

Learning And Fun: Synonym Or Antonym

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Tampa, Fla.

At Tampa's Independent Day School – Corbett Campus, the enthusiastic answer is: SYNONYM, thanks to the use of the Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures.

Based on an international research program begun by Dr. Spencer Kagan in 1969, the Kagan technique has proven to increase academic achievement, enhance self-esteem and awaken new levels of learning in all types of students.

Long a model school for the highly regarded Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures, IDS again hosted a Kagan Workshop on February 8th and 9th. Visiting educators not only enjoyed the opportunity to witness the learning structures first hand in the classroom, but also to attend workshops led by Dr. Kagan and his wife, author Laurie Kagan.

In Jennifer Jones' and Sammi Borosh's blended first-second grade multiage class, students learned the difference between synonyms and antonyms through the use of a technique called "Showdown." Working in groups of four, the students independently answered a question, then shared/checked answers and coached each other as needed. At the end of each round, "Showdown" also included a bit of a "brain break" in the form of a celebratory "team cheer." The children took turns serving as Showdown Captain for each round, encouraging the development of leadership skills in addition to building vocabulary.

Across the vibrant campus in Rania ElChaar's and Lori Hohmann's PreK4 class, the children were seated in small groups practicing writing their numbers through the Kagan structure "Show Me," by following Mrs. ElChaar's rhyming verbal instructions:

"Backward 'C', backward 'C,' that's how we make a three!"
"Start at the top, down you run, that's the way we make a one!"
"Across the sky, slide down from heaven, that's the way we make a seven!"

After each rhyming clue, the teacher called: "One, two, three – show me!" then offered praise and coaching as warranted, followed by a short cheering session.

And in Michael Vokoun's eighth-grade English class, the students were actively engaged in the "Quiz Quiz Trade" learning structure, pairing up, asking each other a question found on note cards about the formal five-paragraph essay, coaching and/or praising the response, and then switching partners after each set of questions. This structure allows students to be up and moving while also reviewing a large amount of material in a short time. However, it also allows students to work on their social skills as well.

"Learning problems go away when kids are engaged, moving about and interacting with each other," observed workshop attendee, Mary Beth Smoot, of the Orange County School District Instructional Support team.

At IDS, the Kagan structures, along with other learning techniques in line with the M.O.R.E. (Multiple Options for Results in Education) philosophy, keep the joy and challenge in learning and make it possible for every child to have to have *A Teacher of the Year*.

Founded in 1968, Independent Day School-Corbett Campus is a fully accredited, independent school located on Orange Grove Drive in northwest Hillsborough County with 550 students from PreK3 through 8th grade. At IDS, all children experience learning in a nurturing and highly academic environment focused on excellence and developing a positive self-concept. IDS-CC has become recognized as an exemplary school with over 3,000 visitors observing and learning from and with IDS-CC teachers. For more information about IDS visit www.idsy.com.

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