Shell Education

50 STRATEGIES for Cooperative Learning

Sabrina Winkleman



for Cooperative Learning

Sabrina Winkleman, M.Ed.

To Ma—may the liberation you experienced on Walker's Creek continue to heal our lineage. Your love is a constant balm.

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Welcome

What are your experiences with wholeness in education? How often do you consider and plan for the many domains of development: physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and emotional, particularly as they connect to your and your students' identities? How frequently do you think about the brain in relationship to the nervous system? And how might wholeness move us toward equitable learning environments where both adults and students thrive?

I know these aren't easy questions—yet I believe answering them is critical to your students' well-being and learning, as well as your own. And my hope is that the strategies in this book help you build and support the skills, habits, and mindsets needed to not just navigate but embrace wholeness. Wholeness honors the differences and complexities of humanity and moves us toward a more caring and just world.

Navigating wholeness has been a long journey for me. Slowly developing reflective practices like mindfulness and focusing on cultivating my own social and emotional skills are steps that have positively impacted my nervous system, mental health, and sense of joy and humility in the world. I find this particularly important as someone who has a high adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) score. The score is not destiny. I am proof, as are many others! High ACEs scores are not destiny for our students and communities either. When we choose to implement strategies that consider and welcome our students' wholeness, we create identity-affirming learning environments that protect against mental health risks, support joy, boost academics, and interrupt historical inequities.

Cooperative learning, alongside transformative social and emotional learning (tSEL), is a powerful way to practice wholeness in the classroom through its emphasis on student voice and collaboration. You probably already use many elements of both cooperative learning and social and emotional learning with your students. This book's simple and effective strategies emphasize the relationship between the two concepts, offering ways to create an identity-affirming learning environment that honors wholeness and well-being for all of us—adults included.

This book does not contain a list of basic cooperative learning lessons or activities. Instead, each strategy offers a way to explicitly pair a tSEL competency with the academic goals and objectives of any cooperative learning lesson. These strategies also highlight the importance of cooperative learning that is responsive to all student identities; the strategies are therefore centered in healing. This partnership of the tSEL strategy with your responsive cooperative learning lesson supports well-being for you and your students.

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