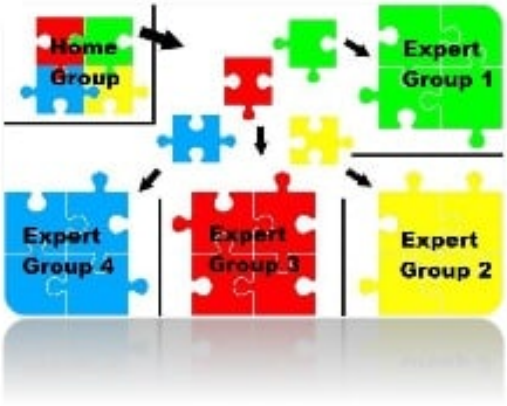
The Jigsaw Strategy

Introduction:

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that has been used for over thirty years. Professor Elliot Aronson and his graduate students from the University of Texas invented this technique in 1971 out of need due to rising hostility among students in Austin, Texas during desegregation.



The idea behind the jigsaw technique is this: Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, each piece – each student's part – is essential for the completion and full understanding of the final product. If each student's part is essential, then each student is essential (Aronson, 2000). The jigsaw method can also be used to cover a large amount of material quickly, to introduce students to different perspectives on a topic, to introduce topics and create interest, and as a research strategy.

How to proceed with the Jigsaw Cooperative Technique:

1. Students are divided up into groups. The number in each group depends on the number of subtopics.

2. Each member of the group is assigned a section or portion of the material.

3. Each student meets with the members of the other groups who have the same assigned section forming an expert group.

4. The expert group learns the material together and decides on how to teach the material to the original groups.

5. Students later return to their original groups, whose members are each now an expert in one of the different areas of the topics being studied, and teach their area of expertise to the other group members.

6. A quiz is given in the end. At that time no team members may help each other.

Recommendations:

• Develop an expert sheet and a quiz for each unit of teaching. First, divide the content into topics for the expert sheets. The expert sheet should communicate what students should do – read, watch a video, do an activity – and an outline of the topic in the form of questions

• Encourage students to use a variety of teaching methods. They can demonstrate an idea; read a report; use the computer; illustrate their ideas with photographs, diagrams, charts, and drawings.

• Encourage team members to discuss the reports and ask questions; each member of the team is responsible for learning about all of the subtopics.

Adapted from Jill Parker and Dr. Edward J. Lazaros, 2016