

UCLA WRITING PROGRAMS

How to Facilitate a Jigsaw Discussion

Jigsaw conversations are great for getting students to talk with each other, take responsibility for their learning, and cover a large amount of material in a short amount of time. The pedagogical principle underlying the jigsaw is that students retain information and think flexibly and creatively when they have an immediate opportunity to share, reframe, and apply what they have just learned.

Step 1: Create a set of discussion questions to bring to class.

Step 2: In class, divide students into small groups of 3-5 people. Explain how the jigsaw will work: students will collaboratively formulate an answer to one discussion question, then form new small groups and convey their group's original response to their peers. Students should take good notes during their initial discussion, since they will be responsible for accurately reporting on their group's conversation.

Step 3: Assign each group one single discussion question.

Step 4: Give small groups some time to formulate a response. Circulate among groups to make sure students are arriving at accurate, coherent, and complex answers.

Step 5: Students form new groups. Each student reconvenes with 2-4 classmates who were not in their original group.

Step 6: Each member of the new group teaches the others about their original group's answer to a discussion question.

Step 7: Repeat steps 5 and 6 until all students have heard the answers to all questions.