

Jigsaw

Overview:

The jigsaw strategy is a cooperative learning strategy that involves assigning each student a specific part of a topic to learn and share with others. Students work in two types of groups: an "expert" group where they meet with students who have the same part of the topic and discuss the key points, and a "home" group where they teach and learn from each other.

Purpose:

The jigsaw strategy allows students to take ownership for their learning as they know they will need to teach what they have learned to other members of their class. Students become invested in what they are responsible for teaching and for what they learn, which deepens their knowledge and application of the skill. With the jigsaw strategy, students are responsible for understanding the essence of their portion of the task well enough to teach it to others, while also developing skills necessary to work productively in a group. This strategy can also be supportive for students who are not yet confident speaking in front of a whole class.

Application: When and where can I use it?

Jigsaw can be used with any content and many different types of materials. Each expert group can be responsible for a portion of a textbook chapter, a different problem-solving strategy for a math problem, a country within a region, a chapter from a novel, a different work of art, etc. The age of your students will determine the complexity of the assignment, as well as the types of materials students will be working with.

Getting Started: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

Assign students to a "home" group consisting of 3-5 students. The size of the home group should reflect the number of "pieces" in your jigsaw as ideally, each member of the home group is assigned to a different "expert" group.

Create "expert" groups consisting of at least one member of each home group. Have students meet with their home group. Provide each home group with their assignment: the section of the text that they will read and be prepared to summarize; a problem-solving strategy to explore and be prepared to demonstrate; the topic they will research, etc. Provide students with parameters for the amount of time they will have to work with their expert groups, all the materials they will need, guiding questions for them to consider, any organizers that you want them to complete, etc.

It is important that all students understand that when they return to their “home” group, they will be responsible for teaching what they have learned to members of that group. All students must be prepared to do so.

Once students return to their home group, provide any necessary guidelines for their sharing out (i.e. if a specific order of sharing is important, approximately how many minutes each group member take to share, a notetaking sheet or graphic organizer that students are responsible for completing as they listen to and learn from their peers).

Depending on the complexity of the task and the materials the students are expected to work with, using the jigsaw strategy can take as little as 20 or 30 minutes or extend over several periods. At the secondary level, you may have students work in their expert groups one day and reserve the following day for students to come back to their home groups to share.

See this Instructional Move in action:

[Bing Videos](#)

Read more about this Instructional Move:

[The Jigsaw Classroom](#)

[Using the Jigsaw Cooperative Learning Technique | Read Write Think](#)

[4 Things You Don't Know About the Jigsaw Method | Cult of Pedagogy](#)

References:

[The Jigsaw Method Teaching Strategy - TeachHUB](#)

[Jigsaw | Classroom Strategies | Reading Rockets](#) (includes a video of a 2nd grade classroom involved in a jigsaw activity)