



Kagan Structures - Not One More Programme. A Better Way to Teach Any Programme

How is the Kagan Structured approach different from other approaches to teaching? To producing academic gains? To realising the goals of cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, character development, and higher-level thinking? At the heart of T2T(UK) workshops are Kagan structures. Kagan Cooperative Learning Structures convert principles into practice, producing positive outcomes for students, teachers, and schools.

What is a Kagan Structure?

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Kagan Structures Structure Interaction

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- Not Test Dependent
- Improved Communication and Sharing
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- Breaking the Replacement Cycle
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- Integrated Basic Principles and Visions

What is a Kagan Structure?

A Kagan structure is a content-free, repeatable sequence of steps designed to structure the interaction of students with each other and/or the curriculum in ways which align with basic principles and efficiently realise specific learning outcomes.

Teachers use structures all the time. At any moment in a classroom there is almost always an underlying structure, whether the teacher is aware of it or not.

Worldwide, one of the most frequently used structures is Whole Class Question-Answer. The sequence of steps is all too familiar:

1. Teacher Asks a Question
2. Students Raise Their Hands
3. Teacher Calls on One
4. Selected Student Answers
5. Teacher Responds to the Answer

Most teachers world-wide are using this five-step Whole Class Question-Answer structure.

Although it is relatively universal, it is a very inefficient way to reach almost all of the most desirable educational outcomes. Whole Class Question-Answer is a structure, but it is not a Kagan structure because it violates basic principles and is very inefficient in reaching core learning outcomes. Whole Class Question-Answer produces unequal participation, lacks individual accountability, and does little to promote student achievement. In contrast, T2T(UK) train teachers to use simple Kagan structures like Timed Pair Share and RallyRobin (which take no more time) produce engagement and achievement for all students.

Kagan Structures are Content Free

When a teacher learns a Kagan structure during a T2T(UK) workshop, the teacher is then prepared to actively engage students in an infinite number of activities because the Kagan structures are content free. For example, on Monday a teacher might use a Timed Pair Share (Students in turns each share with a partner for a predetermined time) to have students express what they know about a topic or what they would like to learn. On Tuesday the teacher might use the same structure to have students role play being historical characters or characters from literature. On Thursday the same structure might be the basis for an activity in which students report to a partner the results of their science experiment, and so on.

Kagan Structures for Desired Outcomes

Kagan structures are in contrast to simply telling pairs or groups to work together. They emphasise a highly structured sequence of steps designed to implement basic principles or visions such as equal participation or stretching the kinesthetic intelligence. Telling students to work together without providing structure is wishful thinking; the students may or may not participate equally or develop the target intelligence. Kagan structures ensure success by structuring for desired outcomes.

Kagan Structures Respect Basic Principles

Different Kagan structures are designed to implement different principles or visions. Most Kagan structures involve cooperative interaction and are designed to efficiently produce engagement, positive social interactions, and achievement because they incorporate four basic principles, the **PIES** principles: Positive Interdependence, Individual Accountability, Equal Participation, and Simultaneous Interaction. The traditional Whole Class Question-Answer violates all four:



Positive Interdependence:

Positive interdependence occurs when there is a positive correlation among outcomes; negative interdependence is a negative correlation among outcomes. That is, we are positively interdependent when a gain for one is a gain for another and we therefore feel ourselves to be on the same side. We are negatively interdependent when a gain for one can be obtained only by a loss for another, in which case we feel ourselves to be in competition. In the Whole Class Question-Answer structure there are important elements of negative interdependence: When a teacher asks a question, many students raise their hands. As one student is called upon, the others who a moment before were excitedly waving their hands signal their disappointment as they lower their hands -- the gain for one (being called on) is a loss for another. If the selected student hesitates or begins to falter, the other students wave their hands with glee, the loss of their classmate is a gain for them. Only if the answering student fails can the other students win an opportunity to be called upon. Inadvertently the students have been set against each other. A gain for one is a loss for another. The students do not experience themselves on the same side. This negative interdependence undermines desired social outcomes such as sharing, caring, helping, and empathy.

