



Supporting Children with Additional Needs in Kagan Cooperative Learning

The following are simply my additional notes I use to support Teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSA's) as they attend and then attempt to implement the basic Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures from our Level 1 Day 1-2 Kagan Cooperative Learning workshop. There is no substitute to attending the training in person however in the meantime you may find below that one piece of information that could help you as a teacher to successfully support that student that needs additional support.



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One point I try to make with teachers/LSAs is TRY not to over help. Teach the structure and step back to see how children do without you! The children need to see what they can do and what they know without constant prompting. Eventually all children need to perform without us so use the structures to help get them there! **The structured interaction quickly helps them to become more independent.**

Below I use the following terms 'accommodation' and 'Modification':

Accommodation: *A change that helps a student overcome or work around the disability. This does not reduce the learning expectation.*

Modification: *Change to material/resource. This can result in lowering expectations.*

It is vital to do lots of Classbuilding and Teambuilding while these students are in the room. (*Classbuilding and Teambuilding: 'Build the Class of Your Dreams' is one of KaganUK's most popular workshops. See also Chapter 9 and 10 of 'Kagan Cooperative Learning' for more CB and TB ideas.* www.T2TUK.co.uk) Students with additional needs are no different in that they need to feel part of the class community, and part of a safe learning environment, part of a powerful learning team. Sometimes a team of 5 works well for these students. Buddying with a higher achieving, socially adept student with the student with additional needs, can be a good initial fix, SEND students are held to the same standards as their peers. With that in mind, I would look at the dynamic of the students we are looking towards to be buddies and make sure they are especially encouraging and good at coaching, or as is often the case work alongside these 'support' students to upskill their coaching and encouragement skills. This is nothing but beneficial for them too in the long run!

Day 1 Kagan Cooperative Learning

Classbuilding and Teambuilding

- If small groups, maybe a nurture classroom setting, start with just Teambuilding. It is important to consider the dynamics of the ‘team’ as is most likely numbers may vary throughout the day.
- Strongly model and emphasise the importance of social skills, I find it works best to ‘get your blinkers on’ and work on a ‘target’ social skill 1-at-a-time, during the structures. This focussed attention to a particular social skill and its development and application can quicken the sense of belonging.
- It is critical as part of the regular classroom- these children are made to feel a full part of the class.

- **Team Formation**

- Teams should be heterogeneous, i.e. mixed achievement, mixed culture, behaviour etc. mixed ‘needs’ special consideration for learning support and or physical needs.
- It is crucial that all children are in the right teams, especially those with Additional Needs- **not in a low group!**

Look at what accommodations I, the teacher, need to provide the SEND student- so they are successful with on-level material. Does the teacher need to provide: manipulatives, extra processing time to think, more ideas in guided think time, a scribe to help with writing, actual coaching tips or frames on the worksheet/desk to act as visual prompts/reminders so that they too can be successful at coaching?

- **Brain Friendly Classroom Environment**

- **Safety:** CB/TB important in their setting (strong relationships help them feel good about school.)
- Work on important social skills.
- **Nourishment:** for the brain, increase oxygen and glucose levels by using lots of movement structures e.g. Mix-Pair-Share.
- **Novelty:** the brain is more awake when there is novelty in the room, as attention spans maybe shorter for these students, consider as many adaptations such as interleaving, chunking, brain breaks etc. to keep them alert and on task.



- **Mix Pair Share (Classbuilding Day 1)**

- Mix-Pair-Share can happen with small groups, cordon a small area using tape on the carpet to limit mixing ie the student must not leave that area and therefore cannot get ‘lost’ on walkabout.
- When going over the steps, remember to give directions in at least two ways; verbal and visual or verbal and modelled. Always chunk directions e.g. give a direction- model it- do it- repeat taking one step at a time. The acquisition of a new structure/routine can be broken up over several sessions or even days. For example, one day the only thing the students do is mix and find a partner. The next day add greetings. After that maybe mix to music before greetings then add the interaction structure followed by gambits for appreciation. I would recommend teaching RallyRobin and Timed Pair Share seated in small groups before adding to Mix-Pair-Share. Go as slowly as needed, there is no rush, so take your time and truly embed each element before adding the next element to the structure sequence.
- Once again -Don’t limit the children but it is okay to go slowly!



- **RoundRobin**

- When generating ideas, students may struggle with academic ideas to share. Initially I would encourage teachers, support buddies to support by allowing paraphrasing e.g. repeating a previous idea or pre-thinking and generating ideas ahead of time for those students that need support. If some students are on different curriculum you could see if there are any basic curriculum ideas you could have students review that would be good for all of them.

