

***Drawing on the Potential of
'Once Upon A Time' ...***

An examination of the effect of a live and interactive storytelling process on subsequent drawings by children in a Reception Class

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PART ONE – CHAPTERS 1-6

Abstract

Written as a series of 'stories', this thesis asks 'Can Stories change Children's Drawing?' and investigates this question using qualitative approaches.

Part One includes an in depth investigation of what 'story' and 'drawing' mean, and provides a critical review of the literature on work with young children in 'story' and 'drawing'. The thesis includes a small study of adults' drawing abilities, which raises the question of how adults bring biased views to their appraisal of drawings, and how children's drawings are judged against what is seen as the superior model provided by adults' drawings.

In Part two of the thesis, a Case Study approach is used to examine the process of 'Story/Drawing' and its apparent effect on individual children. Attention is focussed particularly on an 'invisible' child, and a child from a minority ethnic group. Defective 'Story grammar' is suggested as a reason the children forgot one story. The thesis includes an examination of the question of if/why children *should* draw in any particular way, and whether the idea of 'accuracy' in drawing is important. The thesis concludes with some possible implications for Early Years practice including how practitioners can include elements of story/drawing processes in the everyday activities of a Setting.

The Research Question:

How does storytelling influence the drawings done by four and five year old children?

This question is investigated by a case study intervention approach in a reception class, which examined the impact of live participative storytelling sessions on the depth, quality and detail in children's drawings, and implications for teachers of this age group.

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Dramatis Personae

<i>Who</i>	<i>Playing the Part of ...</i>
Alex	Myself – I have 3 characters <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Alex in the 3rd person2. Alex as an artist/practitioner3. Alex, the EdD researcher
Michael	Michael is the pseudonym I have given to my dear friend, with whom I have had imaginary conversations
Pete	Pete is my partner, in work and in life. He has given permission for me to use his real name
Jo Hebden	Jo Hebden is the teacher in the class where I did the storytelling. She has given permission for me to use her real name
The Children	I have obtained permission from the parents/carers of the children, and from the children themselves, to use their photographs, use their drawings, but I have given them pseudonyms.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Dad – who believed in the power of education

Thanks

Deep gratitude to The Greenway Academy for hosting this research with such interest and support – especially Liz Wilson, Jo Hebden and, of course, the children.

Gratitude, also, to children and staff of McMillan Nursery School – where this journey started

Thanks to the University of Sheffield, especially Prof Cathy Nutbrown, for unfailing support, affirmation and patience especially when I asked silly questions or couldn't fill in forms

Thanks to Neo for proof-reading and ideas, and to 'Michael' for being my imaginary friend

And thanks to Pete – for everything

The Little

White Cat

Chapter One

Introduction – in which we meet the little white cat ...

Once upon a time, there was a little girl called Alex. She was an ordinary little girl, as far as anyone could tell, and she lived in a land with her parents and siblings, and no-one took much notice of her because she was quiet and kept out of the way. Alex spent a lot of time by herself, because other children in the family were much older than her. She grew to like being by herself, and she would spend her days playing, inventing, and telling herself stories. She always liked books - even before she could read by herself. There weren't many books with pictures in her house for her to look at - her father's gruesome medical journals don't really count. Rupert Bear was one and she liked making up stories about the mysterious house in the woods which the man with the pig tail lived in.

Now Alex, as is usual, had two Grannies. One was cuddly, and lived with the family, and Alex spent a lot of time in her granny's room, playing with the button box and talking to herself. Granny Ma would be sitting, knitting or darning quietly - Alex forgot she was there. Granny Ma's room smelled of apples and talcum powder.

Alex's other granny was very different - she lived far away, but occasionally would visit and the atmosphere in the house was always a bit tense when Gren, the other granny, came to stay. Gren had diabetes, and Alex used to watch with fascination in the morning when Gren would expose her large, marbled thigh, swab it vigorously with

purple, aromatic mentholated spirits and plunge a large needle into it without even a yelp. Gren was opinionated about most things, especially children, whom she considered should be seen and not heard. It is surprising, then, that she told wonderful stories, and Alex and her brother, if they were lucky, would be told a story at bedtime - not in bed, but sat at Gren's feet like little acolytes, while she drank her beer out of a copper tankard and weaved spells with her words. Alex's favourite of Gren's stories was the one about the little white cat who had to have her head cut off by the prince, and every time it got to that bit, every time, no matter how many times, Alex had a frissance of worry that the magic wouldn't work, and there was always a huge sense of relief when it did and they all lived happily? Ever after, of course.

Many, many years later, Alex became a grown up. One day she was asked if she could tell a story to some children, and guess what story she told? The Little White Cat. It was amazing that she hadn't heard it for nearly 30 years, but the words flowed, the magic was spun, and the children sat round her feet like little acolytes, with their eyes like saucers when the prince got out his sword to cut off the head of the little white cat...

It was over 20 years after this first storytelling episode that Alex found out that the story of the little white cat was not a Gren original, but a story which was first published, in French, in 1698, and later appeared in English translation in the mid nineteenth century. (Dale 2008:58).

Alex, curiously, felt cheated by this knowledge.

An imaginary conversation, during which the source of the research question is explained, and the process of the dissertation is examined

'So, how did it all begin, then?'

Michael takes a delicate sip of his wine, and rolls it round his tongue appreciatively. He's here for the night, and it's a treat to have him to myself for a change with time for conversation without interruption. The curtains are closed, the fire is warm and the evening is ours.

'Do you remember me telling you about Harry?'

'Harry? No, remind me.'

'Harry was the boy who wouldn't draw – he was 4, and he wouldn't even pick up a pencil or pen. Staff were worried about him. I used to work with him and it became a game between us – me trying to get him to draw, and him resisting. He was good at it too.'

'So?'

'Well, we started the story drawing sessions, and suddenly Harry wanted to draw.'

'Ok, you need to go further back. Go on. Start at the very beginning.'

'Right. Well you know I'd been doing artist in schools projects for about 17 years, managing, actively, to avoid working with any person under 8 years, because I thought they were just blobs. However, when Creative Partnerships was introduced in 2002 –'

'Ah yes, CP, the then Government's "flagship creative learning programme"¹,' says Michael, quoting numerous glossy publications.

'That's right,' I say. 'It all came out of the 'All our futures' report of 1999. Hull was chosen as one of the pilot areas because of the massive deprivation, and Pete and I were invited to a kind of marketplace do, where schools came to see what was on offer, so to speak. McMillan Nursery School head and deputy were there, and

¹ For instance Woods (2009)

although they didn't speak to us, they told CP that they would like to meet us and discuss a project, which is how I found myself in a nursery school. Strangely, it felt very natural to be in that environment – there was something about the basic and fundamental activities which were provided for the children that I felt at home with – I saw that everything was a learning opportunity for the children, whether it was trying to identify the contents of my lunch box through the plastic, or experiencing the feel of shaving foam between their fingers.

'You've got an open mind, that's why,' says Michael. 'You see opportunities, you say yes.'

'I suppose so. Anyway, I was concerned, very early on, to see that the children had limited imagination – am I allowed to say that? And why did I come to that conclusion?'

'Why not? What made you say it? Do your notes say anything? It's easy to forget reality.'

'I'll say. My notebooks of the time don't record much, but my memory (ah, memory, that fickle box of tricks...) is that everything the children did was 'given' to them, and that their homes were lacking in conversation and stories - although one needs to be careful making an assumption like this, as Tizard and Hughes² point out.

'Who?'

'Researchers. They did an amazing study of conversations at school and in the homes of young children, and they found that the conversations children had at home with their mums were far more complex than most of the ones they had with adults in school. Complex and interesting and informative. Other people have found the same³. None the less, it was a thought I had had, observing the play of the children, that there was very little invented imagination. It was all what they had seen on TV. There wasn't a culture of reading at home either, it seemed.'

'How do you know?'

'Well, I guess it was a one off example, but I clearly remember a little boy coming up to me one morning saying "We've got a book in our house." "A book?", I said. "Yes,

² Tizard and Hughes (2002)

³ MacLure and French (1981)

we got it on Saturday. A book.” “What’s it about?” “I dunno.... It’s mummy’s book.” “Have *you* got books?” “No, I ent got books.... It’s mummy’s book.” It was an occasion to report to school – we have got a book at our house.’

‘I just cannot imagine not having books. The few early memories I have that don’t involve cricket involve books,’ says Michael, and I laugh.

‘Yes, me too – except for the bit about cricket.... Anyway, I wondered about poking the children’s imaginations, and I said to the staff that I’d like to have a go at storytelling – improvising a story with the children contributing.’

‘Didn’t they do storytelling?’

‘Not as such. They had lovely sessions in small groups when they would read and discuss books, but there was no storytelling without a book. It was quite interesting in the early sessions, because the children had to get used to the idea that a story didn’t have to have a book to be told. And when I asked what the story was going to be about, inevitably, in the first sessions, the only suggestions were stories which they already knew. It took some time for them to know that they could say anything and it would get incorporated.

‘Immediately the staff were fascinated at the responses the process was eliciting from the children. The children seemed to be more focussed, and concentrated, and even the younger ones listened intently. Some staff and I were doing a drawing course at the time, and so it was a natural progression for us to start drawing the story as it developed, and then to ask the children to draw after the story, which they did with gusto. And that brings us back to Harry.’

‘The boy who wouldn’t draw.’

‘That’s right. He had the most amazing facility of avoiding anything to do with pencils, pens and paper. As I said, this was a cause of concern, obviously, for staff. But gradually, he started having a go at drawing after story – there was nothing else to do and nothing to lose. I remember once I refused his request to draw him a dog, but I step-by-step modelled a dog, drawing on my paper next to him, for him to copy on his sheet. He started drawing by himself, and one day I had the huge joy of him asking me if he could do another one. Something had effected (or is it affected?) him, something in the process. And since then I’ve done a huge number of

story/drawing sessions, in lots of different schools, and it works every time. Staff are amazed at the difference in the children, and in the quality of their drawings. So I've decided to take it further and do a proper bit of research to see if I can find out why, what it is.'

Michael pours us both another glass of wine. He is an old and very dear friend, whom I trust, and silences are easy.

'Ok, so I know you've been doing this PhD'

I interrupt. 'It's not a PhD, it's an EdD – a professional doctorate. It hasn't really been research till now. I've done a great deal of finding out about things which interest me – like the fact that I don't want to do a quantitative study –'

'Quantitative as opposed to qualitative, right?'

'Yes. The way I remember the difference is that Quantitative is all about quantities – statistics, forms, validity, whereas Qualitative is about quality – colour, nuance, not having to actually PROVE anything. I used to think that research had to be quantitative to be valid, but it doesn't. Ethnography, for instance, does not set out to prove anything, it sets out to say what is there.'

'So is your work going to be ethnographic?'

'It will have elements, definitely, because I am who I am, asking this question with my individual knowledge and experience. No one else would ask it in this way.'

'I understand. Ok, so you've done finding out in Part One – is this next piece of work Part Two?'

'Yes. This is the biggy. It ought to be in lights or something. It's the thesis, and part of the criteria is to make a contribution to knowledge.'

'Right. But how do you know it hasn't been researched before? Surely someone else has had the idea? It seems such an obvious thing to do?'

'As far as I'm aware, from the quite extensive literature search I have done, no-one has put together this particular way of working – tell a story, to which the children contribute, draw it as it unfolds, then the children draw a picture of their own

afterwards. Several people have done the first bit, but not the second, as far as I'm aware – like Vivian Gussin Paley⁴, for example.'

'Ah, yes, I've heard of her. She annotates the children's stories, then they act them out – right?'

'Yes, that's right. But they don't draw afterwards – for her it's the acting that's important.'

'So, how are you going to go about it? I kind of understand the basic premise – story changes drawing – but – how many words did you say?'

'50,000.'

'Bloody hell. How are you going to write 50,000 words on those three? Story changes drawing.' He shakes his head.

'Well,' I say, slowly, thinking aloud, 'there are academic conventions which I'll have to uphold, for starters.'

'Like what?'

'You have to have a literature review, when you go through all the literature to find out what other people have said about the topic, partly to ensure, in fact, that it hasn't been done before, or, at least, to learn from what has been done, and even replicate it if it's appropriate. My problem is that I have 3 topics, really – story, drawing and story/drawing.'

'Trust you to make it harder. So how are you going to manage that?'

'I'll separate them. Actually, I'm going to have to separate further than that. I think the first thing to do is have a think about what is meant by 'story', what is meant by 'drawing'. They are terms we all think we understand without deconstruction, but, if the reading I've done so far is anything to go by, people - '

'You mean researchers?'

'Well, yes, I suppose I do, largely. They talk about 'story' and 'narrative' as if they are the same thing – I'm going to have to examine that because I do not agree. They talk

⁴ For instance: Paley (1990)

about 'a drawing' without always saying what kind of drawing. It's like talking about a tree, without saying which species. Very often it doesn't matter, but if you are complaining that 'the tree doesn't give very good wood' then, actually, I need to know what kind of tree before I can agree or disagree.'

Michael rolls his eyes. 'You've lost me,' he says.

'Is the drawing I do on a napkin to show you the hat I bought last week which blew away and got crushed under a bus (and, as an aside, is that a story or a narrative, eh?), and the drawing Pete does on his computer of an automata mechanism the same thing?'

'No, I suppose not.'

'But they are both called drawings. I need to do a chapter which looks at all the different ways and impetuses of the thing we call a drawing. THEN I'll do a chapter on how researchers have written about children's drawings and the conclusions they have drawn.'

'Only children's drawings?'

'Well, most of the research is about children's drawings and what they mean. People –'

'Researchers?'

'No, people – they seem to assume that drawing, the ability to draw, is somehow a right which we have as adults. They don't think it of playing the violin or dancing the tango, but expect it of being able to draw. So, yes, I'll do a chapter about adults' ability to draw. I know several schools who would ask their staff to do it for me, and it will make an interesting comparison to the children's drawing research.'

'Ok. And the same with story?'

'Yes, I think so. A chapter on story, what is it and why is a story not a narrative or is it? And what people have said in the literature about story, narrative and storytelling. I think that's going to be more complicated.'

'Yes, but so interesting.'

'Indeed.'

'Ok, so what next? I suppose you are going to have to find some children to do sessions with?'

'Yes, but first I'll have a chapter on what they call methodology – what I did, why I did it in the way I did it and how it practically worked, ethical considerations and permissions – with references to any theorists who have been important in my thinking. Actually, I think I'll do that before the literature reviews..'

'Why?'

'Well, I think that what I'm doing is unconventional..'

'Typical!'

'Yes, well, maybe. But it will be important for the reader to understand where I am coming from, before they read the rest, to understand my "lens", my motivations.'

'Ok. So what about those theorists? It sounds to me like you might be entering quite deep theory here.'

I shake my head, worried all of a sudden.

Michael gets up and starts to play the piano quietly – he's proficient, and I know he's thinking. I, meanwhile, am scribbling notes to self on a piece of paper. These ruminations with a good friend are important to capture. Over the years I have come to know how my brain works, and my conscious mind appreciates the thoughts it produces at odd times and inappropriate places.

Michael's playing degenerates into a discordant improvisation. He closes the lid of the piano with a flourish, sits down and says 'Right – THEN what?'

'THEN' I say with glee, 'I have fun! I arrange to go into school and tell some stories. Of course I don't know what they'll be, but I'll probably use one or two which I've used before.'

'I thought you always made them up?'

'Not always. There's one, for instance, which developed in a Reception class a few years ago. I had taken in a real tiny teddy and an angel earring which flashed when you turned on the lights – you know, the sort of thing which appears on girls in pubs around Christmas. It's a nice, simple story, and, as part of this work is to show that

the children don't just copy the drawing on the board, it's a useful one, because the teddy never gets drawn by me, but the children draw him – and I've seen amazing drawings where the children have interpreted 'magic', which of course you cannot see but they have drawn it. And anyway, it's partly the making up, but it's also to do with incorporating the children's ideas – so if you have a story which you know (and even one which, perhaps, they know - like the 3 little pigs) the thing is to try and get their opinions about elements of the story, but not necessarily the bones of the story.'

'Like you know the skeleton, and it doesn't change, but they can add muscle?'

'Exactly. And, when you know the children, they can actually come up and draw bits – so if we were doing the 3 little pigs, 3 children come up and draw the 3 different houses – I've done that really successfully.'

'Do you ever have the children being the storyteller?'

'Yes, I've done that. It's quite scary because their story grammar isn't always right when they are that young.'

'What's story grammar?'

'Story grammar is like the grammar in a sentence – you know – a sentence isn't a sentence unless it has these basic components (noun verb etc.) Some researchers in the 70's came up with the idea that stories had a grammar too, and there has been lots of research done about putting stories into the wrong order, for instance, and people – adults and children – will automatically put it into the right order when they retell it.'

'I've never heard of it. Who are the researchers?'

'Mandler and Johnson⁵, did one investigation, and look up Stein and Glenn⁶. There are others, of course, but those were among the first.'

Michael makes a note. Then he asks 'How are the children going to be chosen? I'm assuming you won't be working with a whole class?'

⁵ Mandler and Johnson (1977)

⁶ Stein and Glenn (1979)

'No, the idea is that in the class we'll identify a small group of children on whom we'll concentrate. And they are the ones we'll get permission to photograph and video, and to collect their drawings. There's a strict ethics code in the University. We'll have someone of low ability, someone who's SEN, someone who's EAL etc. I think Jo, the teacher, has some children in mind. We'll need to make sure they're ok with it, mind. It's all very well parents saying yes they can be involved, but I'll need to ask the children too.'

'What if they say no?'

'That's fine, we'll find another child. I'm hoping when I come to analyse the stories that I can do a few case studies of the target children. I'm going to have to watch the videos carefully to see changes which I think are part of the process. I'm really looking forward to it.'

'Are you going to tell and draw all the stories?'

'No, I don't think so. Part of what I want to find out is if it is just ME having an effect on the children, or if anyone can do it.'

'Yes, there's lots of research about the 'artist' effect, isn't there?'

'That's right. I'm going to have to be away one of the weeks, but Jo says she is going to do a session anyway, and I'll be really interested to see how it goes. She's marvellous. So enthusiastic and open to new things.'

'So you've got the stuff you have to do like the literature review, you've gone in and done the sessions and written up the stories – that must just about be it, isn't it?'

Michael says, yawning. I yawn back at him.

'Yup, that's it – bar the shouting – which is the really important bit. I'll be collating all the things which have come out of all the previous chapters, and making some conclusions – I guess it might be that they aren't cut and dried, but I'm confident that they will show what I set out to show, and what I really hope, is that the work can be disseminated to practitioners in the field, and they can do it with their children. It just takes confidence, that's all.'

Michael gets up and stretches. 'Well, good luck with it all,' he says. 'I'm off to bed.'

At the door, he turns back into the room. 'Don't underestimate the 'Alex' effect,' he says, lightly, and goes off.

'I won't,' I say.

And I don't.



Chapter Two

Methodology

Introduction

The account of methodology in this thesis does not take a conventional form.

This chapter on methodology precedes the literature reviews because I feel it is important that the reader is aware of my motivations, my experience – my positionality, because this awareness may help understanding later in the piece – the reader will not be reading ‘cold’.

This piece of research has been like trying to hold an extravagant confection of jelly, ice-cream, live coals and wriggly puppies in my bare hands, in the knowledge that I have to walk over a priceless Persian carpet and present the confection to the Queen. I started with a basic idea - to show that there is a difference in children’s drawings after a live and interactive storytelling session – but it became clear, very quickly, to ‘beware the simple job.’ It’s the complexity of simple things. Once one becomes aware of the mechanics, the systems, the beliefs, the stitches which make things work and hold things together, one realises that nothing is simple – nothing at all – and furthermore, the simpler the appearance, the more likelihood there is of furious gnomes pedalling just under the surface where they cannot be seen. Our brains are like that as Eagleman (2011: 4) says: ‘your consciousness is like a tiny stowaway on a transatlantic steamship, taking credit for the journey without acknowledging the massive engineering underfoot’ – why should anything else be different?

My Brain

I love my brain. He sits there and most of the time I have NO idea what he is doing. I do not know why he’s a he, but he is, and over the years I have learned to trust him, and I have learned how to make him work most efficiently for me. So what happens is I give him a problem (like, I’m committed to writing a thesis about story/drawing and handing in in October, ok?), and then I sit back and wait. After a while, as hand-in time gets closer, I might open the door and say ‘how you doing in there?’ but Brain is looking out the window. I decide to do some work anyway. I try and read

some stuff, and I go into school and work with the children. Brain is mum. Another 3 months go by. I have a hand operation. I say to Brain 'it's my HAND, it doesn't involve you', but Brain *glares* at me and refuses to think about anything except my hand – it's like they're in LOVE or something. Another month. I'm starting to panic. I buy more books and find more articles which I sort, ready for putting in the bib. I open the door. Brain is filing his nails. 'WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME!' I say. Brain starts to paint his nails. I give up. I go and drink a bottle of cinzano and sit on the river bank in a huff.

One day I wake up and Brain says – 'are you ready?' Am I ready? Jesus! 'Yes, I'm ready.' 'Then I'll begin'...

And then I can't stop him – all day I write – I can't keep up with the connections the thoguhtstheideashtednrvklfopwer;owRNSklvnWO;GJ W3PNwe,.

'Oh, for goodness sake', says Brain. 'I thought you said you were ready...' and goes back to filing his nails...

That's how my brain works. I have learned not to rush him, not to hassle him. He has never let me down.

Finding the Farm shop

The first hurdle was a low one – Quantitative or Qualitative? The quantitative approach is like Tesco's trying to make every mange-tout they sell look the same – and behind the hedge are all the bent, big/small, twisted rejects – but they are still healthy mange-tout. The qualitative approach is the farm shop, and every healthy mange-tout is in the basket, ready to be sold. It might be scary, it might be 'full of doubt and uncertainty' (Conteh 2005:97), but, for me, its individuality, its idiosyncrasy – its potential for stories made it the right way forward.

I knew early on that whatever I ended up writing would not be a traditional piece of research. I knew, because I asked, that, whatever else I did, I would have to produce a thesis of plus or minus fifty thousand words - and that would underpin whatever else I might produce - the mime or the sky-writing.... and the form the words have taken is a surprise. Before undertaking my EdD my impression of research was that it **had** to be positivist – I **had** to have a particular type of data, that fulfilled the 3 R's - reliability, repeatability, replicability – as well as being valid, objective, systematic,

and, most importantly, value free. Positivists aim for total neutrality - 'seeking the truth by attempting to eliminate the effect of their preconceptions, personal views and value judgements.' (Greenbank 2003:792) My voice could not be heard because I would be expressing an opinion – and opinions are not facts – opinions are not value-free and thus are not valid. This was what I thought. And in my first musings about what the work might look like, I imagined tables with squiggles and graphs going up and down, statistics with Chinese names – all showing facts.

But Eisner (1992:14) points out that 'the facts never speak for themselves. What they say depends on the questions we ask.' I came to understand this, and that a quantitative methodology was not the only way forward – there were alternatives. In previous assignments I explored qualitative methodologies, and I found that this suited me – that I was able to speak my mind, embrace my individuality within academic conventions, say what I felt and say how I had come to feel it – my experience was important because it added reality to my work. An acknowledgement of my 'I's' (Peshkin 1988) would lead to an understanding of how they may influence my thinking.

Conteh (2005:97) says:

Methodology, then, is much more than the set of methods that are chosen to answer the research questions, more than a list of ways of doing things or a set of tools for collecting data. Your methodology is, in effect, a reflection of yourself and your values... As you proceed, you have to learn to live with doubt and uncertainty and - always at the back of your mind - the lurking suspicion that you might be totally wrong.

I wanted to write something which could, and would, be read by ordinary, non-academic people – as Woods (1996:93) suggests, the 'new genres ... increase the accessibility, speaking directly to the reader's experiences.' I wanted to write something which they would understand without a dictionary; which they would, and could, ponder over; a 'writerly' rather than 'readerly' text which would 'call on readers to engage with the text and to bring to the reading their experiences' (Sparkes 2002:96), and, potentially, challenge their practice. I wanted my work to be 'used as well as analysed, to be revised and retold rather than settled and theorised. (Bochner and Ellis 1996:4) In other words I wanted the reader to be proactive to my writing, and not just sit there skimming the pages with a box of chocs or a beer, or

worse, leave it, half read, to distort and gather dust in the loo. Richardson (2003:499) says:

Although we usually think about writing as a mode of “telling” about the social world, writing is not just a mop-up activity at the end of a research project. Writing is also a way of “knowing” – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable.

This encouraged me. Later Richardson writes about how she found other’s writing boring – suffering from ‘acute and chronic passivity: passive voiced author, passive “subjects.”’ (ibid 501) She talks about how quantitative work can be read simply through its tables and graphs, but qualitative cannot – ‘the work carries its meaning in its entire text’, just as the summary of a novel on the back cover does no justice to the plot inside. She talks about the *researcher* being the “instrument,” rather than the interview, the survey, the questionnaire. (ibid 502) She rues the practice of writing ‘homogenization’ which drowns the ‘Self’ in the ‘acceptance of the omniscient voice of science.’ (op cit)

Later in her chapter on writing as inquiry, Richardson posits the idea that ‘triangulation’ – where a researcher will use several methods to ‘validate’ their findings (ibid 517) - as the method for qualitative research has the problem that it assumes that there is some fixed point around which the researcher can triangulate. Richardson suggests that instead of ‘triangulation’ we use the image of crystallizing.

I propose that the central imaginary for ‘validity’ for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two-dimensional object. Rather the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, alter, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colours, patterns and arrays, casting off in different directions. What we see depends upon our angle of repose. Not triangulation, crystallisation. (op cit)



Fig 2:1 A Tanzanite

So it seems I've written a crystal – like the tanzanite in Fig 2:1

I am not, however, a 'gem' myself, certainly not an academic one with

my
facets
polished,
reflect
decades of wisdom
ground
bevelled
deflawed
registered
certified
purchased
displayed in Haggerty Hall, room 114D
Tuesdays and Thursday, 1-3
(Richardson 1996)

I'm the ivy. I have written an idiosyncratic piece, following my nose, answering the questions as they formed – having what Clough and Nutbrown (2007:27) call 'a holistic response to research design', and using different writing conventions according to what I thought suited the content - a set of themed short stories, rather than a novel. One of Ellis' (2004:230) fictional characters says 'looking from multiple perspectives and integrating them is the way I experience the world. I'd like to represent that in my research.' I feel the same. I do not know how to label the work, inspired as it is 'by partial happenings, fragmented memories, echoes of conversations' (Sparkes 2007:522) if, indeed, it needs or should be labelled. I have gained a great insight into potential styles of working through reading Ellis (2004) and Ellis and Bochner (2003), for instance, and I have tried to maintain the integrity of my voice throughout, although the work is not auto-ethnography. I've considered the work of Pink (2007) and Harper (2003), and rejected the idea of making a photomontage but I've chosen the images carefully. Denzin and Lincoln's (2003:5) image of researcher as a bricoleur is appealing, although I cannot (or is that will not?... no, it's cannot, definitely) sew anything more complex than backstitch, and that not in a straight line – but a quilt? Yes, matching pieces which stand by themselves, but warm with the joining. The imagined conversations of Nutbrown, Clough and Selbie (2008) gave me food for thought as to how I might approach several chapters, and I found reading Clough's (2002) 'fictions' gave me inspiration to write freely, as well as understanding that I could mix methods according to what I thought was needed. Clough acknowledges, in the first sentence of his book (p 4), that it is uneven, messy 'but it is not without a scheme!' I feel this piece of work is the same – here a story, there a seeking, everywhere an exploration. I have taken Woods' (1996:90) advice and tried to write something with 'intellectual coherence, originality, quality of argument and insight'. I've mixed genres and metaphors, as well as taking the scary step of questioning a few of the greats – i.e. Piaget – and, finding that I am not alone in this questioning, has been liberating too. I have put a sticky note in my copy of Bruner and Haste's (1987) 'Making Sense' on page 85, where they are putting into doubt Piaget's all encompassing notion of children's egocentric perspectives (on mountains, in this case) – the note says 'yeah – eff off piaget'.

The simple job (and the beware of it) of showing that story changes drawing has meant that I have had to pare down the final content and pare down again as some chapters grew fatter and fatter. The exploration of what a drawing is, for instance, takes up many words. But if we do not understand, together, me and you, what the word means, then we might be at cross purposes when we write and read the word. And story? Such a simple word, such a complex subject. Haven (2007) says:

Stories have been sidetracked into the kiddie corner and labelled 'just for fun'. We believe that story is the opposite of logic, and that stories aren't effective for conveying serious and important concepts. And without ever consciously pausing to consider either the veracity or implications of our assumptions, we set aside the most powerful communications and teaching tool available to humans and then idly wonder why our efforts to communicate and to teach concepts, ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and facts do not succeed. (p 17)

Part of the specific purpose of this piece of work is to try and counter this 'sidetracking' of story, and convince other people of the power of a story. I have done this by telling a story to the children, and they have drawn a picture afterwards – plan A, but I have also done this by writing in story form, to make the work accessible, especially to non-academics – (surprise) plan B, and surprise, as Bruner (1986:46) says, is 'an extraordinarily useful phenomena' because it allows us to question and prod our preconceived ideas about things. 'Surprise', Bruner tells us, 'is a response to violated presupposition.'

So how *did* I do it?

I was very lucky to have a setting which welcomed the chance to work with me. I am a familiar face in this primary school. Staff have trust in me, which is a huge advantage in that, because we are familiar, we are not starting our relationship from scratch. 'A longstanding relationship encourages depth, ensuring that time is used to greatest effect.' (Hallowes & Shimmin 2012:39) What I was proposing to do was familiar to staff, because we had used the story-drawing technique before – indeed, it was partly this previous experience that raised the question in the first place when we observed the effect it appeared to have on some children.

I had an initial meeting with the head teacher, to explain the proposal and discuss the ethics process. I would need informed consent for the work from parents, but also

from the children, which might not be so easy. Although the Nuremberg Code was aimed at medical research, it was, nonetheless, as Elnimeiri (2008:96) says, an important landmark in the history of ethics, and the first of the ten principles is that participants should give voluntary consent to being part of any research. However Coady (2001:65) reminds us that, in legal terms, children are not in a position to give consent, but, in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is good practice to ask a child if they are willing to take part in, or 'assent' to the research. Roberts-Holmes (2005:60) considers that it is important to ensure that children are given all the information about the research, in appropriate language, and preferably in small groups to aid questions. Respect for the child during the research process is paramount (Greene & Hogan (Eds) 2005, Christensen & James (Eds) 2000, Mac Naughton Rolfe & Siraj-Blatchford (Eds) 2001, Nutbrown (Ed) 2002), and they need to feel at ease, and able to withdraw at will. It was for this reason that we decided that the story sessions would be part of normal school day, and that the whole class would be involved - partly for the process to benefit all the children, but mainly so that the 'focus group' children did not feel that the process was out of the ordinary, and that they were comfortable with it.

I met with the reception teacher, Jo, to talk with her about what I was hoping to achieve, and how it would work in a practical way. I asked her to identify a small group of children, who would have certain characteristics which might lend themselves to showing a difference in behaviour, attitude etc through the process. These children would be the 'focus group' for whom I would obtain permissions.

So the group would have a child with EAL⁷, a child with behaviour issues, a quiet child, a gregarious child, a reluctant child. Gender balance would be equal.

I left the appropriate ethics permission forms and information for staff to give to parents. The letter contained my details in case a parent wished to discuss anything with me. Appropriate permissions were obtained from parents, and were obtained from the children in week one – i.e. I met with the focus group children and explained, in simple terms, what I was going to do and how they could help. The children were asked if it was ok for me to collect their drawings and talk to them about their content, and they all agreed. Once this had happened, I then asked the focus group children if they would draw me a few pictures – a person, a dog, a tree,

⁷EAL = English as Additional Language

'something which does not exist'. My intention was to have drawings out of context of a story which I could compare, if necessary, with drawings done after a story.

With everything in place, equipment checked, pencils sharpened and new white board pens procured, I went in to start the process.

Jo was able to use her staff to ensure that during each session the focus group children were being observed, both during the story and whilst they were drawing. I generated an observation form for the staff to fill in during the process. This meant that there was continuity of data gathering, but it also acted as an aide-memoire during a session for staff as to what was required – see Appendix 6 for examples. In addition one staff member was asked to take photographs, so there is a photographic record as well as the video.

This organisation of staff was essential for 'live' observation of the children, since I would be unable to do it myself. When I tell I am concentrating on telling, with everything that it involves – it's a different kind of observation. It's observing to hear ideas and get clues for the story, as opposed to looking at behaviour, and I found it impossible to do both – and especially impossible to do both with a number of children. I needed and relied on the staff to observe the children, and they enjoyed it. The children were unaware that they were being observed, because they were part of the large group, concentrating on the story, hence the staff could take the metaphoric 'fly on the wall' (Woodhead & Faulkner 2000:15) stance.

A story session prototype

I would arrive in the classroom at about 9.30, when registration was finished, parents had gone and the children were settled into their day. Jo would always remind her class that I was due in, and I was greeted enthusiastically when I arrived. Jo and I would have a brief chat about the format of the session (i.e. who was drawing, who was telling) then I would join in with whatever was happening, until someone would announce that it was time for story. The children would help to tidy up, and I would set up the video, and organise the whiteboard and get any props ready (i.e. Tiny Ted).

The children would come and sit on the carpet, I would start the video, and make my way to the front. Hush would fall naturally, and I would start by asking 'so what do you think today's story is about?' This would generate a chorus of ideas, and I would pick one to use. The story would then develop, with me adding elements to take it

forward, and asking the children for ideas whenever it reached a crossroad, so to speak, or when there was a problem to solve. I would usually finish the story by incorporating all the 'loaded guns' (see Chapter Three for more on this), and, after 'The? END!', we would usually have a short recap of what had happened, to refresh memories, especially of those elements which had been rubbed off the board to make more room, ready for drawing.

The children would get up and move around, sometimes coming up to speak to me, or to look more closely at the board. They would collect pencils and paper, and then settle themselves to draw. Some chose to draw lying on the floor, and others would go to a table. The observer would watch them draw, and would talk to them about their drawing and record what was said. The children would draw for as long as they wanted, usually about 6-10 minutes, but sometimes considerably longer.

But what are they actually doing?

The Theoretical Framework – the child constructs

Bruner (1961) said 'One seeks to equip the child with deeper, more gripping, and subtler ways of knowing the world and himself.' Through listening to, and contributing to, a story the child can construct meaning through incorporating knowledge he may already have about a situation, and by learning new information as the story unfolds.

The old adage that we are born into the world as empty vessels, ready to be filled, is largely discounted by modern thought. The new (September 2012) Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for all early years providers in England states that 'every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured' (Department for Education 2012:3), and it was Bruner (1960:33) who said 'We begin with the hypothesis that any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development' - in other words, if the teacher, who or whatever that may be, uses language, examples, concepts suitable to the abilities of the learner, which the learner can understand, then the learner can learn. This is a fundamental element of the pedagogy of the schools in Reggio Emilia who consider that every child is a competent child, 'rich in potential, strong and powerful.' (Thornton & Brunton 2005:8)

Although developmental psychologists agree that our genes influence our potential for learning, most knowledge, and the way in which we acquire that knowledge, is constructed. (Philips 1995:5) There are several different theories of Constructivist thinking. The first concerns the question of how *individuals* construct knowledge, the second on how human knowledge is constructed *in general*.

Constructivists also differ as to whether they believe that new knowledge is 'made or discovered' (Ibid: 7) - if 'made' it is through the human thought, if 'discovered' it is nature who is the 'instructor'. Popper (Thornton 2009) considered learning (especially in the sciences) to be a combination of 'made and discovered'. He considered that where Man has a theory, the errors in the theory are eliminated through testing by nature, leading to a new theory.

A third consideration of constructivist theory is that the construction of knowledge is an active process, whether the activity be individual or social, physical or mental, passive (as in the Spectator theory) or participatory, or a combination - the emphasis is on the activity involved in finding out rather than 'pre-wired cognitive processes' (Philips 1995: 9).

Two of the most important constructivist theorists of the twentieth century, with regard to learning in the early years, were Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. The primary theories developed by Piaget were that knowledge is constructed by the learner, in isolation, and that learners pass through set stages in development – the first 2 – sensorimotor and preoperational - occurring between birth and 6 years. He considered that development from one stage to the next occurs through set processes – he calls these *assimilation, accommodation and equilibration*, and occur chronologically. Piaget considered that children display patterns of behaviour in their development which can be generalised – these are what modern theorists call schemas (Lindon 2005, Pass 2004, Athey 2007).

Vygotsky's contribution to educational philosophy continues to be felt, in spite of his early death in 1934. His main ideas were that learning is a social event, and that children develop through interaction with other people; that, with help, children can develop to function at a higher level – he called this the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD); and that children spontaneously develop concepts of the world according to their experiences, which can be built on (scaffolded) with help and

teaching. He agreed with Piaget's developmental stages (actually changing his original 3 stages to 4 after reading Piaget's 1923 book to which he wrote a forward (Pass 2004:88), but disagreed that they were strictly chronological.

Bruner's image of the spiral curriculum and scaffolding learning grew out of Vygotsky's theories (Moyles 2005:9, Lindon, 2005:41), and the theory of schemas has been developed over the years as practitioners and researchers have understood how they are fundamental to how we embed learning – practising movements and ideas until they are deep in our cognitive processes and we can move on (Athey 2007, Nutbrown 1994). Kitson (2005), for instance, describes how fantasy play can help children develop their schemas by allowing them to draw upon existing knowledge within the fantasy, and then incorporating new information as the fantasy progresses, thus making new interconnections. 'Fantasy play can help children test out ideas and concepts and help them make sense, mainly through assimilation.' (p 115)

An important element of constructivist theory is that the learning is contextual – the learner will be more predisposed to concentrate, listen and have-a-go if what is being offered is relevant to their interests, and temporal – especially for young children. 'You cannot strip learning of its content, nor study it in a 'neutral' context. It is always situated, always related to some ongoing enterprise.' (Bruner 2004).

Constructing the Research

The nature of this research – the fact that, although I have a question, the nature of examining it relies on the reactions of the children to a stimulus, a story, means that I too am working in a constructivist paradigm. Ontologically the research reality is 'socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature' (Guba & Lincoln 1994:110), and epistemologically it is 'transactional and subjectivist – the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the 'findings' are *literally created* as the investigation proceeds.' (Ibid:111 original italics)

With young children it is important that the voices of the children are heard – their '100 languages' (Abbott & Nutbrown 2001) interpreted. Everything that a child sees and hears and feels (materially and affectively) is added to the growing bank of knowledge. For a child anything and everything is possible. 'Knowledge is not the

discovery of some inherent truth about the world. It is not finding and representing an objective reality waiting 'out there' to be discovered. Knowledge is not something absolute, existing outside context and unchangeable - and, as such, transmittable to the child... knowledge is the product of a process of construction, involving interpretation and meaning making.' (Moss 2001:128) Children learn all the time, in all circumstances, whether these are positive or negative (Rogoff et al 2003). As researchers, we need to find the means of gathering the ideas and changes in the children. I did it, in this research, mainly through observation.

Observation

As I have stated above, it is not possible to observe the children when telling a story, not for behavioural changes – I am too busy observing them, their contributions, to enhance the storytelling session. So the observations staff did were very important.

After a session, I talked to staff to get their notes from their observations, both from the form they had filled in, and by me asking them to make comments about the session, which I took notes of. I knew that it was important to write up each session as soon as possible afterwards, so as to remember all the little details which can get forgotten over time. I am used to this as a process for reflection and evaluation, and, over the years, I have come to really love all the notebooks which lie in an untidy heap under my desk. I rely on them too, and sometimes they are the only memory I have of an event. It can be seen, looking at the observation forms in Appendix Six, how important these are for notating the immediacy of the event, but equally, the information they give is sparse, and it was important to speak to staff to develop a picture with more DPI⁸, so to speak.

And then, as soon as practicable, I would get the film off the camera, and watch it, taking notes of things which occurred to me, things which I remembered when I saw/heard them again, groaning at the things which I missed. I also, of course, looked at the drawings carefully, and wrote notes about anything the video added to what the observer had said.

All these different observations built up a picture for each of the focus children, and new questions were formed.

⁸ Dots Per Inch – the more there are, the closer you can get without losing detail and becoming fuzzy

Question development

As questions became apparent, due to the above process and my reading, possible chapters manifested. I started to get irritated by the deficit attitude which some researchers had had to children's drawings⁹, and I devised the idea of asking adults to draw. I realised that a comprehensive look at what a drawing and what a story were was going to be necessary, as well as actually writing about the sessions – what had happened – 'proving' my thesis that story changes drawing.

I toyed with the idea of writing a novel, of producing paintings or ceramics, but in the end, it was the playing with words which seemed the best way for me to express my thinking, my ideas. 'We understand the parts better by seeing them as pieces of a whole.'(Woods 1996:82)

I started by describing this work as holding an 'extravagant confection of jelly, ice-cream, live coals and wriggly puppies in my bare hands, in the knowledge that I have to walk over a priceless Persian carpet and present the confection to the Queen.'

So here we go - Pick your spoon....

⁹Costall (2001:x) considers that Sully, writing in 1895 'helped to consolidate a theoretical approach that has continued to the present day. Sully wrote, for instance 'I have dwelt on what from our grown-up standpoint we must call the defects of children's drawings.' (cited in Costall2001:x)



Fig 2:2 – Spoon Miscellany



Chapter Three

What is a Story?

& Story Literature Review

Stories – the Literature and What Is A Story?

Stories are everywhere. Sit on any bus or train, hang around any concourse where humans meet, and you will hear stories of all descriptions. 'Our own story is embedded in the larger tale of our time and interwoven with the many tales of all those we meet' says Kornberger (2008:17), and certainly biographical stories as well as allegorical ones can help us to make sense of what is happening to us, as well as helping us to locate our place in our family, our community, our history, our culture and our gender or race.

Stories have genres – fantasy, romance, historical, sci-fi, for instance; stories have messages – parables, fables; stories are as old as the hills – the Songlines of the Indigenous Australians, Odysseus, Beowulf; stories are born every minute of the day. Stories are true – guess what happened to ME today?; stories are false – it was THIIIS big – I promise you! Stories have other names – tale, fable, joke, myth, legend, yarn, anecdote, saga, and they can be tall too. Stories can be thought, read, listened to, seen, experienced; they can be shared by millions, or hidden away in our minds. Stories can make us laugh, and cry – sometimes at the same time, and they can make us despair too, as well as amaze. Stories can teach and inform. Stories can give hope. Stories can 'take us out of emptiness into a momentarily fascinating otherness.' (Nell 1988:64)

But what is a story? The Oxford English Dictionary (1979:3073) has several definitions including story as 'a narrative, true or presumed to be true, relating to important events and celebrated persons of a more or less remote past.' Story is also 'a recital of events that have or are alleged to have happened', and 'a narrative of real, or more usually, fictitious events, designed for the entertainment of the hearer..... a tale'. Booker (2004:3) reports that when he asked people why we like stories, the most common response was that 'they satisfy our need for 'escapism' into that realm of fantasy or imagination we find to beguiling.' It is the ability to imagine which is important, the ability to ask 'what if?', the ability to say 'oh no – so what happened?' when 'something out of the ordinary' happens. (Engel 1999b:71)

All ships are boats ...

Bruner (1986:11) considers there are two 'modes of cognitive functioning' and 'efforts to reduce one mode to another or to ignore one at the expense of the other

inevitably fail to capture the rich diversity of thought.’ The one mode is ‘paradigmatic’ – the mode of scientific thought, mathematics and logic which, although they may start life as a ‘little story or metaphor’, when applied imaginatively ‘leads to good theory, tight analysis, logical proof, sound argument, and empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypothesis.’ (ibid 13) The other mode ‘establishes not truth but verisimilitude’ (ibid 11), and Bruner calls it the ‘narrative mode’, which is where stories come from, and this mode ‘deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course.’ (ibid 13).

In reading the literature the word ‘narrative’ and the word ‘story’ are often used interchangeably. But are all ‘narratives’ ‘stories’? In my head they are different. Engel (1999b:65), for instance, says ‘if the structure of a child’s story may vary as a function of its meaning, how do we know which things a child says constitute a story and which do not? Every utterance is not a narrative.’ But, I would say that not every narrative is a story, either. As Dalkir and Wiseman (2004) say: ‘All stories are narratives. But not all narratives are effective stories.’ Haven (2007:76) says that ‘stories are a specific subset of the more general narrative characterised by specific structural elements.’ Earlier Haven (ibid 19) says

We have lots of words for specific subcategories of story – tale, fable, myth, legend, fairy tale, folk tale, parable, por qua story, epic, snippet, humorous, tall tale, farce. We have no other word than story for the subcategories of narrative.

And he talks about an author (unnamed) who uses different ways of writing the word to describe different narrative structures, because there are no other recognised words – so story, *story*, STORY, and **STORY!** give different emphasises and thus different characteristics to the word. (op cit) He says (ibid 79)

The general term, narratives, may be plot-based, event descriptions, stories (character based), or information-based articles, reports, data sets and other similar documents. Only stories are structured around the character-based informational elements receivers need in order to trigger and successfully drive the mental processes that lead to understanding; to the creation of meaning, context, and relevance; and to active memory.

If, for instance, at the beginning of a film, we see a bird’s eye view of a march, say, with thousands of people, we know that this is scene setting, and we wait to see

where the camera is going to focus, on which person. If it continues to pan, we start to wonder - Who are we supposed to be empathising with? Who are we supposed to be worried about? Which side of the fence are we sitting? So, whereas a narrative can occur with no specific reference to any one person, a story first and foremost requires that we have characters, and then it has to have certain characteristics, which do not necessarily appear in a narrative. And the first of these is the?

Beginning

I remember giving a workshop about storytelling some years ago, to a class of Year 5 children. It was part of their 'literacy celebration' at the end of year. The previous year they had had Roald Dahl So I wasn't intimidated at all

I began by asking the children what they thought made a good story, and the answers were pretty dull, to be frank. It 'had to have a beginning, a middle and an end' – so obviously that little bit of teaching had worked; it had to have 'a plot', but no-one could really say what a 'plot' was; it had to have characters (a ha); it had to have 'something happen' (double a ha). So, I said, I'm going to tell you a story now. Let me know what you think of it. (expectant faces and shuffling of bottoms to get comfortable)

One day I woke up when the alarm went off. I really didn't feel like getting up, but my mum called up the stairs – "come on, Lazy bones, your porridge is getting cold." So I got up, did my teeth, put on a tee shirt – the one with Hanna Montana on it. I like that tee shirt, although it's a little bit small for me now because I'm growing quite fast – faster than my friend Lucy who doesn't seem to be growing at all.

I look down at the children. Two boys at the back are poking each other, and several of the girls are whispering behind their hands.

'What's up,' I say. 'Is there something wrong?' There's an awkward pause, then the Bright Spark puts up his hand and says –

'It's boring, miss.'

'Boring, is it? Why?'

'Because nothing is happening.'

'Nothing happening? But I'm getting dressed, ready to go downstairs for my porridge – it's the beginning – you said there had to be one.'

'Yes, but all the stuff about Hanna Montana and your friend Lucy – it's boring.'

'Ok, lets skip that bit.'

When I got downstairs, my mum opened the fridge to get me some milk for my porridge.

"Oh dear," she said, "we're out of milk. I forgot to get some on my way home last night. Do you want juice on it instead?"

Juice? On porridge? I don't think so!

I said – "I'm all dressed, shall I nip to the corner shop and get a pint?"

"That would be perfect," my mum said, and she got her purse off the side and gave me a £20 note – "I haven't got any change," she said. "You be really careful with all that money."

I look at the children. They are quiet and still.

'So is it still boring?' I ask.

Bright Spark says, 'well, nothing has happened yet, but something might.' (Yeah, yeah and nods of agreement).

'How do you know something might?'

