Where can I find research evaluating Sanford Harmony
The most up-to-date and concise summary of the research that is available can be found in a white paper posted on the Sanford Education Center website. The title of this paper is called “Summary of Research Evaluating the Sanford Harmony Program.”

In the research summary, president of National University, Dr. David Andrews, discusses the research evidence that shows that social and emotional skills can be effectively taught in schools, which has a direct impact on improving school-related outcomes (i.e., self-esteem and academic performance), and decreasing disruptive behaviors. Dr. Andrews has over 30 years of experience in child development/SEL.

How was Sanford Harmony developed?
Sanford Harmony was developed and researched at the Denny Sanford School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University (ASU) and was first introduced into elementary schools in 2008. Researchers at ASU sought to identify practical methods for reducing relational conflicts in the classroom while increasing student confidence, relationship skills, and academic excellence. Incorporating best practices developed through their research, they created Sanford Harmony to achieve these goals by teaching understanding and empathy through classroom discussions, stories, activities, and lessons. Sanford Harmony was migrated to National University for the purposes of continued development, dissemination, and evaluation.

Was Sanford Harmony pilot-tested?
The program was pilot-tested at Arizona State University (ASU) prior to its migration to National University for the purposes of continued development, dissemination, and evaluation. Initial research conducted by ASU indicates positive results, including improvements in student academic achievement and empathy, as well as a decrease in bullying, teasing, aggression, and stereotyping.

How has Sanford Harmony been tested or validated? And on what populations?
Three rigorous evaluations of Harmony components have been conducted since the program's inception in 2008. All three studies utilized quasi-experimental design and found that Harmony components had a positive impact on children's peer relations when compared to control groups. Two studies focused on fifth-grade students participating in relationship-building activities, while one preschool study evaluated the impact of the “Buddy Up” everyday practice.
Is there a recent research article published on Sanford Harmony?

One recent article “The Efficacy of a Relationship Building Intervention in 5th grade,” published by the Journal of School Psychology in 2017. On pages 77 and 78, the authors of the article discuss Relationship Building Interventions (RBIs). The RBIs are equivalent to the five Harmony units: Diversity and Inclusion, Empathy and Critical Thinking, Communication, Problem Solving, and Peer Relationships. RBI units, corresponding goals, and activity descriptions are presented:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RBI units</th>
<th>Overall goal</th>
<th>Activity descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and Inclusion</td>
<td>To promote an inclusive environment and a common classroom identity</td>
<td>Students are provided with opportunities to get to know each other and are taught to recognize and appreciate each other's similarities and differences. Students develop a common classroom identity by working together to develop a classroom name and motto.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathy and Critical Thinking</td>
<td>To facilitate an awareness of the connection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; to promote empathy and incremental thinking; to reduce stereotyped thinking</td>
<td>Students engage in interactive exercises and games to become aware of how their thoughts influence their feelings and behaviors, to learn the skills associated with empathic responding, to recognize the malleability of human traits and abilities, and to identify the consequences associated with stereotyped thinking. Students participate in observational and experiential exercises to increase their awareness of healthy and unhealthy communication patterns. Students practice using effective communication skills and avoiding ineffective communication skills in cooperative learning group activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>To foster the use of effective communication skills during social interactions and cooperative work groups</td>
<td>Students participate in activities to identify different types of conflict styles and the benefits and costs associated with each style. Students learn and practice a step-by-step approach for successfully resolving interpersonal conflicts and are encouraged to use this approach whenever conflicts arise at school. Students participate in activities to consider the qualities important to friendships, to develop strategies for minimizing the costs associated with cross-gender friendships, to learn effective responses for dealing with bullying situations, and to practice providing peers with support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>To cultivate the ability to solve interpersonal problems effectively</td>
<td>Students participate in activities to consider the qualities important to friendships, to develop strategies for minimizing the costs associated with cross-gender friendships, to learn effective responses for dealing with bullying situations, and to practice providing peers with support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Relationships</td>
<td>To encourage supportive interactions and friendships among classmates</td>
<td>Students participate in activities to consider the qualities important to friendships, to develop strategies for minimizing the costs associated with cross-gender friendships, to learn effective responses for dealing with bullying situations, and to practice providing peers with support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the purpose of the evaluation being conducted by John Hopkins University?
The research being conducted by John Hopkins University is a mixed methods study (survey and case studies) of how practitioners and students in diverse schools use, experience, and react to Sanford Harmony. The JHU study is exploring how Harmony impacts such educational outcomes as school climate, academic and relationships skills. The final report will be completed by summer 2017.

