Research Literature Review Supporting Kagan Teaching Methodology
Written by Angie Hoover for NYU Marron Institute Ventura County School District
Research Trial

Kagan learning strategies foster cooperative learning through subversion of the traditional, didactic student-teacher relationship (Hertz-Lazarowitz, Kagan, Sharan, Slavin,& Webb, 1985). While teachers remain in control of the class, and guide student focus, they do not typically lecture, or require students to focus silently on any task for more than 10 minutes. Instead, teachers act as facilitators, who briefly summarize material, place students into peer groups by counting them off randomly, and direct them through a coactive task. The goal of the model is to enhance achievement, self-esteem, and social skills by shifting classroom focus to collaboration vs. competition (Kagan & Kagan, 1994).

Kagan activity handbooks offer a broad range of activities and techniques that vary in detail, but follow a similar structure of brief collaboration followed by presentation and class discussion. Activities are fairly short; in an hour long class period, students may go through a 2 minute warm-up, 1 to 2 activities, and a brief cool down. Group sizes range from 2 students to the full class and goals range from doing tongue twisters in unison to developing skits, songs, or presentations to share. For example, students may be placed into random groups of 4 and asked to come up with 1 important vocabulary word, 1 important question, and a brief summary of the 3 core concepts explored in a particular section of their textbook. After discussing and developing their main points, each group must write their key terms on the board and present them to the class. Each student within a group is required to speak during presentation time, ensuring that all individuals are engaged (Kagan, 2015). These methods are often used for language learning, particularly in ESL classrooms where communication is an objective as well as a learning tool.

Hertz-Lazarowitz, R., Kagan, S., Sharan, S., Slavin, R., & Webb, C. (1985). Learning to cooperate, cooperating to learn.

Kagan, S., & Kagan, M. (1994). The structural approach: Six keys to cooperative learning. *Handbook of cooperative learning methods, 115*, 33.

Kagan, S. (2015). Kagan Cooperative Learning: Dr. Spencer Kagan and Miguel Kagan. Kagan Publishing.