'Well, because she's been given a lot of money and told to be careful – there's lots which could go wrong.'

'Really? Like what?' I point to a whispering girl.

'She might meet Lucy and go to town and spend all the money on clothes and a burger,' she says.

'Yeah, and then she hasn't got any money for the bus home and has to walk....' 'Yeah, and she gets lost....'

'Yeah and some perv (giggles) tries to pick her up ...'

‘yeah and –’

‘Wow,’ I say, ‘and all because of a £20 note?’ They nod enthusiastically. ‘That’s what you call “loading the gun”’ I say. ‘Have any of you played paintball?’ – there are nods from many of the children. ‘You know when you go and get your gun, and it’s got paint stuff in it?’ (yeah) ‘Well, that’s your gun loaded. So what are you going to do?’

‘Shoot it!’ says one of the elbowing boys.

‘Yes! You’re going to shoot it. There’s no point in having it if you just sit on the sidelines and eat chips. It’s the same in a story – if you introduce something – like the £20 note – then something has to happen. Otherwise mum should have had the change for the milk because the money isn’t part of the story.

‘So the beginning of a story is like loading the gun – giving hints of what might happen later. You know the boring bit at the beginning, with the Hanna Montana tee shirt and my short friend Lucy? If they have nothing to do with the story, then I should leave them out because otherwise they’re like a gun which I’m not going to shoot.’

‘So what happens when she goes to the shop?’ someone asks.

‘I don’t know,’ I say (with the emphasis on ‘I’ – like someone else might), ‘perhaps you could make it up later?’

This idea of ‘loading the gun’ was given to me by playwright Ann Jellicoe in 1986 on a summer school about improvisation in the theatre. As a metaphor it is, perhaps, not the best to use with children, but I can’t think of any other which fits the idea any better. If you have a loaded gun, you have to shoot it, otherwise there’s no point in having it¹⁰. We were learning about what Keith Johnson (1981) calls Impro, and in that book, when he is describing story (p 112), he talks about ‘reincorporation’ - making links between all the different elements which have been introduced (all the loaded guns, if you will) during the improvisation, and how unsatisfactory it is if this doesn’t happen. Someone will always be thinking ‘yes, but what about the

¹⁰ I recently said as much to my brother who lives in South Africa, after he had had an ‘incident’ with a group of bad people....

spaghetti?' if spaghetti was introduced, but not utilised. 'They should have used *it* to climb down,' they'll be thinking, 'rather than that vine.'

So in a story:

- first we need to meet our 'hero' – i.e. the person who is going to take us through the story – Bruner (1986:37) found that when subjects recall a story, they 'converted the story into a tale of character – character and circumstance.'
- and after the basic scene has been set, 'a protagonist inspired with intentionality, undertaking some action, physical or mental, real or imagined, within the story itself' (Russell & Lucariello 1992),
- we need a problem, or 'inciting incident' (Baboulene 2011: Chp 3 section 5),
- and the 'key question' is posed' (ibid section 6)
- and then anything which is introduced, needs to be reincorporated later.

Or, as Booker has it: 'Once upon a time there was such and such a person, living in such and such a place' (scene set) 'and then one day, something happened.' (focus of story – the 'issue') (Booker 2004:17)

Usually the focus is a problem of some sort which needs to be solved, and, in Booker's (ibid) opinion, there are seven basic plots into which every story will fall, complete with a basic cast of characters. (p 7). Engel (1999b:80) says a story 'must describe or evoke events placed in time and space, must convey some sense of what is usual and unusual, must contain or refer to some point of drama, a sense of tension, and/or a transformation.' Using the beginning above, if I had gone to the shop, bought the milk, returned home unscathed and given the change from the £20 note back to mum, that is not really a story – that's more of a narrative of events. Basically nothing happened. And 'nothing' does not only apply to lack of physical 'action'. People thinking, remembering, feeling is still 'action', and in the story above, none of that happened. If I had had a thought ('wow, twenty quid... that's a lot of money. How much was that hat? ...) then, that's action, that's loading a gun.

Middle

The middle of a story can be as complicated as you want. It can have highs and lows, peaks and troughs (or peeks and troths?), cliff-hangers, turning points and minor resolutions – all of which make up the overall structure – rather in the way a playwright will divide the play into 'Acts' and 'Scenes'. The middle is where it all happens, all the twists and turns, dead ends and surprises – the development of all

the characters – the good guys and the bad guys. If we are not convinced by the rationale of *any* of the characters, then we will not be convinced by the story, and, in my case, it is relegated to the ‘gave up’ collection in my kindle – a sad set of titles with only 20% read.

And the plot develops in the middle too. We watch our hero grow, change, manage adversity, climb and fall. She works against the clock (tick tock **tick tock** TICK TOCK **TICK TOCK**), he finds reserves he didn’t know he had – will they won’t they? Can they can’t they? In a good story we worry about them – we go to bed early, so that we can read a bit more. We feel the book getting thinner on the right (or, in these modern times, we see the indicator at the bottom of the device closing the gap – oh God, I’ve read 87% - how is it going to get resolved with only 13% left!).

What’s interesting, also, is that it doesn’t matter if we know more than our hero (it’s behind you!!!!) – in fact, it makes it all the more tense if we do have information withheld from the protagonist. We can see them walking into the trap, we KNOW she’s a bastard and he doesn’t etc.

And finally, we limp OR BURST into the

End

Usually there is a final flurry of activity – the kiss, the wedding, the funeral, the killing, the court-case, the picnic, the sighs, and the sense of resolution and normality returning. This is where the storyteller needs to ensure all those loaded guns have been fired, all the loose ends tied up into a nice tidy parcel – which sometimes has a little piece of string hanging out, just so that you STILL have to check under the bed, because you aren’t quite sure it’s over. Kornberger (2008:73) says: ‘A tale kept open-ended and alive does the same to the listener. It allows neither habitual ending nor forgone conclusions.’

It can be seen in Fig 3:1, that a story is a series of ups and downs which gradually build to the climax of action and tension, when everything is resolved, sorted, kissandmakeup. The point of a story, is that it ends. The characters might carry on with their lives, do what they do with the excitement of the story we have just shared behind them, but we know nothing of this (unless there is a sequel, in which case we catch up at the beginning of the next adventure). Egan (1997:63) agrees, and says ‘in life we are always ‘in the midst’ and so cannot determine and ascribe meaning to

events. We know we have reached the end of a story when we know how to feel about the events which make it up.'

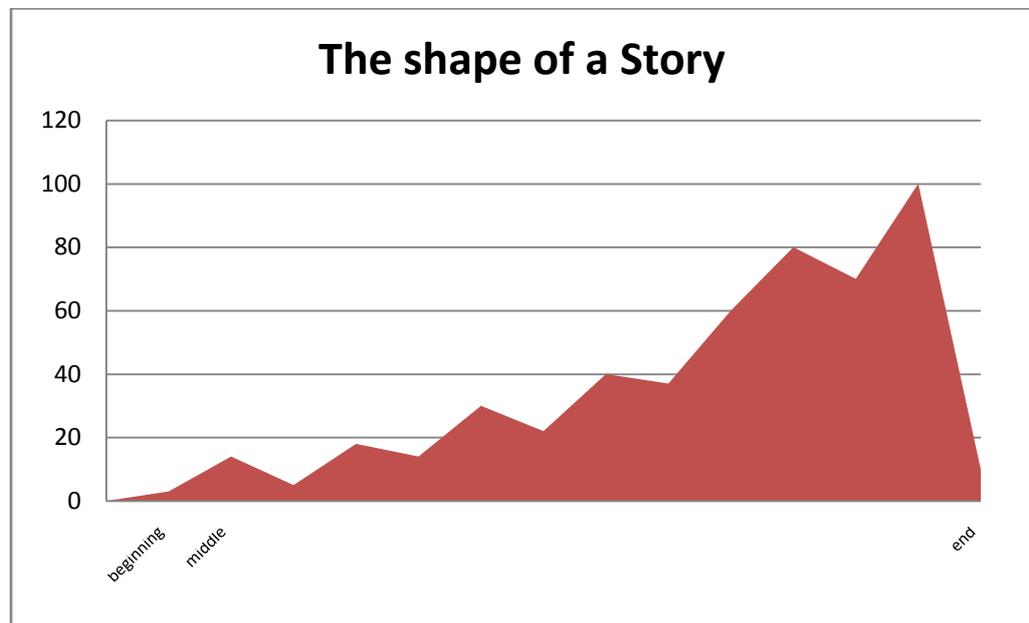


Fig 3:1 The structure of a Story

The stories which are not of concern – not here, anyway

This is probably the place to say that, in this piece of work, I am not concerned with the personal stories of the participants – their life stories nor their 'play' stories.

Much important and fascinating research has been done gathering the stories people have to tell of their various experiences, (for instance Ellis & Bochner 2003, Clough 1996 & 2002, Sparkes 2007, 2002, Nutbrown 2011, Richardson 1996, Goodson and Sikes 2001), and, in the early years, we listen as the children play and invent narratives – I call this 'you be the mummy' storytelling. It's when the children are playing house, or playing cops and robbers – or whatever modern children play. This imaginative play, where the children take on different roles, is important, but these are what I call narratives – they are on-going, they rarely have an 'and they all lived happily ever after' element, and they are not the sort of stories I am writing about. My stories, you might say, are 'once upon a time' stories, as opposed to 'you be the mummy' narratives.

My stories

'Small children already come to school carrying a great knowledge of story structure, however limited their experiences of encountering stories.' (Hendy 1992:107). Even if the children do not have a culture in their family of bed time story or books, they hear stories, and they see and experience them through the television and films.

They know that things happen in a story, sometimes difficult or scary things, but they also know that, usually, the good guy wins. Hendy divides stories, very basically, into 'home' and 'away', where home is a story about things familiar to the children, based in their reality, and 'away' stories are those which are further afield, or fantasy, and require a greater input of imagination. (ibid 106)

The stories I tell are usually improvised on the spot, sometimes with the help of props and/or staff, and sometimes it's just me. If I'm honest, I actually like it when it's just me, because I have total control over the process.

Very occasionally I tell a story, when asked, which is known to the children – the Three Little Pigs, for instance. Jordan (1992:114) says children enjoy returning to a known story because it is predictable, and familiar. Dissanayake (2012:82) agrees. 'We wait expectantly for the punch line or the denouement, even when we already know it – and then laugh or feel the appropriate emotions of sadness, disbelief, outrage, amazement.' When telling a familiar story to the children, it is an opportunity for them to get directly involved, because we all know what is going to happen. I invite children to draw elements of the story – the Pigs' houses, for instance, whilst I continue to tell the story.



Fig 3:2 This 5 year old is drawing the Pigs' house made of bricks

On one occasion, I remember, when I asked what the story was to be about there were two definite camps in the group – one group (girls) wanted the 3 bears, but the other group (boys) wanted something with aliens. So I combined the two concepts, and we had 'the 3 bears' 'in space' with 'who's been eating my gloop' etc, but

'goldilocks' ended up eating the 3 aliens with her long sticky tongue to much horror from the children....actually, they were aghast, which was really funny (well, I thought so, anyway)

But usually, I don't know what the story is going to be about. It's quite a scary feeling. But humans have an instinctive knowledge about how stories are constructed (Fisher 1989:24, Cooper and Collins 1992:2), and they will help to construct it in a logical way.

An extreme example of this was once when I was telling a story to the whole school – about 90 children aged 3 and 4, with the help of another creative practitioner who was working in the setting, Jon, the dancer. As usual I asked the children what the story was going to be about, and they told me it was about a giant. As I developed the story, Jon, behind me, acted and danced it out. The children were entranced – they didn't know whether to watch me, or to watch Jon. The climax was approaching. The giant was a bully and needed his comeuppance. Jon was cavorting, eating all the carrots. I didn't have thought in my head. And so what do you think he did? (think, Alex, think!) Beside me a small voice, James it was, said, 'Bees' and YES, the bees saved the day by stinging the giant who ran away howling.



Fig 3:3 An extreme example of collaborative story telling

The real advantage of an improvised story, of course, is that it is new, never been told before, and therefore there are no bits to remember (or, heaven forbid, forget) – when Baker and Greene (1977: 58) report a storyteller hearing a small boy say that the stories she had told had 'come from herself', they are speaking of a skill which allows the stories to appear fresh and new. Many of the books about storytelling – the manuals, so to speak (for instance Baker & Greene 1977, Haven 2007, Maguire 1985, Zipes 1995, Thomas and Killick 2007, Lamb 2008, Birch 2000), agree that there is something about a live telling of a story which is different to one being read, no

matter how expressively. Maguire (1985:22) for instance, recognises that a child's listening vocabulary is greater than her speaking vocabulary, and thus she will be 'spinning her own sense of things' as the story unfolds, and the Teller shouldn't be too concerned that there are words the child doesn't understand – in fact, it's a good opportunity to introduce new, perhaps complex words. In my own practice, I was telling a tale with a group of 6 year olds about a boy who went into the woods to look at animals, but he and his dad couldn't get near them because the animals always ran away. They met a man in the woods who said they were wearing the wrong clothes! So the next time they went, instead of a bright red shirt, the boy wore a dirty green shirt, and instead of bright yellow trousers (no, it wasn't Rupert Bear...) he put on some brown trousers etc, and sure enough, the animals didn't see them and they could get really close. And do you know what that's called, when you hide yourself like that? No? Well, it's called 'camouflage' – I'll write it down - how do you spell camouflage, Miss Hebden? (Miss Hebden: I'm not sure – let's look it up in the dictionary)

Engel (1999b:46) says 'language is the child's passport into his culture', and a storytelling session can increase a child's vocabulary, concentration and ability to think symbolically and metaphorically. It can increase listening skills, and imagination, and can create an understanding of language with its rhythms. It enhances memory too.

However, some storytellers are also, it seems, concerned about replication of actual words as they have been honed by constant repetition or 'polished smooth like a stone by constant rubbing' (Cooper and Collins 1992:42), or as they were written. If an author has spent all that time finding the perfect word, then the storyteller is duty bound to use the same word – in the same way that one would when saying a poem, or acting in a play – one does not paraphrase Shakespeare. 'Each word and its placement in the sentence has special value and importance in relation to the story as a whole (Baker and Greene 1977: 50). They cite the example of a teller who substituted the word 'pumpkin' for 'squash' because she assumed that her listeners would not know what a squash was. But in doing this, the whole rhythm of the piece is destroyed. (ibid 54) There is a short paragraph about whether a storyteller ought to improvise (ibid 51), and what to do if the listeners don't appear to be interested (ibid 67) – all this may have relevance to a traditional teller of tales, but it doesn't

apply to what I do. Baker and Greene describe 'the wishing candle' (ibid 65) – an artifice to bring attention to the teller – 'when the candle is lit, no one speaks but the storyteller' – this is really the antithesis of my way of working. For me, if no-one speaks, then there is no story, and getting staff to understand that putting up hands is NOT what is needed on this occasion can be a real battle. Part of the engagement, is that the usual rules of the classroom are relaxed during my story sessions. I do not want the children to put their hands up if they have an idea. I try, in this messy, noisy environment, to hear everything, and to accommodate ideas, but even if I don't hear an idea, at least the child has vocalised it, has expressed it, has said it out loud and felt it with their tongue. I don't want to ask the children, especially this age, to try and keep an idea in their heads on the off chance that they might be asked to speak – I think it is too much to expect – and, anyhow, if you are concentrating on keeping an elusive idea in your mind, how can you listen to what anyone else is saying? How many times have you been in a situation, had an important contribution to make to the conversation, let the person speaking finish, opened your mouth.... and your idea has gone? What happens with me is that I then mentally withdraw, fiddle with my memory to get the elusive idea back, listening to nothing while I do it, jump in saying – 'I remember what I was going to say' and find the conversation has moved on so far that what I have to say is completely irrelevant. I WANT the children to speak. I want them to have ideas, to grasp them and to express them before they can slip away. And if they are not heard by me, at least they have been spoken aloud, which makes them real and more tangible.

The putting-up-hand rule is for something else – it is to help the children learn to take turns, to listen to each other, to enable the teacher to hear what is being said. But all that is immaterial in my story sessions. Ideas are what we are after, not turn taking. And if the class gets so noisy with ideas being shouted out that you really *cannot* hear anything, then you call for order. The children understand and they learn quite quickly that, during my sessions, they can shout out if they have an idea and, importantly, that their ideas are taken on board – I do not already know the answer to my question. I sometimes wonder if some of the things in the drawings are these personal ideas. Occasionally, when you are speaking to a child about her drawing, she will say something which was not a part of the story we've just had which she has put into her drawing. This confuses me - but I think it might be that

this is an idea she has had during the telling, which wasn't incorporated, which SHE has put into HER story nonetheless? (see Harika's drawing Fig 10:9)

The other thing about putting-up-of-hands is that some children use this as a strategy. They know that it is good to appear involved, but it is difficult to be involved if you don't know or don't understand. So they have this strategy. They eagerly put up their hand, waving it, perhaps, making annoying uh-uh-uh sounds to get attention, and yet, when asked, they say – 'oh, I've forgotten...' They can't do this in a story session because there is no right answer, nothing to forget, and when I do a series of story sessions with a group, the prevalence of this strategy falls away¹¹.

There are some stories which just sing – I don't know what makes them come out that way, but everything falls into place and they are fully formed and wonderful – and bear telling again. Sometimes when I go into a school for the first time the children are so unused to their opinion being sought that when I ask for suggestions they look at me as if I am mad – this is when one of these 'ready-made' stories comes in useful. I know they work, and I know they have come from the children in the past – just not *these* children, but these children's ideas can be incorporated as much as possible. A good example of this is the story of the Very Bumpy Road, the hero of which is, in my telling, a Mouse. At the first telling I drew Fig 3:4 and asked the children what they thought it was.



Fig 3:4 The very bumpy Road

It's a very bumpy road, said a child, aged, probably, about 5. And so it was.

There is a curious mixture in the stories I make up of very traditional elements – princesses and kings, for instance, and parts of recognisable 21st century society – such as buying things from the supermarket or online. This mixture doesn't seem to worry the children, nor are they worried by anthropomorphic characters. According to Zipes (2002:184) it is Piaget who says children are animistic thinkers until the age of about 9 or 10. In the Bumpy Road story, the children suggest things the Mouse

¹¹ I've tried to find literature which describes this 'I've forgotten' strategy, and can find nothing at all

does for Granny's birthday directly from their own experiences of birthdays - usually there is a balloon mentioned and a present, and the Mouse either rings Tesco's for home delivery or goes there to buy the things, plus, of course, the all important cake. During his journey down the bumpy road the balloon flies away, the present falls off and is squashed – but at least we have the cake!

There is no doubt in my mind that this ability – and confidence – to improvise a story has come through my experiences of 'impro'¹² – where you say yes. By saying 'yes' I am, in a very real sense, making things easier. There are no decisions to be made. Yes, it's a very bumpy road. The next thing, for the purposes of the story, is to work out the *consequence* of the road being bumpy. There's no point in having a bumpy road unless it causes something to happen – loading the gun. And once the consequence of the road being bumpy has been found, from my point of view, as the teller, the rest falls into place.

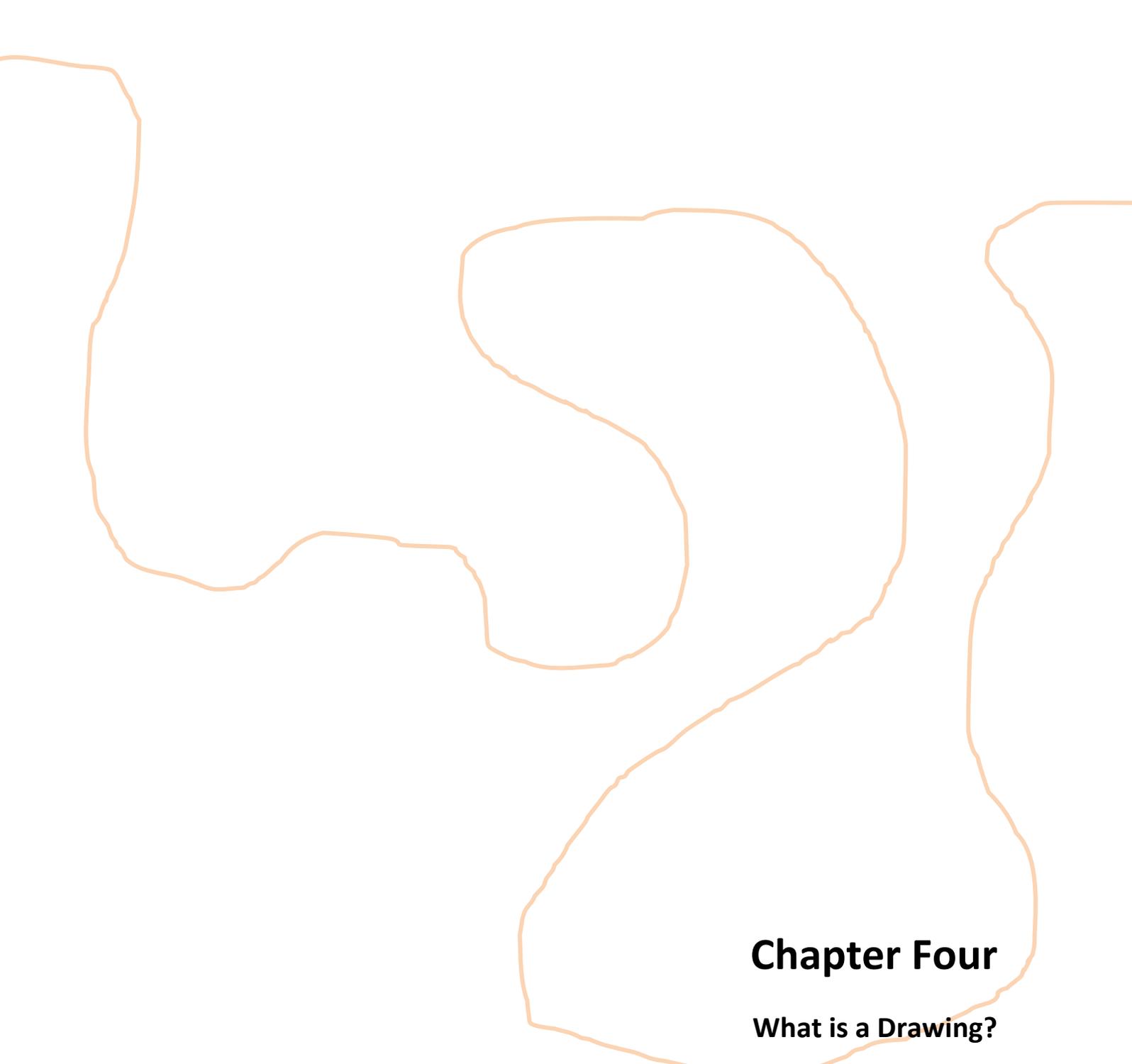
And the stories I tell are real. In my stories people fart and burp and are sick all over each other, and people cry, and, very occasionally, people die. The children laugh – very often at me pulling faces, (and afterwards staff say how they don't hear the children laughing very often), and the children get scared. The stories which we make up are not high art, but I try and make them real – physically real so that what goes up comes down; psychologically real, so that the children understand the characters and their motives and problems, and morally real – with real dilemmas, real problems for the children to think about. The children are young, but nonetheless a good story 'provokes them to think seriously and critically for themselves, against the grain, and provides hope that they can find the moral and ethical vigour not to simply survive but to live happily with social codes and arrangements that they create themselves and enjoy to their heart's content.' (Zipes 2002:231)

In this chapter I have examined the concept of 'story', the differences between a story and a narrative and why a story is not necessarily, to my mind, a narrative. I have examined the make up of a story – the need for a beginning, middle and end. I have examined the improvised stories which I tell with children, and compared them with more traditional storytellers, whose words, very often are set, and I have made the

¹² Keith Johnson developed this form of improvised theatre in the 1960's, using techniques devised to open up the creative mind, not thinking about what you were going to say, using games to give rules – all of which made the improvisation slightly manic and very unpredictable. Johnson used mask too. I was lucky to work with him in 1986.

point that my stories are not high art, but they are real, in which real things – like vomit and death, can occur.

In the next chapter I intend to examine the concept of a 'drawing', to show how a drawing can also, in some circumstances, be a story.



Chapter Four

What is a Drawing?

In this chapter my intention is to look at the concept of 'drawing'. First I will examine the history of drawing, from earliest times, and I will question the word 'primitive' as applied to the drawings of some non-European cultures, and as applied to the drawings of children. I will give examples of different categories of drawing, with the caveat for practitioners that not all drawings are the same.

Introduction

People have been looking at the drawings of children for over 100 years.

They've been looking at them for various reasons:

- To show development
- As 'Art'
- As a diagnostic tool

Goodnow (1977:2) says that drawings 'may be regarded as expressions of our search for order in a complex world, as examples of communication, as indices of the type of society we live in, as signs of intellectual development.' In the late 20th century there was an idea in English education that drawing was not a bona fide activity in itself, but rather only a precursor to writing – when the National curriculum was introduced in 1988, art was not a compulsory subject. An art curriculum was introduced for Key Stage 1 children in 1992, and this had 2 attainment targets: Investigating and Making, and Knowledge and Understanding. 'Drawing' became 'mark making' (Athey 1990) which was, in some ways, liberating for practitioners, since a 'mark' could be construed as a 'drawing' or 'emergent writing' which removed the emphasis on literacy. However Ring (2001) considers that this term

in emphasising the importance of children's earliest marks for writing development, can give the message that pictorial representation is inferior to the more important role that the reading and writing of symbols has been given within the National Curriculum and within society in general. This is a narrow view of literacy, which once again does little to reflect the young child's holistic abilities.

Anning and Ring (2004:16) point out attainments in literacy and numeracy are only 'narrow' indicators of achievement and that 'making drawings gives young children opportunities to represent intricate personal narratives and use them to communicate with significant others in their lives.' (ibid 117) Further, that 'children should not be made to feel that drawing is only a 'temporary' holding form of symbolic representation leading to mastery of the 'higher level' ability to form letters and numbers.' (ibid 118) In other words, children should be encouraged to draw for drawing's sake.

History

So what IS a drawing? Does any jot and mark on a surface constitute a drawing? Certainly it seems to be an instinctive human trait – the Lascaux cave drawings in France have been aged at 10,000 years (Bahn 1998:viii), and are, apparently, extraordinary in their fineness and beauty. Bahn says:



Fig 4:1 Lascaux Cave painting

Why did these prehistoric artists paint so well? Why did they create works of art that went far beyond the merely functional. If they wished to record a deer, a horse or a bull, they could easily have done so with crude little matchstick figures. But instead they laboured away in the dimly lit recesses of their caves recreating details of shape and form that would do credit to artists of any epoch in the history of painting.' (ibid viii)

In Africa too 'Bushman'¹³ paintings can be found all over, representing daily life as well as hunting and magic. Some of these paintings and drawings are extremely fine – and mysterious too – the 'thinking strings' (Woodhouse 1979:104) in particular, which join elements of the painting for some (possibly magical) purpose, remind me of how a child will sometimes draw a 'line of looking' to show where the concentration is.



Fig 4:2 Thinking strings – (Woodhouse 1979:104)



Fig 4:3 'looking lines' – the 3 Billy goats gruff observe the lurking troll Boy 4:3

¹³ Herein a minefield of terminology – some people prefer to use the word San instead of Bushman, since the latter has such negative connotations historically. But, as Dowson (1995) points out, 'San', however, is also not safe from negativity since in the Nama language it means vagabond.' There are so many Bushman languages that there is no generic word to cover all groups. I use, therefore, the word Bushman, without any of the negative associations it may have.

Are they 'Primitive'?

In the European 19th century, there was a great interest in the newly discovered peoples around the world and their cultures. Seen through an almost exclusively western-Eurocentric lens, much was written about the people and their cultural artefacts, some of which is difficult for modern readers due to the patronising and derogatory messages which the writers gave. My own great grandfather, for instance, who was a missionary in an area of what is now Zimbabwe, wrote a (to my mind cringing) book called 'Among the Matabele' in which he describes the everyday life of the people.

Carnegie (1894: 62) describes several things that are made – utilitarian carvings (which are without 'idols') and baskets, for instance, and he finishes by saying (incredibly) 'beyond this narrow limit the Matabele know little or nothing; the civilised world, throbbing with life, is to them as if it were not.' Carnegie does not use the word 'primitive' in his book, preferring, predictably perhaps, since he was a missionary, 'heathen' or 'savage', which are equally problematic. But many other writers used the word 'primitive', which, today, causes disquiet because it is unacceptable, yet there is no alternative. William Rubin (1984:74), in a note to his essay introducing 'Modernist Primitivism', says

the word "tribal" has been frequently used in preference to "primitive" in characterising a wide variety of arts of more or less non-centralised societies with simple technologies. Both words are profoundly problematic and we use them reluctantly and interchangeably in this book to answer the need for a generalised collective term for the art we are addressing.

He goes on to explain that 'primitivism' is unacceptable due to negative, Darwinian connotations, but 'tribal' also is problematic, because many of the peoples being described are not tribal in an ethnographic sense. However Rubin considers that the word 'primitivism' refers not to the tribal arts as such, but rather to the western interest in them - 'primitivism is an aspect of the history of modern art, not of tribal art' (ibid 5), he says, and compares the word to the French 'japonisme' which refers to western interest in things Japanese, not directly to the art of Japan. It was Picasso, in conversation with Rubin, who said 'primitive sculpture has never been surpassed' (op cit), and Rubin cites the anthropologist Claude Levi Straus (ibid 6) with a quote which should bring our fears about using the word into perspective: 'A primitive

people is not a backward people or retarded people, indeed it may possess in one realm or another, a genius for invention or action that leaves the achievement of other peoples far behind.' Nonetheless, 'primitive' art had a pejorative meaning in the eyes of most people for many years, and in likening it to the art of young children there was the implication that child art was also deficient.

Children's drawings

Very young children seem to enjoy mark making – whether it's marks in the sand tray or fingers in porridge, but whether it's the action or the marks themselves which they enjoy isn't always clear – as Gombrich (1977:101) says 'the motives and purpose for which children draw are very mixed'. Dissanayake (2012:178) considers

human patterning and picturing grow out of natural dispositions to use the hands, just as singing and dancing arise from natural elaborative (repeating, regularizing, exaggerating) movements of the vocal tract and the body. In infancy these unlearned rhythmic-modal capacities, as precursors to the arts, are the behavioural means – the doings and makings – by which we are acculturated.

Gardner (1980:23) has a description of how a child develops and learns about the objects which surround him – first people, then 'things' – and how the things behave, and are predictable (they do this afternoon what they did this morning). So a child starts to learn that a 'thing' can be a tool – in Vygotsky's theory this could mean language, for instance (Holzman 2009:16) and other psychological 'tools' which leads to culture, but it could be very practical too. Whereas a marker was once just a nice cool cylinder, expectation of its use develops, and the child learns that its function (among others) is to make marks, and an expectation of mark making ensues. Whereas initially he had no 'grand representational schemas' (Gardner 1980:23), and simply enjoyed the 'rough, muscular movements of his forearm', he starts to expect marks, and starts to learn to control the marks he makes.

And that control leads him, or her, to making marks, to drawing, for different reasons.

Different types of Drawings for different Occasions

In my work as a practising artist, and with children, I have noticed that there are several different types of drawing – technical, movement or action, narrative, symbolic, photo, observational, comic or cartoon, graffiti, illustration.

- **TECHNICAL DRAWING** – where the Drawer is attempting to draw something representational, accurate and to scale. Sometimes these drawings are called ‘plans’ – in architecture, for instance. We use them to build things, whether it’s a house or a model engine. In the old days people called draughtsmen drew on drawing boards, usually A1 or bigger, using special pens and special paper. It’s not a drawing style that most people can do, and, increasingly it is done on computer which allows you to draw any thing any size, from the design of a ball-bearing to an oil rig. The next stage on is 3D drawing – where you draw your design in 3 dimensions, and you can manipulate it on the computer screen to look at it from all directions. These days you can buy, quite cheaply (i.e. under £500) a 3D printer – so you can do (or buy on the internet) your 3D design, press print, and the printer will produce it in 3D – there’s even a version where your design comes out of the machine in chocolate! It’s quite mind boggling. But technical drawings are mainly for reference – buy anything ‘flat pack’ and it will have an ‘exploded’ drawing telling you where the bits go, so you can check that the bit you have left over when you’ve built it isn’t essential.... Fig 4:4 is an example of such a drawing..



4:4 Royal Enfield Revelation

I've seen beautiful 'technical drawings' done by young children – usually boys, who have an interest in the 'reality' of what they are drawing – mostly something like a bulldozer (see Fig 4:5). These renditions show a real knowledge of the subject, which has been well observed.



4:5 Big digger – Boy 4:2

- **MOVEMENT OR ACTION DRAWINGS** – Jackson Pollock is a well known proponent of action painting, and, in the flesh, the paintings are huge and powerful. Action drawings done by children, however, are hard to identify. If you're not careful you can overlook them, and just see a scribble. In the drawing in Fig 4:6, done after a storytelling session, you can see, top left, a tiny figure – this is Tiny Ted. Tiny Ted is a real, very small bear, and, during the story, Tiny Ted flies (usually to the soundtrack of Dallas, for some reason). He's happy and exuberant and flies over the heads of the closest children. When asked to draw something from the story, this child drew the flying. Staff thought it was 'just a scribble', until they noticed the little figure.
- **NARRATIVE DRAWINGS** – again potentially hard to identify – you have to be there. I remember on one occasion, a boy drew a magnificent fire-engine, which he then completely 'scribbled' over, but listening to him, he was narrating an amazing story about the engine driving at great speed putting out fires and rescuing people – the line was the journey it had taken. As an adult I was sad to see the fire-engine disappear under the lines, but as a practitioner I was fascinated by his story.

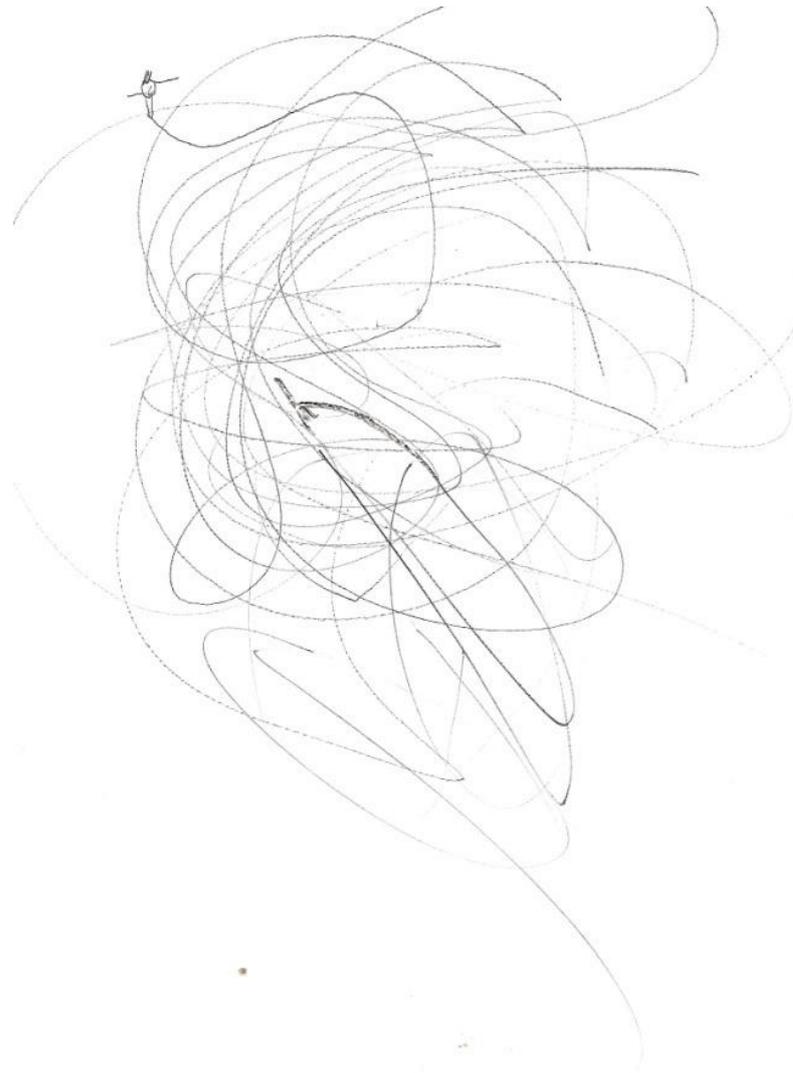


Fig 4:6 Tiny Ted flying – boy 4:10, original drawing A4

Sometimes, of course, a drawing which has been drawn over could be the evidence of a child going through an enveloping schema (Athey 1990), one of a number of patterns of behaviour which children go through in their early years. The child will consistently cover things up – their doll in a blanket, their toy in the sandpit, themselves in the cupboard. To ascertain if a drawing which has been ‘scribbled over’ is part of a schema requires careful observation by staff and family. As Nutbrown (1999:23) says ‘Adults working with young children use their knowledge of children as individual human beings, and their understanding of theories about child development and learning to make sense of the things children do and say.’

- **SYMBOLIC DRAWINGS** – this is where something stands for something else – not to be confused with signs, which are, according to Matthews (1994:90) ‘a rather different way in which reality can be represented.’ Matthews talks about how, when we look at a drawing of a horse, we learn to understand that it represents the creature. If, however, we look at the word ‘horse’ or **‘HORSE’** or ‘horse’ or ‘horse’ or ‘HORSE’ or ‘horse’, unless we can read the signs, the letters which make words, we have no chance of understanding what they mean. It was interesting, in rural China, going to the loo, since the door openings were marked with words, not symbols, and I had to wait for someone to come out or go in to know which space was appropriate for me. Some cultures use symbols as a matter of course – such as the horse-shoe which the Warlpiri people in Australia use to denote a human being (see Cox 1997:38), and symbols have been used for centuries by artists.



Fig 4:7 Nature Morte au Crane – Cezanne (with permission)

One of the most fascinating series of lectures I attended as part of my BA degree was on symbolism in paintings. Every week the tutor would show a series of slides and discuss the deeper meanings behind the subjects. The symbolism, it seems, was mostly allegorical – Fig 4:7 shows a painting by Cezanne – ‘Nature Morte au Crane’ (still-life with skull), which shows luscious fruit in various stages of decay with the skull warning us that we’re not immortal.

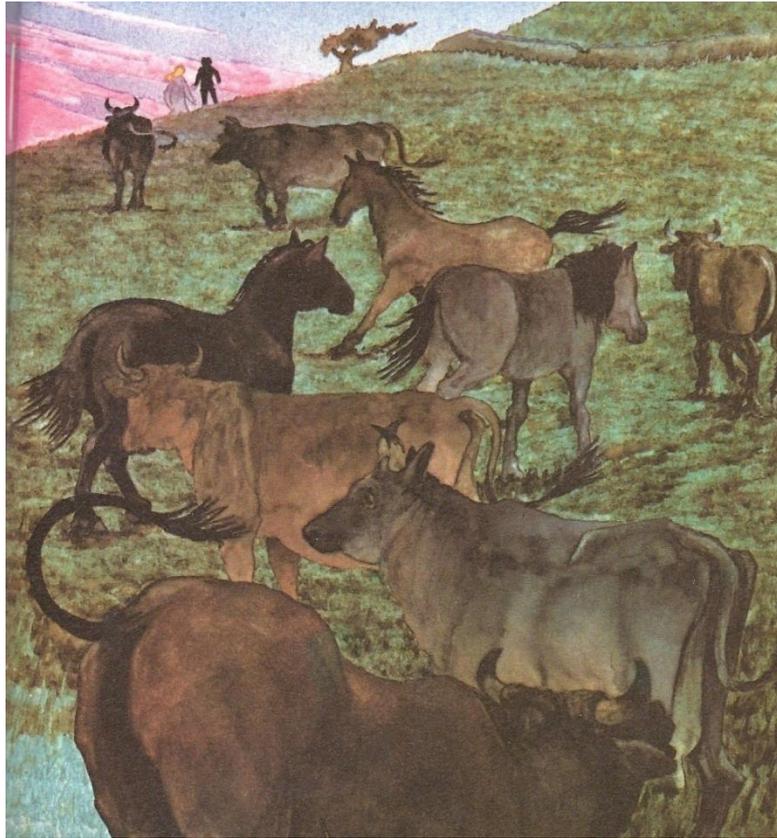
We can't all be a Cezanne, but we still use symbols, children included. In our post modern culture, I think we have lost touch with the origins of meanings in many cases, and symbols have become confused. A daffodil, for instance, used to be a sign of spring, but now a charity has taken it, it makes one associate it with cancer. Children (usually girls) often learn how to draw a 'love-heart' with which they embellish everything, relevant or not.

In art therapy the patient often uses symbols without really understanding that that is what they are – it is the role of the therapist to help the patient to unravel the symbolic meanings behind their drawings.

During the first stages of therapy, it may be that the client must gain fluency in the language of art. The therapist presents him with art materials, suggests that these materials may be used to communicate his internal world, and introduces the new language to him. Once the client achieves a certain level of fluency, it becomes the therapist's job to learn his particular syntax, grammar, and symbolism. (Morrell 2011:30)

- **'PHOTO' DRAWINGS** – where someone draws an accurate representation of something, 'a picture', to scale and with accurate proportion and perspective. Photo drawings are the attempts by people to make things look like what they are, and, increasingly, I think it's easier just to take a photograph! Viola (1944:54) agrees and says this is a confusion between art and nature. He says 'These are two different spheres. The painter who only depicts and repeats nature, and maybe with utmost skill and talent, is not an artist. Art is more than copying of nature. Photographers can do that much better.' I also think that this is the kind of drawing people mean when they say 'I can't draw'. They are incredibly skilful and frighten mere mortals (like me and, probably 90% of the population of the world). Occasionally illustrations in children's books are of this type (see Fig 4:8) and it is no wonder that a child might feel intimidated by the skill and say – 'I can't draw'.

As an aside, I chose this particular painting just because it reminded me of the Lascaux cave painting (Fig 4:1) – and I know which I'd prefer on my wall ... even if it meant living in a cave.



4:8 Photo drawing by M White (White 1981)

- **OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING:** where you set out to draw exactly what is in front of you. It helps you to 'draw what you see' – even though what you see looks odd.



Fig 4:9 – My left leg

This little sketch, Fig 4:9, was done on the day I was waiting for my interview for the Royal College of Art. I didn't get offered a place, but I have a nice sketch instead. I

can remember disciplining myself to draw EXACTLY what I could see without any censoring (the discipline was, of course, to try and stop the fear of hearing my name called), and when it was finished I stood back, so to speak, and was amazed that, actually, it did look like my crossed leg. Anybody who has some experience of drawing and painting will say that drawing what you see is a really important part of the artistic process. My friend Richard¹⁴, who is a skilled painter, told me that 'it gives you a greater understanding – a combination of what you see and what you understand.

Therefore it helps your observation skills, makes you more aware of the make-up of the world around you. How DO you draw a box? Why is a cow not a donkey? It's the nuances of shape and form. Edwards (1982:192) says drawing is a magical process, a 'way to quiet the chatter and grasp a fleeting glimpse of transcendent reality.' For Edwards the process of drawing as things are is a process of finding oneself through drawing. 'Once you have started on this path, there is always the sense that in the next drawing you will more truly see, more truly grasp the nature of reality, express the inexpressible, find the secret beyond the secret.' (op cit)

I think observational drawing is important, whether it's observation of how someone else has drawn something, or observation from life – sunflowers, a nude. Of course, an observed drawing of a drawing that someone else has already done can be called copying and some people (for instance Harrison 1960, Viola 1944) say that young children shouldn't be given the opportunity to draw like this (i.e. copy), because it will somehow stifle their creativity. I think that very young children shouldn't be forced to do anything which they don't feel comfortable doing, but the opportunity should be offered, for the reasons given above. There are certain things which we learn – by we I mean most of us – for some people they are instinctive - and we can learn a great deal by 'copying' (as long as we know that is why we are doing it) as well as by observation. Gardner (1980) discusses how his daughter, who was besotted by horses, copied and traced pictures to develop her ability to draw horses. This is copying with purpose. Connie Nelson (nd), on her website giving tips for better drawing, advocates copying. She says:

When you copy a drawing by a highly skilled artist, you are not only exposed to his or her drawing techniques, but at the same

¹⁴ In a personal phone conversation on 19 March 2012

time you study their *thinking process*. If the drawings are studies for a finished painting, you can also learn how the artist developed an idea from beginning to end. To reap this benefit, however, you can't just engage in mindless copying. You must consciously ask yourself **why** the artist did this or that, and why it works. If you can pinpoint specific strategies used in the drawings, then you can transfer these techniques to your own works of art.

It is important to note that Nelson says we are copying so that we can transfer our learning to our own work. Wilson and Wilson (1977:11) report a child they studied who had learned to draw in the style of Marvel Comics – superheroes wearing tights and capes diving and jumping, whizzing and biffing. Through repeated copying and practising this style of drawing, the boy, Anthony, was able to draw the human figure, in this style, in any pose at all, not just those in the comics. In other words he had learned by copying, and transferred the learning into his own drawings – albeit in the same style.

And observational drawings? When I visited Reggio Emilia¹⁵, in Italy, I had the great privilege of watching a small group of children drawing a vase of poppies. The flowers were in a tall glass vase, and the vase was standing on a white plinth, in the sunshine, which was throwing shadows onto the plinth, and ripples of the water. The children were discussing the flowers – the colour and the textures. They were walking round the vase, observing how their own shadows interacted with the other shadows. They noticed that if they stomped it made the shadow ripples more ripplier. They were quiet and concentrated. Then they got some paint, paper and a brush each, and they started to paint what they saw. Their paintings were lovely. They were careful, and delicate, and lovely. These children were, I think, really benefiting from the opportunity to paint what they saw. They were learning to make comparisons of spaces, sizes, tonal values, shape, line character and textures. They were learning about perspective, and proportion, and colour mixing, and shadows and, I dare say, a lot more besides, including being thoughtful, listening to each other and having an opinion. Their ability and self-confidence were growing through practice. They were not being forced or stifled. If this had been the only opportunity for drawing and painting offered to them, then perhaps it could be said that this was

¹⁵ Reggio Emilia is a small city in northern Italy, birthplace of Mussolini, which has, since the 1960's, developed a world renowned Early Years pedagogy, based on the premise that a child is 'rich, competent and intelligent, a co-constructor of knowledge, a researcher actively seeking to make meaning of the world.' (Moss 2001:129)

limiting, but, by the same token, perhaps a pedagogy which doesn't offer observational drawing opportunities is also limiting.

Talking about the drawings they studied for their research, Wilson and Wilson (ibid) say 'It was certainly no surprise that the images that young people use did not derive from art instruction, since the assumptions about the natural unfolding of artistic development and the belief that creativity is squelched through any outside influences have led to the avoidance of instruction in drawing.' Further (op cit)

We believe that there is nothing inherently wrong with young people's being influenced by teachers, or with their copying behaviours. These are the primary means by which visual sign making abilities are expanded. We think it unfortunate, however, that there is so little for students to be influenced by in their art classes that their influences stem mainly from outside the fine arts. Indeed, if we were to prescribe teaching practices in drawing, many of them would centre around assisting young people from ages eight or nine onwards in acquiring as many programs as possible for visual sign making.

In other words, children are going to copy whether we think it is 'right' or not, so they may as well be given instruction and something other than comics to copy – not that there is anything wrong with comics. It's just that a thought-through programme of art instruction in school would give the pupils another style which they could employ – what Wilson and Wilson call 'substituting the worthwhile meat of art for today's cotton candy content.' (op cit). Cizek, according to Viola (1944:33) said 'art more and more dries up because it is supplanted by the intellect. The time for art is over, perhaps. In its place probably technique will come.' Whilst it seems true that as children get older they become less 'free' in their drawing, and more worried about accuracy and technique, we could spend a long time pondering this chicken and egg situation – if you don't practice you are unlikely to get better, and modern schools consider drawing to be a filler activity rather than an important activity, so we don't practice all the different ways there are of drawing (i.e. this chapter) so we don't get any better, so we say we can't draw (because we can't draw in a certain way) so we don't draw... until we get older and go to classes to learn.

