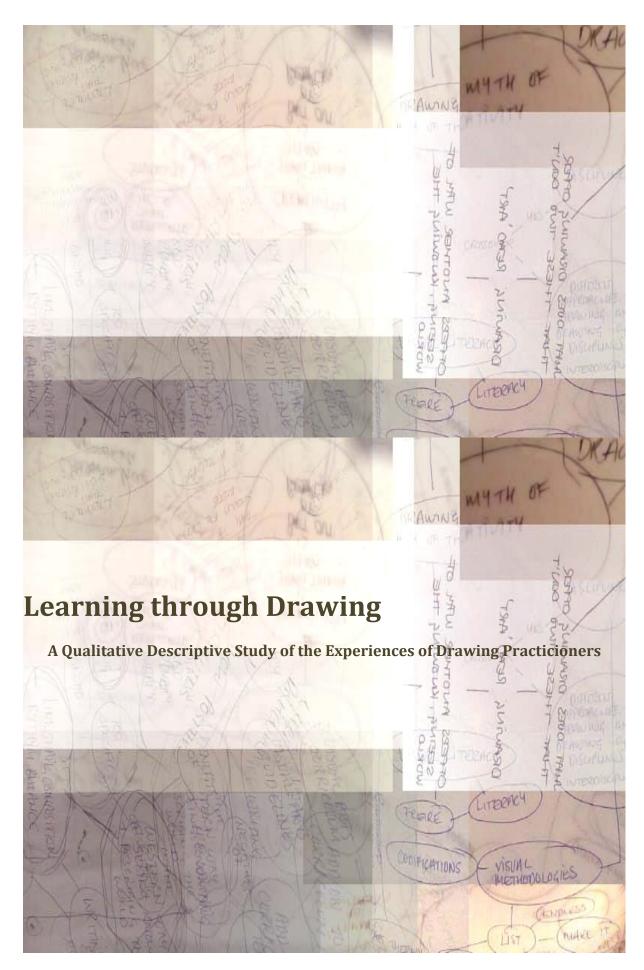Submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the M.ed in Adult and Community Education

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# Learning through Drawing

**A Qualitative Descriptive Study of the Experiences of Drawing Practicioners**

**Declaration**

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master in Adult, Community and Further Education of the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. This thesis has not been submitted for any academic assessment to any other University. I confirm that this thesis is my own work and assistance received has been acknowledged.

Signed:

Date:

## Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the participation of the people who took part in this study. I would like to thank them sincerely for their valued contributions and their time.

I would also like to acknowledge and sincerely thank my research supervisor Bernie Grummell whose patience, guidance and expertise has been much appreciated throughout this journey. To the wider staff within the Department of Adult Education and my classmates with whom I shared this journey I would also like to extend my thanks.

To all of my friends and family thank you for your endless support, advice, patience. Finally I would like to thank my dad who always encouraged me to draw.

**Abstract**

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Drawing as a tool for learning is both undervalued and underutilised in current educational systems. Outdated understandings and conceptions of what drawing is and what it can be used for are embedded and perpetuated throughout our learning environments. As such, there is a necessity to describe and articulate the process of drawing so that its learning potential may be further explored.

Within our educational enviroments there exists hierachies of knowledge that premise rational and logical ways of knowing the world. By succumbing to these hierarchies we invalidate other ways of knowing and experiencing the world.This results in the isolation and neglect of our full range of human capabilites and intelligences. The mystification and spiritualisation of art out of connection with our everyday lives is discussed as it affects the instrumentality of drawing.Through a discussion of the experiences of the participants involved in this research we can come to a fuller understanding of how they use drawing in their daliy lives. The aim of this research is to explore and discuss the possilbties that exist for drawing as a learning tool.

The findings of this research relate to and support themes that have emerged throughout the literature review. This research found that drawing as a method of communication, a therapeutic tool, and also as a vital means of self-expression has a large role to play in learning settings.

**Table of Contents**

**Chapter One-Introduction**

**Chapter Two-Literature Review** **16**

**Chapter Three-Literature Review** **29**

# Chapter One-Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

Apparently inspired by a leaking milk truck, the road markings of North America constitute one of the largest drawings in human history. Criss-crossing and intersecting across this vast continent the function of this drawing is road safety. These road markings, one of the simplest line drawings ever articulated, have had a phenomenal effect on human behaviour. Farthing (2011, p.21-24) recounts the story of this evolving drawing as a way to understand and appreciate a wider conception of what drawing is and the role it plays in our lives. What this story illustrates is the extraordinary impact that drawing has had on our world and also how much we are surrounded by it in our daily lives. Nearly everything around us that is manmade started life as a drawing.

Some of the earliest recorded drawings in human culture have been found in the Lascaux caves in Southern France. These drawings estimated to be nearly 20,000 years old depict animals and humans in various interacting poses. We can only speculate as to the purpose of the cave drawings but their discovery has given us an unparalleled connection to the past which allows us to investigate and attempt to understand what it was that the people who made these marks were trying to communicate. Dewey (2005) claims that the drawings in the caves were used "to keep alive to the senses experiences with animals that were so closely bound with the lives of humans" (p.5). He also reminds us that these earliest artworks had no connection with contemporary conceptions of art, these caves were not a museum or gallery but "were a part of the significant life of an organised community" (p.5). Walter (2015) had the opportunity to research the caves at Lascaux believes that the invention and development of symbolic expression is the most supreme innovation in the history of humankind superseding *both* the stone tool and the steel sword. Drawing as the original form of symbolic expression paved the way for the written word facilitating the vast waves of communication that followed. It is this function of drawing, its innate communicative nature, compounded by its versatility and adaptability that has secured its position as one of man-kinds greatest achievements. If we look to the markings made on human bodies, through both scarification and pigment, that have persisted for thousands of years and still exist throughout indigenous tribal cultures we can more readily assess

the function of these early markings. Used variously for religious, hunting, military, and emotional reasons or to mark a rite of passage the function of these drawings on the body was to mark out that person for reasons of tribal identification, spiritual protection, conquests in tribal wars, or as a symbol of fertility. These early forms of mark making had very specific functions and their purpose was understood by all members of the community. Our ancestors appreciated the vitality and primacy of drawing and acknowledged and embedded it in their lives in a much more functional and explicit way.

Although we cannot with any certainty establish the function of the cave drawings at Lascaux what these drawings can attest to is the longevity of drawing throughout human culture. Taylor (2012) makes plain that the act of drawing is not only celebrated because of the length of its history but also because it retains its functionality as "a means to translate document, record and analyse the worlds we inhabit" (p.9). As we can see from the examples given above drawing has been used throughout the history of human culture as a vital means of communicating both our interior and exterior worlds. Drawing is used for multiple functions and found in an array of diverse contexts. However, within our educational systems today and within culture more broadly a solitary conception of what drawing is persists. This conception informed primarily by drawings relationship with the formal subject of art, significantly constricts the learning potential of drawing as I will illustrate throughout this thesis.

## 1.2 Drawing and Education

Drawing and the role it plays in a person's education is typically a short lived and transitory endeavour. Throughout educational systems drawing as a tool for learning is underutilised and where *it is* used its conception is both limiting and formative. Research on drawing in the context of education is primarily focused on early childhood education. Within this context the role of drawing is primarily a subsidiary one used to support the mechanical dexterity needed to write. Through the initial grasping and holding of the pencil, to the establishment of the necessary grip and pressure needed to make a mark and repeat it, the child learns all the drawing she needs in order to make the shapes that constitute the alphabet. A child may make scribbles and scratches upon

paper intuitively, but this activity is encouraged not as a means of self-expression in itself, but as a way to prepare the child for the more important activity of writing. Learning to read and write is a prerequisite of an early education, learning to draw is not. Once reading and writing skills are acquired drawing is thus relegated to the art room where if it is used again it is only in a very superficial way without any kind of instrumental instruction. Where drawing does continue it is typically used for illustrative purposes by means of representational drawing.

Throughout education systems there exists a hierarchy of communication skills with reading and writing long established as the essential skills. With our earliest encounters with drawing in mind I would state that the subsidiary role that drawing plays is formative in our understanding of what drawing is and what it can be used for. By relegating drawing to the art room we position it in the minds of learners as something less than the most promoted methods of communication. Acknowledging the verbal and written hierarchy Taylor (2012) positions this impasse not just as an educational issue but one that exists more commonly in society. She calls for drawing to be interspersed throughout curriculums in order to "guarantee drawing as a valid vehicle of communication" (2012, p.10). We need multiple ways of knowing the world. Visual literacy, the ability to read understand and compile visual information is not premised throughout education systems. This literacy can be achieved through learning the visual language of drawing. I will argue that drawing is another way, another approach that we can use to learn about, name and know our worlds.

 The field of educational psychology has put forward the most prominent research on children's artistic development. The majority of this research is organised around stage theories of development. Piaget (1956) devised his theory of a child's artistic growth based on an assumption that a child's drawing follows a universal development that external factors do not influence. Piaget's framework proposes discrete drawing stages that a child will progress through. These stages are based on a U-Curve that flows from early scribbles and mark making and ultimately ends up at an advanced stage of visual realism. This developmental theory has been criticised by Barrett (2006, p.19-28) who argues that development shown in a drawing needs to be assessed within the context of the task that the child was asked or instructed to carry out. Kindler (2004,p.233-252) argues that the U-curve of artistic development employed by Piaget is not a suitable

gauge of artistic development as it is based on a western perspective which denies the validity of the aesthetic values held by other cultures and societies.

## 1.3 Drawing within Adult Education

Within the field of adult education there is a distinct lack of research with regards to adults and drawing. Where research does exist drawing is not explicitly stated but rather presumed and subsumed as part of a variety of artistic strategies used. Pockets of drawing practice can be evidenced throughout further education and adult learning environments but are the exception rather than the rule.  Specialised areas of adult education such as arts therapy and women's education often use artistic strategies as a way to explore issues that are fundamental to learner's lives and as a means to articulate their lived experiences. Community education uses artistic strategies in a much more explicit way. Kelly (1999, p.17-21) speaking on the arts more broadly says they can be witnessed more within the sphere of community education with empowerment being the central concern of these endeavours. The most prominent role that drawing plays in the adult education sector is within the subjects of art and design where it is a distinct module that underpins art and design courses.  As I will discuss throughout this thesis, equating drawing exclusively with art can also be problematic. Drawing is a multidisciplinary activity, but its intrinsic association with the formal subject of art can be detrimental to any attempt at a more democratic application of drawing processes. As Farthing (2011) notes attempts to understand the multi-faceted nature of drawing, are hugely complicated by drawings relationship with the words "talent, giftedness and most of all art" (p.21).

As I will illustrate throughout this thesis there is a need for much more research in terms of what drawing can bring to adult learning environments. The communicative, expressive and therapeutic potentials of drawing are equally as valid in terms of an adult's development and education as they are to a child. Drawing has the potential as I will discuss throughout this thesis to be used in a much more explicit way than is currently the case.  There is a need to consider and affirm the value of drawing in terms of its potential for use in learning environments. This need necessitates a requirement

to sever drawings connection with fine art and to reconceptualise it as a vital communicative, expressive and therapeutic tool.

## 1.4 Background to the Study

This research is influenced by my own experience of learning to draw in both formal and non-formal learning settings. It is also heavily influenced by own belief in drawing as another way of knowing the world. Drawing plays a large role in my personal artistic practice within which it has opened up new ways of knowing and understanding the world. Throughout my own educational journey I have experienced drawing in a number of different ways both traditional and more experimental contemporary approaches. The contrast and tension between my conceptions of what drawing can be and how it is used in educational settings prompted me to question the function and purpose of drawing and how it could be used in a more effective way. For me drawing has always been contextualised in terms of an artistic practice and my move into education has offered me an opportunity to re-conceive of drawing in terms of how it can be used as a learning tool. My understanding of drawing is now expanding in order to accommodate how it may be used not just in terms of arts education but in terms of adult education more generally.

Underlying this thesis is my belief that drawing can assist in facilitating the cultivation of the imagination and creativity in learning settings. This belief is influenced by the work of Maxine Greene, which is premised on the idea that releasing the imagination can lead to empathy and ultimately freedom. I believe that education should offer people the practical methods for navigating their worlds and that the process of education should be meaningful and draw on a person's lived experiences. Drawing as another way of seeing and knowing the world can provide learners with more resources for navigating their worlds. This research is not proposing drawing as an all-encompassing methodology, but rather seeks to offer a tentative proposal or suggestion that drawing needs to be re-considered and re-understood in terms of what it can do for learning.

