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Kagan Structures for Active Learning and Educational Equity

Jane Joritz-Nakagawa

Aichi University of Education

Chiryu City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

The problems we all face

Have you ever observed a language classroom where some students seem to do all the talking? Or none? Students do not participate in the EFL class to the same degree, nor in the same manner. Research has indicated a number of reasons for this. Gender studies have found that male students dominate conversations while female students exhibit more turn-taking behaviors (see for example Wade and Tarvis 1994; Williams and Best 1994; or Wood 1994). Student self-perception of language ability is another important factor, as less confident students may speak up less often in class. Age is significant in age-conscious societies like Japan. Older students, even repeaters, may feel they have more right to speak due to outranking younger peers. Personality is another significant factor; extraverts may dominate class discussions while introverts are quieter.

In some classrooms you may find students who are sitting alone in the back of the room, other students with their heads on the desks, apparently uninvolved in the course where a teacher may be standing in the front of the room talking with not everyone listening or active. Often, teachers leave equal classroom participation up to chance, which in the long run may also lead to unequal academic outcomes. This raises an important question: how can a teacher create a classroom environment where all students can participate equally?

The Structural Approach to Cooperative Learning

Spencer Kagan (Kagan 1994; Kagan and Kagan 1998) has developed dozens of classroom structures that stress equality of participation. Each is based on four factors Dr. Kagan considers essential to his structural approach to cooperative learning: positive interdependence; individual accountability; equal participation; & simultaneous interaction.

Positive interdependence means student success is linked to the success of other students in the class, and occurs via cooperation not competition with peers. *Individual accountability* means building in a way to determine whether students working collaboratively have each individually contributed their fair share to the group effort. *Equal participation* means that all students are actively participating, after having been given the same chances and incentives to be involved in class. *Simultaneous interaction* means that all students are actively engaged simultaneously during the class. This is in contrast to one student responding to a teacher's question, while the rest of the class merely listens, or pretends to.

Following are examples of some of Kagan cooperative learning structures, with an illustration of how they can be implemented in EFL or ESL courses.

Timed Pair Share

Students pair off, and are numbered off 1-2. The teacher chooses a number, 1 or 2, to speak first. That student speaks about a specified topic for a specified length of time. The other student listens, nods and smiles but does not speak. After the allotted time has elapsed, now the other student speaks for the same specified length of time on the same or other stipulated (or student-chosen) topic, with her or his partner in the listener role. After both partners have had an equal chance to speak, the teacher randomly chooses students (say, by pulling name cards from a deck of such cards students prepare for this purpose) to tell about or summarize what their partner had said.

Culturally appropriate social skills can be taught by modeling, and having students imitate appropriate body language for listeners. Students can also be taught conversation gambits, such as back-channeling ("uh-huh", "hm-mmm", "I see") and "It was nice talking to you!" after completing the exchange.

<u>Folded Value Line</u>

A problem is posed, such as "Do you support capital punishment?" The teacher finds out via having a show of hands which students are strongly for or against capital punishment. These students stand at either end of the 'Value Line', where one end of the line representing strong support and the other representing its opposite. The rest of the class physically positions themselves in the line at the point that reflects their opinion. Those who feel squarely in the middle of the issue stand at the middle, those who feel rather strongly supportive stand near that end of the line.

Students often benefit from chances to explore their ideas with other students who have similar ideas. One efficient way to do this is for students to 'pair off' with the person standing next to them. It is also possible to 'group off', by students first breaking into pairs, and then joining another pair to make groups of four. Students exchange opinions with their partner(s), explaining why they feel the way they do about the issue, or answering questions students or the teacher have previously prepared.

It is also valuable to allow students to speak to students who have different ideas. This can be done by breaking the line in half. Let's say there are 28 students in the course standing in a line like this, with person 1 strongly supporting capital punishment, and person 28 being strongly against it:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Break the line between persons 14 and 15, and person 15 leads the second half of the line to the person 1. The second half of the line pairs off with the first half like this:
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28

Now, students can exchange opinions with the person standing across from them. It is possible to repeatedly break the line and refold it to regroup students who then repeat

their idea exchanges. It is also possible to combine this structure with one like Timed Pair Share (student exchanges structured via time limits and rotating speaking order).

The last step could be for randomly selected students to orally summarize to the class the views they heard, or for students to write a paper for homework that describes the breadth of opinions they heard, along with their supporting or opposing arguments.

<u>Corners</u>

As with "Folded Value Line", "Corners" is a structure that can be used for having students express and listen to various opinions on a topic. The teacher can make each corner of the classroom represent a stipulated view ('For', 'Against', and 'Undecided' relative to a topic or statement being 3 possible corners). Students move to the corner that represents their viewpoint. Then, students discuss their opinions or respond to a comment within corners. This could first be done in pairs, and later with pairs joining other pairs to make a group of 4, or with a subsequent change of partners to form a new pair.

Students can begin by summarizing their earlier conversation to their newer partner(s). Summarizing/repeating helps ascertain whether the listener both listened and understood, as well as validates the ideas of the speaker, and increases the opportunities for student oral language practice. Finally, the views of all members in one corner can be aired before the entire corner by, say, each person summarizing what was said by the person on their left while standing in a circle in the corner.

After students have finished their in-corner discussions, they can rotate around to other corners and share their corner's viewpoint. One way to do this is for the teacher to randomly selects two representatives from each corner to go to another corner and summarize their corner's viewpoint. They rotate to all other corners, making their presentation to each new corner within specified time limits. The final step could include randomly chosen students who have not been representatives to report to the class on what was expressed, heard, and learned.

