

22 ACTIVE COOPERATIVE ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES/STRUCTURES FOR PAIRS AND TEAMS*

“Cooperative learning structures are content-free, repeatable instruction sequences that organize the interaction of students to implement basic principles of cooperative learning.” – Spencer Kagan

Basic Principles:

P= Positive Interdependence

I = Individual Accountability

E= Equal Participation

S= Simultaneous Interaction

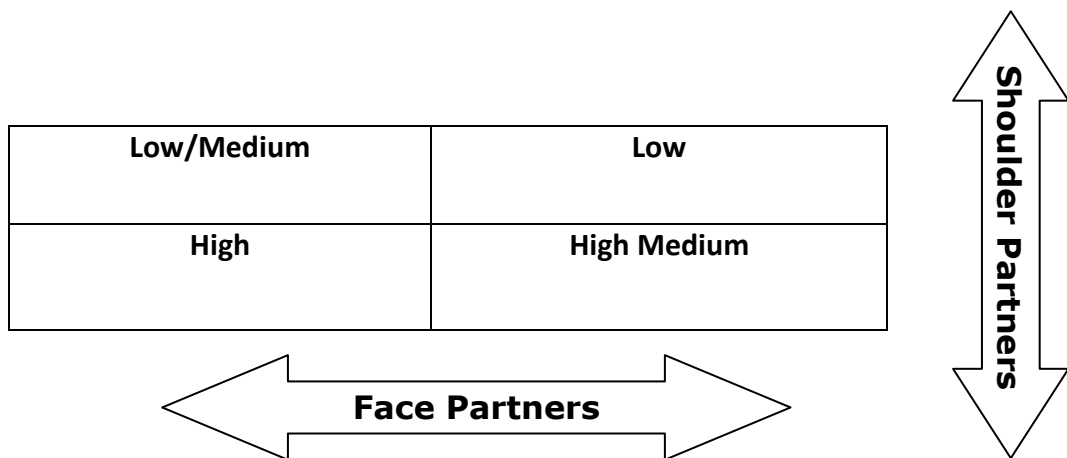
Content + **Structure** = **Active Engagement**

The WHAT of teaching

The HOW of teaching

An Active Cooperative Learning Experience

Ability Level Shoulder and Face Partners in Heterogeneous Base Teams



*Most strategies/structures adapted from: Kagan S., & Kagan, M. (2009). *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. San Clemene, CA: Kagan Publishing.

I. Strategies/Structures for “Pairs” or “Partners”

1. Think-Pair-Share or Rally Robin or Paired Discussion (Oral)

- Teacher presents a question to the whole class.
- Teacher provides a minute or two of silence to allow students to collect their thoughts and formulate a response.
- Teacher instructs each student to turn to their shoulder or face partner to take turns – **Rally Robin** - sharing thoughts/answers with each other.
- Following paired discussion, teacher asks a sampling of pairs to report out to the whole class.

Variation: Timed-Pair-Share. Specify the amount of time each person in the pair will have to share (30 seconds to one minute).

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

2. Rally Robin (Oral)

- Teacher poses a problem to which there are multiple possible responses or solutions and provides students with think time.
- Students pair up and turn to their partner.
- Partner A shares thoughts or answers with Partner B.
- Partner B listens and encourages Partner A.
- Partner B shares thoughts or answers with Partner A
- Partner A listens and encourages Partner B.

Variation: Continuous Rally Robin. Continue repeating sequence back and forth.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

3. Rally Table (Written Responses or Problem Solving)

- Students take turns generating written responses, solving problems, or making a contribution to a project. In Rally Table, partners take turns.
- Teacher provides a task to which there are multiple possible responses and provides think time.
- Students pair up.
- Partners take turns passing the paper and the pencil (or a team project), each writing one answer or making a contribution before passing it back to their partner.