## 1.5 Rationale for the Study

There is strong support within the broader drawing community for research that seeks to understand drawing outside of its implication with art. This study will form part of an ongoing dialogue that seeks to reinterpret our understanding of what drawing is. It is premised on the need for a re-conceptualisation of what drawing is. The aim of this study is to provide a detailed account of the experience of adults who use drawing in both their personal artistic practices and in their professional lives. The objective is to collect and collate these experiences so that these experiences may inform a broader understanding of drawing with the intention of furthering a more democratic application of drawing processes. This research aims to explore with the participants how they view drawing and how they use it in their lives with the intention of affirming the value of drawing as a valid learning tool. By doing this we may move towards a re-conception of drawing practices and how they may be implicated in learning environments. The lack of existing research in relation to this topic serves to further underline the justification and rationale of this study.

More specifically, this research will explore the historical reasons underlying why drawing is not taught in any perceivable or explicit way throughout educational systems. I will examine the premising of visual realism and investigate and explore common myths and perceptions that surround drawing. Due to the lack of existing research in regards to drawing in adult education this research will in *part* be framed through broader dialogues concerning aesthetic education. It will also be heavily informed by both educational and art discourses. Throughout this research the aim is to establish the value of drawing so that a better rounded conception of drawing can emerge.

## 1.6 Structure of Thesis

Chapter One will introduce the reader to the central research topic. It will also familiarise the reader with the background to the study and discuss the rationale for the research undertaken. It will then proceed to outline the structure of the thesis and conclude the chapter.

Chapter Two forms the first aspect of the literature review. This chapter will discuss the decline of drawing in educational systems and the premising of visual realism. In recognition of the need to demystify art it will then discuss the work of John Berger. Following on from this it will discuss inter-disciplinarity in light of its role in adult education.

Chapter Three contains the second aspect of the literature review. This chapter will explore the role that the imagination plays in learning, discussing hierarchies of knowledge and multiple intelligences. It will then discuss the role that drawing plays within the process of codifications and dialogical drawing encounters.

Chapter Four is the methodology chapter which outlines and discusses the research approach used in this study. It will discuss sampling and inclusion criteria, data analysis, interview process and research limitations. It will conclude with a consideration of ethical concerns.

Chapter Five contains the findings of this research. It provides an overview of the data that emerged as a result of the interview process. It outlines these findings in terms of the themes that emerged throughout the analysis of the data collected.

Chapter Six is the discussion chapter and as such discusses the findings from this research. The discussion focuses the findings in light of the themes that were distilled from the analysis and in relation to ideas that emerged throughout the literature review.

Chapter Seven contains the conclusion to the research process. It concludes with the contention that there is a need to reaffirm the value of drawing in learning environments. It also contains a reflection on my learning throughout the research process

## 1.7 Conclusion

This chapter in the first instance outlined the diverse nature of drawing in all its multiplicities. It also established the role that drawing currently occupies in learning environments. Acknowledged in this chapter, was that the most abundant research in terms of drawing and education is within the realm of early childhood education. I additionally acknowledged the lack of research concerning drawing throughout adult and further education. Also addressed was the background to the research study which acknowledged both personal and professional motivating factors for the research. This chapter also discussed the justifications and rationale for the research undertaken and acknowledged the factors that influenced these decisions. The aims and objectives of the study were also laid out in addition to the structure of the thesis.

# Chapter Two-Literature Review

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with the acknowledgement of the decline of drawing within education settings over the latter half of the twentieth century and the reasons underlying this decline. It will then discuss the persistence of visual realism and how this persistence reinforces common drawing myths. The first section of this chapter is located and contextualised within the sphere of art historical discourses. It then moves to situate the discussion in terms of contemporary educational discourses. Through a discussion of the work of John Berger I will argue that there is a pressing need to demystify art. Following on from this I will discuss the arguments of Elliot Eisner that argue against implicating art across curriculums. I will argue that inter-disciplinarity is essential to a holistic vision of adult education. In the final section of this chapter I will discuss and put forward contemporary definitions of drawing in an attempt to articulate drawing in terms of its learning potential.

## 2.2 The Decline of Drawing

Drawing has always played an unacknowledged but foundational role throughout the discipline of fine art. For centuries drawing was the first skill that had to be mastered before a student of art could progress to painting, sculpture and architecture. The sketchbooks of great masters attest to the fundamental role that drawing played in this regard. Drawing played a vital and necessary role but one that was essentially preparatory. Within general education but also society more broadly the initial demise of drawing can be attributed to the wide spread adoption of photography as a way to document and record the world. Photography was viewed as an objective medium, one that could impartially record the truth about our experiences of the world. The immediacy of photography and the fact that it is also relatively accessible to most people has secured its position as our most utilised means of communication. The false objectivity that was attributed to photography has seen it being implicated in a multitude of ways across our public spheres. Photographic evidence is admissible in courts and photo journalism has in both positive and negative ways vastly changed our

perspectives on the world. The idea of placing a camera between us and the world, and this camera acting as a container for truth, disregarding human framing, has long since been discredited. Photography has lost any claims to objectivity yet the power of photographic images to purport to the truth still lingers. The Italian photographer Davide Monteleones on completing a photography exhibition examining the fragmentation of Czechnyian identity aptly surmised that "we can never photograph the truth only interpretations of it" (as cited in Weeks, 2013, para5).

More specifically, the decline of drawing within art education can also be attributed to photography, but within this sphere, drawings decline was compounded by the emergence of conceptual art. When Du Champ submitted his work *Fountain* (1917) for exhibition what was born in this moment was the idea that anything could be art depending on the artist's intentions. Conceptual art and its premising of ideas and process over a finished product, overturned the ideals and values that art had held for hundreds of years. What this meant for drawing and for traditional art more generally were that the skills of painting, drawing and sculpture fell out of favour. The adoption of conceptual art as the pivot around which art school curriculums swung was well established by the latter half of the twentieth century. Thus in art schools the slow erosion of drawing and some say artistic skill and integrity could be witnessed. The artist Jim Dennison (2001) laments that "although the desire for immediate expression (through conceptual art) can be compelling it is very often a smoke screen for blindness and incompetence" (p.287).

As a result of the widespread adoption of photography and the emergence of conceptual art drawing became perceived as an old fashioned and irrelevant skill. A skill that was not transferable to the ever increasing pace of modern societies. More recently Fava (2011) cites the non-verbal nature of drawing as one possible reason for the continuing deterioration of drawing in educational settings. The non-verbal nature of drawing does not sit well within assessment procedures whose objective is to make learning explicit. Fava cautions that drawing may be further isolated to the periphery of learning as "as it cannot compete with more explicitly measurable skills" (2011, p.130). The implications of the acceptance of these neo-liberal values will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

## 2.3 The Persistence of Visual Realism

A popular understanding   of what constitutes a good drawing rests upon the myth that a good drawing is one that depicts a likeness for the subject or object portrayed. The height of this obsession and dependence on visual realism can be traced to the enlightenment era. In his documentary film, The Secret of Drawing, Ian MacMillan (2008) claims that drawing has been the foundation stone of modern science and established the ground rules for empirical scientific research. He expands on this by illuminating the link between drawing and the natural sciences. The purpose of this type of drawing was objectivity and accuracy in a bid to stem the enlightenment obsession with categorising the natural world. This reach towards visual realism or the illusion of reality as Gombrich (1960) termed it can be traced throughout the entire history of western art reaching its pinnacle during the enlightenment. This illusion of reality is achieved through a set of systematic artistic conventions rather than a faithful reproduction of the natural world. Howells (2003, p.136) maintains that with the arrival of post impressionism artists were no longer interested in producing visually realistic work. Due to the class based nature and the insularity of some disciplines, such as art, what happens within this sphere is to a certain extent happening within a vacuum. Within educational systems, visual realism persisted in being held up as the ideal. Anning (2012, p.94) states that Piaget's Stage Theories of drawing which were hugely influential in the field of education are permeated with the idea that the ultimate objective of drawing is realistic and accurate representations. So although the artistic world left visual realism behind it seems to have permeated popular consciousness in a significant way.

'I can't draw' is an expression I have heard countless times. The sentence should read. I can't draw an accurate and realistic representation based on the conventions of visual realism. Commenting on this phenomena Haney, Russell, and Babel (2004) describe this attitude as "one of the most remarkable examples of a learned disability" (p.268) that they have witnessed. Throughout their research they have also observed that this attitude towards drawing is to a certain extent culturally specific. They observed that countries like China and Japan have a higher tendency towards maintaining and valuing drawing as a skill. Vgotsky's (2004) theories posit that children tend to lose interest in

drawing around the age of twelve as they come to realise that that their drawings do not accurately depict the world around them. Drawing is an instrumental skill that can be learned much in the same way we learn to read and write, through practice and persistence. However, by premising visual realism we not only discourage people from attempting to draw but also isolate other ways of drawing that may contribute to learning. Visual realism has been   adopted as a cultural norm whose values are learned implicitly throughout educational systems. The most powerful myths are sometimes perpetuated by the simplest means. Praise in the form of children's artwork is typically doled out when a child depicts a likeness for an object, thus the premising of visual realism continues. By maintaining this ideal it perpetuates further myths namely the idea that people that *can* draw are in some way naturally gifted or creative. This idea of innate ability to be creative or artistic will be discussed further in the Chapter Three.

Thus far we have established that the decline of drawing in educational systems was facilitated by the emergence of conceptual art and wide spread implementation and use of photography throughout both educational systems and society more generally. Where drawing is still found within educational systems it is almost exclusively equated with art and visual realism. This situation is undoubtedly influenced by Piagetian developmental theories that put forward a U-Curve of children's artistic development. In the following section I will discuss the mystification of art which serves to further isolate art from people's lives.

## 2.4 Intangible aspects of art

There is a sense throughout some of  the literature reviewed for this thesis that the arts do something for our lives, add value in some way but how they do this is not tangibly expressed. Greene (1995) variously describes our moments of connection and engagement with the arts as times that add meaningfulness to our lived experiences *however* other commentators are more hesitant to name and articulate what it is the arts bring to our lives. John Waters (2005,p.6) articulates this phenomena in an interesting way describing the arts as something that people need much in the same way they need a glass of wine or bar of chocolate. Commenting on public advocacy for the arts Waters (2005) asks how the arts add value to our lives and surmises that there is "a vague hint that something vital is at stake but the only tangible sense of what this is

seems to hover around the concept of civilisation" (p.6). Dewey (2005) is more explicit in naming the effects of these phenomena when he describes the compartmentalisation of art as "spiritualising art out of connection with the objects of concrete existence" (p.10). Wassilly Kandinsky published his influential treatise 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art' (1911) just a few years before Dewey's comments.  In this treatise Kandinsky outlines his position which posits artistic creation as a spiritual act. More recently DeBotton and Armstrong (2013) explain this situation as being in "the grip of a romantic deference to art that regards it as a quality so mysterious that outsiders can't and shouldn't try to interfere with it" (p.74).This positioning of art within an esoteric realm only serves to mystify it and deny its validity as a vital part of our lives.

In the following section I will examine the contributions of John Berger who through his work has done much to demystify and democratise art. As I have established there is a need to demystify drawing, separate it from traditional conceptions and affirm its instrumental value in our lives. Transcending the effects of mystification is necessary if we are to consider implicating artistic strategies such as drawing across curriculums.

## 2.5 Demystifying Art

John Berger is an English art critic, novelist, painter and poet. He is perhaps most widely known for his art criticism which offers a Marxist analysis of the structures and social relations that underpin art. Through his critiques of the political economy of art and its social relations Berger gives quite a simple yet profound offering. Question everything that you see. Berger advocates for a democratic looking, one that is about including those who are dispossessed and politically unseen. Smith (2015, para, 6) describes how Berger facilitates his critique of art by accommodating the invisible bodies and silent voices of those who are concealed within our society. The critiques that Berger offers are not just of art but are rather an offering of an alternative way to read the world. In his early career the ruling classes that Berger interrogates were those who upheld a conception of art that premised white, western European ideals. These ruling classes modelled their understanding and appreciation of art, on a modernist meta-narrative characterised by an implicit understanding of artistic tradition and progress. In Berger's  more recent works this ruling class can be assumed to have been replaced by an art world that embraces a more post modern liberal philosophy but nevertheless is still underpinned by powerful structures of money and power relations. To Berger the

art of our past belongs not to an elite few but to the entirety of the population. He believed that people's ability to choose is significantly impacted by their ability to situate themselves in history. "This is why –and this is the only reason why –the entire art of the past has become a political issue." (Berger, 1972, p.33) This reclaiming of histories and identities is central to Berger's work. In order to dismantle power and redistribute it we need to be able to situate ourselves in history and take ownership of it. If we cannot situate ourselves in history we will feel like "rootless subjectivities-dandelion pods tossed by the wind" (Greene, 1988, p.3).