Note: When choosing reporters for all structures, I always use a random system such as numbering off and then randomly picking a number, or name cards to choose students, because I otherwise may inadvertently choose the same persons repeatedly. The random method encourages everyone to be prepared, because no student knows if they will be chosen or not. Moreover, the random method appears "fair" to Japanese students because the students are being treated uniformly.

Another way to use Corners is to have discussions on distinct topics going on simultaneously in each corner. Later, representatives, as above, go to other corners to talk about their discussion, with a similar final step as above.

Rally Table

Rally Table is a structure that uses alternating student roles to have small groups jointly complete a task, such as writing a poem, story, or song lyrics. To have students create a poem in pairs, for example, one student writes the first line, the second student writes the second line, and so on, passing one paper and pen back and forth, alternating writing lines until the task is finished or the specified time limit is up or specified poem length reached.

Blackboard Share

Blackboard Share is a simultaneous reporting method. Let's say students have been working in groups with the task of brainstorming causes and solutions to a particular domestic or international issue (such as homelessness in Japan, global warming, sexual harassment, and so on). During the discussion or writing stage, it is important that each person in the group contributes equally. Rally Table, Rally Robin (an oral version of Rally Table, requiring students to alternate speaking), a structure like Timed Pair Share, or stipulating that each person in the group contributes three ideas are some solutions.

At the reporting-to-the-class stage, students first number off in groups. The teacher then selects one number, and that person in each group goes to write on a designated

part of the blackboard the findings of the group for class inspection, discussion and analysis/comparison. Many different ways to present information on the blackboard are possible. If each group is working with the same topic, a specified number of ideas from each group could be written. Each group could write a chart listing causes and solutions to a particular problem. Students could be instructed not to repeat any idea that another group has already written on the board, to obtain a broader spectrum of ideas.

Resources for the structural approach to cooperative learning

These structures are just a few example of dozens of structures that can be found in Kagan's 1994 book, *Cooperative Learning*, and Kagan and Kagan's 1998 book, *The Complete MI Book*. as well as in other of Kagan's published works.

Kagan's structures can be used for a variety of purposes such as mastering specified material, creating a positive interpersonal dynamic (e.g. used in conjunction with peer self-disclosure activities and ice breakers), enhancing critical thinking (by having diverse students put their heads together to solve problems), and others. The structures can be used for both fluency (e.g. a way to structure otherwise "free conversation" to ensure equal participation) and accuracy (e.g. students in pairs or small groups do minimal pairs pronunciation drills or collaborate actively and equally to do spot-the-grammar-error tasks). Finally, structures can be chosen with multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) in mind.   Kagan and Kagan (1998) have arranged structures according to which multiple intelligences (abilities of students including verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and others) are needed to perform the activities. In a language course, students can use their non-linguistic abilities to compensate for their still developing facility in the FL/L2. Assuming a diverse student body, collaborative activities that require a variety of skills/abilities will allow all students a chance to "shine" regardless of their specific talents.

In addition to books and other materials Kagan Professional Development offers teacher training workshops.   Further information is available at www.KaganOnline.com.

Conclusion

I find cooperative learning structures especially advantageous in large classes, but they also work well in small classes. Since the structures are content-less they are very flexible; steps can be adapted to suit the language level and aims of the course and its students.

I have used these and other Kagan structures very successfully in university EFL courses in Japan. Student comments in anonymous course evaluations have been very positive. For example, students have said they enjoyed the peer interaction that the structures afforded, that the structures were fun/game-like, that they were "fair", and that they were "useful" for learning English because they encouraged an active approach to learning.

Students also liked the methods for grouping students (usually random, sometimes by grouping based on commonly held interests/beliefs) because, as they reported, it encouraged them to get to know everyone in the class / it avoids clique formation. Some students said for example they would have been shy to approach on their own students of the opposite gender to be work partners, and appreciated that they were "forced" to work in mix-gender groups. Before classes begin, I randomly place student-made name cards on tables-but with a little "cheating" to create heterogenous (e.g. mix together female and male students) groups. Recently I purchase large stacks of blank postcards from the 100 yen shop which when folded like a tent becomes the foundation of the name card the student uses; I usually give boys and girls a different color card to make mix-gender groups quickly without having to read names. Randomly created, heterogenous groupings are also recommended by Kagan (Kagan 1994).

Students thus usually at least start out the class, if not experience the whole class meeting, working with those students sitting next to them, after re-arranging tables to make groups of 4 (two pairs sitting across from each other). Groups of 4 can be split into

pairs easily. Groups larger than 4 are sometimes undesirable in language classes as they reduce student total talk time.

I highly recommend language teachers to become familiar with Kagan structures and Kagan cooperative learning philosophy as a powerful tool for an active and egalitarian class.

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The Author

Jane is an Associate Professor at Aichi University of Education and the former coordinator of JALT's GALE SIG (http://members.tripod.co.jp/gender_lang_ed/). Her interests include cooperative learning, human rights education, and poetry. She has lived and worked in Japan since 1989.

You can do it, too!
Cooperative Learning in a Japanese Junior High School

Toshiko Suzuki

Seirei Junior and Senior High School

Seto City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

The Japanese secondary education system is often portrayed as resistant to change, not responsive to broader educational trends, and alienated from students. This is certainly not true of one private secondary school near Nagoya. The English Department there has recently introduced a unique cooperative learning approach to all junior high school English classes. The program begins with team-teaching in first year, continues with a group-based cooperative learning approach in the second and third years, and includes cooperative assessment tasks. It has improved student attitudes towards learning English. The approach was implemented by personal and professional collaboration, and is now considered an important element of their school program.