How does Sanford Harmony align with CASEL competencies? (CASEL is the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) Harmony uses the 2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs (Preschool and Elementary School Edition) as a framework for evaluating effectiveness and guiding objectives. CASEL’s five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies correspond with not only the specific Harmony objectives for grade levels K-6, but also correspond to the Common Core State Standards. For more information, please see the Sanford Harmony Kindergarten-sixth Grade CASEL Alignment Guide: Common Core & CASEL Alignment Guide, including Harmony Objectives for each grade level are also available here.

How does the program address cultural responsiveness?
Sanford Harmony activities, including the Meet Up and Buddy Up, are excellent ways for building inclusive classroom relationships and can be adapted for use with all students. Meet up and Buddy Up are specifically designed to provide students with multiple opportunities to interact with and understand peers.

Establishing classroom goals encourages students to use skills learned from Meet Up throughout the school day. By reinforcing the things that are important to their classmates, students build supportive peer relationships and stronger classroom bonds. The “share” aspect of Meet Up provides students with the chance to share personal experiences, achievements, or special belongings with the peers and teacher in the classroom, while the “community check in” affords students the chance to learn more about each other. Through such repeated positive experiences during Meet Up, students gain the opportunity to practice important skills that help to foster connections in the classroom, promote communication, and facilitate student interaction. In summary, Meet Up activities facilitate positive experiences with diverse peers to help break down barriers.

Relatedly, the Buddy Up activities, creates opportunities for students to get to know one another, form connections, and
learn together with peers. Students are paired with a different buddy each week to intentionally create opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to get to know one another, and provide opportunities for students who may not typically choose to spend time together to participate in collaborative and enjoyable activities.

Lastly, each of the five core Harmony themes address an important need in schools to create positive and proactive environments that support the student success of diverse students. The five core harmony themes are: diversity and inclusion; empathy and critical thinking; communication; problem solving; and peer relationships. For more information, please visit our [website](#).

**How does Sanford Harmony address its use for children with disabilities?**
Sanford Harmony activities, including the Meet Up and Buddy Up, are excellent ways for building inclusive classroom relationships and can be adapted for use with all students.

**Has Sanford Harmony’s fidelity been assessed?**
Research is currently being conducted by John Hopkins University to assess fidelity through a mixed methods study design, which includes survey and case studies. The John Hopkins University evaluation focuses on examining how practitioners and students in diverse schools use, experience, and react to the Sanford Harmony. In addition, the JHU study is exploring how Harmony impacts such educational outcomes as school climate, academic and relationships skills. The final report will be completed summer 2017.

**PFor further reading...**
**Pilot Testing of the Sanford Harmony Program**

Initial research conducted by ASU researchers found measurable increases in achievement, empathy, and other positive student behaviors. This research is discussed in the *Handbook of Social Influences in School Contexts* (Hanish, Martin, Miller, Fabes, DeLay, and Updegraff, 2016).

The *Handbook of Social Influences in School Contexts* book may be viewed online through the National University Library.