The widespread use of photography has made images unexceptional, art that was once enjoyed by an elite few is now commonplace and seen by the masses. Through Berger's democratic approach to viewing works of art he unearths not only the conditions that surround the making of art and its underlying meanings *but* also questions the conditions of its viewing. Where we view art and how we view it is fundamental to our subsequent understanding of it. Berger (1972, p.23) argues that when cameras made mass reproduction of images possible the 'aura' that surrounded art vanished and a 'false reverence' took its place. In Berger's opinion original artworks are ensnared within a web of 'bogus religiosity' that is essential to ensuring their significant market value. The art establishment shields its class interests from critique by mystifying and spiritualising art. Berger (1972) asserted that "If the image is no longer unique and exclusive, the art object, the thing, must be made mysteriously so" (p.23).

Berger was heavily influenced by Walter Benjamin's work 'The Work of Art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction' (2010). Benjamin's assertion in this work was that mechanical reproduction freed works of art from their dependence on ritualization. The ability to reproduce images signalled the death of the magic, mystique and aura that surrounded art images. Merrifield (2012,p.42) speculates that Berger celebrated the loss of arts aura and mystique because he saw it as an opportunity to recast art in its proper context which Berger believed was the chaotic reality of our common experience. It is the consistent questioning and the tension in the relationship between what we see and what we know that characterises much of Berger's work. He consistently questions, probes and reappraises art in order to specifically look for these tensions and ambiguities. These tensions and ambiguities that we distil can guide us towards a more authentic reading of the past. By stripping away the layers of reification

that are typically associated with art Berger gives people the confidence and authority to make their own readings of works of art.

What we can conclude from discussing Berger's work is that although he has done much to democratise the act of seeing there is still an imperative to demystify art. The ruling elite that Berger positions his critiques against can still be very much evidenced today, with class biases still surrounding art in education systems. Lynch (2008,p.139) notes that within the formal subject of art, art which is the preserve of the upper classes such as fine art and art history is accorded the highest status. In concurrence with this, curriculums and assessment methods position design work that is typically connected with working class professions, within a lower category. The idea that art is above the everyday common experience is detrimental to any attempt at implicating art across curriculums This reinforces the idea that art or particular forms of it are still the preserve and indulgence of an elite few. The layers of reification that surround art not only protect the market values and class interests of the ruling elite but make art inaccessible to the majority of people. The compartmentalisation of art as superior and distinct from other cultural products, positions art outside of the reach of everyday experience. By placing art beyond the realm of the everyday we lose out on opportunities for people to engage with and experience art in a meaningful way. This false spiritualisation also serves to further enhance and reinforce the myth of creativity. To rise above the effects of mystification as Berger attempts to do throughout his work we must embed art within chaotic reality of common experience. In the following section I will discuss the problems that arise when we advocate for the implementation of artistic strategies such as drawing across curriculums.

**2.6 The Arts as a Handmaiden of the Curriculum**

One way to embed art, and more specifically drawing, in our everyday experience is to implicate it across curriculums in a much more explicit way. This can be done by using artistic methods and strategies such as drawing across a range of disciplines and not exclusively within the formal subject of art. Elliot Eisner (1998, p.51-60) makes a compelling argument *against* prostituting the arts as a handmaiden for other disciplines. Eisner (1998) says that if we justify the arts as a method to support other

areas of curriculums this will "legitimatise the subsidiary space that the arts already occupy in education settings for those looking to rationalise these positions" (p.51-60). The fact is that art is already in a subsidiary position throughout curriculums and the frame through which it is viewed further enhances this position. Eisner's position supports the argument that the arts should only be taught in and of themselves as unique discrete disciplines. Drawing has always been an activity that permeates all disciplines from map making and drawing diagrams to anatomical drawing within schools of medicine. What we need is more explicit forms of drawing across education more generally. Underlying Eisner's argument we once again find the idea that art is something else, something unique, something that should not be democratised and used as part of either our daily lives or educational experiences. As already discussed this spiritualisation of art is something that is detrimental and unnecessary. Eisner's view can be contrasted with that of Gill Hope (2008) who anticipates that drawing and artistic strategies should be used across and throughout all curriculums. Hope (2008,p.9) cautions that the more the borders of a discipline are restricted the likelihood of one way of thinking permeating this discipline is very high, the danger in this is that one way of knowing a discipline becomes the only way of knowing it. By keeping a discipline "pure", "hard" and "abstract" it will have no connection with other areas of life. Eisner's emphatic insistence on maintaining these boundaries causes art to be perceived as something else, something that is not a part of our everyday lives. Dewey (2005, p.7) extrapolates on the importance of using and embedding the arts as a part of our daily lives. He maintains that separating art from daily life by positioning it within its own sphere separate from other experiences only serves to reinforce the idea of art as a superior cultural product. Delineating boundaries as Eisner envisages complicates any appeal to further a more democratic application of drawing in learning settings as drawing is intrinsically bound up with the discipline of art. As Nissan (1997, p.201-216) warns the likelihood of tunnel vision and reckless action is the direct consequence of having a narrow view of disciplines. Nissani (1997) further asserts that "Many complex or practical problems can only be understood by pulling together insights and methodologies from a variety of disciplines" (p.201-216).

In light of adult education's interdisciplinary philosophy of experiential learning, it is essential that collaborations between and within disciplines are facilitated. Distinct

boundaries between disciplines do not allow for the acknowledgement of previous or different life experiences the affirmation of which is essential to adult learners. A lack of boundaries between disciplines and also between different areas of people's lives facilitates richer experiential learning encounters. Affirming the importance of experiential learning Brookfield (1995, p.134) contends that the accumulation and acknowledgement of experiences throughout our lives is the key difference to the variations between how we learn as adults and how we learn in earlier parts of our lives. Inter-disciplinarity provides learners with the opportunity to learn in a variety of situations and through a variety of contexts thus broadening the learning potential of their experiences. Brookfield (1995, p.134) not only expounds the merits of experiential learning to adult learners but also proposes that the ability of adults to learn in a variety of contexts and through a variety of diverse methods is often projected as the overarching purpose for educators who work with adults.

Through this discussion we can see that the inability to take a broader view of disciplines significantly narrows experiential learning opportunities. The idea that artistic strategies such as drawing should be confined within the formal discipline of art serves only to further the mystification of art. Through an educational philosophy that supports and encourages inter-diciplinarity we can further affirm the instrumentality of art. Through inter-disciplinary collaborations we can offer learners both pragmatic and meaningful connections with art. The ability of adult learners to learn is enhanced by an acknowledgement of their experiences and also through the diverse nature of their experiential  learning encounters.

## 2.7 Learning to Draw is Learning See

"For the artist drawing is discovery. And that is not just a slick phrase, it is quite literally true. It is a platitude in the teaching of drawing that the heart of the matter lie's in the specific process of looking. It is the actual act of drawing that forces the artist to look at the object in front of him, to dissect it in his mind's eye and put it together again; or, if he is drawing from memory, that forces him to

dredge his own mind, to discover the content of his own store of past observations". (Berger, 1953, cited in Savage 2001, p.1)

What the above statement illustrates is that Berger makes no distinction between the act of drawing and the act of seeing. When we draw we are at once recording, analysing and filtering a particular world view. This statement is seemingly making the most obvious assertion but the strength of its claims can be quite easily missed. Put simply, drawing and learning to draw is the same as learning to see. When we learn to draw we do by extension learn to see the world around us in a different way. This process can be an unexceptional one in that a person may only learn to draw visually accurate depictions of the physical world around them but it also holds within it the possibility of becoming something more exceptional than that. An activity that when utilised can assist us in learning to see our interior and exterior worlds in new ways.

Through the process of drawing we do not just draw the object in front of us but learn to understand this object in new ways. Through drawing we may take an object apart and juxtapose different elements coming to a new understanding about the function of this object. Although it can be argued that through the process of drawing we merely replicate standard artistic conventions I believe as many artists do that drawing presents an opportunity to reflect upon and understand things in new ways. Drawing can facilitate the analysis of the functional aspects of an object but also provide a space for our reflective response to this. What we choose to draw and how we draw it can facilitate a broad understanding of the object of study. If we extend towards the broader implications of Berger's analogy it asserts that a transfer of learning occurs when we draw. Advocates for the implementation of the arts across curriculums contend that a transfer of learning occurs when we move to locate and interrogate different artistic methodologies through the lens of different disciplines.

Eisner (1998,p.51-60) argues that  he has not found evidence of a transfer of learning occurring although he regards those who seek it as ambitious and noble in their objectives. He contends that learning is context specific and that strategies of learning are limited to the context within which they are situated. He acknowledges that whilst some transfer may be discernible this is not to a required measurable degree. He admonishes art educators that occupy this position for viewing the significance of art as

its ability to add to other disciplines. I would disagree with Eisner on this point as art is already occupying a subsidiary position and is an activity that is the preserve of an elite few. Using art across disciplines and curriculums does not diminish its worth but rather can give more people the opportunity to engage with art. Contemporary drawing research would disagree with Eisner's position on a transfer of learning. Michelle Fava's research seeks to build and expand frameworks that allow for the exploration of drawing and cognition. Through her research Fava (2011) considers the connections among observational drawing skills and approaches to learning. She has observed that attentional and observational strategies employed when drawing are extensively transferable. She argues that "drawing facilitates the development of meta cognitive control in these domains" (2011, p.84). Fava's research justifies drawing in terms of what it can bring to other areas of the curriculum. Fava herself is diffident towards the necessity to justify drawing in terms of "concrete reasoning and written material" (2011, p.86) to those who have the power to articulate curriculums. It must be noted that contemporary drawing research such as Fava's is still in its infancy. In order to satisfy an argument such as Eisner's we would need research that encompasses a broader remit so that the results could be transferable. However this type of research offers exciting possibilities for the future of the learning potential of drawing.

## 2.8 Defining Drawing

Due to the fact that definitions of drawing can be limiting people are apt to describe the process of drawing rather than offering a concrete definition of what they believe drawing is. This hesitancy reflects the multi-faceted nature of drawing rather than any confusion about what drawing is. Drawing is typically defined by the process of drawing or by the product produced. The artist Alice Maher (2001) although hesitant to commit a definition to paper, states "that drawing is thinking" (p.19). She describes this thinking process as the ability to understand something "with your eyes and limbs and heart and mind" (p.19). Berger (2001) defines "drawing as discovery" (p.3) and Tom FitzGerald (2001) describes it as "a tingle in the nerve ends of the imagination" (p.49). All of these assertions and descriptions of drawing although highly evocative bring us no closer to a pragmatic understanding of how drawing can be used. To my mind more important

than an all encompassing definition is an understanding of how drawing may be used as a tool for learning. The Irish artist Brian Fay articulates some of the attributes of drawing that are helpful when considering the learning potential of drawing .Fay (2013) describes the activity of drawing as one that is persistently changeable and imbued with the ability to "adapt to new forms, emerging technologies and conceptual attitudes" (p.19). From this description we can acknowledge that drawings adaptability to changing circumstances make it an ideal candidate as a learning tool.

My own personal understanding of drawing is that it provides another way to know the world. Through this understanding I have come to believe that drawing in its multiple iterations it can both add to and enhance learning in a variety of situations. Eileen Adams (2013, p.3) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how drawing can be used for in learning settings. Her framework acknowledges the versatile nature of drawing and offers a comprehensive framework of how drawing may be utilised. Adams approach to a definition of how we might understand drawing in relation to learning is the most comprehensive that I have found. I think it is important to include in full here so that we can establish a sense of what drawing ought to be in educational settings and learning environments. Adams divides her definition into three distinct sections; drawing as perception, drawing as communication and drawing as manipulation. What Adams comprehensive working definition offers us is a description of the practical functions of drawing. It is included in full in the section that follows.

