

Using Artwork to Support SEL ~ Docent Conference, September 2022

Cheryl Beeson, Docent
Beesoncips@gmail.com

Welcoming/Inclusion Activity One, Two, Three, CLAP!

Steps: The same partners face each other during each of the three rounds.

Round 1:

1. Ask participants to find a partner (in any way that is appropriate).
2. Explain that pairs will count to three over and over again, with each player saying the next number in the sequence.
3. Model slowly with a partner.
4. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the game to a close with your agreed-upon attention signal. Ask, *"How many of you made a mistake?"* *"What did you do when you made a mistake?"*
5. Tell the group that during the next round, whenever they make a mistake, they should raise their hands in the air and say, "Tah-dah!"

Round 2:

1. Explain that for this round, pairs should replace the number "1" with a clap and then continue the number sequence "2-3" counted out loud (Clap-2-3, Clap-2-3, etc.).
2. Model slowly with a partner. During the modeling purposefully make a mistake, such as saying "1" instead of clapping after "3." Raise your hands in the air and say, "Tah-dah!"
3. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, use your attention signal to call the round to a close. Ask, "Was anyone glad that they weren't the one making a mistake?"
4. Tell the group that in the next round when one person makes a mistake, both partners will raise their hands in the air, give each other a double high-five, and both say, "Tah-dah!"

Round 3

1. Explain that in this round, participants should clap for “1,” replace the number “2” with a foot stomp, and say “3.” (Clap, stomp, 3; Clap, stomp, 3; etc.).
2. Model this with a partner and purposefully make a mistake, such as saying “2” instead of stomping. You and your partner now give each other double high-fives and shout, “Tah-dah!” together, and start over again.
3. Once everyone has had a minute or two to play, call the round to a close with your attention signal.

Debrief by asking participants what they noticed (e.g., that they were taking care of each other, were learning to sync with each other, finding the right pace for everyone to succeed, etc.) Noting aloud the positive energy that was created with each mistake in the group, explaining that they will be working together for the next [*time period*], and encouraging them to keep that same energy when mistakes are made. Tah-dah!

This SEL practice focused on self-awareness and community building.

Using Artwork to Support Social Emotional Learning

Cheryl Beeson, docent with Weatherspoon Art Museum
Campus of UNC-Greensboro, NC

* The SEL Framework: This lesson focuses on Self-Management.

To learn more about the framework and access short PBS videos about SEL competencies: <https://casel.org/sel-framework/>

Featured Artwork: Elizabeth Catlett, *Sharecropper*

This lesson merges SEL competencies for Self-Management with Mindfulness and Observation Strategies often used in art museums.

LOOK CLOSELY

- What do you notice as you look closely at this figure?
- Copy the expression you see on this person's face.
- How does it feel to wear this expression?
- What feelings or emotions are being expressed here?
- What do you see that makes you think this?

PEOPLE OFTEN LIVE IN STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

• Depending on the age of your students and whether you wish to delve into a deeper discussion, introduce the title of this artwork: *Sharecropper*. Ask students what they already know about the history and economics of sharecropping. The Story Corp interview between a father and daughter, *Reflections on Sharecropping*, is concise and moving: <https://www.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/themes/sharecropping/>

Belly Breathing with Humming

• Injustice can be a great source of stress, and stress is most hurtful to the person who is feeling it. This simple exercise offers a way to remain in control of yourself when you feel stressed.

Closing

- Recap the two self-management practices explored today.
- Ask students what other ways they can think of to manage stress?

The Cozart lesson focuses on the SEL competencies of Self- and Social-Awareness:

Image of the featured artist and artwork: Steve Cozart, *The Harrington Interview I-III*

LOOK CLOSELY

• Ask students to take 2 minutes to look quietly and carefully at this artwork and make a list of everything they notice.

• When 2 minutes are up, allow students to share their observations in pairs or small groups. Encourage them to listen carefully to each other since we all notice different things and think about what we see in different ways.

- Invite the group to share something they learned or thought about differently after talking with their partner or someone in their small group.

Extend the conversation with these questions:

- What emotions do you feel in response to looking at this artwork?
- What feelings or emotions are being expressed here?
- What do you see that makes you think this?
- If you were this person, how might you feel?
- How would you want others to see you?
- What do you think it means to be “too black” or “not black enough?”
- How would you relate the figure in this artwork to what you know about Self-Awareness?

Repeat this step to examine the concept of Social-Awareness

- What did you notice in your small groups as you listened carefully to each other?
- Can you think of a moment where group members or partners thought differently about the same observation or idea?

Explain to students that everyone observes and interprets information differently based on past experience, age, cultural and religious background, and many other differences that affect how we see.

Cozart Lesson Closure

- Invite students to lower their gaze or close their eyes and sit comfortably so that they can easily focus on their breath, inhaling deeply through their nose, and then slowly exhaling. Let your mind follow your breath, in and out. As you continue to breathe, say to yourself:

May I feel safe. (pause)

May I feel content. (pause)

May I be strong. (pause)

May I live with ease. (pause)

- Now picture someone in your mind you want to wish well, and repeat these phrases as you focus your thoughts on that person.
- Take this practice deeper by thinking of someone with whom you’ve experienced conflict. Repeat these phrases as you breathe in and out and focus your thoughts on that person.

Alternatively, share this short youtube video that demonstrates a simple Loving Kindness Meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LAO2ACTjtsw>

Learn more about the artist, Steve Cozart by visiting his website: <https://www.stevenmcozart.com>