Individual Accountability:

In the Whole Class Question-Answer structure teachers call on volunteers, asking "Can anyone tell me...?" "Who would like to...?" or "I need a volunteer to share..." Any student can avoid being called upon by simply not raising his/her hand, breaking the principle of Individual Accountability. Because students know there is no required individual accountability, many do not put in their best effort. For example, students are aware that no one will know if they are daydreaming in class: They do not have to be engaged.

Simultaneous Interaction:

During Whole Class Question-Answer only one student at a time is called on, leading to very little overall overt active participation, violating the principle of Simultaneous Interaction. In six minutes of Whole Class Question-Answer, the teacher can call upon and respond to about three students. Subtracting time for the teacher to ask each question, call on each student, and respond to each answer, in the six minutes, the three students receive at most about a minute each to verbalise their answers. Most of the class is not actively involved. One-at-a-time participation amounts to little overall engagement for most students because it takes thirty minutes to listen to each student in the class for one minute if they speak one at a time. During that thirty minutes, each student has been an active participant for only one minute.

The Kagan structures are carefully designed to implement the basic principles.

It is amazing that teachers worldwide have settled so universally on a structure so inefficient in implementing basic principles known to produce engagement and learning. Rather than using this inefficient Whole Class Question-Answer structure, the teacher might use any of a number of efficient Kagan structures learnt in the T2T (UK) workshops. The Kagan structures are carefully designed to implement the basic principles. For example, in a RallyRobin students turn to a partner and take turns stating possible answers. When the

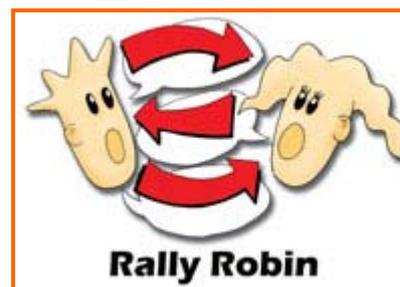
teacher has students do a RallyRobin, all four PIES principles are implemented:

Equal Participation:

During Whole Class Question-Answer as we move beyond Reception and Year One where all students raise their hands, only a subset of the class always or almost always raises their hands. As we move up the Year Groups, a larger and larger subset seldom or never do, breaking the principle of Equal Participation.

Positive Interdependence:

When the teacher has students RallyRobin, students experience themselves as on the same side rather than pitted one against another. They have a common goal. Each hopes their partner comes up with good answers, knowing a gain for one is a gain for the other. Sharing, caring, verbal skills, and listening skills are enhanced.



Individual Accountability:

Each student is required to repeatedly respond on their own publicly, creating engagement and learning. They know they cannot daydream because often they will be held accountable.

Equal Participation:

Because students are taking turns in pairs, each student in the class participates about equally.

Simultaneous Interaction:

At any one moment half the students in the class are overtly active naming answers, not just one student out of the class. In six minutes of RallyRobin each student has about three minutes to verbalise their answers. In contrast, Whole Class Question-Answer gives only one minute to only three students, while others are passive and silent. Retention is fostered by RallyRobin in part because each student is verbalising his/her own answers.

Kagan structures are bridges, allowing teachers to pass easily from principles to practices, implementing basic principles and visions as part of any lesson, at any age level, with any curriculum.

Kagan Structures Produce Positive Outcomes

Kagan structures produce numerous positive outcomes for students, teachers, as well as schools and Networks. A great deal of research and theory has established the positive outcomes for students of implementing programmes in cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, character development, and higher-level thinking. In what follows, no attempt will be made to summarise that research. The focus is on the benefits of using Kagan structures to implement those programmes. What do Kagan structures offer above and beyond other approaches? The Kagan structures are not only the easiest and most sustainable method for implementing those programmes, they produce many positive outcomes not associated with alternative approaches.

