

Independent Day School-Corbett Campus Teachers Model Cooperative Learning for Kagan Seminar Participants

Hundreds of educators observe cooperative learning strategies and techniques at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus.



Working in teams, Dave Freeman's sixth grade social studies class models a Kagan cooperative learning structure called "Numbered Heads Together" during the national Winter Kagan Cooperative Learning Academy hosted at IDS.

March 1, 2011 (TAMPA, Fla.) – In Kim Fowler and Debi Brockmeyer's first/second grade multi-age class at Independent Day School-Corbett Campus, Max Fuller turned knee-to-knee to face his "shoulder partner," Kacy Krig. In soft voices, they took turns naming as many words as they could think of that rhymed with "end."

"Depend," said Max.

"Oh, that's a great one," said Kacy, complimenting and supporting her partner.

Meanwhile, visiting teachers standing along the back of the classroom jotted down notes. They carefully observed the interaction between the two students and among their classmates also working with partners.

A simple sequence of steps called a RallyRobin, the activity was but one example of a Kagan Cooperative Learning structure. Independent Day School-Corbett Campus teachers and students modeled dozens of the structures for more than 150 visiting teachers from around the state, the nation and the globe, including Denmark and Belize, during the national Winter Kagan Cooperative Learning Academy hosted for the 14th consecutive year at the school last month.

Kagan is a leader in educational professional development and highly regarded for its dramatic results in student achievement. Dr. Spencer Kagan's teachings are based on international research he began in 1969 and have been scientifically proven to produce higher academic achievement while improving social skills and cooperativeness. IDS is noted worldwide as a model school for teaching with cooperative learning strategies and its teachers are masters of Kagan structures.

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In Tom Bronson and Thelma Rosenberg's seventh grade Algebra I class, for example, Chandni Patel and Falisha Kurji practiced simplifying rational expressions using the Sage-N-Scribe structure. Taking one problem at a time, they alternated responsibilities, working through and writing out the answers and coaching and commending each other's efforts.

IDS teachers agree that regardless of the instructional strategy and whether it involves pairs and/or teams of four, such as RoundTable Consensus, cooperative learning structures are invaluable for engaging students and providing research-proven academic, social and psychological benefits.

"Cooperative learning creates a positive climate in the classroom so students can share what they are thinking but also provides for individual accountability," said Intermediate Division leader and fifth grade teacher Michelle Hill.

"Cooperative learning creates confidence that enables students to be successful when they move to independent work," said Ann Cashen, IDS third/fourth grade multi-age teacher.

Because IDS is a private school with a public purpose, teachers are enthusiastic about sharing the power of cooperative learning with visiting teachers throughout the year, including during the annual Kagan workshop. "It's a way for all of us to share the gift of cooperative learning and other strategies with teachers, who then open a whole new way of learning for their students."

In some cases, those children may be an ocean away. Ulla Krogsgaard who teaches language in Slagelse, Denmark and attended the conference with two colleagues said, "The trainers and teachers were inspiring. It's been wonderful to see the structures in practice with teachers and children."

"The atmosphere and the energy I experienced at IDS were just incredible," said Julie Justin, a reading/language arts teacher from Hillsborough County. "I felt it from the first moment I stepped on the campus."



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Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, nonsectarian private school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County with over 500 students from PreK3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience the International Baccalaureate Programme in a highly academic and nurturing environment focused on excellence and excitement in learning. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 6,500 visitors observing and learning from IDS-CC teachers. For more information, visit www.idsyas.com or contact the Admissions Office at 813-961-3087 for a personal tour.

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