**2.9 Adams Framework for defining function of drawing in learning settings**

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**Drawing as perception**.

"Drawing assists the ordering of sensations, feelings, ideas and thoughts. The drawing is done primarily for the need, pleasure, interest or benefit of the person doing the drawing. It might then enable them to explore and develop observation and interpretative skills to investigate and understand the world. Pupils are at pains to frame their thinking and to consider relationships between elements" (Adams, 2013, p.3).

**Drawing as communication**

"Drawing assists the process of making ideas, thoughts and feelings available to others. Here, the intention is to communicate sensation, feeling or ideas to someone else. It is likely that certain codes or conventions will be used so that a viewer will be helped to understand what is being communicated. It might be for an unknown audience. It might be to support group interaction, discussion or other learning activity" (Adams, 2013, p.3).

**Drawing as manipulation**

"Drawing assists the creative manipulation and development of thought. Ideas are at an embryonic stage, unformed or only partly formed at the beginning of the process of drawing. Ideas take shape when the pupil experiences 'reflexive oscillation' between impulse, ideas and mark, receiving feedback from the marks appearing on the page, which prompt further thought and mark-making. Usually the drawing is one of a series where ideas are explored, repeated, refined, practised, worked over, discarded, combined, where alternatives are sought and alternative possibilities explored" (Adams, 2013, p.4).

## 2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I outlined and examined the decline of drawing in educational contexts and the reasons this occurred. The historical underpinnings of visual realism and it's persistence throughout education systems was also discussed. Through this discussion the need to demystify art was established. A discussion of the work of John Berger allowed us to identify the urgent nature of this need. Following on from this I discussed inter-disciplinarity and the importance of this for adult education. I then offered Adams's functional definition of drawing as a way to understand the learning potential of drawing. We can conclude from this chapter that contemporary understandings of what drawing is and what it can do vastly under estimate drawing as a medium and as a potential learning tool. This situation is further exacerbated by both class and cultural biases underpinning art in education and society. More specifically in the sphere of adult education which embraces a philosophy of experiential learning the need to recognise experiential approaches to learning has been acknowledged.

# Chapter Three-Literature Review
## 3.1 Introduction

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As stated previously drawing as an activity that can facilitate the imagination is proposed as one of the reasons that I believe we might choose to implicate drawing more explicitly across learning environments. In the first instance this chapter will contextualise the imagination in terms of meaning making. The importance of the imagination in facilitating the emotive aspects of learning will then be discussed in terms of hierarchies of knowledge and multiple intelligences. In the subsequent section I will discuss how we could use drawing in terms of a critical education through the use of both Freirean codifications and Angela Rogers 'Drawing Encounters' (2007) approach. In the final section of this chapter I will discuss the therapeutic benefits of drawing.

## 3.2 The Imagination and Learning

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Enthralled by the moment of expression we often view creative acts such as drawing with wonder and fascination. We are all familiar with the process within which something that is truly well crafted presents as seamless and effortless yet this illusion can still seduce us into awe. We are momentarily captivated by virtuous displays of innovation and artistry. Our human capacity for being creative lies in our imaginations. Fresh ideas and concepts are fabricated when our imagination forges links between distinct experiences. Egan(1992) reminding us that the human mind does not work in the same way as a computer, asserts that new learning is affected by multiple variable factors such as our intentions and emotions as it passes through our minds. He puts forward that the "Imagination is the process by which we can make new associations between all of these variables. Variables that are themselves imbued with meaning" (1992, p.50). Vygotsky (1978) reminds us that each imaginative act is implicated in a much larger gestation process concluding that people with the richest imaginations are those with the richest experiences available to them. The idea of innate creativity is viewed in a different light when we examine how our imaginations work. Those we view as innately creative have simply honed their capacity to make the most meaning

out of their experiences. The more experiences we have that we can make meaning out of the more we can use these experiences again and again in varying juxtapositions.

What this illustrates is that our imaginations depend on our ability to make, reappraise and reflect on our experiences in order to make meaning and learn from them. This mining of experience is thus essential to cultivating our imaginative capacities. The richer our experiences or rather the stronger our ability to make meaning from our experiences, the richer our imaginations will be. Experiential learning depends largely on our ability to embrace, acknowledge and learn from varying experiences. In light of the philosophy of adult education that embraces experiential learning we need more approaches to learning that accommodate and acknowledge a wider range of experiences and that also accommodate the imaginative and emotive aspects of our lives. As Greene (1995) asserts "of all our cognitive capacities it is our imagination that makes empathy possible and gives credence to alternative realities" (p.3). There is a particular focus in adult and further education on training and instrumental learning and although this type of learning has its place it lacks a meaningful connection with people's lives. In order to counteract this impasse we need approaches to learning that accommodate the imagination and focus more holistically on the range of a person's experiences and intelligences.

However, we must be careful not to overstate the capacities of our imaginations nor see it as an all encompassing panacea for current issues within adult education. We should also be mindful of the fact that the imagination is not benevolent. Greene (2000, p.33) reminds us of this when she relates the story of the Sandy hook Elementary School shootings, striking a chord, when she asserts that the perpetrators had both rich and dynamic imaginations. A more subtle illustration of how our imaginative capacities can be used against us is offered by Bell Hooks. Hooks (1995, p.145) recounts the story of being asked to design her dream house in a high school art class. She was fascinated by the idea that deep in the segregated south an art teacher would encourage students to deal with the topics of fantasy and desire. She discovered in retrospect that dealing with fantasy and desire was the perfect way to avoid dealing with the divisive political realities of class, race and gender.

## 3.3 Measuring Meaning

Descriptions of the value of an aesthetic education in the most part always mention the word meaningful and very often appeal to the imaginative and the creative. Meaning and meaningfulness is to a certain extent immeasurable if we are to contextualise it within current frameworks for curriculum provision and assessment. This immeasurability does not sit well within our current educational climate in which justification through numerical and statistical measurement reigns supreme. Advocates for an aesthetic education and for participation in the arts more generally typically appeal to people's experience. As Benson (1989) sets out any appeal for the arts is generally an appeal to experience. Such appeals are made vulnerable by the nature of the fact that they appeal to those who are already aware of the value of the arts. To a certain extent the aspects of our minds that deal with our emotive worlds have been disregarded in favour of rational and logical thinking. Lynch (2008, p.22) describing this "false dichotomy" between reason and emotion, contends that it results in learning spaces that prioritise the rational resulting in our emotive lives being under represented and consequently under educated. The hierarchy that exists between ways of knowing the world can have very real implications for our realities. The premising of logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic ways of knowing has very real consequences resulting in the emotive aspects of our lives being neglected.

## 3.4 Multiple Intelligences

Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences puts forward the idea that, rather than one universal intelligence, we are all in possession of a variety of intelligences. These intelligences are musical-rhythmic, visual-spatial, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinaesthetic, inter-personal, intra-personal and naturalistic. The dissemination of Gardner's theories is to a certain extent culturally specific as some cultures see our intelligence as set where as others see it as something that can be developed and enhanced. Gardner (1983, p.133) asserts that throughout education systems certain intelligences namely verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical are premised over the range of other intelligences that we possess. This premising can be witnessed through both the curriculum and methods of assessment. Recently Gardner's

theories have come under increasing scrutiny not least because people have reduced them to the concept of learning styles. This reduction of multiple intelligences to that of learning styles presents Gardner's theories as a methodology for learning. Learning styles in their multiple iterations can be witnessed throughout a vast amount of learning spaces as educators attempt to accommodate as a wide a range of learning styles as possible. Gardner (2013, para.6) argues that there is no such thing as a learning style there are only learning preferences. There are distinct differences at play when we approach learning from the position that we must accommodate different learning styles rather than approaching learning with the idea in mind that we must appeal to and attempt to educate multiple intelligences. Learning styles are used *not* to educate a particular intelligence but to educate a predetermined outcome through a particular stylistic method. So although we may conclude that in a large part learning styles are democratic and may accommodate learners preferences they cannot be said to educate holistically, as in the whole person, and their range of intelligences. When we look at what is really underlying learning styles we can see that their function is essentially a performance enhancing one. This performative function is used to ensure that learners learn in the most effective manner possible. This is not necessarily a negative thing but when viewed in light of a neo liberal agenda it highlights a concern for effective performance over any concern for actually educating the range of intelligences that people possess.

The detrimental effects of premising verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical ways of knowing the world is further exacerbated by what Greene terms the spectre of assessment. Neo-liberal values such as performance measurement and skills assessment which are characterised by rationality further permeate learning environments within which a logical rational hierarchy dominates. These rational values take precedence over other values that could potentially add to people's lives in a more meaningful way. In order to fulfil the requirements of measuring and quantifying, determining and calculating, we must develop our abilities to observe and judge, scrutinize and detect, over our abilities to feel or sense, intuit or experience. We all possess multiple intelligences and may be prone to using one intelligence more than others but again how intelligent we are in a particular area is dependent upon how much we learn to cultivate this intelligence. The idea that we have multiple intelligences can be easily evidenced but more importantly to this discussion is the idea that learning

environments cultivate all of our intelligences not just the verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical.

Thus far we have established the importance of accommodating the imagination in learning environments as it holds some of the keys to our emotive worlds. We have also established the need for educational settings to appeal to our range of intelligences including our emotive intelligence. The hierarchical nature of knowledge affects both how we learn and what we learn. This situation is compounded by the values that   neo-liberalism promotes. This can be particularly witnessed in adult education which has come to be characterised by training and instrumental learning. Drawing as an approach and method that can be used in learning can facilitate the imagination which in turn can accommodate aspects of our intelligence that are usually neglected in learning environments.

## 3.5 Product over Process

Greene defines (2001, p. 6) an aesthetic education as an education that should attempt to merge and blend together the arts with the lives of learners. I propose that one such approach that may facilitate such a union is drawing. Drawing is a powerful and effective tool with which we can reflect upon our worlds. To a certain extent Greene's writing and philosophy emphasises meaning making through the appreciation of significant works of art *over* the possibility for learners to create meaning *through* making, emphasising product over process. Although we can learn through the appreciation of art I believe we can learn better through making art as we can learn through the experience of the process and the interpretation of the product. The distinct differences in these approaches will be discussed in the section of this chapter dealing with art as a therapeutic tool.

An approach to learning that emphasises drawing is beset by the fact that drawing as an artistic strategy is at its best when the process is as important as the product. This emphasis on product over process can be determined through the methods used to assess drawing modules throughout adult and further education. The characteristics of drawing that emphasise communication and design are given precedence as they are measurable to a certain extent. Where process is acknowledged it is in terms of design and development of an idea rather than assessing how the process of drawing

contributed to a person's broader learning. The development of an idea can be visually evidenced throughout developmental drawings and as such we can measure and assess what we can see. The premising of product over process is another example of the emphasis on explicitly measurable skills that can be witnessed throughout adult and further education.  This presupposes that all drawings that come to be aim to exist in a finalised state. Process drawing, mind mapping, casual doodling, plans, diagrams, and sketches all of these things are only valued when they are accompanied by a verbal articulation. The fact that to a large extent we rely on verbal articulations to explain artworks further exacerbates this situation. Our verbal and written articulations can be assessed, the non-verbal nature of drawing makes it harder to explain and understand in a way that would satisfy assessment methods and procedures. There is need for our curriculum designers to recognise and validate visual languages such as drawing not just as an ancillary to the curriculum but as a valid method of communication.

**3.6 Drawing and the Imagination**

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Howard Riley (2012, p.154) states that the social function of drawing is communication. Within this communicative function there are three levels of communication that drawings can aspire to.  Although each level is distinct they all operate simultaneously.

> "The first function is to convey some aspect of our experience of the world: second to express our attitude or mood regarding our experience and also to position the receiver in terms of mood and attitude: and thirdly to structure these two into a coherent perceptible form. The first two functions are here labelled the experiential and the interpersonal. The third may be termed the compositional function" (Riley, 2012, p.154).

