

FOR-PD's Reading Strategy of the Month

JIGSAW

September 2009



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“There are no extra pieces in the universe. Everyone is here because he or she has a place to fill, and every piece must fit itself into the big jigsaw puzzle.” ~Deepak Chopra

RATIONALE

Looking for a way to assist your students with working together, developing thinking, content-specific and social skills, all while learning from one another at the same time? Then the *Jigsaw* cooperative learning strategy of may be right up your alley. *Jigsaw* is an effective strategy to use when you want to increase students' mastery or a topic at a hand, boost their concept development, enhance targeted discussions among students, and foster group project participation and learning (Kagan, 1994).

Developed by Elliot Aronson (1971, 1978) this strategy views each student as an essential piece to the puzzle of the learning. Since each student is seen as invaluable to the process, this leads to a shared responsibility model of learning that focuses on both inter- and intra- personal components (Gregory & Chapman, 2007). *Jigsaw* is seen as a powerful differentiated instruction strategy because it gives all students the ability to contribute to the topic, discussion, or task in meaningful ways (Crawford, 2008).

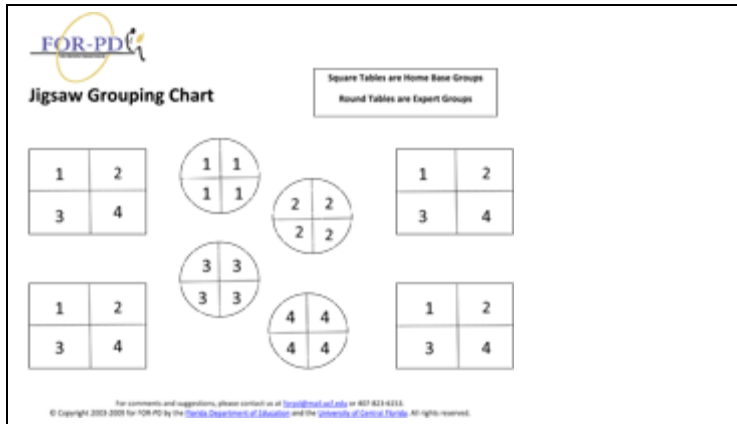
HOW TO USE THE STRATEGY

While there are many modifications that have been created on how to organize the Jigsaw strategy, the following represents the simplest version (Schlemmer & Schlemmer, 2008).

Jigsaw Steps

1. Divide students into 5- or 6-person *Jigsaw* groups. These will be the “home base groups”.
2. Give the home base group information on the goals and overall tasks of the assignment. Is the goal to learn more about the stages of plant growth? Will they be learning about causes of the Civil War? Will students be creating a report, presentation, or concept map?
3. Divide the lesson into segments that are comparable to the number of students you have in each group. For example, if you have four students in each group divvy up the information into four groups.
4. Assign each student in a group to learn one segment of the topic or subject.
5. If providing students with information give them time to read over their segment in order to become familiar. They may want to take notes of the important parts or parts they plan to share. If this is based on students' research, consider using an [I-Chart](#) to assist them with preparing.
6. Form "expert groups" by having students from each home base group join other students assigned to the same segment of information. In these expert groups, the students should discuss the main points of their segment and pick out the important elements they would want to share with their home groups.

See an example of a grouping chart below.



7. Bring the students back into their home groups and have each student present his or her segment to the group. Other members of the home group should ask questions for clarification on the topic.
8. Conduct a final assessment of the topic via a presentation, quiz, demonstration, or project.

See the following examples for how to use the strategy in your classroom.

Jigsaw Organizer

Jigsaw Strategy Note-Taking Sheet	
Expert Group	Home Group
Let an expert on the topic tell:	What were the other topics covered by the home group?
Points of discussion I want to talk about in the report areas about the topic.	How do the topics and information from the home group connect with my topic?
What did I learn in my expert group?	Write a group summary about home group's subject.

