

MAP MAKING

Classroom Maps

Map making, in the context of General Semantics, is far more than putting a few lines on a page. It becomes one of the pillars of sanity. We will explain as we go on.

Most schools have “maps” of their floor plan located on the hall walls for the convenience of the students and visitors. By second grade the teacher can discuss the map and its features. Then the teacher can ask his/her students what would happen if someone came in at night and changed the names of the teachers on the map. Could a visitor use it to find a specific teacher? At least some of the children may say the map has become useless. Here is an early opportunity that they can hear that for a map to be useful, it must reflect the territory. A common adult response to this is “It goes without saying”. So we do not say it, for so often we ignore the obvious. From now on, when we work with maps, we encourage teachers to emphasize that the map must reflect the territory to be valid. Explain that in this case the territory consists of the classrooms, hallways and the teachers’ names.

Next, the teacher can ask the class to tell her/him how to get to Ms Soandso’s room. When they speak it, or better still, write it down, explain that these too are forms of maps. And just like the diagram map of the classrooms, their verbal map must reflect the territory if it will be of use to anyone.