COMIC BOOK OR CARTOON DRAWINGS – For the purposes of this chapter, I am putting 'comics' and 'cartoons' together. Although in some ways they are very dissimilar, I think they are sufficiently the same to be together. Some forums on the internet consider that the only difference is that cartoons are animated, but this isn't

strictly true. I think of a cartoon usually being one picture, which tells a story – such as Giles’ political cartoons. Woody Woodpecker and the like are also cartoons, but animated. A comic is always, I think, more than one picture – sometimes a strip, and sometimes a whole book. I was amazed, recently, in a local bookstore, to see a whole array of 4 or 5 shelves dedicated to adult comic books – ‘Sandman’ (Gaiman 2010) was one – it’s a whole genre, with a very specific way of drawing, and recommended, on the back cover ‘for Mature readers.’ I didn’t understand it at all!

Herge, the creator of Tintin, is quoted as saying ‘He practically did not evolve. Graphically he remained an outline. Look at his features: his face is a sketch, a formula.’ (Farr 2007:31) The Tintin books are almost without shading, although they are full colour, action and excitement. In Fig 4:10 note the use of red in the exclamations of the 3 characters – a simple device which shows us the extent of their concern. Note, also, in the second frame, the subtle use of the movement lines, to show the different running patterns of the two animals.



Fig 4:10 Herge 1960:31 (with permission)

Compare Fig 4:10 with Fig 4:11 by Will Eisner (2008:119). Eisner works exclusively in black and white, using shadows to enhance the atmosphere of the story. The drawings are like a film strip, in that the focus changes, as with a camera angle. The faces are caricatures – over emphasised. We are left in no doubt as to what they are thinking or feeling.

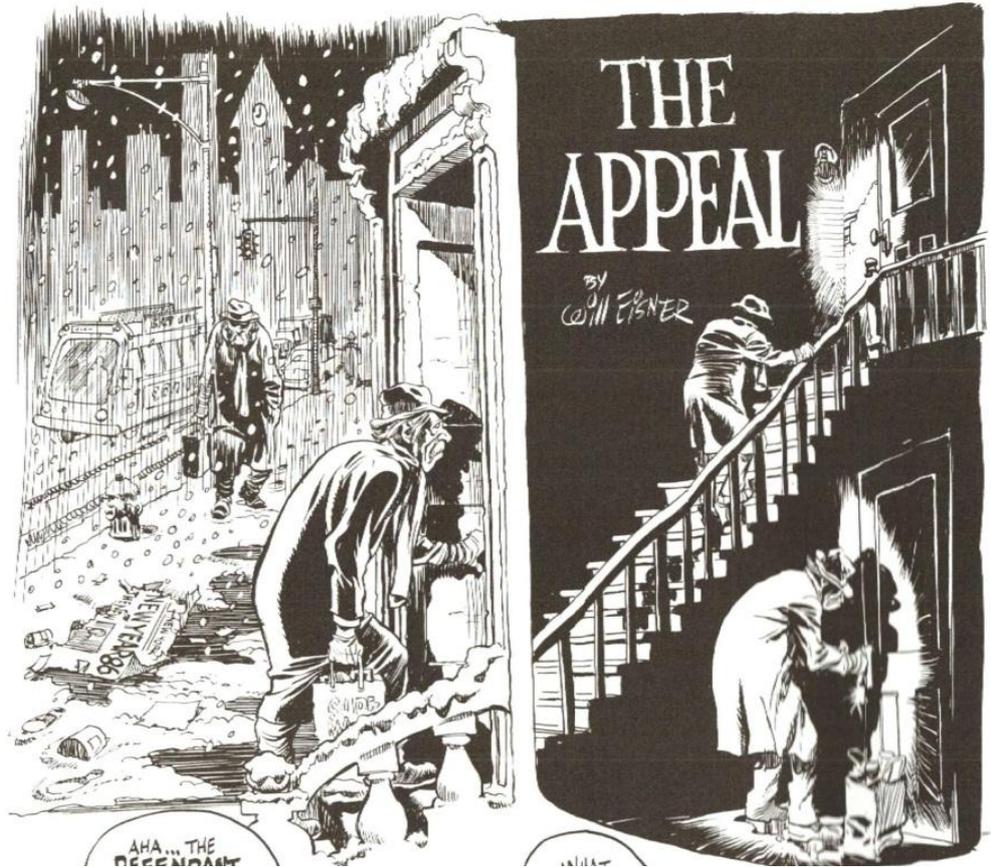


Fig 4:11 Will Eisner 2008:119 (with permission)

I have a strong memory, as a teenager, of being fascinated by the way cartoonists drew shadows and thus made facial expressions, and I spent hours copying the technique. So I am not afraid to try it out when I draw – Fig 4:12 is a frame from a cartoon I drew in 1989.



Fig 4:12 Captain Mugwide - Hallowes 1989

And Fig 4:13 is an earlier cartoon where I combined photographs and drawings.



4:13 Summer Project - Hallows 1993

So cartoon or comic drawing can be dynamic, and has the potential to be much more exciting in storytelling terms than a simple illustration of an event – for one thing, anything can happen! But, some cartoon characters can be ‘paint by numbers’ drawings – or ‘method’ drawings – where there is a methodical sequence to drawing a character which doesn’t change. I was talking to staff of a Children’s Centre recently, and they all said that they had learned how to draw something – usually a dog – aged about 6, shown by someone older, and that this was the way they still drew that thing.

In Fig 4:14 see a story about ‘how to draw a dog’ collected by Pete in 2009.

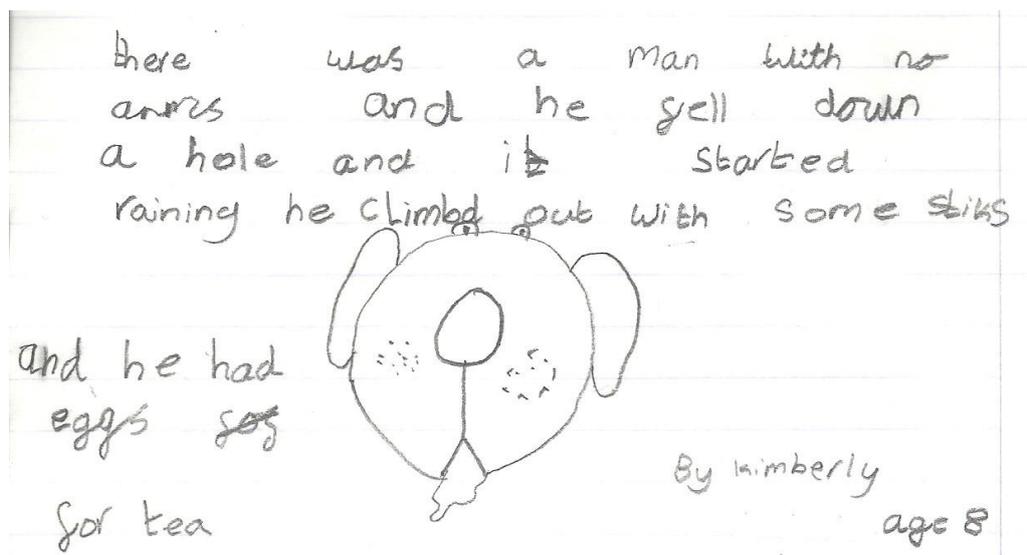


Fig 4:14 How to Draw a Dog by Kimberly

Clearly Kimberley has been shown how to draw a dog through a story, even though the result is not individual. Proof, perhaps, that learning by rote precludes any judgemental thought?¹⁶ So 'learning' to draw a cartoon can be an inhibition, and I was concerned to see the change in how one of my subjects, Jonathan, drew a dog. I asked all the participant children to draw me a dog on my first visit into school on 5th May 2011, and I repeated the exercise on my last visit on 19th July, 10 weeks later.

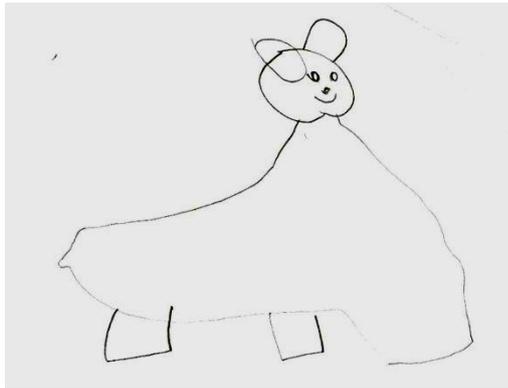
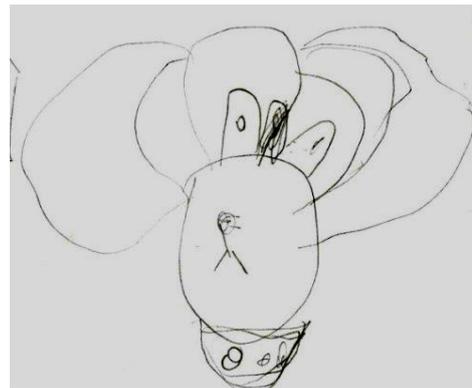


Fig 4:15 Jonathan's dog 5th May 2011



Jonathan's dog 19 July 2011

In Fig 4:15 it can be seen that he has drawn a very commendable dog on 5th May, complete with nice rounded ears, a large body and legs. His drawing of 19th July is complex, and obviously something learned by rote, to a formula. It is also something with far less individuality and character than his previous dog, although it does get round the difficulty of drawing from the front (see p93).

Formula drawing has the same proviso as copying – it's fine, provided we know that we must (and can) change it according to any specific circumstance. I'm sad if Jonathan thinks that his formula drawing of a dog is the only way to draw a dog, in the way the Children's Centre staff's ability to draw a dog has been atrophied through knowledge of formula dog.

- **GRAFFITI** tends to be very stylised, and is everywhere. Take any railway journey and 'tags' (which is what people who write their name call the resultant marks) are in every tunnel, every wall. You have to admire the tenacity of the artists – walking miles on uneven surfaces just to write their name over and over again. According to Kramer (2010:235), writing about the graffiti culture in New York City, 'scholars have devised a variety of typologies to classify the various forms of graffiti

¹⁶ See Appendix 5 for another example of this 'drawing by rote'

that appear in public and semi-private spaces. These typologies usually include categories of graffiti such as 'name-based', 'amorous', 'intellectual', 'political', 'territorial/gang', and 'latrinalia' ' and most of these can be seen in Europe too. Good graffiti is great – although the difference between graffiti and a mural is the fine line 'between vandalism and urban art' (Meyer 2012). In London, apparently, in a fight against 'tagging' there is a move to have more official graffiti – called art murals – especially on buildings which are continually being tagged. The idea is that there is respect between graffiti artists and they won't 'tag' someone else's work, so if you have a mural, then the tagging will stop. (ibid)

Some graffiti images are really beautiful and, given the subject of this chapter, I thought Fig 4:16 is fabulous, as well as being really clever. Corrado Ricci would approve.¹⁷ We have no way of knowing who the artist is, but I like to think that they know the story of the 'discovery' of child art, which is why they have specifically drawn 2 small children defacing the wall, even though they are dressed exactly like taller teenagers (complete with pants in danger of falling down!)



Fig 4:16 Graffiti Ricci

- **ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWINGS** – these are the usual drawings that most people do. They give an impression of something. For me they are not really illustrations,

¹⁷ In 1887, so it is said, Corrado Ricci was sheltering in an alley from a rainstorm, and he became entranced by the children's drawings which he saw on the walls. He subsequently wrote a book called 'The Art of the Children' which is the first time, according to Viola (1944:8), the term was used.

although they illustrate. Or perhaps there is a difference between big I and little i illustration? Certainly the Illustrations you find in books can be marvellous works of art , but these are not the drawings I'm talking about. For me, an illustrative drawing is one which is not trying to be perfectly representational, accurate, or in perspective. It's a sketch, usually quite quickly made, to illustrate something, often to be a form of communication between people. Ullman (1990) considers also that it's an aide memoire. 'Designers often unconsciously make sketches to help them remember ideas that they might otherwise forget.' These illustrative sketches quite often form the basis of technical drawings. Ullman (ibid) calls these drawings 'study drawings'.

So, Fig 4:17, is an illustrative drawing I did to show a design I had in my head for a dress I was going to make. I've tried to give an impression of the final garment, but it's not a technical drawing, not the pattern of the dress. It's just an illustrative impression of something which is much easier to draw than explain.

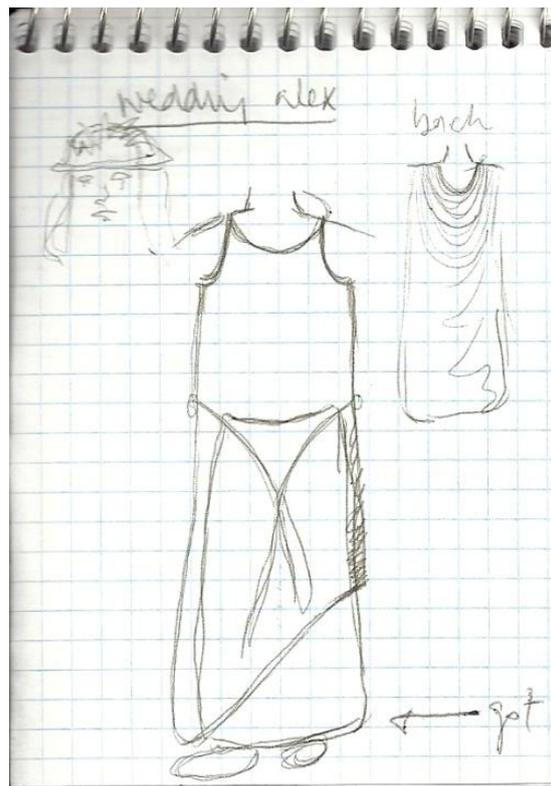


Fig 4:17 An illustration

So? what is a drawing?

So, does any jot and mark on a surface constitute a drawing? Not necessarily. For me, a drawing implies intentionality, and is different to making a mark. And, as we have seen, there are a variety of different ways of drawing which can take the name

– they all have a place for different occasions. They all need practice to gain mastery. Wilson and Wilson (1977) tell the story of a young man they studied who had been to life drawing classes, and who could, therefore, draw quite a good rendition of a nude woman from memory. However when they asked him to draw a woman with her clothes on, his drawing became totally different and child like. ‘I’ve reverted to the 5th grade!’ he is reported to have said. The reason for this is because he had not generally practiced drawing since the 5th grade, and therefore his skill, his ability, had atrophied. Wilson and Wilson call the different ways of drawing ‘programs’, and we all learn, for better or worse, to draw in at least one of these.

Some programs function easily, smoothly, and with great sureness; these are the programs that are in continual use. Other programs, out of disuse or neglect, are outdated, ill-functioning, and unsatisfactory to individuals attempting to employ them and are thus easily aborted. We have all known young people who could draw one or two things extremely well while the rest of their drawings were done in a very average manner. In the case of those objects that are well drawn, they have repeatedly played essentially the same program, sharpening their ability to recall the desired configuration easily from memory, and to move from one drawing sequence to another almost without hesitation, producing few errors (misguided lines) needing correction. On the other hand, programs that are poorly run are characterized by vague memories of graphic configurations, halting movements and transitions, few established sequences with which to flow through, and indecisiveness at each decision point.(ibid 9)

Drawing may be an instinct, but it is also a skill – and proficiency needs practice.

Geertz (1973:36) considers that we are all products of our culture – we live in it therefore we are effected by it – but sometimes the huge variety of options within any culture doesn’t show in the art produced by children. Wilson and Wilson’s (1977) suggestion may be 35 years old, but is still valid – they suggest that schools have a formal programme of art instruction which would introduce some of this variety to children who may not, for various reasons, ever become aware of it - to offer children an alternative option in their art to Disney or the latest television programme.

And we, adults, regarding the drawings the children do, need to understand, that not every drawing is the same, and we should be careful about 'classing' them, unless we are sure of their meaning.

Having ascertained that there are several ways of drawing, in the next chapter, I will examine the way children's drawings have been represented in research over the years.



Chapter Five

A Review of the Literature on Drawing

After a brief introduction this review of the literature on children's drawings falls naturally into 2 parts.

First I will to examine the literature on children's drawings which presents them in a deficit manner, comparing them to the drawings of adults, and making assumptions about the child's development according to what she can't draw.

Second I will consider those studies that saw the drawings as something in themselves, as 'art'.

Gardner (1980:15) considers that these two schools of thought have been in parallel for over 100 years.

Introduction

Interest in the drawings of children started in the late 19th century partly, according to Jolley (2010:9) as a result of an increased interest in studying 'origins' – which was stimulated by Darwin's new theory of evolution. Earlier, in the late 18th century, Rousseau formulated the idea that children should be allowed to have a time when they were not 'little adults'. 'Try and teach the child everything useful for his age, and you will see that all his time will be more than filled. Why do you, to the detriment of the studies which are suitable for him today, want to apply him to those of an age which it is so uncertain he will reach?' he said. (Rousseau 1979:178).

Jolley (2010:9) tells us that around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries there were many scientific studies published about developmental stages in children - Darwin himself did a longitudinal study of his son, for instance. People started collecting children's drawings and the notion of developmental stages in drawing was introduced. One of the influential researchers who picked this up was Georges-Henri Luquet.

Georges Luquet

Luquet was a developmental psychologist and his book, in French, on children's drawings was published in 1927. It was translated into English for the first time in 2001 (Luquet 1927:2001). It is an intensive study of the drawings of young children, mainly of his daughter, many accompanied by careful observations of the process of drawing. Although it can be argued that a researcher who has intimate knowledge of the subject cannot maintain scientific objectivity, it can also be said that researchers who do not know the child provide little information other than their age and gender. Luquet was careful to hide the relationship between himself and his daughter, but his observations, because of their relationship, have advantages of deep detail specific to the life of a child. Costall (2001:xiv), Luquet's translator, in his introduction to his translation, considers that Luquet made every effort to care for his daughter to ensure that she did not become resentful of the attention being paid to her drawings and 'he remained open to the meaning and creativity of her work', which thus enabled him to develop his ideas.

According to Luquet, after a period of indiscriminate scribbling, a child's drawings go through 4 stages of realism: fortuitous realism, failed realism, Intellectual realism and visual realism.

The first is '**fortuitous realism**'. The child is scribbling away, and suddenly notices that a scribble looks like something – Luquet (1927/2001:85) says 'a drawing is a combination of lines drawn to represent an actual object, whether or not the intended resemblance is actually achieved', so it could be argued that any 'drawing' achieved through fortuitous realism isn't actually a drawing, because 'drawing', according to Luquet, as described above, implies intentionality. What I find interesting in Luquet's analysis, is the idea that the child is working through the stages on his own, in isolation, with the adult observer having no effect on the process – and I feel this is difficult. One of the observations I have having worked in early years settings, is that very often we, as adults, cannot (or do not seem to find it easy) simply allow a child to experience materials, whether that be a pencil on paper, paint on card, or mud in the garden – what Vinter (1999:34) calls the 'how' of drawing. We look for representation, (Vinter calls this the 'what' of drawing (ibid 34) – and a child soon learns this – so the development into 'fortuitous realism' is a learned development, I would argue, because the child learns that her mother

observing 'oh look, you've drawn a bird' helps the child to make that mysterious quantum leap from reality to symbolic representation – and this is not a criticism – it's the way we learn a great deal; through copying, through wanting to please. So where Luquet considers the child develops the ability to spot these 'accidental' representations on her own, I would argue that perhaps, in fact, Luquet has underestimated the effect he has had on his child – even a shared look has implications, and also that there is a more deliberate attempt on the part of the child to replicate, so as to generate more adult attention and praise.

The influence of culture

'Being a baby means wanting to participate in patterned, multimodal, emotionally communicative improvisations with other people, to imitate their sounds and activities, handle things, and play with vocal sounds and physical materials.' (Dissanayake 2012:178) Children want to belong. Gombrich (1977:101) says that children 'grow up in our world where the image has already assumed its manifold functions: to portray, to illustrate, to decorate, to entice or to express emotion. Our children know picture books and magazines, the cinema and the television screen, and the pictures they make reflect this experience in more ways than the child psychologist realizes.' Gombrich goes on to say 'all the time they are absorbing and adapting the standards and schemata of the grown-up world...' (ibid 102) Gombrich (ibid 105) also reminds us that we perceive images with the 'mental set' of our culture – and our culture (by which I mean western European) is a legacy of the ancient Greeks, whose art was a reflection of an actual reality – albeit sometimes an imaginary reality. In this writing Gombrich is talking about our interpretation of the art of the ancient Egyptians, but the point I am making is that children, very young children, do not have any 'culture' – it is something they learn in the process of becoming a 'social being' (Bruner and Haste 1987:1), acquiring 'a framework for interpreting experience' and learning 'how to negotiate meaning in a manner congruent with the requirements of the culture.' (ibid) – learning the 'rules' of culture (Haste 1987:163).

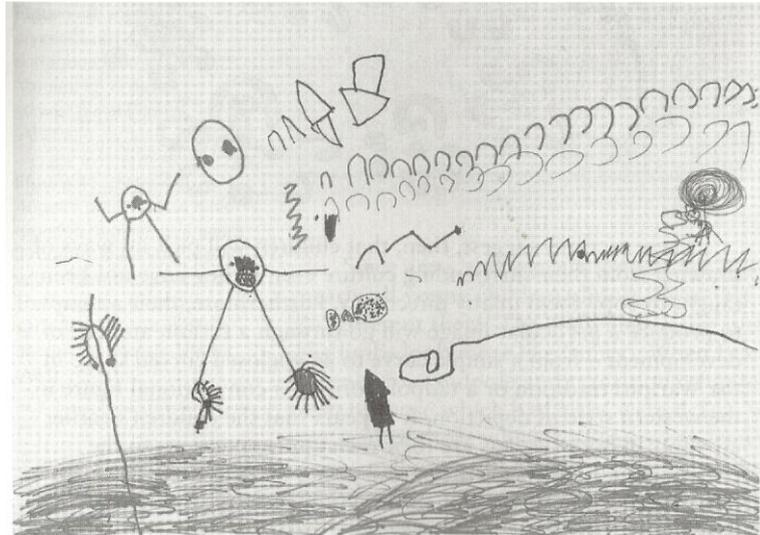


Fig 5:1 Illustration of a mixed culture drawing (Cox 1997:37)

Maureen Cox (1997:37) gives examples of drawings by children who have been influenced in their imagery by two cultures – western and Australian aboriginal. Cox does not consider that, as a rule, young children copy the subjects of their drawings from other sources. Rather they see imagery around them, and absorb it into their growing personal culture. So the child's drawing in Fig 5:1 shows an attempt at drawing the human figure in a western style (the tadpole figure), in tandem with aboriginal symbols for a person (the horseshoe shapes)

Thus, to my mind, a child's early mark making could mean something to them which we, with our learned culture, don't understand and thus misinterpret – and the child wanting (needing?) to please, to fit in, learns and adapts the way they draw.

Representation vs. Presentation

Arnheim (1967:166) also considers that 'first scribbles are not intended as representation, but rather as presentation – that is, they involve the exciting experience of bringing about something visible that was not there before.' Arnheim considers that the physical act – the muscle movements – required to produce a drawing are, in a 'grown-up' (ibid 168) artist, just a means to an end – we have to move to make our mark which makes our drawing, whereas in a child the physicality of mark making is as important as the mark itself. (This is represented by what I call an 'action drawing' - see figure 4:6) The child, drawing or painting, is not necessarily trying to make a representation, but is rather trying to make sense, using the picture as 'an efficient means of orientation in a confusingly organised world.' (Arnheim 1998:16)

Rhoda Kellogg

Rhoda Kellogg, who, working in the 1960's, collected an enormous number of children's drawings which she examined, also considers that adults misinterpret the early scribbles of a child, considering that they are 'random motor activity'. (Kellogg 1972) She says 'Most adults rate a child's drawing according to *how well it represents* a person or a familiar object' (my italics). We, as adults, do not appreciate the marks for being just that – marks – and Kellogg identified 20 'Basic Scribbles' which she considers children discover and master before they start to make representational marks – i.e. attempt to draw 'something'. Not only that, but Kellogg also recognises that Adults are the catalyst for children realising that marks that they have made mean something – when mummy says "that's a lovely boat" the child makes the connection. Kellogg says 'All children spontaneously scribble and make designs, but adults must teach them how to "copy nature".' Kellogg, like Luquet, considers that there are four stages of drawing development, but, for her, the child progresses through the first three (placement stage, where the child deliberately places marks on the paper; shape stage - where the child starts to make distinct shapes, and these become what she calls 'diagrams (circles, squares etc); design stage – where the child starts to combine diagrams (such as a cross within a circle) before getting to the 'pictorial stage', which is where the marks start to begin to look like something an adult can recognise. She further divides the pictorial stage into 'early pictorial' and 'later pictorial'. Early pictorial could be likened to Luquet's second stage which is '**failed realism**' – where a child tries to draw something specific, and fails in its realism – so a 'tadpole'¹⁸ drawing would fall into this category. For Luquet, there is intentionality in this second stage – the child is deliberately trying to draw something, whereas for Kellogg, the reverse is true – the child is not necessarily trying to draw a representation but 'is more concerned with creating aesthetically satisfying structures.' (Kellogg 1972)

Making assumptions

Many researchers, (see, for example, Sully (in Costall 2001:ix), Goodenough 1975, Goodnow 1978, Lowenfeld 1978) in examining children's drawings, compare them to the adult ability to draw an accurate representation of how something looks and

¹⁸ This is the name given, because it resembles a tadpole, to a young child's drawing when they draw a circle, sometimes with dots for facial features, and limbs coming from the circle – i.e. no differentiation between the head and the body

thus have found them to be deficient –although, of course, most people, from the age of about 9, when they lose the ‘instinctive expressiveness and freedom to invent unconstrained by academic rules’ (Coates & Coates 2011:87), would say they can’t draw, and, in fact, if accurate representation is what ‘drawing’ is, then they are right! (See Chapter Six)

Things such as foreshortening, perspective, drawing what is known rather than what is seen (Luquet’s ‘intellectual realism’), transparency, leaving things out etc have all been considered to be an indication of mental, psychological and emotional development or lack of it. Piaget, for instance, embraced Luquet’s models of development of drawing, and used them, slightly adapted, to ‘prove’ development of spatial awareness in children. In one experiment (Piaget and Inhelder 1956:383) children were shown a beaker containing coloured water held at an angle, and were asked to draw the waterline in the beaker. Children under 7 or 8 years failed, and Piaget considered this was because they had no concept of ‘absolute horizontal.’ He did not consider whether or not they were able to draw, or whether they understood his question.

Drawing something which doesn’t exist

Over the years other researchers (for instance Karmiloff-Smith 1990) have reached conclusions about a child’s development when it turns out they can’t draw something – such as something which ‘doesn’t exist’.¹⁹ The research was designed to find out if children could break sequential habits of drawing – i.e. always drawing something with the same sequence of lines (first we draw a circle for the head, then we draw a bigger circle for the body etc). Having read this research, I attempted the same question with my small group of participants – who did not know what I meant.... At all. They needed specific prompting before they had an idea of what was being asked.

To reiterate my point - we ASSUME children understand what we are talking about, and they do their best to comply with our requests. If we ask someone to draw ‘something which doesn’t exist’, we are assuming a complexity of thought which many people, let alone very young people, don’t have.

¹⁹ See Chapter Six for a full discussion of this

The Goodenough 'draw-a-man' test

Drawings, usually of the human figure, were also used to measure 'intellectual maturity' – one of the best known researchers is, perhaps, Goodenough (1975) who says, in the preface to her book, that 'the drawings made by young children have an intellectual rather than an aesthetic origin. They are determined by concept development rather than by visual imagery or by manual skill' (p iii). Her premise (revised and extended by Harris in 1963) is that as children develop, so their drawings become more complex – they move from 'tadpole' to a figure which has separate head and torso. Given enough intelligence they eventually draw a person with fingers, clothing, a hat and cigar ... well, almost. She identified 18 criteria (sometimes sub-divided. Category 9, for instance, concerns clothing, and is divided into 5 subcategories, the 5th of which is further divided into 4 categories.). With subdivisions there are 51 points on the scale. Through careful assessment of each drawing (the fringes of a cowboy shirt do not count as a shirt unless there is a line drawn on the wrist to indicate the end of shirt sleeve...), a score is reached which is 'transmuted into mental age equivalents' (ibid 89), and thus the IQ can be ascertained by dividing this by the chronological age.

Goodenough concluded that her test 'throws considerable light on the development of conceptual thinking in young children' (ibid 82), and that 'artistic ability is practically a negligible factor as far as influencing the score is concerned.' (op cit).

A voice in the wilderness

John Matthews (1994) has also done a longitudinal study of children drawing using his own children and those in schools. He has some conclusions which are different to those I have examined above.

He says 'I do not favour the view that young children only scribble until they can produce visually realistic pictures. This makes the mistake of comparing children's drawings with one particular type of picture made by artists and other adults.' (ibid 9) As a matter of interest, Matthews is himself an artist – perhaps this is why he sees things in a different manner to other researchers who are, very often, psychologists. Matthews has an holistic approach to the work which children do. He sees the importance of context, and he sees 'art' in everything – the 'twirling, running, jumping up and down, shouting, singing' (op cit). He considers observation to be

paramount, if we are to understand the meaning of a child's work, because the meaning is not always apparent in the end product, (p 10) and the book is full of narratives which describe a child having an experience – now with spilt milk, now with paint. We can see, through the descriptions, that it is the process which is important for the child - the process of pushing and pulling the brush, tasting the paint, having eye contact with mum – in all of these activities he is learning about the world, investigating how it works. Matthews does not consider these early explorations by his son as scribbling. He posits the idea that Ben might be 'babbling' (as in early language learning) with paint. He says '(Ben) is obviously very involved in the painting, and his whole manner suggests a commitment which would not be conveyed by mindless scribbling. What he is doing seems to be emotional. Perhaps it reflects or conveys his mood. It may help create a mood, or at least intensify an existing one.' (ibid 18) Matthews considers that this is the beginning of representational thought, complex and intelligent 'events in space and time'. (ibid 29) Scribbles they are NOT.

Throughout the book we follow Ben (and the other 2 children when they come along) as he develops his drawing and painting skills. The children learn about how perspective works, how far away things are smaller, how it is difficult to draw some things from only one point of view, how it is difficult to draw some things full stop. Matthews talks about the 'errors' in a child's drawing not being an error at all, but rather a sensible decision, by the child, as to what needs to be shown, and what not, depending on the context of the drawing. On page 103, for instance, Ben, who knows about the 'vanishing point', decides that, actually, having his railway carriage top and bottom lines parallel is more important than showing that the carriage is going away in the picture. Matthews says 'it is worth reminding ourselves, that just because children may not use a certain drawing system, this does not mean that they cannot produce the types of lines required'. Context is everything. Matthews concludes ... actually, it's worth putting it in bold

When children struggle to show more of the truth about their worlds, they produce drawings which may look strange to some adults. However it is a mistake to measure these against a limited notion of visual realism and evaluate them in terms of supposed deficits. Their drawings are frequently the result of combinations of different types of knowledge encoded in different systems. It is our responsibility to decode these systems in order to help children understand

how their lives and their worlds are represented in them. (p 135)

Food for thought

Adding food for thought to Matthews' ideas, is a fascinating study by Alexander Alland published in 1983. At the time Alland was a professor of anthropology, and he went into six different cultures (Japan, USA, France, Bali, Taiwan and Ponape) and asked the children to draw for him. The children's ages ranged from 4 years to 9 years, and many of them had no experience of drawing – they had, in fact, never drawn before. The drawings, sadly monochromatic in the book, are intriguing. Firstly, there is a dearth of representation, pictures of 'things'. Alland suggests 'it is likely that the ability to represent, particularly among the very young, is *more* the product of learning than is the ability to produce interesting designs. Experience in representation most likely involves some formal rule learning from exogenous sources.' (his italics) (Alland 1983:185) He continues 'In young children, free play in art is not automatically connected to representation. It has been my experience that young children will not attempt to represent unless the task is set by adults.' So the young children who have had no experience of drawing, and no culture of drawing – even though the culture around them may be rich with artefacts – chose to make patterns, rather than draw people or things. Just flicking through the book it is really striking how few representative drawings there are. There are some. Fig 5:2 is the drawing done by P23, a female 5 year old from Ponape –she took 8 minutes to do it. She had never drawn before, although, as the sister of a local school teacher, my guess is that, perhaps, she had had access to books and magazines. Alland describes how she drew her picture, remarking that it is apparent, looking at the film of the event, that the child had no clear idea of how to draw a human, but became more confident as she filled the page. My observation of the drawing is that it is unlike the 'people' drawings one usually sees depicted, in that the people in her drawings are nobody. They are just people, and the child is teaching herself how to draw them. They are out of any context, they are not me and mummy. They are technical.

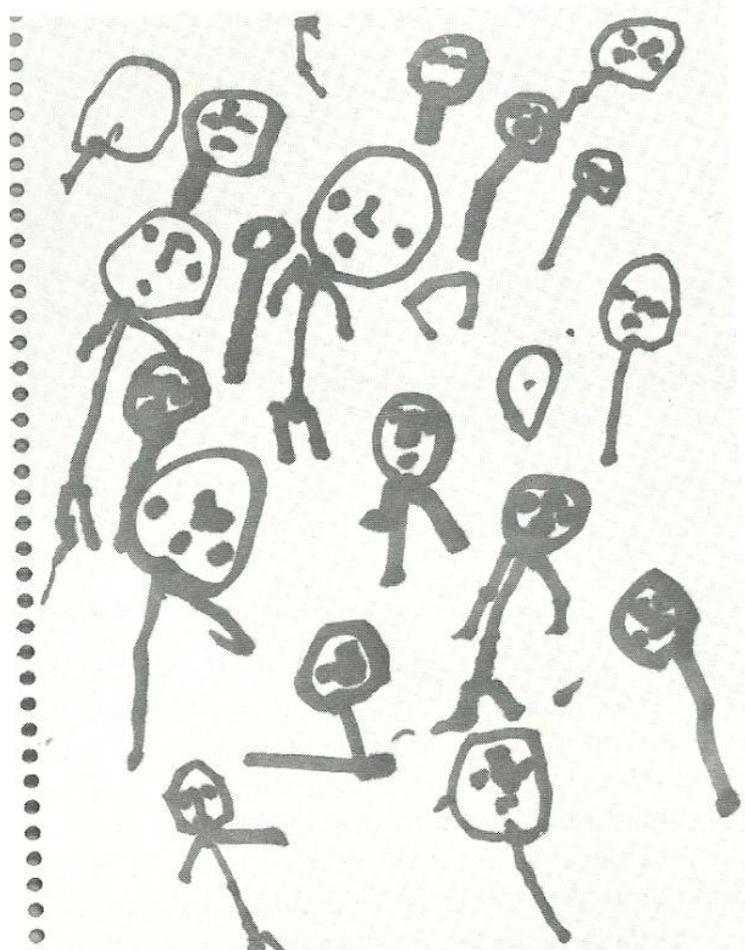


Fig 5:2 Drawing by P23 (female, 5 years old) from Ponape

Fig 5:3 is a typical drawing from Ponape, done by P15, a boy aged 5 who took 17 minutes to complete it. It shows how unusual the drawing of P23 (Fig 5:2) is. P15, like the majority of the Ponape children, has drawn a complex study, filling the page with both angular and round shapes. It is not stated specifically whether or not P15 has any experience of drawing or writing, but he is pre-school. We must assume, therefore, that what we recognise as letter-forms in his drawing, are not letters but nice shapes.

Alland found in the Ponape drawings by older children that they tended to draw representative pictures, and he considers that the drawings of the younger children are interesting 'because of their non-conformity with developmental norms found in the study of Western children and non-Western children with school experience.'
(ibid 70)



Fig 5:3 Drawing by P15 (male, 5 years old) from Ponape

Alland also makes a very interesting comment about children 'scribbling'. He notes, during this study, that although the younger children, who have no drawing experience will 'scribble', older children, even with no drawing experience, will not scribble, but will immediately draw shapes. (p 35)

In his conclusions, Alland states 'my data strongly suggests that development from scribbling toward representation is not an automatic result of maturation, or even of experience with drawing. Children are often content to play with form, and need not imbue this form with meaning.' (ibid 211) Very few of the drawings he collected had a 'story', and when he asked the children what their marks were or what they meant, the children shrugged. 'The question did not seem to mean anything to them or have any importance.' (op cit)

If we are to accept Alland's conclusions, that, basically, children draw according to their culture, their frame of mind, and not in any particular stage, but according to where they, as an individual, are today, (and I am so inclined, it must be said), then what about this idea of children's drawing and paintings being bona fide 'art'?

Child Art

According to Golomb (1993), Arnheim perceives a direct linkage between children's art work, primitive art, and the work of the mature artist. He sees in all forms of art a primary intelligence that links the different forms of expression. This approach to the artistic process marks a turning point in the study of child art, and it liberates investigators from an excessive preoccupation with the so-called conceptual limitations of children's drawings. (ibid 27) Kelly (2004:4) considers that there have been two parallel paradigms in the consideration of children's art since the early 20th century. On the one hand there was the interest in a child's development – she calls this the 'mirror' paradigm. Researchers were not concerned with the drawings or paintings as 'art' but rather as what they showed of the child's state of mind. On the other hand, the 'window' paradigm looked at the work as art, advocated by Franz Cizek who said that 'art is not nature. Art is not a representation of nature. Children do not copy nature.' (Viola 1944:80). Cizek also considered that there needed to be more respect for the child as a child, that children were different to adults, and that, therefore, they will have different rules because they are less influenced by society (ibid 10)

Several important artists of the early 20th century – Picasso and Klee, are examples, were very influenced by the drawings and paintings of children as they fought to find their own voice within the strictures of the established art world. Picasso's early paintings are an eye-opener, if one is only used to his later work. He is reputed to have said 'It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.²⁰' And he can ... paint like Raphael. But he experimented over the years, influenced by the drawings of children and the art which was appearing from the colonies, stripping his work down to stark lines in some cases. 'I paint objects as I think them, not as I see them' he is reputed to have said, and Fineberg, interviewed in 2006 about a proposed exhibition for the National Gallery in Washington, which featured some of Picasso's childhood drawings, said 'In working on that exhibition, I became aware of the fact that artists were the only ones who had looked at

²⁰ Picasso Quotes:

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/p/pablo_picasso_2.html#Xt7UhyFqZl1dTIq3.99 Accessed 20/7/12

children's art from an artistic perspective really seriously. They're the ones who taught me to see children's drawings in a different way.' (Camhi 2006)

Paul Klee, too, was heavily influenced by the art of children, in some cases copying drawings to use in his own paintings (Camhi 2006) 'The creative vitality of childhood had been discovered in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but it was the early modern search for an alternative to the imitation of nature that first gave license to the serious use of children's drawings.' (Franciscono 1998:96) and although Klee was not the first artist to 'borrow' from child art, he was the first to acknowledge it as a source of inspiration (ibid 97) As Jolley says 'artists were inspired by the *expression* of the children's drawings while the scientists analysed the *representation* of realism in the drawings.'(Jolley 2010:9 original italics)

In this chapter I have examined the literature on children's drawings, both that which presents them in a deficit manner, comparing them to the drawings of adults, and making assumptions about the child's development according to what she can't draw, and also some researchers who recognise that children do not draw in an attempt at visual realism, but rather as one means of making meaning in their particular culture. In addition this chapter briefly examined the idea that children's drawings are bona fide art, and the influence they therefore had on artists such as Picasso and Klee.

In the next chapter, I will examine the premise made by some researchers (i.e. Goodenough 1975) that adults can draw, by asking a small group of adults to draw things which researchers have studied through the drawings of children.



Chapter Six

Adults Draw...or not?

One of the main conclusions I draw from my review of the literature about children's drawings, in Chapters 4 and 5, is that the 'yardstick', so to speak, seems to be their comparison to western adult drawings, rather than the children's drawings being what they are – drawings by people who are not very old yet. Anning and Ring (2004:18) point out that many of the longitudinal studies done on children's drawings take no account of the whys and wherefores of the children, they are 'disembedded from any consideration of children's intentions or of the contexts in which the children were drawing.' (op cit) and further, 'few concessions were made to the affective, aesthetic and psycho-motor aspects of development'. (op cit) Researchers were more interested in developing theories of developmental stages, (for instance Luquet (1927), Goodenough (1975), Lowenfeld (1978) and the 'deficit' of the drawings as the children worked towards 'visual realism' – the only purpose of drawing in the 'traditions of fine art training in the Western World.' (Anning and Ring 2004:18). Di Leo (1970:122) speaks about the negative attitudes towards children's drawings falling into two categories – the drawings are considered to be meaningless, and the drawings are defective. The defective nature is defined as a drawing which has no perspective, for instance, or one in which the proportions are wrong. But, as Di Leo points out, this is only true if 'the adult is taken to be the measure of all things'. (op cit)

'The measure of all things'? If this is the case, if we assess children's drawings in light of their cognitive development, according to the way in which *adults* draw, then, it seemed to me, it is important that we know HOW adults draw – ordinary, off-the-street adults, who have had a variety of educational experiences.

I decided to do a survey, to find out how a small selection of adults draw. I asked 3 head teachers – one nursery, one primary and one secondary, if they could distribute a short drawing task to as many staff in their establishment as possible. I wanted a cross-section of people, not just teachers, and I wanted, if possible and practicable, for the staff not to confer whilst doing the task, although of course they could compare notes afterwards.

I devised a one-sided sheet with 6 small boxes. Each of the things staff were asked to draw are things which I knew from my reading other researchers had asked very young children to draw.

At the top I gave a brief description of the task:

THANK YOU! For agreeing to draw for me. My research is simply to see how adults draw things. So have a go, and take as long or as short a time as you like. There are no rights or wrongs, and I'd prefer pen not pencil or felt tip.

And at the bottom I gave other brief instructions:

After you have drawn, Please indicate difficulty for each drawing (where 10/10 is difficult). Please have a go at each drawing, and indicate if you didn't understand the instruction. Your help is really appreciated

I was interested in this element – how difficult does an adult find it to draw a horse, for instance? Did they understand the instructions? Part of my thinking is that we might be asking children to do things which they find difficult, but we rarely ask them if they *have* found it difficult. I know that, for the purposes of some research, researchers try to keep the conditions exactly the same (i.e. Merry & Robins 2001) by asking exactly the same wording in the question for each participant, but what about the child who doesn't understand? How do we really know that he DOES understand? Are the words we are using *in* her vocabulary – like 'exist' for instance? Deloache and Brown (1987:123) say that it is absolutely crucial that any task we ask a child to attempt is age appropriate, and further, that 'if we wish to understand the development of sophisticated cognitive skills, we cannot ignore their earlier, more primitive precursors.' Feldman (1987:131) reminds us that every task has two aspects. Firstly what she calls epistemic, which is the 'mental act ... whereby we come to *know* about the world.' (original italics). And, she continues:

all such epistemic acts involve a second aspect. For mental acts act on inputs, which have, first, to be *construed*. And so, before the judgement of equality of water in two differently shaped beakers can be made, the subject must first construe or represent mentally the state of affairs of the water in the beakers. It is this construal of the situation by the problem solver – *his* image or description – that he operates on: *his* not ours, not a physicist's, and not, certainly, an aboriginal, uninterpreted world that simply is as it is. (ibid – original italics)

So, in asking adults to do some drawing, I was interested to see if the task was difficult, if they understood my simple instructions, and how they construed it.

At the bottom of each box I put what was to be drawn. I kept this brief, knowing that it might be misinterpreted – especially the ‘Draw something which doesn’t exist’ task – which I’ll talk about more fully later in the chapter.

I received 83 responses – which is amazing given that I only distributed 70 forms. 17 of the responses were from males. I am a very familiar face in 2 of the schools, and it was fascinating going into the schools after the task had been done – everybody I met said what fun it had been to do, which I thought was a really interesting comment, and some people got a bit giggly, self conscious about their drawings, I think. One person asked me if I had analysed the drawings and ‘are we all mad, then?’

Although I had asked people to put a ‘nom de plume’, most people put their own names on the form. The age range of participants was 17 – 59.

Overall I got a good cross section of the adults in a school, from teachers of all ages to TA’s of both sexes; from admin staff to ‘other’ which includes a dinner lady, a caretaker and volunteers. I had suggested that perhaps some of the 6th form students might be interested in doing the task, and this is why there are 17 year olds in the group.

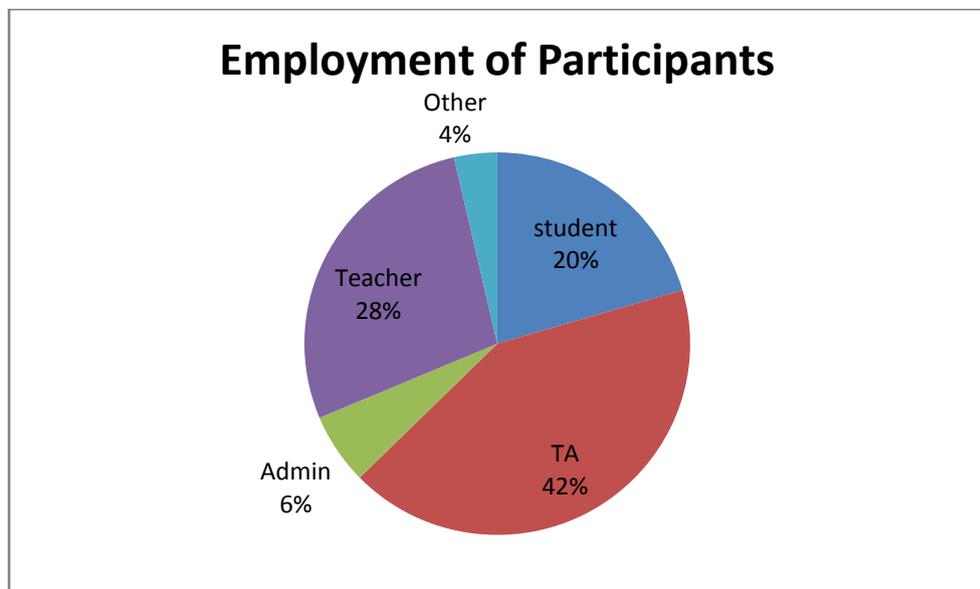


Fig 6:1

The things I asked them to draw are all things which various researchers have asked children to draw, and then they have made assumptions about the development of the children as a result.

1. So first, of course, draw a person - Goodenough (1975)
2. Next draw a horse – Ives and Rovet (1979)
3. I provided a picture of a 'vase'. And asked for flowers to be drawn in and the water level indicated - Piaget & Inhelder (1956)
4. And a house on the side of a hill please - Piaget and Inhelder (1956)
5. Now draw someone picking up a ball – Goodnow (1978)
6. And lastly, draw something which doesn't exist – Merry & Robins (2001)

Some of the drawings have numbers on them – this is because I asked participants to mark, out of ten, the difficulty they had in doing each drawing, where 1 is easy and 10 is difficult.

All the examples which follow, except for two, are from different people.

1. Draw a person analysis

'One of the first recognisable forms that children draw is the human figure' says Maureen Cox. (1992:31) Thus it seemed to be the logical way of starting the drawing task I set my participants, and I analysed the drawings according to these criteria.