Other accommodations:

- Preferential seating
 - Verbal response acceptable in lieu of written response
 - Fewer multiple-choice responses
 - Word banks provided
 - Visual Aids during instruction e.g. anchor charts
 - Mnemonic Devices
 - Picture books/Picture Exchange Cards
 - Pre-teach material
 - Reteach material
 - Study Guides
 - Highlighting/Underlining
 - Partial Assignments/Tasks
 - Use of Calculator
 - Use of device Ipad, PC, visualiser etc.
 - Content vocabulary lists
 - Peer buddy
 - Small group work or pair work
 - Signals for responses
 - Allow extra time to respond
 - Provide warnings or preparation in routine
 - Use picture cards
 - Use of manipulatives
 - Use of headphones to block noise, screens to limit visual distraction
 - Kinaesthetic symbols for instruction
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- **Difference between Cooperative Learning and Group Work**
The importance of a strong understanding for of the difference between true, robust cooperative learning structured interaction and loose group work is just as important to support students with additional needs. (*See P.I.E.S. Chapter 12 Kagan Cooperative Learning*) PIES principles define students

engagement there is no shortcut here for the teacher other than attend KAgan workshops by a certified Kagan Trainer and deepen understanding by learning and applying P.I.E.S. theory. See '5 Critical questions for implementing PIES'.



- **Structures**

Start with simple pair structures RallyRobin, Timed-Pair-Share. These can be used on a one-on one with students. Teacher and Student to begin with.

Limit the structures that they participate in. Better to use just a few structures in many ways and for many types of content than to overload with lots of different structures. Use picture prompts, with annotations. Explain the procedure beforehand and tell the student who their partner will be. Even rehearse the activity so that the student can feel successful.



(Elle is your 'Shoulder Partner' and cares for you a great deal. She is skilled in supporting you as needed.)

RallyRobin

Timed Pair Share

RoundRobin

RallyTable

Match Mine

Mix-Pair-Share (small groups)

QQT

Fan-n-Pick Pairs

- **TeacherA versus TeacherC**

- When reflecting on the many ways to structure engagement we mention Teacher A, traditional call on 1 at a time, versus Teacher C, a teacher that uses the strong routines of structured Kagan interaction. When as a Teacher A, out of a sense of 'care' for the SEND child, let's call him Gavin, I avoid calling on 'Gavin' in the whole class setting. Do I send a message? Maybe a message is that Gavin is not up to the task, or worse it is ok to ignore Gavin. Children with complex/additional needs students are definitely the ones that get lost.

- **Timed Pair Share**

- Model "think time"- put a timer up and model out loud what is going on in your head. **I call this mental rehearsal.**

- Increase response time if needed.
 - Types of questions critical – kids need lots to share.
 - Some teachers report that a visual timer can be distracting to some students. I would agree with this in the beginning but stick with it, it will be less distracting/novel and kids will learn to manage time. They just need to work through that time.
- **RallyCoach**
 - Again I reiterate the use of strong visuals to reinforce the behaviour needed..
 - When doing RallyCoach it is okay for teacher/LSA to partner the student.
 - Create badges that can sit on the table next to the student to remind ideas/ clues for coaching.

Day 2 Kagan Cooperative Learning

- **Quiz Quiz Trade**
 - QQT works well even in small groups – can trade with the “table” i.e. have spare cards sitting on a table top and when the students have repeated a certain card a number of times they can switch it out for a fresh review QQT card.
 - Maintain the ‘big push’ on social skills
 - Emphasise coaching visual.
 - Coaching cues again – put on Coaching gambits directly onto the QQT cards.
 - Connect to regular class.
 - Okay to colour code cards if groups/students working on different levels or different info.
- **PIES**
 - Nothing different here
 - ‘Students feel’ is huge for children with special needs (all students but...)
 - Same side, needed, can’t hide, equal status, engaged
- **Functions**
 - Keep the same
 - Just note to pick structures that have LOTS of dots so they don’t have to learn as many for different groups of kids
 - Connect and support regular class, if class teacher is using a structure critical to communicate if they are pulling kids out.
- **Fan-n-Pick**
 - Would highly recommend pairs
 - Use visual

- **Multi-Structural**
 - ‘Stacking’ several simple structures together to create a sequence is a very effective way of keeping students engaged through great chunks of instructional time. Sequencing structures in to different patterns can also add the novelty we mentioned the brain craves earlier. It makes sense to stack structures the kids ALREADY know.
- **RoundRobin Variations**
 - Perfect for them! One structure lots of different ways!!
 - Use visuals with students to help students learn!

Notes:

What is Autism?

When people refer to “Autism” today, they are usually talking about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), which are five complex, brain-based disorders that affect a person’s behaviour as well as social and communication skills. The thinking and learning abilities of people with ASDs can vary—from gifted to severely challenged.

Autism is four times more likely to affect boys than girls, and is found in all racial, ethnic, and social groups.

