

The Silent Drawing

Overview

Working in pairs, students may come to recognize that their own intuition, along with the trust they build with a partner, are powerful elements for creating and inventing something “new” together. **Silent communication, collaboration, and a joyful curiosity of “what will it be/what are we creating together”** inform this social and emotional learning exercise.

Materials and Setup

- Drawing paper (one sheet per pair)
- a box or pile of different crayons or markers per table. Crayons create more nuance and are better for this exercise.

Students enter the room where the Silent Drawing paper (one per pair) and 16 – 20 different crayons or markers are set at tables, desks, or on the floor. Using a medium black marking pen, create these papers by placing the same 3 or 4 random marks – zigzags, curved lines, a dot in the same spot on each of the papers. This way, pair then has an 8.5x14 sheet of white paper with the same “beginnings” of a drawing - a few random black dots and lines, on it.

Directions

Explain that some of our SEL lessons involve speaking and some involve gaining more understanding about our selves and others **without the use of any words or sounds**. That’s the case for this exercise.

In a few minutes, you will invite students to turn the lines and marks into a scene or object using their creativity. Explain that the drawing will be done with their partner, and that the creative challenge is that there can be no talking or pre-planning! Trusting our creativity and ability to communicate is key!

Provide at least 15 minutes, have students create an extension of the beginning lines together without talking and with the intention to have the end result be a new, cohesive drawing/picture. Doodles and abstract shapes are OK in part, but working together to create a recognizable scene or object is the goal and the SEL challenge for today.

Write the following self-reflection questions on the board for student journal writing and/or group discussion. Note: SEL Process Questions do not have to be answered in a specific order. Allowing students to choose the questions they are drawn to answer involves them more deeply in the reflection process. Sharing personal insights, good will, different approaches to the same design helps to

build a positive climate among all of the classmates. Display the drawings in the room with the names of the partnered artists below.

Reflective Process Questions for SEL

1. Share with your partner what you each think you drew.
2. What did it feel like for you to do this exercise together? at the beginning? Middle? End? Exciting? Frustrating?
3. What surprised you about doing this exercise?
4. Did you find yourself following or leading? When and why?
5. Are you pleased with the result? Why?
6. Did you like or dislike not being able to talk? What did you notice was similar or different from other partnered activities where you have been able to talk?
7. Did the “no talking” add or detract from your enjoyment and fun or from your sense of accomplishment or fun while doing this?
8. Were there surprises along the way? How did you feel about them? and how did you manage them inside yourself?
9. Does what you noticed about yourself while doing this exercise remind you of other patterns or ways of being that you are aware of?

These answers could be written as a Journal Writing reflection first, followed by sharing or a discussion.

The Silent Drawing

1. Begin by having the partners share:

*What do you each think you drew?
Share thoughts together.*

Then have each partnership hold up their paper for all classmates to see and enjoy. Remark that the variation came from the same beginning lines, through the imagination and collaborative process.

QUESTIONS to promote SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

2. Ask students to think about and then share their insights re: the following questions. Writing thoughts first enhances what is reflected upon.

INTRA-Personal Awareness

1. How did you feel at the **beginning, middle, and end** of this exercise?
2. Were there **surprises** along the way? What were they? How did you feel or think about them as they were coming up? What thoughts or actions did you **hold onto or let go of** while drawing?
3. Did the **silence add or detract** to your enjoyment or creative energy for this exercise together? Why or why not?
4. Would you **change anything** about your actions or thoughts for the next time?

INTER-Personal Awareness

1. What did you do to **encourage each other's contributions** or help each other to continue to contribute?
2. Did the **silence enhance or detract** what you and your partner created? How?
3. How did you change direction or **compromise**? How does this inform you about what's needed when working together?

