroom, where experiences that bring excitement and motivation which enhances learning abound. A classroom atmosphere of trust and social and emotional safety assists students in feeling confident to explore new and innovative journeys. Respect for independent thinking, support and understanding of feelings and emotions, and recognition of student accomplishments provide the foundation for positive nurturing relationships between student and teacher and student with student; from these confidence will flourish for all students.

Teachers continually ask if enough is expected from students academically, not only in terms of outcomes on tests, but in terms of challenging their intellect in effective ways. That students become successful faith-filled adults who are responsible not only for themselves but for the common good is clearly communicated. Teachers empower students to have confidence in their abilities and in the strengths they bring to the school from their homes and families.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

Here are a few fundamental guiding question ask in order to be able to point to examples of the extent to which the learning described in Benchmark 7.5 is actually taking place in the school:

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- What experiences are students exposed to that develop habits of mind in class? In extracurricular activities?
- Are tasks authentic and require students to use the habits of mind?
- What processes/programs work best for different groups of students?
- What dispositions are being fostered in lesson design and assessments?
- Do curriculum documents reflect the intentional inclusion of the habits of mind and Gospel values?
- To what degree do students have the opportunity to connect with outside resources in the parish, local and global community?
- What aspects of the learning community support risk-taking and participation in real-world unpredictable situations?
- How does the school support students in their learning through authentic assessment, positive grading, meaningful homework, collaboration and team work?

III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level **3-Fully Meets Benchmark**,

students are eager to share ideas and ask questions. The affective dimensions of learning are clearly articulated in the curriculum and teachers understand and address the social, emotional, and spiritual needs of their students. Activities and assessments address critical thinking and the diverse needs of the students. Teachers use teaching and assessment strategies that respect the culturally based strengths of the child. They help students understand how to evaluate their own work and give them opportunities to do so. Gospel values permeate all aspects of the classroom experience.

At level **4-Exceeds Benchmark**,

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students confidently share ideas and ask questions. Independent thinking is encouraged and students are fully engaged in learning. Students are committed to doing quality work and persevere to completion. Activities and assessments school-wide are intentionally designed to support students' feelings, emotions and self-esteem. Gospel values provide the context for all aspects of the classroom experience. Assessments for dispositional growth are done intentionally at all grade levels. Student and community data is used to make decisions related to the social, emotional and spiritual needs of the students. Teachers identify the existing strengths of individual students and help them to recognize and develop those strengths. They celebrate many different kinds of accomplishments in their classrooms.

At level **2-Partially Meets Benchmark,**

students follow classroom procedures but in some cases are reluctant to share ideas or ask questions. Students are engaged in classroom instruction and some exhibit the ability to select habits of mind appropriate to intellectual and social situations. Habits of mind are integrated based on the experience and expertise of individual teachers. Dispositions are not clearly articulated across disciplines or grade levels.

At level **1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,**

the learning environment does not support the sharing of ideas, questioning, or authentic engagement. There is a lack of attention to the diversity of the students and teachers lack the cultural competencies needed to prepare them for the future. Instruction is content-based with no intentional application of habits of mind.

IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Provide professional development to assist teachers in recognizing the importance of the affective dimensions of learning and strategies to address them in the classroom
- Incorporate dispositions that support the social, emotional, and spiritual growth of students into the learning environment.

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To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Formally assess the culture, climate, and environment to create a caring faith-filled community for all students
- Conduct surveys to assure a match between student and teacher perceptions of the learning environment
- Be culturally competent in developing and using dispositions that will be effective for your student population

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Clearly define dispositions in a Catholic context and describe their place in the curriculum.
- Have students self-assess their thinking and ability to adapt to predictable and unpredictable situations.
- Make sure that assessments for dispositional growth are done intentionally at all grade levels
- Use student and community data to understand whom you serve

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Habits of mind
Dispositions
Learning environment