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Educational Energy Comes From Visual Inspiration At Independent Day School-Corbett Campus

One Friday in late February, educators flocked to Independent Day School-Corbett Campus (IDS-CC) to witness model teachers in action. It is here that the world-renowned Kagan Cooperative Learning Academy, a leader in educational professional development and highly regarded for its dramatic results in student achievement, has hosted its annual Winter Academy for more than ten years.

Modeling the structures that are key to the Kagan process, the IDS teachers conducted classes as usual, while the visiting teachers, from as far away as Great Britain and as close as Celebration, Florida, watched in awe at the excitement generated in each class.

IDS prides itself on being a private school with a public purpose. Hosting this event annually is a way for its faculty to share their skills with new and veteran teachers who pursue the same goal: to prepare students for the future—helping them be the best they can be, both academically and socially.



The energy was electric as hundreds of educators canvassed the IDS campus, visiting classrooms and participating in workshops that took place over the weekend and into Monday.

“It was really inspirational to see how this type of teaching is impacting the kids,” said Janice Garratt-Simpson, a teacher and administrator from England.

During this impressive event for K-12 educators, the cheerful classrooms at IDS were lined with educators, ready with clipboards and pens, energetically taking notes on how to run engaging

classes with cooperative learning structures that boost student performance—while instilling dignity and respect for all.

“The teachers I saw were so terrific, the students didn’t miss a beat and I just thought: That’s the way it should be,” said Thomas Gifford, a principal from Port Charlotte, Florida who hopes to begin using what he saw at IDS in his own school in the coming school year.

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Fredda Johnson, an administrator from Plant City, Florida was visiting IDS for the second time and commented on the results she's seen in her school since implementing Kagan techniques. "The biggest difference is that the kids want to be in the classrooms where the teachers are doing Kagan, where they can actively participate. We have more discipline problems in the non-Kagan classrooms."

Brian Kurek, a teacher from Burlington, North Carolina shared his sentiments, "I found new ways, very specific ways, to engage my students. I hope to keep in touch with the teachers I saw yesterday. I had a really great experience."

Perhaps the most singular impression gleaned from the collective of all those involved in the Academy event was that extraordinary energy that comes from inspiration. Indeed, an exciting sensation of new possibilities spread through the participants. This impression is significant, as it is sure to transfer directly to their corresponding classrooms, inspiring, in turn, their students.

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