3D Learning Mini-Methods - Paired Hot-Seating

This exercise encourages students to use their imagination to make choices for characters from a story or figures they are exploring. It can be used to explore any character from any text or topic, using and applying any known facts as well as encouraging the use of inference and empathy to deepen understanding. This approach encourages all students to take on the role of interviewer and character, ensuring a class of active learners and opportunities for all to speak and listen.

1. Create a list or key characters in your text or topic with your students.

2. Invite students to take a minute to think about all characters and to identify which character they most connect with and why.

3. Now ask them to think about the narrative that is being explored from a new perspective: that of their chosen character.

4. Tell students they have now become their chosen character and must share their story, their version of events.

5. Split your students into pairs and ask them to label each other 'A' and 'B'

6. 'A' sits on the 'Hotseat' as the character they have selected

7. 'B' then asks 'A' open questions about their character, the events they have experienced, their thoughts, feelings and plans for the future, etc.

8. 'A' should try to answer the questions as that character. Encourage 'A' to really think about the detail in the answers and the era that they are from. i.e their favourite pastime should not be playing computer games if they are representing a character from Ancient Greece! They should call on the facts they already know about the character and events that have occurred, whilst using empathy and inference to provide insights into character thoughts and feelings.

9. Allow for 3-4 questions but allow students the option to ask more questions if needed.

10. When 'A' has answered all questions, the pair should swap over and repeat the activity with 'B' representing the character they have been developing.

11. Now allow students time to sit in a space of their choosing and to make notes as to the further elements of their character that have emerged.

Why This Works

Paired Hot Seating deepens children's understanding because one child must speak as the character or historical figure while the partner questions them, pushing both to use facts, motivations and emotions actively. This roleplay builds empathy, perspective-taking and inference, turning passive knowledge into lived, reasoned insight and strengthening how confidently and accurately children grasp who the character or figure really is and why they chose a particular course of action.