I. **Goals/Outcomes**

1. To leverage participant’s learning about the strategic or important elements of a change process
2. To use participant’s time effectively and efficiently
3. To provide quality information to participants
4. To engage participants in a creative and meaningful way

II. **Background/Context**

This design is one of the most collaborative, engaging, and effective designs we know. It is called the “Jigsaw” because different elements (information) are put together like pieces of a puzzle. In the end, all the strategic information comes together and provides participants with a holistic picture or a system’s point of view.

One of the challenges of a change process is to be careful about information overload. People can only handle so much information. This design manages this challenge by creating the opportunity for participants to become content experts in one area and be taught by others about other important areas. It leverages people’s time, manages information overload, engages participant’s thinking, and produces strategic results. It is a wonderful example of collaboration at its best and is a classic design that is timeless.

There is a substantial amount of up-front planning for this design. The change leader needs to organize information into specific categories. For example:

For a technology implementation effort, you might have five specific themes on which you want to educate the participants, such as:

1. Faculty role in technology implementation
2. Lessons learned from past implementation efforts on the campus
3. External lessons from other campuses that have been engaged in a similar technology change process
4. EDUCAUSE report on technology trends in higher education
5. Financial data on the costs of a technology implementation, promises and pitfalls

For a strategic planning effort, the subject areas might be:
1. Regional data on demographic trends
2. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* special report on future events, trends, and issues impacting higher education
3. Internal report - self-study on campus issues
4. Middle States review process summary
5. Past strategic plan results

The change leader needs to arrange the subject areas into a four-to six-page summary with the most important information. These summaries need to be readable, understandable, and easily digested. The goal is to create a summary that condenses the essential information participants need to know if they are to be well-informed about a topic. Don't short change this. Up-front preparation of these summaries is critical to the successful implementation of this unique design. (You could also use certain articles in this design as a substitute for summaries.)

### III. Logistics

Material: handouts of articles or summaries of pertinent information, flipcharts, easels, magic markers

Space needs: large, comfortable room with movable chairs

Time frame: approximately 2-1/2 hours

Number of participants: 10–50

### IV. Implementation

We will use 30 participants as a model for this design. We will focus on the beginning steps of a strategic planning process.

1. The facilitator reviews the purpose of the meeting with all participants: "Our goal today is to understand the critical element of our upcoming strategic planning process. We want to make strong recommendations that will go to the planning council and the president."

2. The facilitator then creates mixed groups that will function as initial content expert groups. You can do this by having participants count off from one to five. This will give you five randomly mixed groups of six participants each.
The room should look like this:

3. The content groups are then given 30 minutes to read their topic papers and agree upon the four or five most important ideas or themes for their subject. The reason they need to capture the most important ideas is that they will then be teaching this information to the other participants in the next round/step. Some examples of teaching points for the regional demographic data might be:

   - The short term (1–3 years) economic trends for our state are optimistic.
   - We can anticipate a 20 percent bump in student population over the next decade.
   - Older adults will be a customer base that we can tap into. It is growing rapidly.

4. After the learning round has taken place, each content/subject group will have six content experts. These groups will then be redistributed into new mixed groups, containing one group member from each of the subject areas. Once again, you have participants count off, but this time it is from one to six. This will give you six mixed groups of five participants each. Each new "reconstituted" group should look like this:

5. In the second round, have each participant take approximately 5 to 7 minutes each and share their four or five most important points or themes from their content area. (In the second round all the pieces of the information puzzle come together to create a shared body of knowledge.) You can leave some limited time for questions and answers, but the primary goal is for each content expert to share what they learned from the original discussion in the first round. Give participants no more than 40 minutes for the second round.
After each participant has shared their most important information, give each group 10 minutes to come up with a list of the most critical information from all the content areas. Suggest that they limit this list to the top five to seven ideas.

6. A 10–15 minute break would be helpful at this time.

7. After the mixed groups have created their most important points, you have two options:
   
   Option 1: Have each mixed group make a brief (2–3 minute) presentation to the larger group. Remind participants that they should note common themes, discoveries, and innovative ideas because they will be making some strong recommendations in the final round.
   
   Option 2: On a flipchart, create a master list of the most important information by taking one idea from each group until all the ideas have been shared. If groups have similar lists, note this with a checkmark.
   
   8. After the master list has been created in full view of the participants, or after the brief presentations, you are ready for the final round. Have people remain in their mixed groups and give them 10 minutes to make three strong recommendations, sourced from the information that was shared in steps one, two, and three. They should put these strong recommendations on a flipchart and be ready to give a one-minute presentation of their recommendations. Some examples of strong recommendations about a strategic planning process are:
   
   A. We need to show tangible results from this process as soon as possible. We cannot get bogged down with process.
   
   B. We are going to experience massive changes over the next five years (faculty retiring, competition from for-profit companies, ongoing technology costs). Our leadership must have a plan for each of these important challenges and they need to be inclusive in developing these plans.
   
   C. The data show that there is a huge opportunity for adult education. Our graduate schools need to be ready to provide innovative and quality learning experiences for this or our competition will serve their needs.
   
   D. Customer service is an emerging issue in which we need to improve. Our students have higher expectations and want easier access to learning opportunities. We need to be prepared for this or they will go elsewhere.
   
   E. The quality of our faculty remains an issue. We need to be dedicated and disciplined in finding the best faculty we can afford. This needs to be championed by both the president and provost.
   
   F. Our self-study and the Middle States review indicate several issues that we need action on. These issues have been around for a long time. They are: faculty diversity; poor relationships between administration and faculty; a planning to plan mentality; and the need for a more entrepreneurial attitude in our courses, marketing, and service. We need movement on these issues.
   
   9. After the short presentations, the facilitator conducts a brief, open discussion about participant’s reactions to the recommendations. Keep this to about 15 minutes and then thank people for their hard work and participation.

It is important to review where these strong recommendations will go (i.e., to the planning council and president). People need to know how their hard work and ideas will be utilized.
## Schedule

1. The facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the purposes of the meeting  
   10 minutes

2. The facilitator uses a counting off method and creates five mixed groups  
   5–7 minutes

3. Content groups are given 30 minutes to read papers and agree on most important ideas  
   30 minutes

4. Groups are re-distributed and participants share their key learning  
   45 minutes

5. Groups create most important learning from all shared information  
   10 minutes

6. Break  
   10–15 minutes

7. Option A: Brief presentation from each group  
   10–15 minutes

8. Option B: Facilitator creates a master list  
   10–15 minutes

9. Participants meet in re-distributed groups and create three strong recommendations  
   10–15 minutes

10. Participants report out the three strong recommendations  
    10–15 minutes

11. (Optional) Facilitator conducts brief discussion about recommendations  
    15 minutes

12. Facilitator thanks participants for their time, hard work, and attention  
    1-2 minutes

*Total time: approximately 2-1/2–3 hours*