Positive Outcomes for Students Engaging

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The Kagan cooperative learning structures engage students by stimulating interaction. Kagan multiple intelligences structures produce greater engagement by engaging the range of intelligences. Importantly, because the Kagan structures are used on a daily basis, every ten or fifteen minutes, students are engaged very frequently. This is in dramatic contrast to approaches which would have students do the occasional cooperative learning or multiple intelligences lesson.

Brain Compatible

Kagan structures are aligned with the principles of brain compatible learning. They provide a safe team context and interpersonal support, so students feel secure. Reduced threat is a hallmark of brain compatible learning. Because of the stimulating interaction and intelligence shifts, the Kagan structures create high stimulation and novelty which are conditions for brain compatible learning. In addition the structures provide active engagement and opportunities for choices, to discover patterns, and to construct meaning.

Learner Centered

Kagan structures engage a variety of learning styles and intelligences so each learning has opportunities to learn in his/her preferred style. Rather than preparing separate lessons for students with different learning styles and patterns of intelligences, the Kagan structures allow teachers to prepare one lesson which will engage all learners because the same content is approached through a range of structures.

Delivering an Embedded Curriculum

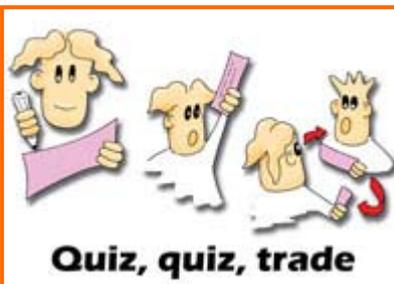
While students do a RallyRobin they learn to take turns, listen with respect to the ideas of others, praise others, and share their own ideas.

Every structure has an embedded curriculum. Some of the most valued outcomes in education are obtained through the use of Kagan

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structures, including cooperative skills, character development, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, and higher-level thinking. For example, as students do a Logic Line-Up they are practicing deductive logic. When they engage in Find My Rule they practice inductive reasoning. When they use or create Kineasthetic Symbols they are engaging and developing the kineasthetic intelligence. When they do a Folded Agree-Disagree Line Up they practice the character virtues of integrity, honesty, and understanding. Specific Kagan structures have been developed to engage each of the eight intelligences, the 15 core character virtues, and the 15 most important types of higher-level thinking. Kagan structures are particularly powerful in preparing students with teamwork, creativity,

communication, and leadership skills which are increasingly in demand in the twenty-first century workplace. Through the use of Kagan structures all of these skills are acquired without separate lessons or programmes, they are a curriculum embedded in the way teachers teach.



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While using the Kagan structures, students practice in real-life settings leadership skills, teamwork skills, conflict resolution skills, listening skills, and the ability to express and defend their own point of view.

Real-Life Transfer

The structures produce real-life learning experiences which reduce or eliminate the transference gap generated by traditional lesson formats. Most of the adult population in Great Britain took foreign language classes at secondary school, but few became fluent in that language. Why? Because the lessons in those classes did not emphasise practice in real-life situations. Memorising vocabulary words or rules of grammar does little for fluency because one cannot transfer the skill of analysing sentence structure to the skill of speaking. In contrast when the skills are practiced in settings similar to real-life settings, they can

be transferred. While using the Kagan structures, students practice in real-life settings leadership

skills, teamwork skills, conflict resolution skills, listening skills, and the ability to express and defend their own point of view. Character virtues are not acquired by reading about or listening to lectures about those virtues; they are acquired in the process of acting with virtue. While engaged with the regular academic curriculum, students using the Kagan structures learn a host of virtues such as integrity, understanding, responsibility, and respect. Students do not just learn about respect, they acquire respect. Some Kagan structures promote virtues, others stimulate higher-level thinking, yet others stretch the various intelligences. Importantly, in all cases with the Kagan structures the skills are acquired in situations very similar to how they will be used later in life, making later transfer to real life situations far more probable.

