

DYNAMIC, DIALOGIC, RELATIONAL

These words come from *Teaching to the North-East* by Russell Bishop. Kagan is an effective discursive intervention that provides schools with the tools to deliver the findings of his research.

DYNAMIC

The term dynamic refers to the requirement for any pedagogy to be flexible and responsive, and able to be applied across a range of educational contexts. It needs to be interactive, with learners able to interact with the teacher, their peers, and the curriculum.

Kagan Structures are content-free. This means structures can be used with any age group or curriculum area as we provide the structure for you to deliver your content. For example, take a well-known structure like RoundRobin which has been around for ever. In a Junior room the teacher could ask the students to take turns, RoundRobin, listing animals before a story about the zoo. Or they could be skip counting in 2s or sharing about their weekend. In an intermediate room, they could be making predictions about a science experiment, or recapping chapters in a novel. In a secondary Social Sciences class they could be sharing their views on an historical event or describing events that have similarities to the topic. At university students could be introducing themselves and sharing their key area of study and why.



So it's the same structure but used in a variety of ways across all age levels. There are over 250 Kagan Structures that cover all educational functions -interpersonal and academic. Kagan breaks the replacement cycle where new interventions come in and replace the last 'new thing'. Once you've learned a structure like RoundRobin, you can use it for the rest of your career.

DIALOGIC

Bishop discusses the importance of classrooms being interactive and dialogic where learners are "co-inquirers, raisers of questions, and evaluators of questions and answers." (p. 23) There are two key aspects here. One is creating the right environment for this to happen. We will discuss this in Relational.

The second aspect is that the teacher has a wide range of tools to facilitate and regulate these interactions. Kagan gives teachers those tools. There are pair, team, and whole class structures covering all dimensions of effective teaching practice. Kagan provides teachers with the means to become very strategic about their practice, and what tool will best serve their objective at any one time.



If we go back to RoundRobin, a team structure, teachers have to decide is this the best structure for their purpose. Can all students answer or talk to the question or topic? Is it complex enough or too simple? Is it an open or closed question? Do they want students to share once or many times? Will they use cards for students to talk to, and who will make them? Does the question allow for 4 or more original answers? Do they need to control the amount of time each student speaks for? Do they want the responses recorded? How long will they allow for the structure? How will they know when each team is finished? Who will start? Will they stand to share, or will just the speaker stand? Are responses or feedback required and how will that be structured in? How will they check in with teams after the structure – or do they even need to?

As you can see, although this is a very basic structure, the teacher has to make many decisions around content and management. We don't provide the content, but we do help teachers match their content with the best structure. Now you can understand why our core workshop, Kagan Cooperative Learning, is 5 days long. You cannot learn the above in one day, especially if you are a new teacher, or this type of teaching is completely new to you.

RELATIONAL

This is key to any learning. Te Kotahitanga sought to ensure all learners were in classrooms with caring teachers. Nothing has changed, in fact it's more important than ever for youth of today, but in particular Māori students.

His research shows the direct correlation between whanaungatanga and effective teaching practices (p.39). So where teachers created extended family-like environments, they also used Māori pedagogical approaches, such as akō and tuakana teina (*inherent in Kagan Structures*).

Kagan is very deliberate about creating the right environment for learning. We can't make teachers like their students, but we can give those teachers the tools to at least ensure there are connections and caring relationships between the students. We put students into carefully selected teams, with regular team building activities to build the will and skills to work together. We teach social and communication skills. At the same time, we use class building structures to develop a caring and connected classroom, where diversity is appreciated, and all students feel accepted and respected.

Students can work very well with their friends, but we build the climate where they can all work with anyone in the class.



Bishop also found the same high correlation between whanaungatanga and student engagement. Again this is an area where Kagan excels. We structure engagement, which means we don't leave it to the students to try and include everyone, give all the same amount of time to share, or coach and support. In many classrooms there is a lot of unstructured interaction, or group work, where the obvious ones will make sure they have their say, and the learners we are most looking to support, fade into the background, or don't feel safe to share.

"Relationships are fundamental to teachers being able to implement effective teaching pedagogies." We say Kagan is the pedagogy that provides the tools to concurrently build those relationships.



This is a very brief overview. It is so difficult to describe how Kagan as an intervention works its magic. Our workshops are experiential and situational, so teachers get to experience for themselves what it feels like to be in a Kagan classroom.

If you'd like to meet and discuss things further, please email Jennie at jennie@kagan.nz