Jigsaw I

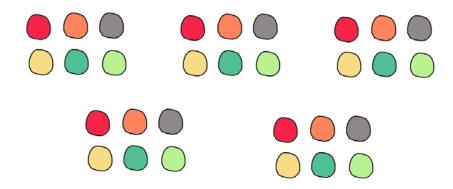**Step 1: Divide students into groups of 4 to 6 people per group.**

Jigsaw works best when you have the same number of students in each team, so avoid having some groups of four, some of five, and some of six. For this example, we'll assume you're working with a class of exactly 30 students who can be divided evenly into groups of six. We'll call these the *Jigsaw Groups*.

Step 2: Divide your content into 4 to 6 chunks.

It's important to divide the content into the same number of chunks as the number of students in each group. So if you have six students per group, break your content into six chunks. If you're only going to have five students in each group, then you'll only need five chunks.

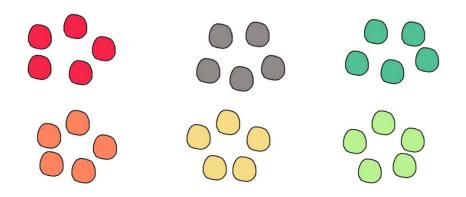**Step 3: Assign one chunk of content to each person in the Jigsaw Group.**

Each group has one person responsible for one chunk of the content. That person will be expected to teach that chunk to the rest of the group.

At this point, students don't really interact with other members of their group; they just read and study their own chunk of content independently. Then, their independent study is fortified by the next step...

Step 4: Have students meet in Expert Groups.

After each student has studied his or her chunk independently, they gather with all the other students who have been assigned to the same chunk. These are called *Expert Groups.*

Within each Expert Group, students compare their ideas and work together to prepare some kind of presentation to give to their Jigsaw Groups. During this time, gaps in individual students' knowledge can be filled, misconceptions can be cleared up, and important concepts can be reinforced.

Step 5: Students return to Jigsaw Groups.

Now that students have studied their chunks in their expert groups, they return to their original jigsaw groups, where each student takes a turn presenting their chunk of information. Meanwhile, the other students listen carefully, take notes, and ask lots of questions – they are learning the material from this expert, so this is their opportunity to make sure they learn it right.

Once the first expert has gone, the others take their turns. As each "expert" teaches their chunk of content, the others in the group are learning it.

Step 6: Assess all students on all the content.

The assessment can be a simple quiz to make sure all students got a basic understanding of all the material. Be sure to include all content chunks in this quiz.

Jigsaw II

Developed by Robert Slavin in 1986, Jigsaw II makes one significant tweak to the basic Jigsaw.

The difference is in how the assessment is treated. In *Jigsaw I*, students are assessed individually and receive just one score. In *Jigsaw II*, quiz scores are given once to individual students, then each group's scores are averaged to generate a group score. This builds in competition between groups and encourages students to work harder at helping each other learn the material well.

Troubleshooting

What if students don't divide evenly?

Ideally, you'd have a perfectly divisible group. But as we all know, that kind of perfection rarely happens, and even if you have perfection in your plans, one absent student can throw your whole game off.

First, remember that you can create groups of 4, 5, or 6 (and some jigsaw advocates even allow for groups of 2 or 3), so that should help minimize "extra" students. Still, if you end up with a few extras, just assign two students in the same group the same chunk.

What if some "experts" don't teach the material very well?

You can anticipate this problem when creating your groups. One thing you can do, if you do have an uneven number of students, is pair up two students on the same chunk who might be stronger together than they would be on their own.

Also, it's the responsibility of the Expert Group to make sure that everyone is prepared to present their chunk to their respective Jigsaw Groups. If one student isn't really getting it, make sure the rest of the group gives that student extra preparation so they'll be ready to teach the material to their Jigsaw Group.