Riley asserts that the compositional function of drawing is to structure the experiential and the interpersonal into a perceptible form. I believe it is this compositional function that gives drawing a unique place among modes of communication. What the artist has when imagining a drawings composition is power, albeit power over a very small thing but power nonetheless. What this compositional power gives us is the freedom to record, analyse and interpret the world as we see it but also and perhaps more importantly the power to re imagine it. Drawings compositional power allows us to

frame and reframe perspectives so that we may make more meaning out of our experiences. This compositional power, that drawing offers has very real potentials when viewed in the light of transformative learning. Mezirow (2000, p.7-8) defines transformative learning as the process of opening up our frames of reference so that they will become more discriminating and reflective and thus generate new beliefs that can guide action. Disorientating dilemmas can be mediated and reflected upon through the process of drawing.

It must be noted that drawing is obviously not alone in this respect. Many other forms of art making offer similar potentials to drawing. Sculpture, photography and painting, all of these are equally valid in regard to the above assertions. But drawing holds a unique position as a mode of communication  one that is often overlooked but one that I believe holds some key attributes that are often missing from other perhaps faster and apparently more effective means of communication. It is fundamentally accessible to all educators and students. There are no specific materials required.  Drawing can be an immediate and transitory way of communicating but can also embrace a slower looking at and reflection upon themes and objects and their place in the world.

Drawing is a gateway to the imagination. Through drawing our imaginations can be set free to illustrate that which words can fail to communicate. Drawings can stand alone or serve as a departure point for other modes of communications, a catalyst for conversations or a form of therapeutic self expression. While working with a group of students I had the opportunity to witness just how powerful the act of making art can be. This group was compiled of special needs assistants who were participating in the art workshop as a way to familiarise themselves with artistic strategies that they could potentially use with their students. The activity they were taking part in was self portraits and as such they were asked to use mirrors to concentrate on their faces. The interesting result of this activity was not necessarily the artworks (fig1.) but the student's responses to taking part in this activity. They found drawing themselves after extended looking in the mirror very difficult. One of  the women in the group remarked how uncomfortable this process made her feel and acknowledged that she hated recording how she looked as she felt she was getting older. The other woman agreed that it was a difficult process and a very interesting conversation about the pressure to look a certain way ensued. I included this story here because I think what it illustrates is

the power of artistic strategies to facilitate conversations that otherwise may have not occurred.

As illustrated above the power of artistic strategies to act as a departure point for further imaginings and conversations that serves to reinforce or re imagine our place in the world cannot be underestimated. Hope (2008) states the common thread underlying all imaginative drawing is "the need to record visually that which could not be considered manipulated or communicated by words alone" (p.8). Greene (2001) suggests we look to the arts because "an engagement with an imaginative form can lead as no other engagement can to a recapturing of our authentic perspectives on the world" (p.119).



Fig.1 Self Portraits (2016). Student Artwork. Mixed Media on paper.

## 3.7 Freirean Codifications

Freirean codifications offer us an opportunity to assess how drawing is used in an innovative way in the context of critical community education. Codifications are typically used as part of an educational practice that is underpinned by a philosophy of critical and emancipatory education. I believe drawing may offer us a way to re-imagine the process of imagic codifications and their use in these contexts. Although enthusiastic about the potential of drawing to add to these contexts I am in no way suggesting that this is the only means by which we can enhance these situations but merely suggesting that drawing could play a more significant role in these situations. From culture to culture and between communities and individuals the meaning of symbols fluctuates significantly. When discussing images McEvilley (1993, p.71) surmises that "Everything that can be said about an image that is not a neutral description of aesthetic qualities is an attribution of content". He asserts that representation can never be an objective representation of reality but rather a structure of emblematic symbols whose meaning varies throughout different societies and cultures. It is this variance and discrepancy in understanding that forms the foundational basis of Freire's codifications as there can be no possibility of a neutral description of an image. Although typically imagic these codifications could be an idea, a text, a situation etc that are used as starting points to create dialogues in and between groups. Codifications are supported by generative themes or manifold whys as Freire describes them and are typically representative of a participant's social reality. A generative theme is based on the idea that each epoch or time is characterised by a multi faceted web of "concepts hopes doubts values, and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites striving towards their fulfilment". (Freire, 1992, p.68) Codifications work by capitalising on the uncertainty and doubt that arises when we attempt to situate ourselves in relation to these images. Fitzsimons (2017) sites the steps necessary in creating a codifications and states that central to this difficult process is that the generative theme that underlies the code must materialise naturally from group discussions. Freire's systems of codifications have been typically successfully used in promoting and advancing literacy adult learners. Taylor (1993,p.148 ) criticises Freire's approach to education as differing only in degree but not in kind from the system against which it is set. I think this is a valid point as when we think further about this issue the generative themes and codifications are

generally set by the facilitator. Fitzsimons (2017, p.122-130) draws our attention to the fact that this must be an authentic transparent process. She asserts that tensions will arise in groups when the generative theme is more reflective of curriculum content and suggestive of the facilitators need or want for the direction of the group. One response could be to democratise the codification process and have the participants identify their own generative themes and codify these themes themselves. On the simplest level a drawn image allows for us to accommodate the metaphorical and the imaginative as well as the literal. Drawings ability to accommodate the imagination gives it more possibilities for use than does photography or variously sourced images. Sourcing previously existing images from photo-books and magazines can be limiting when attempting to codify a specific situation. These images are framed in such a particular way and from such a particular viewpoint. Essentially, it is the boundless nature of the imagination that allows us to represent something that we may not have directly experienced. Hope(2008) articulates this clearly when she asserts that "By occupying the middle ground between the imagination and the real world even drawings of minimal clarity can be discussed and explored as if they were real"(p.11).

Learning a new language such as a visual one can expand our range of understanding and the approach we take to solving problems. Simple methods to overcome learner's fears about using and learning the visual language of drawing can be overcome by placing the emphasis on communication and not visually accurate representation. Groups can be asked to draw with their non-dominant hand, this is a fun exercise but one that levels the playing field so to speak. A dialogue in and between groups does not necessarily have to be a verbal one. We can also respond to each other through drawing. This is further illustrated through the research of Angela Rogers in the field of contemporary drawing research. Rogers (2012) developed 'Drawing Encounters' as a means to facilitate one to one personal communication and what we may discovered by "drawing the spaces between us" (p.5). Rogers through her research sought to understand the role that drawing can play as a method of creative enquiry. Her research suggests that the 'Drawing Encounters' approach has the ability to facilitate a dialogue that deals with issues of human co-existence. Rogers approach takes the form of collaboration within which participants respond to each other's drawing through drawing. Rogers believes that the aesthetic dimension of drawing encounters will

provide participants with "a differently nuanced and more aware exploration of the meetings between people" (2012, p.6). Roger's framework for dialogue is based upon Bohm's model of dialogue within which the purpose and objective of the dialogue is a shared understanding. This is distinctly different from educational dialogical approaches whose primary aim is generally understanding but ultimately action. Nevertheless it can offer us potentials for how drawing may be used to facilitate dialogue in a community education context. Our conversations need not always take place through a verbal-linguistic medium. Drawing conversations can give 'voice' to topics that may have otherwise remained unaddressed. As Rogers asserts 'Drawing Encounters' can add another alternative to methods used to facilitate change.

Elements of Rogers approach echoes that of artistic strategies used in art therapy but with distinct differences to be noted. Drawing Encounters positions drawing as a dialogue within which both people participate in the process of drawing responding to each other through drawing. In a typical art therapy context only the client would produce artistic work and the therapist would co investigate with the client but ultimately respond through language not the medium the client is communicating in. In the following section I will examine the implications of drawing as a therapeutic tool in both therapeutic settings and   how this could be implicated in learning environments.

## 3.8 Drawing as a Therapeutic Tool

There are two approaches at play when we consider the therapeutic benefits of art. The first is that through the appreciation of already existing art we may come to a place of understanding about various issues in our lives. This appreciation may also facilitate our arriving at a place of empathy as we empathise with other subjects and objects that we find in art images. The other approach to the therapeutic benefit of art is the one that is gained through the process of making art in an art therapy context. DeBotton and Armstrong (2013, p.232) offer the former, the appreciation of art as a form of therapy. They describe at length the benefits that art appreciation can bring as a form of therapy but also caution about the limits of art. They (2013, p232) describe art as a "picture of a destination" but warn that although art images may specify the direction we should take they do not give us any indication of how we might get to that point. Through questioning the purpose of art DeBotton and Armstrong offer a suggestion of what they

believe art should be used for. They treat art as a tool, a therapeutic tool but frame this tool as one that can act as an assuagement to its users rather than an active therapy that can facilitate action and change. The premising of the appreciation of art as a form of therapy stands in direct contrast to more institutional approaches to art therapy. A more traditional approach to art therapy premises the process of making art as a process that can facilitate change in people's lives.

I think that although looking at and appreciating art can play its role in a therapeutic encounter we receive more benefit by being implicated in the process of making. Traditional approaches to art therapy offer both a directive and non-directive approach. A non- directive approach specifies that the therapist seeks to encourage the client in all their art making endeavours but does not impose any directional focus on the artwork. (Tipple, 1992, p.106) Illustrating the phenomenal influence of Piagetian developmental theories, these theories can also be found in the directive approach to art therapy. Within the directive approach the client is guided through a stage by stage process that mimics the arc of a child's artistic development. (Tipple, 1992, p.107)

The central concern of art therapy is to use the process of making art as a path towards healing. As a mental health profession art therapy is a distinct field separate from education. However the approach taken in a therapeutic relationship has been promoted as an approach that educators can take. Through the work of Carl Rogers the approach taken in a therapist-client relationship has been suggested as one that can be used in facilitator-learner relationships. Rogers developed his approach to client centred therapy on the foundations of the following core conditions which are dependent on the facilitator's ability to create a positive interpersonal relationship. He defined the attitudes and qualities in this relationship that facilitate change as follows; realness in the facilitator of change, prizing, acceptance and trust, empathetic understanding. Irvin D. Yalom (1995,p.ix) in introducing the work of Carl Rogers notes that it was Rogers belief that the person centred approach generated so much power for personal change that there was no need to confine it to the psychologically troubled. It was because of this belief in the power of the interpersonal relationship that Rogers believed educators should focus on the whole person and that a learning environment of acceptance, genuineness and empathetic understanding be created. Rogers (1999, p.304) defined the goal of education as changingness, a reliance on process rather than

on static knowledge is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world. He believed that learning how to learn is the aim of education. Rogers stated (1999,p.305) that whenever he tried to teach he failed so he only tried then to facilitate learning, and the most important thing in the facilitation of learning is the relationship between the facilitator and learner. The facilitation of this learning rests upon the attitudinal qualities that exist in the personal relationship between facilitator and learner. From the field of art therapy we can take their approach to art-making that values process over product and instil this throughout our approach to integrating artistic strategies such as drawing into curriculums.

MacMillan (2008) makes an interesting anaylsis about using drawing as a gateway to the unconcious mind and reminds us of the importance of hesitancy when claiming that artworks  articulate an expression of the unconcious mind. Drawings made in institutions much  like drawings made by children often hold a peculiar fasination for people. The idea that we are looking at the expression of the unconcious mind can be quite appealing. The artist Cynthia Weldon spent a significant portion of her life institutionlised at Bethlam Hospital when she was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Considerinng that Weldon was drawing almost continuosly throughout her time at Bethlam and this drawing was encourged by her therapist we would assume that it may have helped her in some way. This is not the case as Weldon died as a result of  suicide her own throat in September 1977. What her drawings do illustrate is the expressive power of the medium of drawing and its ability to act as a mediator between our interior and exterior worlds. What this illustrates is the imporatance of distinction between drawing done for the purposes of expression and drawing within a controlled theraputic encounter. The former having no proven benefits in improving peoples lives past the point of allowing them to communicate their pain. Eerily intriguing and utterly compelling are Weldons drawings (fig2,fig3&fig4)  from her time at Bethlam. Although obviously thematicaly heavy this is contrasted elegently with the simplicity of line used. In parts the reduction of line to its essential elements depicts the rawness of the emotional vulnerability of the drawings.

Fig.9 Cynthia Weldon, **Untitled** (no date), mixed media on paper.



Fig.9 Cynthia Weldon **Untitled** (no date), marker on paper.