- A. That the drawing was incomplete – i.e. not the whole body shown (usually just the torso), or facial features were missing
- B. Facing front, with features and clothing, and in proportion
- C. Facing to the side, with features and clothing and in proportion
- D. Facing front and side (face and body front but feet to the side), with features and clothing and in proportion
- E. Facing front, with features and clothing but not in proportion (usually head too big)
- F. Facing side, with features and clothing but not in proportion
- G. Facing front and side, with features and clothing, but not in proportion
- H. Not ok (either a stick figure or a cartoon)

It can easily be seen that only 10% (B + C) of participants drew a whole person, which was ok and in proportion. 'Ok' means it had clothes, facial features and hair, for instance. 17% did not draw a whole person – USUALLY from the waist up, but my instructions were not explicit about drawing a whole person, I had only asked that they draw a person, assuming that they *would* draw a complete figure. So a misunderstanding of instructions.

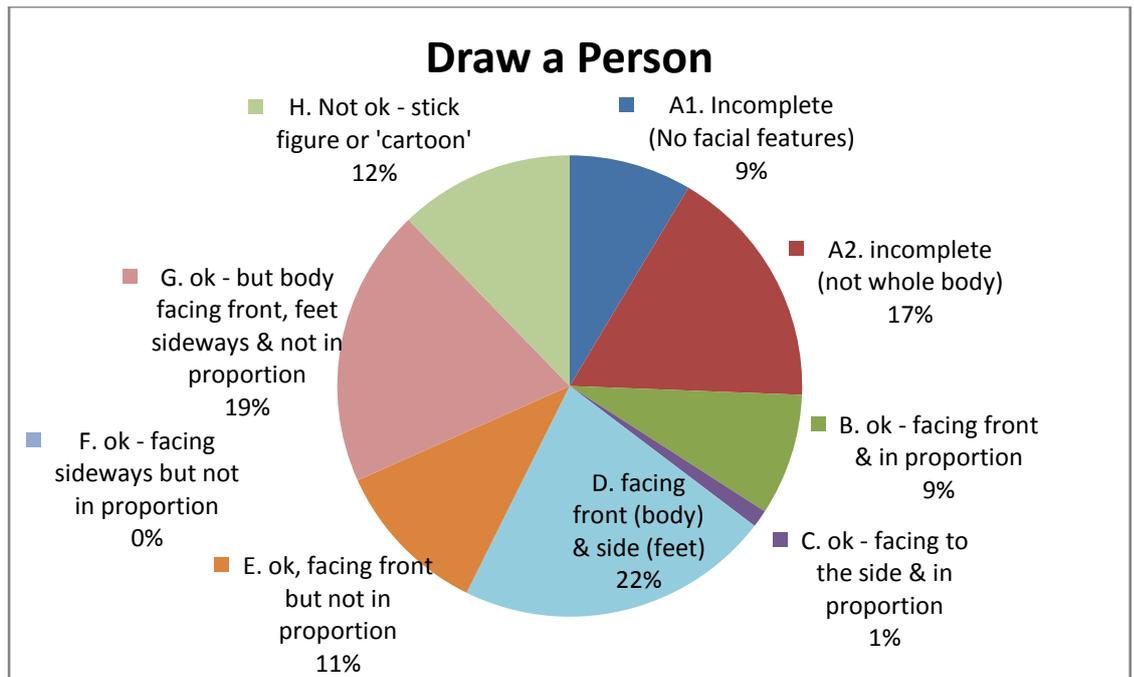
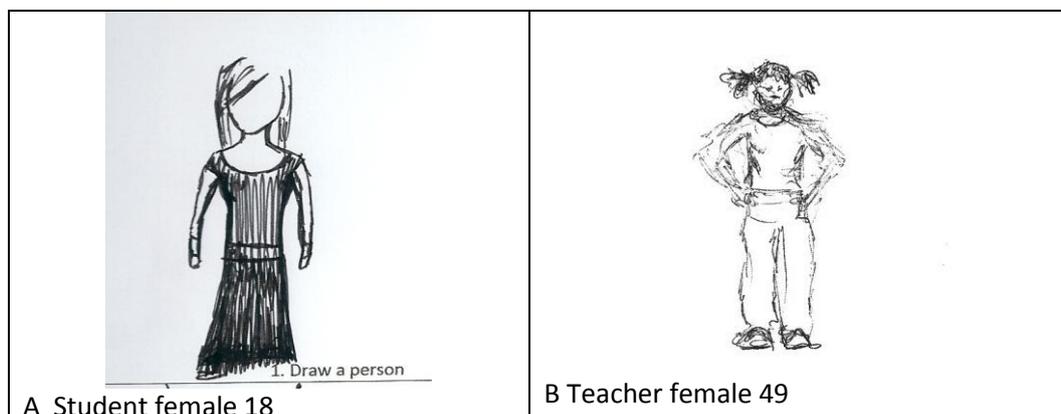


Fig 6:2

If I take one example from each of the categories (see below – A falls into A1 and A2), it can be seen that there is a huge variety of drawing. Some people – (Person C, for instance in Fig 6:3) have, I suspect, drawn the figure before – in Person C’s case a fashion model type stance. Person E has some knowledge about cartoon drawing, and Person B and Person G have some experience which shows through correct proportions of the body, although many features are missing. Person A, Person D and Person H have probably not drawn much since primary school. And the last drawing – well, what can you say? This person has a talent and ability to draw whatever takes his fancy without even trying. I doubt that he has had lessons – I think he is one of the lucky ones who picks up a pencil and out it comes – lucky person.



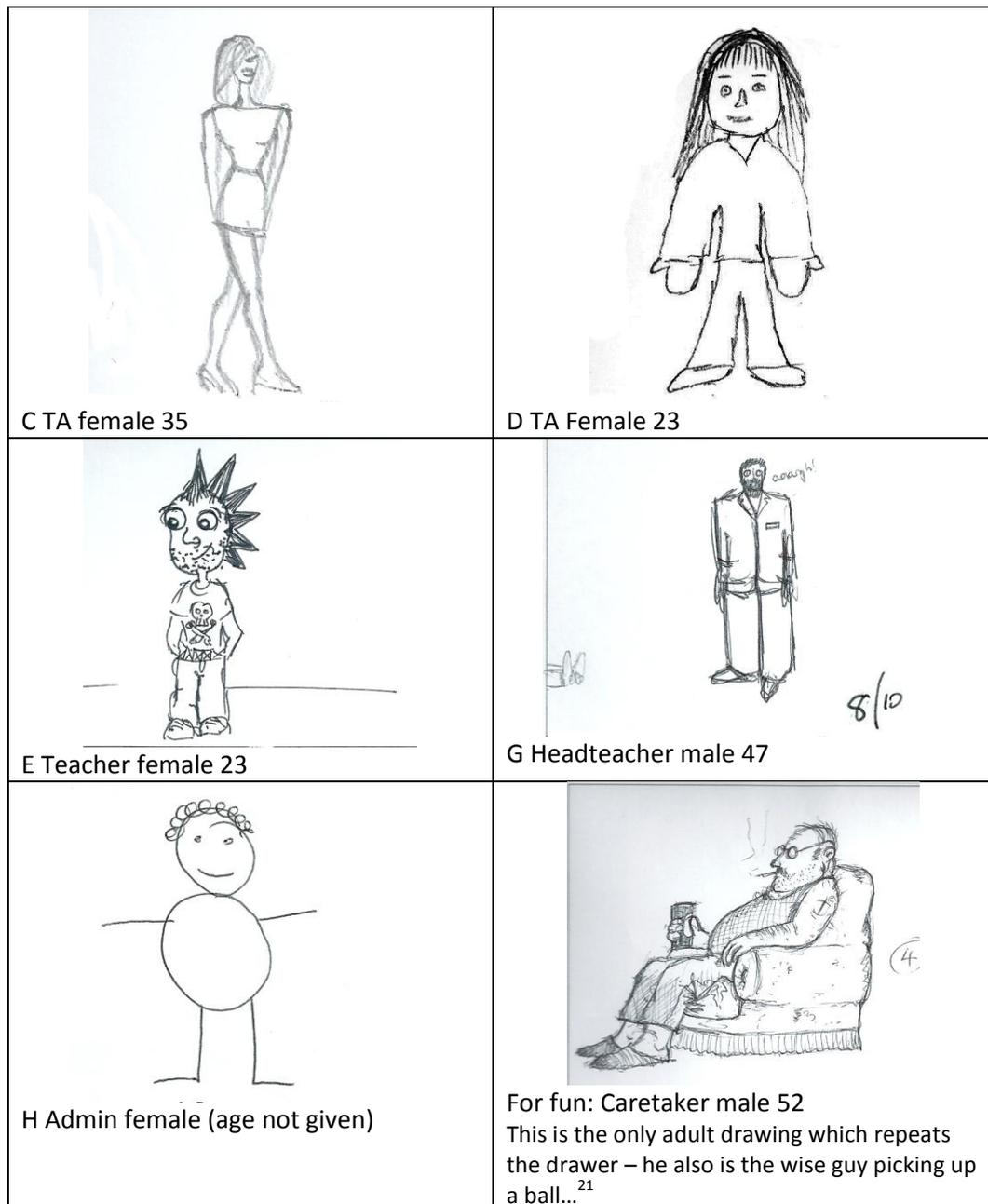


Fig 6:3

2. Draw a Horse

Ives and Rovet (1979) looked at how children draw horses, amongst other animals, in their research. They came to the conclusion that most children draw horses from the side, because that way the 'longness' of the horse can be seen. They draw owls from the front, because owls do not have 'longness', owls are round (as with people), so they draw owls (and people) from the front. This causes problems when we want to draw a person moving, because to draw movement from the front requires foreshortening, for instance, which is very difficult, so we usually chose to change the

²¹ As a matter of interest, this is not a self-portrait

aspect, and draw a person moving from the side (although THIS creates problems of making a head from the side... only one eye, and all that...).

Actually, I disagree with Ives and Rovet. I think the simple explanation of why people draw horses from the side, is that it is incredibly difficult to draw a horse from the front! Drawing a horse (or a cow, or a steam-roller for that matter) from the front requires 2 things: first it requires that we have really observed the horse/cow/steam-roller, as opposed to only having an impression of it, and second, that it is a drawing from the front that we want, as opposed to a drawing which captures the horsey/cowey/steam-rollerness of the subject. There is a lovely story Gombrich (1998:28) cites about Andre, the unimaginative son of a university professor, and Jean, the son of the professor's gardener, who is helping out. Andre is looking, and scoffing, at a little drawing Jean has done of a cat. 'It's only got 2 legs!' he crows. A visitor, Mr Majorin, asks to see the drawing, and, hanging his head, Jean hands it over. Mr Majorin interrogates Jean about the drawing – why has he drawn a cat with only 2 legs and its tail coming out of its head? Jean replies that that was what he saw. Much to everyone's astonishment, Mr Majorin gives Jean a big hug.

"If only I had a child like that," Majorin said.

"Are you saying that because he drew a two-legged cat with a plumed head?" asks the professor.

"No, it's because he's a born observer, and with that quality- faculty if you like – you can go far and avoid a multitude of pitfalls."

"I just can't see – I must admit – how drawing a two legged cat..."

"Exactly. You don't see. Or, rather, like so many people, you've never seen.... Except through the eyes of other people who've never been able to see either. You see a cat as a four-legged feline with a tail, whiskers and two ears that stick up and flick about. If one of those items is missing you're not prepared to admit that what you are seeing is a cat at all."

You'll be happy to know that Mr Majorin then pays for Jean's education.

I agree with Mr Majorin – most of us, most of the time, do not see what's in front of us. We look, we process what's in front of us, we identify, we move on. Cats have four legs, therefore I will draw one with four legs, even though I can only see two. It depends on what the task is – drawing what I see or what I *know*.

In looking at the 83 horses which my adult participants drew, only one is definitely from the front, and this is a cartoon (Fig 6:4 left) and formulaic – although this female TA aged 40 tells me that ‘is my second sheet as my horse looked like a dragon first time’. Not a dog then? (Fig 6:4 right, student 18 male)

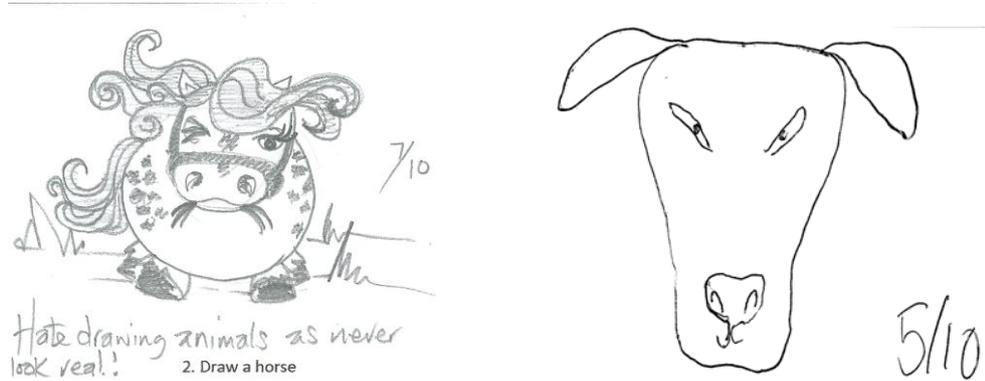


Fig 6:4 – Horses from the front

I have put the dog/horse in as one of 2 examples where the horse body cannot be ascertained by the drawing as there is no hint of neck or body.

14 participants drew their horse with head facing forward, but body either drawn or indicated to the side. The rest drew the horse from the side.

I have scoured the many books I have on children’s drawings, and I have found only one example of a child who drew a horse from the front. There is no information about the age of the child, Niki Zeh, but it is thought, apparently, that Kandinsky was so impressed with the drawing that he had it exhibited in Moscow. The date is 1908/9. (Worwag 1998:83) There are 3 horses in the drawing – called ‘Teutonic Battle’ (Fig 6:5). Two are rearing up on their back legs, but the third, to the right, is from the front. We can only see the underside of its neck, and its rider is wielding an axe. The whole drawing is lively and well depicted, but this is an unusual aspect for a horse and shows someone, no matter what their age, who is confident and competent. And this is the only one I can find.



Fig 6:5 – Teutonic Battle by Niki Zeh (Worwag 1998:83)

Let's look at the horses from a different point of view – bias.

Horse Matching Game

Ok – just for fun – 8 horses below in Fig 6:6.

Can you match them to who drew them? All are free-hand drawings:

1. a dinner supervisor, female, aged 36
2. a volunteer in a primary school, male, aged 37
3. a primary school teacher, female, aged 41
4. savant child, girl, aged 3
5. a TA, female, aged 24
6. a secondary school teacher, male, aged 34
7. a young girl, aged 7
8. Picasso

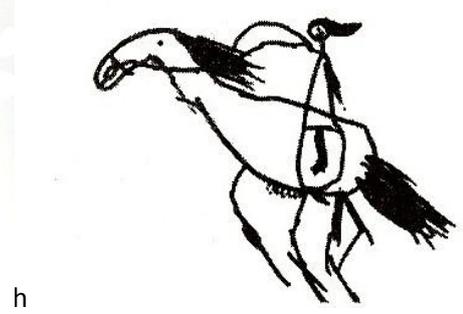
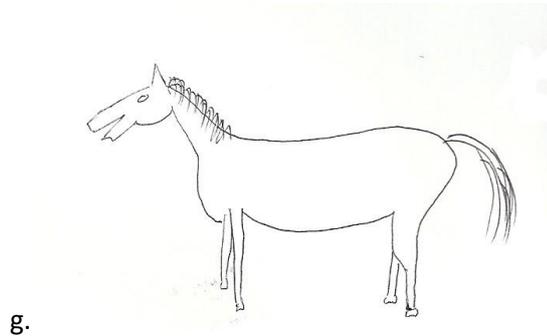
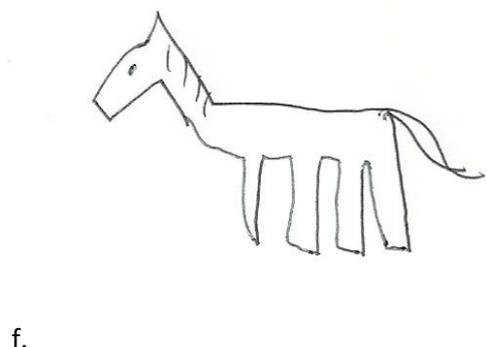
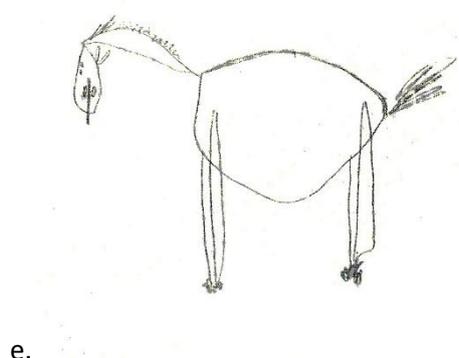
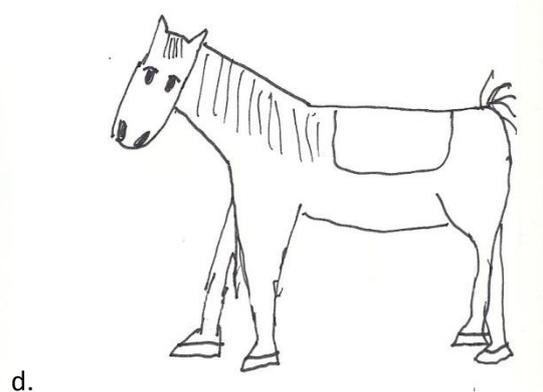
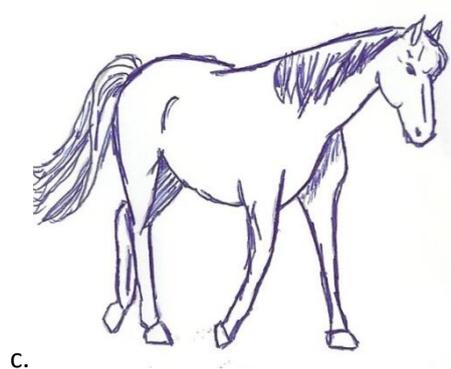
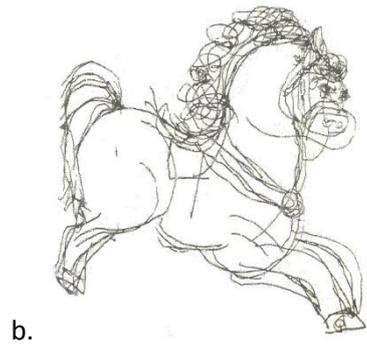
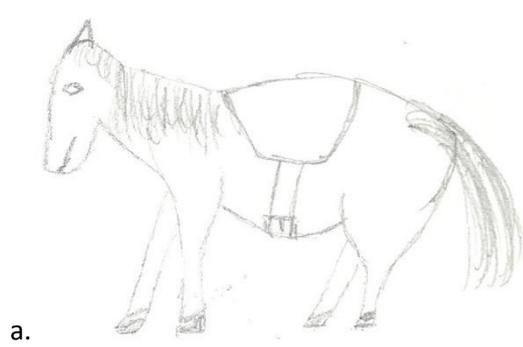


Fig 6:6 Who Drew the Horses?

I asked a small group of adults (11 people) (let's call them The Matchers) to do this matching task for me. They are all Year 4 EdD students, whose professional careers are in Education of some sort. They were interested in the task, and, in written feedback, those who commented said it was either a difficult, very difficult or impossible task! One person (male aged 42) commented that 'judging against the very brief descriptors was impossible.' and another (female aged 39) said 'I am aware that I am basing this on my assumptions of these people, and definitely don't think I am correct.'

Making assumptions about people is, partly, why I did this matching task with my EdD colleagues. When I went to pick up the drawings from one school, the head teacher said to me 'who would have thought a dinner lady could draw so well?' Why shouldn't she? But I think it is apparent that the Matchers were also biased according to who the people were. For instance, the majority of them are of the opinion that Person 3 (female primary school teacher in her 40's) drew one of the 'better' renditions of a horse (Horse B, C or D). And over 50% of them have attributed the drawings which look most like those of a child (Horse F & H) to Person 7 (the young girl aged 7).

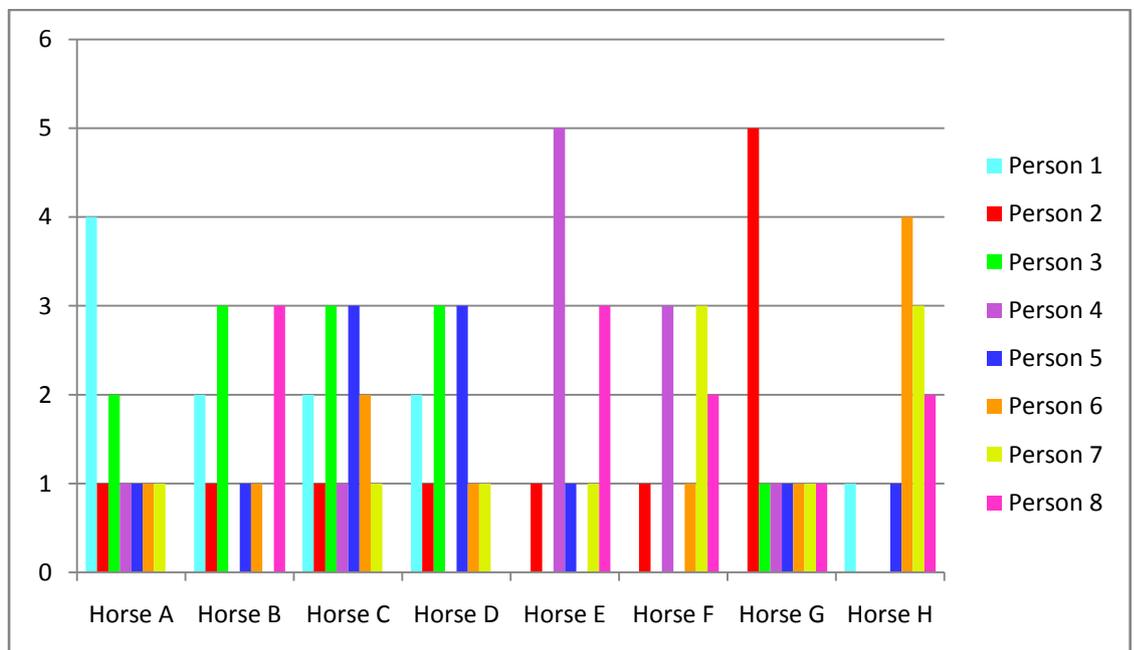


Fig 6:7 The Matchers opinion

I think it is interesting that the Matchers have seen something in the quality of Horse E which makes nearly half of them attribute it to the savant child (Person 4), and it is also interesting that nearly half think Person 2 (a man) drew horse G.

In general the Matchers were off mark – but that is not the point. The point for me, is that horses are very difficult to draw, and it is unwise to draw conclusions about the drawings children have done, because, as the drawings above show, few can draw a horse without observation and practice. Gardner devotes 13 pages of *Artful Scribbles* (1980:115-128) to an examination of his daughter, between the age of 6 to 8 years, and her fascination with drawing horses. We see her development from simple studies, to an exploration of narrative drawings, pictures combined with prose or poetry, and experiments of different ways of drawing movement. (see H above). By the age of 8 Kay has developed the skills to be able to competently draw a horse, with or without rider. But she’s been practising for over a quarter of her life.....

**Answers to who drew what in Appendix 2*

3. Water Level

I asked my adults to draw this because of the work done by Piaget and Inhelder (1956), and this task is associated with the next section – draw a house on a hill. Piaget and Inhelder were concerned about the development, in children, of the ability to discern vertical and horizontal lines, and parallel lines, in the everyday environment – whether a child can ‘spontaneously utilize such a system of reference’ (p 377) – in other words, do they see the correlation between vertical and horizontal axes in the world around them.

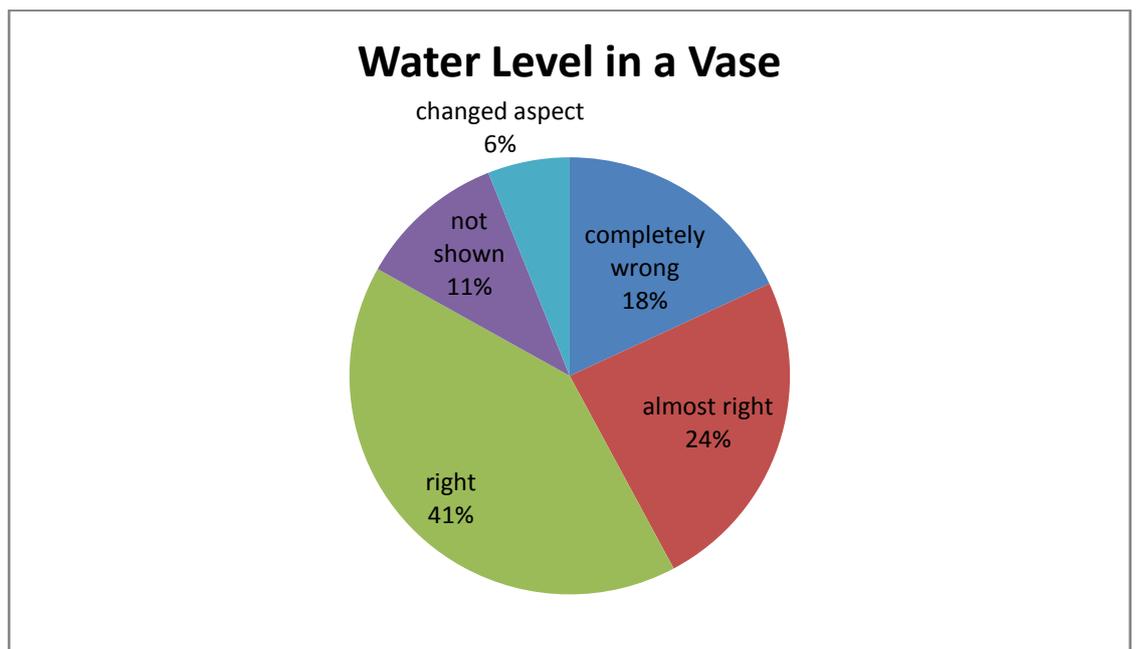
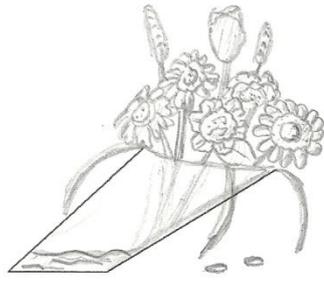
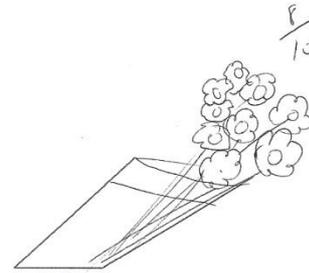


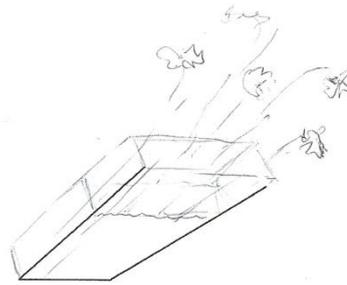
Fig 6:8 Water Level analysis



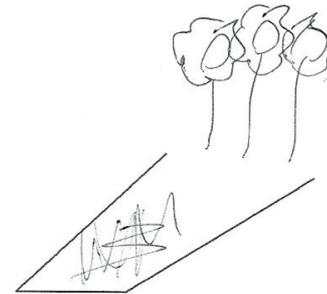
Water level right



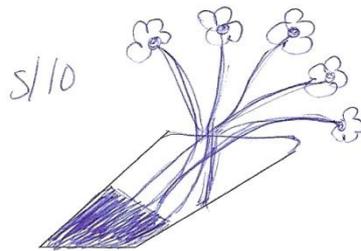
water level nearly right



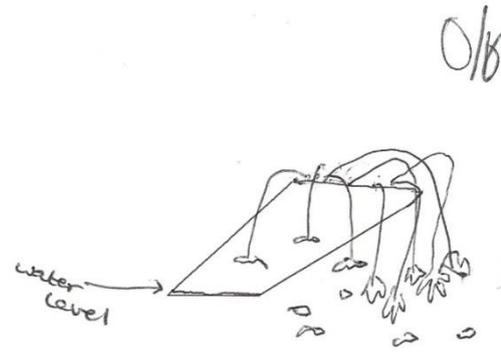
Changed aspect of vase



water level ambivalent



Completely wrong



Another Wise guy!

Fig 6:9 Water level drawings

In the 1956 experiments the children were shown real containers of water, as well as cardboard cut-outs, and the liquid level was demonstrated as the containers were tilted. The children were encouraged to draw the level of water in the tilted vessel, and also to place the cardboard 'water' onto a tilted vessel at the right level.

Now let's look at the 'draw a house on the side of a hill' task

4. Draw a House on a Hill – not at the top

This task is the second Piaget and Inhelder (ibid) used to demonstrate the development of awareness in children of vertical and horizontal axes.

This was the most difficult to analyse, because participants interpreted the task in many different ways.

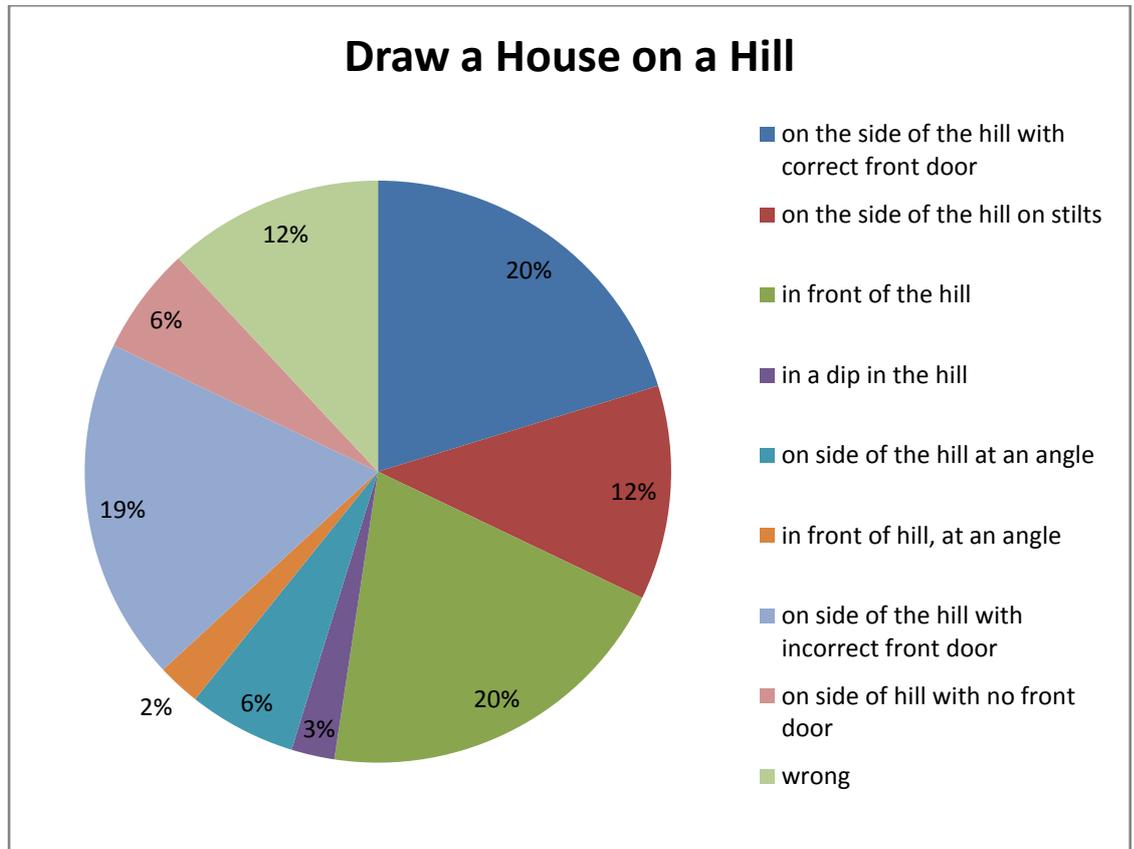


Fig 6:10 House on a Hill analysis

Although only 6% of participants drew their house on the side of the hill at an angle (the way, in fact, that many children draw it), there were various ways that the rest had difficulty with the task. They understood that the house had to be vertical, and some drew very elegant stilt houses. Others drew the bottom of the house at an angle, but this, in turn, created a problem of how to draw the front door!



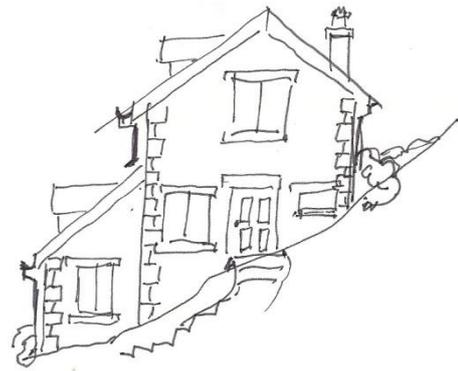
I'll move in here tomorrow!



Example of Stilt house



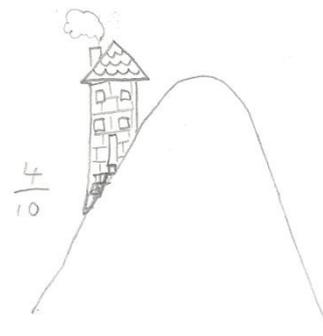
One of the 6% who drew at an angle



Lovely house with dodgy front door!



Door and house don't add up



Steps been added to sort out door



The floating house



Door problem solved by putting it on the side!



*Door is right but house is not
Fig 6:11 Houses on hill drawings*



Everything is lop sided

Discussion of the Water Level and House on a Hill Tasks

Piaget and Inhelder concluded that there are stages of development of understanding about vertical and horizontal. Up to 4-5 years, children are in Stage 1 during which they do not show the water level as a line, but rather as a 'round blot or a little ball inside the jar' (ibid 382) (rather like the fourth vase drawing in Fig 6:9, done by a 23 year old female TA), and their houses on mountains are 'drawn lying flat on the sides of mountains, or else placed in arbitrary fashion using the mountain as a background.' (op cit) – so like the first and third drawings in Fig 6:11.

And so their conclusions continue.

My point is simply that the drawings which 83 adults did of these 2 tasks show that many of them, according to Piaget and Inhelder's criteria, have no idea about vertical and horizontal axes. Many said how they found the water level task difficult – marking it anything from 6-10, and less than 41% accurately drew it. The range of houses on a hill were impressive, but very few were absolutely architecturally, vertically and horizontally, accurate. Piaget and Inhelder conclude by saying 'Topological relations are relations which remain purely internal to each object or pattern. As against this Euclidean relations, completed by the construction of reference frames, are essentially relations established between numbers of objects or patterns.' (p 418) I believe the drawings done by adults which I have shown indicate that whilst this may be true, there are two provisos: firstly it is not necessarily age related as to when we learn it, and secondly, our knowledge of it cannot necessarily be gauged by whether we can draw it or not, and this applies to all ages.

5. Picking up Ball

Goodnow's (1978) research concerns the way and order in which a child draws, especially when it comes to changing a drawing. So, if a child draws a person, how do they adapt their habit of drawing to accommodate drawing a person who is bending – to pick up a ball, for instance. She says 'The present study explores the possibility that parts of a drawing may differ from one another in the likelihood of being altered when a drawing is changed, a likelihood that changes with age.' (ibid 637) This hypothesis came after a longitudinal study where a group of 4 year old children were asked to draw a person over a succession of weeks. It was noticed that

the children tended to change the “accessory” parts of the figure – i.e. the arms, legs, leaving the “core” – i.e. the body - the same. However, being asked to ‘draw a person’ conveys no particular need to draw in any particular way, no need to change the ‘habitual’ way of drawing. So Goodnow asked the children to draw a person who was moving in a particular way – and one of those ways was picking up a ball. She then looked at how these drawings compared to the ‘habitual’ drawings, and drew the overall conclusion that the older the child, the more likely they were to draw an accurate rendition of someone bending, as opposed to adapting their ‘habitual’ way of drawing by changing the “accessory” – i.e. making an arm long so that it reaches the ground. The subjects were not told what kind of ball their person was picking up.

Goodnow divided the results into two basic categories – those with and those without a bend in the body – each category had inner divisions.

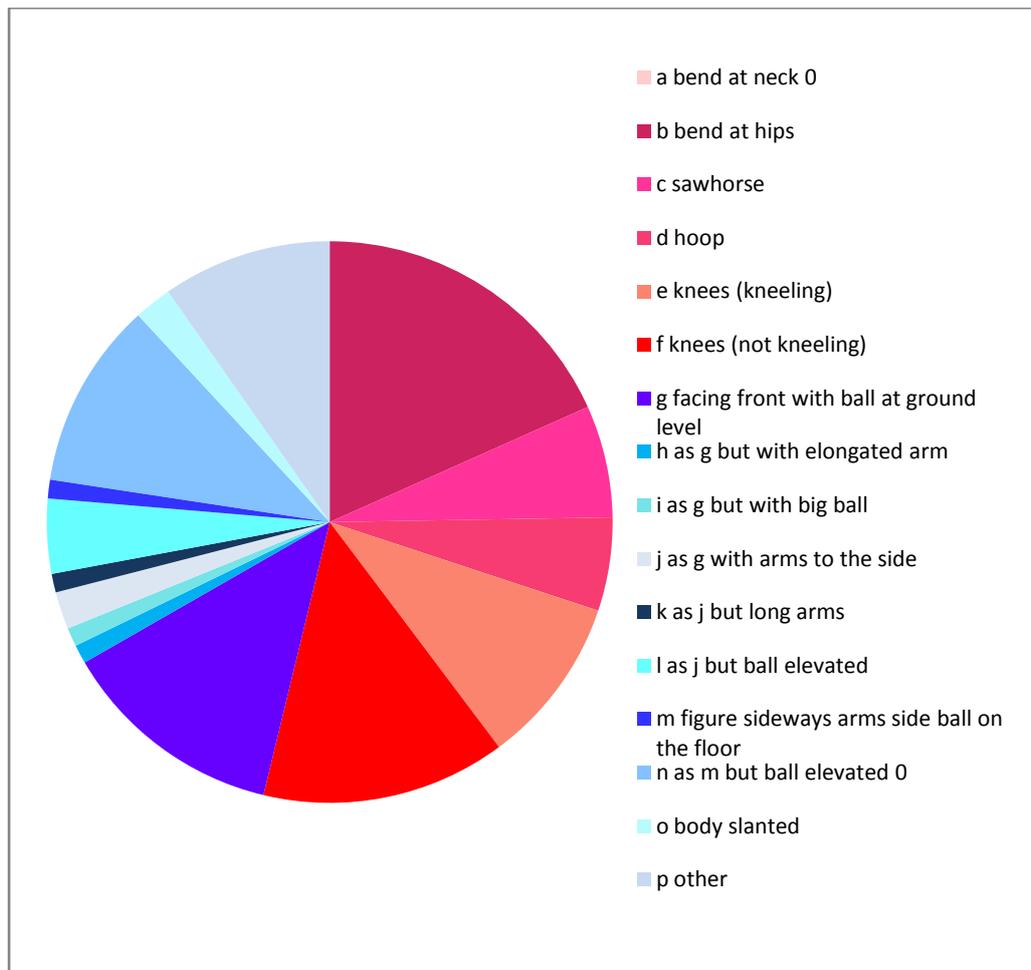


Fig 6:12 – Analysis of drawings of people bending

I analysed the drawings done by my adult participants in the same way, but I added the category 'other' – which was to accommodate the few different ways the participants had found to solve the problem – including standing their person in a hole, and the wise guy (see below). In the chart (Fig 6:12) Type A – with a bend – are red hues, and type B – without a bend – are Blue hues.

It can clearly be seen that the adult participants tended to put a bend in their person, mostly at the knees or hips. However a significant number were Type B – no bend. Of Goodnow's sub-categories, only 2 had no examples in the adult drawings.

In the discussion about this research, Goodnow says that it adds to the idea that 'new shapes are often old shapes partially modified' (ibid 640), including using a formula shape for an animal, for instance, and 'making' it different by changing the ears, for instance – long ears = rabbit, triangle ears = dog. She considers that her research adds 'support to approaches regarding representations as constructions in which parts have specifiable relationships to one another and differ in specifiable ways.' (ibid 641)

I have no quarrel with this. However I consider that the adults who drew for me have shown that Goodnow's research is not particularly age related, and we should be careful about applying any judgements about a child's development according to how they draw someone picking up a ball, and rather use it 'to enhance its value as an accessible, visible expression of thought.' (op cit)



3. Draw a person picking up a ball
Type B sub category M (although no arms are shown)



Type B sub category K



3. Draw a person picking up a ball

Type B sub category L

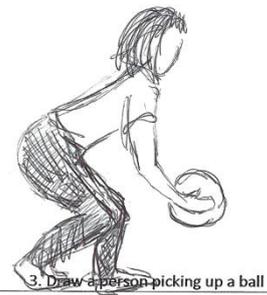


3. Draw a person picking up a ball

Type A sub category D



Type A Subcategory F



3. Draw a person picking up a ball

Type A sub category B (although knees are bent too)



Type A sub category C

Fig 6:13 Picking up a Ball drawings



Wise guy!

6. Something which doesn't exist

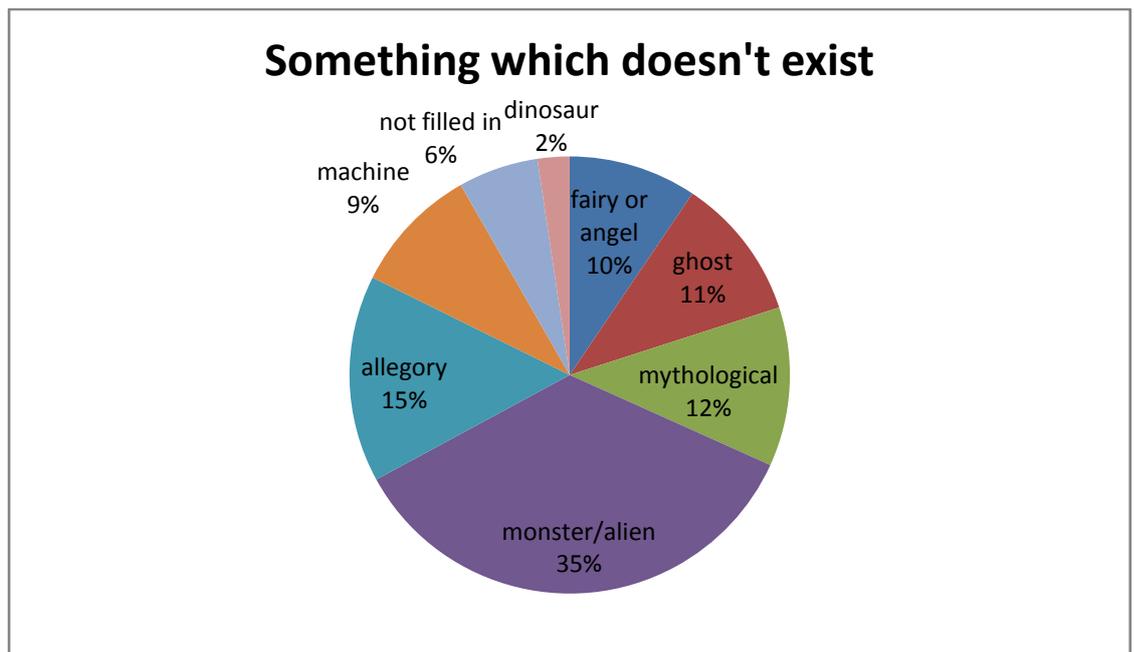


Fig 6:14 Something which doesn't exist analysis

Karmiloff-Smith (1990) and Merry and Robins (2001) asked children to draw something which 'does not exist', and I, in turn, when I went in to work with my target group of children, asked them the same question when I was getting 'base' drawings in the first and last weeks.

Karmiloff-Smith and Merry and Robins both noted that, to achieve the task, the children would have to break the habitual way they drew, and it was this habit breaking which they studied – did the children add extra things, did they leave things off? Both researchers asked the children to draw a person who could not exist, then Karmiloff Smith asked for a house which could not exist. Merry and Robins, however, considered that it would be more interesting to ask the participants to draw something which they were not in the habit of drawing, but were still familiar with – and they chose a bicycle which could not exist.

Drawing on Karmiloff-Smith and Merry and Robin, I was confident, when I went into my research setting, that the children would understand what was wanted – but they did not, and they needed much explanation before they understood – in fact, the results I got were of monsters and aliens, because these were the words we used to try to explain what we wanted. The children did not appear to understand 'does not exist'.

So the last thing I asked the adult participants to draw was ‘something which does not exist’. I was interested in whether they understood what was meant, and this was partly why I asked for them not to confer before the drawing task had been completed – but I have no knowledge of whether they did or not.

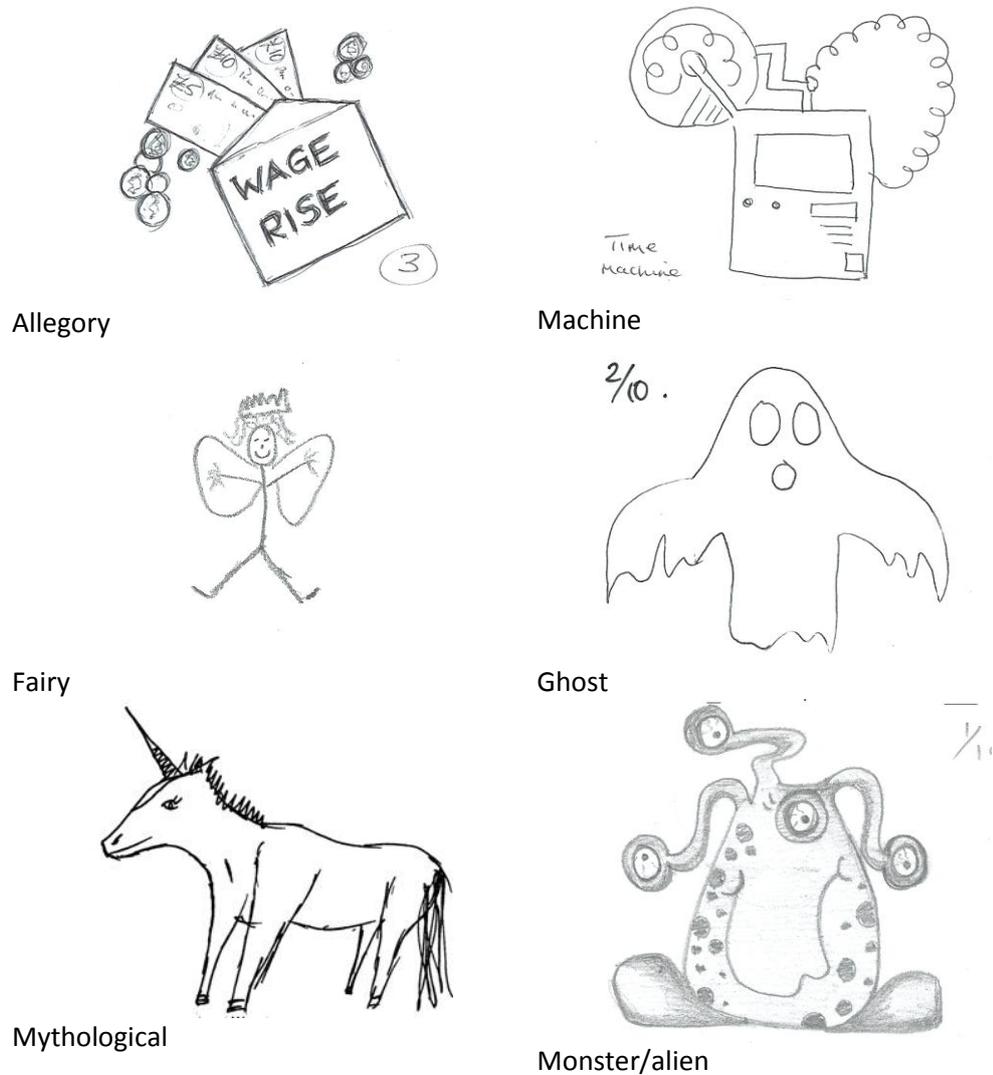


Fig 6:15 Something which doesn't exist drawings

Six per cent did not do a drawing, including one head teacher, who said to me – I didn't know what you meant.