The School

Seirei Junior and Senior High School ('Seirei') is a private Catholic girls' school with about 1300 students situated in Seto City, Aichi Prefecture. The school is a six-year secondary school with both junior (JHS) and senior high school (SHS). Almost all Seirei JHS graduates go on to Seirei SHS. Seirei was founded 54 years ago by a religious order, the Holy Spirit Convent. The motto of the school is from Ephesians 5-8, "Walk as children of light". The school has a warm and friendly atmosphere, and the relationship between the students and school staff is close. Seirei has had a student exchange programme for twenty years with Catholic girls' schools in Melbourne, Australia, presently with Mount St. Joseph Girls' College.

The JHS English Program

The English department comprises thirteen full-time and three part-time Japanese teachers, and two native speakers. Among them, seven Japanese teachers teach regular JHS English classes while two native speakers teach English conversation to the JHS second and the third graders once a week. The number of English classes per week varies according to the year: the first year students take four classes per week; the second year students four regular classes plus one English conversation class; and the third year students five regular classes plus one English conversation class. Although there are some exceptions, many public Japanese JHS students can take only three English classes per week, so comparatively speaking Seirei JHS students have substantially more exposure to English. Each year consists of five classes of nearly forty students, a typical class size in Japanese JHSs.

Cooperative Learning at Seirei JHS

First year program

The first year English classes are team-taught by two Japanese teachers. Before team-teaching was introduced, each class was divided into two groups of twenty students, and two teachers taught in separate classrooms. This was because forty students in one class was felt to be too large for absolute beginners. However, about 10 years ago, the English teachers began to feel that it was unfavorable for the students of one class to learn separately from different teachers. We were concerned that it may have caused a sense of inequality among the students. What is more, if the homeroom teacher were an English teacher, it would be quite an awkward situation for her, as she could only teach half and not all of her own homeroom class. Thus, team-teaching was introduced eight years ago.

Team teaching was initially a challenge for the teachers since they were not familiar with the idea of teaching one lesson together with another teacher. There was also some conflict with the school administration, as the idea that one teacher teaches 40 students was so dominant that team-teaching was not acceptable to them at first.

However, team-teaching the first year students is now one of the selling points of the Seirei JHS English Department.

The first year class is team-taught most of the time, but is divided into two when intensive grammar exercises are necessary, or to play games. The authorized textbook used in the freshman class is *New Horizon English Course*. The first year students also use *Take Off With Phonics* (Matsuka, 1988) during the first month of their learning. *Take Off With Phonics* has a lot of pair or group activities, so the students naturally get the idea that they learn a language through interaction with others.

We sometimes devise easy games for the students. For example, in the very beginning, the students play a "phonics alphabet karuta" game to remember the phonics alphabet. Students make 10 groups of four according to the seating arrangement in the classroom. Then a set of 26 picture cards is distributed to each group. The pictures are those taken from the textbook. Students spread the cards on the desk and wait for the teacher to say one English word or pronounce a single sound (vowel or consonant). On hearing a word or a sound, the students race to pick up a picture card that corresponds to the word or the sound. At the end of the game the students count the cards, and decide on the winner of the group.

In every class, some sort of pair or group work is included in the common lesson plans, used by all the first year teachers. It is a prerequisite to begin each class with a dialogue between the two teachers so that the students review what they did and predict what they are going to learn. Common lesson plans are prepared by one teacher, in turn, who discusses and consults with all the first year teachers before it is put into practice in the classroom. Teachers learn to cooperate before teaching the students how to cooperate.

Second and third year program

Second and third year English classes are taught by one teacher not two. The first English class of the second year starts with a review of the good points about English class the previous year. The students usually make positive comments about pair work and group work, and team-teaching. Students often comment that playing games with classmates is a lot of fun and, group work helps them understand the classes better. As for team-teaching, they comment that having two teachers is convenient for them. When they have a question, they can ask a teacher at hand any time during the class. What is more, they can understand the situation where communication takes place between two people. It serves as a model for the students' pair work.

Having reviewed the first year English class, the teacher has the students make ten groups of four people, by asking students to line up according to their birthday, or by playing games. Making groups is a very important first step for the students to begin to cooperate with their new class. After the students settle down in their groups, the teacher explains that the students are to learn English in groups for the whole year, the same group for half semesters, and cooperation is the most important skill to be learnt.

The first cooperative group activity is to name their own group. Instead of being called "ippan" ("group 1"), and so on, students enjoy being called for example "Kitty-chan group" by the teacher. Then each member of a group decides on one role, namely the 'starter', the 'homework checker', the 'questioner', and the 'recorder'. They keep the role until they change groups. It is favorable for them to experience the four different roles during the year. The *starter* literally tells the member to start doing the task given by the teacher. She encourages the members to work and participate in the task. The *homework checker* checks to see if all the members did the homework or not and reports this to the teacher. The *questioner* asks questions during the class on behalf of the group. The students are supposed to help each other during the class, so many of the questions are actually answered by the group members. Weak students tend to avoid asking the teacher even when they have important questions. But they do not hesitate to ask their

peers questions, and those asked also benefit from reviewing what they have learnt by answering. The *recorder* is responsible for recording group members' ideas or answers to the questions given by the teacher. The students change groups twice during the term, and play different roles in the new groups.

Although the organization of class activities is based on a cooperative learning approach, the lesson flow follows a relatively traditional pattern. Class starts with the review of the previous class, then new material is introduced, the teacher writes grammatical points on the blackboard, followed by practice of new words and phrase, model reading of the text, then choral reading, and concludes with some tasks to reinforce the new material introduced earlier.

