

"Two Worlds" introductory activity

BY PAULINE S. JOHNSON

This lesson, which can be used the first or second day of class, is a carousel brainstorming activity that will enable the teacher to discover what his/her students already know about the geography and history of North Carolina. The teacher will also get an idea of the extent of their students' basic geographic knowledge.

Learning outcomes

- Students will access their background knowledge of the geography and history of North Carolina.
- Students will recognize the need to learn basic geographic details about North Carolina before the course begins.
- Students will begin to build a rapport with other students by getting into cooperative groups.

Teacher planning

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Five sheets of newsprint, labeled Coastal Plain, Piedmont, Mountains, History of North Carolina, and General Geographic Terms
- Five different colored magic markers
- Masking tape
- Clock, timer, or watch

TIME REQUIRED FOR LESSON

20-30 minutes

ADVANCE PREPARATION

Be familiar with the basic steps of carousel brainstorming^I.

Procedure

1. Put the students into five groups. Since this may be one of the first activities of the semester/year, the teacher may choose to just organize the students by rows or alphabetically. Give each group a different color magic marker.
2. Explain the procedure for carousel brainstorming with the students. While doing this, either put the five sheets of newsprint in five different areas of the classroom or give one to each of the stationary groups.
3. Have the students follow the steps of the carousel brainstorming activity. For this particular activity, the timing should be 1 ½ minutes for the first two turns. For the last three rounds you will need to add time (about a minute or so) — the students are not supposed to repeat information, and they may have more difficulty thinking of information that hasn't been added by previous groups.
4. While the students are working, circulate around the classroom listening to the groups as they work.
5. After all rounds have been completed, post the sheets so you can go over them.
6. Go over the brainstorming. This should be an open, non-threatening, and fun activity. Because each group has used a different color magic marker, you will be able to match items with groups. During this time you can:
 - Acknowledge correct answers
 - Indicate which answers are incorrect
 - Cross off duplicate answers
 - Interact with the students
7. After the activity is completed, keep the newsprint. As a review at the end of “The Land²” chapter, this activity can be repeated to let the students see how much they have learned.

Assessment

This activity is an opportunity for the teacher to learn about the students — what they already know about geography and North Carolina, and also something about the personality of the class. By completing this anticipatory lesson, the teacher may also discover classroom leaders and/or students to watch.

Students will discover that they have a lot to learn about their state.

North Carolina Curriculum Alignment

SOCIAL STUDIES (2003)

Grade 8

- **Goal 1:** The learner will analyze important geographic, political, economic, and social aspects of life in the region prior to the Revolutionary Period.
 - **Objective 1.01:** Assess the impact of geography on the settlement and developing economy of the Carolina colony.

On the web

Natural diversity

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/1.1>

North Carolina has within its borders the highest mountains east of the Mississippi River, a broad, low-lying coastal area, and all the land in between. That variety of landforms, elevations, and climates has produced as diverse a range of ecosystems as any state in the United States. It has also influenced the way people have lived in North Carolina for thousands of years.

The natural history of North Carolina

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/1.2>

If the five billion years of the earth's history were condensed into a single day, humans would have arrived in North Carolina just two tenths of a second before midnight! This article summarizes the major biological and geological events in North Carolina's history and explains how the land and environment of today came to be.

More from LEARN NC

Visit us on the web at www.learnnc.org to learn more about topics related to this article, including North Carolina, brainstorming, cooperative learning, and geography.

Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1989>.
2. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-twoworlds/1.0>.

About the author

PAULINE S. JOHNSON

I am currently the Director of a Teaching American History Grant for Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and Madison County Schools. I have taught history and English in the seventh and eighth grades for over twenty-six years at Reynolds Middle School in Asheville, North Carolina. I am currently doing adjunct work for Mars Hill College and Western Carolina University. I have a Masters Degree from Western Carolina University and am Nationally Board Certified in Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History. I am certified to teach K-12 and I also have Academically-Intellectually Gifted certification.