Fig.3 Cynthia Weldon **Untitled** (1971) Mixed Media on paper

## 3.9 Conclusion

In this I chapter I discussed the imagination in terms of the meaning that it can bring to learning environments whilst being cognisant of the limits of the imagination. We can conclude from this chapter that the imagination has a vital role to play in learning environments which can be achieved through various drawing processes. The importance of the imagination in facilitating emotive aspects of learning was contextualised through a discussion of hierarchies of knowledge and multiple intelligences. The idea that we need to premise all of our intelligences, and not just logical-mathematical and verbal-linguistic ones, has been discussed and acknowledged. I also examined how drawing can contribute to the codification process and further suggested that it can be adopted in dialogical approaches to learning. In the final section of this chapter I discussed the therapeutic benefits of art and how therapeutic relationships can benefit education, concluding that they are essential to obtaining a more holistic vision of education.

# Chapter Four-Methodology
## 4.1 Introduction

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The following chapter presents an overview and evaluation of the research approach and design for this study. This research explores people's experiences of the process of drawing, in both their personal and professional lives. It is my belief that drawing is underutilised in educational settings and as a pedagogical tool it can offer multiple advantages to learners. In order to establish the different perspectives that both inform and contradict this statement I chose to complete research that would give me a variety of differing perspectives on drawing and its processes. I approached this research from the perspective of both a researcher and an artist who believes in the necessity of using drawing as part of an artistic practice but also and perhaps more importantly believes in the positive attributes that art but more specifically drawing can bring to learning environments. Drawing can be utilised as a method of communication, as a therapeutic tool and also as a vital means of self expression. All of these attributes can I believe contribute to a more vibrant and multi disciplinary learning environments. The aim of this research is to discuss and investigate its possibilities and the potential for drawing being more widely used as a pedagogical tool in learning settings. By discussing this with the participants in the research process it is my aim to gain a deeper and broader understanding of the process of drawing in both formal and non formal learning settings.

In the first instance this chapter will discuss my approach to the research study and my ontological and epistemological views that informed this. This section will focus on defining and refining my position in light of the fact that my approach to the research is informed by two distinct research paradigms namely a criticalist paradigm and a post modern paradigm. In the second part of this chapter I will discuss the methods used to carry out this research. This will incorporate a discussion about the interview process, sampling method and inclusion criteria. The third and final part of this chapter will focus on a discussion of the ethical considerations that were most pertinent to the research process.

## 4.2 Research Approach

Initially upon approaching the research I chose to design this study within the paradigms of a critical theoretical approach. My ontological position, concerning the nature of how the world is, was most readily informed by a criticalist position. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define a criticalist as a researcher whose work critiques both cultural and social spheres and who also acknowledges and accepts specific primary beliefs about the world. These beliefs are that all thought is determined by power relations and that "facts can never be separated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription" (2005, p.217). To my mind a critical theorist inhabits a space that deals primarily with ideologies. These ideologies are a set of beliefs or assumptions that underpin our social structures and communities. This position is typically characterised by critiques that employ a feminist, race or class based investigations. I believe that yes, the world is made up of ideologies and through a criticalist position we can determine values and commonalities that underpin these ideologies. However upon further consideration of my *epistemological* position and reflecting about how it is we come to know the world I realised that my research approach would be more nuanced. Yes, many stories are mediated by dominant ideologies and a criticalist position helps us to uncover the commonalities among these stories. However, these commonalities when uncovered are not absolute truths but rather possibilities that can promote further understanding and meaning. I would be very hesitant to embrace one critique or way of knowing the world *as* one way of knowing can very easily become the only way of knowing. I believe that by using and applying elements of a post modernist paradigm this study will more strongly reflect my epistemological position about how it is we come to know the world.

A post modern paradigm supports the idea that there can be no possibility of an objective truth and truth seeking is not its endpoint. In fact there is no endpoint the purpose of this position is to open up and become aware of the bricolage of possibilities that exist. Facilitating the search for objectivity and truth is as Anderson (1995) contends not the purpose but the purpose is rather an understanding that "all our stories about what's out there – all our scientific facts, our religious teachings, our society's beliefs, even our personal perceptions – are the products of a highly creative

interaction between human minds and the cosmos" (p.8) Definitions of post modernism usually characterise it as a rejection of meta-narratives. More specifically it offers a critique that collapses the boundaries between high and low cultural hierarchies, a questioning of authenticity and originality and an investigation of fragmented subjects and objects We can see this collapsing of boundaries through any attempt to question false dichotomies such as reason versus emotion. Bhabba (2003) laments that if post-modernism is reduced to "the celebration of the fragmentation of the grand narratives of post enlightenment rationalism then, for all its intellectual excitement it remains a profoundly parochial enterprise" (p.1110). He articulates his position by incorporating the idea of movement in between spaces into his analysis. He describes these in between spaces as a place where identities singular or collective can be created and recreated. In his, albeit more specifically post colonial view of post modernism, he offers us as a space within which "collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself" can take place. (2003, p.1113) He echoes many articulations of post-modernism when he describes this holding of ambiguity, as one that can "refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable". (2003, p.1113)

This articulation and conception of in between spaces is something I find quite compelling and quite reflective of the position I hold in relation to my approach to this research study. Whilst critically questioning ideologies we can inhabit this in between space where all discoveries made lead to understanding rather than objectivity. This space allows for the holding of ambiguities between the tension that exists between our desire to know and the realisation that we will never fully understand and know our world. By situating my research in this in between space it becomes less about a journey with an intended destination and more about an emergence of understanding and multiple possibilities.

Not only are there multiple ways of knowing the world there are also multiple ways of representing and symbolising it. Drawing is one method through which we can articulate our own perspective. Through drawing, both the process and appreciation of it, we can come to further understandings about our own and others interior and exterior worlds. As McEvilley (1993, p.71) asserts there can be no possibility of a neutral description of an image. This lack of neutrality and objectivity further reflects

my post modern paradigm. Embedded in the heart of drawing is this in between space, a space that can provide both affirmation and contestation yet at the same time be a holding space for ambiguity. Narratives both grand and small that present one story of drawing reduce the potential of this medium to act as both a channel and a guide.

## 4.3 Sampling Method and Inclusion Criteria

The sampling method that was chosen for this research study was criterion based purposive sampling. Robson defines the purpose of selection in purposive sampling is the researchers judgement as to typicality or interest (1993, p.141) Criterion based samples were chosen so that participants could be selected on the nature of the specific experience they hold in relation to drawing. In criterion based purposive sampling a cohort can be assembled that satisfies the specific needs of the research study. (Robson, p.142) The inclusion criteria for selection were people who have specific drawing skills that have been either formally or non-formally trained and also those who teach drawing in both formal and non formal learning settings. With these inclusion criteria in mind I chose the participants who fitted a minimum of one of the inclusion criteria. I identified the participants with which I would work with based upon their experience of drawing in either a personal or professional capacity and also based on their experience of learning and teaching drawing in both formal and non formal learning settings. The rationale for choosing was based on their experiences of drawing which either met one or all of the inclusion criteria. I had initially aimed to interview eight people but due to various circumstances specifically the time I allocated to the interview process this was reduced to a cohort numbering six people.

## 4.4 Profile of Participants

The participants were chosen on the basis of their experience with drawing in both formal and non formal learning settings. More specifically all of the participants used drawing in their personal and professional lives. The professional status of the participants was as follows; an educator in further education, an educator in higher education, an art therapist, a graphic designer, a tattoo artist, and a practicing artist. Four of the participants were themselves formally trained in both further and higher

education and two were non-formally trained. The age range of the participants varied significantly from the youngest in their mid twenties to the oldest in their early sixties. Although the age range of the participants was not something that was explicitly decided upon it did offer up more varied perspective on the process of drawing. The accumulated experience of the participants chosen and the distribution of this experience throughout the diversity of professions represented again offered many unique perspectives on drawing and its processes.

## 4.5 The Interview Process

The research was collected by six semi-structured interviews which were recorded on an audio device and transcribed verbatim. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as a way to collect data as they offer an in depth description of a person's experiences and also allow for flexibility throughout the interview process. Clarification and elaboration of participant's responses is cited by May (2010, p.136) as being one of the main advantages of a semi-structured interview approach. May describes this process as "probing beyond answers" to facilitate a richer dialogue. This probing beyond answers is also reflected in how the interview questions matured throughout the process as I became more confident and familiar with the process. The main challenge for me throughout the interview process was the act of interviewing itself. May (pp.131-132) cites the main challenge of the interview process as the interviewer truly understanding the dynamics of how interviews work. The small size of the cohort did not allow for me to sharpen my skills enough to the extent that I would surmise that the interview process was wholly successful. Interviewing is itself a highly specialised skill and throughout this process I realised how much experience is needed in order to get the full benefit from this process. It is not enough to have the ability to ask the right questions but an ability to also know which avenues to pursue is also critical. Retrospectively I can conclude that my lack of skill in this area has resulted in the data collected although being usable to a certain extent it is also highly variable and fragmented. I had some definite tendencies within the process towards in some interviews leading the participant too much and on the other not enough with them taking the lead. In retrospect a much stronger balance would be needed on my part within this element of my interview process.

## 4.6 Data Analysis

The data that I gathered from the research was analysed by defining key themes and topics that emerged throughout the interview process. These themes were then further considered in light of the findings from my literature review. Compiling these thematics together formed the essential aspect of the discussion chapter of this research study. Throughout the analysis of the data some themes were more explicit than others which took more listening skills to emerge. Presumptions on my part that certain introductory questions would yield the same results turned out to be completely wrong with the participant's answers varying widely in terms of both depth and complexity. By considering my research paradigm I did attempt throughout the analysis to uncover commonalities throughout the themes that emerged but have remembered that due to the very small sample that was interviewed any commonalities that emerged cannot be said to be representative of a larger population. Another difficulty was in the actual process of determining themes due to the widely diverse nature of the professions of the participants the same questions resulted in widely differing results.

## 4.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research study was sought and obtained from Maynooth University. This research adhered to the ethical considerations as set out by Maynooth University. Throughout the research process different ethical considerations fluctuated in and out of focus in terms of their relevance to each stage of the research endeavour. The most pertinent ethical issue that came to light was the right to confidentiality. I had not anticipated that I would consider using the participants own drawings as a way to further enhance and illustrate their responses throughout the interview process. When I came to this realisation that I would like to use their drawings I broached this topic with two of the participants. One of the participants had no problem with me using his work but the other was slightly concerned and rightly so. In order for the participants artwork to be used they would have to be credited as the owner and producer of these works. This presented obvious problems with retaining the confidentiality of the identities of the participants due to the small size of the research cohort and the specific

nature of their professional roles. In the end I decided not to use any of the participant's drawings in order to retain the integrity of the interview process which was premised and presented to the participants on the basis of confidentiality.

## 4.8 Research Limitations

It is noted that there are a number of limitations to this research study which include the small sample size and my inexperience as a researcher. Due to the small sample size of this study it is noted that the data cannot not be generalised or made widely transferable. This research falls within the framework of a qualitative descriptive study and as such may be criticised with regards to my subjectivity. One of the objectives of this research was to affirm the value of drawing which to a certain extent positioned me favourably in relation to drawing. However, throughout the research process I aimed to be as unbiased as possible.

Another limitation of this study was the varying professional occupations of the participants. It was the intention for this variance to add to the depth and quality of the responses to the interview process. However this variance in experience made it difficult to establish common set points from which the process of drawing could be discussed.

## 4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of my approach to this research study and the methods used to carry out the research. This approach was used in order to adequately describe the participant's experiences with drawing and its processes. This chapter discussed both my ontological and epistemological position in regards to this research. It also presented a broad discussion of these positions in light of the fact that combining both a post-modern and critical paradigm could be problematic. This research aims to add to contemporary dialogues which seek to affirm and acknowledge the value of drawing from both educational and artistic perspectives. As relatively little research has been completed on drawing within the sphere of adult education this research attempts to address this lack. In the following chapter I will lay out the findings of this research endeavour.

# Chapter Five- Findings

## 5.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides an over view of the data collected throughout the interview process. Six participants were interviewed with a view to gauging their opinions of a range of topics relating to the drawing. The fact that the interviews were semi-structured did allow for certain foundational grounding. The findings make apparent the perceptions of the participants in relation to drawing. The data collected here has been distilled into three broad themes; the nature of early drawing experiences, the possibilities of drawing and drawing as a therapeutic tool.

