

TALKING CHIPS

Kagan, S. 1994. Cooperative learning, San Juan Capistrano, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning.

Communication skills are the basis for the success of cooperative learning teams as well as the success of their members throughout life. Some cooperative skills can be learned by using techniques that foster communication. Talking Chips are used during group discussions to ensure that everyone has a turn to talk and no one dominates the discussion.

STEPS:

1. Each group member is given a marker or chip (a pen or pencil works)
2. To talk, place a chip/marker in the center of the table. An individual cannot talk again until everyone has placed her or his chip in the center of the table.
3. When all the chips have been used, the chips are retrieved, and anyone can talk again if they place her/his chip in the center again.
4. Steps 2 and 3 are repeated until the end of the discussion time

VARIATION:

1. Give each group member a number of colored chips (one color per person).
2. To talk members place a chip in the center of the table. A turn can be taken as long as s/he has chips to put in the center.
3. After five minutes, have students take a look at the number of chips of each color in the center. Students are asked to discuss:
 - How equal was each member's participation?
 - What do they need to do to ensure that participation is about equal?