

Literacy Strategies

Jigsaw

The **Jigsaw** strategy (Aronson, 1978) is designed for cooperative learning. The idea is analogous to a jigsaw puzzle in that “pieces” or topics of study are researched and learned by students within groups and then put together in the form of peer teaching between groups.

Students work in groups of three to six to become experts on a particular topic which is based on an overall theme or unit of study. The group members are charged with learning everything they can about their assigned topics. Each group member participates in the research efforts and becomes an “expert” on his or her particular topic. The students then leave their groups to join “expert groups” to teach about their assigned pieces of the puzzle. Then, the original group comes back together to teach each other what they have learned. Each student listens and takes notes, and at the end of the unit, is accountable for the information shared throughout the class.



Instructional technology can easily be incorporated into the jigsaw strategy. Research can be accomplished via the internet on-line encyclopedias. Presentations can be developed with various software packages and enhanced with video camera pictures, student voices, music, and moving illustrations from other sources in to the presentations.

Note: *The teacher's preparation and planning is key for the success of this project. It can be set up for a couple of days or a couple of weeks, depending on the nature of the topic, the students who will be conducting the research, and the extent of the research that is involved.*

How to set it up:

1. Divide class into 4-6 member groups; each member becomes an expert on a different topic/concept assigned by teacher.
2. Members of the teams with the same topic meet together in an expert group with a variety of resource materials and texts available to explore their topic. Also, a single reading from the textbook or another source could be used to complete the assignment.
3. The students prepare how they will teach the information to others.
4. Everyone returns to their jigsaw teams to teach what they learned to the other members.
5. Team members listen and take notes as their classmate teaches them.
6. All students are given a quiz or exam on the overall topic which as been taught in sections within each jigsaw group.

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