## 5.2 The Nature of Early Drawing Experiences

The first theme identified through the interviews was the restrictive nature of the participant's first encounters with drawing in educational settings. Early encounters with drawing were didactic and left little room for creativity and imagination. This first and quite prominent theme was expressed by nearly all participants regardless of age, which upon consideration of the age variance in the group reflects the lack of instrumental drawing instruction over a long period of time.

> "I would of drawing anything, but in school you were given the colouring book things, and join the dots, you rarely got to use your own imagination to draw stuff, especially in school it was always colouring inside the lines or draw this picture beside the word". (a)

> "so I suppose colouring books would have been my first contact with drawing, like filling in the shapes and don't go outside the line, and then they were very perfect you couldn't go outside the line ,if you have that controlling line all the time there is no going outside it, it's very restrictive, it's very mechanical" (d)

One participant noted that from their experience they believe that how drawing is taught in educational settings has not changed since they were at school

"Looking back I suppose the cutting out of shapes, drawing would be something other than that, pencil and paper just used to illustrate a story. It's all filling in colour. I saw the same thing the other day with the niece and nephew and they all had the photocopy of the Easter eggs and they have to fill it in. So they had the Easter bunny and it's like colour between the lines, nothing has changed, they did not do the drawing themselves, it was given to them and they filled it in, which is sad, it was already done, and then it's kind of like you are not drawing yourself so you are not really experiencing drawing, it's just like filling in the blanks". (b)

Within this broad theme of the nature of early drawing experiences another topic was identified: how the participants experienced the perception of art from broader society and institutions. This recurring topic was centred on   the negative perception of art more generally by those around the participants. It was seen as less than other more academic subjects and in one instance described as so.

"Yes, definitely , I had a bad experience when I was in school when I  went to secondary school, they wouldn't let me do drawing or art , and I wanted to do art, I wanted to do art the whole time in primary school, and it's what I wanted to do and you know the way you do your grade tests, you go in and you're going to  be in class whatever, I was , basically what they told me was I  was too smart to do the art class and that it was for the dumb people." (a)

"Well the thing I noticed about that as I was thinking about it, was that in primary education at the time there was no drawing there was no art. I feel that the subject was kind of put into a place where it's not that important, your main things are Maths and English and Irish and the discipline of learning those things, and that drawing was a nice little thing to be doing on the side. As something to enjoy, there is no value in it" (c)

Interestingly one participant noted the tension that exists between different perceptions of how we should draw.

"When your twelve you try to teach yourself, that leaves people the playfulness of drawing, and it becomes about being a representation, so people don't seem to know how to be expressive because they are afraid of it, whereas they are not

afraid of being realistic because it is accepted. So you have to break that perception of it." (d)

## 5.3 The Possibilities of Drawing

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 The following section will outline how the participant's use drawing in terms of the roles that it plays in their practice. The role that drawing plays in the participants lives is quite varied. With two educators, two practicing artists, a tattoo artist and an art therapist the results were very varied. The largest commonalities that could be distilled were the participant's passion for drawing. How they use it varies from a preparatory role to a therapeutic one.

"Drawing is everything in tattooing. It's everything I do." (a)

"I use it a lot actually, notebooks I suppose would be the first thing, different materials, do observational drawings, so I do a mixture of everything, so for me it's a place for sorting out your ideas, so whatever your ideas are then that will progress into another stage, and then you might come back to do it again and again. It's kind of like a circle". (d)

" it would be preparatory  for me , as a tool to something else, it would not be a final product, I use it for working out a painting, so it's a very temporal thing for me" (b)

"Yes it would, well it would be very therapeutic for me, so I could use it to get myself into the mode of doing the final piece". (e)

All participants agreed that drawing is a space for self- expression described variously as an important method of communication.  Interestingly two participant note how important this was as it provided a space to explore these ideas that other methods of communication don't. The potential of drawing to offer a space to be something else the freeing element of it, or to address issues that would perhaps remain unaddressed.

"Well I suppose the way I think about that is that all children like to draw its natural, that we should do it. Your time spent alone you find magic in the line, comics played a big part in it I think and I  find that interesting because on the one

hand you have the visual stuff, that you pick up from comics from trying to draw, and then you go to school and their teaching you how to read, but the things about comics that I found they open up kind of adventures, where there was war, science fiction, social commentary or horror, none of those subjects were tackled in school, they were all though in comics. And then in the drawings, that would be my initial encounters." (c)

"Well it's non-verbal, so it's completely on the other scale of expression, so it can offer healing it can offer expression, it can offer freedom of expression not necessarily freedom , but the freedom to say something or to be something, you know." (d)

## 5.4 Drawing as a Therapeutic Tool

The role that drawing plays as a therapeutic tool was commented on by the majority of the participants. Broadly speaking, drawing was viewed as a space for contemplation, as a place for thinking out ideas, a place of reflection and variously described as helpful in a personal reflective way.

"It's actually very peaceful. It's the only time I get to get proper peace. You forget everything else and the rest of your head gets a bit of space. You're just concentrating on one thing. It's good, it's peaceful and it's probably one of my favourite things to do, like in my spare time I like to draw. Even if it's just practicing a particular style of leaf, drawing it over and over again." (a)

" It's very positive, I have used it myself as a therapy and it has changed my life, even as an adult not just as a child, it's very playful drawing, you know it's really good if you can get into it that way." (d)

From the perspective of those participants that are also educators they could see the benefits that drawing had for their students. In the main their students learning drawing was seen as improving their overall confidence. A lack of time for concentrating on specific drawing tasks was also mentioned as was the premising of computer design software.

"I see a lot of people right from the beginning, and see how they don't know the language, and then when they begin to pick it up and you would see them progressing a lot, and see their confidence improving"(d).

"Well no, you can see the lads at (.......) getting annoyed when they can't get it. It can be frustrating for them. Once they get used to using it they're not necessarily good at it, but they lose the fear and I suppose their confidence increases". (c)

"When I was doing the lectures in (…) you can see the difference in them, the ones that can draw are more confident, they take on more. I suppose it gives you that confidence you need, when you're able to do it" (c).

## 5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I laid out the findings from the interview process which I grouped according to the most prominent themes. The themes that emerged were of the restrictive nature of early drawing experiences, the perception of art, the function of drawing and drawing as a therapeutic tool. In the following chapter I will discuss the findings in relation to the themes that emerged from the interview process and in light of what emerged from the literature review.

# Chapter Six-Discussion

## 6.1 Introduction

The data presented in the previous chapter presents an account of the participant's experiences of drawing. This chapter will discuss the findings of the research study in light of the themes that emerged in the previous chapter. As discussed in the previous chapter, three prominent themes emerged from the findings and these shall be used here as a framework within which to discuss the findings. This discussion will also consider these themes in relation to the information that emerged from the literature review.

## 6.2 The Nature of Early Drawing Experiences

To begin with I will discuss the early encounters that the participants had with drawing within educational settings. As highlighted in the literature review our earliest encounters with drawing and learning can be formative ones so they are important to note here. All of the participants highlighted the lack of genuine drawing opportunities presented to them throughout their early educational careers. This similarity of experience was one of the most prominent themes that emerged. All of the participants remember 'colouring in' as their earliest encounter with mark making. This is the first drawing activity they can remember and in one instance the *only* activity that is remembered. Colouring is designed as a pre writing skill that helps to develop hand-eye co-ordination. It is not an activity designed to promote drawing skills per se but one designed to develop a child's fine motor skills. It must be noted that due to the age profile of the participants their early encounters with drawing cannot claim to represent the current situation in early year's education. Other early encounters with drawing experienced by the participants in educational settings were for illustrative or decorative purposes with drawing once again serving a supporting role to the written word. As we can see from the participants early encounters with mark making they are all designed in preparation for the more important activity of writing. This data speaks to broader themes that emerged throughout the literature review. Through the participants experiences we can witness the hierarchical nature of knowledge at as it was constructed through their experiences. As we have established throughout the

literature review constructing hierarchies of knowledge has a number of detrimental effects. In the first instance it fails to accommodate the full range of human intelligences with the emotive aspects of our lives usually suffering the worse neglect. It also leaves little room for different methods of communication and thus silencing those whose preferred method of communication is neither verbal nor linguistic. As already discussed the foundations of thought within Western educational systems are based on a false dichotomy between reason and emotion. O'Brien (2001p.264) illustrates just how embedded this false dichotomy is when he cites drawings invisibility in educational spaces as due to social unconsciousness about drawing. Reflecting on this trend that O'Brien believes permeates Irish society more broadly he notes that that "the poet W.B Yeats was the real cultural icon of Irelands conservative revolution, not his brother Jack the painter" (2001, p.264). This social unconsciousness about drawing serves to highlight the need to describe drawing further so that its learning potentials may be utilised.

## 6.3 The Possibilities of Drawing

The most formative experiences with drawing that the participants encountered where in the realm of fantasy and adventure  largely through the medium of comics. Mimetic drawing and creating imaginative alternative worlds, populated by both real and imagined people and animals, were characteristic of the shared experience of the participants. Drawing from the imagination in order to create and compose alternative worlds was frequently mentioned. This playful inventiveness is typical and characteristic of most children's drawing. I think what this highlights is the ability of drawing to provide a space for the imagination. What drawing facilitates in this respect is the imagination by providing the participants with a medium through which their fantasies can be released.

By acting as a medium between the imagination and the real world drawing allows creative and playful juxtapositions to occur. It is possible that the same expression could happen through writing but Hope (2008) states the common thread underlying all imaginative drawing is "the need to record visually that which could not be considered manipulated or communicated by words alone" (p.11).All of the participant's, except

one, had their most fulfilling encounters with drawing outside of the context of their school environments. Drawing was something they pursued in their own time with only one participant noting the encouragement of drawing through a weekly art class. The formative experience of learning to draw happened in a personal context with the findings suggesting that this learning was both inventive and imaginative.  I think the potential held within these early imaginative drawing encounters is what they could possibly become with the support of a more integrated approach. In order to facilitate a more integrated approach drawing would need to be both premised and acknowledged within education systems. We could use drawing not only in conjunction with writing but as another vital means of expression and communication. An integrated approach to drawing would be one wherein both educational staff and broader communities are enabled to encourage learners to use drawing in their lives.

If we look for a moment to the slums surrounding Delhi and Mumbai we can witness one of the most innovative and integrated approaches to drawing that highlights  the vitality of drawing as a learning  activity. Sturgis (2015) reported in a recent online article that through a broad civic and educational campaign young Indians have been given the opportunity to create maps of their areas. These young cartographers spend months investigating the streets and alleyways that make up their neighbourhoods. They look for and identify gaps, openings, spaces and places that could accommodate what they would like to see in their neighbourhoods. Humara Bachpan, an advocate for child led development, says that what the young people are creating "is their dream aspirational map" (cited in Sturgis, 2015, para.5). According to Sturgis these maps far from being aspirational are in some instances ending up on the desks of local urban planners. These maps are hand-drawn due to the lack of computer facilities in these areas. As we can see from these drawings (fig4&fig5) the lack of computers is not an issue for these young map-makers. What this story illustrates is the not only the power and impact  of imaginative drawing , but also,  the potential learning benefits that can come from an integrated approach to drawing. As discussed earlier, drawing is all around us and so are opportunities to engage with it in a meaningful way. As Hope (2008) notes the imagination acts as the mechanism within which the pictures in our inner worlds can be contrasted with the reality of our daily experiences. An articulation of this contrast facilitated through drawing, can as illustrated by the young map-makers

Fig.4 & Fig.5 Young Indian cartographers (2015) Images accredited to Humara Bachpan.

in India, bring our imaginative endeavours to life. As we have already established in order to make best use of experiential learning and authentically effect change learnersmust experience both tangibly and emotionally the potential and possibilities that lies within their actions. In the case of one participant, inspiration found in comics was not just used to inspire drawing but also used as a way to understand broader issues "subjects that were never tackled in school" (c). This observation further reflects the ability of art to situate us in relation to broader societal issues. The primacy of drawing can facilitate our most urgent expressions of imagination but can also utilise a slower more deliberate reflection upon our world. The power of fantasy and comic-books lies in their ability to connect wildly and imaginatively with minds young and old. These visual narratives can relate to the viewer on multiple levels both emotive and imaginative. Within these visual spaces fears, hopes, dreams and aspirations can be both embraced and mediated. Greene (1995) describes this type of imaging as "becoming a friend of someone else's mind" (p.38). Through this process we "can bring severed parts together and can create wholes" (1995, p.38)

## 6.4 Drawing as a Therapeutic Tool

Another theme that emerged throughout the research process was that of drawing as a therapeutic tool. Nearly all of the participants noted the therapeutic benefits of drawing although they had quite different ways of expressing this. It must be noted that the participants were not engaged in a therapeutic art processes and the benefits they described were unintentional aspects of the drawing process. The act of drawing was described variously as bringing them to a space of peace, a reflective thinking space and in one instance described as being used specifically as a therapeutic tool. I think drawing plays this role for a lot of people. The process of drawing, the physicality of it, can be quite a meditative and calming experience. Robins (2009) examines the meditative qualities of art making in her book Slow Art: Painting and Drawing as a meditative process. Throughout this work Robins argues that we need more divergent opinions about what art can be in order to neutralise the consequences of living in societies that are inundated with imagery. As the participants noted this space of peace or space for reflection can be achieved through drawing. Repetitive mark making and patterning are just some of the drawing methods that can release people into a flow

experience. The flow experience is characterised by an absorption so deep in the task at hand that time seems to lose its sense of meaning. Our interior and exterior worlds are temporarily silenced when we enter this state. In one instance participant (c) who is a practicing art therapist discussed the frustrations that he experiences when working with clients. Several of his clients have autism spectrum disorders. He finds getting them to engage in the process of drawing in a spontaneous way difficult. He does not like to give instrumental instruction in drawing but finds the tension between these two approaches hard to navigate. One of the most interesting aspects about this interview was the conception of drawing that emerges when it is viewed from a therapy perspective. No observations are made on the quality of the work produced and it is the client's perception and interpretation of the work that is premised. The purpose of this drawing is to help the client the articulate their inner worlds. The view that art therapy is still an emerging discipline in Ireland was expressed and also frustrations about the lack of professional recognition for the work that is done.

