

Kagan Strategies

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Objectives

Understand how to implement cooperative learning in the classroom in ways that meet adolescent needs and make learning effective.

Organization

The following Kagan strategies are organized in alphabetical order for easy access.

Blind Sequencing (teambuilding, thinking)

Teams work to sequence cards in their proper order, but there is a catch – each student holds his or her own cards, and no one else can see what is on them.

1. One student on a team will be the dealer. He equally distributes cards among team members face down making sure no one can see what's on the cards.
2. Students mark the back of their cards with initials, a number, letter or geometric shape to identify them as their cards.
3. In turn, each student describes his or her cards as well as possible to teammates in an attempt to make it easy for the team to sequence the cards.
4. After all the cards have been described, the team works together to put the cards in the proper order. Students sequence their cards face down on the table. No card is set on the table unless all teammates agree. If the team gets stuck, only the original card holder can peek at the card and describe it to the team.
5. Once the team thinks they have properly sequenced the cards, they flip over the cards and check to see how they did. If the sequence is correct, they celebrate with a team cheer. If the sequence is incorrect, they correct it and discuss what went wrong and how they could do better next time.

Brainstorming (teambuilding, thinking)

Each student is given a special role and contributes to the team's "storm" of ideas.

1. Teacher assigns roles
 - a. Speed sergeant – encourages speed
 - b. Sultan of silly – encourages silly ideas too
 - c. Synergy guru – encourages teammates to build on other ideas too.

- d. Sergeant support – encourages all ideas, suspends judgement
 - e. One student will also serve as secretary and record each idea on a slip of paper (can be in addition to another role).
2. Teacher announces a topic which prompts students to generate creative ideas. A prompt should have no right or wrong answers; it should be open-ended enough for students to come up with loads of creative ideas. “Your team needs to raise \$100 for a trip to the museum. Think of all the things you can do to raise the money.”
 3. In teams, students generate ideas. Remind them of their roles. The secretary is not to stack or hold the slips of paper but to lay them out for the team to see.
- **Alternative: Thinkpad brainstorming – No roles. Students generate items on thinkpad slips, announcing them to teammates and placing them in the center of the table.

Carousel Feedback (communication skills, information sharing)

Teams rotate from project to project to give feedback to other teams.

1. Teams stand in front of their own projects.
2. Teams rotate clockwise to the next project.
3. For a specified time, teams discuss their reactions to the other team’s project – no writing at this time.
4. Person #1 records feedback on feedback form.
5. Teacher calls time.
6. Teams rotate, observe, discuss, and give feedback on next project. A new recorder is selected each round.
7. Teams continue until each team rotates back to its own project or until the teacher calls time.
8. Teams review the feedback they received from the other teams.

Corners

Students move to different corners of the room, depending on their point of view. This activity may help them see that not everyone shares the same point of view, and it may stretch their own way of thinking.

1. The teacher announces “corners.” Then she announces the choices for each corner of the room. “If you were to be a doctor, which specific profession would you choose: cardiologist, psychiatrist, dermatologist, or pediatrician?”
2. Students are then given a small amount of silent think time to make a choice. They will write the name of their corner on a piece of paper but should not discuss it with anyone else.
3. Teacher tells students to go to their chosen corners. Once they are in their corner, they must find a partner to talk with – someone not on their regular team.
4. Pairs will then discuss the reason(s) for their choice. Teacher will then select a few students from each corner to share what his or her partner shared.

Fan-N-Pick (teambuilding, mastery, thinking, communication)

Students play a card game to respond to questions.

1. Student 1 holds question cards in a fan and says, "Pick a card, any card!"
2. Student 2 picks a card, reads the question out loud and allows five seconds of think time.
3. Student 3 answers the question.
4. Student 4 restates the answer.
 - a. For right or wrong answers, Student 4 checks and then either praises or coaches.
 - b. For higher-level thinking questions which have no right or wrong answer, Student 4 does not check for correctness, but praises and paraphrases the thinking that went into the answer.
5. Students rotate roles one clockwise for each new round.

