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X2.006: Story Maps of Montpellier - Exploring Through Imagination

Core Concept	Search Keywords (Inbound/Outbound)	Related Network Resource	Linked Action	Practical Example / Impact
<p>Use hand-drawn maps of Montpellier to create localized stories that help children explore the city’s topography, landmarks, culture, and history. This experiment encourages children to learn about their environment through imaginative storytelling, using different parts of the map as prompts. By visualizing the city through stories, children can develop spatial awareness, creativity, and a deeper connection to the local culture. The combination of real-world elements and imaginative narratives makes the learning experience both educational and magical.</p>	<p>Inbound Keywords: - Search “map-based storytelling for kids” or “exploring cities through play” - “early childhood geography activities” - “learning about local culture through stories” Outbound Keywords: - Use phrases like “Montpellier map exploration for children” or “story-driven geography activities”</p>	<p>1. Hand-Drawn Story Maps: Create maps that highlight different zones in Montpellier (Southeast, Northwest), showing landmarks, topography, cultural sites, and more. 2. Purdue Geography Learning Programs: Search “Purdue early childhood geography education” for resources that teach children about maps and spatial awareness. 3. Montpellier Historical and Cultural Tours: Explore “Montpellier</p>	<p>1. Develop Story Maps: Include a hand-drawn map with notable zones (Southeast, Northwest) and landmarks like Place de la Comédie, Antigone, and Jardin des Plantes. Use simple illustrations to make the map inviting and easy to explore. 2. Promote Storytelling Through Maps: Encourage families to pick different areas on the map and create stories that explore these places, mixing</p>	<p>Practical Example / Impact: Characters: The Laurent family, including 5-year-old Clara. Event: Clara explored a hand-drawn map of Montpellier, noticing a tiny castle icon in the Southeast zone. “Can we make a story about a hidden castle there?” she asked. Experimental Subjects: Local geography, cultural exploration, spatial awareness, storytelling. Experimental Results: The family created a story about “The Secret Castle of Antigone,” where a kind fox named Felix lived and guided travelers to secret gardens hidden across the city. Core Plot: By following the map, Clara learned about different parts of Montpellier, imagining magical creatures living in familiar places. Impact: Through this map-based storytelling, Clara developed a sense of curiosity about her city, learned about its landmarks, and discovered a fun, imaginative way to connect with her local environment.</p>

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		<p>family heritage tours” to learn about the city’s history, architecture, and cultural elements that can be incorporated into stories. 4. Global Platforms for Place-Based Learning: Connect with networks offering resources on storytelling and map-based learning, helping children connect with their surroundings through imaginative exploration.</p>	<p>real history with fantasy elements. 3. Encourage Exploration and Play: Let children imagine characters that travel through the map, discovering hidden treasures, meeting magical creatures, or learning about local customs. 4. Use Digital Tools: Apps like <i>MapTales</i> (for creating interactive story maps) and <i>Geoguessr Junior</i> (to learn about places) can complement the hand-drawn maps.</p>	

hand-drawn maps. This activity encourages children to use their imagination to create stories based on real places, helping them develop spatial awareness, cultural understanding, and creativity. By blending factual elements with fantasy, children can see their city in a new, magical light.

Experiment Steps:

1. Materials Needed:

- Hand-drawn map of Montpellier, highlighting Southeast and Northwest zones, with landmarks, parks, and historical sites
- Colored pencils, stickers, and a notebook for writing or drawing the story
- *MapTales* app (optional, for creating digital story maps)

2. Setup:

- Sophie spread out the map on the living room table, letting Clara explore the different zones. The map had playful, colorful icons representing places like Antigone, Place de la Comédie, and Jardin des Plantes, with simple illustrations of animals, trees, and tiny castles.
- “Pick a spot on the map, and let’s see where our story starts,” Sophie said. Clara excitedly pointed to the tiny castle in the Southeast zone.

3. Procedure:

- Clara decided that the castle belonged to Felix the Fox, who was very shy but very kind. He lived there to protect a secret garden that could only be found if you knew the right paths through the city. “Felix knows all the shortcuts!” Clara said, imagining Felix trotting down the cobbled streets.
- Olivier added, “Maybe Felix finds a map of his own that leads to a new garden, but he needs help reading it.” Together, they created characters like “Lila the Wise Owl” and “Pierre the Playful Hedgehog,” who joined Felix on his journey.
- As they followed the map, Clara learned about real places in Montpellier, like how Place de la Comédie was a bustling square full of life, and how Antigone was known for its beautiful, modern architecture. Each stop became a part of Felix’s adventure, blending reality with imagination.

4. Data Recording:

- Clara drew parts of the story in her notebook, adding little illustrations of Felix leading his friends through the streets of Montpellier. The hand-drawn map became a reference point, helping her visualize the different parts of the city and how they connected.
- The family used the *MapTales* app to create a digital version of their story, placing pins on the map to mark where each part of Felix’s adventure took place. Clara loved seeing the story unfold on the screen, and she shared it with her friends at school, who got excited about making their own map-based stories.
- The Laurents decided to visit some of the real places they talked about, like the Esplanade Charles de Gaulle, making the storytelling experience even more immersive for Clara.

5. Results:

- **Observations:** Clara learned how to navigate the map, understanding how different areas of the city were connected. The story gave her a fun, imaginative reason to explore these places, turning familiar streets into magical paths.
- **Conclusion:** Through this map-based storytelling, Clara developed a sense of curiosity about her city, learning about its history and culture in a playful, engaging way. The process also encouraged creativity, as she imagined new characters and adventures inspired by real places.

Core Plot:

The story of Felix the Fox was more than just an adventure—it was a way for Clara to see her city through new eyes. Every stop on the map became a chapter in Felix’s journey, from the busy streets of Antigone to the quiet, hidden parks dotted around the Southeast zone. Felix’s shy but brave personality led him to meet new friends, and together they discovered secrets hidden in the corners of Montpellier. Clara’s story made her feel connected to her city, and she was excited to visit the places she had imagined, turning her fictional journey into a real-life exploration.

Data Table:

Map Zone	Landmark or Feature	Story Element	Clara’s Reaction	Favorite Part of Story
Southeast	Secret Castle (Antigone)	Felix’s home, where he guards a hidden garden	“A fox with a secret garden? So cool!”	Felix’s first adventure through the city
Northwest	Jardin des Plantes	The final stop, where Felix finds a rare flower	“It’s like a magical park!”	Finding the hidden flower with Felix
City Center	Place de la Comédie	A bustling place full of lively characters	“There’s so much happening here!”	Felix meeting new friends at the market
Historic District	Medieval streets and buildings	The old streets lead to secret tunnels	“It looks like a maze!”	Felix discovering hidden pathways

Impact:

Through the hand-drawn map, Clara was able to explore Montpellier in a way that was both imaginative and educational. The story allowed her to connect with real places, learning about their history and culture while creating her own fictional journey. The use of a map as a storytelling tool encouraged her to think spatially, understand how different zones were connected, and see her city as a place full of stories waiting to be told. The Laurents shared their experience with friends, inspiring other families to create their own story maps and discover the magic of their surroundings.

Encouragement for Families:

Grab a map of your city and see what kind of stories you can create! Use landmarks, parks, and streets as prompts to build an adventure, and let your child’s imagination lead the way. Whether you’re exploring a real place or inventing a magical world, map-based storytelling can turn any city into a playground of possibilities. Ready to discover hidden treasures and

meet new characters? 🌍 📖 🦊