There are five Autism Spectrum Disorders, sometimes called Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD):

- PDD-NOS (Pervasive Developmental Delay - Not Otherwise Specified).
- Autism (sometimes referred to as Classic Autism, Early Infantile Autism, Childhood Autism, or Autistic Disorder)
- Asperger Syndrome
- Rett Syndrome
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder

Social

- **Social cues:** Children may have difficulty understanding social cues and reading others’ nonverbal gestures.
- **Sharing:** Children may display problems with sharing or waiting for a turn during a game.
- **Eye contact:** When having a conversation, children may not look directly into the eyes of the person speaking; this is thought to be a self-regulating strategy to compensate for visual input difficulties.
- **Social interactions:** Children may lack the skills, ability, or understanding to make friends, initiate contact, and maintain social interactions.
- **Responsiveness:** Children may be more interested in “things” than in people, and may lack interest in responding to other children.

Communication

- **Functional language:** Children with ASD are often echolalic — repeating what others say.
- **Verbal language:** Forty to forty-five percent of students with ASD are nonverbal.
- **Reciprocal conversation:** Children may have difficulty in the natural “give and take” in a conversation and may talk only of their obsessions.

- **Imitation and comprehension of language:** Children may demonstrate *hyperlexia* — an above-average ability to read with a below-average ability to understand spoken or written language.

Behavioural

- **Unusual obsessions and compulsions:** Children may become preoccupied with a single television programme or with arranging objects in lines or stacks.
- **Unusual sensory experiences:** Children with ASD may be hypersensitive to touch.
- **Repetitive use of objects:** Stacking or lining up objects, for example, may become a fixation.
- **Self-injury:** This is common in more severe forms of autism. Children may, for example, bite themselves.
- **Splinter skills:** Children may be highly skilled in one area, such as painting.

Although knowing the general characteristics of ASD is helpful, teaching strategies for students with ASD still need to be individualised, and it is important for teachers to realise their expectations of their students. Children with ASD often have visual-spatial strengths.

- Model- Visual cues
- Schedule before the task, practise time, use visuals
- Eye contact
- Know what reinforces students and let team know
- Teaching social skills to children with ASD is extremely important, and is beneficial not only for the child but for classmates as well. Classmates have been known to “benefit from their experiences with students with ASD, developing a compassion for and an understanding of children with special needs. Their self-esteem is boosted by the positive role they take in helping a friend with autism learn.”
- Teachers/LSA’s should always supervise social interactions, and can offer valuable support by providing specific social rules and reinforcing positive social interactions. This can be done by posting specific social rules easily visible and understandable by all students, and reviewed periodically with the class.
- Teachers/LSA’s should recognise that a child with ASD may want to interact, but may not know how. Helping the child change topics of the conversation when necessary, rehearsing strategies for social interactions and using classmates as peer models (e.g., video modelling of a desired social skill) are notable strategies, as well as providing “scripts” of what the student should do in particular social situations.

Selective Mutism

Characterised by a child's inability to speak in various social settings, often these children speak at home, and in settings where they are comfortable, secure and relaxed.

The etiology (cause) of Selective Mutism is due to severe anxiety.

When compared to the typically shy and timid child, SM children are at the extreme end of the spectrum for timidness and shyness.

Some children have difficulty pointing/nodding or even mouthing words, others may be able to respond and initiate nonverbally with ease and look completely relaxed.

What It's Not (usually)

Child is stubborn

Child has been traumatised

Child will just outgrow it

Normal shyness

Deliberate

Child has speech and language disorder??

Seating

Next to a buddy or familiar friend/neighbour *importance of CB and TB

Near the back of the room, allows child to speak without being seen or overheard, increases privacy.

Away from classroom exit, this is an area of increased 'traffic', less private; increased perception of onlookers.

Near the teacher/LSA, if there are learning issues and the child is comfortable with the teacher/LSA.

Accommodations

Away from the teacher, if the child feels more comfortable with classmates than the teacher.

In group seating arrangement, place peer next to child not across, eliminates the eye contact and makes it easier to whisper into neighbour's ear.

Pair with 'buddy'.

Gradually add other children to the group.

Provide as much small group work as possible.

Allow nonverbal communication at first.

Ask choice, direct, or yes/no questions.

Allow extra time to respond.

Extend time for class work as necessary.

Provide rewards/incentives for achieving.

Use rating scale to assess level of comfort/anxiety.

Adjust large group expectation (circle time)

Audio/Video recording.

Minimise eye contact.

Provide warning and preparation for changes in routines.

I think it is important to not make the child feel as though you are 'waiting' for him/her to speak. This expectation is anxiety provoking. In addition, it is important for teachers/LSA's to not make a big fuss over any verbalisation that does not occur. Very often, the SM child will speak to a peer before the teacher/LSA

Feel free to contact me to discuss any of the ideas above. I am always available.

Many Thanks,

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