3D Learning Mini-Methods - Masking Tape Worlds

This activity asks your students to map out any location you are exploring in detail. Using the whole class space or hall, students will be able to consider all specific features of a location and to decide where each is in relation to the others. They will then be able layer the world of the story with descriptive language in order to make it their own and to act as a prompt for writing.

1. Ask the students to think about the world/location you are exploring from your story or topic.

2. Discuss the different geographical features that they can think of (perhaps mountains, rivers, towns, etc. or the rooms in a building: tower, reception room, dining room, kitchens, dungeon, etc.) and make a list.

3. Tell the students that they are going to map out the world in your classroom – your classroom is now the world of the story/topic!

4. Highlight the first feature and ask the class to decide where in the space this location might be.

5. Using masking tape, mark out where the location is and name it using a clear marker (you could also do this on a table top or on your class carpet)

6. Move through all locations asking the class to decide where they imagine them to be in relation to the other locations.

7. Expand class thinking by questioning where additional features might be (e.g. paths, bridges, corridors, etc.)

8. Ask students to use strips of masking tape to mark out river and road routes etc. and name all clearly.

9. Now give your students labels or sticky notes and ask them to move around the world, spending time in each feature and deciding what they think they might be able to see in each location – they should use an adjective and noun pairing and all write using one agreed colour.

10. Move onto what they might be able to hear and ask that they use a verb and noun (add an adverb for higher level language). Students should use an alternative colour for this part of the activity.

11. Now guide your students through thinking about what they can smell, touch and taste. They should use adjectives and nouns and swap colours for each sense so that you have each sense detailed in a different colour.

Why This Works

Masking-tape worlds work because they turn an imagined setting into a physical, shared space children can walk through, map, label and enrich with sensory details. By deciding where features belong, marking routes, and adding what they might see, hear, smell, touch and taste, children build a vivid, embodied mental model of the story world, making imagination deeper, clearer and more memorable. Perfect as a lead in activity to a writing exercise.