Variation: Praise-N-Pass. Students praise the contribution of the person passing the paper to them.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

4. Simultaneous Rally Table (Written Responses or Problem Solving)

- Students take turns generating written responses, solving problems, or making a contribution to different problems.
- Teacher provides each pair of students with two different topics or problems for which there are multiple possible responses (e.g., Pro/Con) and provides think time.
- Students pair up.
- Partner A writes an answer to topic or problem A.
- Partner B writes an answer to topic or problem B.
- Partners switch papers, read, then add onto the answer.
- Repeat turn taking until the teacher calls “time.”
- Pairs compare their responses with other team pair.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

5. Rally Coach (Worksheet Problems or Oral Problems Presented by the Teacher)

- Partners take turns, one solving a problem while the other coaches.
- Setup: Each pair needs one set of challenging problems with one pencil.
- Partner A solves first problem.
- Partner B watches and listens, checks, coaches if necessary, and praises.
- Partner B solves the next problem.
- Partner A watches and listens, checks, coaches if necessary, and praises.
- Partners repeat taking turns solving successive problems.

Variation: Pairs-Check. After solving two problems, pairs check their answers with the other pair in their team.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

6. Mix-Pair-Share (Oral Response)

- Setup: Teacher prepares questions to ask students.
- Students mix around the room. The mixing phase can be done with or without music – similar to musical chairs.
- Teacher calls, “pair” when the timer or music stops.
- Students pair up with the person closest to them and give a high five. Students who haven’t found a partner raise their hands to find each other.
- Teacher asks a question and gives think time.
- Students share with their partners using:
 - **Timed-Pair-Share** for longer responses
 - **Rally Robin** for shorter responses

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

7. Stand Up-Hand Up-Pair Up (Oral or Written)

- Teacher says, when I say go, you will “stand up, keep your hand up, and pair up.”
- Students stand up and keep one hand high in the air until they find the closest partner who is not a base teammate. Students’ do a “high five” and put their hands down.
- Teacher may ask a question or give an assignment and provides think time.
- Partners interact using:
 - **Timed-Pair-Share** for longer responses
 - **Rally Robin** for shorter responses

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

8. Quiz-Quiz-Trade (Oral Review of Content or Solving Math Problems)

- Teacher prepares content review cards or math problems. Older students may generate their own content review cards or math problems.
- Students find a partner through **Stand Up-Hand Up-Pair Up**.
- Partner A will then quiz Partner B over content review material or a math problem.
- Partner A coaches, praises, and thanks Partner B.
- Partner B will then quiz Partner A over different content review material or a different math problem.
- Partner B coaches, praises, and thanks Partner B.
- When they have both completed their “quizzes,” they trade cards or math problems and go off to find another partner.
- For accountability, teachers may set a goal of meeting with a minimum number of partners.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

9. Inside-Outside Circle (Idea Sharing, Summarizing, Quizzing, Problem Solving)

- Students rotate in concentric circles to face new partners for idea sharing, quizzing, summarizing, or problem solving.
- Students form pairs. One student from each pair moves to form a large inner circle facing outward.
- Remaining students find and face their partners (class now stands in two concentric circles).
- Inner circle students ask a question from their question card; outside circle students’ answer.
- Inner circle students’ praise or coach.

Variation: The teacher asks a question and indicates inside or outside student to answer to their partner.

- Partners switch roles. Outside circle students ask, listen, then praise or coach.
- Partners trade question cards.
- Inside circle students rotate clockwise to a new partner. (The teacher may call rotation numbers, e.g., “Rotate three ahead.” The class may do a “choral count” as they rotate).

Variation: Inside-Outside Line. Students stand in two straight lines facing each other. One line rotates and the other remains in place. Rotating students rotate to a new partner and rotate to the back of their line when they pass the last student in the fixed line.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

10. Give One-Get One

- Students fold paper in half lengthwise (hotdog style). Students then open paper and draw a line down the crease.
- At the top of the left column, students write “GIVE ONE.”
- At the top of the right column, students write “GET ONE.”
- Teacher poses a question or a topic with multiple answers and gives a time limit.
- Students list as many things as they know in the “GIVE ONE” column.
- Teacher uses **Stand Up-Hand Up-Pair Up** for students to find their first partner.
- Once students have greeted their partner, Partner A gives an answer to Partner B from his/her “GIVE ONE” column.
- If Partner B already has the answer from Partner A, he/she checks that off on his/her list.
- If Partner B does not already have this answer on his/her list, then he/she adds it to the “GET ONE” column.
- Partner B then repeats this process by “GIVING ONE” to Partner A and the same process repeats for Partner A.
- Partners say thank you/goodbye, put hand up, and find a new partner.
- Continue repeating this process until teacher calls “time.”

