Peer Instruction/Jigsaw Reading

With peer instruction, students derive meaning from texts through reading, as well as through interaction with their peers, rather than by receiving information from the instructor. Peer instruction may be implemented in a course through various strategies, including through jigsaw readings. Jigsaw reading was invented at the University of Texas and the University of California in the early 1970s (Social Psychology Network and Aronson, 2019). It is a research-based cooperative learning technique that provides students with opportunities to engage actively with readings, allowing them to discuss readings in groups. In jigsaw readings, students read a text or a portion of a text alone or in a group where everyone is reading the same text or text section. Then the instructor reassembles students into new groups, where each student has read a different text or section of a text. In these cooperative groups, each student teaches the other students (who have not read the same section or text he or she has read) the content of the reading he or she has read. To provide accountability and to keep the learning on an active plane, students take notes in a matrix or reading guide as they listen to other group members. This allows students to capture what their group members have said, and the notes may be collected for a grade, or they may serve as a study guide later. Ultimately, during peer instruction/jigsaw readings, students must be able to comprehend a topic or reading well enough that they are able to explain it to their peers.

Instructors may have concerns about students learning inaccurate information from their peers during a peer instruction/jigsaw reading activity. Some ways to avoid this potential challenge are to use peer instruction/jigsaw readings only one or two times per quarter on articles that are relatively low-stakes (i.e., they won't count for a large portion of the students' grades). Students can also be given the full reading as a reading assignment after the peer instruction has taken place and be told that they will need to read the full text.

Peer instruction/jigsaw readings have many potential advantages: the activity provides an impetus to read the article; students actively explore the topics themselves, rather than listen to an instructor; students are exposed to other students' understandings of the topics; and finally, students are given the opportunity to think critically about the content by discussing the article in groups.

Exemplar: Peer Instruction Matrix/Jigsaw Reading

Peer Instruction

To dig deeper into some of the principles involved in developing content mastery, we will read an excerpt from "How Do Students Develop Mastery" – a chapter in *How Learning Works: Seven Research-based Principles for Smart Teaching* by Susan Ambrose and colleagues.

1. **Read the full article for general understanding.**

2. **Then,** read in detail **the section you have been assigned**, taking notes on important points using the "Notes" column. You will use these notes to explain your section of the article to your classmates.

3. **With the larger group**: Explain the section you read to your classmates and discuss it as a group. Then, the next person explains their section, and the group can discuss. (Note: When each of the other members of your group talks about his/her section, take notes on the section that person read to complete the Peer Instruction Matrix.)

Peer Instruction Matrix	
Section	**Notes**
Section 1: Expertise (Pages 95-99)	
Section 2: Component Skills (Pages 99-103)	
Section 3: Integration (Part I) (Page 103-middle of page 105)	

References found in this resource (Peer Instruction/Jigsaw Reading)

Social Psychology Network and Aronson, E. (2019). The jigsaw classroom. Retrieved from www.jigsaw.org.