Workplace Competencies

By increasing students' range of experience, Kagan structures better prepare students for the workplace of the future. We can only dimly imagine how our students will work and interact as we move further and further into the twenty-first century. Technology is creating new industries and new ways of working including various forms of distance communication and telecommuting. Although we cannot predict with certainty, of this we can be assured: as technology advances, it will create greater interdependence in the workplace so teamwork and communication skills will be at a premium. The Kagan structures emphasise the acquisition of teamwork and communication skills. In a rapidly evolving workplace, success is increasingly dependent on creativity and thinking freshly about old content. Many Kagan structures are specifically designed to develop various types of higher-level thinking skills including brainstorming, analysis, synthesis, deduction, induction, and understanding points of view different from one's own. These skills prepare students for the rapidly evolving, unpredictable world which faces them. Most importantly, the Kagan structures increase the range of experience of students, so they are more likely to adapt well to the rapidly evolving workplace of the future.

Kagan structures promote acquisition of skills in part because the skills are practiced as part of every lesson.

Distributed Practice

Another advantage of the Kagan structures for students is they create distributed practice. Distributed practice is far more efficient for learning than is massed practice -- three fifteen minute sessions add up to far more retention than one forty-five minute session. How do structures create distributed practice? Among the Kagan structures are many review structures which may be sprinkled throughout a lesson to distribute practice and increase academic gains. The Kagan structures distribute practice also on many nonacademic variables. As we have seen, much of the learning which occurs among students using Kagan structures is learning embedded in the structures themselves. If, for example, we want students to become better listeners, we can take either a curricular approach (teaching a lesson on listening skills) or a structural approach (using structures like Paraphrase Passport which promote listening while students are engaged in academic tasks). The curricular approach amounts to separate lessons on the skill; in the structural approach the skills are embedded in the instructional strategy, with no shift in curriculum. If we take a curricular approach, we teach one or two lessons on listening; if we take a structural approach we are teaching listening skills all school year.



The same is true with all of the skills embedded in the structures. For example, if a teacher takes a curricular approach to character development the teacher might teach a lesson on respect. Having given that lesson, the teacher might move on to teach a different virtue. If the lesson on respect was delivered in October, that lesson will have little impact on the amount of respect students display toward others by June. Learning about the importance of respect is not the same as becoming respectful. In contrast, if respect is a daily practice because it is built into structures used on a daily basis in the classroom, students become respectful. Their practice of that virtue is distributed all school year, not massed into one or two lessons. A

lesson designed to engage or develop an intelligence will not have as much lasting impact as engaging that intelligence daily. Kagan multiple intelligences structures are used all school year to engage all the intelligences on a daily basis. Similarly, a lesson about the importance of cooperation has little impact; practicing cooperative behaviours every day is transformative. A lesson teaching a specific form of higher-level thinking will have little enduring impact compared to having students daily engage in higher-level thinking because higher-level thinking is a curriculum embedded in the structures used daily in the classroom. Kagan structures provide distributed practice on a great range of skills making them far more powerful than separate lessons. Kagan structures promote acquisition of skills in part because the skills are practiced as part of every lesson.

The Kagan structures are teacher-friendly, require little or no prep time, and allow for ongoing, authentic assessment.

Advantages for Teachers
Kagan Structures are Content-Free

As we have seen, because structures are content free, learning one structure empowers a teachers to create an infinite number of activities. The Kagan structures are "reusable." That is, once a teacher learns to do RallyRobin or Timed Pair Share, the teacher can use that structure with any content. Thus, the ratio of learning time to improved teaching time is greater than in any other approach. Using the Kagan structures, with little investment teachers can greatly improve their teaching and student outcomes in every class they teach. The structures empower teachers for a lifetime.

Easy to Implement

The Kagan structures are teacher-friendly. Rather than preparing complex cooperative learning or multiple intelligences lessons, the teacher uses simple Kagan structures as part of any lesson. Whereas a cooperative learning or multiple intelligences lesson might take an hour or even several days, most Kagan structures take but a few minutes. It can be overwhelming to plan a cooperative learning lesson which has positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, a social skill as well as an academic skill, processing on the academic skill, and processing on the social skill. In comparison it is very simple on a regular basis to have students do a Kagan structure like RallyRobin or a Timed Pair Share. Although the Kagan structures are quite simple, they are carefully designed to have basic principles "built-in," making the life of a teacher easier and more efficient.



Little or No Prep Time

The Kagan structures take little or no preparation time. For example, once a teacher knows Mix-N-Match, whenever there is matching content (events and dates; vocabulary words and definitions), at the drop of the hat the teacher can have students create Mix-N-Match cards and play Mix-N-Match. Numbered Heads Together replaces Whole Class Question-Answer. It takes the same amount of class time, with no special preparation or planning. The structure simply becomes part of what a teacher does on a regular basis. When that occurs students support each other rather than taking pleasure in the failures of others, they are held accountable, and they all participate regularly and about equally. Kagan structures create a transformation the classroom, leading to dramatic changes along a number of the most important educational outcome dimensions -- all with little and in some cases no preparation time for teachers.

Ongoing, Authentic Assessment

The Kagan structures allow an easy format for ongoing authentic assessment. In a traditional classroom, when a teacher checks for understanding after presenting, typically the teacher will ask a question of the class. Often only the brightest or most motivated students raise their hands. The teacher thus ends up hearing from a very unrepresentative sample of the class, giving the illusion

there is far greater understanding than is actually the case. In contrast, when teachers use Kagan structures they get a very authentic, ongoing assessment of the class because, as the students are engaged in the structures, the teacher walks around, listening. A representative sample of the class is sampled, not just those who want to show off that they know. This allows teachers to fine tune their input, to better adjust to the actual level of their learners.

Not One More Programme

Teachers are overburdened. Pressures from national curriculum reform, Government initiatives, district and school-wide programmes all result in more and more pressure on teachers to transform curriculum and implement new programmes. In addition to being evaluated on how well they deliver an increasingly demanding and sophisticated curriculum, teachers are being pressured to use cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, brain-based learning, integrated instruction, and promote social skills, character development, emotional intelligence. And these are only some of the new programmes schools and Government demand!

One of the wonderful things about Kagan structures is that they are not just one more programme placed on a plate already too full. Rather than one more thing to teach, the Kagan structures are a way of teaching that makes it easier and more efficient to deliver the range of programmes demanded of teachers. The focus of Kagan structures is not new and complex content, but a fresh and easy way to deliver any content. Teachers experience the Kagan structures as tools to help them teach more effectively, not one more programme layered on top of an already taxing curriculum. The Kagan structures are not one more thing to teach, they are an easier way to teach.

Making the Impossible Possible

Many Professional Development trainers advocate cooperative learning lessons, multiple intelligences lessons, character development lessons, or higher-level thinking lessons. At T2T(UK) we believe that Kagan structures make cooperative learning, multiple intelligences, character development, and higher-level thinking part of every lesson. Using Kagan structures, a teacher does not plan a separate multiple intelligences lesson. Rather, the teacher uses structures which engage and develop the range of intelligences. Similarly, the teacher does not plan a separate cooperative learning lesson or higher-level thinking lessons. Rather, as part of any lesson the teacher uses structures which engage students cooperatively and engage students in higher-level thinking.

Use of a range of Kagan structures promotes character development, thinking skills, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, and cooperative learning, making the otherwise impossible possible.

As a teacher uses, say, a Timed Pair Share with any content, the students are learning social skills, communication skills, acquiring the virtue of honesty, and exercising their intrapersonal intelligence. Unlike the special programmes approach, all of this special learning occurs without time off the traditional curriculum; it's embedded in the structure. There are a host of different skills acquired as the teacher uses each new Kagan structure.

As the students do an Agree-Disagree Lineup on any issue from history, literature, or science, they are learning a host of skills including diversity skills, listening with understanding, disagreeing politely, taking and defending a stand, delaying gratification, openness to new information, ability to reevaluate a stand in the face of contrary evidence, and respect for others. Character development, emotional intelligence, thinking skills, multiple intelligences, teamwork skills, and the content are all acquired at once. This integrated approach makes possible for a teacher what otherwise would be impossible. It would not be possible to deliver separate programmes in character development, thinking skills, multiple intelligences, emotional intelligence, and cooperative learning while covering the academic curriculum. But use of a range of Kagan structures promotes development in all those areas, making the otherwise impossible possible.