Throughout this research I have been reaching for and examining different conceptions of what drawing can be. In art therapy the relationship between the client and the drawing or art object is premised. The drawing or art object is conceptualised as a container within which the issues at hand are held. This container provides an articulation of a client's problems. Schaverian (1995) developed the theory of scapegoat transference as a way of understanding the role of the art object within the therapeutic relationship. The concept behind scapegoat transference is that either an unconscious or conscious transference of attributes happens between the client and the drawing or art object (Schaverian, 1995, p.13). This object is then imbued with these negative attributes and viewed as a talisman in the therapeutic relationship. I think this is interesting to note here as the function of the drawing or art object is representational, its execution though is irrelevant and the process of making it is subservient to the role that it will play for the client. It is fascinating to observe how drawings or art objects are viewed in different ways throughout different disciplines.

 Two of the participants are art educators in both FE and HE. One of them found it difficult to understand drawing as a process for investigation, experimentation and reflection, where there may be unexpected outcomes and the learning activity is not under their control.  It was also difficult for this participant to conceive of drawing as a

connecting strand in a sequence of inter-disciplinary learning activities. Although I have noted this here I was hesitant to do so as it must be noted that this may be reflective of my inexperience as an interviewer rather than fully reflective of her position. It was apparent to me that both of these art educators although open to the idea of drawing being implicated in a more explicit way across the curriculum  could  not wholly envisage how this would happen. I think this relates to the acceptance on the part of educators to the separation of art from other disciplines. It may also reflect the unconscious acceptance of hierarchies of knowledge.

## 6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the findings from the research process in light of the themes that emerged through both the interviews and the literature review. In light of this discussion we can conclude that although the utilisation of drawing can offer many possibilities and potentials for learning this was not the experience of the participants. Through the experiences of the participants predisposition towards verbal-linguistic ways of knowing the world was once again highlighted and acknowledged. On a more positive note the imaginative encounters with drawing that the participant's described illustrate the primacy and vitality of drawing as a medium. The participants spoke extensively about the restrictive nature of drawing encounters in early education although it must be noted that due the age range of the participants this cannot be said to be reflective of the current situation in early education.

# Chapter Seven-Conclusion
## 7.1 Introduction

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Through speaking with the participants in this research process their passion and enthusiasm for drawing could be evidenced. Through their almost daily use of drawing they have come to value drawing as a significant part of their personal and professional lives. Within this chapter I will give a brief outline of the findings of this research and also discuss the broader aims and objectives. In the final section I will offer a reflection on my learning throughout this process. As Gibbs (1988) maintains it is not enough to just have an experience to learn we must reflect on this experience in order to cultivate its learning potential..

## 7.2 Conclusion

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The participants in this research had an overwhelmingly negative view of their early drawing encounters. These experiences were restrictive and in the most part drawing and art were neglected in the participant's early education. Through the words of the participants we can come to more fully understand just how embedded particular ways of knowing the world are. Consequently, as was evidenced throughout the literature review the premising of rational-logical ways of knowing the world results in the neglect of our full range of intelligences.

The literature review spoke extensively about the need to rise above the effects of mystification and embed art within our daily lives. Through the experiences of the participants we can distil the positive benefits that such an endeavour brings to their lives. Two participants noted that the increased confidence their students displayed through a sustained effort at drawing. This sustained effort results in achievement which demystifies the process of drawing and further undermines the myth of creativity. A prominent theme that was revealed throughout this process was that of the therapeutic benefits of drawing. The participant's use of drawing as a therapeutic tool was, although largely unintentional, one of the positive attributes of drawing that they identified. The ability of drawing to provide a space, an in between space, where we can reflect upon our interior and exterior worlds, was identified by the participants. The richest accounts given by the participants were their encounters with imaginative

drawing. Their voices offer an opportunity to remember and re-embrace the playful and inventive elements of drawing. It is these aspects of drawing that are forgotten when visual realism is premised as the ideal. Through the words of the participants we can challenge this solitary conception of drawing. We can remember as the participants do to embrace the inventive and playful capacities of drawing in all its multiplicities.

To conclude, I suppose we must go back to the beginning. My beginning was full of perhaps boisterous claims and affirmations about drawing, and its potentials for learning. I believe I mentioned the road markings of North America as a way to highlight not only how drawing surrounds us but how it can so explicitly affect our behaviour. If, for a moment we hold this idea in our minds, and begin to play around with it we may come to a fuller understanding of the power of drawing. When we *really* think about what it means to make a mark upon the world, to draw a line in the sand, to delineate a boundary, the implications of this echo deeply. If we take a moment to think back to the young cartographers in Delhi and Mumbai, they were making drawings and maps that affirmed their vision of the world. It was these drawings and others like them that I connected with the cave drawings in Lascaux. I cited a fellow drawing enthusiast who described drawing as the most supreme form of human expression.

If we give these young map-makers some time and reflect upon what they were really doing while they mapped their neighbourhoods, we will realise that they were executing their most fundamental human rights. The right to be acknowledged, the right to have their voices heard. Through drawing they articulated not only their aspirations, but also the lived reality of their lives. There are some voices, loud voices, very articulate voices, that tell us that what we need is more conversations, more dialogues, so that we may articulate a better vision for education. When these voices are well versed within the hierarchies of knowledge it can numb them to the common realities of daily life. Any approach to learning that is even briefly steeped in means and methods can be very easily silenced by these voices. I believe that in order to make room for all voices we must accommodate all the ways in which these voices are expressed. I wondered throughout this research process how long it would take for my post-modern methodology to truly make sense to me. I realised it did, when I came to understand that the spaces of adult education are just like the spaces that Bhabba (2003) described,

they are in-between spaces, not yet there, yet not here anymore. An in-between space, a gap in the world is also a space upon which we can draw a better version of ourselves.

In light of the experiential philosophy that underpins adult education we should remain open to any and all approaches to learning that are experiential, but particularly ones that that can accommodate the emotive aspects of our lives. Acknowledging and validating the full range of human capabilities and intelligences should be a chief priority for adult educators and also for curriculum planners. Unfortunately, meaning and meaningfulness is most often found at the periphery of adult education whilst neo-liberal values make up the centre. Artistic strategies such as drawing should be further utilised and explored in learning environments. As illustrated throughout this thesis drawing could have a significant impact on adult learning environments.

Throughout this research it was the intention to affirm the value of drawing. This thesis goes some way towards this affirmation. I believe the learning potential contained within drawing has been addressed. The findings of this research relate to and support themes that have emerged throughout the literature review. This research found that drawing as a method of communication, a therapeutic tool, and also as a vital means of self-expression has a large role to play in learning settings. This research recognises the potential of drawing but also acknowledges that drawing is not utilised or recognised in any fundamental way throughout adult education. This thesis also acknowledges the need for further theoretical and practical research on drawing and artistic strategies within adult education.

## 7.3 Reflection on Personal Learning

The process of completing this thesis has not been without its challenges. Throughout this process I have learnt a significant amount about what it takes to undertake a research endeavour such as this one. I have learned that much more can be achieved through breaking down the research process into more manageable goals and objectives. I also learnt the importance of stepping away from the research process in a bid to let things settle and return with a fresh perspective. A key learning that occurred was throughout the interview process as I slowly learnt how integral developing interviewing skills are to the research process. I don't lack the ability to listen to people but I was often at a loss when through my inexperience discrete skills that are the characteristics of good interviewers were not available to me.

In retrospect I have learnt throughout this process that a research project that premises drawing should really in my opinion use drawing methods to collect the data. This would provide a much more nuanced account of drawing as a potential learning tool but would also evidence the learning potential of drawing in a much more significant way. However the research I did collect through the interview process afforded me the opportunity to reflect on the subject at hand in new ways.  I have had the opportunity to broaden my understanding about the subject matter and also view it through the lens of different disciplines. More broadly throughout the research process I had the opportunity given the opportunity to explore aspects of educational discourse that were previously unknown to me which had great benefits for me. Overall this research process has been a time of great learning for me.

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**Appendices:**

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**Appendix A: Information Sheet for Interview Participants**

**Research Topic**

My name is Olivia Smith and I am currently undertaking an M.ed in Adult, Community and Further Education in Maynooth University, Maynooth. As part of this programme I am required to complete a research study. The research that I am undertaking proposes to explore peoples experience with the process of drawing. It is my belief that drawing as an educational tool is underutilised. The aim of this research is to identify the elements of drawing processes and practices that could be utilised in educational settings.

**Procedures**

The research that will be undertaken is a qualitative descriptive study that will use semi structured interviews to collect data. The purpose of the interviews is to hear your opinions and views on the topic mentioned above. The interviews will be recorded so that your views can be represented as accurately as possible

If you would like to participate in this research you can contact me either by phone or by email the details of which are listed below.

I will then contact you to arrange a time and place to meet that will be convenient to you. A consent form will then be given to you to sign.

**Confidentiality**

Participation in the interviews will remain confidential. No information that could be used to identify you will be used in the research. . The transcripts of the interview will be made available to you so that you can make any amendments or adjustments as you fit...

**Benefits**

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this interview although it is the intention of the research to contribute to a broader field of knowledge.

**Risks**

There are no perceivable or foreseeable risks to you from taking part in the interview process.

**Participation**

There is no obligation for you to participate in an interview. If you are to participate you have the right to withdraw from the process at any time.

**Permission**

This research study and the questions that have been planned for the semi structured interviews have been submitted to and given ethical approval by The Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University, Maynooth.

**Funding**

This research study is self funded.

**Further Information**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information and for considering taking part in the interview process. If you would like to participate and be interviewed as part of this research study please contact me by either phone or email.

Phone:

Email:

## Appendix B   Consent Form for Participants

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**Research Title**: An Exploration of the Role that drawing plays or could play in an educational setting

**Researcher Contact Details:**

Name:                    Email:                    Phone:

**Declaration of Consent:**

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from taking part in the interview or interview process at any time.
- I understand that all of the information collected for this research will be treated as confidential and that my identity will remain anonymous.
- I understand that the interview will be audio taped and that I will be given a transcript of the recorded interview and I can make any adjustments necessary.
- I have read the information leaflet pertaining to this research and I understand its contents and I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and the interview process.
- I understand that the results of this research will be submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Med in Adult, Community and Further Education at Maynooth University, Maynooth.

**Participants Signature:**

**Date:**

**Statement of Responsibility**

I have provided the participant with an information leaflet pertaining to this research. I have explained the procedures required while taking part in this interview. I have addressed any questions that the participant had concerning taking part in research. The participant has given their consent to take part in this interview.

**Researchers Signature:**

**Date:**