Self-Collage

**Goals**
1. To offer the participants an opportunity to obtain data about their self-concepts.
2. To help the participants learn to communicate in symbolic, nonverbal ways.
3. To allow the participants to investigate the creative process.
4. To help the participants build deeper relationships with one another.

**Group Size**
An unlimited number of dyads. This activity is most frequently used during the early stages of a group’s life.

**Time Required**
Approximately an hour.

**Materials**
1. At least as many magazines as there are participants.
2. A pair of scissors for each participant.
3. A large sheet of construction paper for each participant.
4. A roll of transparent tape for each participant.

**Physical Setting**
A room large enough so that the participants can spread out and have plenty of space in which to create their collages.

**Process**
1. The facilitator makes the following comments:
   “The members of this group have worked together long enough to have developed some perceptions of one another. Today we’re going to check the accuracy of these perceptions. I’ve brought a number of magazines, pairs of scissors, construction paper, and tape. When I tell you to start, you are to look through the pile of magazines and take one that appeals to you. In addition, you are to take one pair of scissors, one sheet of construction paper, and a roll of tape. Then find a comfortable spot in the room and create a collage that will tell us who you are. Try to avoid telling us what you are.”
   After eliciting and answering questions, the facilitator tells the participants that they have twenty minutes and asks them to begin.
2. After twenty minutes the facilitator asks the participants to stop their work. Each participant is asked to nonverbally choose a partner whom he or she knows less well than others in the group. After the dyads have been formed, each participant is told to silently study his or her partner’s collage for a few minutes.

3. After two to four minutes, the facilitator gives these instructions:
   “Now that you have studied your partner’s collage, verbally tell your partner who you feel he or she is. Then check with your partner to see if your interpretation of the collage is accurate.”

4. When the partners have finished discussing their interpretations, the facilitator reconvenes the total group and asks these questions:
   - When you were constructing your collage, did you have difficulty describing who you are? If so, why? How did you cope with your difficulty? Did you feel that your collage told who you were?
   - Did your partner accurately interpret your collage? If not, why? Did you use pictures, words and phrases, or a combination of both? Do you know your partner better? Why or why not? How do you feel about this experience? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about your partner?

**Variation**

When the activity is used with a group whose members have already developed rapport, warmth, and insight into one another’s character, the facilitator may stipulate that the members not show their collages to one another. After the collages have been completed, the members choose partners whom they know quite well. Then the partners split up, and each participant creates a collage to illustrate who his or her partner is. After the new collages have been completed, the dyads reassemble, exchange their new collages, show their original collages to each other, and discuss the similarities and differences between their perceptions of themselves and their perceptions of each other. The processing concentrates on the reasons for similarities and differences between collages, anything new that has been learned, reactions to the feedback received, and feelings about the experience.

Submitted by Kenneth T. Morris and Kenneth M. Cinnamon.