Find My Rule (thinking, classbuilding)

A great strategy for encouraging logical thinking and inductive/deductive reasoning. This activity works well for introducing a new unit, grouping students randomly for cooperative learning, and for developing problem-solving and categorizing skills.

1. Teacher prepares identity cards, related to an overall theme and to each other by a "rule" (one per student).
2. Teacher announces that students will need to form groups of a given size by circulating throughout the room to locate students who have identity cards that are connected or related to their own by some commonality or "rule."
3. Teacher gives an example and checks for understanding.
4. Teacher passes an envelope containing all identity cards around the classroom.
5. Students take one card each and circulate around the room to try and find others who have identity cards that are related to theirs.
6. Once all members of the group have been found, the group will find a place to sit together.
7. Group members will articulate the rule that connects all their identities and will try to guess the theme to which all the groups are connected.

Find the Fiction (teambuilding, mastery, thinking)

Students pick out the fictitious statement from a set of three statements.

1. Teammates write 3 statements: two true, one false.
2. One student on each team stands, then reads his or her statements to teammates.
3. Without consulting teammates, each student writes down his or her own best guess as to which statement is false.
4. Teammates discuss and reach consensus on their "best guess."
5. Teammates announce their guess.

6. The standing student announces the false statement.
7. Students celebrate: If the team guessed correctly, the standing student claps for teammates. If the team was stumped and didn't guess correctly, teammates clap for the standing student.
8. The next teammate stands to share. The process is repeated from Step 2.

Formations (teambuilding)

This activity might be particularly appealing students with bodily/kinesthetic intelligence.

1. The teacher announces a "formation" and the ground rules to all teams.
2. Each team puts their heads together to discuss how they will form the shape, letter, number, etc., making sure they follow the ground rules, involve everyone in their team, and use only their bodies to form the shape.
3. The team then creates the formation.

***Try with alphabet letters, nature shapes, polygons, road signs, or household objects.*

Inside-Outside Circle (classbuilding, mastery, thinking, information sharing)

In concentric circles, students rotate to face new partners and answer questions.

1. Students stand in two concentric circles, facing a partner. The inside circle faces out; the outside circle faces in.
2. Students use flash cards to ask questions of their partner, or they may take turns responding to a teacher question(s).
3. Partners switch roles: outside circle students ask, listen, then praise or coach.
4. After each question or set of questions, students in the outer or inner circle rotate to the next partner. (Teacher may call rotation numbers: "Rotate three ahead.")

Jigsaw (interdependence, status, equalization)

This is a great way for students to feel like experts and share information about what they know!

1. Each student on the team becomes an "expert" on one topic by working and sharing with members from other teams assigned the corresponding expert topic.
2. Upon returning to their teams, each one in turn teaches the group about his/her expert topic. Works well for acquisition and presentation of new material and review.

Line-Ups (classbuilding)

Students discover that they each occupy a unique position in the class, and the class can see at a glance where everyone stands.

1. Teacher describes how students should line up (e.g. alphabetically by first name, by birth date, shortest to tallest)
2. Students must find out where they stand relative to classmates.
3. Students may talk to a partner next to them to share how they feel about their position in the line-up. “How do you feel about your name?” “What do you wish your name could be?”
4. The teacher may then call for a different line-up.

Mix Freeze Group (classbuilding, mastery)

Students rush to form groups of a specific size, hoping not to land in “Lost and Found.”

1. Students mix around the room.
2. Teacher calls, “Freeze!”
3. Students freeze
4. Teacher asks a question to which the answer is a number or corresponds to a key with a number. (Examples: How many planets are there in our solar system? What direction is Washington from California? Key: North=2, South=3, East=4, West=5)
5. Students group according to the number and kneel down.
6. Students not in groups go to the Lost and Found.

Optional: Once students know the game, students in Lost and Found may be the ones to generate and ask the question. After they ask the question, they rush to join a group.

Numbered Heads Together (mastery, thinking)

Teammates work together to ensure all members understand; one is randomly selected to be held accountable.