Schools and Networks who have adopted Kagan structures report higher achievement scores, more positive social climate, more enthusiastic and engaged students, and fewer discipline problems.

Advantages for Schools and Networks

Improved Outcomes

Schools and Networks who have adopted Kagan structures report higher achievement scores. They also report a wide range of other improved outcomes including: a more positive social climate, dramatically improved ethnic relations, more enthusiastic and engaged students, and fewer discipline problems. Engaged students are not discipline problems.

All Teachers Benefit

Because the structures can be used at any age group with any content, all teachers benefit from training in the Kagan structures. One teacher may have students do a RallyRobin to name possible alternative endings to a story or predict what will happen next as he is reading to the class. Another might use it to have students name elements from the periodic table which have certain properties. A third teacher might use RallyRobin to have students count in multiples of twos. A fourth might have students name possible consequences to our society that does not address homelessness. In all classes, the students are more engaged, like school and class more, acquire a more positive social orientation, hone their verbal/linguistic and interpersonal intelligences, and better retain the content. Four teachers. Four curricula. Four age groups. Positive results for all.

Not Test Dependent

There is great pressure on teachers to teach what will be tested. Thus nonacademic programmes are often short changed as academic testing approaches. However the nonacademic benefits of the Kagan structures are not dropped at the end of the school year as testing nears. This is because with Kagan structures the nonacademic benefits spring not from special programmes or special curriculum, but rather on how teachers teach. Imagine for a moment the following all too common scenario: A special programme is adopted, let's say for character development. Testing time is approaching. The teacher experiences a crunch: Should I cover a new maths concept which has not yet been covered -- one which I know will be on the SAT test, or should I cover a character virtue which I have not yet covered -- one which I know will not be on the SAT test? Special programmes get dropped or are given only brief lip service in the face of pressure to for better test scores. This is not so for the benefits of Kagan structures which are not a by-product not of special content or curriculum -- the benefits of Kagan structures spring from a transformation of the way teachers teach. As teachers using Kagan structures prepare students for academic tests, the nonacademic benefits continue to be harvested. This harvest is what will most enrich the lives of students long after the tests are forgotten.

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Improved Communication and Sharing

Adopting Kagan structures provides a common language for teachers. Teachers readily share successes and communicate about variations on structures. The statement, "I did cooperative learning today," can mean any number of things and does not communicate what exactly happened in the classroom. In contrast, when a teacher says, "I tried Simultaneous RoundTable, having students list items from the four food groups," the teacher communicates exactly what has happened in his/her class. The activity is replicable by other teachers because it has

a specific meaning. With just one sentence the teacher conveys both the content and the instructional strategy. Because teachers trained in Kagan structures as part of a T2T(UK) workshop can so readily communicate, they find it easy to share ideas and to encourage each other to try new structures and variations. Many schools and Networks are initiating SAM Clubs — Structure-A-Month Clubs — so

all staff are on the same page as they coach, problem solve, and encourage each other to increase their repertoire of Kagan structures.

Transformed Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are being transformed by Kagan structures (see T2T(UK) workshop 'Cooperative Meetings'). In a typical staff meeting of thirty staff members for an hour, using the traditional one-at-a-time format, each person on the average has about two minutes of time to express their point of view -- if the SMT said nothing! With an average of far less than two minutes per person, staff members in the traditional format feel their contributions are not valued. They are passive and leave the meeting drained of energy. In contrast, when the SMT sprinkles into the staff meeting a few Kagan structures like Timed Pair Share, Paraphrase Passport, or Team Interview, the meeting comes to life. The Staff feels vitalised. A range of Kagan structures are used to make meetings more positive and productive, cultivating a common vision and purpose.

The Kagan structures empower teachers for a lifetime. Rather than setting aside the Kagan structures in favour of new programmes, they are integrated with new programmes, breaking the replacement cycle and ensuring benefits to students are not set aside in favour of other benefits.

