

An Adapted Version  
of  
REMOTE ISLAND

A SIMULATED LEARNING SITUATION DESIGNED FOR  
UPPER LEVEL EDUCABLE MENTAL RETARDATES  
OR STUDENTS WITH MINOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

Adapted by Richard B. Cohen

RATIONALE

Teaching map symbols to pupils in the classroom, even a learning disability or educable mentally retarded classroom, is usually considered one of the easiest lessons to "get across." Teachers usually have children come to the map at the front of the room to point out such things as rivers, oceans, states, capitols, mountains and valleys. These factual components of learning are readily memorized and, therefore, usually viewed with some enthusiasm by both the teacher and the pupils. They represent less abstractness in social studies than the study of a man's life, or the course of events in a war, battle or peace conference. In a sense, a pupil can "see" the facts.

Perhaps this is why most teachers do little more with the teaching of map skills than fill out dittoed worksheets or construct salt and flour maps. Too, it is often felt that there simply isn't time in the curricula to spend studying map symbols as a separate unit. Consequently, map symbols are taught by the teacher whenever he "feels" that the time is appropriate for a greater understanding of the lesson at hand. This, for the most part, represents an "addition" to a regular lesson.

Teaching map symbols in this manner does not necessarily insure a transfer to application learning. For this reason, REMOTE ISLAND attempts to use the symbols as they are learned in a simulated condition of problem solving. It is known that learning the application of knowledge at

the same time that knowledge is presented allows the pupil to internalize the learning in usable form. Decision making, based upon the presented knowledge, enhances this mode of learning even more. The pupil is allowed to use the knowledge in his own way as he chooses a path through the decision making process.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE SIMULATED EVENT

REMOTE ISLAND concerns a hypothetical island which the United States gained from Japan after World War II. It has remained virtually uninhabited since the time of its' discovery by the crew of a shipwrecked sailing vessel. Pupils who take part in the simulation are asked first to apply these learnings to a problem that confronts the people of the island. All pupils participate in the learning and problem solving by contributing different information concerning the island. Each child is assigned a role to play. The members of each simulation group decide, by consensus, what to do about the problems facing the island.

#### MATERIALS AND STEPS IN IMPLEMENTING THE SIMULATION

The simulation is implemented by dividing the class into groups of five persons each. A sociogram lends itself well to this grouping. Groups represent inhabitants of the island. A transparency for each physical characteristic of the island will be shown on an overhead projector. Each member will have a role card telling him what person he is to represent on the island. He will also have a worksheet on which he records the data about the island in the form of physical characteristics and questions to be answered. (See Appendix for these materials.)

The simulation starts with the group compiling factual knowledge about the island. This is accomplished by the instructor showing transparencies to the entire class (transparencies represent rainfall, temperature, locations of streams, etc.). As each transparency is shown, the group members record this data on their outline maps on their worksheets. Colored pencils should be used to duplicate the same colors presented on the transparencies. Each member of the groups now has the same information.

The second part of the simulation has to do with placing three large cities, any number of small cities that the group desires, and appropriate roads and railroads on this map. Symbols to be used for these physical features are included in the worksheet. The group is encouraged to discuss where to place these additions and arrive at a consensus before placing them on the map. Discussing reasons for completing these placements are important to each member of the group and his understanding as the simulation progresses.

The third part of the game starts with the problem that is given in the worksheet. A wealthy man wants to start a fish processing plant. This event can cause many things to happen to the people located there. It also can represent added jobs and income to the people of the island and the people that are not good. From the processing of the fish smog can be generated, streams and the ocean itself can be polluted. All aspects for the new plant should be considered by the group. To do this, every member uses his card which defines his role on the island. Maximum time should be allowed for the discussion until a group decision is reached and the reasons are clearly set down for the decisions that are made.