1. Students count off numbers in their groups.
2. Teacher poses a problem and gives wait time (Example: “Everyone think about how rainbows are formed. [Pause] Now make sure everyone in your team knows how rainbows are formed.”)
3. Students lift up from their chairs to put their heads together, discuss and teach.
4. Students sit down when everyone knows the answer or has something to share or when time is up.
5. Teacher calls a number. The student with that number from each team answers question individually, using:
 - a. Response cards
 - b. chalkboard response
 - c. manipulatives
 - d. slate share

One Stray (information sharing, mastery, thinking)

One teammate strays from his or her team to a new team to share information or projects.

1. Students are seated in their teams and share information on a topic.
2. Student One stands up. The remaining three teammates remain seated but raise their hands.
3. Teacher calls stray.
4. Student One strays to a team which has their hands up.
5. Teams lower their hands when a new member joins them.
6. Students work in their new teams to share information tested or to solve problems.

Pairs Check (mastery, communication)

In pairs, student stake turns solving problems. After every two problems, they check answers and celebrate with another pair.

1. In teams, shoulder partners are formed. Partner A in each pair does the first problem, talking out loud. Partner B watches and coaches. Partner B praises.
2. Trade roles: partner B does the next problem. Partner A watches, coaches, and praises.
3. Pairs check with their eyeball partners after every two problems. Teammates coach and correct if needed.
4. The team celebrates after reaching agreement on the two problems.

Pairs Compare (teambuilding, mastery, thinking)

Pairs generate multiple responses to a question, then compare their answers with another pair, and then team up to create additional solutions.

1. Teacher provides topic or question.
2. With their shoulder partners, students RallyTable ideas or answers.
3. Teacher calls time.
4. Pairs pair up with another pair.
5. Partner A in Pair One shares; Partner A in Pair Two adds the item to the list, or if it is already listed, checks it off.
6. Partner B in Pair One shares; Partner B in Pair Two adds or checks off the item.
7. Partner A in Pair Two shares; Partner A in Pair One adds or checks off item.
8. Partner B in Pair Two shares; Partner B in Pair One adds or checks off item.
9. Steps 5 through 8 are repeated until all items are shared.

Team Challenge: As a team, student RoundTable adding more additional ideas or answers.

People Hunt (mastery, thinking)

This activity has the added advantage of socialization!

1. Students receive a list of statements or questions to answer or complete about a topic.

2. Students circulate in the classroom trying to find classmates who can help them answer a question or complete a statement on their sheet. Other students may answer and sign their names only once on another student's sheet.
3. The students hurry to see who can be first to find answers for the questions or complete the statements.
4. After the people hunt, the teacher will process and debrief the information.

RallyTable (Mastery, thinking, communication)

In pairs, students alternate generating written responses or solving problems.

1. Cooperative teams are given one piece of paper and one pen or pencil.
2. Teacher poses a problem or provides a task to which there are multiple possible answers, steps, or procedures.
3. The teacher provides an example and checks for understanding. A time limit is set.
4. The teacher selects a student to begin in each team.
5. Students quickly write their word or phrase and pass their paper to the team member on the left.
6. The paper continues to go around and around the table as each student adds to the team's list.
7. The teacher calls time. All pencils/pens are placed on the team table.
8. The teams take turns sharing their responses with the rest of the class.
9. Students celebrate their success.

RallyRobin (mastery, thinking, communication)

In pairs, students alternate generating oral responses.

1. Teacher poses a problem to which there are multiple possible responses or solutions.
2. In pairs, students take turns stating responses or solutions orally.

Rally Table (mastery, thinking skills, communication)

In pairs, students alternate generating written responses or solving problems.

1. Teacher poses a problem or provides a task to which there are multiple possible answers, steps, or procedures.
2. In pairs, students take turns passing the paper and pencil , each writing an answer or making a contribution.

RoundTable (teambuilding, mastery, thinking, communication, information sharing)

In teams, students take turns generating written responses, solving problems, or making a contribution to the team project.

1. Students sit in teams of four.

- Each student takes a turn drawing, pasting, or writing one answer to a query, as a paper and pencil (or paste) are passed around the group.
**Works well for assessing prior knowledge, practicing skills, recalling information, and creating cooperative art.