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 Jigsaw Strategy Note-Taking Sheet Elementary Example	
Expert Group	Home Group
<p>Learn an expert on the topic of:</p> <p>The atmosphere, the hard, outer layer of the Earth.</p>	<p>What were the other topics covered by the home group?</p> <p>Our subject this week was the Earth's Major Layers. My group members shared information on the hydrosphere and atmosphere.</p>
<p>Points of discussion I want to talk about in my expert session about the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The atmosphere is about 100 km thick. It's very dirty. The crust is located under the ocean. 	<p>How do the topics and information from my home group sessions connect with my topic?</p> <p>The Earth has three layers: a solid layer, the atmosphere, covered by water, the hydrosphere, and bounded by gases, the atmosphere.</p>
<p>What did I learn in my expert session?</p> <p>The atmosphere is also considered uppermost mantle and the crust of the Earth.</p> <p>There are two kinds of atmospheres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oceanic atmosphere Continental atmosphere 	<p>Write a journal summary about home group's subject.</p> <p>Each layer of the Earth all interact with one another. While the Earth has changed since it's been formed, we know that each layer has also slightly changed. We know that water is a part of our atmosphere and is considered the hydrosphere.</p> <p>Question we still have: Is the Oceanic atmosphere the same thing as the hydrosphere?</p>

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Elementary Example

 Jigsaw Strategy Note-Taking Sheet Secondary Example	
Expert Group	Home Group
<p>Learn an expert on the topic of:</p> <p>Christopher Columbus</p>	<p>What were the other topics covered by the home group?</p> <p>Our topic as a group was "Origins of Portugal and Spain". I like Christopher Columbus while other topics included Vikings, Balboa, and Magellan.</p>
<p>Points of discussion I want to talk about in my expert session about the topic.</p> <p>Christopher Columbus was a Genoese navigator that was financed by the King and Queen of Spain to explore in a voyage in the search of trade routes heading west instead of around the tip of Africa.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> He actually discovered the Americas. No interaction between old and new world led to the Columbian Exchange. 	<p>How do the topics and information from my home group sessions connect with my topic?</p> <p>Columbus was the one of the first explorers out of Spain. He followed the Earth was round. His explorations led the way for other sailors/shipbuilders to explore. These included explorer (1492) (Columbus, Balboa (1492), and Magellan (1499).</p>
<p>What did I learn in my expert session?</p> <p>Columbian Exchange was good for trade but Indians (Native Americans) were harmed with new diseases such as small pox. Many of them died.</p>	<p>Write a journal summary about home group's subject.</p> <p>Explorers and traders sailed the ocean from Spain and Portugal during the late 1400s into the early 1500s in search of new trade routes. Columbus' voyage led to the Columbian Exchange and furthered interest by other explorers. He led the way for other explorers such as Vesputri, who did not believe the new land was Asia. Balboa who crossed the South Sea, and Magellan who completed the South Sea the Pacific Ocean. Trade was expanded along with contact with nations of the new world.</p>

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Secondary Example

ASSESSMENT

Teachers can assess both the process of how students participate in the *Jigsaw*, what they learn about the topic from the cooperative experiences, and also the final assessment of that the students create as a product from their *Jigsaw* experiences. When evaluating the process you may want to use a rubric similar to the one [here](#).

RESOURCES

The Jigsaw Classroom

[http://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_E-Media/files/files-techniques-2009/classroom_connection\(3\).pdf](http://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/Publications_and_E-Media/files/files-techniques-2009/classroom_connection(3).pdf)

This printable brochures offers insight and thoughts on the advantages of using the Jigsaw method.

The 'Jigsaw' Approach Brings Lessons to Life

http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr324.shtml

Sixth-grade teacher Ellen Berg desperately wanted to show her students the true meaning of a fairy tale, but how could she organize an activity that would encourage them to develop their own definition of the term, willingly? A technique called the "jigsaw method" provided the backdrop for the dynamic and engaging lesson that her students still recall!

Jigsaw

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/group-work/cooperative-learning/48532.html?page=1>

Learn how to use the jigsaw strategy across different content areas, including author studies, writing, and math.

Math--Special Segments of Triangles Jigsaw Activity

<http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/1435.html>

This site offers specific strategies on how to use the Jigsaw strategy in the high school math classroom.

REFERENCES

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Gregory, G. and Chapman, C. (2002) *Differentiated instructional strategies: One size doesn't fit all*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Kagan, S. (1994). *Cooperative learning*. San Clemente, California: Kagan Publishing.

Schlemmer, P., & Schlemmer, D. (2008). *Teaching beyond the test: Differentiated project-based learning in a standards-based age*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

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