BACK TO BACK MAPPING

Grade Level: adaptable, elementary - adult

Objective: To quickly familiarize students with the geography of a given region (can be either place-name, geographic features, borders, etc.)
To develop oral language skills

Time Required: 15 minutes

Materials: - Blank outline map of area; enough for half the class
- Same outline map, but with place names or geographic features labeled; enough for half the class
- Pencils for half the class

Procedure:

1. Group students in pairs; have them sit with their backs to each other.

2. Give one member of each pair a blank map and pencil (this student should have a writing surface to put the blank map on); the other member gets the labeled map.

3. Without looking at each other's maps, the partners must work together to fill in the blank map. This means they must rely entirely on verbal communication.

4. When time is up, students compare the filled-in blank map with the labeled map, and make any corrections necessary.

Debrief:

- If the focus is mastering geographic details, not much debriefing is needed. A few questions about how different pairs proceeded, what parts of the maps they found most difficult, etc.

- This activity also provides a wonderful opportunity to encourage students to examine how they communicated with each other without the assistance of visual cues. How difficult was it? Why? What kinds of misunderstandings occurred? What techniques did different pairs use to fill in the information?

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