Of the 7 people who drew a unicorn (the others in 'mythological' category were mermaid and a gryphon), there is a distinct correlation between how they drew it and their horse – i.e. horse with horn, which ties in with Karmilloff Smith and Merry and Robins' findings that children will adapt a known habit of drawing – it seems adults do too.

And this was also evident in those who drew angels or fairies where they drew 'people' in the style they had already exhibited, with wings – i.e. in the illustration above, this person had drawn a stick person for their 'person' and thus a 'stick person with wings' for their fairy.

Looking at all the drawings of things which do not exist, it is interesting to note that it is the people who appear to be more confident about drawing who have branched out, particularly in the allegory and machine categories, drawing things very different to what they drew before. It is almost that, in their confidence, they do not need to hide behind their habits.

Wilson and Wilson (1977) consider that if you draw something regularly, you develop what they call a 'programme' for drawing that thing, and the more you draw the more programmes you develop. The more programmes you have, the more you can swap about, so to speak, which means you will be able to draw more things competently.

I feel there is something to add to this – the more you draw, the more you see – your brain learns to dissect colour, shape, shadow and form. Georgia O'Keeffe²² said 'Nobody sees a flower really; it is so small. We haven't time, and to see takes time - like to have a friend takes time.' That is not to suggest that every drawing has to be a minute examination at cell-structure level. Rather it means that the more we DO do those closely observed drawings, the more we understand how things are, and, thus, can translate the knowledge to different subjects.

The corollary is that the less we draw, the less we see – the nuances of how things are. Why is it you know a cow is not a horse? Seeing is the same – it's noticing the little things, and learning ways of showing them. For most of us, if we don't draw, then we cannot draw. It's as simple as that. And when we do draw, we fall back on what we already know – the habit, the rusty programme.

Goodenough Draw a Man test

I decided to do a Goodenough draw-a-man test on the drawings of people above (Fig 6.3) - one from each category. Goodenough called her book 'Measurement of Intelligence by Drawings' and test comprises asking the person to draw 'the very best

²² Georgia O'Keefe Quote: [Http://www.Georgiakoeeffe.Net/Quotes.Jsp](http://www.Georgiakoeeffe.Net/Quotes.Jsp) Accessed 18/7/12

picture that you can' (Goodenough 1975:85), and then scoring the picture according to what features have been put in – first the big ones like legs, arms, head, but getting increasingly detailed. This includes:

16d Eye detail – Glance. Requirement: The face must be shown in profile. The eye must be either be shown in perspective, as described in the preceding paragraph, or, if the ordinary almond form is retained, the pupil must be placed toward the front of the eye rather than in the centre. The scoring should be strict. (P 108)

I made a table and scored. (see Appendix 1)

The only person with an IQ over 100 is a school caretaker, and the person with a mental age of 4.5 is a nursery school administrator. Cause for concern? No, not really. What I am suggesting in applying this test is that the test is nonsense in this circumstance, and was always suspect, perhaps. The caretaker can draw – he is one of those lucky people, who just picks up a pen and it happens. The administrator cannot draw. It probably didn't interest her as a child, and she probably hasn't drawn anything for years – in other words she hasn't practised. There's something instinctive in all the arts, and when you see someone who has got 'it' (or, dare I say, the X factor..) you just know – there's a certain panache, confidence and air of it being easy. In the 'draw a horse' test, Person 1, a dinner supervisor, drew Horse C. This horse is accurate, but it lacks the va va voom that the caretaker has in his horse.



Fig 6:16 Caretaker's Horse

Dinner Supervisor's Horse

It is interesting that both of them thought that drawing a horse was hard – the Caretaker gave it a 6/10 and the dinner Supervisor gave it 7/10.

The Goodenough Test was designed for children, to measure intelligence. In her 'summary and conclusion' Goodenough says:

9. Artistic ability is practically a negligible factor at these ages as far as influencing the score is concerned. (Goodenough 1975:82)

I would disagree. If, as often happens, a child is interested in drawing, then they will have practised drawing and thus will be more proficient. They will have developed one of Wilson & Wilson's (1977) 'programmes'. Wilson and Wilson consider that 'Some programs function easily, smoothly, and with great sureness; these are the programs that are in continual use. Other programs, out of disuse or neglect, are outdated, ill-functioning, and unsatisfactory to individuals attempting to employ them and are thus easily aborted.' (ibid 9) In other words, if you practise, no matter how old you are, your drawing will be more proficient than if you do not practice. It takes training, tuition and practice to be able to draw anything – unless you are one of the lucky ones.

Summing up:

So, are adults the 'measure of all things'? (Di Leo (1970:122) What this small survey has shown is that there is a huge variety of style and ability in drawing among these adult members of school staff. Some do have talent for drawing, and some, to be frank, are rubbish at it.

What Anning and Ring (2004:124) conclude is that 'our children deserve better than this.' They are discussing the dearth of opportunities for children to draw, for drawings sake, both in school and in the home. 'We need to recognise that multi-modality is core to their preferred ways of representing and communicating their growing understanding of the world and their roles as active members of communities,' (op cit) they say, and they conclude their book by saying 'we need a society that can listen to children and recognise that perhaps their drawings may tell us much more about childhood than we ever imagined.' (op cit)

And this means we need to stop comparing children's drawings in a judgemental way to those done by adults, because there is no comparison. As Wolf said 'drawing development must be understood not so much as a ladder of ascending stages, but as the development of a repertoire of choices.' (Wolf 1997:189) – and, for me, this can happen at any age.

In Part One of this thesis, which is asking the question 'Will the drawings done by Reception Class children ('Rising Fives') have a different quality, depth or detail after they have participated in a storytelling session compared with those drawings done without such an activity?', I have looked at the concepts of story and drawing, and the literature regarding both, and I have drawn the conclusion that firstly, there is a difference between a 'story' and a 'narrative', and that the process I use is 'story'. Secondly, that there are many different ways of drawing, and that the 'deficit' approach to drawings by children, brought about by comparing them to drawings by adults, is fraught with difficulties, since many adults cannot draw with visual accuracy, which is the usual criteria.

In Part Two, I will examine the process I used in the classroom, focussing on a small group of children, where, together, stories were devised, and then drawings were done immediately afterwards. We will look at an invisible child, a child from an ethnic minority, and we will discuss why the children forgot one of the stories.

Drawing on the Potential of 'Once Upon A Time' ...

**An examination of the effect of a live and interactive storytelling
process on subsequent drawings by children in a Reception Class**

ALEX HALLOWES

*Thesis in part fulfilment of the EdD in Early Childhood Education,
School of Education, University of Sheffield.*

September 2012

**PART TWO – CHAPTERS 7-13
APPENDICES & BIBLIOGRAPHY**



Chapter Seven

The Stories in General

In this Chapter I will analyse the story/drawing process which I have used for this research, and then I will examine those stories and subsequent drawings which are not covered in future chapters.

A note about Ethics

This research has successfully been through the University of Sheffield Ethics procedure. I have written permission from the school to use it's real name, from the teacher to use her name, and from parents/carers of the children in my focus group to take and use photographs which identify the children. In some of the photographs which follow, the children for whom I do not have permission (i.e. not in the focus group) have had their faces pixilated to avoid identification. I have changed the names of the focus group children.

The Stories, in general.

People have probably told stories to children forever. Storytelling is such a natural thing to do, and the bed-time story, something to lull you off to sleep, is an important part of the rhythm and routine of many children's lives. Hendy and Toon (2001:4) say that 'stories are the lifeblood of human existence and it is important that storytelling supports children's early lives', and they consider it vital, in an early years setting, that story time is not considered just a filler activity, 'a period of entertainment', but a real opportunity for children to hear language, with all its rhythms and cadences. Bettelheim (1976:5) tells us that 'for story to hold the child's attention, it must entertain him and arouse his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination, help to develop his intellect and clarify his emotions.'

Picture books? "No, not I," said lazy dog²³

In an early years setting, the children often have stories read to them from picture books - stories which have come from heads other than our own, as we read rather than tell. Griffiths (2006) thinks this reading rather than telling is because 'busy' practitioners do not have the time to memorise stories (p 7). This may be true, but I would say that it is more not having the confidence to tell – they already know many stories. Reading, however, has the advantage of wonderful pictures to look at in illustrated books, but the disadvantage is that we, both teller and listener, no longer make the wonderful pictures in our heads. It is an opportunity to talk about pictures,

²³ From the story of the Little Red Hen

however, and to give the children a chance to discuss them in a critical way. According to Eisner (1972) children can develop two abilities through art appreciation activities – visual awareness and the ability to explain visual forms, and looking at picture book illustrations helps with this. Certainly Hsiao’s (2010) study of early years children in Taiwan showed that, after a project about picture book appreciation, the children observed illustrations more carefully, talked more about the detail in the illustrations and the materials used to draw them, and drew more pictures themselves at home. (ibid 151)

Story Acting? – “No, not I,” said sleepy cat

Children's narratives are not naturally confined to the spoken and or written word. From early childhood on they tell stories in dramatic play, in their drawings and paintings, in movement and spontaneous song. As they move further into the adult world of signifying, spoken language does begin to take precedence, but in essence children do not naturally limit the forms that their expressions take. (Gallas 1994:xv)

Vivian Gussin Paley (for instance, 1990) realised that the stories of the children in her class were really important for ‘connecting everything that happens in this nursery school classroom.’ (1990:xi) She has, over the years, devised a way of working with the children whereby they dictate their stories to her, and, later in the day, the stories are acted out by the children. ‘Fantasy,’ she says, ‘is the first line of defence against every sort of fear, and, in fantasy play, the children discover the value of peer support.’ (ibid 162) These stories are individual to each child, with other children contributing to the acting out.

The difference between what Paley does and what I do in my story sessions is that I construct the story with all the children making a contribution to the process. It is made up on the spot and accompanied by drawing as the story unfolds. I will discuss this further in this chapter.

Draw and Tell? “No, not I,” said noisy yellow duck

Thompson (1995) has a draw-and-tell process which is different to mine. He tells an existing story, and draws as he tells, but the elements he draws finally come together into a bigger picture – sort of like Rae’s picture of Rudolph (see appendix 5) growing

in story form. I've not tried this – it looks like fun, like a guessing game – but the children can have no contribution.

In the process I use, I WANT the children to contribute to the story, which means it can go off in any direction, I WANT them to criticise the drawings (Girl: that isn't how you draw a dog. Me: ...it's the way I draw a dog, ok? You draw a better one when you draw yours...)

“Yes !” said the little red hen

So, how does it work?

The way I tell stories with the children is, in the first instance, to ask them what the story is to be about. I suppose some people might find this a frightening process, because they would have to 'think' of something, but, actually, most times, the children, if you give them the opportunity, will do the thinking for you. It does not matter if the children already know the story – it's the telling. Imagine if one only ever heard every story once and got bored. It doesn't happen. If a story is worth telling, it's worth telling again. We LIKE the familiarity, the anticipation of a scary bit, the resolution at the end when we all live happily ever after. Bettelheim (1976:154) says 'listening to a fairy story and taking in the images it presents may be compared to a scattering of seeds, only some of which will be implanted in the mind of the child.' Hearing a story again enables us to hear bits we may have missed before – enables more 'seeds' to implant.

On the other hand Kornberger (2008:151) says 'the storyteller's daring in exploring the continents of unknown tales gives their child listeners the bravery to face the world. For storytelling takes courage to reach out to the new, the immediate and utterly present. Uncertainty is always creative.' My motive for telling a story is to get the imaginations of the children to work – and this is why, usually, I make it up on the spot with those children who are there.

Over the course of several weeks, I went into the school to tell stories, and this chapter is a look at them, especially those which are not discussed in depth elsewhere.

Any Ulterior motives?

I had several things I wanted to examine, during the story sessions, just to see what happened. For instance, in light of Goodnow's (1978) research, I wanted to see if the

children would draw someone bending over more competently after a story session as opposed to 'cold' – out of context.

The stories

Three of the stories have been dealt with in individual chapters:

Chapter Eight – Mr David and his VERY big nose – 12th May – the dangerous story

Chapter Nine – Miss Hebden's Birthday - 9th June – Jenny case study.

Chapter Ten – The story of Captain Bead – 26th May - The forgotten story²⁴

The other stories are covered in this chapter.

16th June – The Very Bumpy Road (and the difficulty of changing hats)

This story is an example of the difficulty for staff to change the way they work with the children, to accept their ideas, rather than rejecting them until they come up with the 'right' answer – i.e. the answer the member of staff has in her head.

This week I was unable to go in to school due to a prior engagement, but Jo had said that she would do a story session as normal, to keep the momentum going.

She chose to tell a story which was originally devised by me with her reception year class a few years earlier – i.e. the one about the bumpy road. It is a silly story, and, in telling it, Jo had no need to think about the story structure, because she was not 'inventing' the story, but telling it. Nonetheless it is full of opportunities for mime and things to go wrong, and chances within the structure for the children to make contributions which add to the 'meat' but do not change the 'bones'. What is interesting, watching the video 'cold' so to speak, is to see Jo, the storyteller, be subjugated by Jo, the teacher. Jo has an idea in her head – Mrs Williams should pack the birthday things into a rucksack to keep them safe. And whereas Jo has incorporated ideas from the children earlier, she suddenly 'blocks' their ideas, because she wants them to say 'rucksack', her idea. It makes no difference to the story structure, but there is suddenly an element of testing, and you can see the change in the children – they quieten, and there are less suggestions. I can sympathise – sometimes when you are making up a story you have it all mapped out, but then someone offers a suggestion which doesn't suit your map, and you have to tear it up and follow the new territory, as Alford Korzybski (Sikes 2001) would say.

²⁴ See also Appendix 3 for Story Grammar analysis of this story.

But this letting go, saying yes, has to be conscious in your mind, otherwise you do end up ‘testing’ the children until they come up with the ‘right’ suggestion – i.e. the one YOU have thought of – which is what Jo did.

23rd June – Five Eyes

I want to concentrate on Isaac for this story. Isaac is boy with huge eyes and a sombre expression. Seeing his smile is a great delight. Usually he is quiet, and monosyllabic, with little eye contact.

The drawings he did for me at the start of the project, were a surprise. They are confident, but a bit bizarre – except for the dog. He could not draw a dog, and it worried him – he started to get really agitated, muttering ‘I can’t do it...’



Fig 7:1 5th May Isaac’s person 12 May Isaac draws Mr David 19 July Isaac’s person

Fig 7:1 shows Isaac’s drawings of a person on the first and last weeks of my project, plus his drawing after the Mr David story on 12th May. The first is disturbing to me, showing a zigzag mouth, spiky hair and eight armed figure – one of the pair of arms is a wavy line, which shows that Isaac is capable of different lines, not just zigzags. The 19th July drawing is calmer, but there is the spider which appears in many of Isaac’s drawings. When asked why he draws it, he says it’s because his father does not like spiders. In his drawing of Mr David, he has not given Mr David a nose – and the story was all about Mr David’s big nose, and also, he has not put the glasses on Mr David’s face, although they are there at the top of the page. There is half a spider.

The story of Five Eyes begins much as usual – I have brought in new whiteboard pens, with new choice of colours, so when someone says the story is going to be about a monster, it seems logical for the monster to have five eyes, each a different colour. Isaac, who is sitting right at my feet, chooses the first colour, and, when I add a yellow beard, he says – ‘that’s how I saw him.’ This is unusual for Isaac – usually he

doesn't say anything, although he is engaged. His observation sheet this week is full of the little comments he makes during the story telling. At one stage Isaac comments 'I saw the monster' and I say 'Did you? I think this must be your story, Isaac, because you already know it!' The story is simple – monster frightens people because, as it turns out, he is lonely. When he frightens people, he jumps out of his cave in front of them, sticks out his tongue and goes 'BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH!!!!' Billy, our hero, defeats the monster, by making a toffee apple. He goes to Five Eyes' cave, and, sure enough, Five Eyes jumps out (BLEUGH BLEUGH ETC) Isaac says, very excited 'stick your tongue back in – I says to him stick your tongue back in!'. I call attention to this. I say to the group 'Isaac says Billy shouts "stick your tongue back in – you're very rude!" and guess what Five Eyes does?' There is a pause while the children think – then, as one, with me included, we all go 'BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH BLEUGH!!!!' and the children laugh. Billy keeps his cool, and while Five Eyes is doing this he THRUSTS the toffee apple in Five Eyes' mouth where it sticks, of course, and that's when we find out that he is lonely. So Billy promises to be his friend, and that's the end of the story.



Fig 7:2 Isaac shows us how Billy defeats Five Eyes with a toffee Apple

Usually I let the children stretch and have a little chat before we move on to getting ready for drawing. This week, Isaac jumps up, stands confidently in front of the board, and tells me all sorts of things about the story. When he has finished, I speak to the class, and drawing gets organised.

Isaac seems distracted – but it is not surprising – there is a huge amount of hub-bub, and children are walking over each other as those who want to draw on the carpet

get settled, and those who want to come and speak to me step over them. Eventually Isaac, with his paper and pencil, makes his way back to the board. He stands for some time, tracing my pictures with his finger, talking to himself. You can see, on the video, that I am trying to hear him and watch him, but other children are speaking to me and I cannot concentrate on him.



Fig 7:3 Isaac drawing after story

Eventually he sits on the carpet – frustrated by the melee, unable to focus. He draws a few lines. Jo, who is observing him today, says that he starts to get frustrated with himself – groaning ‘this is getting stupid’ and his drawing shows that he has had a go at drawing Five Eyes and he has scribbled over it. Looking under the scribble, I think he has given up on the face-front version which I drew initially.

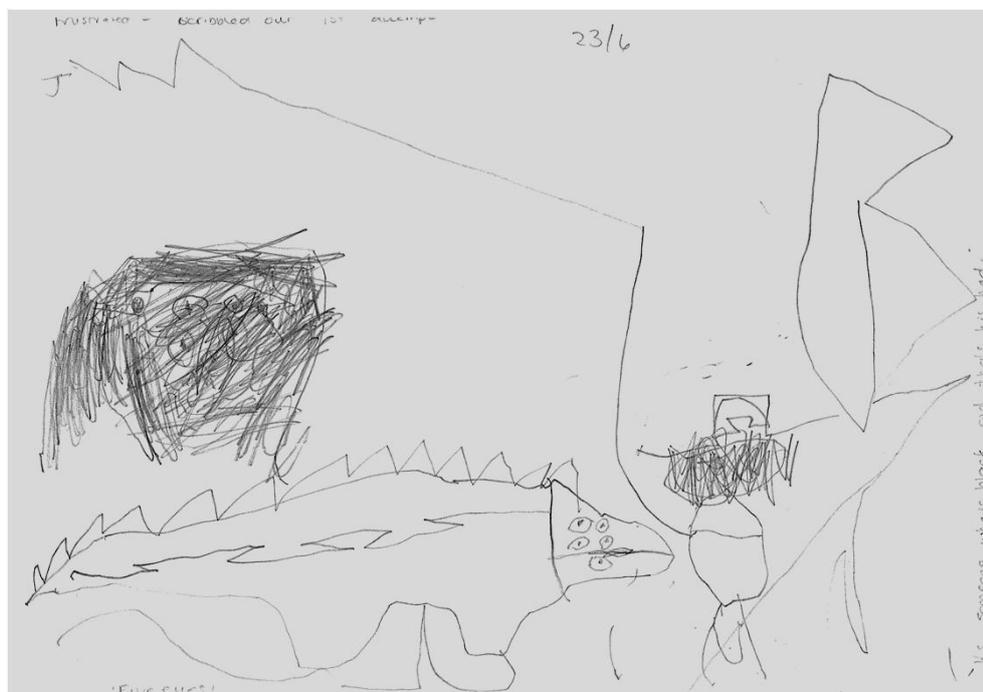
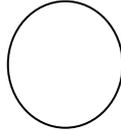


Fig 7:4 Isaac's drawing after 5 Eyes story

Eventually the class settles – everyone is where they want to be, and the noise dies down. Isaac is in a small group, sprawled on the carpet with Jo, the teacher. He

draws for about 15 minutes in all. And describing the picture he has drawn of the man, Billy, Isaac says 'It's someone who is black – and that's his hat.'

Someone who is black? Well, yes, I suppose so. The 'ulterior motive' in my head for this story was to draw someone bending down, which I did. But 'someone black' was not on my mind. When Billy, the man, first came into being, for no reason at all I chose a black marker, and, again, for no reason, I filled his head in, rather than leaving it an empty circle. So

This  as opposed to this. 

I could just as easily have chosen a green or blue marker – it just happened to be black – and Isaac identified with it. Winkler (2009) tells us that research has shown that very young children have an awareness of race. She cites Katz and Kofkin's 1997 study which showed that babies of 6 months stared significantly longer at an unfamiliar face of someone from a different race than they did at an unfamiliar face of the same race as them. Shutts et al (2011) research in South Africa, surprisingly, showed that children of all colours 'preferred' a white face as opposed to a mixed race, Khosa or black face. They conclude that this is due to perceived social status. We accept that children are constantly constructing their world according to what is going on around them, but why does this include early construction of racial bias? According to Winkler (2009) there are two reasons. First, because of their age, their 'immature cognitive structures', (ibid) children have difficulty categorising people in multiple dimensions – they tend to lump people together – 'when they see people who are alike in one dimension (e.g., skin colour), they presume they are alike in other dimensions as well (e.g., abilities or intelligence)' (ibid). Secondly, the environment around a child teaches that child about social categories. Winkler says 'They are likely to notice that the people in their families or neighbourhoods are all different heights and have different hairstyles, but perhaps almost all have the same skin colour. Therefore, children may assume that they should avoid or dislike people with different skin colours than their own, even if no adult ever says this to them.' Whether the above opinion is true or not, what is true is that in Hull there is a very small black population, and Isaac will have seen that he is among the minority of people who have black skin. Isaac is not the only black child in the class (from memory I think there were 5 children in a cohort of 70), but he is definitely in a

minority. The fact that he saw Billy as a black person, touched something in him. He is used to being the odd one out, used to having things for the majority, in spite of the school actively promoting inclusion. But today, the story, he felt, was for him. And it showed in his behaviour. He was so motivated during the telling that you can see, watching the video, staff looking at each other significantly as Isaac makes comments – usually he is straight faced and silent. And I think the quality of the drawing (Fig 7:4) that he did is different to those he had done previously. Although Billy has long wavy arms, he is the ‘right’ size, rather than being over-sized, which is Isaac’s normal way of drawing people.



Fig 7:5 Final drawing after 5 Eyes story by Alex

And Isaac has not copied my drawing, which is what he has done on previous occasions. Instead he has concentrated on the two main characters facing up to each other, with Billy about to vanquish the foe.

A final word about this story session – it was not only Isaac who was affected by Billy being black – one other boy, who had never come up to me before, came and spoke at length about his drawing. He was also black.

So I suppose what I learned about this session, is that we need to ensure two things: first that we do not inadvertently give prejudicial messages to children. I remember once getting a very funny look from a play-worker, when she described a colour as ‘skin-colour’ and I said, quite testily, ‘whose skin?’ Ouseley and Lane (2008), commenting in *The Guardian* about reactions to their book on racism in young children say ‘Research over the past 50 years shows that children recognise differences, including skin-colour differences, by the age of three, long before they go to school.’ Young children are astute, and form opinions from what they see and hear. Further, ‘there is evidence that these early attitudes may not be entirely racial or ethnic in nature. Rather, these attitudes may, in part, reflect intrinsic attitudes toward light and dark colours.’ (Quintana 1998:34) – so we need to be careful about black things being bad or evil and white ones the opposite; and second, the minority, whoever they are, need to have things for them too, to make them feel special and included – a token black doll is not enough. It had not occurred to me before this story session that having a black character would be so significant to this minority group of children, and yet I am always conscious of making characters in stories equally male and female. Shame on me. I, of all people with my background, ought to have known better.

29th June - Tiny Ted & Angelina

On reading a mediocre story the other day, where the plot was thin and inconsistent, a question was sparked in me about magic in stories. Magic is fine, magical, even, but it still has to abide by rules – there still has to be physics involved, although the physics might be fiction, it is still logical and consistent fiction.

No matter how outlandish, fictional physics, or magic have to be believable, consistent, and bound by (albeit possibly future) rules of science.

In the *Tiny Ted and Angelina* story there is magic. Firstly, *Tiny Ted* can fly, and the children are entranced by this. Oh – I forgot to tell you that *Tiny Ted* is a real little bear. It doesn’t matter to them that they can see me holding him and whizzing him around – suspension of belief prevails, and they accept that he flies. Golomb (2011:169) says ‘the child’s conception of magic implies an imagination that is open

to possibilities, and his magical thinking, as yet unlike that of an adult, may evolve with time and development into complex constructions that are culturally sanctioned.’ In the story Tiny Ted goes to the shops to buy things for his breakfast, but when he comes out and tries to fly (123 *Jump* in the air), he finds that he cannot. And usually, with no prompting, someone will call out ‘he’s too heavy!’ The children have applied their knowledge of physics, and come to the conclusion that his shopping has caused gravity to beat magic. Even when Tiny Ted’s friend Angelina comes to help, the two of them cannot lift the shopping, and Angelina has to apply her ‘special’ magic, when the lights flash, and only then can they fly, back to Tiny Ted’s house for a slap up breakfast.



Fig 7:6 Final drawing of Tiny Ted story by Alex

This story is one which I have told before. I told it as part of this work because I wanted to see how the children would react in their drawings to a ‘real’ bear, as opposed to one I drew. In the past, when I have told the story, the children have found all sorts of ingenious ways to show Tiny Ted and Angelina’s special magic. I also wanted to show that the children were using their imaginations when they drew, as opposed to simply copying what was on the board.

It can be seen above in Fig 7:6, in the bed and the table, that there are spaces where the real little figures are put during the story.



Fig 7:7 Tommy's drawing after Tiny Ted story

Tommy has not drawn Tiny Ted, but he has remembered many of the things Tiny Ted bought for his breakfast, and has put them into a big bag, ready for taking home. This was not drawn by me – my drawing, which has been rubbed off, was first of a small, flaccid bag (empty), then a round shape (full bag) to which I held Tiny Ted as if he was carrying it.



Fig 7:8 Jonathan's drawing after Tiny Ted story

Jonathan, on the other hand, has drawn several features which were on the board at the end, including Tiny Ted in his bed, and he has also added Angelina, with a fab wand – I think the circular marks on her dress are the lights flashing, and the conveyor belt at the supermarket. Also he has added, according to his observer, a ‘big man’. I’m not sure why, because there was no big man in my story – perhaps there was in Jonathan’s?

My ‘ulterior motive’ in this story was to show that the children do not simply copy my drawing but use their recollection of the story to make their drawing. Clearly both Tommy and Jonathan have understood the story, remembered it and embellished it.

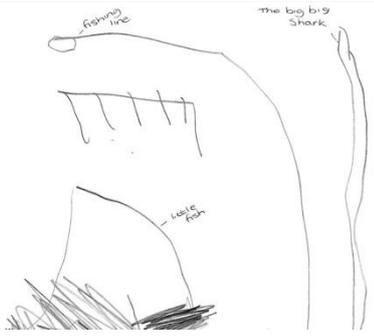
12th July – The Man who went fishing

The children had been on a visit to The Deep, Hull’s submariu²⁵ and I spent the first half hour in class helping to put a net up on the ceiling, and attaching all sorts of sea creatures which the children had made.



Fig 7:9 Final drawing after the fishing story by Alex

²⁵ it's not an aquarium, apparently... and they get jolly cross if you call it so

<p>Madison</p>	<p>The fisherman appears to have caught a man – and there is a big shark in the water too</p>	
<p>Jenny</p>	<p>A little fish You can see how Jenny has had a go at drawing the pier, plus there is a big shark in there too</p>	
<p><i>Fig 7:10 What the children drew after fishing story</i></p>		

Tommy was away this week, so we do not have a drawing from him.

From the point of view of my ulterior motive – the children deciding what the fisherman pulled up - it was successful. Each of them has made a decision, and drawn it in. Harika has really benefited from her visit to The Deep, and, as a child with EAL, she has, through her drawing, been able to show her knowledge of what she learned and saw on the visit in a way unlikely, for her, through talking.

So finally?

The stories told during the project will never get into any compendium of great stories. Bits were absurd, but I agree with Rodari (1996:28) that 'it is important not to limit the possibilities of the absurd... such possibilities are not detrimental to their education in science.' Bits were funny, and the children enjoyed laughing. Bits were a bit close to being unacceptable – when Mr David decides to cut off his nose (see Chapter 8) – but it makes the stories real, because the children know that their ideas will be used. Each in its way did the job. The children responded as I would expect, and they took me by surprise. The process of having a story to which they can contribute and then having time to do a drawing afterwards, helps the group to listen and share, allows the children to make connections, solve dilemmas, exhibit knowledge, and use their imaginations. Storytelling is important without the drawing element afterwards, but WITH the drawing it takes on another dimension. Golomb (2011:172) says 'In drawing and painting the child's action creates a tangible

product that captures a moment in time, and continues to exist even after the action is completed.’ This capturing of an idea, developing the pictures you have both made in your own head and seen being made, live, by someone else, this is what makes a story/drawing session light up a child’s mind. Zipes (1995:225) says it is difficult to really know what impact a story has on a child, and it is imperative, therefore, that a story has truth. Our stories had ‘truth’ because they came from the children, were a reflection of their lives and experience, and, mostly, imagination.

In this chapter I have elaborated on the method I use in a story/drawing session, and I have analysed several of the stories. I have pointed out the difficulty for staff to take off their teacher hat and accept the ideas of the children. I have discovered the importance of being aware of the needs of the children who are in a minority, and I have shown that, in their drawings after a story session, the children use their knowledge and imaginations and do not simply copy what is on the board.

In the next chapter I will analyse one specific story – the first story, and discover that danger in a story is necessary and acceptable.

Big Man

Chapter Eight

The First Story – the story of Mr David

It's ridiculous!

I'm so nervous.

*I can feel my guts churning – I keep thinking ‘what the hell is wrong
with me?’*

Then I remember – tomorrow it starts...

*Like – the end is nigh... (to be said in a high quavering voice with
pointing bony finger...)*

HA! That's what I say. I need to get a grip and stop over reacting.

*I think it's because suddenly ‘it's research’ rather than just ‘I'm going
in tomorrow to tell stories’.*

I am prepared – as much as I can be, I think.

I've checked the technology works – the video camera works.

I've charged the batteries, got charger etc.

*I'm not going to use the voice recorder this session because I think
the video will be enough, with the camera for stills.*

*I will need to get there early to think about the best place for the video
so that it can't be knocked and is unobtrusive.*

*So, actually, Alex, get a grip. You're ready. You're prepared, and you
know what you're doing.*

What could possibly go wrong?

In this chapter, after an analysis of the story, and the subsequent drawings, I will examine the necessity of not being frightened by taboo or dangerous topics in a storytelling session.

The story of Mr David - 12 May 2011

I arrive about 9.30. The children have seen me once before, when I came in last week to talk to the focus group about the project and to get first drawings. Most of the staff know me too, from when I worked with them a few years ago. Although this is the new school²⁶, it's familiar in a funny way, and I just muck in. Staff ignore me, and soon I have a small group of children around me, showing me things. Children always like me. I don't understand it....

After about half an hour, Jo calls for order, and the great tidy begins. I use the time to set up the video camera. At last the two classes have separated, with the other group going next door, and the children are sat, a bit wriggly, on the carpet. Jo introduces me, and explains that we are going to have a story. I come to the front, take a deep breath, and sit down.

I start by asking the children what they think the story might be about. As it is the first session and they are not used offering original ideas, they suggest stories they already know - 3 little pigs, Billy goats Gruff. I say it's a new story from our heads, and offer to give them a clue.

I draw a circle, which elicits some suggestions. I draw another circle – in my head I have a bicycle – but someone says 'it's glasses' – and so it is.

And who do they belong to? ~ 'Mr David'.

(... and who is Mr David? The child who suggested the name isn't called David, and staff don't know if he has a David in his life... it's not a familiar name. Did I mishear? Possibly. But the child (a boy) accepted my version (Mr David) of what he said.)

Now Mr David had a very big nose. And do you think he was happy or sad about his nose?

You're right – he was quite sad about it – he didn't like it at all.

So what do you think he did?

'He cut it off'

Is that what you think? – that he cut it off?

²⁶ The old Victorian school was pulled down in 2010 – the new school is smaller in every respect – windows, number and size of classrooms, halls, ceilings – and, already, there are portacabins in the playground because of lack of space.

(Oh my god – how do I deal with this!! Oh well, onward and upward, Alex, have faith in the process...)

Well, you're right (Looks of astonishment on faces of staff and children alike) – that's what he did – he cut it off!

One day Mr David said – I hate my nose! I wish it was smaller. I'm going to cut it off! So he went into the kitchen, and he got the biggest, sharpest knife he could find.... He was very, very silly doing this, *(Alex trying to reinforce her trepidation at the turn the story has taken!)* and he took the end of his nose and he started to cut (many children, including Tommy, who drew vampires and ghouls and dripping blood last week, hold their noses and I make extravagant sound effects)



Fig 8:1 Tommy during the nose cutting scene

Well – Mr David hadn't cut very far when his nose started to bleed, and it was very, very sore, and he started to cry, and he said – I'm not going to cut off my nose because it's too sore! And he went and got a bright blue plaster and he stuck it over the cut he had made, and he went downstairs and made himself a boiled egg and soldiers, and he thought – what am I going to do about my ? Nose!
'Get a new one!'

Get a new one, eh? Well, you're absolutely right. He got his computer, and he went on the internet and *(at this point, on the video you can hear someone say 'he went on ebay' – oh, how I wish I had heard that! The possibilities for the auction!)* he found a company called 'The New Nose company', and he ordered himself a new, smaller nose.

His new, green, nose arrived, and he put it on, on top of his old nose, and he went out all swanky, to go to the shops and show it off. But, disaster! The people started to laugh at him even more, because now he had TWO noses – so poor Mr David got a taxi (suggested by a child) and slunk back to his house in shame.

Now the story has to change towards a conclusion. Mr David is skulking in his house behind closed windows, and he hears someone screaming ‘I’ve lost my baby! I’ve lost my baby!’ So Mr David goes out and says ‘please don’t be frightened, but you may have noticed I have a very large nose and noses are good for ‘smelling!’ and I may be able to smell your baby for you. So the mother gives him something of the baby’s to smell, and he SSSNNNIIFFFFSS – and sure enough, he smells where the baby is, and from that time on, of course, he is accepted into his local community and sniffs out all sorts of lost things.

The end

The Drawings:

It can be seen from the final drawing left on the board (Fig 8:2) that many of the features in the story have been rubbed off – this is deliberate, and part of the process. I want to show several things:

- that the children are not simply copying my drawings,
- they are remembering parts of the story which have been rubbed off,
- they are thinking about the elements of the story – by adding things which I didn’t draw
- they are adding 2 and 2 to make sense for themselves in their drawing.

So you can see that the knife has been removed, as has the egg and soldiers, and the new noses are separate from the computer and keyboard. The initial picture of Mr David has remained, and, at the end of the story, his mouth has been changed into a smiley mouth with teeth – the children wanted the teeth. Observing the video, it is interesting to note that very few of the children (none of the sample group) look at the board while drawing.



Fig 8:2 Mr David story –12 May 2011 – final image on the whiteboard by Alex

So, looking at the children's drawings:

Isaac: has drawn a very distinctive Mr David (Fig 8:3), with smiley mouth, but the glasses have been drawn separately. He has given Mr David a body and limbs, which I didn't do, but Mr David has no nose at all. In addition he has drawn things which look like spiders. Isaac's observer says that he showed great interest in the story, and drew for a long time, although initially he was unsure what to draw. His pencil strokes are confident and dark.



Fig 8:3 Isaac's Mr David drawing

Isaac is usually a very expressionless child, and it is inspiring to see him laughing during the telling.



Fig 8:4 Here we see Jonathan (left) and Isaac (right) during the telling

Jonathan: Jonathan is a quietly confident child, the youngest in the class, who drew Mr David, wearing his false noses with an arm holding a knife. The pram is also there, and an unidentifiable shape.



Fig 8:5 Jonathan's drawing after Mr David Story

Harika: Harika's first language is Turkish, and staff comment that usually she has trouble sitting still. However during the story she sat with concentration, joining in and laughing. Her drawing is confident, although she has used the paper in landscape and only filled the top third of the sheet. Her drawings are copies of what is on the board - she has Mr David, the stairs and the 3 noses and Mr David's house and Mr David in bed with just his nose showing. But then she has put the noses onto the computer screen, which I didn't do, so although most of her drawing is a copy from the board, she has made a connection between the noses and them being on a web page for Mr David to see and buy.



Fig 8:6 Harika has put the noses onto the computer screen

Jenny:

Jenny is considered to be one of the less able children in the class. Certainly when she was asked, last week, to draw things, she showed no effort or thought, and made very quick marks. Photos of the session, and comments by the observer, show Jenny superficially engaged in the first instance – ‘she showed me her painted nails’.



Fig 8:7 Jenny ‘fiddling’ with her painted nails

Her observation reports that she made little contribution to the story, but that she was commenting as things occurred – i.e. ‘I have boiled eggs’ when Mr David gets himself some.

She was reluctant to start drawing – although this was the first week, and so, perhaps, she did not understand what was required. She showed increased interest in her drawing as her observer showed interest in it, and, actually, it is very detailed and far more defined than her drawings last week. She has attempted the stairs (top right) and has made 2 good drawings of Mr David in bed – and she has put his head

at the opposite end to me. She has drawn his noses, one on top of the other. She has drawn the knife cutting off the nose (without Mr David's face).

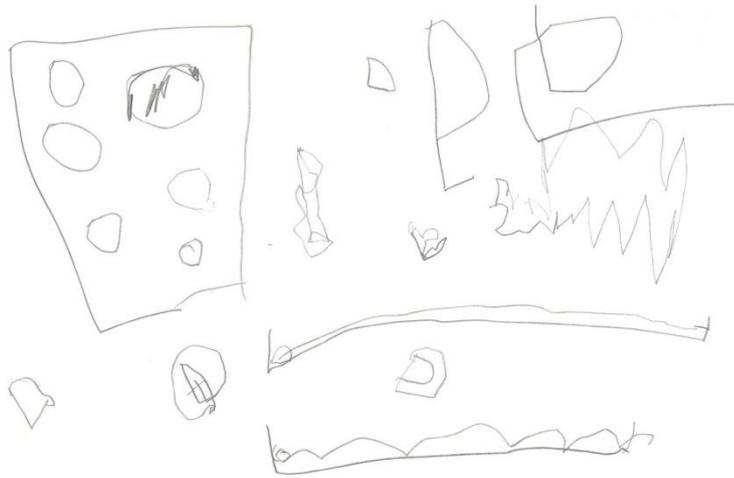


Fig 8:8 Jenny's drawing after the Mr David story

She has drawn something which could be Mr David's house. Her observer says Jenny remarked 'that's the bell, and that's the door.' – if it is the house it bears no resemblance to the house she drew last week.

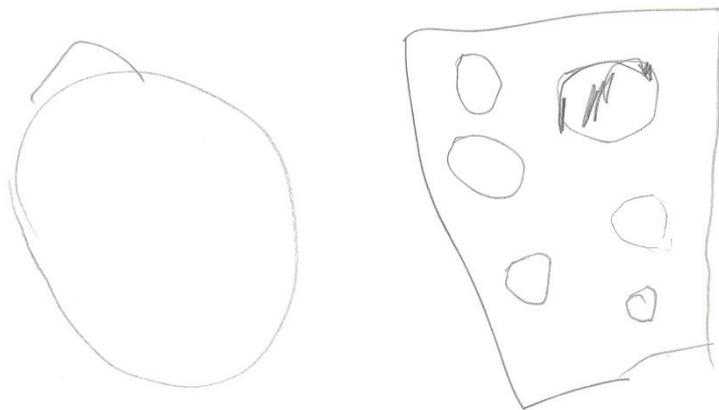


Fig 8:9 Jenny's first house (5 May 2011) and Mr David's house (12 May 2011)

Madison:

According to staff Madison finds it difficult to sit still and is a 'wiggly' child, and they remark on how she sat and focussed on the story for 'an uncharacteristically long time.' She drew 3 pages of confident pictures, although they are difficult to identify, and I have to rely on the comments of the observer as to what things are. She has drawn things which I did not draw, specifically the people laughing at Mr David when

he was wearing 2 noses – which staff pointed out to me when showing me her pictures.



Fig 8:10 Madison draws People laughing at Mr David

Tommy:

Tommy's 'control' drawings are very violent. He drew the head of a wolf instead of a person, and his 'thing which doesn't exist' was a vampire, dripping blood. Tommy's house is very small, and not really definable as a house, whereas his dog is very big, with vicious teeth.

During the story Tommy was very engaged, and watched intently. He made several contributions to the proceedings, including the suggestion that Mr David should get a new nose, and he conversed during the story with the child next to him, remarking that he had a small nose – on the video we can see a short discussion is held when relative nose sizes are compared. Tommy grabs his nose when Mr David starts to cut into his nose with the knife – I make gruesome cutting noises and most of the children laugh, but Tommy puts his hands over his nose protectively, and at one stage, for a short moment he hides his eyes with his hands and rocks (oh dear!). He also calls out that it's blood when the 'drip drip drip' occurs, and when I say that 'it

was very, very sore' Tommy rubs his nose, perhaps to reassure himself that it isn't his nose?

He continues to be very engaged in the story, holding up three fingers after I do, and laughing in a guilty fashion when I'm 'crying' (in a funny fashion).

Tommy sat down to draw straight away. He sat with his back to the board, and he drew on and off for over 10 minutes. His individual images are smaller than last week, and many of them are well defined. He has drawn the knife, which is no surprise, but it is quite small, and, although it is unidentifiable he tells his observer that he is drawing the pram. The woman who has lost her baby is clear (especially when you see my drawing) and so is the computer.



Fig 8:11 Tommy's drawing of the Mr David story

A reflection on the 'dangerous' story

I feel happy as I leave that this has been a good first session. The children got into the idea that they could suggest things very quickly, and the whole class drew relevant pictures.

After the story I was swamped by children wanting to show me their pictures and talk about them, including Tommy, who, although his drawings last week were full of blood and violence, this week his knife was restrained, with no dripping blood, and he draws other things too. Rodari (1996:76) talks about the need for stories to be real, and to address 'taboo' subjects. In this story, Mr David did something which everyone in the room KNEW was taboo – he fooled around with a knife. Jo, the teacher, was fine about it. She said that the idea had come from a child, and needed

to be dealt with rather than ignored. Too often we do this – ‘we don’t talk about guns/shit/sex/smoking’ in nursery’ we say – but just because WE don’t talk about them, does not mean that THE CHILDREN don’t. They do. They are infinitely curious. And in my mind, it is better to address taboo subjects honestly, and give information openly, rather than let the children find out through misinformation. Why not do a project about lung cancer, when you have seen children play-smoking? Give them an option to say no. We all shit, why not talk about it? A nursery school which I am involved with has recently completely changed the way they deal with children playing with guns. In the past the school had a blanket policy of ‘we don’t play with guns here’, but, like the research of Penny Holland (2003) and Jane Katch (2001) they found that it did not stop the gun play, rather it drove the play underground, and the children became sneaky about pretending that they were NOT playing a gun game. Once the staff recognised this, and did something about it, which included listening closely to the play, they found that there was a wealth of language, compassion and caring and story development in the play. Holland concludes her book by asking the question: if we use the power we have over children in such an authoritative manner, by simply banning activity, are we in danger that ‘we run the risk of teaching children to resist us?’ (ibid 100) as opposed to showing the children that negotiation is always an option. Rodari (1996) considers that, if we talk about taboo subjects, if we talk in a safe environment, perhaps laugh about them, ‘it is not indecent, but emancipatory.’ (ibid) I agree. In this story the bluff was called, so to speak. And the children learned that the process was genuine – it is your story, for you to make as you will.

And they did.

In this chapter I have analysed the drawings done after the first story session, finding that the children did not simply copy my drawing. The importance of having someone observing the children became apparent, as they saw and heard things not apparent on the video. The issue of dealing with taboo subjects was examined, with the conclusion that it is important to deal with such subjects in a real manner.

In the next chapter, I will uncloak the invisible child, and suggest strategies for helping her maintain her visibility.



Chapter Nine

The story of Jenny – the invisible child

Fig 9:1 self portrait by Jenny

In this chapter, a case study approach is given to Jenny, an 'invisible' child, where, with close observation of her interaction during the story session, we find, unexpectedly, that she is very involved with the process.

It's the 10th of June – a hot and sticky day, but I'm too motivated to worry about that. I've just been looking at the video of the story session we had yesterday, and I'm really excited by what I've noticed about Jenny – and I want to share it.

So I phone Jo, the teacher.

'I'm really interested in Jenny this week – she seems to be very different to previous sessions. Can I come in and show you?'

'Wow,' says Jo. 'That's intriguing. I've got my PPA²⁷ time this afternoon – can you come in then?'

'Jo, you are a star – I'll see you about one.'

The staffroom is largely empty when we go in – one other person is doing her paperwork.

'Will it disturb you if we run a video?' I ask, but she shakes her head and smiles. Jo and I sit together on the hard arm chairs, and I start to boot up my laptop.

'So what's going on?' Jo asks.

'Well,' I say, hesitantly, 'you know how Jenny has been so far?'

'Yeah', says Jo. 'Sitting at the back playing with her nail varnish. I just don't understand her. She seems so vacant, so uninterested. She's one of those children whom you can miss, if you're not careful. She's never there, never volunteers anything, keeps out of our way. It's like she's invisible. Sometimes I'm quite worried about her.'

'Well, there has been quite a lot written about what they call "Invisible children". One article I've seen²⁸ speaks about how the average children just seem to not hit staff radar.'

'What does average mean?'

²⁷ Planning, Preparation and Assessment – statutory time given to teachers each week

²⁸ Waterhouse S, (1995)

'It's a child who doesn't stand out in a busy classroom. It's not necessarily talking about ability. Can I get the internet up here?'

'Yes,' says Jo. 'What are you going to do?' I'm logging into Mozilla as she speaks.

'Let's just look up "Invisible children in the classroom",' I say, and I type the phrase into the toolbar. Google jumps to attention, and I open an article called R.H.I.N.Os.²⁹

'Here you go,' I say. 'Look. This was written a few years ago, but it's all about the children who just seem to slip through the net – Really Here In Name Only – that's clever.' Jo is reading. She pushes my hand from the mouse and scrolls down.

'That's Jenny!' she says. "Even though this is talking about secondary pupils, the behaviour is the same – someone who is quiet, not disruptive, asks no questions, and does the minimum amount of work.'

'Yes,' I say, 'and when you have a child like Micky in the class, even though, through his statement, he has one to one support, he still takes up your time and attention.' Jo is frowning.

'I'm going to print that off,' she says. 'What else is there?'

'Well, there's something here, written in 1988³⁰,' I say, opening up the link. 'It's about invisible children, and how very often they are girls. It's about younger children, too.'

'Print it off,' says Jo, decisively.

'Yes, look what they say – nothing has changed, eh?' I read from the article. "'To a considerable extent the teacher's task in infant and nursery settings is one of organisation and management, in which a degree of order and coherence has to be established and maintained, with respect to a large number of competing interests and wishes. The highly visible child presents particular difficulties for the teacher in this situation.'" Look, they categorise the visible children in three ways...'

'Let me guess,' says Jo. 'One is special needs, right?'

'Yes, except they call it "disturbed". The other two are "immature" and "lively".'

²⁹ Oakley J (1999?)

³⁰ Morgan V & Dunn S, (1988)

'Lively? What's that a euphemism for?'

