



Planning More Engaging and Effective Lessons

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Teachers and trainers know Kagan Structures enhance engagement and learning, but are asking, "How do I get started? How do I include Kagan active engagement structures in my lesson plans?"

You can infuse engagement and interaction into just about any lesson by using a Kagan Structure. A simple structure can transform a dull/run-of-the-mill lesson into a cooperative and highly engaging learning experience. While using the odd structure here and there can help teachers more successfully reach learning objectives, there's a whole lot more you can do with lesson planning.

There's an art and science to lesson planning Kagan lessons.

With the increasing demand on our KaganUK Lesson Planning service, I thought now was a good time to write a little about the process. KaganUK Professional Development offers lesson planning services to schools and MATs who have taken at least two days of the Level 1 Kagan Cooperative Learning workshops. Kagan Lesson Planning is designed to take place during PPA, collaborative planning, time, where teachers meet in small groups to share ideas and go through upcoming lessons. This can be done by Year Group teams or by Department/Curriculum area teams.

These sessions give the teachers and the KaganUK Trainer opportunities to address three major areas.

1) Structure/Content Match: Teachers have a wide range of objectives that need to be taught. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers have a variety of sound instructional practices from which to choose. Kagan Structures serve as tools that allow teachers to engineer various types of learning experiences for students. Kagan offers many highly-engaging structures. Different structures are better suited for reaching different learning objectives. Selecting the appropriate structures for the desired outcome is part of the art of teaching with structures. Lesson planning sessions with a Certified KaganUK Trainer assist teachers in analysing their own curriculum and choosing structures that maximise learning and engagement.

2) Lesson Plan/Curriculum Connection: A lesson plan is a series of activities so teachers learn how to identify the best structure to reach each mini-objective in a lesson. Almost any lesson can be improved by infusing a Kagan Structure into the lesson. Kagan Structures offer a more engaging and effective approach to reaching learning objectives. Teachers can keep their current lesson plans/curriculum directions and learn how to insert structures to engage students throughout the lesson. This involves looking for key words, identifying group activities, and analysing lesson components to determine the best place(s) to insert structures. Kagan basic formula: **Content + Structure = Activity**.

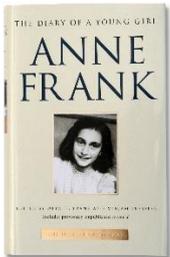
3) Seven Keys: Teachers often have additional questions about team formation, classbuilding, teambuilding, management, and social skills. Lesson planning sessions give teachers the opportunity to ask questions and gather suggestions and ideas for strengthening the key areas. Beyond content–structure matching, we focus on best use of time, management, materials, and supplemental sources of content.

Teachers love these sessions not least because the lesson planning sessions are a definite “make and take”: teachers leave with a ready-to-implement lesson plan, but more importantly, they leave empowered to apply proven, powerful lesson planning techniques to every lesson.

Kagan Lesson Planning Sessions are Flexible

Kagan Lesson Planning sessions are designed to be flexible. The KaganUK trainer meet the teachers “where they are” and assists them in taking the next step toward successful implementation.

The lesson planning experience delivers much more: teachers learn techniques of lesson planning they can apply to make any lesson more dynamic and memorable.



A Sample lesson: ('4C's': Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and Communication)

A lesson on a non-fiction/drama book with which many are familiar: The Diary of Anne Frank.

Before reading, the teacher could set the lesson with a scenario asking students to, “Imagine across the country, citizens are being persecuted because of their religious beliefs. This includes your family. The danger is great as people are being captured and beaten because of this. Your family is trying to decide what to do and has come up with some options: 1) stay, 2) flee the country, 3) go into hiding, or 4) other. What would you do? Provide reasons to support your decision.” With a question like this, a teacher asks students to think critically and evaluate a best decision.

Then engage students with the Kagan Structure [Corners](#). Students commit to their choice by walking to the corner of the room that represents their selected answer. Within Corners, students communicate and collaborate using the Kagan Structure [Timed Pair Share](#) to justify their selection.

Following that, the teacher lets students know their parents decided that their family must go into hiding. Next, the teacher engages students with the Kagan Structure [Jot Thoughts](#) to collaborate, communicate, and creatively brainstorm items they would want to take with them to go into hiding.

After completing that structure, the teacher shares with students that they can only take items: 1) they can wear without being conspicuous and 2) fit in a small suitcase. Next, the teacher engages students in the Kagan Structure [RoundTable Consensus](#) to prioritise the items. This structure fosters critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.

Finally, the teacher then tells students they just made decisions similar to Anne Frank and her family and millions of Jews during the Holocaust and World War II. The teacher then invites them to learn more about Anne Frank.

To recap, Kagan Structures are tools to challenge students to be creative, collaborate, think critically, and communicate multiple times in just one lesson. With Kagan Structures, we can develop creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication within super-engaging lessons our students love.

Good luck in taking the plunge into the wonderful world of multi-structural lessons.