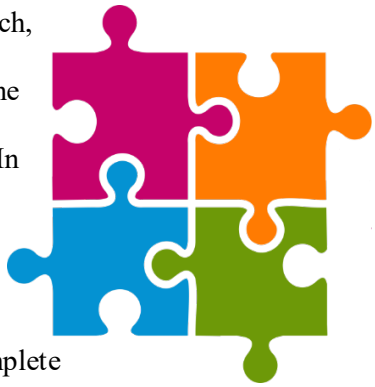
JIGSAW TEACHING STRATEGY

CTL TED University
Center for Teaching and Learning

Jigsaw Teaching Strategy



The jigsaw teaching strategy is a **collaborative** learning approach, which was first developed by Elliot Aronson and his students at the University of Texas and the University of California in the early 1970s. In jigsaw, each student in a group takes responsibility for one chunk of the content, then teaches it to the other group members. Like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, students fit their individual chunks together to form a complete body of knowledge.

The goal of the approach is to study the learning material in groups to achieve **specific objectives**. This strategy draws a direct image of a jigsaw puzzle where each student represents a piece of the puzzle. As the final image of a puzzle constructed from fitting together separate pieces, each student presents his/her assigned task to complete the puzzle.

Jigsaw strategy is based on "cooperation by design" where no student can succeed completely unless everyone works well together as a team. This understanding leads students to value each other as contributors to a shared task.

Jigsaw strategy **empowers students** to take charge of their learning, and aids retention, peer tutoring, communication skills and retrieval of concepts (Sabbah, 2016). In studies comparing Jigsaw with traditional direct instruction, students taught with the Jigsaw method demonstrated increased feelings of autonomy, competence, and intrinsic motivation (Hänze & Berger, 2007).

Imagine you are a history teacher who wants to do an overview of different types of government using the jigsaw method. You can divide your content into these chunks; *democracy*, *dictatorship*, *monarchy*, and *republic*. In this case, you will need 4 home groups, and 4 expert groups to study each chunk as displayed in Figure 1. You will assign each expert group one chunk to study. The student in the expert group will be **responsible to teach** that chunk to the rest of the students in the home group.

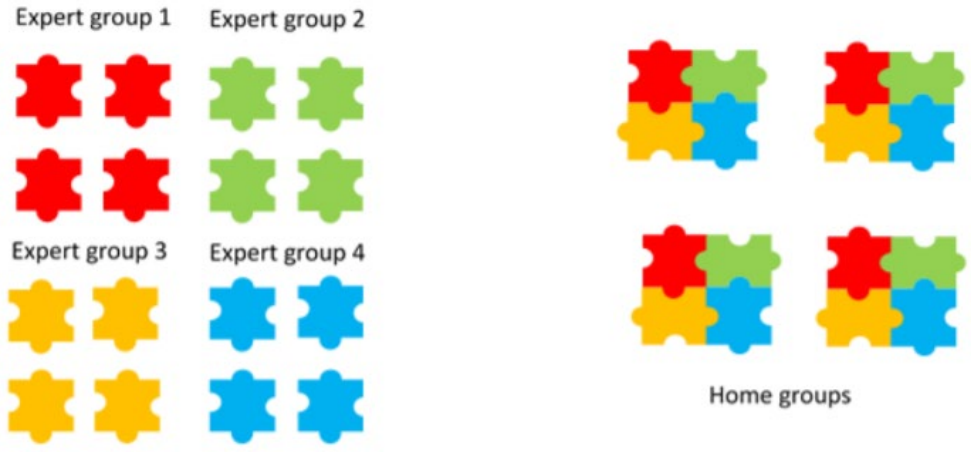


Figure 1. Jigsaw Approach

(Adapted from Jigsaw Cooperative Approach in Professional Studies: A Case of Top Technical Institute)

Planning and Preparation

- The teacher selects the **content to be taught** for the next lecture.
- The content is **divided into subtopics** (according to the number of the students in a group).
- The teacher should prepare **clear instructions for students**, and she/he should also explain the critical terminology so that students can understand the topic easily.

TIP! Jigsaw works best when you have the same number of students in each team.

Implementation

- Divide students into groups of 4 to 6.
- Divide your content into 4 or 6 chunks (i.e. the number of the chunks depends on the number of the students in each group).
- Give each student in the home group a different chunk to master. Make sure they read and study their chunk individually.
- Have students meet in expert groups. Gathering with all the other students assigned with the same chunk will give them the chance to compare their ideas and work together to get prepared. This also helps to enhance their communication skills and help them to solve any queries. This is particularly helpful for the students who find it challenging to understand the task on their own.
- Students in the expert groups then return to their home groups to present their chunk to other members of the team. Meanwhile, others in the group listen carefully, take notes and ask a lot of questions. Here, students are accountable for individual learning and the success of the group.
- Walk around the classroom to observe and offer any kind of help if necessary.
- At the end of the class, give a quiz on the material to make sure all students got a basic understanding of all the material.

TIP! In each home group, appoint one of the students to be the discussion leader, on a rotating basis. It helps the groups run more effectively.

References

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Hänze, M. & Berger, R. (2007). Cooperative learning, motivational effects, and student characteristics: An experimental study comparing cooperative learning and direct instruction in 12th grade physics classes. *Learning and Instruction, 17*(1), 29-41. Retrieved from http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959475206001174

Newbury P. (2015, November 24). *Engage every student with a jigsaw.* Retrieved from https://peternewbury.org/2015/11/24/jigsaw/

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Further Reading and Resources

- The Jigsaw Method, Cult of Pedagogy
- Spotlight on Teaching & Learning: Jigsaw. Berkeley, Center for Teaching and Learning.