EXERCISE: MAPPING YOUR PLACE

Topic: Writing/Language Arts
Level: Grades: K-5
Time: 1 hour, plus follow-up and review

Materials: Whiteboard, projector, or large sheet of paper, markers, paper, writing utensils
Objectives: Practice observing and articulating details about a place

INSTRUCTIONS

• Choose a place the class is familiar with – cafeterias, libraries, and playgrounds work well.
• Ask students to call out as many details as they can while you list them on a large paper or whiteboard.
• Then, draw a map or project a photo of the place. Ask students to suggest labels for spots, e.g., reading corner, our class’s lunch table, or tallest slide. The goal is to help students recall details, not to create a completely accurate map or drawing.
• Now have students choose a place and make their own maps, pictures, and/or lists. Remind them that maps and drawings do not have to look “real”– the point is to get details and/or special spots such as a favorite picnic place or the best place to climb.

SHARE AND DISCUSS

Discuss students’ maps, pictures, or lists.

– What was similar; what was different?
– Encourage students to stick by their impressions even if they differ from another student’s.
– If they’ve drawn a picture, have them share it.

BUILD

Now ask students to write about a place other than their home. Suggest a poem or prose style, appropriate to age and ability. Here are some guiding questions you might use:

– Do you go to this place alone or with someone else?
– How does this place look, sound, feel, smell, and/or taste?
– What do you like about this place? Why is it special?
– Are other people there? What do they do? How do you feel about them?
– How do you feel when you’re there?

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