We use many cooperative learning activities regularly in the classroom. For example, the students ask and answer the questions or check a work sheet among the group to recall what they did. New material is introduced by interaction between the teacher and the students, and among the students, to learn a new grammatical structure. After the class reads the text aloud all together, the teacher gives a comprehension check. The teacher appoints not an individual student but a group to answer the questions. The student who represents the group feels confident in her answer because of the group effort to reach the answer.

For pair work, the students can form three different pairs among the group, so they have more practice. We can modify pair work among the group, too. For example, one pair can interview each other while the two other members listen to them, take notes, then report it to the class later. Reading aloud in groups is more fun for the students and easier for the teacher to monitor.

Assessment

Since the introduction of the cooperative learning style approach, Seirei English teachers have been discussing how to assess students' English ability. One solution is to give them various types of assessment so we may evaluate different aspects of students' learning process. For example, at the end of each unit comes the unit-end group task. Firstly, students take formal examinations individually and their score reflects their own performance. Secondly, though, students take a test as a group. It is a test in which the individual students can 'cheat', as they are encouraged by the teacher to refer to the textbook, notebook, workbook and discuss the question with the group members to reach an agreed answer to each question.

This cooperative learning test serves two main purposes: one is to review of the unit, the other for the group members to help each other to master the unit through problem-solving tasks. This task is particularly beneficial for weak students, because they can learn how to tackle the problem with assistance from the peers, and there is a good peer pressure that she has to take part in solving the problems.

The task consists of questions and answers about the text, and a composition. In the composition part, for example, the students have to interview their group members to make sentences in English. Only one test paper is distributed to each group, the students have to literally put their heads together and work on it. The writer fills in the test paper while other members check her spelling. The teacher collects the test papers after 25 minutes, and marks them. Since all the group members participated in the test, each member gets the same score. That is, even those who are weak in English can get full marks as a result of group cooperation, while those who are good in English sometimes gets a bad mark if the group does not cooperate. During one school year, the total score of unit-end group task amounts to 200 points, which equals two formal examinations. Considering the fact that there are seven formal examinations per year, which totals 700 points, the unit-end group task score is not a small figure.

<u>Recitation Contest</u>

The annual recitation contest in the third term is the yearly highlight of cooperative learning. In first and second years, students recite a given text individually in class. First year students use *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, by Bill Martin Jr., and second year students a text of the year teacher's choice, such as *The Rainbow Fish* by Marcus Pfister last year.

After practicing a few times in class, students try to learn the text off by heart individually since it is part of their winter holiday assignment. Each student recites in front of the class, and the other students give marks for her performance. Based upon these marks, two or three students are selected as class representatives. Although the preparation is not cooperative, student selection is student determined, and students learn to praise their classmates through this activity.

The third year recitation contest is not an individual performance but a group one. We have used *The Giving Tree* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* as texts, and allocate about two weeks or ten lessons to preparing for it. Every student has two roles in this activity. They have to play a role from the text, but more importantly also as a group member - as the director, the checker, the recorder, or the person who asks for help from the teacher. The third year students must not only recite the phrases, but they have to perform in front of the class. They are supposed to have overcome their shyness or hesitation, and built up good teamwork by the time they act out their roles.

The Teacher Development Challenge

The process towards using a cooperative learning approach at Seirei began when a close colleague and I were appointed to be first year homeroom teachers six years ago in 1998. For us both, it was our first time to be a homeroom teacher to first year students, although I had taught them English once before. We quickly discovered that being a subject teacher is one thing and a homeroom teacher quite another. We began talking about what is the purpose of secondary school education, what is the most important

thing to be learnt at school, the advantages and disadvantages of competition and cooperation, and …, well, many different things! We paid a lot of attention to slow learners, and tried to establish a good way to support their learning. We started counseling those who were not good at English, and kept a record of these conversations. Both of us began to believe more strongly that all students want to learn, understand, and be confident in their academic work.

In that same year, I had an opportunity to go to Canada to give a short presentation about the Seirei school community at a mini-conference at Toronto University. The Japanese and Canadian university professors there introduced me to an influential book, *TRIBES: A New Way of Learning and Being Together* (Gibbs, 1995) ('*TRIBES*'), which seemed to be widely used by primary and secondary teachers as a reference in Toronto. I also went to observe an in-service for secondary school teachers on how to make good use of the book in their classrooms, and had the chance to visit a few primary and secondary schools to talk with the teachers and principals. At those schools, the teachers placed a special emphasis on cooperative learning based upon *TRIBES*.

In Japan, every teacher is familiar with group work as a technique to be used in class. Usually group work is only occasionally employed, with different groups each time, and with no connection among the subjects. However, *TRIBES* assumes that the same groups are used for a longer period, up to one semester or the whole school year. Many Seirei teachers were concerned that students could not communicate well with each other even in Japanese. In order to help students to relate to each other better, a cooperative learning style seemed ideal, as it seemed that a cooperative learning approach could help students develop more effective interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

When I came back from Toronto in October that year, I looked for a book related to cooperative learning, written in Japanese. I soon found *Gakushu no Wa* (Johnson and Johnson, 1990), originally written in English as *Circles of Learning*. With *TRIBES* and this

book, I began to talk to my close colleague, and then the other JHS teachers at Seirei. We knew that team-teaching was quite an effective method for the first year students, but due to budgetary and administrative reasons could not continue with it through the second and third years. A cooperative learning approach seemed ideal. Quite soon, all JHS English teachers had bought copies of Johnson and Johnson's book. From that October, we had only five months to prepare before starting cooperative learning for the second year classes in April 1999, but we did it. That Seirei teachers are willing to learn to make things better, and to openly share effective teaching ideas and activities, is a very good point about our Department.

