# Coloring in Kindergarten?
Judith Gugel

I am so excited with what is happening in the kindergarten classes regarding map coloring/conflict resolution skills. When I first introduced this concept I did it with the intent of creating an AB pattern. Another focus I had was the concept of same and different (without one of these concepts you can't successfully be shown how to color two regions). After some work with AB patterns I decided to introduce the coloring of a picture. One of these pictures goes home with the children for homework once a week.

Prior to sending the picture home, I do the coloring with the children on the overhead. I ask the children to try to color the picture with only two colors if possible. As a class we decide what to do with each region of the picture and we try to limit the number of colors. Coloring the pictures with the children ahead of time helps the children to succeed with their homework (unless a parent convinces them otherwise!).

Up until yesterday we had completed approximately 4 of these homeworks. Yesterday, as usual, I placed a picture on the overhead. This time I asked the children to take a few moments to look at the picture to predict if they could color it with only two colors.

After a few moments of silence I asked the class if they indeed felt we could color the picture with only two colors. As I expected, most said "yes," but some said "no." I asked one child why he said "no." His response was, "You need three colors." I thought that maybe this was a lucky guess so, as I always do, I asked him why he thought that we needed three colors. He answered, "Well, there are three things that touch."
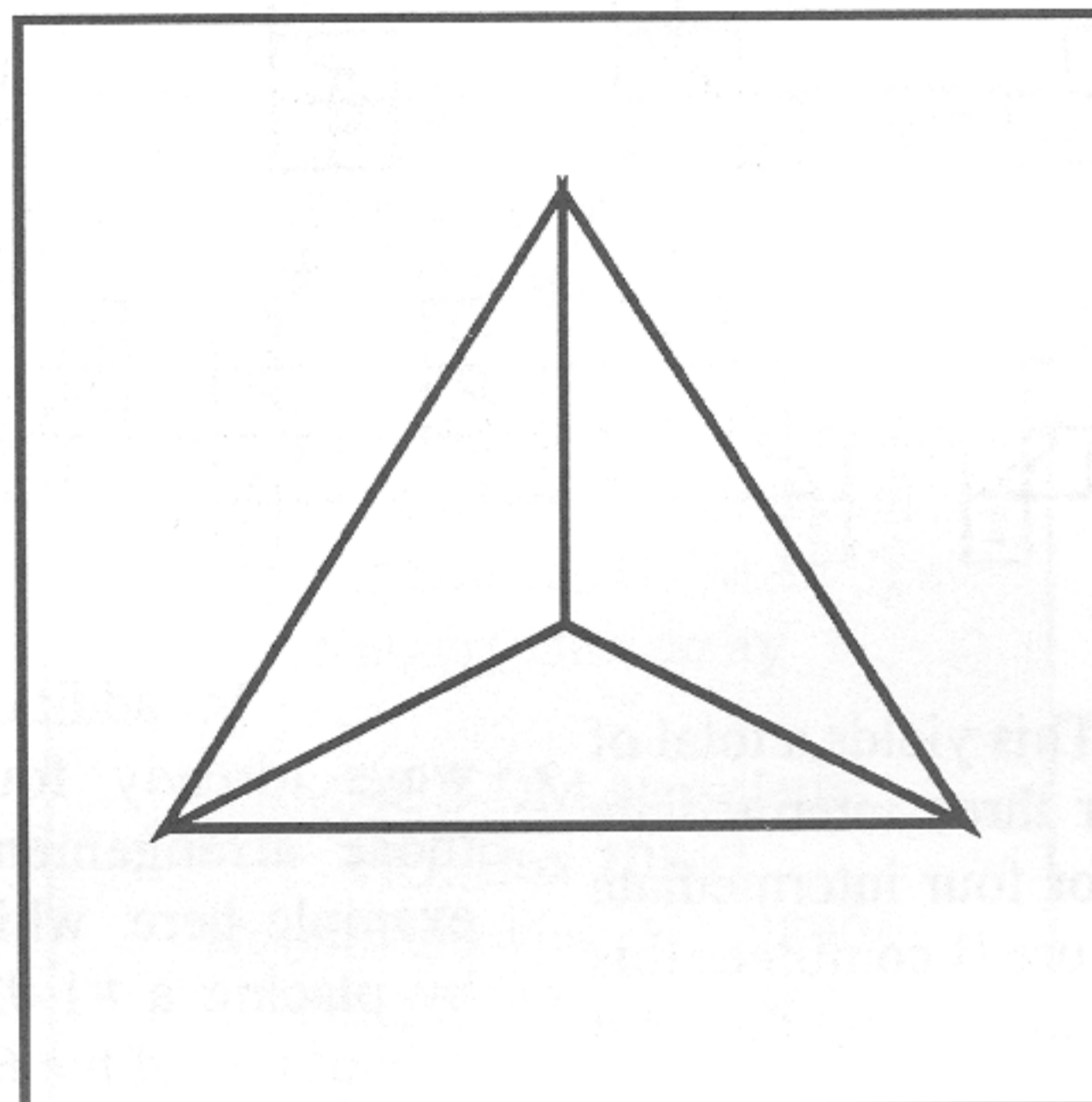
Now I was becoming excited so I had him go up to the screen with a pointer to show me what he meant. Sure enough he showed me three regions that were touching, and we discussed why that meant we needed at least three colors. We used that as our starting point for coloring the picture and found that indeed, we needed three colors. I then asked the children "what would happen if I put a square around this picture" and Tammy said we would need a fourth color and was able to go to the screen to justify her answer. All of this was really exciting, and some of the children are really getting it. While many are being successful when *doing* the coloring I can now see that some are developing *strategies* in order to succeed.