*Rotating recorder: Students take turns recording each student's response.

Showdown (teambuilding, mastery)

This activity can be used to check for mastery of concepts and skills, as a review before a quiz or test, or to assess student skills.

- The teacher distributes materials to each group: a deck of question cards, one small basket and thinkpad slips (small slips of colored paper) for each team member to each group.
- The teacher selects one student in each group to be the Showdown Captain for the first round and asks him/her to turn the question cards facedown in the center of the group's table and pass the thinkpad slips to each team member.
- The teacher explains that the Showdown Captain will turn over the card with the first question (cards can be numbered on back) and read it aloud for all team members. Then each team member will answer the question individually on their thinkpad slips and turn their answers facedown on the table in front of them.
- When the teacher gives the Showdown signal, all team members will reveal their responses at once. If all are correct, the team will get 5 team points. If not, the team will coach their team members to correct their answers and will then receive one team point.
- Team members will celebrate.
- The student to the left of the Showdown Captain will become Showdown Captain for the next round.
- Repeat from step 2 for each round.

Similarity Groups (classbuilding)

Students move about the room forming groups based on similarities. They will discover hidden qualities of their classmates that are similar to their own.

- Teacher announces a topic on which students might group. Guide students' thinking by providing imagery about the topic. "Think about your favorite food (long pause). Think about the last time you had your favorite food (pause again). Write down your favorite food."
- Students get up and move about the class, grouping with those who have a similar response. "Group with students who like the same or similar food."
- Have students break into pairs to discuss their similarity groups and what they like most about their favorite food. They must not pair up with someone on the same team.

Simultaneous RoundTable (teambuilding, mastery, thinking, communication, information sharing)

In teams, students simultaneously generate responses, then pass their list or product clockwise so each teammate can add to the prior responses.

1. Teacher assigns a topic or question.
2. All four students respond simultaneously by writing or drawing.
3. Teacher signals time, or students place papers/pens down thumbs up when done with the problem.
4. Students pass papers one person clockwise.
5. Students continue writing or drawing, adding to what was already on the paper.
6. Continue, starting at step 3.

Alternative: Students may build their responses with manipulatives rather than draw or write.

Snowball (mastery)

Students will have fun locating the answers to questions after tossing wads of paper across the room.

1. Half the students in the class receive questions to answer or terms to define written on a colored sheet of paper. The other half of the students receives answers to the questions or a definition for a vocabulary term written on a different color of paper.
2. All students with the same color of paper line up and face the others who have a different color.
3. The teacher draws an imaginary line down the center and instructs the students to wad up their papers and toss them over the imaginary line.
4. Each student collects one of the snowballs that falls on their side of the line and then tries to find the student who is holding the match.
5. Students pair up, check their pairing with the teacher, and reform into two lines to repeat.

Spend-A-Buck (communication skills)

This structure might work well for selection of a team name, logo, or topic for a project!

1. Each student will have four quarters (or chips) to spend on two, three, or four items.
2. The item with the most quarters is the team choice.

Spin-N-Review (mastery, communication)

Set-up: Each team receives review questions, Spin-N-Review gameboard, and game marker.

1. Teacher selects a spin master.
2. Turn captain moves marker to "Who asks the question?" and spins. The selected student reads a question to teammates.

3. Turn captain moves marker to “think time,” directs teammates to think about their answers and silently counts five seconds, showing the count on his/her fingers.
4. Turn captain moves marker to “Who answers the question?” and spins. The selected student answers.
5. Turn captain moves the marker to “think time” and silently counts out five seconds as students think about the answer given.
6. Turn captain moves the marker to “Who checks the answer?” and spins. The selected student leads the team in checking for correctness.
7. Turn captain moves the marker to “think time” and silently counts out five seconds as students think about how to help or praise.
8. Turn captain moves the marker to “Who praises or helps?” and spins. The selected student leads the team in helping or praising the student who answered.
9. Turn Captain passes the spinner clockwise one person. The process repeats starting with step 2.