'Well, unlike the other two, it's positive. It's one of those bright, enthusiastic, intelligent children, who always wants to help, always has her hand up.'

'Yes, that's interesting, isn't it? How they can take attention just by being wonderful.'

'Ah, but read this – there's a gender difference, according to Morgan and Dunn, in how the teacher responds to this liveliness.' Again, I quote from the article.

'''In general terms, lively children are approved of and, significantly, there were considerably more boys than girls in this category. In discussions with teachers the liveliness, noise and 'shouted-out' comments are often described as signs of interest and of academic potential. But they are also, at times, seen as in some way 'boyish', or even 'tom-boyish'. It is behaviour to be curbed occasionally, but never to be wholly suppressed. But it is not really all that acceptable from girls. The language used to describe it also differentiates between the sexes. For a girl it is often described as 'showing off', while for a boy it is 'a bit cheeky, but a sign of interest.'''

'Blimey,' says Jo, and I smile.

'But look at how they categorise the invisible children,' I say. 'Want to guess?'

Jo thinks for a moment. 'I'd be surprised if one wasn't "shy",' she says. She drums her fingers. 'And "worried" – that could be one too.'

'Well done,' I say. 'Shy and anxious are two of them. The third is what they call "marginal survivor"' - I scan the text- 'it's those children', and I read, '''who find the early stages of learning difficult. They use their invisibility as a way of avoiding trouble and of not becoming exposed. The important thing is not to attract attention, even if—perhaps especially if—they are having difficulty with school work. For them the learning process is a dangerous, mysterious and fraught business. Clearly this behaviour carries with it the danger that lack of understanding or of progress is not noticed.''' Blimey, that seems to be Jenny down to a Tee.'

'Blimey,' Jo agrees. We sit in silence for a moment.

'Yet, she's not unwilling,' says Jo. 'It's just like she wants to get away from adults.'

"Yes,' I say. 'Remember when I came in in the first week and we asked her to do those drawings. She did them so quickly, with no effort – almost not looking at the paper, and then looking at me kind of..... defiantly. It was odd.'

'She always does that. If you ask her to do anything, she does it super speedy, or not at all.'

Yes,' I say. 'Well, looking at yesterday's video, I'm actually quite excited by what she does.'

'Really?' says Jo, with a slight frown. 'But she didn't do anything.'

'Ah, that's the thing. She didn't offer any suggestions, for instance. But it's what you've just said. She's invisible. You can miss what she does because it's so small. But let's have a look – you'll see.' I press the button to start the video, and immediately there is a babble of sound, and on the screen we can see children milling about in front of the white board. A voice says "onto the carpet, everyone, it's time for story"

'Look.' I say, needlessly. Jenny has entered the frame. She sits right at the front.

'That's the first thing. See. She's the first one to come onto the carpet and look where she's placed herself.'

'I hadn't made the connection between Jenny and where she's chosen to sit. Previous weeks she's been at the back or to the side, right?'

'Yes. I am so interested that she has very deliberately chosen to sit right in the front. It's like she really wants to be in on the action, rather than her usual place off to the side. She's not short sighted or hard of hearing, is she?'

'Not that we know of,' says Jo, with a frown. We continue to watch, as the children settle onto the carpet.

Jenny tells the student teacher, who is waiting to draw, to remove a piece of paper from the board, to give more room for drawings – "Good idea, Jenny" says the student, and she removes the paper. Jo shakes her head.

'That's showing unusual initiative,' she says. Jenny then sits quietly while the class get themselves prepared. Alex comes to the front and sits down. "Is it about Mr David?" asks a boy. Alex looks at him and shrugs extravagantly. With no prompting, silence falls.

'So,' says Alex, 'what do you think?' 'Mr David!' say a couple of voices. 'Mr Fox Man' says Tommy, in a confident voice. 'Mr Fox Man,' repeats Alex.

'I can remember thinking that it would be good for Tommy to have his idea used', I say, 'but I suspected Mr Fox Man is an existing character, so I hesitated.'

There are other suggestions, and someone says 'Miss Hebden' – and I make my decision. I know it is her birthday today, and I know that the children also know, so it's a relevant subject for the story.

During this thirty second interval Jenny is sitting still, looking round a bit, but not contributing ideas. When Alex says 'once upon a time there was a lady called Miss Hebden' there is a little frissance among the children, a few gasps, some giggling and pointing, but Jenny doesn't respond. Student Teacher starts to draw. Alex repeats: '*Once upon a time there was a lady called?*' 'MISS HEBDEN!', shout the children, '*and one day,*' continues Alex, '*she went into school*' - 'it's her birthday', says a voice from the crowd 'and she said to everybody "*It's my birthday!*"' – the children shout 'yay!' and there is some clapping. Jenny hasn't responded. The camera doesn't show her face, but it is clear that she is concentrating on the board, where pictures are appearing. Her head and body are still.

The story continues – *no-one believes Miss Hebden when she says it's her birthday, and she is a bit sad. Suddenly there is a knock at the door* – I pause the tape.

'In story structure terms, I know at this point it's time for something to happen. The scene is set, the problem identified. Now it's time to move on – and there's nothing like a knock at the door to focus attention. I think it's partly the shock of the physical noise of knocking, but also it's anticipation – who is it going to be? The possibilities are endless.' Jo nods agreement.

Alex describes the person in some detail – with her long witchy hat, and long witchy nose, and long. Witchy. Finger. Nails. On. All. Her. fingers. Student Teacher is drawing the witch. She is right handed, and drawing on the extreme right of the board, so her hand is obscuring the marks. Jenny leans forward to peer under the hand to see the picture.

The witch, with her wiggly wiggly fingers, speaks in a strange, tight, Lady Bracknell kind of voice – and Jenny seems transfixed by this – the video clearly shows her watching Alex closely. The witch has a message for Miss Hebden - she has to go to Tescos at lunch time – and she disappears. The disappearing is done by Alex wiping off the picture with one gesture – many of the children react with a sort of upward body movement – some gasp – but there is no discernable reaction by Jenny.

ANYWAY, dinner time comes and Miss Hebden gets in her car and goes to Tescos. She is uncertain what to do, so she collects a trolley, and wanders around the shop, ending up at the cake counter. Just as she is about to lift the biggest, most chocolatiest cake into the trolley ‘POUF!’ and the witch appears (Alex’s arms are bent at the elbow and, with the sound – POUF! - they make an upward movement) The witch says she has another message, which is to go to ‘Asda’ someone shouts - ‘to go to Asda’ Alex agrees.

When she gets to Asda, everything which happened in Tesco is repeated, and when Alex’s arms go to ‘pouf’ position, many of the children do the action and make the sound effect with her – but not Jenny. Of course, since everything always happens in threes, there is another message, this time to go to’Morrisons’ shouts Tommy, and he turns in delight to smile at his companion when the idea is accepted.

‘I’m glad he got his idea in,’ says Jo. ‘It meant so much to him.’

Miss Hebden is thoroughly irritated by now, so everything is repeated through gritted teeth – including Miss Hebden driving fast with extravagant wheelie sounds. When it gets to the part when the witch

has appeared previously, Alex pauses and the children insert 'the witch' with the 'pouf' movement – but no witch appears. Miss Hebden moves on, Alex pauses, 'the witch!', but no witch appears. So she moves on again and suddenly 'THE WITCH!' – yes, the witch appears.

"I'm sorry I'm a bit late," says the witch, "but you were driving so fast! But I do have another message..." There are angry 'grrrs' from some children, in frustration, and Harika makes two fists which she pulls towards herself with a 'grrr' – Alex mimics this, and so does Tommy. Tommy must make a link with boxing (i.e. hands held in fists in front of him), and he tells Alex that 'she says she wants a fight with her', but Alex says no, she doesn't want a fight, she's just cross and hungry – her tummy is making strange noises – 'like that crocodile' someone chips in' yes, like that crocodile' Alex agrees. (Crocodile in question refers to story of 2 weeks ago when Poorie the Croc had tummy ache and was saved by the hospital trampoline)

Miss Hebden says 'well, what's the message?' in a long suffering voice. The witch says 'well, there's no point in you putting that cake in your trolley, because you haven't got any money to pay for it' and Miss Hebden realises she hasn't got her handbag with her, so it's true, she doesn't have any money – oh no, she starts to cry. 'Get a card thing and get some money' Tommy exclaims, but Alex shakes her head. 'The card is in her bag, and she hasn't got her bag with her, so she can't do that – what a shame, it was a good idea.'

Miss Hebden says to the witch, wearily – 'what's the last message?', and the witch says ' well, you had better get back to school, because dinner time is nearly over, and you don't want to keep the children waiting.'

So Miss Hebden puts the cake back, and she goes out to her car, and she starts driving back to school – she's crying all the way. One child makes screeching tyre noises, like when she was driving last time, but Alex says ' no, she isn't driving like that anymore, cos she's sad, she's like dribbly driving'. Alex mimes driving and crying, and all the children laugh and look at the real Miss Hebden who is smiling widely.

And she gets back to school, and it's all very strange – there's no-one around. There's no-one in reception, no children in the playground. (At this point you can see the children starting to wonder what's going on. There's ALWAYS someone in Reception) But Jenny is losing concentration – she suddenly sits up straight and puts her hands behind her neck to stretch.

Miss Hebden decides to go and look in the hall – she opens the door and it's all dark and she thinks 'I wonder where everyone is?' 'And do you know what happened?' asks Alex and Tommy makes a 'pouf' noise and says 'it's the witch!' – and oh, how I wish I had said yes – he has made a perfect circle of the story by including that final element.

'I know *why* I didn't make the connection,' I say slowly. 'It was because I was trying to meld the magic of the witch, with the reality of the circumstance – i.e. this school, which doesn't have a witch – I guess the witch could have been Miss Wilson in disguise?... but I didn't think of that at the time... it's very unsatisfactory. I should have trusted the idea.'

So I don't make the connection - I say no, and I make a feeble ending of everyone shouting 'surprise!' (and there is a sense of disappointment in the room, I think), *and it's a surprise birthday party for Miss Hebden.* We finish by singing Happy Birthday to Miss Hebden, and everyone claps ... well, not everyone, Jenny doesn't...

The children start to move about a bit – stretching and talking to neighbours. Jenny is still – it almost seems like she is in a dwall³¹, and it takes some shaking off. I ask the children if they can do me a drawing, please, and they get up and go off camera to get their paper for drawing, Jenny among them.

Some return, with paper and something to rest on, and they lie on their tummies in front of the board, get themselves comfy, and start to

³¹ I've always thought of this as being a Carnegie word – i.e. one from my family. My father's two sisters, apparently, made up a language when they were children, and several words have filtered through the decades which I consider to be perfectly normal but they aren't! It turns out, however, that it has Scandinavian roots and is a sort of trance brought about by laudanum. The way I use it is less sinister.

draw. I love this time. They are gently chatting to each other, to themselves, getting on the task.

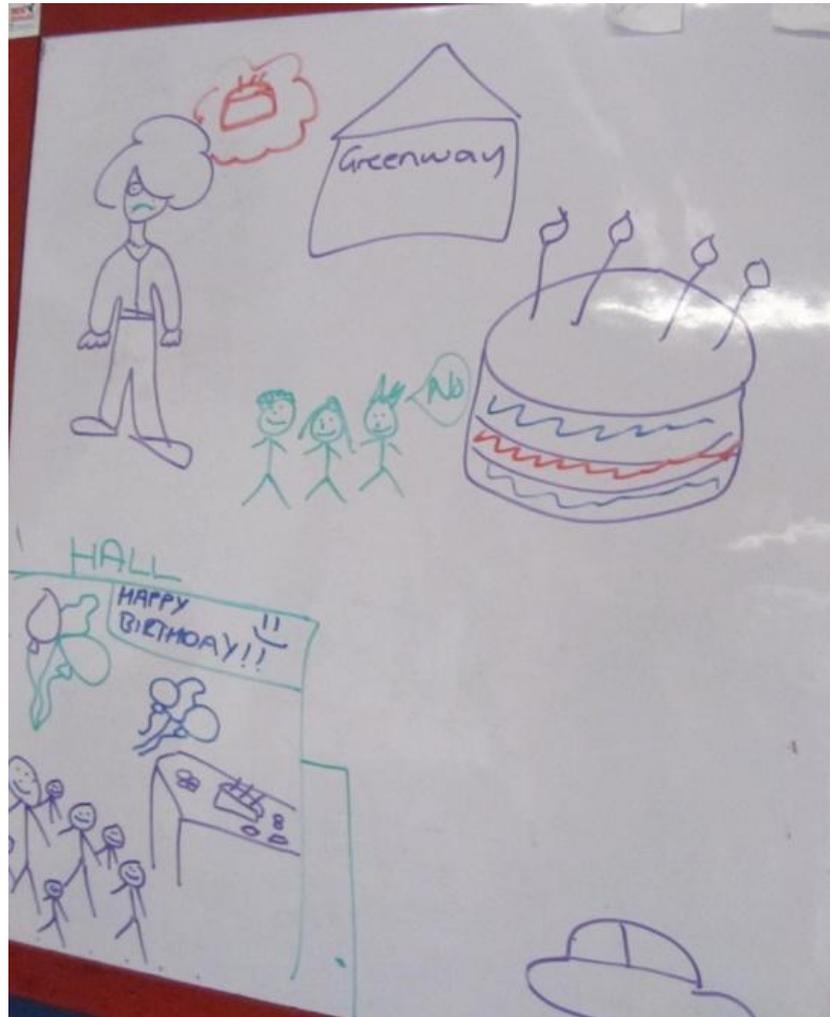


Fig 9:2 Final drawing Miss Hebden's birthday story by PGCE Student

'I timed this,' I say. 'Guess how long she is off screen.' We watch the children milling about, getting ready to draw.

'Where is she?' asks Jo, impatiently. Still we wait. 'What IS she doing?' says Jo.

'I suspect she's being invisible,' I say. 'Just waiting, at the back of the line probably.'

'Well, it's a waste of time,' says Jo, angrily. 'We need to change the way we organise that handing out of paper and pencils.' I say nothing. It's an irritation to me, because every second the children are not drawing, potentially their ideas are leaking out of their minds, and I'm pleased Jo has seen the time waste – it's difficult when you are in the middle of it.

'It is 2 minutes 37 seconds before Jenny comes back into view -'

'Is that all?' Jo interjects. 'It seemed much longer.' Jenny makes straight for the teacher's chair, where she sits, and adjusts her piece of paper, ready for drawing. She is worried by the fact that someone has written something on the file she is using to lean on – she tries to tell a member of staff, but they don't hear her. She looks around at the other children. She decides to turn the file over. She starts to draw.



Fig 9:3 Jenny starts to draw

Now, look carefully at this, Jo,' I say. 'See how she starts with a big circle, and lines come out of it.' She draws a shape inside the circle. She looks up and catches Mrs M's eye. They smile at each other. She's engaged, and wanting affirmation. 'I like that smile without words.' Jenny pokes the paper with the back of her pencil, then adds more lines round the circle.

'Now this bit's weird. Look, she draws 2 more smaller circles, then it's odd – it's almost as though she can see us today, in the future, looking at her. She glances at the camera, sits back in the chair and pulls her legs up. Now we can't see what she's doing any more. This next bit is about 2 minutes 30 seconds after she started drawing.' She gets off the chair and comes over to where I'm sitting. 'Tell me about your drawing,' I say, and Jenny immediately starts pointing with her pencil and talking about the different things she has

drawn. I ask 'are those her wiggly wiggly fingers?' and Jenny smiles and nods. We continue to look at her drawing. Jenny says she is going to draw something else. I say 'go on then' and she returns to her chair. She draws for a short time, finishes, gets up and tries to come back to see me, but I'm talking to someone else, so she veers off. Mrs M, who is observing her this session, calls her over, and Jenny tells her about the drawing.

'It's so ANNOYING – I don't notice this exchange happening RIGHT in front of the camera, and I turned the camera off before it is over. I'm so irritated with myself,' I say.

'Yes, that's a shame,' says Jo.

'I know why I did it – the session has gone on for 25 minutes, and I am aware that the procedures in the classroom are interrupted by me being in – no matter how much you say you don't mind the interruption to your day. The staff are very supportive, you especially, and interested in your different ways, but it does mean the children being 'late' for snack, and staff not getting their breaks etc.'

'Yes,' says Jo. 'It's a line though, isn't it, between something really interesting happening which we know will benefit the children, and maintaining the regularity of the class which they understand, and some of them rely on.'

'I'm amazed at how long she drew for, and how she wanted to talk to someone about her work,' says Jo.

'That's why I was wanting to show you this,' I say. 'It shows that, if you can observe closely, and specifically, you can see things which usually you don't – make the invisible visible – like we are now, by being able to stop and start the film and chat about it. You can't do that in the classroom. In Reggio, you know, they use video a lot. When we were there in 2005 we were impressed at how they did it. Most of the British contingent said they didn't have the time, but in Reggio they have *made* time, because they know how important it is. As Helen Bilton³² says – observation should be at the heart of the work. And Carlina Rinaldi³³ talks about documentation being a way of listening to, respecting and supporting the children's work. The advantage,

³² Bilton H, (2010),

³³ Rinaldi C, (1998),

also, I think, of the video, is that once the children get used to it, and once you have got it in a good position to document what you want...'

'How do you mean?' asks Jo.

'Well, in one setting I was in, someone put the camera in a cupboard, so that we could see the children drawing, which was fine until someone else came along and closed the cupboard! Once you've got that cracked, THEN you can think about the time needed to watch the footage. And also, there is that thing in observation of where you physically observe from to get uninhibited play. I once did a very interesting CPD session with a group of early years staff where I set up an observation exercise. The staff were put into groups of 3 or 4, and 2 people were 'the children' while the others observed. I provided all sorts of materials for 'the children' to play with, and I gave specific instructions as to whether they were or were not allowed to speak to each other. I also gave 'the staff' instructions as to whether they were or were not allowed to talk to 'the children' and where they could observe from – close or far. In the debrief it was interesting how many of the 'children' said they felt really put out by irrelevant questions by 'the staff', and how they wanted to hide what they were doing from 'the staff'. Everyone said they would go back into their setting with new thoughts about how the children felt about being observed.'

'Hmmm, that's really interesting,' Jo says.

'Have you got the picture Jenny did?' I hand it over. 'This picture is fantastic,' says Jo. 'Even though the quality of drawing isn't great, poor even, you can see that she has understood the story, and incorporated lots of the details from the story.'

'Yes, but only because she spoke to someone about it and they annotated the marks. Otherwise we wouldn't be certain what the marks mean.'

'What were the comments from Mrs M?' Jo asks.

'She doesn't report anything much. She just says what we already know.'

'Which means if we are going to observe, we have to do it properly and systematically, so that we don't miss things or assume things.'

'Yes, did you notice during the story that most of the staff were watching the board rather than their child!' Jo shakes her head.

'I think that observation, and documentation, are not easy, if you are doing them to observe learning, as opposed to doing them for assessment. The sort of thinking and concentration that's needed is tiring, plus, in most classrooms, who's got the spare staff for them to spend time observing just one child, no matter what else is going on.

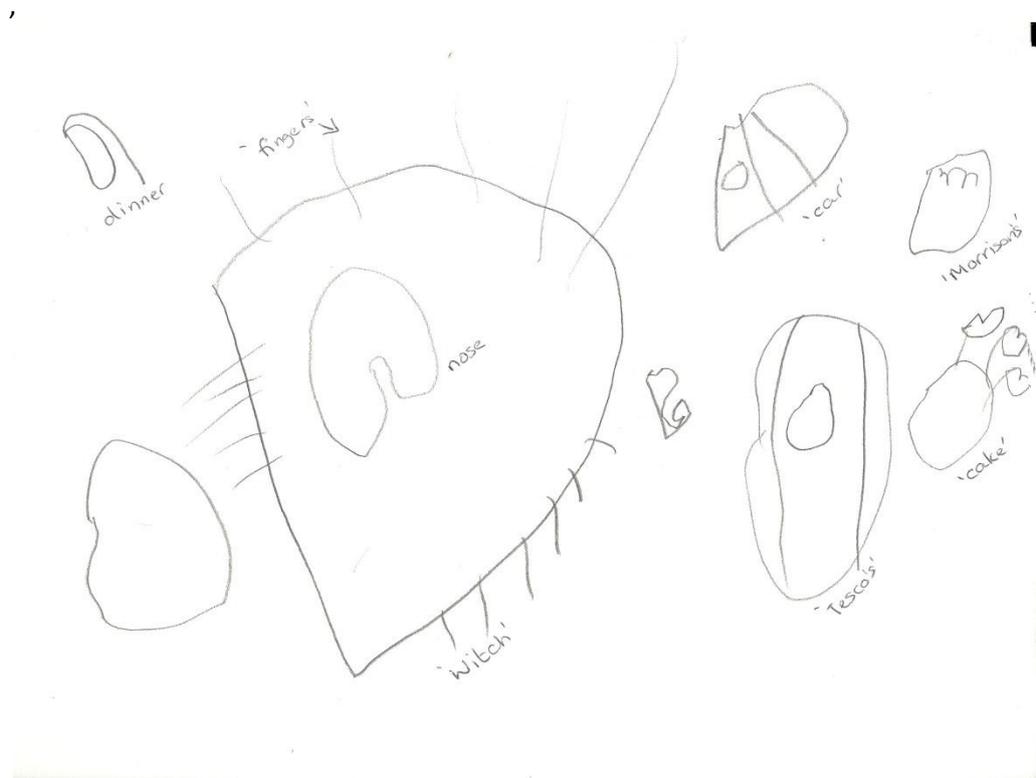


Fig 9:4 Jenny's drawing after Miss Hebden's birthday story

'What's interesting,' I continue, 'in that article about the average child being invisible³⁴, is that the way they did the research was what they call naturalistic – in other words, initially the researchers just let the teachers talk in an unstructured way. And the teachers *didn't* talk about the average children, and when they were asked, they said that they knew very little about them.'

Jo says 'We consider Jenny to be of low ability, because the work she does do is just that. But, yes, from the point of view of actually knowing much about her as a person, we don't know much – her likes, dislikes. That thing about 'children's voice' – I can see that we have never listened to Jenny.'

³⁴ Waterhouse S, (1995)

'So we could say, using the articles we've read, that she is an average child, who is a marginal survivor.'

'Yes, but having realised it, we can put strategies in place to help her. Like that TES³⁵ article suggests - she needs support in understanding personalised targets, set by me, and she needs opportunities to work in partnership with other pupils, so that she cannot disappear. And, where appropriate, I should give her targeted help in small groups, perhaps of other invisible children.' Jo smiles. 'Thanks for coming in today - it's been really useful.'

Addendum:

Jo is as good as her word. Over the next few weeks Jenny continues to sit herself right at the front during story/drawing sessions, and the notes which observing staff take are far more comprehensive and useful. Jo has made the handing out of paper and pencils more streamlined so that the waiting time is minimal. Jenny's drawings show increasing confidence and complexity, including, below, an amazing bicycle..

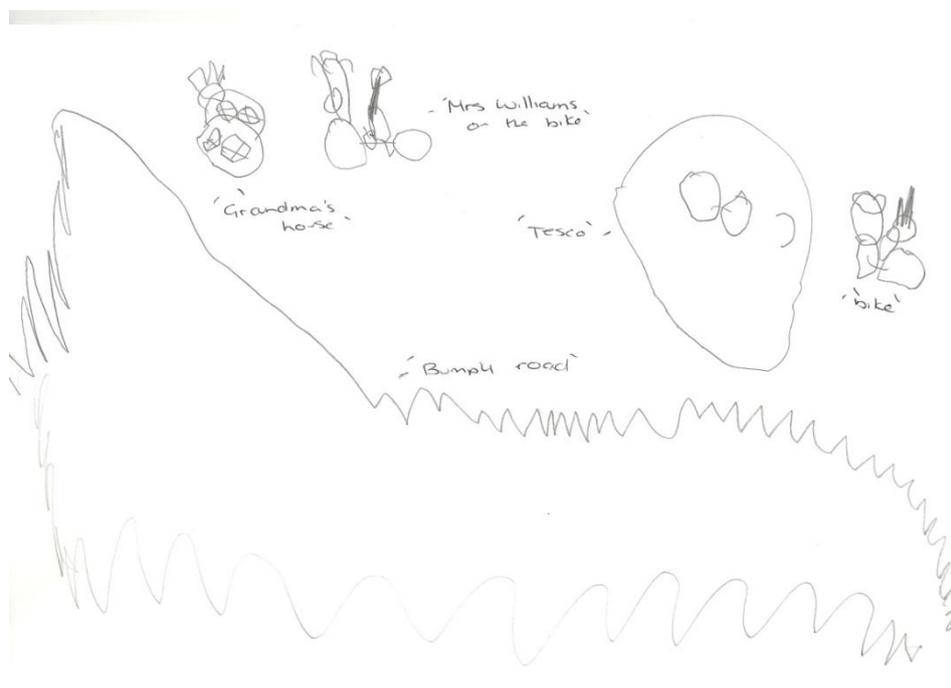


Fig 9:5 Jenny drawing after Bumpy Road story

³⁵ Times Educational Supplement (TES), (2007)

We have great pleasure, during the Tiny Ted story, in accepting an idea from Jenny as to what he should put in his basket – the first time she has ever volunteered information, according to Jo.

And, nearly a year later, Jenny, now in Year 1, is happy to tell me what happened in some of the stories of the year before (see page 210). However, although Jenny contributed quite a few ideas, what is of note, is that she contributed them ‘once removed’ so to speak. In other words, let’s say we were talking about the Mr David story, and several children had contributed to the memory, we then moved on to the next story they could remember. Then Jenny put up her hand ‘yes, Jenny?’ – ‘he got one off the internet’, she said. In other words, she is still talking about Mr David, even though WE are talking about Five Eyes the monster. Then, when we move on from Five Eyes to Poorie the Croc, she says ‘he frightened the people’ – i.e. Five Eyes did. So I’m wondering whether, in Jenny’s case, she is not so much a low achiever, as a slow thinker? And this might not be picked up. In a normal, busy classroom with 30 children, someone who finds it difficult to think quickly can develop strategies to keep out of sight, but when cornered, will appear low ability because they are not given time to develop ideas. Jenny gained confidence during our story sessions to put her hand up with an idea, and she had lots of ideas in this remembering-story session, and is happy to express them, albeit once removed. Her ideas are not verbatim copies of what other people have said, although sometimes they are the same.

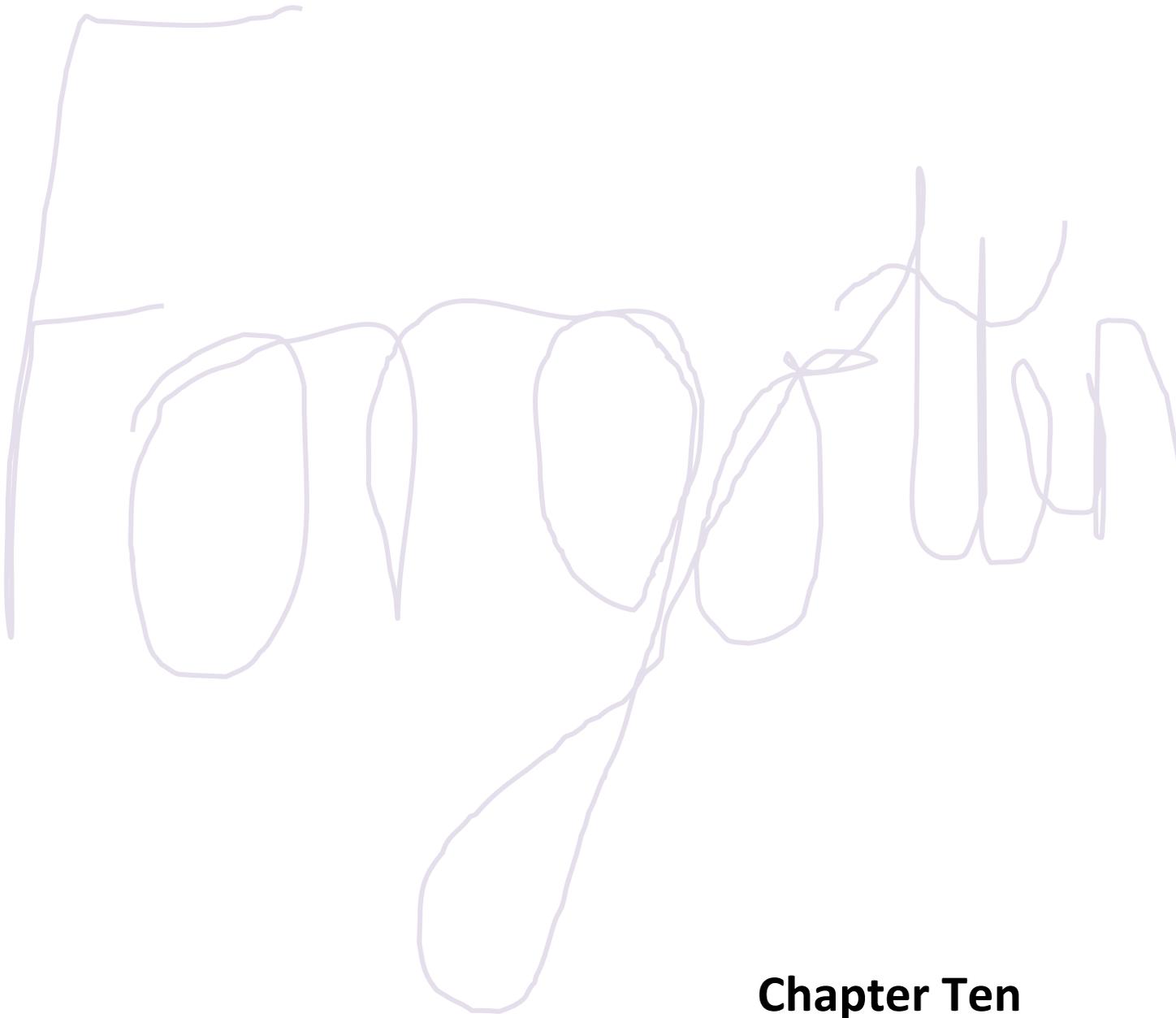
Is Jenny still invisible? I don’t know.

I do believe that the story/drawing we did together touched something inside her, which made her want to respond, and be a part of the process.

It could be that it was personal to her, contextual and temporal for her. Kornberger (2008:223) says ‘story-making is an alchemical art practised in the laboratory of the soul. The tale transforms both hero and story-maker in the telling of it. It is a process of purification in which the base metal of the intellect is turned into the gold of the imagination.’ His words are a little ‘new-age’ for me. I prefer to think of a story as being a spanner – a golden one if it makes you feel better, but a spanner nonetheless – one which opens the tap of imagination. Jenny’s tap, perhaps, was just a bit furred up through lack of use. Will it fur up again? I hope not.

In this chapter I have identified the importance of observation for learning. Although it is understood that this difficult in a busy classroom, it is suggested that a story/drawing session gives an opportunity for it to happen. In this session we clearly saw that Jenny was involved, focussed and motivated, which, had we not observed in this way, would have been missed – Jenny would have remained an invisible child.

In the next chapter, I will examine three drawings by two children, to see if the drawing which they did after the story which was forgotten, is different to other drawings they did after story session, and, if so, could the explanation be that the forgotten story did not, in story grammar terms, make sense.



Chapter Ten

The story the Children forgot – Captain Bead

In this chapter, after a brief exploration of memory, I will compare three drawings by two children to ascertain if the drawing they did after an unsatisfactory story (see Appendix 3) has a different quality to the other two.

Remembering the Stories

I have noticed, in the past, that the children remember the stories we have made up together for a long time after the event. I believe this is because the stories are *their* stories - in their time, their place, with their contributions, and embedded, perhaps, by drawing them afterwards. Rodari (1996:83) says, of stories made up by children, that:

...the story is made up of diverse parts: the words – their sounds, their meanings, their unexpected relation; the personal memories; the surfacing of the unconscious; the pressures of the censor. Everything is combined in a process that has provided the child with intense satisfaction. The imagination was the instrument, but the entire personality of the child was involved in the creative act.

Although Rodari is talking about individual stories, I feel that the story creation process which we go through applies as well – the children give ideas and accept the ideas of others. They have learned through the process that all ideas will be considered (i.e. Mr David cutting off his nose) without censorship – and, having proved this in the Mr David story, the children therefore self-censor. Using the basic Leuven scale of involvement³⁶, looking at the videos of the story sessions, most children are Level 4 or 5 – they are highly involved with the process (Laevers & Heylen 2003) with high or very high well-being. They are enjoying the process, and thus, to my mind, are likely to remember it.

Much has been written about how we remember, what we remember and why we remember, and the more you read, the more you come to recognise that you cannot take your memory as an accurate representation of your life. Memories are tricksters and shape shifters (Sparkes 2012:184), and Susan Engel (1999a:vii), for instance, talks about the time she was in conversation with her sister, recounting

³⁶ See appendix 4

something – her sister looked at her sideways and said ‘but you weren’t there! That’s the story I told you about what happened.’ I was, just the other day, working with two Year Six girls, who were arguing about whether Bethany had been in nursery with them – yes she was/no she was not – so the fidelity of memory is not age related, it would seem. I’m talking about long term, declarative, memory, of course. Non-declarative, or implicit memory, cannot be accessed consciously, nonetheless research has shown it is apparent virtually from birth (Bauer & Pathman 2008). Piaget considered that very young children don’t remember – they don’t have the capacity, their brains being ‘a mysterious abyss for the psychologist’ (Piaget, 1927, cited in Courage & Howe 2004), and he influenced the thinking of researchers for some years. As Malloch & Trevarthen (2009) say ‘Until the late 1960’s, mainstream medical and psychological science were not inclined to credit infants with complex skills or creative mental abilities, and certainly not with any active sympathy for other persons’ thoughts or feelings.’ Recent researchers have shown that Piaget was mistaken in his assumptions, and they have shown that even very young children DO remember – even if they don’t yet have words. Simmering (2012) has researched Visual Working Memory in children as young as 6 months, showing that the children can remember changes in arrays of cards, and Ornstein, Gordon and Larus (1992), interested in the premise that young children cannot remember events, did a study with children aged 3 and 6 where they questioned them about a visit to the doctor. Both sets of children had accurate recounts of the event, although the older children tended to remember in more detail and for longer – 2-3 weeks. Both groups resisted attempts to make them remember inaccurately. Bauer (1997), considers that the memory of events in children is influenced by two main factors, namely: the repeated experience of an event, and how well the mental representation of the event is organized.

Haven (2007:121) cites a small study conducted by Janner (unpublished dissertation 1994). Janner, apparently, went into four fourth grade classrooms and delivered the same story to each, but using different methods. To one he showed a video of the story, to the second he read the story from a book. The third class got a copy of the story to read for themselves, and the fourth had the story told to them. After a month, Janner interviewed the children, to see which class had greatest recall of the story.

The class who had watched the video had the most accuracy in recalling the story. However, apparently they required what Haven calls 'extensive prompting' to remember. (op cit) The children who, with minimal prompting, with excitement and enthusiasm could verbally recall the story in 'vivid and expansive' detail were the ones who had had the story told to them. Haven concludes 'Storytelling creates excitement, enthusiasm, and more detailed and expansive images in the mind of the listener than does the same story delivered in other ways.' (op cit)

My intention, in going to visit the class I had been working with, was to see if the children remembered the stories after 11 months. I was confident they would recall some of them, and I decided to put my theory to the test. How many, and in what detail, would they remember of our stories nearly one year on?

They remembered them all – except one, and I decided to analyse this elusive story (see Appendix Three), which had been made up by Jo, the teacher. My analysis showed that, in story grammar terms, the story was not a satisfactory one – it had inconsistencies and did not make sense.

What follows is in no way a criticism of Jo. She's a very good teacher – open minded and enthusiastic. Rather, I think, it is an example of

1. Someone telling a story who has no 'Impro' (Johnson 1981) training – the training which helps you to say 'yes' to ideas, even if that puts you 'in trouble'. During my first story session, when someone decided that Mr David should cut off his nose because it was too big, within me I was thinking 'oh my God, what happens now!', and I could have said 'oh no, he didn't do that, it is terribly dangerous to play with knives'. But I didn't, and immediately the story becomes exciting and vibrant, because everyone knows, me especially, that the story has gone into dangerous territory.
2. Someone who is inexperienced at seeing the potential in a story – seeing (and accepting) the 'loaded gun' (see Chapter Three)
3. Someone who has the other persona of being 'the teacher', which is what she is the rest of the time, and that means the rules and protocols of the classroom are difficult to overcome in a session like this – whereas I can come in, make a lot of noise and leave with no underlying status or behaviour issues challenged.

There has been substantial research about the effect of having an artist in a classroom (for instance Oddie & Allen 1998, Turner 2003, Orfali 2004, Robinson 1982, Sharp & Dust 1997, Smart 2001) with many benefits to children and staff being identified - including formal and informal CPD for staff, and raising of motivation, self esteem and enjoyment in pupils. Smart (2001:4) observes that an artist should not be considered as a substitute teacher, but rather as a person who has specialist knowledge of their art form which, when combined with the teacher's specialist knowledge of the curriculum and the pupils, makes 'the most successful arts projects.' She also considers that children benefit from working with adults who are not teachers since 'they can work in new and unusual ways that stimulate the children's interest and present them with exciting challenges.' Sharp & Dust (1997:4), however, have a cautionary approach. Whilst acknowledging the potential benefits to teachers, including the opportunity to observe another adult working with their class and developing teachers' interest in the arts, they also acknowledge a possible problem when a member of staff feels envious of the artist's privileged position in school, their instant popularity with pupils, their possible undermining of established working methods and different attitudes to discipline. (ibid 13)

In this circumstance I am confident that there is no 'envy' – I have worked closely with Jo, the teacher, for a number of years, and we have mutual respect for each other. She understands the way I am with the children, and she understands that, when they are with me, their behaviour may be out of the normal allowed in class. But that does not mean that she will or should work in the same way.

So, given the 3 observations above, it could be argued that a story session with a member of staff will not be the same as with an experienced improvising storyteller.

But that is not to say that a session with a staff member will be a disaster or a waste of time and should not be attempted. It is, rather, to suggest that an *improvised* story may not be the best medium for some people, especially until they have gained confidence in the process.

Back to the forgotten story.

In story grammar terms, the story did not make sense.

But did this reflect in the drawings the children did afterwards? Tommy's observer commented that he was very unmotivated and restless, and, in the end, he drew

himself and his (adopted) family playing rugby. Other observers commented that the children drew quickly and for a shorter time than previous weeks.



Fig 10:1 Captain Bead final drawing by Alex

Let us do a comparison by looking at three drawings by two of the children.

First, the drawing from the previous week, when we had the story (told by me and drawn by Jo) of Poorie the crocodile – a silly tale about a croc (suggested by Isaac) with belly ache who, eventually, tries to get to the hospital (at the top of a tree) by the only apparent means possible – a trampoline (suggested by Tommy) – and he extravagantly falls off and, hooray, his belly ache has gone.

The final drawing (by Jo) (Fig 10:2) is a simple drawing of the tree, with the hospital at the top, and a nurse leaning over to talk to Poorie. There are three versions of Poorie in the drawing – first -on the trampoline with bounce lines, second -lying on his back having fallen off and third –burping.



Fig 10:2 Poorie the Crocodile story - final drawing drawn by Jo

Madison

Madison (Fig 10:3) has drawn a dynamic rendition of the final part of the story. The correlation with the board drawing is obvious, although she has made several marks of her own, interpreting what has happened. She has made the trampoline into a 'bird's eye' view, with the crocodile on it, and also bouncing.



Fig 10:3 Madison drawing after Poorie the Crocodile story 19 May

Then she has drawn a semi-circle, which I think is the upturned trampoline, with the crocodile lying underneath – certainly the observer has written that Madison said ‘then he fell off’. She has used the whole page of A4. This is a competent drawing by someone who has understood the story, and although it has been influenced by the final drawing on the board, it is not a direct copy. Madison has not drawn, for instance, the hospital as a separate building at the top of the tree. Rather she has made it an integral part of the tree.

Madison’s drawing (Fig 10:4) done after the Captain Bead story has a different quality. It seems rushed, and there is no detail about the action in the story – all we see is the Captain with the parrot, and an unidentifiable square shape. Looking at the final drawing (Fig 10:1) there are many other things she could have drawn, even if she simply copied from the board. But she did not chose to. Her observer commented that she was ‘a little bit fidgety’, whereas the previous week, the observer had commented that she had sat still and concentrated which was unusual behaviour. Further the observer commented that she drew for a very short time.

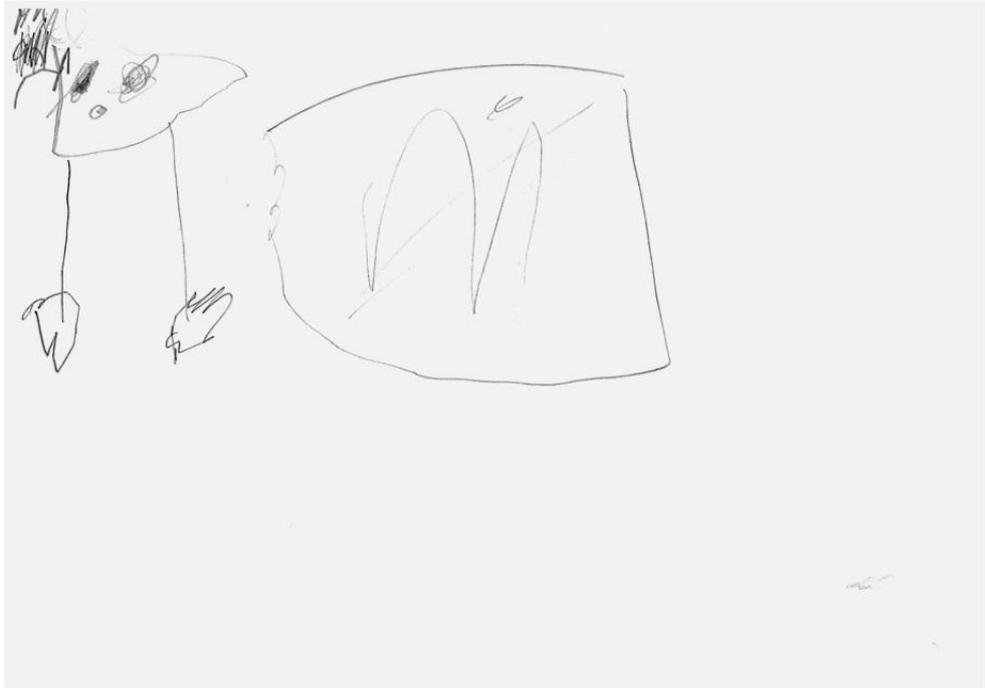


Fig 10:4 Madison drawing after Captain Bead story 26 May



Fig 10:5 Madison drawing after Bumpy Road story 16 June

If we turn to another story, the one about the Bumpy Road, Madison's drawing (Fig 10:5) is different again – it has life and animation. She has drawn the shop as a basic

square, with emergent writing as the name, but just look at the movement in the picture of Mrs Williams on her bike! All her features are every which way due to the bumps, and what bumps – they jerk across the whole page with abandon – it is no wonder that all the things fell out of the basket.

I think it is very clear that the drawing Madison did after the Captain Bead story is different to the other two, and I would hypothesise that the reason is that she was uninspired by the story, because the story was unsatisfactory.

Harika

English is Harika's additional language, but although she has limited experience of English, her understanding is fantastic, and she is an eager participant at story time.

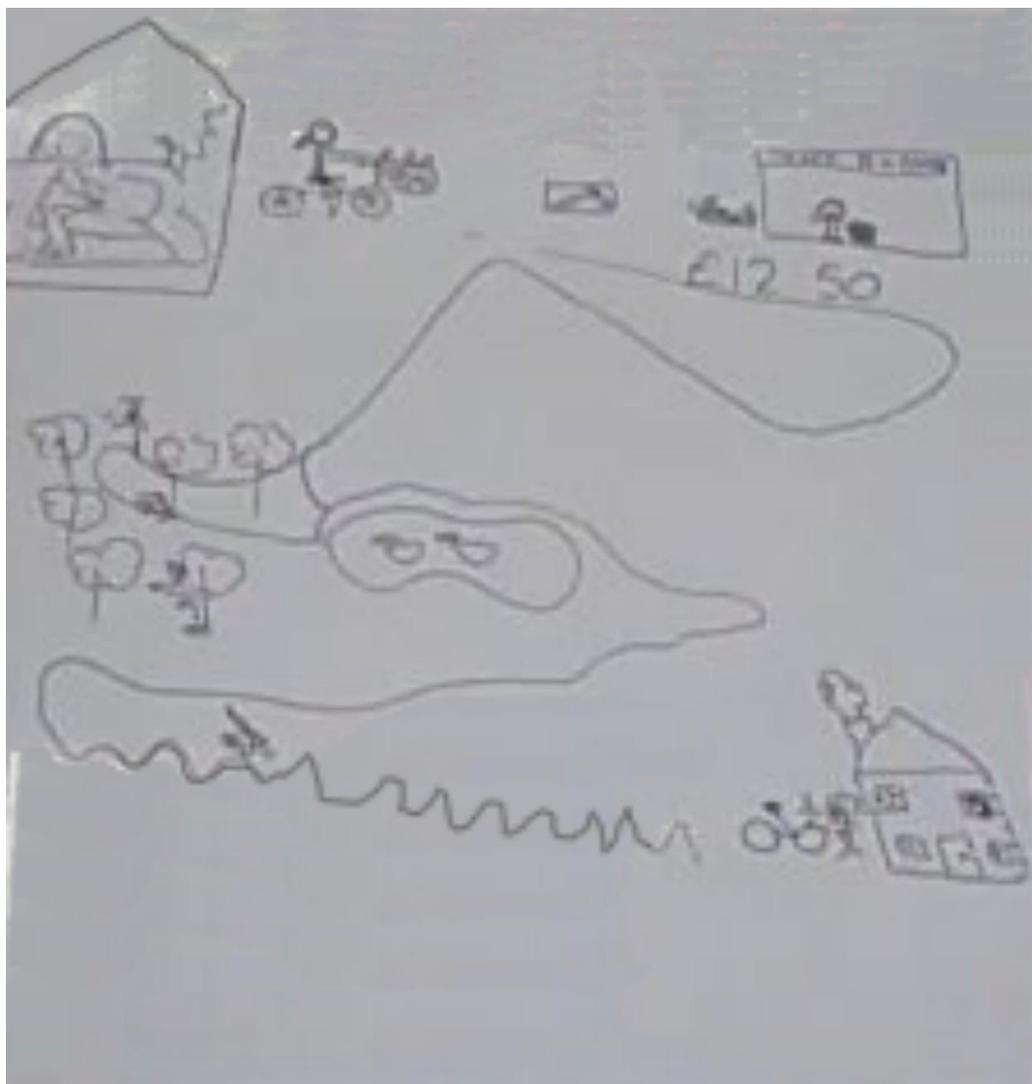


Fig 10:6 Final picture, by Jo, of the Bumpy Road story 16 June 2011

In the story of Poorie the croc, it was Harika who offered the suggestion that perhaps he could go up the tree-hospital in a lift, but, of course, in spite of hunting, he couldn't find one. Nonetheless, looking at Harika's drawing, Fig 10:7, she has put the lift in, as well as someone else's suggestion of a ladder. Perhaps the idea of the trampoline was just too much! Or, perhaps, she didn't know what a trampoline is, in spite of extravagant miming, by the class, of bouncing.



Fig 10:7 Harika drawing after Poorie the Croc story 19 May

Harika has drawn the hospital at the top of the tree, including the door and the nurse, who is balanced precariously on the only branch. She has attempted to draw the crocodile, and has given him a remarkably toothy body, and a down turned mouth. Harika has drawn a simple drawing, using the whole of an A4 sheet, emphasising the tallness of the tree.

