



Expert groups / Jigsaw method

Follow the guidelines
below to implement this
method in your classroom



Description of the method

Jigsaw is a collaborative learning approach where students learn the value of cooperative learning through the distributed information system within groups. Similar to assembling a jigsaw puzzle, the instructor divides the content into equal parts or "pieces", which students then solve together to form a cohesive whole. This method allows for the exploration of various subthemes within a single lesson, enhancing comprehension and engagement, for example, to consider different subthemes, aspects or angles of a topic, a case or a problem.



Primary group A



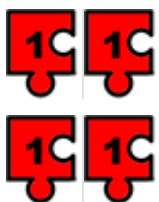
Primary group B



Primary group C



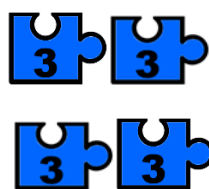
Primary group D



Expert group 1



Expert group 2



Expert group 3



Expert group 4

What will you need

Practical organization

Group: min. 12 students or 16 students, jigsaw groups of 4 students, 3 or 4 groups

Duration: a class period, 50 min or a block schedule (2 X 50 min), depending on the lesson topic

Materials: chairs and desks organized in groups of four, comprehensive set of learning materials, assignment bundle for each expert group and an answer key

Implementation in the Classroom

1. Preparing for the lesson

Select a Topic

Choose a topic relevant to the curriculum or learning objectives. Ensure it is suitable for division into four subthemes.

Divide the Topic

Divide the chosen topic into four distinct subthemes. Each subtheme should represent a key aspect or area of focus within the broader topic.

Prepare Learning Materials

Create a comprehensive set of learning materials customized to the learning group. These may include informative texts, tables, images, video clips, and potentially a glossary of terms. Additionally, develop a clear assignment bundle for each expert group, outlining their tasks and objectives. Provide a corresponding answer key and possibly a grading rubric to facilitate assessment and feedback. Ensure that each expert group has access to relevant materials and instructions to effectively engage with their assigned subtheme.

Organize Resources

Provide each expert group with a designated workspace where they can collaborate and engage with the materials effectively. These steps ensure that each expert group is equipped with the necessary resources and guidance to delve into their assigned subtheme effectively during the lesson.

2. Organizing the groups

Create Primary Groups

Divide the students into 3 or 4 primary groups, depending on the number of students (refer to the diagram). Introduce lesson topic and working method.

Assign Expert Groups

Within each primary group, further divide them into expert groups. Assign each expert group a specific subtheme related to the topic.

Engage with Learning Materials

Each expert group reads and discusses the provided learning materials relevant to their assigned subtheme. They collaborate to complete the assignment bundle associated with their subtheme.

Assessment and Review

Once the expert groups have completed their tasks, let them carefully evaluate their answers against the answer key. This ensures that inaccurate responses are not propagated in the subsequent phase. Each member of the expert group should thoroughly understand all the information to effectively participate in the next step. By following these steps, you can facilitate effective collaboration and learning within each group, ensuring that all students engage deeply with the material and are well-prepared to contribute to the subsequent phases of the lesson.

3. Reforming Primary Groups and Exchanging Expertise

Create New Primary Groups

Reform the primary groups by including the appointed experts from each expert group.

Facilitate Knowledge Exchange

The appointed experts from each expert group share their insights and information about their assigned subtheme with their primary group. Meanwhile, other members of the primary group collaborate to complete the assignment bundle, ensuring that all members have a comprehensive understanding of all subthemes.

Ensure Understanding

Verify that each member of the primary group understands the information shared by the appointed experts. This ensures that the knowledge acquired in the expert groups is effectively disseminated within the larger group.

Tips and Tricks

Effective Group Monitoring

- Monitor the groups closely to assess the depth of students' understanding and mastery of the content. Regularly walking around the room lowers the barrier for asking questions and allows you to identify any potential misunderstandings or misinterpretations.

Promote Peer Learning

- Emphasize to students that they are responsible for transferring knowledge to their fellow classmates.

Additional Resources (optional)

- Consider supplementing the provided materials with additional resources, such as relevant articles, case studies, or interactive multimedia resources, to further enrich the learning experience and accommodate different learning styles.

Preventing "Free Riders" and Encouraging Active Participation

- The risk of "free riders" (students who contribute little during group work but still receive credit) can be addressed by implementing peer assessment, as it allows students to evaluate the extent to which their peers have contributed to achieving learning outcomes in the expert groups. By incorporating peer assessment, students become actively involved in the evaluation process, fostering engagement and accountability. Task assignment is another possibility (reporter, moderator, ...)