In the *Handbook of Social Influences in School Contexts*, chapter four is authored by ASU researchers and provides
background on the pilot-testing process for Sanford Harmony. The article cited to support this work is by Martin, Fabes, Hanish, Gaertner, Miller, Foster, and Updegraff (2017). This is the same article used in reference to the figure below:

Excerpts from chapter four help to explain the research evidence for Harmony:

**Background on Harmony, discussed on page 58:**
“Over the past seven years, our team has worked to address the above-noted needs for building positive and inclusive peer relationships in school with development of the Sanford Harmony Program (SHP®), which is a preschool and elementary classroom-based program administered by teachers” (Hanish et al., 2016, p. 58).

**Research and initial evaluations conducted on Harmony, discussed on page 58:**
“Outcome analyses from two initial short-term evaluation trials (using school-matched cluster designs with pre- and post-test comparisons of intervention and control classrooms) of selected components showed that the program was successful in improving key indicators of the social harmony model, including improved relational competencies, increased breadth of peer relationships, enhancement of peer socialization processes, increased school climate, and greater academic performance” (Hanish et al., 2016, p. 58).
Sanford Harmony: Evidence from the Research Literature

Article Title

The Efficacy of a relationship building intervention in 5th grade.

Abstract

The present study reports initial efficacy data for a new school-based intervention - the Relationship Building Intervention (RBI) - that includes a series of teacher-facilitated, structured activities designed to promote positive peer relationships and inclusive classroom communities. The RBI was evaluated in fifth-grade classrooms by estimating multilevel model (MLM) analyses of covariance (ANCOVA) comparing 368 fifth-grade students in intervention classrooms with 259 fifth-graders in control classrooms on social behaviors, perceptions of classroom connectedness, and academic performance. Controlling for pretest scores, cohort, and demographic variables, findings revealed that students who participated in the RBI liked school more, felt a greater sense of classroom identification and inclusion, were perceived by teachers to be less aggressive, and performed better academically than students who were in control classrooms. Further, implementation data showed that students and teachers responded positively to the activities. These results suggest that the RBI is a promising approach for improving the social and learning environment in fifth-grade classrooms.

Sanford Harmony: Evidence from the Research Literature

Article Title

Using an intergroup contact approach to improve gender relationships: A case study of a classroom-based intervention

Abstract

Children from infancy develop attachments to significant others in their immediate social environment, and over time become aware of other groups (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, classroom, sports) that they do or do not belong to and why. Recent research shows that children’s attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours are significantly influenced by these memberships and that the influence increases through childhood. This handbook delivers the first comprehensive, international reference on this critical topic.

Sanford Harmony: Evidence from the Research Literature

Article Title

*Peer influence on academic performance: A social network analysis of social-emotional intervention effects.*

Abstract

Longitudinal social network analysis (SNA) was used to examine how a social-emotional learning (SEL) intervention may be associated with peer socialization on academic performance. Fifth graders (N = 631; 48% girls; 9 to 12 years) were recruited from six elementary schools. Intervention classrooms (14) received a relationship building intervention (RBI) and control classrooms (8) received elementary school as usual. At pre- and post-test, students nominated their friends, and teachers completed assessments of students’ writing and math performance. The results of longitudinal SNA suggested that the RBI was associated with friend selection and peer influence within the classroom peer network. Friendship choices were significantly more diverse (i.e., less evidence of social segregation as a function of ethnicity and academic ability) in intervention compared to control classrooms, and peer influence on improved writing and math performance was observed in RBI but not control classrooms. The current findings provide initial evidence that SEL interventions may change social processes in a classroom peer network and may break down barriers of social segregation and improve academic performance.

Sanford Harmony: Evidence from the Research Literature

Article Title

Social harmony in schools: A framework for understanding peer experiences and their effects.

Abstract

The Handbook of Social Influences in School Contexts draws from a growing body of research on how and why various aspects of social relationships and contexts contribute to children's social and academic functioning within school settings. Comprised of the latest studies in developmental and educational psychology, this comprehensive volume is perfect for researchers and students of educational psychology.


Other Useful Resources

SEL Webinar