Back to-back telephone messages

Warm-up: guided role-play.

A: Who’s calling, please?
B: Steve Hudson.
A: Could you spell it, please?
B: Yes, of course. S-T-E-V-E, that’s Steve. And H_U_D_S_O_N, that’s Hudson. Have you got that?
A: Yes, I think so. And your telephone number?
B: 654 78 657.
A: Can I read it back to you?
B: Yes, please.
A: 554 78 657.
B: I’m sorry, it’s 654 and not 554.
A: Oh sorry.

Read through the dialogue above. After a few minutes, cover the lines and in pairs, practise it replacing the name and telephone number with yours. Please pay attention to pronunciation and intonation patterns.

1. Students practise taking down messages for others in the group. To create the impression of being on the telephone, students sit back-to-back.

Procedure

Students form pairs sitting in chairs placed back-to-back. Each student writes down a telephone message for a member of the class other than their partner. Messages should include:

- Name of person the message is for.
- Name of person the message is from.
- Reason for the call.
- The caller’s telephone number or a time when they will ring back.

2. Pairs take turns “calling each other up”, and taking down messages. Students pass on messages to the third party. They write them down and pass them to
the intended receiver. Example: **Message for Tom Harlow –** John Davis has called from Techniphon. He’s having problems with his bank transfer. Call him back a.s.a.p. Tel. 379 42 90.

3. Simulation: students make enquiries over the phone, exchange information and make an appointment to discuss the conditions of a financial product (an investment loan, a mortgage, etc.).