COMMON CORE CONNECTION: SHOW AND TELL

COMMON CORE CONNECTION: Reading English Language Arts and Literacy – Speaking and Listening
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

OVERVIEW
Students will practice their communication skills as both speakers and listeners by completing this partner-based activity. Each student will choose a work of art from the Walters Art Museum at art.thewalters.org. One student will describe her artwork to the other student, who will attempt to draw the artwork, based on the student’s verbal description, and without seeing it for himself. The partners will have to be articulate and patient in order to accurately recreate each artwork. Please note: this is not an activity that requires fine arts skills but encourages students to listen and communicate with one another.

SUPPLIES
· printed copies of image (you can use the one provided or select another from art.thewalters.org)
· drawing paper
· pencils
· markers, crayons, or colored pencils

ACTIVITY
➊ Begin by practicing a verbal description of the work of art with your entire class. Project an artwork onto your board—such as the painting of Diogenes included in this activity. Have the class work together to fully describe the painting. Make sure they cover the basics, such as horizontal or vertical orientation and general color palette, before getting into specifics. Write down details on the board as students suggest them. Use the following questions as prompts: What is in the foreground? What is in the middle ground? What is in the background? How many figures do you see? What are they doing? Describe where the figures are located. Where are they located in relationship to one another? What other details do you see? etc.

➋ Divide your students into partners and distribute a printed artwork to each of them. It is important that each partner have a different image to describe. Then give the students this activity:

A. You and your partner each have an image. DO NOT show your image to your partner! It will be your job to describe the image out loud to your partner, being as detailed as possible. As you describe your image, your partner will do his best to draw the image as accurately as he can.

B. Decide who will describe first and who will draw first. The describing partner can’t show her image to the drawing partner, and the drawing partner can’t show his drawing to the describer.

C. The describer will start talking about her image while the artist does his best to recreate it. The describer cannot look at the drawing-in-progress to correct the artist, but the artist can ask as many questions as he likes to clarify details. Stop working when the teacher says, but make sure to write your names on the back of the drawing paper. Ex: “John Doe drew and Jane Doe described.”

D. Switch roles, following the same directions.

E. Once you and your partner have finished your drawings, compare the originals with the reproductions. Do they look alike? Are there any major differences? Write a short response to gather your thoughts. As your write, ask yourself: As a describer, were there any important details that I did not emphasize enough? Did I use the right words? As an artist, did I listen well to directions? Did I ask good questions when I wasn’t sure about a detail? Which role was easier, and why—drawing or describing?

➌ Once the activity is complete, have your students come back together for a class discussion. Have them volunteer answers from their written response and see if students agree or disagree on the difficulties of the activity. Ask them: what do you think is the most important part of good communication: good speaking, or good listening?