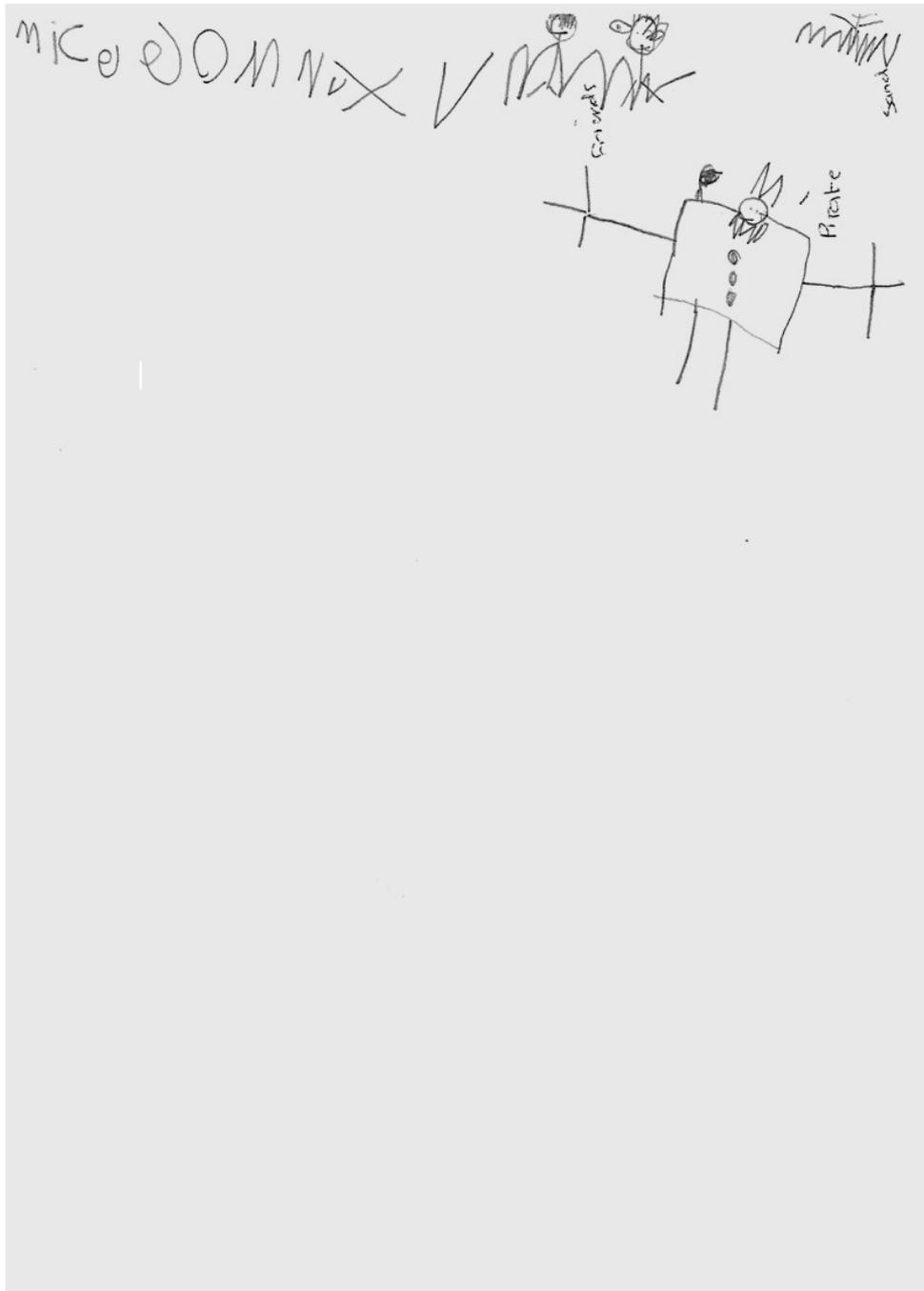


Fig 10:8 Harika drawing after Capt Bead story 26 May

Harika's drawing (Fig 10:8) after the Captain Bead story is very different. She has cramped her marks into the top of the page, and has chosen not to draw many elements of the story action, even those shown in the final drawing on the board. Her observer says she sat very still during the story, and did not contribute, which compares with the comments from the previous week, where she appeared to be quite animated, and made several comments both during the story, and about her drawing.

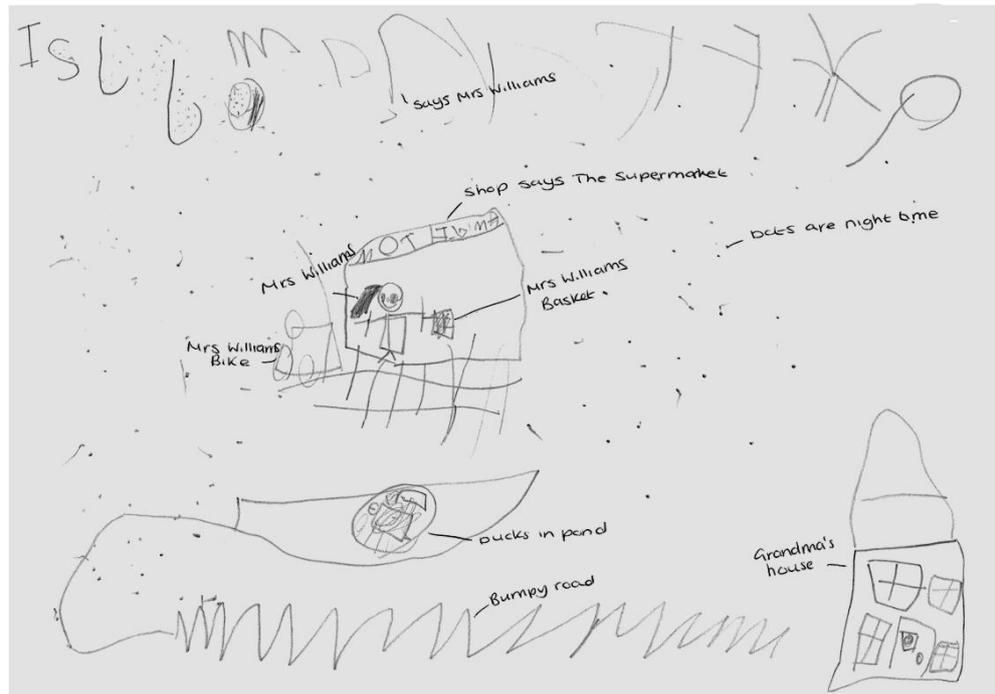


Fig 10:9 Harika drawing after Bumpy Road story 16 June

Compare the Captain Bead story with the one above (Fig 10:9), which was after the Bumpy Road story, told and drawn by Jo. It is bursting with images from the story – including Mrs Williams written in emergent writing, the shop, the bicycle, the basket, the ducks in the pond, grandma’s house and, of course, the very bumpy road.

Looking at the final drawing, Fig 10:6, we can see that Harika’s drawing has a similar linear narrative, but she has also added dots all over the page which are ‘night time’ according to the (rather invasive) annotation on the drawing by the observer.³⁷ Night time did not occur in the story – this is something Harika has invented – again, perhaps it was an idea she had which was not incorporated, but she has put it in her story anyway.

Looking at the three drawings by Harika, in my mind there is no doubt that the Captain Bead story drawing is weak and uninspired. Again I suggest the reason is that the story was the same. As Mandler and De Forest (1979:889) say ‘automatic understanding, at least for children, appears to be automatic retrieval according to

³⁷ I really hate the annotations which staff put on children’s drawings. They are useful, of course they are, for without them, very often we would not understand the content of the drawing. But, for me, they show a disrespect of the work. I have spoken with Jo about this, and what they do now in her class, is they have a special book, and when a child talks about his/her drawing, the notes are written to the side in this book. This means the drawing is unsullied, we still have the important observations and words by the child, plus the child learns the use of being literate in a very real way.

the structures with which they are familiar – and this story did not have that structure.

Why the Bumpy Road?

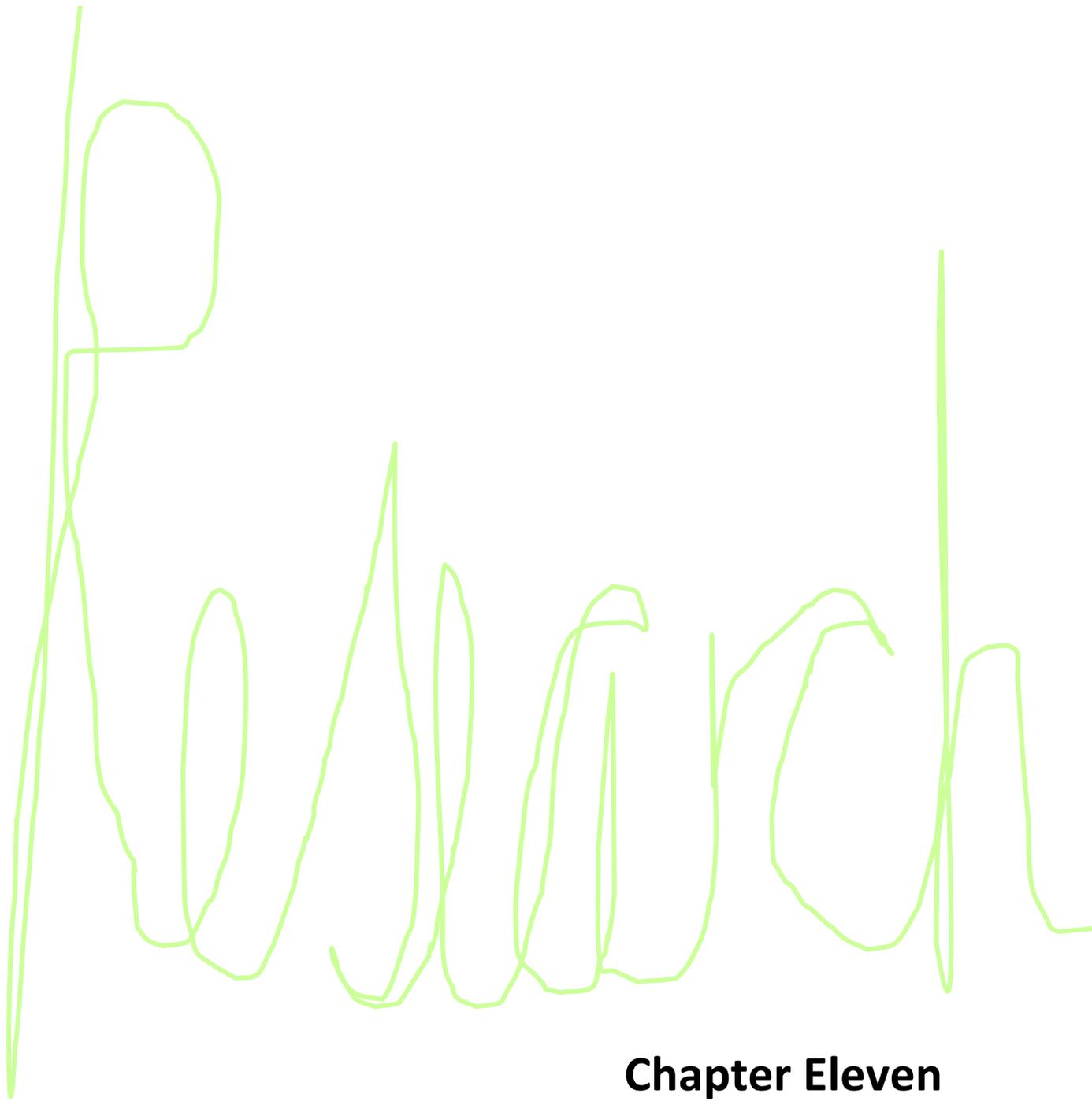
I have chosen the Bumpy Road story to show the children's drawings because it was another story which Jo told, but this time she was not making it up. It is a story which was originally made up, by me and her then class, a few years previously. Again the plot is simple – a basic case of scene setting (Mrs Williams relaxing in bed on a Saturday morning), initiating event (pring pring 'hello dear, grandma here – you haven't forgotten it's my birthday today have you?' YOIKS), problem solving (gotta get grandma a cake gotta get grandma a cake) and resolution (grandma gets her cake and is very happy the end).

My point is that Jo, because she already knew the story, did not have to think about the content, the structure. Yes, she had to remember what happened, which is different to 'memorising', but she did not have to make it up. Thus the story has a cohesion which is lacking in the Captain Bead story. The story makes 'sense', is satisfactory – and it shows in the different quality of the children's drawings.

In addition it shows that story/drawing as a process, CAN be done by people who are not skilled improvisers – an existing story can be used, providing the story contains elements which the children can contribute to – like what goes in the basket, what colour he painted the walls and what he used to paint with. The difficulty is when the member of staff cannot be as open and flexible as possible, and the story becomes a 'testing' of what I've got in my head, rather than real contribution by the children and acceptance of their ideas.

In this chapter I have suggested, by examining three drawings by two of the children, that the story which did not make grammatical sense, produced drawings which were less detailed, and drawn quickly.

In the next chapter I will describe the 'nub' of my research, including showing that people have found ingenious ways of solving difficult drawing problems over the centuries. I will also suggest that there is no such thing as accuracy for people see differently, and have different motivations to draw.



Chapter Eleven

The nub of my Research

The Nub of this Research

This thesis has asked the question 'How does storytelling influence the drawings done by four and five year old children?' I have used a qualitative approach, with conversations, and case studies.

In this chapter I intend to identify the nub, the kernel of my research, by revisiting the initial concept, and suggesting some reasons as to why story changes drawings. In addition this chapter will discuss how people have solved drawing conundrums through history, and suggest that there is no such thing as accuracy in a drawing, because people see differently, feel differently and have different motivations for drawing.

The nub of my research is the fact that when you tell a story and ask the children to draw afterwards, you are asking them to do something in context, and in their time. Although they may have been taken away from an activity to come and participate in the storytelling session, the drawing afterwards is immediate, and the internal images are fresh. I try and organise it so that there is nothing planned after the story/drawing session, so that the children have no pressure to go and do something else. They can draw for as long as they want or need, and I have known them be sitting on the carpet, totally immersed in their drawing with all the mayhem of a busy class around them for over half an hour.

Children can have difficulty with time – as a concept it means nothing. So when a sad and frightened child says – when's mummy coming back? And you, in a well meaning fashion say – at dinner time – you might just as well say 'in 50 years' or 'at half past pomegranate' – because it's the same amount of time to that child – i.e. forever. The younger the child, the less time is understood, and the more they live in the here and now. Friedman's study (2000:930) with children aged from 4 to 10 found that the younger children had little idea about time, but 5 year olds had made the connection between past and future:

Because no natural memory process could provide information about distances in the future, and ways of knowing future times must be socially constructed over a considerable period of time, a differentiated sense of the times of past events precedes a differentiated sense of the times of anticipated events. However, as children learn about recurrent time patterns, such as parts of the day, days of the week, and months of the year, the processes they use to think about the future and past become more closely related.

The story sessions we had were part of the normal day, and the immediacy of the drawing afterwards was important, so that the children could draw while their ideas were fresh.

Story and Drawing in context

When you tell a story, especially one which a child has helped to construct, then the child is more likely to draw with intensity, concentration and feeling, because the story is contextual and temporal for that child. He has watched the story unfold, both with drawings on the board and by watching animated telling (pulling faces, mime, sound effects) which sometimes involves him. It really is *his* story, and when he draws, he draws the things he has seen or heard during the telling which are not necessarily, of course, the things which happened. Sometimes I deliberately rub things off the board, so that they aren't there for the children to copy, but, invariably, the children draw them anyway.

Looking at Fig 11:1, which is the final picture of a story in March 2012 with a group of children who had never had story/drawing before, there is little evidence of the Wolf, in spite of him being the central character in the story. I've rubbed him off to make room for story continuation. Bottom right of the picture we can just see him sleeping in the long grass, dreaming of the pie he has stolen and eaten. On examining the 29 drawings done by these rising 5 year olds, 13 have drawn a full body wolf, some with the spider in his tummy. Oh, I forgot to say that he swallowed the spider, who wriggled and shouted until he got coughed up. All of the drawings contain at least one spider, sometimes in its web – also rubbed off. Those children who did draw the house, drew the pie, resting tantalisingly on the window ledge with 'smell lines' wafting from it - you can just see the remains of these on my drawing – but the pie has gone, of course, because the wolf ate it and so I rubbed it off.



Fig 11:1 Final drawing March 6th 2012 – the wolf and the Pie by Alex

So the drawings which this group of children have done are explicit to the story, and individually thought out. They have not copied, because my drawings have been erased. The children remember parts of the story which occurred at the beginning, when the wolf ate the spider, who was jolly cross, and even those children who have drawn less recognisable elements of the story, have drawn with passion and intensity – see Fig 11:2. This is not a thoughtless ‘scribble’. There are a number of different marks in this drawing, and if we had observed and listened, we would understand what each of them represent. I am certain that the reason for this passion, intensity and concentration is that they identify with the story – it’s their story in their time and space. At the end of this telling, for instance, someone said – ‘and then it started raining’ – and so it did, by me drawing the rain, explaining that all the rain ran down the man’s face and dripped down his nose ‘like snot!’, yes, exactly like a big bit of snot.



Fig 11:2 A narrative drawing of the wolf and the pie

Don't want to Draw from the Story?

It has happened, very occasionally, that someone really doesn't want to draw something from the story – Pirate Day, for instance, when Tommy was in a strop. Tommy had huge issues at home which sometimes manifested themselves in school. I turned up one morning to find him, alone, on the carpet, having time-out because of an incident outside. (My notebook reports 'how terrible to see someone so young frowning like his face would break.') By story time he had calmed down, and he contributed ideas, and laughed and made noises as appropriate. But when it came to drawing, he said, very adamantly 'I'm going to draw a picture of me and my dad playing rugby.' And he did. His mind was on something else – and that is what he wanted to draw, I suppose to reassure himself that he was part of that family by drawing himself as part of it. Oaklander's (1988) very readable book about her play therapy with children has sections in it which really remind me of Tommy. Although I am not (nor do I want or need to be) intimate with the circumstances of his home life, I was told enough for this passage to resonate:

Children soon learn that life isn't perfect, that we live in a very chaotic world, a world of contradiction and dichotomy. Furthermore, parents who are raising children have their own personal difficulties to contend with. Children learn to cope and compensate. Many do quite well in their living and growing and learning. Many don't. (p 57)

Johnson (1981:138) calls these underlying thoughts our subtext, and he uses it as a ruse to get more depth in the improvised performances of his actors. It's the thoughts that lie under what is happening, and they are very often nothing to do with the action on hand. Tommy's sub text, whatever it was, took precedent on this occasion. His mind needed to have the time to do a picture which would reassure him about other circumstances. I'm sure he wasn't aware of this, as sure as I am that it was beneficial for him to have that time to himself. We all need time, at different times, to give our brains the opportunity to work things out without the interference of the phone ringing or someone wanting to know what's for tea. This is why I like driving by myself, and why dreams are important. Jung considered that the unconscious could be represented in art. Furth (2002) explores the ideas of Jung as a basis for a form of therapy and says, considering Jung's ideas, 'These images and symbols are displayed in paintings, sculpture, poetry, dance, music, literature and many other forms, and are expressions coming from the creative side of the human being. This content originates in the unconscious, the seat of creativity.' (ibid 2)

The Creative Process

The creative process is an important one. It is well accepted (for instance Claxton 1998, Csikszentmihalyi 1997, Gardner 1993 among many) that we work things out in our heads when we dream – whether that be day-dream or sleep dream. Marty Neumeier (cited by Fletcher) says: 'the history of invention can be seen as a series of marriages of incompatible ideas or at least ideas that previously had not been introduced. The matchmaker in most of these marriages is the unconscious mind.' (Fletcher 2001:33)

Many therapies rely on the fact that we reveal things in our art which we were not aware of. (Furth 2002, Oaklander 1988) Artists have used this knowledge about the power of the unconscious ever since it became general knowledge, largely through the work of Freud. (Winner 1982:384) The Surrealists, in the early 20th century, used to push themselves into making discoveries about their psyches through things like automatic writing, for instance (where you write as quickly as you can whatever comes into your head without thinking, censorship or deletion). There are therapies which help people to understand and come to terms with traumas in their lives through writing, drama and drawing. Bolton (1999:79), talking about ideas and

images 'slipping and slithering' in the mind says 'the power of writing is to stabilise them so that you can look at them, like fixing a photographic print.'

So I consider that the reason the children draw in a different way is because they have had an experience (the story) to which they have had the opportunity to contribute, and they know that when they are asked a question it's because I want a genuine answer – I don't already know the answer. They have seen the pictures appear before them, and they are of a standard which they understand – i.e. sometimes crude, and sometimes a manifestation of a sound effect (such as a wiggly random line to the lovely farty sound of a balloon deflating). I think this is an important point, too, because children very rarely see adults drawing and I think it's important that they understand that the gorgeous and proficient drawings and illustrations which they see in their books are not the normal adult way of drawing. They see that drawing, like football, needs to be practised to make you more proficient.

Becoming Proficient & Gaining Mastery

Don't you hate it when people who have mastered something patronisingly tell you, as you struggle, that 'practice makes perfect.'

But it does. A few years ago, I found the score for Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata among a pile of stuff in a junk shop, and I decided to try and learn the first movement – you know the one – slow arpeggios with the left hand and a simple (yes? Ha!) melody with the right.

My family are very musical, and I have what is called a 'good ear'. My parents made me have piano lessons, but I never got very far with them. My teacher, a small, portly, blue-rinsed lady called Miss Thomas, learned never to play me a new piece, because I would try and remember what she had played, rather than reading the notes. I found sight reading very difficult. I enjoyed the discipline of learning scales: there's a mathematical precision which appealed to me, and I liked the achievement of getting faster and more accurate – I could see my development. But reading notes? No. It was a language I never really learned. So it was surprising that I gave myself this challenge of learning Beethoven - who is my hero. Initially it was very hard. Tortuous, even, and SLOW. I would wait until the house was empty – I didn't want anyone listening (and having thoughts about my playing); I didn't want anyone

commenting (remarks like – oh, that’s the Moonlight Sonata, or worse, ‘oh, you are getting on well’); I didn’t want anyone judging and I didn’t want anyone interrupting my train of thought, my concentration just by their presence. I enjoyed the process so much. I enjoyed the difficulty, and recognition of my development. I would repeat phrases over and over and over and over again, to try and get my fingers to instinctively know where to go, and try to get my brain to recognise the patterns in the dots. I enjoyed the deconstruction of the piece – several light bulb moments of understanding how he achieved certain harmonies. I enjoyed the playing, starting to put feeling and emphasis into what I was doing – bursting into tears on occasion because the music is so beautiful and I was making it. I did get better, and I learned to play it sufficiently well so as never to have to play it again.

And it was all achieved through practice. Howard Gardner (1980:25) describes a very similar process that 2 children go through in their learning – one mastery of the pencil and paper, and the other mastery of words. Speaking of Jerry (age 1:11) drawing Gardner says ‘such sessions of scribbling seem worth pondering, for it is from such apparently casual but actually event filled sessions that the messy and wayward scribbles of early drawings slowly give way to the control of geometric form, the achievement of representational depiction, and process of faithful likeness.’ (ibid) Like me, with my knowledge of music theory, Jerry already has ‘a series of schemes or “moves” in the graphic sphere’ - Jerry can make circular motions, and dots and squiggles. Gardner says: ‘At any point in development the individual possesses a certain set of skills, a given cluster of perceptual and motor schemes, and a more or less explicit sense of direction. It may well be that this orientation, this movement toward a goal, is only dimly perceived, but the forward progress of the growth process in normal individuals is no less real and no less potent for eluding consciousness.’ Jerry doesn’t have to be aware of his learning, of his development. Jerry just needs time and space to practice. It is interesting that, in this instance, Gardner reports that Jerry’s concentration is broken by the entrance into the room of his sister, and he stops drawing. (ibid 30)

Later (ibid 32) we are introduced to Anthony (age 2:5), who is lying in his bed, waiting for sleep. He is alone (except, of course, that he has been recorded and there hangs an ethical dilemma!), and he is practising the ‘corpus of words and sounds that he is in the process of mastering’. (ibid 33) He is not trying to communicate, but rather he

is deeply concentrated and immersed in his own world, making sense, in his own way, perhaps, of the signs and symbols he has seen that day, trying out things in the privacy and solitude of his bed time.

Gardner calls both these occurrences, Jerry drawing and Anthony babbling, 'playful symbolic activity' (ibid 33), and he considers that they are caused by 'impersonal developmental forces' – i.e. the children are not consciously planning what they will draw or say next, but rather, they are just following their noses, so to speak. In the concentration, in the solitude, their brains are making sense of experiences, putting them in order, trying out confusions, enjoying mastery. Dissanayake (2012:182), in describing the same thing, says it's 'a way to order the chaos of experience which, unordered, is like a scribble, or growl or stumble. Making something orderly and controlled and then doing a riff on it is fascinating, spellbinding and irresistible.'

Gardner (1980) says that we will never fully understand this process of development, and also that it doesn't happen in isolation. Later in his book, *Artful Scribbles*, Gardner examines the drawings of a child, Shona, starting when she was 3 (ibid 84). The girl draws, developmentally, much as is expected, with, possibly, a few precocious elements which show that she is very aware and talented.

Through a series of drawings, we follow Shona's development from 'tadpoles' to quite sophisticated houses, full of people and things. But then we are asked what influences Shona has had on her drawing? Are they really 'a kind of evolution of graphic skills almost as ineluctable as the way in which her creeping turns to crawling, her standing to walking'? (ibid 88) Gardner doesn't think so. We are shown a drawing Shona's brother has done of a house, and the resemblance to her drawing is striking. It's not that she has copied it, but rather that she has seen it and been influenced by it. This is very natural, in my opinion. How many times have I come up with a new idea for something (a piece of jewellery, for instance) only to find something very similar in a magazine which is a year old, and which I do not remember seeing. Gardner goes on, however, to note that Shona's drawings have also been influenced by a book on 'how to draw'! He says: 'here, then, at the very moment in development when natural processes are supposedly at their height, when the child is allegedly insensitive to factors about her, we encounter a dramatic and persuasive example of the extent to which a model from the culture can contribute to, if not completely dominate, the form and substance of a child's

drawing.’ (ibid 92) Gardner is convinced that, even though Shona would have gone through a normal developmental process of drawing, these outside influences have contributed to what he calls ‘the dialect and accent’ of her drawings rather than to the basic ‘grammar’. Our drawing is influenced by our experience, he says, and if we provide ‘a powerful, persuasive and pedagogically effective guide to drawing,’ (ibid 93) then we will see the effect, even in the work of very young children.

Why should children draw in a certain way?

What is it that makes us think that children SHOULD draw in any specific way? WE don’t, so why should they? We draw according to what it is we want to say, and this might be any number of things. We ask a child to draw something, and we look through our adult lens and we make assumptions about the child and his development. But the younger the child, the more other things he has going on in his head – comprehension for instance. Does he really understand what we have asked?

Getting things in perspective

The younger the child the less able she is to articulate the why’s of what she has drawn, but, to my mind, there’s no reason why she shouldn’t be drawing in different styles according to what’s on or in her mind. WE do – why shouldn’t SHE?

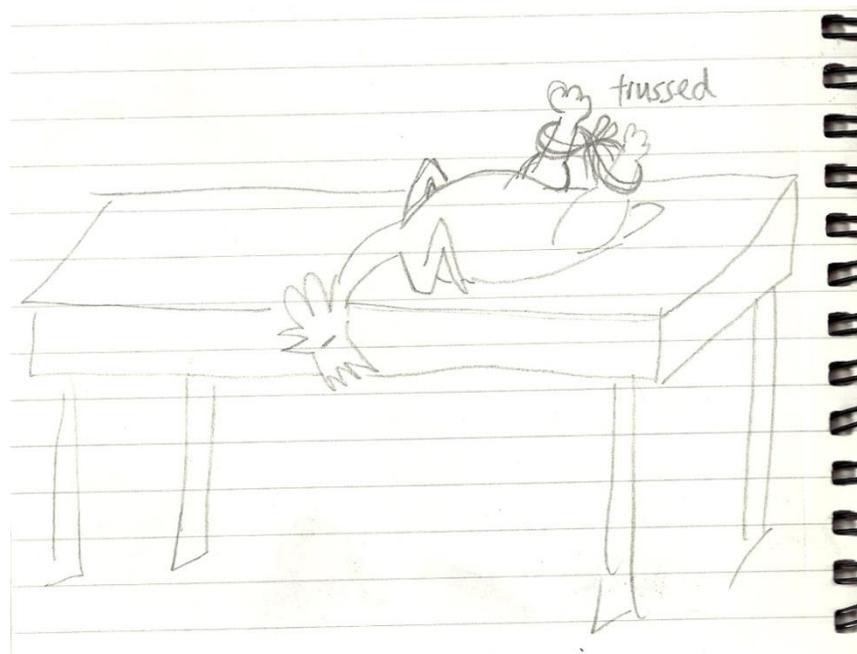


Fig 11:3 Drawing (during a ‘trust’ exercise) showing that Alex can’t draw in perspective

Also, when we are trying to draw an object (as opposed to an idea or a feeling, say) the ability to draw an accurate representation is not a God given right. My brother

can draw. He can just pick up a pen and the images appear. I can draw... but in a different way. I draw quite freely these days, because I don't care about accuracy of representation, but I had to learn not to care. I'm the girl who was told, aged 12, not to take art for O level because I was so useless. I have a theoretical idea about perspective, but I don't instinctively do it (Fig 11:3 for proof!). Drawing in perspective is something you have to learn – most of us need to be taught it, and it's a skill necessary for a certain kind of drawing – like technical. Historically, perspective proved tricky for some artists, and they found ways of ensuring accuracy. Canaletto was well known for working outside using a 'camera obscura' to ensure accurate perspective in his paintings, and even a master like Durer was not averse to using instruments to help with a tricky drawing task such as foreshortening. (Fig 11:4³⁸)

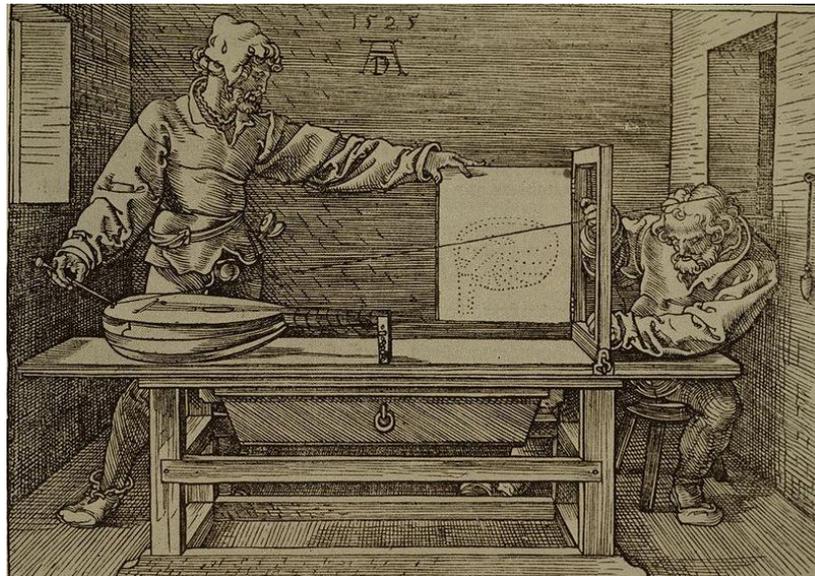


Fig 11:4 Durer, woodcut, man drawing a lute 1525

Medieval artists also found ways to show what interested them. In Fig 11:5 the artist has 'folded out' the backgammon board so that we can see how the game is progressing, as well as observing the body-language of the players. If they had maintained the 'right' perspective by showing only one view, the drawing would be far less interesting, either because we wouldn't be able to see the state of play if viewed solely from the front, or because we wouldn't be able to see the players, if viewed from the top – and how do you draw someone from above?

³⁸ the string represents the line of sight. So it remains static, attached to the wall on the right hand side, and moves to different places on the lute. The point where it goes through the frame is accurately measured, and this measurement is transferred to the paper (on which we can see a dotted impression of the foreshortened lute emerging.)



Fig 11:5 Medieval fold-out painting of Backgammon game

There's no such thing as Accuracy!

Children also solve the problem of trying to show different aspects in the one frame – in Fig 11:6 the child has, I think quite skilfully, shown us the layout of a complex of houses. We can see, from above, the way they are in the street in plan view, and we can also see, from the front, what each house looks like – its configurations of doors and windows. In addition, this child has also made the drawing 'x-ray', in that we can see, through the walls, the staircases. It could be argued that this is not an 'accurate' representation of the street, but what does 'accurate' mean? It depends on what we are drawing *for*. If, for some reason we want to show exactly what we are seeing, then a representation which is proportional, in perspective etc is what is needed. But if we want to show the whole of something, then we may do as the child in Fig 11:6 - make our drawing transparent, or fold bits out so that they can be seen. Golomb (2011:37) says 'In these cases the picture is meant to represent information deemed essential.' And later, discussing the habit of children to draw the whole thing even when they can only see a bit (like items behind each other on a table) Golomb says 'the logic that guides their drawing is based on a desire to depict the complete object, a rule not to be violated lightly.' (ibid 49)

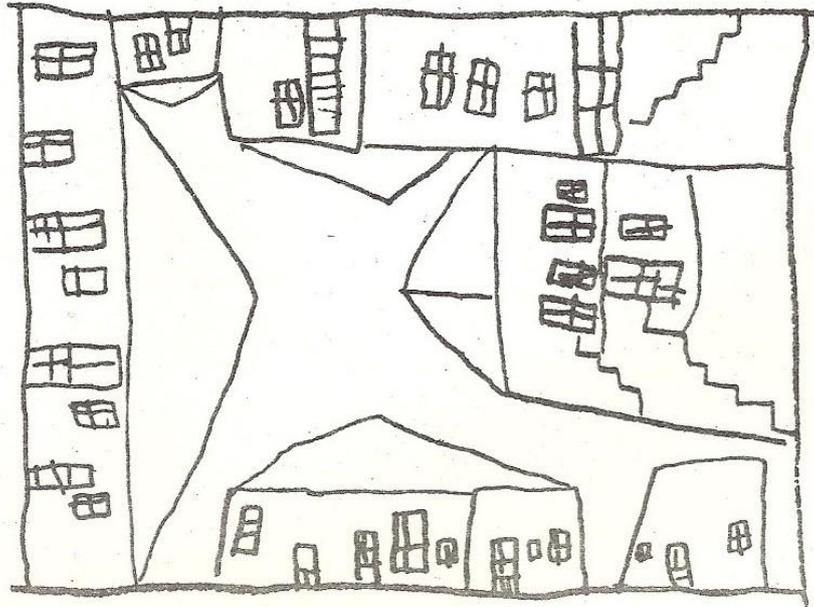


Fig 11:6 Fold out drawing in Lowenfeld 1978:174

And who says we all see the same? Willats (2005:43) describes jumping spiders as having 3 pairs of eyes. 2 pairs (and we don't want to know how researchers found this out...) are used to pinpoint *where* things are in relation to the spider – i.e. the direction of that passing fly, that passing car. Another pair of eyes is used to decide *what* the *where* has identified is - so the 3rd pair of eyes looks and says 'ah, a fly' or 'ah, a car' (or whatever the spider calls a car...) So the different eyes have completely different functions. Presumably, therefore, if you take away the *where* eyes, then the spider knows there is a fly because he can see it, but doesn't know where it is because he can't see it, and vice versa. (Wow!) So not all seeing is the same. According to Willats (ibid) in humans the *where* and *what*, which takes the jumping spider 3 pairs of eyes to sort out, is done with our one pair, and we use different parts of our brain to sort it all out. We do this through not only knowing what something looks like from our point of view, but also from our knowledge of what something looks like per se (in other words, we know what something looks like because of our experience of it, even though it might not be in view at the time.) Our brains work faster than we can imagine, to synthesise all the information coming in from our eyes.

And let's not go down the road of 'accurate' when we consider people who have synesthesia, for instance, where music has colour, and words have music – what tune does YOUR Tuesday play? According to Ward (2008:36) we have many more senses than the usual five (vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch), including pain, temperature and balance. He also talks about 'proprioception' which is our sense of

where our body is – i.e. if I lift my arm with my eyes closed, I still have a sense of where it is³⁹. Then there's 'interoception' which is the senses which occur inside the body – like needing to go to the loo or tummy grumbling. Many synaesthaetes have combinations of all these senses – Ward (ibid) talks about a person doing yoga who saw different colours in different positions, and different pains have had different colours associated with them. The theory among some researchers (Van Crampen 2010, D & C Maurer 1990, Lewkowicz & Turkewitz 1980) is that newborn babies have all their senses jumbled together, and they have to learn to make the neural paths which give them sensations like most of us – i.e. a sound uses the auditory area in the brain, a smell the olfactory area etc. Maurer and Maurer say:

The newborn does not keep his sensations separate from one another. He mixes sights, sounds, feelings and smells into a sensual bouillabaisse. Sights have sounds, feelings have tastes and smells can make him dizzy. The wildest of 1960's psychedelia could not begin to compare with the everyday experience of a baby's entry into the world.
(D & C Maurer 1990:51)

No wonder babies gurgle!

Most people sort out their brains, but for some the channels remain mixed, so that music might have colour, words might have taste. Ward (2008:43) talks about one person he studied who said the number six tasted of vomit whereas the number eight had no taste at all. I think I'm mildly synesthaetic – I have always attributed colours to the days of the week and months, and numbers also have colours. The year 2011 was a wishy washy sort of yellowy green colour, whereas the year 2012 is a beautiful deep blue/purple, for instance. My brother-in-law, on the other hand, is colour-blind. So there is absolutely no accuracy for him when it comes to some colours. One man's chartreuse is another man's viridian, perchance.

'Accuracy' is in the eye of the beholder – and, in Art, this might be what the beholder sees, and it might also be what the artist wants to transmit.

Glynn Thomas (Fig 11:7) makes extraordinarily detailed etchings, where life is every-which way. 'Everybody draws things in rectangles,' he says, 'but if you close one eye you see your nose and the elliptical shape of the eye, so I was always intrigued by

³⁹ It was very strange, recently, to have a nerve 'block' while they operated on my hand. My arm was resting on my stomach when the block was administered, and that was where my brain felt it, even though my eyes could clearly see it somewhere else. It took 2 days for my brain to 'recalibrate.' Poor brain.....

how each eye sees different things.’ (Marshall 2012:17) Like the child’s drawing in Fig 11:6, Thomas’ landscape is not accurate, but there is a sense of movement and logic to it.

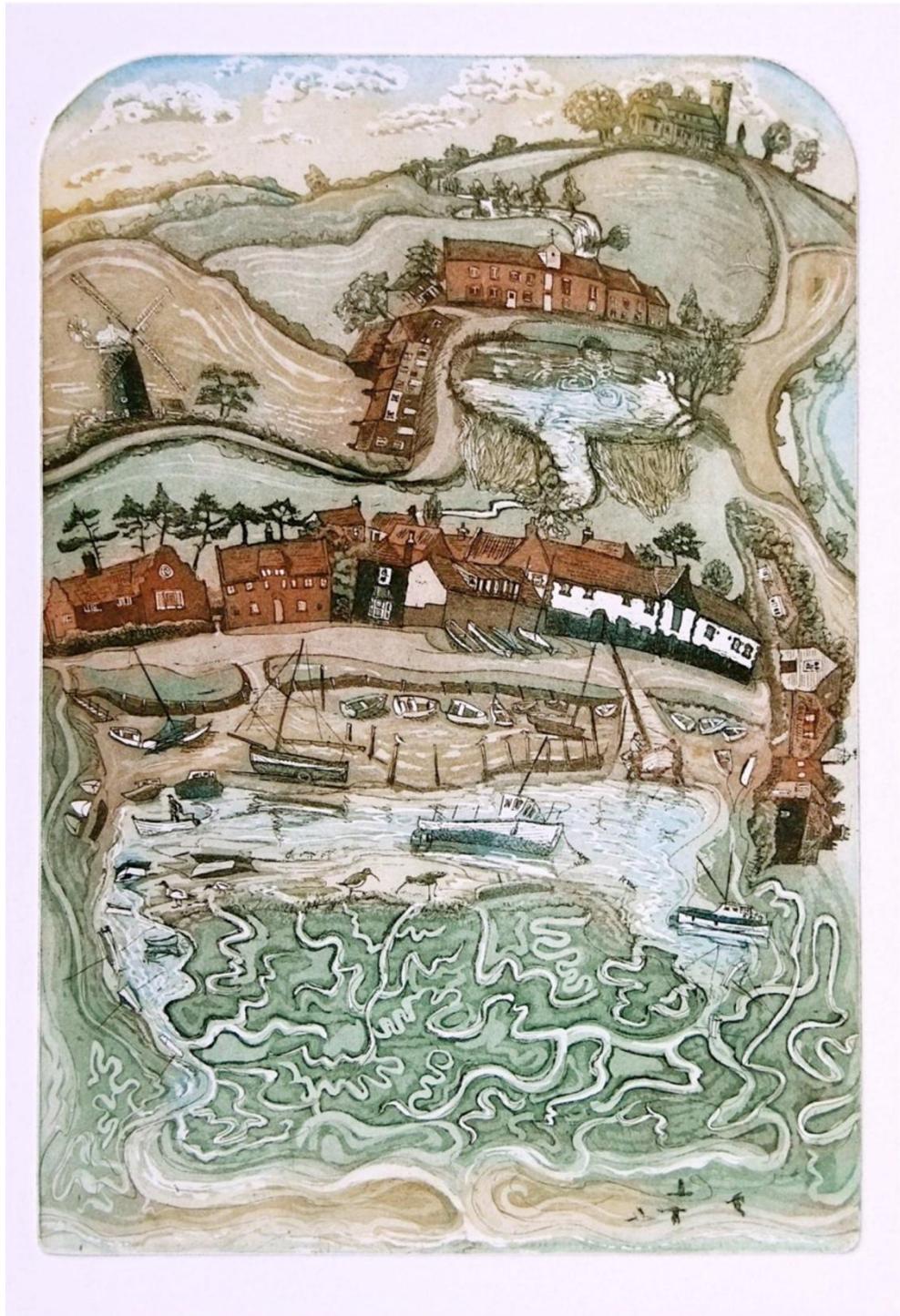


Fig 11:7 Burnham Overy Staithe – Glynn Thomas 2009 – with permission

‘The way I approach a subject is that I take the view that you are walking through a landscape. You start off with what is in front of you – then I draw what is beyond that and possibly behind me. I have a habit of layering things one on top of the

other.’ (op cit) So we can see, in the lane running next to the windmill that the hedges are ‘folded’ down, and, following the lane, when we turn the corner, the houses too are ‘folded’ back, just as they are in Fig 11:6. Size has no logic either – the geese standing in the saltings are much bigger than the dinghies moored next to them, but they, in turn, are smaller than the curlews in the middle of the saltings. And at the bottom of the picture, we can see birds – but they are flying upside down.

Are we going to accuse Thomas (or Dali with his squishy pocket watches and long legged elephant, Picasso with his cubist faces) of not being accurate? Probably not. We look at the paintings and try to interpret what it is the artist is saying to us. Accuracy has nothing to do with this, and is irrelevant.

For me, so it should be with the drawings of children. I don’t see why we should expect them only to draw accurate representations of things – we don’t expect it of adults. We need to be careful before we read (usually negative) developmental interpretations into their drawings without really careful observation and analysis of their execution – the how, when, where and so on of them being made. There are all sorts of different ways to draw, according to what it is we want to say, and children have as much right to draw as they please as an adult does.

In this chapter I have tried to show that there are many reasons and ways of drawing, and all of them have purpose and worth. I have considered the notion of ‘accuracy’ and found it wanting. I have looked at the idea that drawing is a skill which needs practising, although some people have it as a gift, and it is important that children see and appreciate that most adults cannot draw for toffee, which gives them the confidence to draw as they please, because they understand that they are not going to draw like the illustrations in books. It was over 30 years ago that Norman Freeman put it in a nutshell: ‘Children are not simply creatures expressing their essence through drawing, they are also novices who are learning how to draw.’ (Freeman 1980)



Chapter Twelve

Implications for Practice

I have said, throughout this work, that I have written it for two audiences. In this short final chapter, I intend to extrapolate from the text the points which I feel are pertinent for Researchers and for Early Years Practitioners to consider.

Researchers

The most important thing which has come out of this work for future researchers, is that we need to be very careful not to make assumptions about children's drawings. We need to ensure that we have the whole picture, so to speak, which requires that we closely observe the process of the drawing as well as the product – the drawing itself. If we only have the product – the drawing – we may make assumptions which are inaccurate. We may think the child is saying something, when in fact they are not. A teacher recently told me an anecdote which demonstrates this: she was in her class of 5 year old children, having a visit from the local authority advisor. The advisor sidled up to her and said 'I think you ought to be very concerned about that little boy at the painting table.' The teacher looked over and saw the advisor was referring to a child who was of no concern whatsoever. 'Why is that?' she asked. 'Well, he has the choice of all those lovely colours, and he is only using black,' said the advisor. 'That's very significant.' The teacher walked over and saw that this was the case. She bent down by the child in question, and looked at his black painting. She said to him 'Can you tell me about your painting? It's interesting that you have only used one colour...' The little boy said 'Yes, it's the only colour I could reach from here.'

Although this story may make us smile, or wince, the message is clear. Before we come to any conclusion about any drawing, we need to be sure we have the whole story about how, when, where, why it was drawn. In any group of children, the motivations for drawing, even a given subject, will be different. Taking one of my stories as an example, the story of Tiny Ted, for instance, one child may be interested in the content of the story (see Fig 7:8 where Jonathan has drawn many elements of the story including the lights flashing on Angelina's dress), whereas another may be inspired by Tiny Ted flying, and may draw that (see Fig 4:6).

Chapter Six, where I examined the drawings of a small group of adults, showed that making a generalisation about adults being more proficient at drawing than children is not true. In addition, this chapter clearly shows that experiments using drawing to

prove something – such as the apparently simple task of asking a child to draw the level of water in a beaker, as Piaget and Inhelder did (1956), success at which will show understanding of the concepts of vertical and horizontal, are not as simple as they may seem, since the adults, largely, either could not do it, or said they found it a difficult task.

In Chapter **Eleven** I examined the notion of accuracy – and I questioned what this means in a drawing.

For instance young children do not, as a general rule, draw with life-like perspective, and very often their proportions are not according to life. Luquet (1927/2001) called this ‘intellectual realism - i.e. if given a cup to draw with the handle facing away from them, they will draw the handle even though they cannot see it. Cox (1992:93) reports asking her daughter (aged 4:11) to draw a cup with ‘hidden’ handle. Her daughter drew the cup without the handle, then, on consideration, added a handle “because it makes it look better”. Children sometimes also ‘fold out’ elements of their subject, which gives the drawing several viewpoints at once (see Fig 11:6 for an example of this). And they are not adverse to making things see through – or X-ray, as it is usually called. Fig 12:1 is an example of a mine by a child aged 9 (Lowenfeld 1978:181), which I think is really innovative. If you want to portray what happens in a mine, then this is good way to do it. We can see things happening on the surface, and we can see people doing different tasks underground, with a conveyor belt joining the two environments.



Fig 12:1 X-ray drawing of Down a Mine - Lowenfeld 1978:181

The drawing in Fig 12:2 is a 'cross-section of a lead mine,' and it serves the same purpose. We can see the activity, the multi-layering of being underground, the different jobs and the smallness of the tunnels.