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

11. Paired Heads Together (Written)

- Teacher asks a question and gives think time.
- Students record their answers.
- Students pair up with their shoulder partner and share their answers. This may be done back and forth **Rally Robin** style.
- Each student records his/her partner’s answers.
- Students then pair up with their face partners and **Rally Robin** their answers.
- The teacher then calls a number and students with that number share their answers with the class.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

II. Strategies/Structures for “Teams”

12. **Single Round Robin** (Oral Responses)

- Students take turns responding orally in their teams.
- Teacher poses a problem in which there are multiple possible responses or solutions and provides think time.
- Students take turns, one-at-a-time, stating responses or solutions.
- Each student gets one turn.

Variations:

- **Timed Round Robin.** Each student shares in turn for a specified time.
- **Think-Write-Round Robin.** Students think about their response or answer first, then independently write it down before the Round Robin starts.
- **All Write Round Robin.** During Round Robin, students each record each answer on their own paper after oral discussion.
- **All Write Consensus.** During Round Robin, after reaching consensus, students each record each answer on their own paper after oral discussion.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

13. **Round Table** (Written)

- Students take turns generating written responses, solving problems, or making a contribution to a project. In Round Table, students take turns in their teams.
- The teacher provides a task to which there are multiple possible responses and provides think time.
- Students take turns passing a paper and pencil or a team project, each writing one answer or making a contribution.

Variations:

- **Pass-N-Praise.** Students praise the contribution of the person passing the paper to them.
- **Round Table Consensus.** Students must reach consensus before recording each answer.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

14. Simultaneous Round Table (Written, Project, or Problem Solving)

- In teams, students each write a response on their own piece of paper. Students then pass their papers clockwise so each teammate can add to the prior responses.
- Set-up: Each team of four needs four papers and four pencils.
- The teacher assigns a topic or question and provides think time.
- All four students respond, simultaneously writing, drawing, or building something with manipulatives.
- The teacher signals time or students place thumbs up when done with the problem.
- Students pass papers or projects one person clockwise.
- Students continue, adding to what was already completed until each paper or project has made its way around the entire table.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

15. Numbered Heads Together (Oral)

- Students number off in a group from 1 to 4.
- Teacher poses a question or problem and gives think time.
- Students lift up from their chairs to put their heads together, discuss, and teach each other.
- Students sit down when everyone knows the answer or has something to share or when time is up.
- Teacher calls a number. The student with that number from each team answers the question for the team, using:
 - Response cards
 - Chalkboard response
 - Manipulatives
 - Slate share, etc.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

16. Talking Chips (Oral)

- Each member of a 4-person team has talking chips (maximum 2 chips each person)
- Teacher provides a discussion topic and provides think time.
- Any student begins the discussion; placing one of his/her chips in the center of the table.
- Any student with a chip may continue discussing in turn after placing his/her chip in the center of the table.
- When all chips have been used, the discussion is ended or teammates each collect their chips and continue the discussion using their talking chips.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

17. Jigsaw

- Starting with a base team, students number off from 1 – 4.
- All the #1's from each team will join together to form a new expert group.
- All the #2's from each team will join together to form a new expert group.
- All the #3's from each team will join together to form a new expert group.
- All the #4's from each team will join together to form a new expert group.
- Teacher supplies each expert group with a separate reading or research selection.
- Each student in the new groups becomes an "expert" on that particular topic by working, discussing, and sharing information with members from the other teams.
- Upon returning to their base teams, each of the 4 "experts" teaches their base teammates about their topic.
- Base teams are able to complete the task because of the contributions of each of the "experts."
- Works well for acquisition and presentation of new information.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

18. Spectrum or Continuum

- Teacher poses a question and then asks and labels two ends of an imaginary line (or chairs lined in a row) with “strongly agree” or “strongly disagree.”
- The teacher provides questions/statements to the class.
- Students stand up and move to rank their opinions on a continuum and are ready to provide justification for their placement.
- Students continue standing up and moving based on their agreement or disagreement to each of the questions/statements provided by the teacher.