Present and Future Challenges

At the end of the first year of cooperative learning, second year students completed a questionnaire. Most students favored a cooperative style of learning. They said that they had learnt to help each other, and cooperation helped them better understand English, and made English class more fun. This may be because they had more time to interact in English as well as in Japanese with their classmates, compared with a traditional teaching/learning style. Some students did note that they sometimes got too noisy during the class, and that it was sometimes hard for them to share materials among the group. This may partly be because we would intentionally give the students a minimum amount of learning material so they would have to share. However, the most important comment came from the slower learners or weaker students. They said that they could follow class with help from their group-mates, and did not feel inferior to them. When we read this, we felt greatly rewarded for adopting a cooperative learning approach for the whole year.

Every student at any academic level wishes to take part in class and feel that she is part of it. In other words, inclusion through cooperation is one means to make learning more meaningful for students. If a student is seen but not heard in the classroom, how much would she learn? How would she feel? Creating the learner-centered classroom might in fact be an indispensable idea for teachers.

Seirei JHS English teachers hold evaluation meetings more than twice a year. We discuss issues such as the kinds of tasks given to the students, how to help slow learners, how to improve cooperation among the students, and so on. In this meeting we frankly talk about the problems we have had. The noise level and the issue of inclusion are most often talked about. At the end of the school year, each year teacher passes down the teaching plans she used to the new year teacher. By doing so, we can refer to what another teacher did the previous year and plan the annual curriculum on the basis of her teaching plans. We do not hesitate to revise or follow the tasks that another teacher did, since teaching plans are our common property. Cooperative learning facilitates not only cooperation among the teachers but discussion about the curriculum.

When we first adopted team-teaching in English class, it took a while to receive recognition from other subject teachers. However, through accumulation of our experience and students' favorable reaction, it has come to be seen as an indispensable part of English classes at Seirei. These days we give mock English lesson to those elementary school students who come to Seirei Open School Day. Now it is time that cooperative learning is recognized as a new way of learning to help students and teachers work together in the classroom. Some homeroom teachers use cooperative learning groups in their own homeroom class activities. This is an unexpected delight for us English teachers, because if the cooperative learning groups are only limited to English classes, it would be something rather "special" for the students. However, if the students work in the same cooperative groups in different areas in their school life, it would be more beneficial for them. We hope there will be no boundaries between the subjects and all the teachers in the school community will cooperate to make our school a better place for learning and growing together.

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<u>The Author</u>

Toshiko Suzuki has taught at Seirei JHS and SHS for about 18 years. She strongly believes in the value of cooperative learning, and hopes that it is adopted by more Japanese EFL teachers. Her experience of having taught at an Australian school and studying in the UK changed her from her previously traditional approach to teaching, and gave her new perspectives about education. She encourages all secondary teachers to try and find opportunities to work or study in another country.

The "Three C's of Communication"
Applications in the EFL Classroom

Jane A Lightburn

Aichi Gakuin University

Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

Cooperation, Confidence, and Creativity

As educators of English as a Foreign Language, many of us may take the ability to communicate well for granted. Communication is something that we do naturally, and it is part of being a human being. However, underneath the veneer of communication are basic and key skills that not only make up the foundation of good communication but are also essential for positive and productive interpersonal relationships in general. These are "The C's of Communication" - cooperation, confidence, and creativity. Of these three values, cooperation is the most important, guiding the other two in a harmonious balance that allows people to not only communicate, but also be willing to learn how to communicate in a foreign language.

One of the most direct and enjoyable ways to apply cooperation in the EFL classroom is through guided group or pair activities. Although age level, language level, class size, and time element must all be factored into any class activity, for the sake of illustration, this paper will offer two examples of freshman Japanese university Oral Communication classes. The first one is a pair activity called "The Trust Walk", the second, "The Famous Face Race", can be done in groups of two to four students.

The Trust Walk

Students make pairs. One person agrees to be the guide and the other person is to be guided, either blindfolded or with eye closed. Partners take turns guiding one partner from one end of the classroom to the other, around desks and chairs. The student being guided can choose to put their hand on their guide's shoulder, to hold her hand, or to receive only verbal instructions. Before the activity, then, it is useful to teach students basic commands, such as "A little to the left", "Turn left" and "Stop", and so on. This activity comes from the 'Living Values' project, which has many other similar interesting and useful values-based activities (Tillman, 1997).

The Trust Walk gives the students a hands-on type of experience in which they can reference what cooperation, trust and responsibility feels like. At the end of this simple activity, a follow-up reflection activity can focus on the feelings of cooperation, from both guide and guided points of view. For example, what did it feel like to trust the guide? What did it feel like to be responsible for another student?

Two key words to teach for this are trust and responsibility; what these words mean for students in this activity and their own lives. Higher-level students can discuss how they felt in each role, extrapolating this to other classroom and personal experiences. The teacher can guide the students to think about where cooperation is essential - in their club activity, part-time job, at home, and also in the language classroom. This activity can be intensified by asking students to each write a short reflection in English. This could be an essay-style exploratory paper for advanced students, or for low-level students a paragraph describing how they felt in each role. If the students are very low level, the teacher can provide a short and easy "fill in the gap" form for the students to fill in.

