



Creative practice: Collaborative drawing

This workshop is a good introduction to creative methods for learners who may not have worked in this way before. It uses a collaborative drawing exercise that aims to invite students into the creative process using a simple step-by-step drawing activity. Groups can then look for thematic connections between outputs and consider ways to incorporate coding and analysis. The method is also useful for working with non-academic participants and can open up to an introduction to participatory research with community groups, for example.

By the end of this workshop, you should be able to ...

1. Practice collaborative drawing techniques
2. Use some simple creative methods to work with your peers
3. Identify themes and connections between outputs
4. Understand how creative methods can be used in non-academic contexts

Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching
www.blog.ed.ac.uk/tilt



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Futures Institute





Lesson plan

Start with a quote: 'Everyone is an artist' (Joseph Beuys)

Task 1 (10 mins)

- What do you think Beuys meant by this?
- (4 mins discuss with partner, 6 mins general discussion)

Points for facilitator to emphasise (if they are raised by learners) or introduce (if they are not):

- 'Artist' in this sense refers to an inherent human creativity, rather than skills-based artistry
- All aspects of our lives can be considered artistic in this sense
- Make the point that this is a potentially democratic idea
- Relate to any research questions or course themes such as global challenges (e.g. inequality, sustainability, global health, conflict)
- This is an approach available to everyone – not just artists in the conventional sense.

1. There is great value in things not being clear to start off with
2. There are no right or wrong answers here – it will mean different things to different people

Task 2 (10 mins)

Provide pens and paper – one sheet and a different colour per person.

- Draw a response to a set question (perhaps one of the suggested questions in the TILT section on Working with challenges. This can be as literal or abstract as you like. 5 mins.
- Would anybody be willing to share what they have drawn? 5 mins
- Note differences in approach – we all think differently and use different methods.

Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching
www.blog.ed.ac.uk/tilt



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Futures Institute





Task 3 (30 mins)

Pass on to the person to your left

Accept this as a problem to be solved; respond to the questions that it asks.

5 mins. Pass on.

Change the meaning of something in this image. 3 mins. Pass on.

Introduce a new element. 3 mins. Pass on.

Fill in some of the gaps. 3 mins. Pass on.

Add a hidden detail. 3 mins. Pass back to the person who started it.

What has this process shown you about your initial response?

- Emphasise collaboration, exploration, creativity

We now have a collection of collaborative drawings in response to a research question. Can we consider these as data? How might we understand them and analyse them? 10 mins

Key readings or resources

General reading on arts-based research methods:

Nelson, Robin. (2022). *Practice as Research in the Arts (and Beyond): Principles, Processes, Contexts, Achievements*. Springer.

Header image by Zhang, S. (2024) for the Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching. All content is licensed as CC BY 4.0 (Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International). © Overend, D., Choi, S., Cross, A., Cullen, C., Dures, S., Jay, D., Scoles, J., Winter, M. and Zhang, S. (2024).

Toolkit for Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching
www.blog.ed.ac.uk/tilt



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Futures Institute

