

House, Tree, Tiger

Course: MBA (Marketing) Semester: I

The House, Tree, Tiger activity was conducted as a ice-breaking and communication-building exercise. Unlike typical drawing tasks, this one was specifically designed to cultivate non-verbal coordination, mutual trust, and empathy between peers — essential qualities in any collaborative or client-facing marketing role.

In this activity, students were asked to form pairs, and each pair was given only one pen and one sheet of paper. Their task was to draw a house, a tree, and a tiger — but with two critical constraints:

1. Both students had to hold the pen together, using one or both hands.
2. They were not allowed to speak or gesture during the exercise.

The seemingly simple task was layered with psychological and managerial complexity, aimed at fostering insights into how people cooperate, respond to ambiguity, and manage shared control without verbal cues. Students initially found the instruction amusing but quickly realized the challenge of drawing while constrained by silence and shared motor control. Without spoken coordination, they had to rely on intuitive understanding, subtle pressure cues, patience, and mutual adjustment. Some pairs settled into a rhythm quickly, while others experienced friction, confusion, or frustration — which became fertile ground for learning.

After the drawing phase, students displayed their creations which ranged from surprisingly coherent to hilariously chaotic.

The exercise revealed powerful insights into interpersonal behavior, such as:

- ☐ The discomfort of losing control and the temptation to take over.
- ☐ The patience required to match another's pace without words.
- ☐ How misunderstandings arise even in simple tasks when communication is limited.
- ☐ The importance of reading non-verbal signals, a critical skill in sales, negotiation, and leadership.

Students also gained a visceral understanding of what it means to co-create under constraints, an increasingly common situation in dynamic marketing teams where communication may be virtual, cross-cultural, or time-pressured.