The Famous Face Race

The Famous Face Race can use any two famous people from history, but I will give an example using George Washington and Nelson Mandela. I have used this in

conjunction with American Headway 1 Student Book (Soars and Soars 2001: 53), which contains both of their biographies as short essays.

The activity can begin in any number of ways. You can set students to read the essays or information about the famous people for homework, but with my lower-level students we read the essays aloud in class in pairs. Student can check that they understand the information with each other.

Then, students form groups of two to four, with partners different from their first. One person is designated the first 'leader' and the others 'helpers'. Choose one of the famous people, and distribute a list of questions about them based upon information from the essay, one for each group leader (see Appendix A for an example).

The group leader reads these questions aloud to the other members of the group, who must find the answers. The helpers dictate the answers back to the writer, who tries to write it down in full sentences. The writer cannot look at the book and the helpers cannot look at the question page. Depending on the ability of the class, usually about seven to ten minutes or so is allowed for the groups to work and finish all of the answers. The students must consciously cooperate to finish within the time limit. One of the helpers from each group then writes the answer to one designated question each on the board. The class can check these, and discuss any grammar or lexical issues.

In the same groups, students then change roles. The new leader receives questions about the other famous person, and the activity repeated.

Following both of these activities is the second and perhaps the most important step in the '3 sisters' communication process. The teacher draws a large triangle on the blackboard. There are 3 large 'C's on each corner and the word Communication in the center. Ask the students what the "Three C's of Communication" could be, and elicit and write up what they suggest. These could range from clear, correct, convincing, colorful,

cheerful, and cheeky to confused, cynical, crude, confrontational, and critical! But the three C's that I emphasise are cooperation, confidence, and creativity. I write these on each corner of the triangle.

To help students relate these values to their daily lives, I ask them then to reflect how these "Three C's of Communication" can help them succeed outside the classroom, in their club activities, part-time jobs, friendships, relationships, and home-life. Groups can write one to three sentences for each of these values, then jigsaw around to other groups to share their ideas. If the class is an intermediate level or above, the teacher can ask the students to keep a very short daily journal until the next class, to note down how they use cooperation in their daily lives. The students bring their journals next week and can share them with their partners, or hand them into the teacher, who should always give positive and encouraging feedback.

Finally, it is important to point out that both George Washington and Nelson Mandela in their own lives embodied cooperation, confidence, and creativity. Also, in the process of doing these cooperative learning activities, the teachers themselves are doing their own share of learning cooperation, confidence and creativity. Enjoy the class!

References

Soars, Liz and John. (2001). *American Headway 1 Student Book*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Tillman, Diane. (1997) *Living Values: An Educational Initiative*. NY, NY: Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

Appendix - Questions for the Headway Activity.

A: George Washington

1. Where was George Washington born?

2. What were his three main jobs in life?

3. When did he get married?

4. Who did he marry?

5. Who did he fight in the War of Indepenedence?

6. In what year was he born?

7. What year did he become President of the United States?

B: Nelson Mandela

1. Who is Nelson Mandela?

2. Where was he born?

3. What did he study at university?

4. What group did he join in college?

5. What was Nelson Mandela's first professional job?

6. When did he go to prison?

7. How many years did he stay in prison?

The Author

Jane presently works at Aichi Gakuin University. She enjoys focusing on 'values' in education in her classes, and strongly believes it is important to explicitly discuss them.

Book Review

Cooperative Language Learning: A Teacher's Resource Book.

Edited by Carolyn Kessler. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall Regents, 1992.

Reviewer: Robert Croker

Nanzan University

Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan

Carolyn Kessler's classic edited work on cooperative learning (CL) is a must-have for teachers interested in adopting a cooperative approach in their classrooms. Authors include Spencer Kagan, Roger E. W-B Olsen, Elizabeth Coelho, and Carolyn herself. The book provides a strong theoretical and practical foundation for teachers interested in adopting a CL approach in their classrooms. It is also useful for teacher trainers interested both in educating about CL, and for adopting a CL approach in their teacher development activities.

The eleven chapters are divided into three sections. The first section, 'Foundations of Cooperative Learning', contains three chapters that lay out the theoretical basis of CL. The first chapter, by Roger Olsen and Spencer Kagan, examines CL as a resource for language acquisition and academic achievement, focusing on the benefits to learners of CL, traces the history of the CL movement, and summarizes key research results that indicate the usefulness of the approach. A definition of CL is provided, major characteristics of CL identified, major models of CL presented, together with an extensive list of structures and procedures.

In Chapter Two, by Elizabeth Coelho, a sociological, educational, and linguistic rationale for cooperative learning is provided. She argues that CL counterbalances excessive competitiveness, and that oral strategies within a communicative approach can contribute to effective group interaction.

Wendy McDonnell in Chapter Three presents a view of language as a collaborative, meaning making process, and that CL can create a rich and collaborative environment as a foundation for genuine, authentic communication. Students in a cooperative classroom become better prepared to communicate, collaborate, negotiate, problem-solve, and think critically, crucial factors for academic and language success.

'Language Through Content' is the second section, and is of particular interest to teachers in content-based instruction (CBI) programs. Roger Olsen in Chapter Five asserts that contemporary social studies topics, common to Japanese EFL university classrooms, present particular difficulties for limited English proficient students because the topics are often abstract, cognitively demanding, and usually very language dependent. This chapter illustrates different ways to use CL procedures, structures, and related frameworks with content-based material, based on group and individual accountability.

Another chapter of interest is Chapter Seven, in which Elizabeth Coelho provides a synthesis of basic principles of CL applied to CBI. She focuses upon Jigsaw as a pattern of curriculum and classroom organisation appropriate for integrating language and content, and offers numerous practical suggestions using published and teacher-made resources.

