

Content Tip: Benchmarking



DEFINITION: Benchmarking is a process that helps you to identify the level of quality expected of students demonstrating the performances in a Dynamic Lesson Plan or standards-based instruction or assessment task.

GUIDELINES: Define quality as the best student performances observed on classroom, district, and state assessments, or real world performances by entrepreneurs or employees producing world class products and services, or timeless standards established by experts in their fields such as music or art. Use your benchmarking examples to reflect student performances expected for the top level of your scoring tools. Read the following background information for learning more about "Benchmarking" and how to use the process in TaskBuilder.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How does benchmarking work? Benchmarking performance is the pursuit of excellence in action. It is a process that takes the best of the best and makes it better. It helps students to examine how other students or members of the workforce have produced a quality product. And then it encourages students to at least match, if not surpass, that performance to create a new "best" for others to emulate. Using this approach means that each time your activities are completed a student(s) may establish a better benchmark performance than the current standard of quality.

TaskBuilder Tips:

1. Use the benchmarking process to define the top level score point and criteria for your scoring tool(s).
2. Benchmark examples in the real world of the performances you expect of your students in your Dynamic Lesson Plan or standards-based instruction and assessment tasks. Consider the following examples in that process:

Examples of Benchmarking Performance:

Day One - Activity One: "Writing to Persuade"

- **Assessment Benchmarking Example:** Show your students examples of student anchor papers with excellent scores on the state's writing assessment rubric as the level of quality expected in the classroom. Demonstrate how the assessment benchmarking example reflects the characteristics of the top level of your scoring tool.
- **Real World Benchmarking Example:** Show your students an award winning direct mail advertising letter sent to the general public persuading them to buy a new credit card as the level of quality expected in the classroom. Demonstrate how the real world benchmarking example reflects the characteristics of the top level of your scoring tool.