

# Utah Spotlight: Inspiring Educators

January 2022

## Fostering Deep Learning

### Leveraging the 6Cs

At Timpanogos High School, their collective mission is to “empower all students to become lifelong learners and contribute to society.” To achieve their mission, the dedicated educators focus their work on two goals:

1. Deliberately foster connection and well-being of students and staff
2. Deliberately develop the 6Cs in students and staff.

To achieve these two goals, the school’s instructional leadership team works tirelessly to create the conditions for and build capacity in all teachers so that a culture of learning can thrive. They support all teachers with ongoing professional learning, resources, and dedicated time for deliberate collaboration both within the school and across the district.

Faculty work with students daily to deliberately develop the 6Cs of deep learning: creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, citizenship, and character. As the school leadership team shared, “The 6Cs are our goal and we use the content (core standards) to get there.” More specifically, to realize their goal of deliberately developing the 6Cs, teachers use the deep learning components and intentionally plan and facilitate learning that uses the essential standards to accomplish the deep learning goal.

For example, Anna Davis, a fine arts educator at THS, teaches a drawing course. In one unit of study, she may focus her instruction on developing her students’ creativity and leverage the fine arts standards and the design and construction of a drawing to foster the creative process and develop creativity. Whereas, in Brian Saxton’s English class, he may be working on developing character and provide learning experiences that support students in responding to a written prompt that requests students to illustrate an aspect of character by answering a question like, “In an ideal society how would people work through conflict?”

“Our destination is skills and dispositions—content essentials or extracurricular activities are our vehicle to take us to the deep learning destination.

Creativity

Critical Thinking

Collaboration



Communication

Citizenship

Character

## Timpanogos High School *Alpine School District*

### Instructional Leadership Team



Joe Jensen Ryan Francom Brook Davies



Bvron Tanner Hope Blackburn Steve Durtschi



Brian Saxton Michelle Jensen

### School Demographics

Total Enrollment: 1388 students

- 30% of students of color
- 24% of students with limited income

# Fostering Deep Learning

## Leveraging the 6Cs

The THS journey to deep learning has been a consistent schoolwide focus. For more than five years now, the faculty has been dedicated to creating the cultural conditions necessary to foster deep learning. In the timeline (pictured below), the driving focus has evolved, but hasn't changed. Deep learning has stayed central to the school's visionary work all while affording the staff to grow and deepen their understanding which has led to incremental improvements over time.

As the staff learns more by taking calculated risks that extend their knowledge and skills in the arena of deep learning, there is an air of transparency and trust between the administration and the teachers as well as the teachers and the students. Teachers will explicitly tell students (and parents) that they are trying something new and that it may not work out perfectly, but the potential for success is worth the risk. This modeling demonstrated by the teachers encourages students to also take risks in their learning and creates deep trust between students and families.

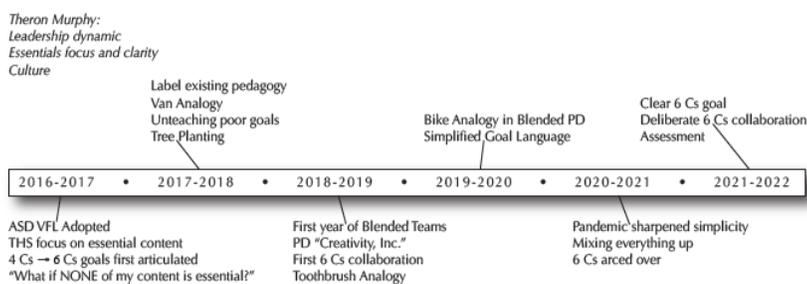
The risk taking demonstrated by teacher also shows the trust that the administration has in its staff. By allowing teachers to innovate and tinker with their

craft, teachers feel supported in their professional growth process and are committed to serving students to the best of their capacity.

Timpanogos High's strong professional learning community (PLC) culture has been foundational in their work around deep learning because it frames the change process for teachers as they strive to go beyond a traditional content knowledge focus. Rich content essentials are still crucial to deep learning because teachers must have a medium to work in to develop the Cs in students. However, by focusing on skills and dispositions as their goal, they work around the PLC results cycle differently than if they were only focused on content knowledge (see image below).