Stand Up, Hand Up, Pair Up (classbuilding)

A classbuilding activity that can be used to motivate, activate prior knowledge, close a lesson or group of lessons, review previously learned material, and to have fun.

1. All students stand up and put their hands up.
2. Students mingle, mix, practiced meeting and greeting, and find a partner.
3. Students sit and put their hands down.
4. Teacher assigns and defines the task.
5. Students are given “think time.”
6. Pairs of students complete the task.
 - A. Timed Pair Share
 - B. Rally Robin Responses
7. Teacher randomly calls on groups to report.
8. Students thank their partners and depart.
9. Repeat as many times as needed.

Stir-the-Class (classbuilding)

The classroom develops a supportive atmosphere as students move from one huddle to another, sharing ideas, congratulating each other, and building new ideas.

1. Students stand in groups of four. Groups stand in a circle around the classroom.
2. In each group, the students stand side-by-side in a line, facing the teacher in the middle of the circle.
3. The teacher asks a question or presents a problem. “What are some possible themes for our class party? Be prepared to explain why.”

4. Students turn to face each other with hands on each others shoulders, as in a football huddle. “Unhuddle and form a line when you are ready to share.”
5. When groups are all ready, call a number and ask the students with that number to take a step forward. Then have those students rotate to a new group. “All threes take a step forward, turn right, and rotate three ahead to join a new group.”
6. Have new group members huddle again with their new group and share their ideas. If students like the new member’s ideas, they must give him a pat on the back to show appreciation.
7. Then, students will unhuddle and wait for a new question to discuss.

Talking Chips (communication skills)

This activity equalizes the opportunity for participation. It also helps the teacher to monitor individual accountability.

1. Students are asked to discuss a topic in groups.
2. As each student talks, he/she places his/her chip in the center of the table (a pen or pencil will work in place of chips).
3. Once a student finishes talking, he/she cannot talk until every other “chip” has been tossed into the center. If a student doesn’t have anything to share on this particular topic, they can place a chip in the center at the end.
4. When all chips are down, students retrieve their chips and start over.

Team Chants (teambuilding, information sharing)

Creation of chants could be most appealing to students with musical intelligence.

1. Teammates decide on words and phrases related to the content of a particular subject.
2. Then they come up with a rhythmic chant, often with snapping, stomping, tapping, and clapping.

Telephone (mastery, communication)

One student per team leaves the room during instruction. When students return, teammates provide instruction on the information missed.

1. One student from each team (“the learner”) is selected to leave the room.
2. Remaining students (“the teachers”) receive instruction.
3. The teachers plan how best to instruct the learner and who will teach each part. Each takes a part of the teaching.
4. Learners return to their teams.
5. The teachers each teach their part of the content (round robin style); teammates augment as necessary.

6. The learners take a practice test.

Think-pair-share (thinking, communication, information sharing)

1. Students think to themselves or write on a topic or question, preferably one demanding analysis, evaluation, or synthesis, provided by the teacher.
2. After 30 seconds, students turn to partners and share their responses, thus allowing time for both rehearsal and immediate feedback on their ideas.
3. Then they share their thoughts with the class. Through this structure, all students have an opportunity to learn by reflection and by verbalization.

This works well for generating and revising hypotheses, inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, application.

Three-step interview (participation, listening, teambuilding, thinking, communication, information sharing)

1. Students interview each other in pairs, first one way, then the other.
2. Students share with the group information they learned in the interview. It may be hypotheses, reactions to a poem or other reading, conclusions from a unit.

Who Am I (classbuilding)

Students wonder who they are. They mingle about the classroom questioning classmates about their hidden identity.

1. Each student receives a secret identity taped to their back by the teacher. The identity may be an illustration, picture of a famous person, quotation, math problem or proof, vocabulary word, or a significant event.
2. Students must wander around the room asking yes/no questions of their classmates to determine their secret identity. Each student that is asked a question must sign the student's identity page. (Optional: Teachers can provide a set of interview questions that students may ask.)
3. Teachers may limit the number of questions that can be asked or the time provided to discover one's identity.