

Graffiti Walls

Graffiti walls provide advisory teachers with a way of asking questions that prompt thinking and do not require an immediate response. A graffiti wall does not seek factual or “right” answers, it is a tool for open ended exploration of opinions and feelings on a given topic/topics. When teachers use a graffiti wall they are encouraging critical thinking and developing student voice. They can be used to introduce new concepts, ascertain prior knowledge, review student learning and to foster ethical thinking in our students.



Example 1:

Students responding to a question from the Social Reasoning Learning Goal – ‘What does scrutiny mean to you?’

Instructions

- Line the walls or windows of your advisory classroom with butchers’ paper.
- Write your questions on butchers’ paper, or a white board.
- Have markers or post-it-notes freely available around the room so that everyone can respond to the questions.
- Students and teachers/adult visitors to the classroom are all expected to respond to the questions on the graffiti walls.

“Graffiti walls are generally very engaging for students and we’ve found that even our shyest students participate when they are given the freedom to do so in their own time and in their own way”
- Kirstyn

Example 2:

My advisory classroom wall is lined with butchers’ paper and a series of introductory questions posed. This graffiti wall was used in my first day with a new advisory class that I was taking over mid-year. The questions included ‘Something Donna should know about you’; ‘Internship that I have or would like to have’; ‘My favourite game is?’ – Donna

Tips

- Allow students to get up and write answers on the graffiti wall at any time. Set behavioural expectations (be respectful of others etc.) but allow free movement
- Encourage students to respond in any way they see fit, e.g. using art; humour; anger; poetry; single word answers, sentences, paragraphs etc.
- It is important that students are allowed to answer in honest and open ways as this allows critical exploration of a groups opinions and feelings.
- Teachers and students alike should respond to the questions on a graffiti wall.
- When teachers discuss student responses they should remember that there are no ‘wrong’ answers and they should seek explanation without judgement.
- Leave the graffiti wall up for an extended period so that students can respond in their own time and as their learning/knowledge progresses.
- Leave blank spaces for students to write up their own questions.
- Encourage students to use graffiti walls to survey others on their Interest Project topics.

Example 3:

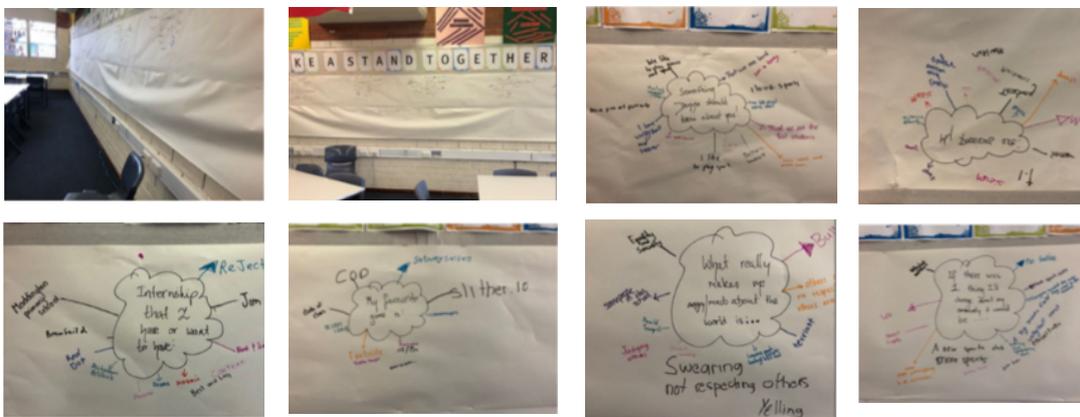
Students are given free reign to respond to the graffiti wall questions.

Some of the individual graffiti wall questions we've used:

- What's was your favourite thing about your exhibition?
- I feel safe at school when....
- Is music poetry in disguise?
- Internship that I have had or would like to have...
- What's one thing that I'd like my advisory teacher to know about me...
- What are the personal qualities that are required to complete your passion projects?

"I've used graffiti walls to help my advisory establish the classroom climate. We learn about each other, gain insight into our triggers for feeling unsafe and it helps us to develop shared understandings and our current expectations from each other."

- Donna



Some of the graffiti wall 'series' of questions that we've used:

- What is science?, How does science impact your everyday life?; What area of science interests you the most?; and What do you think are the limits of science? Hypothesise what will happen if.... – Social Reasoning Learning Goal
- What does it mean to be a good person?; What does belonging mean to you? What is your experience of bullying? How can we keep our classroom safe? – Social Reasoning Learning Goal
- What do you know about history? What do you want to know about history? How confident are you in history? If you could travel back in time to see an historical event when and where would you go? What do you think archaeology is? – Communication Learning Goal



Donna Garr and Kirstyn Pray