

STRONG CLASSROOM COHESION

EFFECT SIZE: 0.66

High-Quality Instruction Cycle Connection:

Step 1: Goals and Outcomes
Step 2: Planning Instruction
Step 3: Instruction

Utah Effective Teaching Standards Alignment:

- Standard 1, Elements 2, 3
- Standard 4, Elements 1, 2

Personalized, Competency Based Learning Framework Essential Component:

Social Emotional Learning
Culture of Learning

WHAT?

Strong Classroom Cohesion promotes the sense that the teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions are working toward positive learning goals. The class is perceived as fair, respectful and focuses on supporting all students in their learning.

WHY?

The effect size of strong classroom cohesion is 0.66 which is more than 1.5 years of growth for one year of learning. Strong classroom cohesion allows students to focus on the learning instead of having to expend mental energy on preserving their emotional safety and assessing threats from other individuals.

HOW?

To foster strong classroom cohesion, schools focus on cultivating a culture of safety and connectedness. Educators achieve this through co-creating classroom expectations and norms with learners, planning learning experiences that empower students to demonstrate success criteria in a variety of ways and attending to the established classroom norms.

PREPARATION:

- In order to build strong classroom cohesion, teachers invest time prior to classroom instruction to facilitate

relationship-building opportunities between students, involve students in determining classroom expectations and norms, and proactively consider how they will ensure that classroom expectations and norms will be maintained.

- Teachers select a variety of methods to support student learning and demonstration of learning during instruction.
- Design instruction to incorporate students' interests, abilities and backgrounds to provide personalized, relevant learning.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Teacher Actions

- Help students see how learning goals are relevant to their lives.
- Provide students with opportunities to work together towards their learning goals.
- Teach students social skills such as:
 - Communication.
 - Relationship-building.
 - Conflict-resolution.
- Incorporate restorative practices.

Student Look-Fors

- Leverage established classroom norms to interact with teacher and peers respectfully, collaboratively and productively.
- Co-develop and follow classroom norms.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Collaborate productively including effective use of positive and constructive feedback.
- Engage in learning activities.

Reflection

- In what ways did members of our classroom work together towards positive learning goals today?
- Were there any students who were not engaged in working together towards positive learning goals? If so, what can I do next time to encourage their participation?
- If classroom norms and expectations were not adhered to by students, how did I intervene? Would I do anything differently next time?

Go Deeper—Resources to learn more

Mullen, B., & Copper, C. (1994). The relation between group cohesiveness and performance: An integration. *Psychological Bulletin*, 115(2), 210–227. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.115.2.210>

[PBIS: Supporting and Responding to Students' Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Needs: Evidence-Based Practices for Educators](#)

[The Restorative Practices Handbook: For Teachers, Disciplinarians, and Administrators](#)



HOME CONNECTIONS

- Share what parents and students can expect in the classroom and how learning goals are relevant.
- Periodically send home updates including what the student is doing well and how parents can reinforce the concepts learned.
- Engage parents assertively and respectfully when their student isn't meeting classroom norms by working to understand the parent's perceptions of what is needed before sharing suggested supports.

For further information, please contact:
Jennifer Throndsen, Director
Teaching and Learning
Jennifer.Throndsen@schools.utah.gov