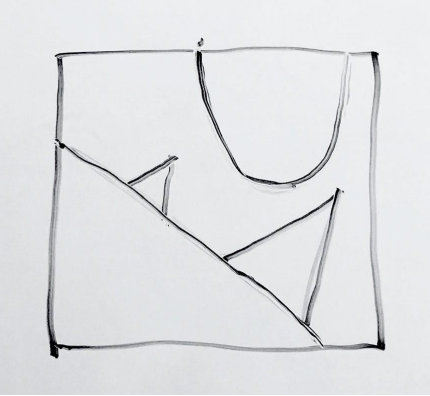
What Do You See?

This activity presents an opportunity to practice tolerating ambiguity, close observation, and idea generation. The task is to look until one sees some shape or visual story in the image, then look again for a new shape or story. The pausing and looking process supports development of tolerance for ambiguity. Once individuals find a visual story in the abstraction, their task is to communicate what and how they see it in clear enough language to allow the group to see what they are seeing.

Time: 10 Minutes
Materials: White board & marker or Document cam with paper. Abstract drawing
Group Structure: Whole class

Directions

The teacher draws a square (approx 18x18 inches) on the board, then adds three or four odd shapes and lines inside the square to create a simple abstract image. Ask students to raise their hands and/or call out what they see. There is no wrong answer! Allow discoveries to unfold for students without additional prompting. This requires long pauses for deep looking. **What do you see?** It is important that students get to communicate what they see to each other. That moment of epiphany, "Oh ya! I see that too!", is both an opportunity for building a culture of belonging and for individuals to experience small perspective shifts.



For Example:

I see a dentist's thumb reaching into a sharp toothed mouth.

I see two pyramids on a flat desertscape with a boiling sun above.

I see a giant lizard reaching its head around to scratch its own back.

What do you see?

TIPS

Composition hint: have one or more shapes/lines extend to the square's edge.

The images you create are not much more than scribbles.

Give students plenty of time to look and think.

WHICH CREATIVE RESOURCES ARE WE GROWING?

Storymaking, flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, imagination, openness, curiosity

WHAT KINDs OF THINKING DOES THIS ROUTINE ENCOURAGE?

Divergent thinking, perspective shift, close observation, idea generation, communication involving abstractions

WHEN AND WHERE CAN IT BE USED?

Quick refocus activity, opener, warm up to math or science endeavors that involve looking at an idea from different angles.