Chapter Four is concerned with science, and Chapter Six with mathematics.

The final section, 'Focus on the Teacher', is particularly interesting, as most CL research focuses on the learner and not the teacher. Yael Harel in Chapter Eight contrasts teacher talk in traditional teacher-fronted classrooms with teacher talk in classrooms employing a CL approach. Harel concludes that the style used in CL classrooms more strongly supports the communicative approach and the principles of second language acquisition.

The diverse roles of the teacher in the CL classroom are identified in a chapter by Wendy McDonell. She identifies key elements of the CL teacher's role - inquirer, creator, observer, facilitator, and change agent. She also clarifies the process the teacher needs to follow for effective implementation of CL.

Peter Shaw's chapter advocates the use of a CL approach in Master's degree TESOL programs, and would be useful for language professionals involved in graduate school programs. He argues that adopting a CL approach gives students a richer and more enjoyable learning experience, with students better prepared to teach and work collaboratively with other teachers. Moreover, Shaw believes that the effectiveness of any teacher education program is enhanced if there is a close congruence between what is studied and what is done: CL approaches need to be experienced rather than treated as an object of study.

Judy Olsen's chapter on CL and inservice education is also of interest to teacher trainers. She provides a useful outline of basic issues related to staff development, then outlines a format for conducting staff development programs in which participants learn about CL by experiencing it.

The book concludes with a very extensive and useful, if somewhat dated, bibliography on CL by Roger Olsen. It is itself organised into three sections. The first is about publications treating CL theory, related research, methodology, and specific procedures. The second focuses on language learning literature, including research, techniques, and strategies incorporating CL. The final section provides selected references on general education, methodology, and core CL texts.

I often dip into this book when I am seeking inspiration for my CL classes, and to re-engage myself with CL ideas. Although Kessler's book was published over a decade ago, and in part is focused on ESL more than EFL, it is a useful resource for all thoughtful teachers and teacher trainers.

Spencer Kagan
Japan Workshop Tour Schedule
http://www.jalt.org/global/sig/Conferences.htm

Monday, Sept. 15, 2003 1:00-5:00pm NAGOYA

Aichi Small Business Support Center

Contact: Linda Donan <ldonan@yahoo.com>

Sponsors: Nagoya, Gifu, and Toyohashi JALT chapters,

TE SIG, Teaching Children SIG, JAPANetwork, Trident Preschool

<u>Cooperative structures and language learning</u>

Cooperative learning is a natural catalyst for language learning. Cooperative learning structures can be incorporated easily as part of any lesson, with a powerful mpact on comprehensible input and frequency of language output opportunities. Perhaps most importantly, the cooperative structures reduce the affective filter and provide a positive, natural context for language learning. Come learn a range of simple cooperative learning structures that can be included in any lesson to promote language learning, including Draw-A-Gambit, Three Pair Share and Same Different.

Tuesday, Sept. 16, 2003 6:30 - 8:30pm NAGOYA

Nanzan University, Nagoya campus

Contact: Louise Haynes <aidsed@gol.com>

<u>Cooperative structures to promote critical reflection</u>

Cooperative learning and critical reflection are natural allies. As the English saying goes "two heads are better than one" (or in Japanese: "sannin yoreba monju no chie" -- three persons have the wisdom of Buddha!).

Dr. Kagan has identified fifteen distinct types of thinking that prepare students for full participation in the information age. Brain imaging research reveals different brain structures engaged with the different types of thinking. Dr. Kagan has developed different cooperative structures to promote each type of thinking. Kagan structures are used without taking time away from academic content - students acquire & develop thinking skills while mastering traditional subject area content. To effectively promote higher level reasoning, creativity, flexibility, problem-solving and critical thinking, come learn Kagan cooperative structures such as Pairs Compare and Find the Fiction.

Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2003 10:50 AM - 12:20pm AICHI

Aichi University of Education

Contact: Jane Nakagawa < jane@auecc.aichi-edu.ac.jp>

Cooperative structures to improve learning,

classroom management, and student social skills

Research reveals cooperative structures create greater student motivation, higher student achievement, effective classroom management, and better interpersonal relationships among students and between students and teacher.

Cooperative structures create an active and effective learning environment, a well-organized but supportive setting for diverse kinds of learners, and mutual respect among learners.

In this workshop you will learn cooperative learning structures that improve learning in any subject matter (including native and foreign languages, science, math, and other content areas) effectively. Remarkably, the structures take no special planning or change in curriculum. They are not something new to teach-- they are a more efficient way to teach.

Come learn structures such as Blackboard Share, RallyTable, and Simultaneous RoundTable. You can use these structures as part of any lesson to promote academic success, language learning, mutual respect, and better social relations between students of various abilities and temperaments.

Saturday, Sept. 20, 2003 (Tokyo) at Teachers College

Contact: Michele Milner <milnermw@tc-japan.edu>

Sponsors: Teachers College, JASCD and GILE

Kagan Cooperative Structures

to Promote Language Learning, Caring, and Peace

Dr. Kagan's simple cooperative structures are transforming instruction in classrooms world-wide. His simple structures dramatically increase comprehensible input, language practice opportunities, and a safe context in which to try on unfamiliar language forms. At thge same time students learn to accept and celebrate diversity, and understand and care for each other. The ultimate outcome is a transformation of social orientation from a "Us versus Them" to a "We" orientation. Come experience the power of Kagan's simple cooperative structures like Timed Pair Interview, RoundRobin, and Mix-N-Match.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2003 TOYKO

Ochanomizu University

Contact: Diane Nagatomo <dianenagatomo@m2.pbc.ne.jp>

<u>Cooperative structures for any lesson</u>

Dr. Kagan presents a revolutionary approach to instruction: Structures. There is always a structure in the classroom. Structures determine academic achievement as well as a host of non-academic outcomes. Knowledge and implementation of a range of structures dramatically improves educational outcomes. Come learn the theory of structures and experience the power of Kagan structures like Numbered Heads Together, RallyRobin, and Team Statements.

