LATIN AMERICA LINE UP

Objective: This kinesthetic activity will help reinforce students' knowledge of the political geography of Latin America. It may be conducted in English or as a communications-based activity for the Spanish classroom. It is useful as an ice breaker or as a pre- and post-test of geography skills.

Materials:
- A set of cards, each with the name of a country in Latin America. Duplicate sets can be made for groups larger than 26. For groups smaller than 26, cards may be selected randomly, to make the activity more challenging, or the leader may wish to focus strictly on a particular region, i.e., Mexico and Central America, South America, Spanish-speaking countries only, etc.
- A map of Latin America, hung, but covered. Alternatively show a computer image using an LCD projector.

Level: Appropriate for grades 3 and up.

Procedure:

Hang a large map of Latin America, but keep the map covered until the last step of the activity.

1) Randomize the set of cards. Distribute one card per participant. Tell participants they now represent the country whose name appears on the card they hold.

2) Tell participants that they are going to line up, using themselves to construct a map of Latin America's nations, from north to south. At the leader's signal, participants should begin interacting with one another to try to determine their location in the line up.

Do not provide instructions about how to handle countries that are located roughly along the same latitude or in the Caribbean. Allow the participants to struggle with solutions.

In the Spanish classroom, all conversation between students should be conducted in Spanish. If necessary, work with participants to develop the basic questions and phrases they will need to converse with one another, such as, "¿Cuál es el nombre de tu país?," or "Mi país está al (norte, sur) del tuyo."

3) Once participants feel they are in the correct order, uncover the wall map. How did they do? Which countries were most difficult to place? Why?

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