Breaking the Replacement Cycle

Schools and Networks (and in turn their students) suffer from the educational "replacement cycle." Every few years a new focus is fostered, and teachers are told they should stop what they have been doing and instead adopt some new programme as when a new textbook series is adopted or a new maths programme. Hard-won, well-developed lessons and units are shelved to make room for the new programme. One educational innovation replaces another. Kagan structures break the replacement cycle because they are an integrated approach. Teachers can use the Kagan structures to better deliver any programme. Rather than telling teachers to stop doing what they have been doing, we say to continue doing whatever is working well. We offer the Kagan structures as tools which help in the process. The Kagan structures do not attempt to replace existing, well-developed

programmes. They merely increase the options teachers have for delivering those programmes. The Kagan structures empower teachers for a lifetime. When a new programme comes along, teachers find they can still use the Kagan structures with the new content. Rather than setting aside the Kagan structures in favour of new programmes, they are integrated with new programmes, breaking the replacement cycle and ensuring some benefits to students are not set aside in favour of other benefits.

Sustained Implementation

Complex methods are generally not sustained because they demand continual effort by teachers to create and implement new lessons. Kagan structures, in contrast, produce sustained implementation because once a teacher learns the steps of a structure he/she can easily use the structure to deliver a great range of content. Rather than demanding energy from the teacher, the Kagan structures give teachers support. When the curriculum changes or the teacher's Year Group changes, the teacher sustains implementation of the Kagan structures because they are useful tools, creating greater engagement and learning. The Kagan structures become part of what it is to be a teacher.

Integrated Basic Principles and Visions

Kagan structures implement basic principles and fundamental visions. Kagan training with T2T(UK) emphasises the link between theory and practice. If there is no emphasis on basic principles, then one structure appears as good as another, and new structures are likely to replace old structures -- even if the new structures are not as powerful in producing positive outcomes. For example, without an understanding of PIES, a poorly-implemented Think Pair Share (Students are asked to think about a topic, pair up with a partner to discuss it, then share

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with the class what they or their partner said.) looks as good as a Timed Pair Share (Students each in turn share with a partner for a predetermined amount of time). When the basic PIES principles are understood, the teacher would not dream of substituting a poorly-implemented Think Pair Share for a Timed Pair Share. If the teacher simply tells students to think about a topic, then pair up to discuss it, then volunteer to share with the class what their pair discussed, it is quite likely that one student in the pair might do most or all of the talking and the other student might never volunteer to share with the class. There is unequal participation and no individual accountability. With a Timed Pair Share equal participation and individual accountability are ensured. A small change in the structure means great differences in what is learned. Sustained implementation of the basis principles and theories is ensured by Kagan trainings because training in the structures is coupled with a deep understanding of the basic principles and visions which the structures are designed to implement. Kagan multiple intelligences structures ensure all facets of the intelligences are matched, stretched, and celebrated. Kagan character development structures allow students to practice core virtues. Kagan structures are not viewed in isolation as cute strategies, but rather in the context of theory, as tools to realise powerful principles and visions. Kagan structures couple the best of theory with the best of practice.

In Conclusion

Kagan structures are powerful tools to translate visions and theory into practice. The Kagan structures have a profound impact on what is learned because their positive educational outcomes are a function of changing not what we teach, but how we teach. Many other approaches to cooperative learning, character development, multiple intelligences, and higher-level thinking are supplemental curriculum or separate programmes. For this reason, their implementation is not sustained in the face of pressure to adopt new programmes. The Kagan structures are not separate programmes, but rather tools to more efficiently deliver existing programmes. They are not additional burdens for teachers, instead they make the job of teaching easier. Because the benefits of the Kagan structures flow from the way teachers teach on a daily basis, they weather the storms of the replacement cycle and pressure to teach to the test, producing sustained implementation. Because the Kagan structures are not a new educational programme, but rather a more efficient way to deliver any educational programme, they make an enduring positive transformation of the lives of both students and teachers.

(With thanks to Dr. Spencer Kagan)



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