Wednesday, Sept. 24, 2003 TOYKO

Soka University

Contact: Prof. Sekita <sekita@s.soka.ac.jp>

<u>Multiple intelligences: visions, myths, and structures</u>

Multiple Intelligences Theory offers education three powerful visions: 1) teaching the way students best learn; 2) developing a range of intelligences; 3) celebrating diversity. Dr. Kagan and his co-workers have developed dozens of easy-to-use, easy-to-implement structures such as Kinesthetic Symbols and Visualize Share for each of eight intelligences. The structures allow any teacher to realize all three visions as part of any lesson. Come deepen your understanding of Multiple Intelligences Theory and of structures such as Kinesthetic Symbols, Window Panes, and RallyRetell — novel ways to align instruction with the three visions.

Friday, Sept. 26, 2003 5:30 - 8:30pm TOKYO

Seisen University

(Pre-conference workshop at Peace as a Global Language II conference)

Contact: Alison Miyake <mbi@joy.nce.ne.jp>

or visit: http://www.eltcalendar.com/PGL2003

Positive human relations via cooperative structures

Classroom structures determine academic achievement as well as a host of non-academic outcomes. Traditional classroom structures undermine positive social relations. Cooperative structures, in contrast, enhance understanding of self and others, respect for differences, empathy, self esteem, as well as liking for school and classmates. Remarkably, cooperative structures improve human relations without taking time from academics. Students actually learn and retain more when cooperative structures are used.

To help you build positive peer relationships in your classroom, while maximizing student learning come learn structures like Team Interview, Agree-Disagree Line-Ups, and Timed Pair Share.

Sunday, Sept. 28, 2003 TOYKO

Seisen University

(Experiential plenary at Peace as a Global Language II conference)

Contact: Alison Miyake <mbi@joy.nce.ne.jp>

or visit: www.eltcalendar.com/PGL2003

Cooperative structures, character, and peace

There is always a structure in the classroom, and the structures we use on a daily basis form character. A teacher cannot choose not to impact on character formation. An important question is the direction of that impact.

Traditional classroom structures (individual worksheet work; having students raise their hands one at a time to be called on) if not balanced by cooperative structures, have a demonstrable negative impact on character and diminish our long-term hopes for peace. In this experiential plenary session, we will examine a fifteen-virtue model of character and analyze the impact of traditional and cooperative structures on virtue acquisition. Finally we will explore how structure forms character which impacts on long-term prospects for peace.

To help you build character in your classroom, and increase our long-term prospects for peace, come learn structures like Three-Step Interview, Paraphrase Passport, and Corners.

Other Upcoming Conferences

<http://www.eltcalendar.com>   <http://jalt.org/calendar>

JALTCALL 2003: CALL for All
Saturday October 4th and Sunday October 5th, 2003
Kinjo Gakuin University, Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture
Sponsor: CALL SIG
The JALT CALL SIG's 8th annual conference offers some innovative enhancements to their already-successful conference formula. The theme this year is "JALTCALL 2003: CALL for All" and the motto is, "CALL is hot, CALL is cool".
Website: jaltcall.org/conferences/call2003/

FALL 2003 Mini-Conference
Learner Development: Contexts, Curricula, Connections
Friday, October 17th to Sunday October 19th, 2003
Mt. Rokko YMCA, Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture
Sponsor: CUE SIG, Learner Development SIG
This is a weekend conference co-sponored by the College and University (CUE) and Learner Development (LD) SIGS. Through a variety of workshops and presentations we will explore issues related to the concept of learner devevlopment.
Website: www.kobeconference.com

JALT Hokkaido 20th Annual Language Conference
Sunday, November 9th, 2003
Fuji Women's University, Sapporo Campus, Hokkaido
Sponsor: Hokkaido JALT Chapter
A joint conference held with the ETJ Expo. Various presentations streams focused on teaching children, junior/senior high, college level classes. A large publisher display area will open all day.
Website: http://englishforum.sgu.ac.jp/p-reg-form.html

JALT 2003 29th Annual National Conference
Saturday, November 22nd to Monday November 24th, 2003
Granship Shikuoka, Shikuoka, Shizuoka Prefecture
Sponsor: JALT
The conference theme is 'Keeping Current in Language Education'. Lots of interesting presentations, people to meet, events, stands, and more. Book your accommodation soon!
Website: http://jalt.org/jalt2003/main/news/

What is the Teacher Education SIG?

A network of foreign language instructors dedicated to becoming better teachers and helping others teach more effectively, the TE SIG has been active since 1993. Out members teach at universities, high schools, and language centres both in Japan and other countries. The TE SIG focuses on five areas: action research, teacher reflection, peer-based development, teacher motivation, and teacher training and supervision.

If you would like further information about the TE SIG, please contact:
TE SIG Coordinator, Anthony Robins <robins@rio.odn.ne.jp>

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Editor:
Robert Croker
Nanzan University
Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, JAPAN

Contact:
<croker@naznan-u.ac.jp>
+81-52-832-3111 ext. 531