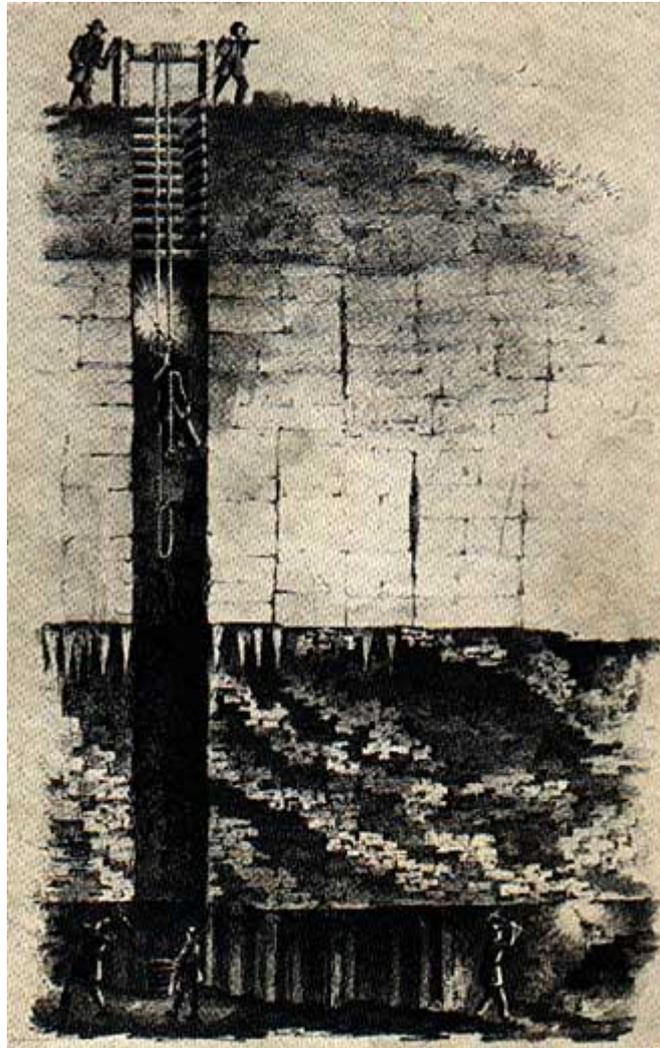


Fig 12:2 Cross Section of down a lead mine

The difference between the two renditions, is that Fig 12:2 has 'cut-away' sections of earth, to enable us to see the activity in the tunnels, and this also gives us a sense of the relationship between the different areas within the mine. But to all intents and purposes, the two images show the same thing – they have just been given different names – and in real terms, both are impossible. But reality, accuracy, has nothing to do with an impressionistic drawing – no matter who the drawer is. (See Fig 11:7)

Drawing is an easily accessible and increasingly popular means of getting data direct from a subject, especially a subject who is preliterate. The message for

Researchers is that the data must be treated with extreme caution – a child's drawing is not always what it seems.

Early Years Practitioners

In **Chapter Three**, where I examined storytelling from the literature, the implication for practice is the effect that a live storytelling can have on a child - it can increase a child's vocabulary, concentration and ability to think symbolically and metaphorically. It can increase listening skills, and imagination, and can create an understanding of language with its rhythms. It enhances memory too.

The new EYFS⁴⁰ (Early Education 2012:29) states that the unique child of 30-50 months should be

- Beginning to be aware of the way stories are structured.
- Should Suggest how the story might end.
- Should Listen to stories with increasing attention and recall.
- Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories

All of which can be achieved through a storytelling session.

Chapter Four issues a caveat for EY Practitioners – not all drawings are the same, and it is important that the circumstances of how, when, where and why a drawing is produced are closely observed before any conclusions about the drawing should be made. A 'scribble' might be just that, or it might be an internal dialogue or journey. It could also be an exploration of movement – a dance on paper. Scribbling over an image might mean that the child is unhappy with what they have drawn (see Fig 7:4 where Isaac has scribbled over his drawing of Five Eyes), but, equally, it might be that the child is going through an enveloping schema, or, indeed, that the scribble is a narrative (this is the fire engine, and this is where he went putting out fires). Close observation by practitioners is needed for interpretation.

Chapter Four also raises awareness of the influences on a child, which may effect how they draw. Drawing from life is not the same as copying, and copying, in itself, is not necessarily a bad thing – it helps us to understand how another person has made an effect. Copying requires thought, dissection and understanding, which is different to learning how to do something by rote (see Fig 4:14)

⁴⁰ Early Years Foundation Stage

Chapter Five discussed the literature about children's drawings. Arnheim (1967:166) reminds us that children are not always trying to represent something when they draw, sometimes they are simply trying to make sense of their world. Dissanayake (2012:180) says that 'although with adult prompting children may label their drawings family members, flowers, suns or animals, the images at first all look remarkably alike.' Does Luquet's 'fortuitous realism' exist, or is it the process which is more important, as Matthews (1994) suggests, and it is adults who 'see' representation?

Early Education Developmental Matters (2012:30) reminds us that early mark making 'is a sensory and physical experience for babies and toddlers, which they do not yet connect to forming symbols which can communicate meaning'.

The small piece of research in **Chapter Six**, where adults were asked to draw, shows that the assumption that adults, simply because they are 'grown-ups' CAN draw is not true, and we, EY Practitioners must ensure we do not make a false comparison. The beautiful and competent illustrations in picture books are made by professionals, and have no relation to how most people draw.

It is unwise, by the same token, to make developmental judgements about a child, simply through a drawing they do – if the child can draw, their drawing will appear more competent than one by someone who cannot draw – see Fig 6:6 – who drew which horse?

The Chapters about the stories we told, have thrown up several implications for practice.

First, in **Chapter Seven**, the difficulty in 'changing hats' is mentioned – Jo, the teacher, is telling the story, but is unable to stop being the teacher. This is understandable, and difficult. If we are to accept the ideas of the children, to really make them think and get their imaginations going, then it is very important that we accept their ideas. Like drawing, this is not always easy, and takes practice. If practitioners become aware of how often, in their dealings with the children, they find themselves 'testing' them (what colour is that?), asking questions to which they already know the answer, then the size of the difficulty can be assessed.

Practitioners will need to make a conscious effort, and also to help each other, to spot 'testing' behaviour, and to change it for a mode which is more open, and allows the children to experiment and explore – and make mistakes.

Also in Chapter Seven, the story of Five Eyes threw up a worrying example of inequality. Isaac was really affected by the story, whose main character was, he decided, a black person. Staff noticed his unusual motivation, and his drawing after the story was different to others. I had not intended to make Billy, the hero, black, because it had not occurred to me that it would be of any significance to the black children in the predominantly white class (and school – and city). But it did have. The message for practitioners is to beware racism – in oneself and in the children. Early Education (2012:38) says an enabling environment will ‘help children to learn positive attitudes and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes, e.g. using puppets, Persona Dolls, stories and books showing black heroes or disabled kings or queens or families with same sex parents, having a visit from a male midwife or female fire fighter’. It is important we do this, but, more importantly, we need to ensure that our *own* frames of reference have no bias and are non-discriminatory. Children are racially aware (Winkler 2009) at a very young age, and any racial intolerance should be identified, talked about and stopped. I was horrified, just the other day, to find my 4 year old granddaughter talking about a colour as being ‘skin-colour’. This insidious, and damaging, racism needs to be identified, and addressed.

Chapter Seven also concerns Harika, who is a child with EAL. The story about the man who went fishing really gave her the opportunity to show off her knowledge and understanding about a school visit to the local submerium through her drawing. (Fig 7:10) in a way which is unlikely, for her, through speech.

The last implication for practice in Chapter Seven is telling the truth in storytelling. Zipes (1995:225) says it is difficult to really know what impact a story has on a child, and it is imperative, therefore, that a story has truth. Our stories had ‘truth’ because they came from the children, were a reflection of their lives and experience, and, mostly, imagination. When taboo subjects came up they were dealt with rather than skirted round. A storytelling session is an opportunity to address difficult subjects, and allow the children to think about them and find solutions – not easy for staff, but very beneficial. Chapter Eight also deals with this.

Chapter Nine concerns Jenny, the invisible child, and practitioners need to heed what we discovered. Firstly, that the idea of Invisible Children is not new, but very often, in a busy setting, they remain invisible – being average, keeping their heads down,

Really Here In Name Only (Oakley ?1999) – what Morgan & Dunn (1988) call a marginal survivor. The story/drawing process gives an opportunity for staff to closely observe a child, not for assessment, but just to really see that child. Once his or her invisibility is recognised, then strategies can be put in place to help the child take off the cloak, and become a part of the group.

Practitioners may read **Chapter Ten** and say – ‘yes, this is what frightens me about this process – having to make up a decent story.’ But I hope that several things will be clear :

1. that we are not talking about great literature – the story just has to make sense, and if it is easier to start with a story that you and the children know, then that is fine
2. learn to say yes – the children will make the story work
3. allow more noise than usual. Allow the children to shout out. You will not be able to hear or use every idea, but it is important that they get spoken, nonetheless
4. get into danger, deal with taboo suggestions – see how the children deal with them too! If someone makes a ‘taboo’ suggestion, help the class to work through it
5. Practise asking questions in a way which ensures the children do not feel they are being tested.
6. TIME – don’t let procedures and timetables stop flow – do not do a story session at home time, do it either at the beginning of the day or in the middle – so the children can draw for as long as they want

Chapter Eleven looks at the nub of the thesis – it reminds us that if we want mastery, we need to practise; it reminds us that children do not live in isolation – they are aware of their surroundings, their culture, and they use their experiences in the work and play as they try and work things out; it posits the thought that expecting children to draw in any particular way is not viable – they will draw according to what it is they want to express. They do not always draw with perspective (but neither do I see Fig 11:3), and, like medieval artists, they sometimes find inventive ways of showing something (Fig 12:1). Chapter Eleven reminds us that accuracy is a subjective concept - many people see things in different ways (people who have had

brain damage, for instance, but also people with synesthesia or colour blindness), and it is our experience which allows us to make judgements about new things.

Early Education (2012) reminds practitioners that although the EYFS is the statutory framework, 'Children develop at their own rates, and in their own ways.' Each child really is a unique being. It is difficult, in a busy setting, always to give individual attention to each person, but the story/drawing process described in this thesis, can give a child an opportunity to be unique, both in his/her ideas for the story development, and in the individual slant they give to the drawing they do afterwards.



Chapter Thirteen

And so? A final conversation

Michael is lazily swinging in the hammock under the apple trees. It's late September, but warm. Annie and Pete have gone mudlarking with the boys. We said we'd rather sit in the sun and drink gin and tonic. It's Sunday after all.

'And so.....?' Michael says, meaningfully.

'And so.....,' I say, mimicking his intonation, 'it's nearly done. I've written everything up, and now all I have to do is finish that shouting.'

'And how's it gone?'

'Queer. It was nothing like I expected. All consuming. Actually that I did expect. No, it was the rest, the trying to access my ideas, to put them into some sort of order, to make sense of them. Like trying to hold six pints of jelly in a durex..... perhaps....'

'Jelly in a durex, eh? What does that mean?'

'Well, it means that you have control over some of it, but not all of it at the same time. It means you sometimes need a third hand to hold a bit in place while you decide what to do with it. It means you have to jettison some things in the end because otherwise the whole thing will collapse and break and you'll have jelly all over your shoes..'

'And no thesis.'

'Yes, and no thesis.'

'So what bits did you jettison?'

'The spikey bits. The bits which would tear the skin. They're just jettisoned, not thrown away completely. I can come back to them if I want to.'

'And the rest? Do you feel you've done what you set out to do?'

'Yes, and more. I've ended up going places I really didn't expect. I mean, for instance, I didn't expect to do a comprehensive analysis of what a drawing is, and how adults draw. But the more I thought about it, the more it was an essential, just to make sure that everyone knows what I'm talking about. I suppose it's setting the parameters of definition, partly so that I could argue from that position later in the piece. I mean, the adults I asked to draw for me showed that, unless you are lucky and have an instinctive talent, or unless you practice, then you won't be able to

draw. And there are MANY different ways and motives for drawing, not just accurate representation.'

'And have you proved your hypothesis?' – Michael's pseudo-Einstein accent makes me smile.

'You mean have I answered my question about whether "story changes drawing"?'
Yes. I think so. And the process showed other things which I did not expect, such as increased motivation in the children.'

'Can you explain?'

'Well, for instance, there was one week when I told a story, and just by chance – by absolute chance – I drew a character's head with a filled in circle instead of an empty circle. I happened to be using a black pen, and immediately the black children in the group were more motivated to become involved – both in the story and in the drawing afterwards. Isaac hardly ever speaks, but he kept butting in during the story – saying things like 'yeah, I saw the monster, and 'I sawed him cross like that', and he drew, according to his observer, for 15 minutes – which is an awfully long time. And another black boy in the class, who had never spoken to me before, came and showed me his drawing very excited and motivated. And all because they associated with the character. On Isaac's drawing the observer has written that he said "it's someone who is black and that's his hat." I would never have guessed that children that age were so colour aware.'

'That's quite scary...'

Yes, it is. Another week I had a look at the video and I noticed how one girl, considered low ability, was just SO interactive – but if I hadn't seen the video, it would never have been noticed because her interaction was so small compared to other children. She's an invisible child.'

'And that's quite scary too...'

'I'll say.'

'Anything else?'

'Well, yes. I went into school, nearly a year on, and spoke to the children about the stories. They remembered them all.'

'Wow!'

'Yes, except one. It was one the teacher made up. So, remember when we were talking at the beginning, and I told you about story grammar?'

"Yes, I looked it up. It's interesting.'

'Well, I did a story/grammar analysis of the story the children forgot – and it was rubbish – and the drawings they did afterwards were pretty nondescript too – really different to the others.'

'That's amazing. You could see the difference?'

'Yes, definitely. That week the drawings were dull and flat.'

'Hmmm...you're sure it wasn't just because the teacher told it?'

'No. Another week she told a story when I wasn't there – it was one she knew - I'd made up several years before in her class. The drawings were fab – I think because the story made sense.'

'So, what's your contribution to knowledge?' Michael asks, lazily pouring the last of the gin.

'I think it's subtle, and I think it's two fold – but the same – like two sides of a coin.

'Firstly, for the academic community, I think what I've shown is that, as a researcher, you have to be very careful before you make an assumption about a child's drawing. You really have to know the how, the when, the where and the why of its production. There are so many variables which may effect the child. You cannot compare a child's drawing to that of an adult, and, for instance, if you haven't seen the child produce the drawing, then you need to be careful of naming 'scribbles' as 'scribbles' because they might be 'a journey' or an active exploration of a space. You cannot take a drawing at face value.

'Another thing: you don't know what has influenced the child. What they've seen on the way to school, on telly last night. Gardner, for instance, in his book Artful Scribbles, is amazed to find that his daughter has been consulting a book called 'How

to draw.’ She is only 5 – who would have thought it? She’s absolutely not just developing by herself. I guess this comes back to Vygotsky’s ZPD...⁴¹

‘Zone of Proximal Development?’

‘Yes. Vygotsky considered that we do not learn in isolation, and further that we need pushing to extend our ZPD. So Gardner’s daughter is doing that by consulting the book, pushing herself, you might say. We try and push the children in a setting, but we have no idea what else is pushing them – and we must not make assumptions.’ There is a small pause, as we sip. I say

‘From the point of view of contributing to knowledge, I think the point is small, but important.’

‘And the other side of the coin?’

‘Well, I always wrote this with early years practitioners in mind. I specifically tried to write using language they would understand, and I wanted them to be proactive in their reading – not to just read, but to READ: be engrossed, be annoyed, get the urge to try things out, ring a colleague and say “I’m just reading this thing and I’m so irritated/inspired”. I really want them to understand that I understand. I know the difficulties and the constraints of a busy classroom. But if you make a few changes, you really can change a life. It’s not rocket science. That’s the point. Most practitioners are so skilled already- they have the skills, and want to sharpen them, want to make the learning experience for the children better. And they can.’

‘And the Alex effect?’

‘That’s the next thesis...’

⁴¹ Holzman 2009

Appendix One

Chapter 6

The 'Draw-a-Man' Goodenough Test - Results

Goodenough Draw-a-Man test: **Results sheet**

Class A – where the drawing is just a scribble or shape – none

Class B

	a	b	c	d	e	g	h	Extra
1. head present	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2. legs present	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3. arms present	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4a. trunk present	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4b. length of trunk greater than breadth	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
4c. shoulders definitely indicated	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
5a. attachment of arms and legs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
5b. legs attached to trunk. arms attached to trunk at the correct point	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
6a. neck present	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
6b. outline of neck continuous with that of the head, of the trunk or both	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
7a. eyes present	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7b. nose present	0	0		1	1	1		1
7c. mouth present	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
7d. both nose and mouth shown in 2 dimensions, 2 lips shown	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
7e. nostrils shown	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
8a. hair shown	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
8b. hair present on more than the circumference of the head and non transparent	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
9a. clothing present	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
9b. at least 2 items of clothing – non transparent	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
9c. entire drawing free from transparencies – both sleeves and trousers to be shown	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
9d. at least 4 articles of clothing shown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

9e. costume complete without incongruities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10a. fingers present	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
10b. correct number of fingers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10c. detail of fingers correct	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10d. opposition of thumb shown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
10e. hand shown distinct from arm or fingers	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
11a. arm joint shown – shoulder, elbow or both	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
11b. leg joint shown	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
12a. proportion head	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
12b. proportion arms	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
12c. proportion legs	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
12d. proportion feet	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
12e. proportion 2 dimensions	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
13. heel shown	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14a. motor coordination lines a	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
14b. motor coordination lines b	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
14c. motor coordination head outline	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
14d. motor coordination trunk outline	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
14e. motor coordination arms and legs	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1
14f. motor coordination features	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
15a. ears present	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
15b. ears present in the right place and proportion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
16a. eye detail – brow, lashes or both shown	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
16b. eye detail pupil shown	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
16c. eye detail proportion	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
16d. eye detail glance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
17a. both chin and forehead shown	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1

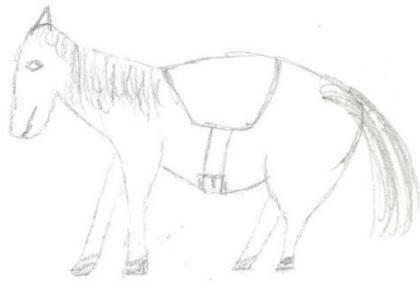
17b. projection of chin shown	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
18a. profile A	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
18b. profile B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
totals	17	31	21	32	36	33	7	49
Using the table on Pg 39 (Goodenough 1975) scores can be translated into mental age. Mental age, therefore, is	7	10	8	10.5	11.5	11	4.5	13+
Let's say they are all 13 years old (although Extra did say he was 12...) which is maximum age Goodenough provides formula for IQ, therefore, is (mental age ÷ chronological age x 100)	52	79	60	81	89	83	33	110+

Appendix Two

Chapter 6

Who drew Which Horse? - Answers

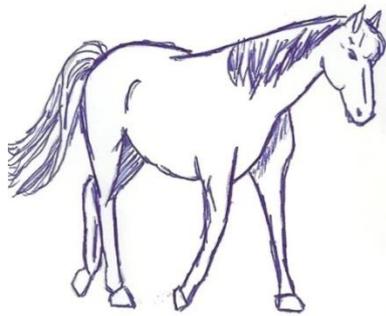
Appendix 2 Who drew Which Horse



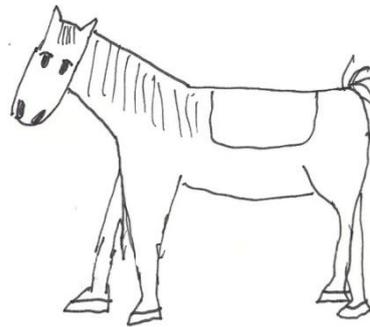
a. volunteer in a primary school, male, aged 37



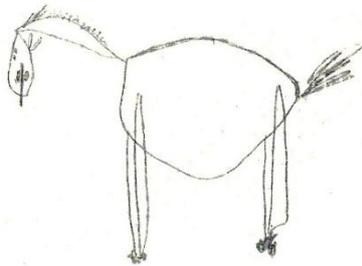
b. savant child, girl, aged 3



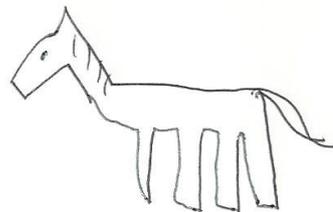
c. dinner supervisor, female, aged 36



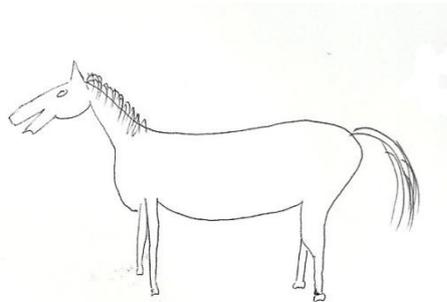
d. TA, female, aged 24



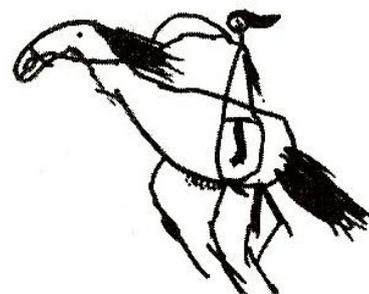
e. Picasso



f. primary school teacher, female, aged 41



g. secondary school teacher, male, aged 34



h. a young girl, aged 7

Appendix Three

Chapter Ten

The story the children forgot – Story Grammar analysis

One year on from my story/drawing sessions I return to school, to ask the children if they can remember the stories. I have noticed, in the past, that the children remember the stories we have made up months after the occasion, and I want to check with these children if this is so. I had not seen the children since last July, and, in moving to their new classroom, they have little to no contact with the reception teacher, Miss Hebden, who set it up for me to visit.

I pretend that I have forgotten the stories we told last year. I say that I have come in to ask them if *they* could remember any of the stories, to help me.

Of course, in reality, I can vividly remember the stories, because I have been studying them, and the subsequent drawings, for a year. But I consciously decided to feign ignorance, because I didn't want the children to feel that they were being tested in any way. If anything is being tested it is my theory!

I say, 'you remember we told stories last year, and did drawings afterwards?' Children nod. I say 'I've forgotten the stories. Can any of you remember any of them?' There is a slight pause. Then one brave voice says 'there was the one about the monster.'

After an increasingly energised and noisy session, about 20 minutes, I thank the children, and Jo and I leave. I am interested to note that the children have remembered all of the stories, except one. They have remembered character's names, and they have remembered beginnings, middles and endings of the stories – not in great detail, perhaps, but the bones of the stories are there, and I'm confident that if we had more time, detail would emerge.

Except for that one.

The one which wasn't mentioned was told by the teacher, Jo, and drawn by me. I decided to examine this story more closely, to see if I could identify what was so unmemorable about it. I used Stein and Glenn's 1979 story grammar structure⁴² (see Fig A3:1)

⁴² Stein N, & Glenn C, (1979), An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children, in Freedle R (Ed.), *Advances in discourse processes: Vol. 2. New directions in discourse processing*, Norwood NJ: Albex

Story Elements Defined by Stein and Glenn (1979)

Element	Definition	Example
Setting	Introduction of main characters	<i>Once upon a time there were three bears, the momma bear, the popa bear, and the baby bear. They all lived in a tiny house in a great big forest.</i>
Initiating Event	An action or happening that sets up a problem or dilemma for the story	<i>One day a little girl named Goldilocks came by.</i>
Internal Response	The protagonist's reactions to the initiating event	<i>She was surprised to see the house and noticed it was empty.</i>
Attempt	An action or plan of the protagonist to solve the problem	<i>She went inside to find the three bears gone and ate the baby bear's soup, broke the baby bear's chair, and fell asleep in the baby bear's bed.</i>
Consequence	The result of the protagonist's actions	<i>The bears return to find things eaten and broken and to find Goldilocks in the baby's bed.</i>
Reaction	A response by the protagonist to the consequence	<i>Goldilocks ran away.</i>

Fig A3:1

The Story of Captain Bead

It is pirate day! So when Jo asks the children what the story is going to be about, voices call out ‘a pirate!’, and she agrees.

The Story	My observation	Story Grammar as defined by Stein & Glenn (1979)
She asks the children what they think the pirate is called, and there are several ideas – one child says ‘Morgan’	Jo ignores the ‘Morgan’ suggestion ‘No, it wasn’t Morgan’, she says, dismissively – is it that she doesn’t know about the character – the ‘king’ of all the pirates (Wilczynski 2008)? I’m fascinated to know how the child knows about Morgan.	Setting – introduction to main characters
and someone says ‘Captain Jack Sparrow’ – making reference to the popular character of the Pirates of the Caribbean films	She accepts Capt. Jack Sparrow by saying that our pirate was friends with him.	Setting con’t
A girl, very quietly, says, what Jo thinks is, ‘Bead’, so that becomes his name.	I often wonder how much we misinterpret what the children say because we can’t hear them	Setting con’t
She explains how he only has one eye because his parrot accidentally pecked out the other one, and his remaining eye is very beady – so that’s why he’s called Captain Bead.		Setting con’t
She goes on to talk about the parrot, how he helps Capt. Bead see on that side – the children suggest his name is Demi.	The children very often come up with names which are existing characters (from TV, for instance). Someone like Capt. Jack Sparrow is an obvious one, but there are others from popular culture which I do not always know, and it is a risk using a name which already exists as a character, because in a child’s mind the character will have pre-existing attributes, and the story therefore should become an existing adventure and thus our story, will be ‘wrong’. It would be like the 3 bears go to Vegas (our invented story) instead of going out foraging and	Setting con’t

	being burgled.(existing story)	
The captain only has one arm too – and Jo explains how he lost one in a fight.	This is good stuff – setting up the Captain for adventures which require one eye and one arm.	Setting con't
He lives all by himself, and is very old and all his friends are dead, and the only company he has is Demi – who 'can't talk' says a voice. That's right, Demi couldn't talk, agrees Jo.	The child who makes this suggestion has clearly made the connection between 'parrots' and 'talking', and by suggesting that this parrot cannot talk he is, in essence, designing the story. This is the problem – parrots should be able to talk and this one can't.	Initiating event 1 – parrot cannot talk
A child says 'I met a parrot who could talk', and there is a chorus of voices calling 'Miss Hebden, Miss Hebden' – but she ignores them and carries on with the story.	The children never call out my name like this – 'Alex, Alex' – they just say what they are thinking (see discussion in Chapter Ten). Presumably they are doing this on this occasion because it is their teacher telling the story.	
One day Capt. Bead decides to get some fish for his supper - he doesn't have a rod – he leans over the side of the boat to try and catch them, but it was very difficult with only one hand	Watching the video, you can see the children are not properly settled – one child gets up to take off his jumper, and another fiddles with her pirate hat. For me, this is unlikely – where is his rod? He must have had one at some stage?	Contrary Initiating event 2 Attempt 2:1 Consequence 2:1
– so he decides to go ashore to get either a rod or something to eat.	This, for me, is where the story gets lost. We have a set up of a one eyed, one armed pirate, non-speaking parrot and a ship, and suddenly we are hungry. So we have the 'loaded guns' but are they going to get shot? Is the hunger anything to do with the non-speaking parrot?	Internal Response 2:1
He sails ashore –he turned his boat around with his one arm – he can see the beach in the distance - he hadn't been shore for a really really long time	I saw a pirate, says a girl, who is fiddling with her hat If he has not been ashore – what has he been eating?	Attempt 2:2
He meets some children in a dinghy – do you know what a dinghy is? It is a little boat which you blow up and you have to		(aside/clarification)

be really careful when you're at the seaside and you go for a ride because the waves can take you out (Miss Hebden – I've been to the beach) well, this isn't the beach it is the sea side	But she did say it was the beach earlier	
He goes up to the children in the dinghy and he waves his arm at them – but it wasn't his arm it was the one with the? HOOK! – yes, the hook, and the children looked at this and got really scared and they screamed, and jumped over the side and swam ashore screaming all the way!	Several children put their hands over their ears	Initiating event 3 Consequence 3:1
He tried to get hold of the dinghy to rescue it and do you know what happened? (he fell in the water) no he didn't fall in the water, but he reached out with his hook – and it POPPED	Jo rejects this idea – she has in mind the hook popping the dinghy Which is what happened.	Reaction 3:1
Alex intervenes by drawing the dinghy going off into the distance with extravagant farting noises and the children laugh	I like to think that I would have said yes to the falling in the water suggestion, we could still have the popping as the Captain tries to get into the boat and spears the dinghy with his hook – then he, too, would disappear with extravagant farty noises – perhaps to be thrown up onto the beach?	
When they got to the beach there were some boys and girls building sandcastles – Capt. Bead thinks – they might like a flag for their sand castle and he takes the skull and crossbones from his ship, and he takes it to the children - but they see the pirate and run off screaming and Capt. Bead bursts into tears because he just wanted a friend	The telling during this section is stilted because, for some reason, Jo is concerned about my drawing and she is waiting for me to draw rather than ignoring me and leaving me to catch up. The skull + crossbones is also confusing – because he would have had to have had it with him all the time, but it was not mentioned so where did it come from?	Internal response 3:1 Consequence 3:2 Reaction 3:2
He decides to put the flag onto the sand castle anyway, but, you were right, he fell over and he squashed the sandcastle and broke the flag and he said 'oh dear, I'm having an awful day'.	A child has suggested, during the previous section, that Capt. Bead falls over	Consequence 3:3 Consequence 3:4 Internal response 3:2
Anyway, he carries on, because his tummy is rumbling and suddenly he smells something really nice	At this point the children offer suggestions – one child says 'ice cream',	Internal response 2:2

	<p>and in the video you can see her smiling broadly as she says it. Someone else says 'it is the burger van' But Jo has in her head fish and chips, so she rejects the ideas, and gives clues as to what he can smell – 'he was trying to catch it earlier'</p>	
<p>So he sets off to find the fish and chip shop. He goes in, but guess what the lady in the shop did? She...? 'screamed!' say the children</p>	<p>The children have grasped that this is what happens when people see Capt. Bead</p>	<p>Attempt 2:3 Consequence 2:2</p>
<p>Capt. Bead decides he's going to have some fish and chips anyway, so he helps himself, and leaves some gold coins to pay</p>	<p>At this point you can see several children have lost concentration and they are looking around, and one or two are talking to each other.</p>	<p>Internal response 2:2 Attempt 2:4</p>
<p>Capt. Bead goes down to the beach and sits on a bench but then he realises he is going to have real problems eating because he only has the one hand. He transfers the bag to his hook, dropping half his chips in the process, and tries to eat</p>	<p>The children obviously are concerned about this: 'why doesn't he put it on the table?' says one child. 'Why can't he eat with his other hand?' asks another child – and Jo explains his predicament with miming. There is a chorus of suggestions as to what he might do, including having a pretend hand...</p>	<p>Attempt 2:4</p>
<p>Over in the distance he could see some boys and girls, and he could hear them shouting and saying 'oh no, what we gonna do!'</p>		<p>Initiating event 4</p>
<p>And what he could see that the children were playing with a kite, and (you know don't you?) it had blown up into the trees and they couldn't get it down You're right Tommy – that's what they did – they called the dad – 'dad, dad, it is stuck in the tree' and the dad went home and got some ladders and he climbed up, but he couldn't quite reach</p>	<p>This remark is made to a child who says 'it got stuck' At this point Tommy says 'they could ask the dad to get it down' The children are quite energised, and there are quite a few suggestions being offered while Jo is talking</p>	
<p>And Capt. Bead says to himself, hang on a minute, I could be of help here – how do you think? She asks the children</p>	<p>And there is a chorus of suggestions – you can hear the word 'hook'</p>	<p>Internal response 4:1</p>

	being shouted	
You're right, Jo says. But he doesn't want to frighten anyone, so he puts his chip papers in the bins, and he slowly goes over to the children	The children quieten, knowing that the next piece of action is about to unfold	
'Don't scream, don't scream,' says Capt. Bead, 'but you see, I've got a hook, and I reckon if I go up that tree I could just about help you'		
So he climbs up the tree, and he's wobbling about and he can't quite reach, but at the last moment, Demi flies up and she gets the bit of string in her beak and she gives it to Capt. Bead, and they come down the ladder	So, actually, we didn't need the Captain or his hook (i.e. the suggestion by the children has been rejected)	Attempt 4:1 Consequence 4:1
And Capt. Bead starts to walk away, because he knows they don't want to be his friend, but you know what happened? One of the boys – do you know what his name was?	This is a rhetorical question – Jo leaves no time for suggestions This time she does wait for suggestions	Reaction 4:1
'Excuse me, Pirate' says the boy. Who me?' says Capt. Bead. Yes' says the boy. 'Since you helped us, we were wondering if you'd like to come with us and get some fish and chips? What do you think he said? Yes, that's what happened, and they became friends, and from that day on every Saturday, they would all go on Capt. Bead's boat, and he was really, really happy because he had lots of friends	3 girls are having a conversation and get shushed by a fierce TA The children nod their heads and say 'yea!'	Reaction 4:2 Consequence 4:2 ending
And that is? The? 'END' shout the children	That was very nice, says a voice, and the children wave good-bye to Pirate Bead.	

'A story schema consists of a set of expectations about the kinds of units found in stories and the way in which they are sequenced.' So said Mandler and Deforest in 1979. They did an experiment, with children and adults, whereby the participants were told stories, and, 24 hours later, they were asked to recall the stories. However, some of the participants were told 2 stories, at the same time, where the events were jumbled together. The data which transpired

suggest that the most important characteristic of stories in determining recall is not that they are prose passages and thus somehow more meaningful than sentences or lists of words, but that they have a particular kind of schematic structure. Experience with this kind of structure leads to the development of specifiable sets of cognitive operations controlling both comprehension and memory. When asked to retell a story, people use a schema to start and stop their recall and, more particularly, to order it in a specific way. Not only do they recall in this manner when left to their own devices, but this way of retrieving is so ingrained, even in children, that they have great difficulty in recalling in any other way. (p 888)

So for recall, the story has to make sense. The story Jo told did make sense after a fashion. There were some inconsistencies – for instance, Captain Bead inefficiently and inexpertly going fishing with nothing but his hook is unlikely, and wouldn't it have been lovely if, over the years, he had found an innovative and eccentric way of eating, rather than spilling his chips through incompetence?

But, for me, there were two glaring issues with the story:

1. We were given the perfect set-up at the beginning, when a child clearly said that Demi, the parrot, could not talk. I know it is easy to say 'oh, I would have done things differently', and, in this case, I hope I would have. But that is not the point. The point is that Jo missed that opportunity, and the story became laboured, and uninspired. Instead of adventures with cough drops, and elocution lessons from a man with a bone in his nose (yo ho), we leave the ship, the sea – the whole *raison d'être* for having a pirate in the first place, and we go ashore – without even falling in the water! None of the things in the beginning were necessary to the story – we had no need of the pirate, the parrot (talking or not), the ship or the hook – it was unsatisfactory, and, looking at the video, my feeling is that the children instinctively knew it.

2. There were several occasions when the ideas of the children were rejected – and the rejection made no difference to the story action. Jo rejected the idea that Captain Bead should fall in the water, for instance, because she had in her mind that he was going to spear the dinghy with his hook. She rejected the ideas the children offered for what he might eat, because she had decided he was going to have fish and chips. And in fact, at one point she asked the children if they could guess, but, for me, for ‘guess’ read ‘be tested’. The children, in turn, guessed that she already knew the answer, and thus they knew that they were back into teacher/pupil land, where teacher asks questions which she already knows the answer to. There have been numerous observations of this. Cousins (1996:30, for instance, quotes a 5 year old traveller child, not used to the systems of school, asking his teacher ‘Why do you keep asking the kids questions when you knows all the answers? Like... like ... what colour is it then? You can see for your self it’s red... so why do you keep asking them?’ Eisner(1991:76) considers that ‘students learn quickly what adults believe is important for them to learn’, and adding to this for my purpose, Punch (2002:325) says ‘Children are not used to expressing their views freely or being taken seriously by adults because of their position in adult-dominated society.’ An example of this is given by Hatch (1990) who asks a child where she likes playing in the classroom, and the child lists different places, ending with “is it computer?”, as if there is a ‘right’ answer.

So the story was not satisfactory, and this is reflected in the fact that it became unmemorable.

Appendix Four

Chapter Eleven

Dr Ferre Laevers'* Leuven Scale for Well-being

1 Extremely low

The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming. They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/herself or others.

2 Low

The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.

3 Moderate

The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort.

4 High

The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.

5 Extremely high

The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He/she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expresses self-confidence and self-assurance.

The Leuven Scale for Involvement

1 Extremely low

Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.

2 Low

Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.

3 Moderate

Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.

4 High

Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.

5 Extremely high

The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period.

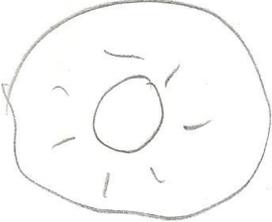
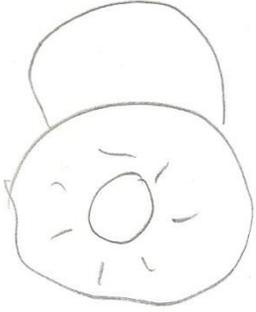
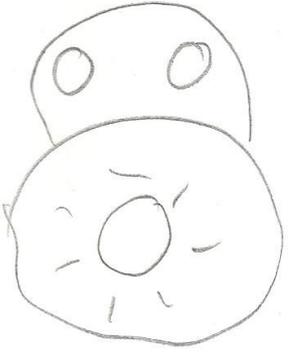
* *Ferre Laevers (2003)*

Appendix Five

Rae's Rudolph

More formula drawing

An example of where ‘formula’ drawing shows lack of initiative by the drawer happened during a Christmas games session with the family. Rae is 8 years old, bright, enthusiastic, and a good drawer. We were playing a game of ‘pictionary’, where the one who is ‘it’ draws, with no words or vocalising, a given subject for the rest of the team to guess. Rae went out of the room to be given his topic, and returned beaming. ‘This one’s easy’, he said, and drew this:

	<p>An immediate babble of suggestions burst from the rest of the team ‘the sun, it’s the sun!’ but Rae shook his head. Then he added this:</p>
	<p>‘The universe the solar system outer space, fried egg’ said the team.... But Rae, frowning a little, shook his head, and added this:</p>
	<p>By now the team are confused, and so is Rae. He is certain that what he is drawing is obvious, but to us it is ambiguous. ‘Glitzy handbag’ says someone, but Rae draws this:</p>
	<p>"Oooohhhhhh’ say the team, for suddenly the meaningless set of lines have become something – and again the suggestions start to fly ‘ it’s a mouse, a dog!!’ Rae shakes his head and draws this:</p>

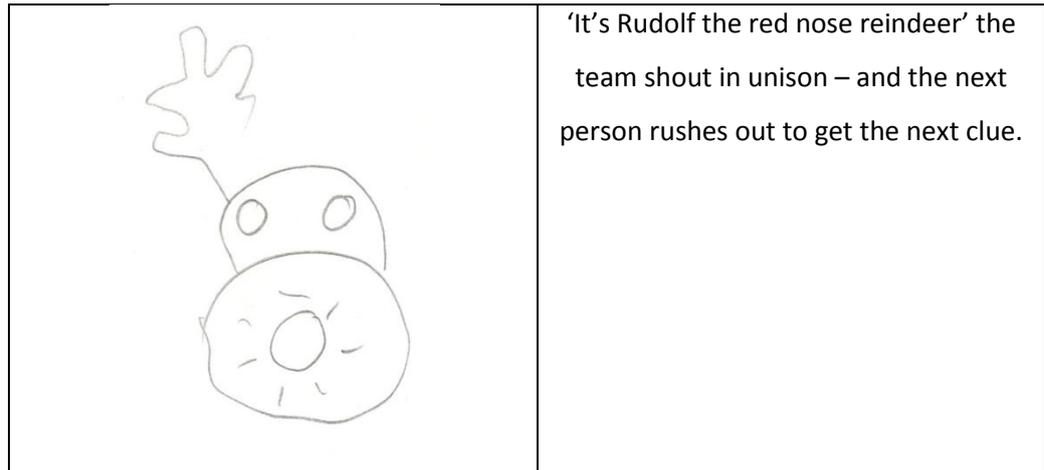


Fig A5:1 Rae's formula 'Rudolph' drawing⁴³

My point is that if Rae had not had a formula to draw to, he would have thought more instinctively about how to portray the essence of Rudolph to us – the way he had been drawing previously and did subsequently in the game. But because he had his formula, because he stuck rigidly to the formula, even though he could see that it was confusing us and not giving us the information we needed, the instinctive, thoughtful way of portraying the essence of the idea went out the window

⁴³ I managed to salvage Rae's final drawing, as I had recognised, during the game, its significance for this piece of work. I asked Rae if I could use it, and he agreed. We remembered, together, the order he had made the lines, and I digitally manipulated the drawing to show the progress of its development.

Appendix Six

Examples of Staff Observation forms

Child's Name: [REDACTED]

Observer's Name: [REDACTED]

Date and am/pm 12/5/2001 - AM

Really quick précis of the story ... Mr David and his nose.

Observation	Mark /10 where 10 is high	Comment? (changes to 'normal' behaviour)
Level of focus on story (sitting still, up on haunches, wriggling to the front, bored, irritating others, whining)	8	Really interested in the story. Uery focussed. Paying real attention. Sat still watching.
Contribution to process Comments & questions, laughing, looking scared etc	4	Laughing at his nose. Pretended to be scared. Laughing lots.
Final comments of story time		Kept his focus/attention throughout. Laughed and Smiled - No comments
Level of confidence in drawing (dithering, looking at others, head down doing it)	8	Starts drawing straight away. Looking around. Motivated
Motivation to draw (filling page, wanting more paper)	9	Filling most of the page. knew what he wanted to draw. Large picture.
Length of time drawing Approx minutes or in comparison to others	4	Finished quickly approx - 5 minutes.
Relevance of drawing to story?		(big giant with a knife) (going to cut his nose off)
Type of drawing? (action - could look like a scribble Narrative - and this bit is where this happened etc Photo - drawing a 'frame' of the story)		Photo - frame of the story. Man cutting his nose off.
Final observations on drawing time Including position when drawing - at table, sitting on floor, sprawling, etc		At table. - Good detail clearly identifiable picture of a man with a big nose and a knife.
Final observations on this session Really interested in any observable differences or changes in behaviour, drawings etc		[REDACTED] clearly enjoyed the story and activity. He was confident in drawing and the picture was detailed and clearly identifiable.

Fig A6:1 Staff observation form: Jonathan

Observation Sheet for Story/Drawing sessions

Child's Name: [REDACTED]
 Observer's Name: Jo Hebden
 Date and am/pm: 10.45 (9.6.11)
 Really quick précis of the story: Miss Hebden's Birthday.

Observation	Mark /10 where 10 is high	Comment? (changes to 'normal' behaviour)
Level of focus on story (sitting still, up on haunches, wriggling to the front, bored, irritating others, whining)		Excited → Mr Fox Man. Sitting up tall. Pointing - 'That can't be laughing - alert eyes! (mouth open.) ✓ engrossed! wiggling hands at part.
Contribution to process Comments & questions, laughing, looking scared etc		'she got a little bit grumpy' 'stop it witch' 'somebody knocking' 'He had a paecake' make a comment to Ellis about it. 'Morrison's'
Final comments of story time		looked at Ellis + did a 'questioning face?' yeah... and the witch... Did cross face spontaneously. ...the witch... copied wiggly fingers. she's saying she wants a
Level of confidence in drawing (dithering, looking at others, head down doing it)		stared straight away at the paper collection table! fight from her!
Motivation to draw (filling page, wanting more paper)		laughed to self... 'Me + my dad + Jed and Aaron doing rugby again. story? 'No it's real hard' 'it's boring'.
Length of time drawing Approx minutes or in comparison to others		7 mins.
Relevance of drawing to story?		That's the witch with the big hat, bigger than one. That's you with a big face.
Type of drawing? (action - could look like a scribble Narrative - and this bit is where this happened etc Photo - drawing a 'frame' of the story)		
Final observations on drawing time Including position when drawing - at table, sitting on floor, sprawling, etc		
Final observations on this session Really interested in any observable differences or changes in behaviour, drawings etc		

Fig A6:2 Staff observation form: Tommy

Observation Sheet for Story/Drawing sessions

Child's Name: [REDACTED]

Observer's Name: [REDACTED]

Date and am/pm ... 18th May 2011 11am

Really quick précis of the story

.....

.....

Observation	Mark /10 where 10 is high	Comment? (changes to 'normal' behaviour)
Level of focus on story (sitting still, up on haunches, wriggling to the front, bored, irritating others, whining)		Sat still and watching everything that's happening and being drawn. unusual for [REDACTED] to be sat still on bottom
Contribution to process Comments & questions, laughing, looking scared etc		looking. Not really showing any expression during story
Final comments of story time		Focusing on what was happening in story but not showing any expression.
Level of confidence in drawing (dithering, looking at others, head down doing it)		Got straight on with drawing
Motivation to draw (filling page, wanting more paper)		filled page with little drawings from parts of story. Got another piece of paper.
Length of time drawing Approx minutes or in comparison to others		finished quickly only drew for about 5 minutes. Got another piece of paper and did 5 more mins.
Relevance of drawing to story?		
Type of drawing? (action - could look like a scribble Narrative - and this bit is where this happened etc Photo - drawing a 'frame' of the story)		drew house, building, crocodile, Snake, crocodile jumping on trampoline and hospital. Alien?.
Final observations on drawing time Including position when drawing - at table, sitting on floor, sprawling, etc		Sat up, legs crossed paper on knees.
Final observations on this session Really interested in any observable differences or changes in behaviour, drawings etc		Seemed to be really interested in what was happening in story and had full concentration on Alex although didn't show any expression throughout.

Fig A6:3 Staff observation form: Jenny

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Figure	Name	Location & Permission info where required
Fig 4:1	<i>Lascaux Cave painting</i>	Lascaux Cave Web Location: Http://Www.Lascaux.Culture.Fr/?Lng=En#/Fr/02_00.Xml Accessed 19 March 2012
Fig 4:4	<i>Royal Enfield Revelation</i>	Location Of Royal Enfield Revelation: Http://Hadland.Wordpress.Com/2012/06/25/Royal-Enfield-Revelation/ Accessed 27 July 2012
Fig 4:7	<i>Nature Morte au Crane – Cezanne</i>	Permission given by the Barnes foundation Paul Cézanne, French, 1839–1906 <i>Still Life with Skull (Nature morte au crâne)</i> 1896–1898 Oil on canvas, 21 3/8 x 25 3/4 in. (54.3 x 65.4 cm) The Barnes Foundation, BF329
Fig 4:8	<i>Illustration by M White for Dafydd & the Lady of the Lake</i>	White M, (1981), Illustrator Of Dafydd And The Lady Of The Lake, In Riordan J (1981), <i>A World Of Folk Tales</i> , London, Hamlyn With Permission of the publishers
Fig 4:10	<i>Red Sea Sharks, Herge 1960:31 © CASTERMAN S.A</i>	“Graphics from the work of Hergé are protected by copyright and may not be used without prior written authorisation from MOULINSART (contact: cecile.camberlin@moulinsart.be) Permission granted
Fig 4:11	<i>Will Eisner 2008:119</i>	From GRAPHIC STORYTELLING AND VISUAL NARRATIVE by Will Eisner. Copyright © 1996 by Will Eisner. Copyright (c) 2008 by Will Eisner Studios, Inc. Used by permission of W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
Fig 11:1	<i>Durer, woodcut, man drawing a lute 1525</i>	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:D%C3%BCrer_-_Man_Drawing_a_Lute.jpg accessed 24 June 2012
Fig 11:2	<i>Medieval fold-out painting of Backgammon game</i>	Http://Historicgames.Com/Alphonso/F75V.Html Accessed 2 August 2012
Fig 11:4	Burnham Overy Staithe, Glynn Thomas	Image supplied by the artist With permission from the artist
Fig 12:2	<i>Cross Section of a lead mine</i>	From the copy owned by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin: Negative No. WHi (x3) 8420 http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/wireader/Images/WER0804.html Accessed 2 April 2012

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