Variation: Students turn to their shoulder partner and justify their opinion to the item when prompted by the teacher.

- Works well by providing students with various view points before completing an opinion/argument writing piece.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

19. Poster Rotation or Gallery Walk

- Teacher posts writing prompts on posters placed around the classroom.
- Students silently rotate to the posters and provide a written response to each prompt.
- After rotating to all posters, the teacher may instruct students to silently rotate again to star or highlight the most important or interesting piece of information or their favorite response from all that the class provided.
- Students use **Round Robin** or **Talking Chips** in their base teams to debrief the class responses.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

20. Four Corners

- In a four corners classroom, the teacher thinks of four or more options concerning a particularly controversial topic.
- The teacher labels the four corners of the classroom with these options. For example, the options could range from **strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree**.
- The teacher hands out 3x5 cards to each student and asks them to jot down their choice on one side of the card and, when asked, to read out their choice.
- After committing to a choice, students will be required to write out the reasons for their choice on the other side of the card. Students could be allowed four or five minutes to do so.
- The teacher then asks them to gather in the corner of the room that corresponds to their choice.
- In each corner, students form groups of three or four each and use Rally Robin to discuss the reasons for selecting a particular choice.
- After two or three minutes of discussion, students could be randomly called on one at a time to give simple, one sentence statements supporting their choice.
- Works well in providing students with a variety of viewpoints to consider prior to completing an opinion/argument piece of writing.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

21. One Stray

- One teammate “strays” from his/her team to a new team to share or gather information.
- A number is randomly called and that student from each team stands up. The remaining three teammates remain seated but raise their hands.
- Teacher calls, “Stray.”
- Standing students stray to a team that has their hands up.
- Teams lower their hands when a new member joins them.
- Students work in their new teams to share or gather information.
- Students return to their original teams to share what they have learned when they strayed.

Variation: Three rounds of **One Stray** can be used to form random teams: A different number is called each round and students may not join a team where a teammate is seated.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?

22. Fishbowl

- Classroom chairs are arranged in a “fishbowl,” two circles, one inside the other.
- The teacher assigns students to the inner circle or the outer circle.
- The inner circle is then given about eight minutes to discuss a statement related to their reading – and to relate the statement both to the reading and to contemporary life.
- The ground rules are simple; state an idea and support it with evidence; agree with the speaker and add additional evidence; disagree with a speaker and offer evidence.
- Each student in the outer circle spends the eight minutes listening to the discussion and making notes on the interaction of their “fish.” (Some teachers provide students with a worksheet to make note taking easier and more precise).
- Throughout the discussion, students tally each time their “fish” contributes an idea, describes feelings, paraphrases, expresses support or acceptance, encourages others to contribute, summarizes, relieves tension by joking, or gives direction to the group’s work.
- After eight minutes, students exchange places, those in the inner circle become observers in the outer ring, and those in the outer ring become the inner ring “discussers” of the second focus statement.
- At the end of the class, students reflect on the fishbowl as a discussion strategy.

Rules for the fish

1. State your idea and support it with evidence from the reading.
2. Agree with the speaker and offer additional evidence to support idea.
3. Disagree with the speaker and offer evidence to support your point.

Rules for the fish watchers

1. Listen carefully to your fish.
2. Take notes on your fish’s contribution to the discussion.

MY FISH	MY NAME
Contributes to discussion	How:
Provides personal response	What:
Paraphrases previous speaker	What:
Summarizes	What:
Provides direction/focus	How:
Supplies humor/tension break	How:

Adapted from: Maxwell, R.J., & Meiser, M.J. (2001). *Teaching English in middle and secondary schools* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

This strategy fits my teaching style.

YES NO If NO, how would you modify it?