

Goal: Promote cooperative learning and interdependence through peer-teaching and discussion

Jigsaw Reading

In Jigsaw Reading, students work in groups to collectively build content knowledge by discussing a set of texts. To prepare for Jigsaw Reading, the teacher selects several texts aligned to a similar topic. Initially, students are divided into small groups, and each group is assigned a different text to read. Through their reading and discussion, students become “experts” on their assigned text. Then, students are reorganized into new groups, so that every group contains an “expert” in each of the texts. Students share what they learned from their text and expert group discussions with their new group, building a shared understanding of the main topic.

Challenges

It is difficult for the teacher to ensure that each student has deeply understood their “expert” text prior to sharing with their mixed groups.

Not all students are prepared to discuss their text with their mixed groups. This may be because some students are reluctant to speak in front of their peers or they lack confidence in their ideas.

It is challenging for the teacher to monitor small groups and promote productive, meaningful discussions. The teacher is unsure of which groups need support understanding their text.

Solutions

The teacher assigns each group’s text in Actively Learn and embeds questions to check for understanding and prompt deeper thinking. As students respond, the teacher provides feedback to individuals or groups and addresses misconceptions.

In Actively Learn, students add notes while in “expert” groups, which they reference when sharing with their mixed groups. The teacher also provides scaffolds, in the form of “Extra Help” in the text, to support specific students.

During discussions, the teacher reviews responses to notes and questions to ensure productivity and hold students accountable. Students use “I Don’t Understand” flags to signal to the teacher that their group needs additional support.

Thinking about using Actively Learn for Jigsaw Reading? Here are some tips:

- [Embed questions](#) at specific points in the text to ensure understanding of key concepts.
- Use the teacher directions to set clear expectations for each small group and [create rigorous, thought-provoking questions](#) for each text you assign.
- If you want your groups to focus on specific aspects of the text as they read, [create custom note categories](#) to guide students (e.g., create a custom note category called “To Share” and instruct students to use this tag when recording notes that they will share in their mixed groups).
- Add [“Extra Help”](#) for questions and notes to provide additional support so all students are able to fully engage in discussions and master the learning objectives.