Overview:

Students will collaborate silently with their partners to draw their shared "dream house." After 10-15 minutes of working together without talking, students will reflect on communication, shared vision, and collaboration.

Learning Outcomes:

- Build communication skills
- Practice components of team work, cooperation, and compromise

Information for Instructor:

Supplies: blank sheet of paper for every two participants; fine or medium tipped colored markers or pencils

Instructions:

Participants are divided into pairs. It doesn't matter if they have a common language because this activity must be done silently. Each pair will work together on a single sheet of paper. Each must have at least one marker or pencil.

Pairs will collaboratively create their "dream house" in the following way: One of the participants will start the house by drawing a straight line or curved line. Then the second participant will add a straight line or curved line. It can connect with the first line or stand alone. Each will make a line as part of his or her vision of the house. But each must add to the house or landscape by alternatively drawing a line.

A straight line or a curved line is allowed, even a squiggly line is permitted. But no lines can be drawn that have an angle. Such lines must be two separate turns.

Finally, there is to be **no oral or written communication between the two partners**. The vision of a dream house must be conveyed through the lines on the paper.

Participants will draw their dream house. Things to consider when drawing their dream house: what would the dream house of each participant be? What would it look like outside and what would it have inside? What would the grounds/landscaping be like? What would be the views?

Time: This activity lasts 10-15 minutes. Then, 5 minutes is provided for the partners to talk to each other about their visions of a dream house and also clarify what the other was trying to achieve in the drawing. At the end, the facilitator invites each pair to talk about what they drew together and their thoughts about the process of collaborating without being able to talk.

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Applications:

This exercise is particularly effective for introducing cooperative learning skills, teamwork, and the often positive results of compromise and shared vision. This exercise also illustrates the importance of communication and language. Not being able to communicate in a common language or on a common footing can be a great disadvantage or can weaken understanding. It is often done in conflict analysis modules, teaching workshops and those that focus on facilitation skills.

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