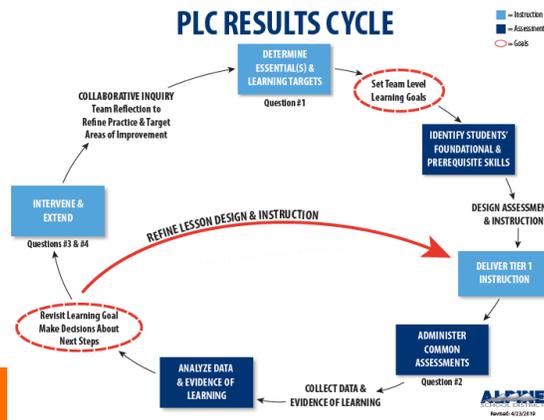
THS's collective purpose has significantly impacted student learning outcomes on state assessments. In fact, THS is #1 in English Language Arts and #3 in Mathematics as measured by the Aspire assessment in Alpine District. Given THS is one of the most diverse high schools in Alpine, this is evidence that their efforts are working to serve each and every student to achieve their potential.

### Timpanogos' Progression Toward Schoolwide Deeper Learning



### Cultural Conditions for Deeper Learning

- Trust**
  - autonomy
  - not top-down
  - freedom to experiment & take risks
  - permission to make mistakes
  - pursue real goals and pedagogy
  - sustainable, authentic
- Trajectory**
  - OK not knowing all steps
  - confident in direction
  - taking steps together
  - growth mindset
- Team**
  - leadership collaboration
  - leadership ratio
  - team vs. group dynamic
  - true singleton engagement
  - hall conversations vs. meeting conversations



### Additional Reading Resources:

- 3 Big Ideas of a PLC
- Leading Daily Deep Learning

## Alignment to Utah's Personalized, Competency Based Learning Framework

The instructional practices and intentional moves towards THS's goals are well-aligned with three essential components of Utah's Personalized, Competency Based Learning Framework.

**Culture of Learning:** The school culture is designed around their north star—the 6Cs of deep learning—which includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that students need to become lifelong learners and contribute to society. They hold high expectations for each student. For example, THS has the highest percentage of students enrolled in early college coursework such as concurrent enrollment or Advanced Placement (AP) in Alpine District. Teacher clarity is a primary strategy the faculty uses to empower students in their learning.

**Learner Agency:** Teachers are trusted and provided with autonomy for how they will support their students in developing deep learning. They work collaboratively with their peers to continuously advance their capacity to advance student learning. Administrators encourage teachers to take “best-practice-informed” risks.

**Social Emotional Learning:** Establishing and maintaining positive student and teacher relationships is at the center of the vision of the school and is part of the very fabric of each decision made at the school. Teachers are intentional and purposeful in the ways they interact with students to create a positive learning environment in which students feel like they can take risks, grow their character, and deepen their skills.

## EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

The faculty of Timpanogos High School engage in a variety of effective, evidence-based practices including:

- 1) **Collective Teacher Efficacy** (Effect Size 1.57) Teachers work together within the school in content-like teams as well as across district in content specific teams to collaborate on how to use their content to achieve the 6Cs of deep learning.
- 2) **Teacher-Student Relationships** (Effect Size 0.47) THS staff are very intentional about their interactions both inside and outside of the classroom to foster positive relationships with their students. They believe that these relationships advance their ability to support their students in achieving at high levels.
- 3) **Student Engagement** (Effect Size 0.56) To support students in knowing what active engagement looks like compared to passive engagement, teachers take time modeling and explaining the continuum of engagement (Berry, 2020).
- 4) **Teacher Clarity** (Effect Size 0.84) THS teachers work to clearly communicate each lesson's intentions along with what success looks like to students so that the desired learning for the day is evident and more readily accessible.



Image: Engagement Posters created by THS faculty member, Anna Davis, [engagementposters.com](http://engagementposters.com).

The goal of the Utah Spotlight is to offer Utah educators inspiring stories of educational strategies that impact student learning in dramatic ways, and importantly, designed to encourage and support educators in enriching their own practice. It is an opportunity to shine a light on inspiring and engaging practices in education with ideas worth spreading.