Assessment

- The evaluation can be conducted through various methods to assess students' understanding and mastery of the material. Some possible evaluation methods include:
 - **Written Test:** Administering a written test to assess students' knowledge and comprehension of the topic. The test may include multiple-choice questions, short-answer questions, and essay questions to gauge different levels of understanding.
 - **Quiz:** Can serve as a quick assessment tool to gauge students' understanding and retention of the material covered during the lesson. The quiz provides immediate feedback to both students and instructors, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning.
 - **Essay Writing:** Assigning students to write an essay on a specific aspect of the topic. This allows students to demonstrate their critical thinking skills, analytical abilities, and depth of understanding through written discourse.
 - **Project-Based Assessment:** Implementing a project-based assessment where students work collaboratively or individually to create a project related to the topic. This could include presentations, research papers, creative artworks, or multimedia projects, allowing students to apply their knowledge in a practical context.
 - **Oral Presentation:** Organizing an oral presentation where students present their understanding of the topic to the class or a panel of judges. This assesses students' communication skills, ability to articulate ideas, and depth of understanding in a public speaking format.
 - **Performance Tasks:** Designing performance tasks or simulations that require students to apply their

knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios. This could involve role-plays, simulations, or hands-on activities that assess students' ability to apply theoretical concepts to practical situations.

Prompt students to reflect not only on the content discussed but also on the process of thinking and learning. This metacognitive awareness enhances their critical thinking skills.



Examples

Referring to:

Learning activity: Democracy decoded: election toolkit

Lesson 3) Political Programs and Topics

Preparation:

1. Select Political Programs and Topics:
 - o Choose a range of political programs or platforms from different political parties (e.g., healthcare, education, environment, economy, foreign policy).
2. Divide Topics:
 - o Divide the political programs into distinct topics. For instance, if you have five political parties and each has five main policy areas, you'll have 25 distinct topics.

Step-by-Step Implementation:

Step 1: Form Primary (Home) Groups

1. Create Diverse Groups:
 - o Divide the class into primary groups, each with 4 (-5) students (policy areas). Ensure the groups are diverse in terms of skills and abilities.
2. Assign Initial Topics:
 - o Assign each student in the primary group a different topic from one of the political programs. Each student will become an "expert" on their assigned topic (e.g., healthcare, education, environment, economy, foreign policy).

Step 2: Individual Preparation

1. Research and Study:
 - o Give students time to research and study their assigned topic. Provide resources such as articles, videos, and party manifestos. Encourage them to take notes and prepare to teach their topic.

Step 3: Form Expert Groups

1. Gather Experts:
 - o Rearrange the students into expert groups. Each group will consist of students who have the same topic but from different political programs or parties.
2. Deep Dive Discussion:
 - o Provide a corresponding answer key to make sure the findings of the students are correct before they will share them.
 - o In their expert groups, students discuss their findings, compare different party policies on their topic, and consolidate their knowledge. They should prepare a summary or presentation to teach their primary group.

Step 4: Return to Primary (Home) Groups

1. Teaching Session:
 - o Students return to their primary groups. Each student takes turns teaching their topic to the group, sharing insights and comparisons from their expert group discussions.
2. Group Synthesis:
 - o After each expert has presented, the primary group discusses how the different political programs compare and contrast. They can create a visual aid, such as a chart or infographic, to summarize their findings.

Step 5: Class Discussion and Reflection

1. Share and Compare:
 - o Each primary group presents their summary to the class. This can be done through presentations, posters, or digital slides.
2. Facilitate a Discussion:
 - o As a class, discuss the similarities and differences between the political programs. Encourage students to reflect on what they learned and how the policies might impact society.

Assessment and Feedback:

1. Individual Assessment:
 - o Assess students on their research, contribution to expert group discussions, and ability to teach their topic to their primary group.
2. Group Assessment:
 - o Evaluate the primary group's final summary or presentation on the political programs and topics.
3. Feedback:
 - o Provide feedback on both individual and group performance, focusing on collaboration, understanding of the material, and presentation skills.

Example Topics for Political Programs:

1. Healthcare:
 - o Policies on public healthcare funding, insurance, and access to medical services.
2. Education:
 - o Plans for primary, secondary, and higher education funding, curriculum changes, and student support.
3. Environment:
 - o Approaches to climate change, renewable energy, and conservation efforts.
4. Economy:
 - o Economic growth strategies, taxation, employment, and business support.
5. Foreign Policy:
 - o International relations, trade agreements, and defense policies.



This work is licensed under a [CC-BY 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) | Learning Lines for Teaching Advanced Critical Thinking (2022-2025) | Erasmus+ Project | t-act.eu | Version March 2025