**Critical Attributes of Criterion 2c**

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| **2c:** **Creating an Environment to Support Learning** | An “environment to support 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 by a shared belief that it is essential, and rewarding, 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. Teachers who are successful in creating a culture for learning know that students are, by their nature, intellectually curious, and that one of the many challenges of teaching is to direct the students’ natural energy toward the content of the curriculum. They also know that students derive great satisfaction, and a sense of genuine power, from mastering challenging content in the same way they experience pride in mastering, for example, a difficult physical skill. Part of a culture of hard work involves precision in thought and language; teachers whose classrooms display such a culture insist that students use language to express their thoughts clearly. An emphasis on precision reflects the importance placed, by both teacher and students, on the quality of thinking; this emphasis conveys that the classroom is a business-like place where important work is being undertaken. The classroom atmosphere may be vibrant, even joyful, but it is not frivolous. An essential skill of teaching is that of managing relationships with students and ensuring that relationships among students are positive and supportive. Teachers create an environment of respect and rapport in their classrooms by the ways they interact with students and by the interactions they encourage and cultivate among students. An important aspect of respect and rapport relates to how the teacher responds to students and how students are permitted to treat one another. Patterns of interactions are critical to the overall tone of the class. In a respectful environment, all students feel valued, safe, and comfortable taking intellectual risks. They do not fear put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students. **Elements:*** *Importance of the content*
* *Expectations for learning and achievement*
* *Student pride in work*
* *Teacher interaction with students*
* *Student interactions with other students*

**Indicators include:*** *Belief in the value of what is being learned*
* *High expectations, supported through both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, for both learning and participation*
* *Expectation of high-quality work on the part of students*
* *Expectation and recognition of effort and persistence on the part of students*
* *High expectations for expression and work products*
* *Respectful talk, active listening, and turn-taking*
* *Acknowledgement of students’ backgrounds and lives outside the classroom*
* *Body language indicative of warmth and caring shown by teacher and students*
* *Physical proximity*
* *Politeness and encouragement*
* *Fairness*
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|  | **Ineffective** | **Needs Improvement** | **Effective** | **Highly Effective** |
| **Delaware Rubrics** | The classroom does not represent a culture for learning and is characterized by low teacher commitment to the subject, low expectations for student achievement, and little student pride in work.  | The classroom environment reflects only a minimal culture for learning, with only modest or inconsistent expectations for student achievement, little teacher commitment to the subject, and little student pride in work. Both teacher and students are performing at the minimal level to “get by.”  | The classroom environment represents a genuine culture for learning, with commitment to the subject on the part of the teacher and students, high expectations for student achievement, and student pride in work. .   | Students assume much of the responsibility for establishing a culture for learning in the classroom by taking pride in their work, initiating improvements to their products, and holding the work to the highest standard. Teacher demonstrates a passionate commitment to the subject.  |
| **Critical Attributes** | * The teacher conveys that there is little or no purpose for the work, or that the reasons for doing it are due to external factors.
* 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.
* Students use language incorrectly; the teacher does not correct them.
* The teacher is disrespectful toward students or insensitive to students’ ages, cultural backgrounds, and cultural levels.
* Students’ body language indicates feelings of hurt, discomfort, or insecurity.
* The teacher displays no familiarity with, or caring about. Individual students.
* The teacher disregards disrespectful interactions among students.
 | * The teacher’s energy for the work is neutral, neither indicating a high level of commitment nor ascribing the need to do the work to external forces.
* The teacher conveys high expectations for only some students.
* Students exhibit a limited commitment to complete the work on their own; many students indicate that they are looking for an “easy path.”
* The teacher’s primary concern appears to be to complete the task at hand.
* The teacher urges, but does not insist, that students use precise language.
* The quality of interactions between teacher and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect or insensitivity.
* The teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students, with uneven results.
* The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that these attempts are not entirely successful.
 | * The teacher communicates the importance of the content and the conviction that with hard work all students can master the material.
* The teacher demonstrates a high regard for students’ abilities.
* The teacher conveys an expectation of high levels of student effort.
* Students expend good effort to complete work of high quality.
* The teacher insists on precise use of language by students.
* Talk between the teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful.
* The teacher successfully responds to disrespectful behavior among students.
* Students participate willingly, but may be somewhat hesitant to offer their ideas in front of classmates.
* The teacher makes general connections with individual students.
* Students exhibit respect for the teacher.
 | * The teacher communicates passion for the subject.
* The teacher conveys the satisfaction that accompanies a deep understanding of complex content.
* Students indicate through their questions and comments a desire to understand the content.
* Students take initiative in improving the quality of their work.
* Students correct one another in their use of language.
* The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about individual students’ lives beyond the class and school.
* There is no disrespectful behavior among students.
* When necessary, students respectfully correct one another.
* Students participate without fear of put-downs or ridicule from either the teacher or other students.
* The teacher respects and encourages students’ efforts.
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