

What was it like?

This non-verbal exercise taps into your right-brain intuition. Choose your theme, and then it's important to draw in silence. Do not discuss what to draw. Afterwards you'll work further with it.

*In silence,
collaborate to draw one picture of:*

*WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO
START USING SCRUM ?*

OR

*WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO
WORK WITH A
BROKEN SCRUM PROCESS ?*

OR

*WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO
WORK WITH A
GREAT SCRUM TEAM ?*

When you're finished, request instructions for the last step, which brings in your analytical left-brain.

Notes for the facilitator:

Groups: This exercise can help a new group gel, and can help a formed group to share difficult information. They don't need to know one another, but it is important that they have a common experience (together or apart). *Write their chosen theme on a sheet of paper.*

Facilitation: The last thing you should do, when they start, is ask the theme question one last time, emphasising "what was it like?" or "what did it look, sound, or feel like?". Now say nothing more. *Remove the instruction sheets (so you don't have all those words floating around).*

Silence: is necessary for this exercise. Words engage the left brain, whereas we are in fact trying to keep it out of the *first part* of the exercise. *Challenge people to "it's difficult, try it as an experiment" ... :-)*

Materials: use one large sheet of paper, and the broadest markers/crayons you can find to encourage abstraction. Limit them to a few strong colors – perhaps 4 colours for 4 participants, to encourage observation & reflection.

Time: Try 10 minutes. If it seems too much, watch what people do with the extra time. Does it actually add to the experience or detract? Add more time if needed, or ask the group what they'd like to do. *You can simply ask "Are you done?" and ask them to give you thumbs up/down silently.*

Final Step: When time is up or people are finished, you can give them the final step of the exercise. *We avoid mentioning it in advance to keep them from thinking verbally about the activity. See Norm Kerth's book for information on why it is done this way and the theory behind this exercise.*

"Discuss this work among yourselves, and come up with a title for your picture. Take your time. This is where your intuition and analysis come together."

Note: this is an important discussion, don't rush it. The value of the exercise lies in building understanding here. There is no profound "aha" expected, don't try to create one. It's enough to get people sharing their thoughts, developing a common language.

Try not to facilitate this conversation, but if the team needs help to get going, ask open-ended questions: *Use questions with "what", "how", "when."* Ask: *"I wonder..."*

Especially avoid "why," "who" and questions with yes/no answers, as these can elicit quick, rational answers rather than the reflective, descriptive language we seek.

Optional add-ons:

Post it for others to see: The team must be willing to post it. "If you would like to put it on the wall, **capture the title and any notes you'd like people to know about it, on a card.**" Include the theme, the image and this card together.

Discuss the process: if you saw important patterns of behaviour or communication during the exercise, you might ask if they want to discuss it: "How did you work together? How do you feel about the way the exercise went?" *When you want to ask "Why", stop and take the time to come up with a more powerful question using "what", "how", "when."* Or ask: *"I wonder..."*

Further Reading: Do you want to get better at asking good questions? Visit the World Café website:

"Powerful Questions" www.theworldcafe.com/articles/aopq.pdf

"Ask Big Questions" <http://www.theworldcafe.com/articles/askingbig.pdf>

This exercise is adapted from the "Art Gallery" exercise in Norman Kerth's book "Project Retrospectives", p195.