

Ensure Students Are Learning: Faculty Descriptions of Innovative Teaching Practices

Each Student Gains Expertise and Responsibility in Classic Jigsaw Group Activity

Innovative Teaching Practice Description:

In art appreciation, the instructor uses the jigsaw technique designed by Elliot Aronson to help students learn important information about artists and their work. Through this collaborative process, students engage in group learning and develop important communication skills.

To begin, the instructor determines how many groups are needed based on the topic then uses Canvas to randomly assign students to groups. The instructor usually does this before class and lists the group assignments on the board. When time is more limited, the instructor has students count off according to the number of groups needed to form random groups. The number of groups depends on the number of topics covered for the day.

After students are in their groups, the instructor introduces the theme or topic for the activity. For example, the theme may be Italian artwork. The instructor then informs the groups if they will all be working on the same general topic or if each group will be assigned a particular work of art. For example, if the theme is Italian art, each group may be assigned a different work of art such as *Mona Lisa*, *Sistine Madonna*, *The Creation of Adam*, and so on. The instructor then informs the groups about the various details they must learn about each piece, such as the period in which it was created, the artistic style, and

the various interpretations of the piece. Groups then assign each of their members to become the expert on one of the details. Students have approximately 20 minutes, depending on the topic, to research their specific area of focus.

After each group member has an opportunity to research, they create a group with other experts in their area. For example, all of the students assigned to artistic style will group together. These expert groups offer students an opportunity to share what they have learned, ask each other questions, and consider elements they may have overlooked in their research. After approximately 10 minutes, the experts return to their original group. The original groups discuss how they will present their topic to the rest of the class. Each group then presents their respective topics and the rest of the class takes notes. At the end of class, the instructor administers a brief quiz over the topics covered. Student receive participation points for partaking in the process. The quiz is worth a grade; however, it accounts for a very small percentage of the overall course grade.