**ESL Developmental Continuum P–10**

**Teaching strategy – Barrier games**

**Focuses on**

*Speaking* *Listening*  *Reading*  *Writing*

**Most useful for students at stages**

A1 A2 BL B1 B2 B3 SL S1 S2 S3 S4

**Purpose of this activity**

In a language classroom it is very important that students have the opportunity to both ask questions as well as answer questions.

**How this helps ESL students in particular**

When all activities are teacher centred, students often only have the chance to answer questions. By setting up communication activities like barrier games, students have the opportunity to speak and listen in pairs, rather than risk making mistakes in front of the whole class.

**Procedure**

In a barrier game, students work in pairs to complete an information gap activity. Usually, one student has a complete map, drawing, table or graph, and the other has just the outline with some information filled in. The students have a piece of cardboard or a folder between them, so that the student with the incomplete map cannot see the completed example. The student with the complete map tells the other student where to place things on his or her map. The student with the incomplete map can ask questions to help place things as precisely as possible.

**Acknowledgments/reference**

Good examples of drawings suitable for this activity can be found in: