

STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A Clumsy Encounter

Dyspraxia and Drawing

By
Claire Penketh



SensePublishers

A Clumsy Encounter

STUDIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
Volume 12

Series Editor

Roger Slee, *Institute of Education, University of London, UK.*

Editorial Board

Mel Ainscow, *University of Manchester, UK.*

Felicity Armstrong, *Institute of Education - University of London, UK.*

Len Barton, *Institute of Education - University of London, UK.*

Suzanne Carrington, *Queensland University of Technology, Australia.*

Joanne Deppeler, *Monash University, Australia.*

Linda Graham, *University of Sydney, Australia.*

Levan Lim, *National Institute of Education, Singapore.*

Missy Morton, *University of Canterbury, New Zealand.*

Scope

This series addresses the many different forms of exclusion that occur in schooling across a range of international contexts and considers strategies for increasing the inclusion and success of all students. In many school jurisdictions the most reliable predictors of educational failure include poverty, Aboriginality and disability. Traditionally schools have not been pressed to deal with exclusion and failure. Failing students were blamed for their lack of attainment and were either placed in segregated educational settings or encouraged to leave and enter the unskilled labour market. The crisis in the labor market and the call by parents for the inclusion of their children in their neighborhood school has made visible the failure of schools to include all children.

Drawing from a range of researchers and educators from around the world, *Studies in Inclusive Education* will demonstrate the ways in which schools contribute to the failure of different student identities on the basis of gender, race, language, sexuality, disability, socio-economic status and geographic isolation. This series differs from existing work in inclusive education by expanding the focus from a narrow consideration of what has been traditionally referred to as special educational needs to understand school failure and exclusion in all its forms. Moreover, the series will consider exclusion and inclusion across all sectors of education: early years, elementary and secondary schooling, and higher education.

A Clumsy Encounter

Dyspraxia and Drawing

Claire Penketh
Edge Hill University



SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM/BOSTON/TAIPEI

A C.I.P. record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-94-6091-455-3 (paperback)

ISBN: 978-94-6091-456-0 (hardback)

ISBN: 978-94-6091-457-7 (e-book)

Published by: Sense Publishers,
P.O. Box 21858,
3001 AW Rotterdam,
The Netherlands
www.sensepublishers.com

Printed on acid-free paper

All Rights Reserved © 2011 Sense Publishers

No part of this work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without written permission from the Publisher, with the exception of any material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The (Pre) Fabrication	1
2. Imagining a Methodology	13
3. Inclusion and Education: Sites for Disciplinary Power	33
4. Creating the 'Dyspraxic Ideal'	45
5. Drawing from Observation: The Pedagogical and Epistemological Context	73
6. Matthew	97
7. Craig	119
8. Alex	141
9. Elaine	153
10. A 'Clumsy' Encounter	161

CHAPTER 1

THE (PRE) FABRICATION

PREAMBLE

The tradition of drawing from observation, and its pedagogic role in secondary art and design education in the UK, forms the focus for this exploration of the experiences of a number of individuals identified as ‘dyspraxic’. My interest began with an initial uncertainty regarding the application of particular approaches to teaching observational drawing based on the work of Betty Edwards’ book *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain* (Edwards, 1982:3). Revisiting Edwards’ manual, in the early stages of this work, I was struck by a focus within her introduction that, on many previous readings, I had missed. She suggests that ‘drawing is a skill that can be learned by every *normal* person with *average* eyesight and *average* eye-hand coordination’ (my emphasis) suggesting that there are some who may not be able to engage as successfully with the activities she promotes. The origins of this book came from my reservations about what it is to have ‘average’ attributes, particularly the concept of what it is to be a ‘normal’ person with ‘average eye-hand coordination’; hence the focus here on those who are identified as ‘dyspraxic’ since by definition individuals are recognised as being less well coordinated.

In considering a range of literature about dyspraxia I began to be compelled by the possibilities that the sensory integration and coordination required for drawing from observation may suggest particular challenges. However, I was also drawn to the ambiguities around definitions of dyspraxia and the social and cultural definitions that may result, not only in its identification against a concept of normalisation (Foucault, 1991:177) but also in the experience of this as a *learning* ‘disability’. This book does not aim to identify specific ‘problems’ but rather to explore the flexible social and cultural settings in which pupils may be defined against particular activities and the implications this might have for their learning. It is therefore less concerned with an understanding of what can be investigated by the analysis of drawings than it is with the sense that participants have made of their art education and the way in which drawing from observation is positioned within their stories of these experiences.

This book aims to critique the creation of the dyspraxic subject by exploring the point at which the ‘dyspraxic ideal’, derived from and produced by a range of literature, intersects with participants’ experiences of drawing from observation as part of their compulsory art education. Here I will explore the possibility that as a result of an exclusive approach to art and design, prioritising teaching of specific skills and mastery of techniques, pupils could be socially and culturally disadvantaged rather than ‘medically’ disabled. I will therefore offer a critical exploration of the pedagogy of observational drawing as a situated and potentially discriminatory activity through the lens of a number of ‘dyspraxic learners’, but with implications for all.

CHAPTER 1

The aim of my initial research was to gain an understanding of the lived experience of observational drawing by those perceived to be less well coordinated, in order to examine the nature of observational drawing as a pedagogic practice situated within socially constructed concepts of physical and technical ability. In this introduction I aim to establish the key themes of the work and explore the autobiographical and professional context for its origin. The latter half of this first chapter is therefore presented as a number of short narrative accounts, offering the space for personal reflections on how this work has evolved. These experiences have, over time, shaped the focus and direction of this research. Chapter 2 offers an in-depth exploration of narrative methodology, its positioning within critical research and its relevance for exploring the complex social sites of inclusion, 'special' education and art education. On a practical level this also allows for a better understanding of the tools that have been used to collect and analyse data.

Section 2 provides the main theoretical framework which is based on a detailed discussion of recent debates around inclusive education in Chapter 3; the creation of the dyspraxic ideal in Chapter 4; and the pedagogical and epistemological context of drawing from observation within the context of art and design education in Chapter 5. The data is presented, analysed and theorised via four narrative case studies (Chapters 6–9) in Section 3. The final section of the book draws together and develops some significant themes emerging from the research and concludes the work.

THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY AND RESEARCH TENSIONS

There is an immediate and obvious tension here in exploring the experiences of a number of individuals largely as a result of the way in which they have already been identified as in some way 'different'. The starting point for me, as a researcher, was to identify the experiences of pupils identified as dyspraxic and to consider an aspect of art practice that may have been particularly problematic for 'them' because of their perceived 'disability'. However, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the manner in which I had framed the original study, based on my first encounters with clinical research. This range of literature has been critically reviewed in Chapter 4 in order to create a text that presents the concept of a 'dyspraxic ideal', a set of ideas which are then positioned within a discussion of key literature in respect of art and design education in Chapter 5. The aim here is to shift the focus from a discussion of individual deficit to one where the construction of certain educational practices can be explored and interrogated. Here I acknowledge the flexible nature of definitions of ability and disability within social and cultural constructions and the role that systemic practices can have in shaping individual experience as well as our understanding of the ways in which we might define a 'norm' in respect of learning abilities.

ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION: THE CONTEXT

This book aims to explore a particular pedagogic practice, drawing from observation, and has a specific focus on the experiences of pupils and their engagement with this activity as part of their art and design education. The observation tradition in art

and design has a significant role in art education as part of the academic translation of the western European approach based on the classical representation described by Davies (2002). Although he outlines the tradition in relation to 19th century Schools of Design his description of this approach to art education resonates with more recent experiences. In a study by Downing and Watson (2004), drawing from direct observation was identified as a prevalent characteristic of the curriculum in ten randomly selected schools, and a further eight selected on the basis of their engagement with contemporary art work. This emphasis is illustrative of a focus on a skills-based approach to teaching art where pedagogy is related to the transmission of a specific set of practical and technical skills (Atkinson, 2006).

The tradition of observation has all the hallmarks of the notion of ‘Quality’ identified by Lippard (1990). She refers to a ‘sheep-like fidelity to a single criterion for good art’ based on high degrees of technical skill and, although referring to cross-cultural issues, her argument can be extended to a discussion of the constraints posed by the observational tradition within art education. Academic observational drawings are still held as examples of a ‘Quality’ to which only a minority can aspire. It may be that an emphasis on teaching observational drawing as a central skill contributes to a particular definition of disciplinary ‘ability’ and that such a definition may exclude pupils from aspects of their learning in art as a result of this emphasis. The role that drawing from observation has in defining disciplinary knowledge, in respect of art education, will therefore be explored, as will the ways in which this activity might create pupils as particular types of subject (Rabinow, 1984:188) and in doing so exclude them.

These ideas are not new in relation to a discussion of the pedagogy of art and design education. In 1998 Hughes claimed that:

... the lives and social conditions affecting young people in the UK have changed so much over a thirty year period that the drawing of a distorted self portrait in a kettle may no longer carry as much significance as it used to (Hughes,1998:45)

I would go further to suggest that there may never have been a time when this had significance for individuals other than for those with the specific skills necessary to render the said portrait to a ‘high standard’. Rather, that this type of observational drawing practice has been subsumed into art and design educational practice regardless of relevance or pedagogic or theoretical justification.

It is argued that the emergence of postmodern practices in art and design (Burgess and Addison, 2004) may present opportunities for this traditional pedagogical canon of practice to be challenged and that contemporary approaches to art practice can be seen to have real relevance to a discussion of less exclusive approaches. Writing about art education in the US, Efland, Freedman and Stuhr (1996:3) indicate that most practices used by Western art teachers remain ‘grounded in modernist conceptions of art’ and retain an emphasis on formal characteristics as a key principle in art education based on the modernist tradition.

The introduction of the most recent orders for the national curriculum (QCA, 2007) may present opportunities for a different pedagogical context. The nature of

CHAPTER 1

language is interesting here, with an emphasis on personalised learning, mistake making in safe environments and risk taking. The definition of ‘first-hand observation’ is expansive, encompassing a range of approaches:

Working from first-hand observation: This could include taking inspiration from the work of others, drawing on personal experiences, drawing on imagination in response to stimuli, or using first hand observation to record images, sounds and ideas in visual and written forms. (QCA, 2007:5)

The expansion of ‘drawing to express’ offers a similarly extensive range of approaches to drawing but it is too early to say whether the new curriculum for art and design will provide some potential for the development of new opportunities for art education (Steers, 2009). This research will engage with these contemporary debates in relation to pedagogy in art and design and aims to contribute to the discussion of inclusive curriculum design and delivery.

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

I have drawn on the work of Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu in order to provide a conceptual framework for the analysis of participant narratives. A main theme related to the subject of the book concerns the social and cultural boundaries that are set, resulting in the identification and formation of both the norm (Foucault, 1991) and consequently ‘the abnormal’, where difference (identified as dyspraxia) is a deficit (learning difficulty) in need of remediation. This is related to a further theme whereby issues of health are viewed as both political and power related (Foucault, 1976). Public health becomes a political objective linked to the preservation of an economic workforce where it is beneficial to identify differences and provide remediation in order to enable appropriate training. The regulation and formalisation of social structures, such as education, allow for interventions to take place in order to correct individual difference. Foucault refers to the history of schooling as a process of uninterrupted examination where there is the potential for ‘perpetual comparison’ making such types of measurement and judgement possible (Foucault, 1991:184). The role of observational drawing, as a practice situated within art education and the broader arena of secondary education, will be examined as a regulative and dominant discourse in providing a mechanism for defining concepts of ability in the discipline as well as the pupil.

The nature of the authorization of these cultural traditions can also be associated with ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977) as part of a socially dominant code that could be described as purposefully exclusive. The ‘institutionalized’ state of this form of cultural capital can be seen to be re-enforced by the examination system and bodies such as the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) who give authority to a curriculum that still rewards the mastery of technical skills based on the nineteenth century model outlined by Davies (2002). Drawing from observation can perform a role within a process of normalisation with individual ability measured against a particular aesthetic, the ‘object’ and the drawing products of others. Those who do not display a particular type of ability may be identified as not only different but in need of remedial support or intervention.

THE (PRE) FABRICATION

The second theme outlined above concerns the role of observational drawing as an official and discriminatory discourse. Connections between a perceived ability to draw and concepts of normality are firmly embedded, and it may be difficult for an art and design educator not to make judgements about the ability of a pupil to engage with the art and design curriculum. As a parallel, an English teacher may have difficulties in acknowledging the level of literacy of a pupil who has problems employing a consistent approach to spelling. This does not render an individual illiterate, but may result in a pupil being excluded from studying literature as an examination subject. My aim here is not to undermine a formalist approach to art and design education (although the pedagogic concepts that underpin such practices will be questioned) but to examine the concept of the authorisation of these systems and consider the implications for those who are excluded through identification of individual difference from an aesthetic norm.

The use of narrative as a form of inquiry resonates with Foucault's discussion of subjugated, naive or marginal forms of knowledge (Foucault, 1980). It could be argued that the participant's voice or narrative of their experience represents a previously 'occluded' way of knowing that is being brought to the fore. This theme is sympathetic with a characteristic of qualitative research where local or particular forms of knowledge are recognised as having the potential to introduce notions of difference. Clough (2002:12) suggests that narrative inquiry sits with other ethnographic and auto/biographical forms which attempt:

... to relate the 'micro' world of the individual to the 'macro' world of institutional meanings which they both inhabit and re-create. At its most fundamental, this is inquiry into the relations between subject and object.

The relationship between macro (institutional) and micro (individual) has additional relevance when considering those participating in this research project, since they are potentially marginalised by being children and by being identified as dyspraxic. They are identified and treated by 'expert' bodies whose knowledge is authenticated and given precedence by an adult and scientific voice. I would also include teachers within this group of experts, whose interventions are increasingly informed by medical identification of difference and the 'science' of assessment. Rigid curricula and age related expectations, for example, can contribute to the pathologising of learning for some pupils (Atkinson, 1998; Matthews, 2003). It is also useful to acknowledge however that the macro versus micro as a binary opposition is not unproblematic since it suggests a reductive view of complex social, cultural and educational sites.

INCLUSION

The range of concepts related to 'inclusive education' explored by Norwich (2002) confirms this as a complex social site (Foucault, 1991). This context provides a setting for the discussion of a specific educational practice based on hegemonic systems of representation and particular forms of aesthetic that may contribute to the production of a particular type of pupil. A consideration of potentially exclusive, socially situated practices will naturally necessitate a debate on inclusion which is

CHAPTER 1

informed by Foucault's discussion of 'normalisation' (Foucault, 1991) and the creation of the 'ideal pupil' or the 'norm'. The potential for a 'breach' between established and hegemonic art practices as sites for learning is set against the concept of the dyspraxic 'ideal'.

A central discussion in respect of inclusion in mainstream education relates to provision for 'special education' based on including pupils in mainstream provision. Baglieri and Knopf (2004) discuss the nature of truly inclusive schooling where differences are 'natural, acceptable and ordinary'. Norwich describes a 'separatist position' that assumes that special educational provision is different from mainstream and the Code of Practice (DfES, 2002), which gives statutory guidance for working with pupils with additional needs, is based on this principle. This type of provision assumes that special education and special educational needs arise from the inability of general education to accommodate and include diverse learners. Barton (1987) goes further to connect school failure more directly with the development of the special educational needs industry. Within this context, specific learner characteristics need to be identified and checked against *the* 'norm' in order to make individualised 'interventions' most effective (Graham and Slee, 2008).

Further to the issues of provision are the tensions present in a discussion of inclusive practices and the recognition of difference, the role of the individual and the implications for the social body explored here by Norwich:

Recognising difference can lead to different provision which might be stigmatised and devalued; but not recognising difference can lead to not providing adequately for individuality. Here is a tension between what we call the values of inclusion and individuality. (Norwich, 2002:496)

What this fails to negotiate are the ways in which such differences are produced by education systems which, in being designed to accommodate, must exclude (Graham and Slee, 2008). Observational drawing, explicit as a system for learning in art education, is positioned as a technology which identifies and therefore produces difference which, I argue here, is defined in particular by individual technical ability that constructs some pupils as *normal* and, by implication, others as *abnormal*.

A simplistic interpretation of inclusion as relating to the practical arrangements for educational provision fails to confront the nature of socially constructed attitudes towards 'special education' and disability identified in Riddell and Watson (2003). This research takes place within the context of such 'dilemmas' and these ideas will be central to exploring the notion of exclusivity in art and design education. This area of research will recognise the principals of inclusion as having implications for all pupils.

In considering these main themes the following questions are relevant for further exploration:

- How do pupils, defined as 'dyspraxic', experience observational drawing practices as part of their secondary art education in the UK?
- How are observational drawing practices defined historically and within the context of art education?
- What is dyspraxia in historical, conceptual and theoretical terms?

- Are the concepts of ‘observation’, ‘ideas’ and ‘imagination’ exclusive in the way in which they are defined in relation to art education?
- Does an emphasis on drawing from observation reflect cultural restrictions that may impact on the nature and definitions of inclusion in art and design education?
- What contribution does this work make to the broader political debate on inclusion, equity and participation in educational practices?

The following section will outline the autobiographical context for the development of this work in order to provide some further context.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

My friend Justine had large beautiful handwriting. She had copied a small Saxon boat carefully and neatly. I'd struggled with the drawing, scarring the first page of my history book with deep pencil grooves. The ink ran under my ruler and smeared across the page as I underlined the date. Mr Tanktop picked up our books, holding them up to the rest of the class.

“Presentation!” he repeated firmly, “Presentation!”

The recommendations to place myself in the research by writing an autobiographical chapter came twice during introductory workshops within the first few weeks of becoming a research student. This autobiographical emphasis is advocated as a means of determining a clear context for the work. It is also a means of reciprocal sharing, moving towards a sense of balance for an ethical researcher anxious about presenting a story of ‘the other’ (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Within this field of inquiry there is little room for the disconnected, dispassionate or detached researcher, sometimes associated with ‘traditional’ quantitative analysis or a positivist perspective. The following ‘anecdotes’ provide something of my own narrative, a construction in which I recognise how I have defined myself against concepts of ‘a norm’ in respect of particular childhood memories, my own drawing abilities, my role as a teacher and my ‘judgements’ regarding the ‘ability’ of pupils.

At first I struggled, aware that I was viewing this work as a former teacher of art and design, not identified as ‘dyspraxic’, and with only a slight awareness of having taught pupils with coordination difficulties. I was certain of my status as an ‘outsider’. However, there were episodes from my own learning histories that seemed relevant as I started to explore concepts of skill, observation and ability. The role of the narrative, as a central element to my methodology has offered a heightened awareness of the relevance that my own stories have had in determining the shape and direction of this book.

We had to draw a jam jar full of random objects for our exam. Splinters of wood stuck in my back teeth as I bit through my pencil. I can still feel the sheer frustration of trying to make that drawing. Ms Nicely looked up from the front desk smiling encouragement.

I got a B for that drawing.

A B's Ok but it's not an A.

I didn't continue with art and design past that third year.

CHAPTER 1

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) discuss ‘the biographically situated researcher’ acknowledging their view of the world through a ‘filtered gaze’. It is the role of this autobiographical chapter to recognize the various filters at work within the project. Denzin and Lincoln claim that there are no objective observations, and the researcher can only offer stories or accounts that are both effects of and affected by the researcher. Bruner’s reflections on autobiography as narrative reinforce the connections with the central role of story in this project (Bruner, 1990). Before the interpretation and analyses of conversations with others can begin there must be an acknowledgement of one’s own set of stories, acknowledging the personal within the political (hooks, 2000). Although this could be considered as a narcissistic act of self indulgence, Fine (1994) identifies a different purpose. She describes the potential for the invisible researcher to be complicit in recreating the participant as ‘the other’ and advocates autobiography as a means of making one’s position more obvious. It could be argued that autobiography makes the researcher visible and allows the reader to trace the ways in which interpretations are made and represented. Autobiography, in this context, aligns with research as an ethical project.

I taught art and design for thirteen years working at two secondary schools in Liverpool between 1990 and 2003 and started this research after leaving the secondary sector to move into higher education. I still identified with being an art teacher and the aim to pursue research seemed a natural progression from gaining an MA as part of the Artist Teacher Scheme (Adams, 2003). As a consequence of my departure from teaching I became removed from these direct experiences, but as I have become disconnected from the specific contexts, other themes, particularly the notion of equity in education, and the development of my own drawing have taken on a greater significance. This book is based on the role of specific practices within art and design education in the secondary sector but this is set within the broader context of concepts of ability (and by implication disability) and how these are negotiated through power structures within society. It has ceased to be relevant that I no longer teach art and design. The importance for me now is as a member of a society where cultural norms and expectations dictate an epistemological stance that can render certain members ‘disabled’ and that this can result in reduced participation in ‘authorised’ forms of learning. However, cultural norms and academic expectations can be redefined and reworked according to particular foci and definitions of ability are therefore flexible rather than fixed. For me, this is where the significance of this work lies.

I WAS A CLUMSY CHILD

The house always smelt lovely. I raced up the veranda steps and hurled myself at Aunty Bea sending her cups crashing onto the pink flags. Claire! The rest of the holiday was spent in pursuit of a replacement cup and saucer.

But that was 35 years ago...

Can't we move on?

THE (PRE) FABRICATION

Some things just seem to stick - pulling you back - like grandpa holding on to the hood of my coat cos I was always the one who was going to fall into the lake when we were fishing for sticklebacks. I never fell in, but I never got close enough to catch any fish.

I was always the one who spilt the milk or knocked things over. I was often referred to as 'clumsy'. I remain unsure as to whether or not I could have been described as dyspraxic but I do have an awareness of what it is like to grow up as a 'clumsy' child. Perhaps it was because I was the younger of two and therefore always comparatively less well coordinated. Another suggestion has been that I was single-minded as a young child and would push through or go over obstacles rather than make a diversion. In comparison to others, my sister or friends at school, I was not very technically accomplished with drawing or handwriting but these skills improved with practice. I was not remarkable in this respect or particularly disadvantaged, but I was often referred to as 'clumsy'. The odd thing is that I had forgotten about it until I started this project.

Dear Claire,

I saw this and thought of you.

I opened the envelope to find a newspaper cutting.

'Not just clumsy?

Professionals recognise an increasing number of children with dyspraxia.'

MY OWN ART PRACTICE

I have never considered myself to be an artist. I was a teacher who also did some of my own art work. I had taken a slightly unconventional route into teaching art and design, having an English degree with art as a minor subject. By the end of my degree I was convinced that art education was central to the career I wanted to pursue and I worked in a primary school as artist in residence on a voluntary basis for 12 months before applying for a place on a PGCE course to teach art and design. The course provided me with a heightened sense of inferiority. My small untidy scraps of work in one folder compared unfavourably to the body of very professional and accomplished work produced by others who had dedicated four years to their specialism. I was a hybrid, a 'jack of all trades and master of none'. I had no awareness of the structure of art and design based degree courses, but I felt myself to be a different sort of creature from others on the course, who appeared to me to be trained 'artists'. I considered that they had already proved their worth and could clearly identify themselves with the cultural definitions of what it was to be an artist. I did not carry the weight of authority that came from a certificated acknowledgement that I could make 'good art'. I lacked confidence in my own technical ability. I wasn't sure that I could draw. In comparison to my sister, I had always been the one who 'couldn't draw'. I remember her comment to me once:

If you ever want me to come in and talk to your class I could tell them how bad you were. If you can learn to draw anybody can.

I loved being an art teacher though and found that my own skills and confidence grew as I taught others, planned projects and practised the skills I wanted to teach.

CHAPTER 1

Drawing became part of my everyday life as well as work. I started to accrue a pile of sketchbooks, paintings and drawings based on direct observation. Drawing from objects and landscapes dominated my work. Drawing or recording what could be seen became central to my art practice and a focus for the way in which I taught art and design. I had not considered until now why working from observation had always had such an emphasis. Which came first, my own commitment to working from observation as an 'artist' or my belief in this as the most important set of skills I could teach? My development as an artist and a teacher were inseparable, each informing and informed by the other. My engagement with curriculum frameworks, examination requirements and assessment and standardisation impacted on my own drawing practice as much as it shaped my teaching philosophy.

LAZY BOY!

Michael was not the most likeable pupil in my form. He was a very capable mathematician and was aware of it. At times this gave him an arrogant edge. In a briefing meeting prior to the start of his first year I was informed that he had a mild form of dyspraxia. I was also informed that he was in fact just 'lazy' and had used dyspraxia as an excuse to have minimal involvement in a range of activities at his primary school. His reputation had preceded him and, on the advice of our special needs co-ordinator, I taught him art and design with an expectation that he would not fully engage because he was likely to be lazy. He did not appear to be particularly poorly coordinated and I had little understanding of any potential challenges that the work may have presented to him. I did not look for any reason for his lack of involvement other than the 'lazy' label passed on. This experience now leaves me feeling uncomfortable. Fortunately I did have a reasonably positive relationship with Michael and we both resigned ourselves to the fact that we would agree to differ in our appreciation of the practical dimensions of the subject. I helped him when I could by giving additional support, starting him off with tasks for example. I remember chiding him continuously for not getting on with the activity set and I marked his incomplete work on the poor effort he made and his almost complete lack of interest.

I offer this anecdote to provide some further context for the way in which this research has evolved. Michael's story is significant for me in highlighting a number of issues pertinent to this work. Firstly, this was the first time that I had encountered a pupil who had been identified by the relevant special educational needs agencies (the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) for the school and an educational psychologist) as being dyspraxic; secondly, the 'diagnosis' was questioned by the school SENCo and the learner was described as 'just lazy'; and finally, being presented with a learner identified as 'different' left me with a sense of being ill-equipped and ill-informed and as a result the 'specific learning difficulty' label appeared to disempower both learner and teacher. Of further significance is the way in which Michael and his 'learning difficulty' came under particular scrutiny whilst particular pedagogical practices, left unexamined, were far less visible.

A TEACHER'S STORY

In drawing these autobiographical strands to a conclusion I will finish with a reflection that relates to my professional practice as an art teacher. During the examination moderation procedures in the mid 1990s, the external examiner highlighted one student's work whose mark she had adjusted from a C grade to a D. She commented that if I had read Betty Edwards' 'Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain' (1982), I would have been able to teach the pupil to achieve the C grade that they had so narrowly missed. After feeling guilty and inadequate, I took the opportunity to engage with Edwards' techniques. I trialled the exercises myself, read the scientific context for the ideas and was excited by the prospect of having some 'real' evidence to support my belief that I could teach drawing and could therefore develop a scheme of work that would have real benefit for students in raising their achievement. From a practitioner's view point, reading about the mental processes involved in drawing from observation was intriguing and compelling. The 'scientific' basis of the drawing theory reinforced and authenticated the exercises as *the* 'correct' way to teach drawing.

The syllabus that we followed in school reinforced this skills based approach to painting and drawing and was interpreted with a strong emphasis on traditional skills. Drawing and painting from direct observation dominated upper and lower school curricula as a form of skills training. The A Level syllabus had a similar emphasis. During marking and moderation, the teacher assigned a grade to the work and it was reasonably easy to make the distinction between that achieving a Grade C or above. The elements of the drawing needed to be in place to a sufficiently 'high standard'. Ellipses had to be understood (continuous and circular rather than sharp edged and drawn in two halves), perspective needed to be used convincingly and rendering had to be mastered in order that three-dimensional solids could be represented effectively. The ideas informing the development of a piece of work may have been convincing but technical skill was the final arbiter in the grading decision.

My year as a probationary teacher coincided with the introduction of the National Curriculum and, with it, a potentially greater emphasis on the developmental aspects of the work and the range of materials and processes used. A short time later we started to plan for the Advanced and Intermediate General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ). We developed the schemes of work to accommodate the required changes, attempting to utilise the existing strengths within the department. This resulted in schemes of work that met the requirements of the National Curriculum and the GNVQ syllabus coverage but which were a reinterpretation of a formalist approach. Downing and Watson (2004) suggest that we may have not been on our own in the way in which we adapted and interpreted the curriculum guidance. Although the regulation of the curriculum may have presented some opportunity for a positive adaptation of existing practice, our new schemes of work were rebuilt from a pedagogical perspective that was underpinned by a belief in art and design education that was based on the transmission of a very specific and culturally based set of skills.

In this critical reflection of my own practice I am seeking to discover how and why I have had such a strong belief in the value and necessity of developing skills

CHAPTER 1

in working from direct observation and how this shaped my own concepts of pupil ability and subject pedagogy. Atkinson (2006:20) offers a useful exploration of the 'passionate attachments' teachers might have to particular pedagogical approaches that function to define discipline, teacher and pupil. Hughes questions the relevance of art and design for many pupils (Hughes, 1998), yet it is also possible to question the adherence to such skills based approaches that are reinforced during departmental apprenticeships and which reproduce the belief systems that constitute learning and teaching in art.

Returning to Michael, my 'lazy boy', I wondered where he would fit within Edwards' definitions of both 'normal' and 'average'. The reference to this culturally restrictive norm is difficult to disregard within concepts of art education that prioritise specific skills development. This book is not a vehicle for the denigration of existing practices, but, as Foucault (1980:81) might recommend, an attempt at unearthing the basis for such systems of thought. Without an understanding of the ways in which such systems have evolved there would be no hope of change.

A frustrating drawing/thinking session.

Heavy handed pencil marks scar the paper. Almost impossible to erase, they leave a memory of both accident and intention even after the page has been turned...

This chapter has provided an introduction to the book outlining some significant questions and presenting an overview of the main themes as well as an autobiographical context for the evolution of the research. In the next chapter I will provide a detailed explanation of methodological considerations as well as outlining more fully the practical aspects of the approach that I have taken.

CHAPTER 2

IMAGINING A METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides tools to equip the reader with a means of understanding the methods employed in this book. It also offers an important means of recognising my epistemological and ontological positioning. Here social and educational research is acknowledged as a political activity informed by the personal values, beliefs and experiences, introduced in Chapter 1.

Narrative, as social research, typifies many of the features of qualitative enquiry outlined by Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2000) who describe it as ‘naturalistic’, ‘interpretive’ and ‘subjective’, a set of descriptors that will be explored in this chapter. Interpretive approaches recognise participants as active in the ways in which they contribute to constructing their worlds, and an understanding of their context and perspective is prioritised, with the individual or particular story as a central element.

Denzin and Lincoln’s (2005) notion of qualitative research as a ‘democratic project’ with a social purpose is recognised as a clear driver (see also Lincoln and Denzin, 2005), and narrative approaches, in prioritising the particular and individual, are discussed as particularly well placed as an emancipatory method. Eisner (2003:53) makes a convincing case for the relationship between interpretative inquiry and the arts for a shared capacity for ‘nuance, particularity, emotion and perceptual freshness’ all of which are typified by qualitative research. The role of the imagination in analysis reinforces interpretive inquiry as an essentially ‘artistic’ and creative act. However, the justification for narrative as a methodological choice here relates to the role of ‘plot’ and ‘story’ as a means of making sense of the world.

The development of a narrative approach is informed by the critical tradition (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005:304) concerned as it is with cultural criticism, including: the mediation of social and historical power relations; the connection between facts and values; a recognition that particular groups in society are privileged over others; and a recognition that language is central to the development of subjectivity. Of principal importance in making connections with the principles of critical theory is a concern that research practices are implicated in the reproduction of social systems and therefore of forms of oppression. Research from this critical standpoint is identified as a first stage in political action in supporting and developing an understanding of complex power relationships of people in society, and it is the processes as well as the subject of the research that is significant. Kincheloe and McLaren (2005) explain:

Research in the critical tradition takes the form of self-conscious criticism – self-conscious in the sense that researchers try to become aware of the ideological imperatives and epistemological presuppositions that inform their research as well as their own subjective, intersubjective and normative reference claims. (p. 305)

CHAPTER 2

The positioning and recognition of ‘the self’ as researcher is therefore a significant aspect in determining whose stories are told (Riessman, 1993) and which technologies are at work in interpreting, representing and therefore potentially creating ‘the other’. Von Foerster (2004:6) argues that researchers, as observers, can only ‘look *into* themselves’ and describe their own world view. Gender, class, ethnicity, age and profession therefore become significant in the power relationships evident between researcher and participants.

A central concern in critical approaches is with ‘technical rationality’ (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005:308) associated with experimental research and defined by hegemonic methods that critical theorists argue may result in undermining the humanistic aims for research. The discussion of Foucault’s work, further developed in Chapter 3, is worth drawing on here for the ways in which power and hegemonic practices are discussed in respect of normalisation, individualisation and dominant forms of representation where ‘technical rationality’ can be viewed as machinery that draws power from the forms by which knowledge and the subject are created.

This chapter provides a discussion of the role that interpretive research has in developing an understanding of particular contexts that can speak of the broader social circumstance. I will therefore include an examination of some significant characteristics of this aspect of qualitative research and the appropriateness of this approach from an ethical perspective. The role of the researcher in inevitably constructing and representing *their* observations of the world will be acknowledged in my justification of this approach.

Narrative, as a means of exploring individual experience has the potential for making the individual visible. A significant consideration in my choice of methodology has been the need to prioritise the experiences of those who may have previously been recorded, considered or discussed via official medical/educational discourse. This is therefore an attempt to give precedence to the voices of those whose experiences might previously have been considered to be ‘naïve’ or ‘subjugated’ within particular forms of knowledge (Foucault, 1980:82). Central to this project is an exploration of the multiplicity of experience rather than a pursuit of specific and definitive ‘truths’. This exploration of methodology concerns finding an appropriate form to ‘capture’ this multiplicity without drawing up absolute boundaries. In considering narratives or the stories of participants, the problematic nature of a research methodology with story, and by implication ‘fiction’, at its centre will be explored as a means of providing a justification for prioritising the study of experience as a central component of the research.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF NARRATIVE

My aim, in interviewing participants about their experiences of drawing from observation, was to gain an understanding of their recollections of this aspect of their experience of art education. Drawings, as artefacts for analyses, are not the main point for consideration in this book. I was particularly interested in the ways participants spoke of their situated experience, *their* recollections of events or incidents. From the outset I was compelled by the ways in which these memories were shaped, plotted and explained by the participants. A significant aspect of this

analysis of the narratives presented in this book centres on ‘a breach between ideal and real, self and society’ (Riessman, 1993:3) or, as Bruner (1990) suggested, ‘breach and exception’ and this provides a basic structure for a reading of the narrative case studies, a descriptor that will be defined later in this chapter.

Bruner (1990:43) describes the sequencing of events as a significant property of narrative where a story relates to a sequence of actions and experiences over time. He suggests that narrative ‘specializes in the forging of links between the exceptional and the ordinary as an ‘interpretive procedure’ for explaining departures from the norm in a meaningful way (p. 46). He suggests that when people are asked to describe a remarkable event they automatically attempt to give reasons in order to give it meaning describing this as a ‘unique way of managing departures from the canonical’. This is not only part of a ‘natural’ drive he claims, but an important aspect of human development that enables us to cope with the world around us:

Children, I think are predisposed naturally and by circumstance to start their narrative careers in that spirit...Without those skills we could never endure the conflicts and contradictions that social life generates. We would become unfit for the life of culture. (Bruner, 1990:46)

Narrative is made up of the story (fabula), the typical or in this case ‘ideal’ experience and the plot (sjuzet) which is the ‘twist in the tale’ resulting in the breach from the ideal (Riessman, 1993:30). The plot unifies potentially disparate elements in order for sense to be made:

the plot has the power to make a single story out of the multiple incidents or, if you like, of transforming the manifold happenings into a story; in this connection an event is more than a mere occurrence, something that just happens: it is that which contributes to the progress of the story as much as it contributes to its beginning and its end. (Ricoeur, 1987:426)

Here I have attempted to reflect this narrative feature by creating a hypothesis based on the ‘dyspraxic ideal’ and drawing from observation as an ‘ideal’ in art education. The personal narratives of the four participants offer plot lines through which breach and exception from these ideals can be identified. The distance between the real and the ideal identified through these breaches creates a space for interpretation and meaning making.

A CONTESTED METHODOLOGY

The Script:

Somewhere in a small grey meeting room...
(There is a round table, a flip chart and a grey metal bin.
Four people sit around the table each with a note pad and pen.)
BF – So...I thought it’d be really useful if this team could offer some help with the tender regarding the methodology section of the bid.
(There is a pause)
I thought at this first meeting we could talk about the types of research... the experience we have?

CHAPTER 2

(pause)

CP – Well my research is based on a narrative approach, sharing stories of experience...

BF – they won't be interested in that...

CP – it might not be appropriate for this large scale project?

BF – No

CP – No?

BF – No (pause)

CP – No...except that...

BF – No...Mmmm (pause)... So what else have we got?

One of my own brief stories in the script above exemplifies this concept of breach and exception in order to introduce some of the problematic dimensions of narrative research. In considering a tender for a research project for a government agency the lead proposal writer, convening an advisory group, asked about our research experience. I outlined recent work I had undertaken employing narrative analysis. For this project it may or may not have been appropriate yet I was concerned that it had been dismissed as a way of knowing and I wondered how much knowledge that person had about the validity and rationale for employing a narrative approach. I also considered that maybe that particular government body, the Training and Development Agency (TDA) should be interested in the narratives of those who were experiencing particular changes in education policy. I lacked the assertiveness to suggest that the impact of other forms of knowing might in fact be diminished without these narratives of personal experience. Here there was a breach at the point where my own beliefs about and experiences of research were contested and dismissed in a claim for 'valid' knowledge by a senior member of staff interpreting the needs of a government body.

Choice of methodology is aligned to the types of research questions we pose yet these choices (and questions) emerge from the way we make sense of the world, our world view, as well as our concepts of what constitutes knowledge. 'Who' is making sense of the world and 'how' they are doing this has significance, particularly where research is publicly funded and therefore politically controlled. In the development of current educational initiatives there is evidence of a growing interest in the development of quantitative approaches to support government initiatives (Stronach, Frankham and Stark, 2007). Dyson (1998:2) outlines a perception of research in the field of 'special' education as relating to description, analysis and testing through scientific investigation by a process he describes as 'rule-bound, publicly testable and which therefore give access to some final or provisional truth'. This emphasis on the authority of the *real* and *publicly testable*, he suggests, results in both research processes and researcher becoming dangerously invisible as a result of unquestioned authority, yet such claims to real testable knowledge are perceived as embodying scientific rigour, validity and claims to truth.

This tension between authorised knowledge forms sits within a wider discussion of the relevance and justification for exploratory methods that contest the 'real' and the ways in which representations can be claimed as 'the truth'. Cannella and Lincoln (2004:7) discuss controversies regarding 'governmental regimes of truth' in the US

which both create and are created by the adherence to particular research practices suggesting that a new period of conservatism in research is attributable to a backlash against newer methods. They refer to Giddens' acknowledgement of the conservative nature of institutions as 'bastions of high modernism' unwilling to acknowledge anything other than a 'gold standard' of research defined by large randomized samples and based on clinical research models. They suggest that the decentering of research and the move towards the use of postmodernism, poststructuralism, critical theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, ethnic studies theories and queer theory as critiques of modernism and traditional approaches have resulted in a backlash against such diverse forms. They also suggest that 'new regimes of truth' are being established that produce and are produced by 'methodological fundamentalism' (p. 7) based on particular concepts of scientific knowledge.

Although legitimised by governmental and academic discourses that define research credibility, there are ethical issues that emerge from such dominant modes of inquiry. 'Experimental research' is defined by a clinical approach often identified as positivistic and quantitative. The apparent invisibility of the researcher in these approaches produces a privileged and legitimised space for the definition and redefinition of 'others'. However, it is also important to recognise that 'emancipatory research' based on interpretive and ethnographic studies can also privilege the researcher and contribute to the reinforcement of social types (Dyson, 1998). Slee and Graham (2008) and Stronach, Frankham and Stark (2007) explore the ways in which qualitative research can actively construct concepts of inclusion and exclusion by the reinforcement of hegemonic ways of knowing and being. Slee and Allan (2001:177) suggest such research can reinforce class, race and gender stratifications in society, for example, so emphasising the concept of exclusion as 'structural and cultural' (see also Clough and Barton, 1998). What appears to be significant is the appropriateness of methodological choice but that this should be judged in relation to a set of considerations broader than sample size, validity and claims to objectivity. Aligning research methodology with the purpose of the enquiry equates with the ontological and epistemic positioning of the research and researcher, and the acknowledgement of research as a highly political and potentially abusive activity is essential.

My aim here is not to represent methodological choice as an oppositional binary, but rather to offer an explanation of the reasons for my approach to this research and the purposes for employing narrative methodology. The narrative turn as a particularly flexible form of qualitative enquiry is contested in discussions around 'what counts' as research yet may be better placed than 'experimental studies' equated with 'the gold standard' particularly for exploring complex social settings. Lincoln and Cannella (2004) argue:

Although experimental studies can and do produce some knowledge worth having, in some kinds of contexts, such studies are singularly ill suited to examining the complex and dynamic contexts of public education in its many forms, sites and variations, especially considering the farrago of subtle social difference ... Indeed, multiple kinds of knowledge, produced by multiple epistemologies and methodologies are not only worth having but also demanded if policy, legislation, and practice are to be sensitive to social needs. (p. 7)

CHAPTER 2

The approaches that are taken to knowledge production through enquiry are subject to regulation that reinforces the validity of certain types of enquiry over others. Within this categorisation of research, narrative enquiry may be contested in terms of validity and rigour on the grounds of sufficiency of sample size, corroboration or triangulation of evidence and claims for 'scientific objectivity' (for example). However, such approaches, emerging out of the 'crises of representation' (Denzin, 1994), acknowledge the confusion in delineating between writer, text and subject matter (Clough, 2002) and aim to find a response that acknowledges particularity within contested truths. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) describe qualitative research as a situated activity that 'locates the observer in the world'. As such it has the potential to realise the democratic act in contesting traditional roles of the researcher as expert and participants as those subject to examination.

EXPERIENCE, FACT, FALSEHOOD AND FICTION

Employing a narrative approach is problematic largely since it draws on experience as a contested form of knowledge (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994). Although it can be argued that 'making sense' of experience via story is a 'natural' and/or cultural activity this does not necessarily provide a sufficient justification for employing it as a research approach. It does however connect it strongly with an interpretive paradigm where meanings are recognised as less firmly fixed by canonical frames of reference. If the interpretation of experience does not form a convincing landscape for research then stories of such experience might be considered to have a degree of fragility as sets of data, yet Riessman (1993) suggests that it is the prominence that narrative gives to human agency and imagination, and the specific and personal dimension that gives it value in research.

Bruner (1986:13) reduces this discussion to the binary of the head and the heart: he describes the paradigmatic mode (as the logico-scientific defined by empirical data, logic, maths and science) and the narrative mode (where there is human or human-like intention and a concern for the human condition). Bruner suggests that 'there is a heartlessness to logic' which offers conclusive or inconclusive conclusions, and a greater concern for human agency in narrative where 'stories reach sad or comic or absurd denouements'. In his argument Bruner suggests that there is strength in personal experience where the unremarkable can become 'epiphanies of the ordinary'. Ulysses (Joyce, 2000) can be claimed as an example of the richness of mundane human experience, yet this connection between qualitative research, experience and narrative and its relationships with the arts further distances it from traditional concepts of research validity.

We might be convinced by arguments that attempt to persuade us of the value of experience as the basis for research (Clandinin and Connelly, 1994; Eisner, 2003) but still remain doubtful that an individual could be called upon to create a reliable story. Reflecting on the 'meeting room' incident, I was conscious that I had used the word 'narrative' possibly to add credibility to my research. Although narrative is established as a research approach (Riessman, 1993; Hatch and Wisnieski, 1995; Chase, 2005), the researcher seems destined to spend time justifying their methodological

choice largely because of the space between traditional concepts of positivistic research based on knowing 'fact' (a word, ironically, derived from *facere* or *factus* 'to make') and the use of narrative forms as a means of interpreting experience. The suggestion of the use of 'story' as a means of inquiry may have felt 'flaky' and insubstantial yet the problem of 'research, truth and reality' offers a useful point for exploring narrative as a methodology.

Polkinghorne (1995) is reluctant to use the word 'story' with the implications it has of 'falsehood and misrepresentation'. In his discussion of this dilemma, he considers the tradition of academic research as rooted in logic through formal academic discourse. Bruner (1990) however, suggests that we use the same narrative form for fact and fiction indicating that narrative can be real or imaginary 'without loss of its power as a story'. Clough (2002) embraces this in writing powerful narratives to explore education and exclusion, creating texts fabricated from his own experiences and the stories of others that blur the distinctions between fact and fiction.

Traditionally, story, located within local oral traditions, could never be perceived as 'true knowledge' but as an emotional and possibly fictional response that suggests that stories can lack credibility. However, Beverley (2005) discusses 'testimonio' as politicised oral story telling from a feminist perspective where the personal as political has significance. Narratives, he suggests, refer to an oral tradition whose authority has been superseded in a text based society. This connection with the oral tradition of storytelling and the legitimacy of text is significant in a consideration of 'truth' and validity of forms of knowledge.

Within the qualitative ethnographic tradition, the 'voice' of participants has a significant role in representation, and it seems that, although the oral tradition has a contested lineage as 'research knowledge', it can be conveniently drawn on to support claims for authenticity. However, in providing text based representations of orality Beverley describes a 'reality effect.' (p. 549) He describes conversational markers in the narrative which suggest that the text represents the spoken voice which 'invokes the complicity of the reader' by making conversation evident. The reader is drawn in by a 'real' voice and the 'authority of the personal experience'. However, all research deals with different types of 'reality effect'. Truth in stories, as with ethnographic writing or case studies (for example), can only be partial since they represent only a partial telling (Bolton, 2006). It is important to acknowledge here that employing a narrative approach does not equate to making a greater claim to 'truth' or 'reality' but that in acknowledging the fragility of the demarcation between fact and fiction, one can employ an approach well suited to research where experience is the central concern and identity and representation are acknowledged as contingent, flexible and shifting.

THE 'NATURAL DRIVE' TO NARRATE

The main focus of this enquiry was to attempt to gain an understanding of participants' experiences of drawing from observation, and my early encounters with open interviews led me to become increasingly interested in the way in which events are remembered and recounted in narrative form. There is a 'natural' drive to story experience well documented by Bruner (1990), Ricoeur (1991) and Polkinghorne (1995)

CHAPTER 2

for whom story is acknowledged as the most appropriate form for understanding human experience. Bruner (1990) argues that without the ability to organise experience by framing or schematising, constructing and segmenting occurrences, we would have what he describes as ‘a murk of chaotic experience’, and narrative appears well placed as a research approach that negotiates meaning making in this way. The focus on narrative research as a ‘natural’ activity, however, is misleading since any research approach creates artificial situations for estrangement in order to examine people or particular phenomena. Similarly the seemingly ‘natural’ occurrences of narrative are moulded and shaped as they ‘are born again in an alien tongue’ (Riessman, 1993:14), being analysed, segmented and written again by the researcher.

Narrative exists as a form of meaning-making outside the research context. Wood (1991) discusses its use as a means of untangling a ‘multiplication of aporias’. Here the role of narrative is explained as an active process through which we seek to make sense of the world around us and the experiences we have. Referring to Ricoeur’s description of ‘emplotment’, Wood stresses the need to make one coherent story out of multiple incidents. This moves beyond a discussion of the role of language as a tool for thought, towards the ways in which events are related and connected and therefore made sense of within a broader context or in relation to other stories. The ways in which we use language as a means of constructing particular ‘truths’ about events is also significant and although narrative may be promoted as a means for individual meaning-making, Ylijoki (2001) explores the social dimension to this construction of meaning. The ways that individuals situate themselves, and are situated by others, are also significant particularly in respect of the research act. Ylijoki suggests a continuous interplay between the public and cultural in the narrative construction of life. Personal stories emerge out of social contexts and shared meaning-making, and to make claims to personalised meanings may therefore be inappropriate and undesirable since the socially situated nature of narratives shift them beyond the local.

In addition to notions of ‘naturally’ emerging data, Denzin (1998) argues that the researcher creates narratives in the way in which they interpret events or texts. In an earlier work, Denzin (1994) discusses the central role of interpretation in the research process, maintaining that events cannot speak for themselves and suggesting that story has a central role for both participants and the researcher who are both inextricably written into the work. I am conscious of my role in recreating stories in order to make sense of my own experiences of the research process, attempting to understand a mass of interrelated strands and trying to create a whole from so many parts.

RELIABILITY IN NARRATIVE RESEARCH

A story of an experience is not the same as the experience, yet it may be argued that there must always be some distance between what is happening in ‘real’ time and our recollection of it. Riessman acknowledges this space as one of interpretation:

Investigators do not have direct access to another’s experience. We deal with ambiguous representations of it – talk, text, interaction, and interpretation. (Riessman, 1993:8)

Ricoeur (1991:20) explores the notion that ‘stories are recounted and not lived; life is lived and not recounted’. The interpretive space between may suggest some unreliability or even a lack of truth to the ‘reality’ of an experience, yet this space in narrative analysis creates room for ‘meaning making’. Bruner (1990:16) reflects on this discrepancy between what someone says and what they do, and the need to give as much credence to what people *say* they do as what they actually do. The reasoning for an action after an event, what people *say* becomes as significant as the *truth* of what has made them behave in a particular way.

The dilemma of the reliable story-teller is illustrated here in my own early experiences at a first meeting with one of the participants, Matthew. I was conscious that there was an element of performance to some of the stories being recounted. Both his parents were present at this first meeting and initiating a dialogue relied on the ability to negotiate conversations as a four way rather than a two way process. The stories recounted were obviously for me as ‘the audience’ and researcher, but Matthew was also accounting for the presence of his parents. This had particular relevance when telling stories related to his school experience. Similarly there were times when Matthew’s parents recounted a story and Matthew became the audience. His parents’ presence inevitably created a different type of narrative ‘truth’ than may have existed had I spoken to him alone.

Some elements of school experience were given more dramatic emphasis than others and I thought that these tales had a sense of having been told before. They had a mythical quality to them. Matthew’s mum mentioned an incident, offering an introduction to Matthew in order that he could recount what happened: “Tell Claire about the time when...”. Bruner (1990) discusses his own experiences of a family recounting and developing their shared stories. It could be argued that all families have these and their shared nature do not necessarily contribute to or detract from their reliability. Here a story can operate as a myth or ‘masked discourse’ where the real meaning of the story is hidden (Kearney, 1991). The narrative as both masked discourse and shifting story might appear unreliable and implausible yet within the interpretative paradigm such stories can have multilayered readings with no fixed set of truths to prove. What we say we do and why we have done it may or may not be the ‘truth’ in terms of the ‘real-time’ event as it occurred yet it is in no way less significant.

A function of narrative is to explain breach and exception, introduced earlier, and the manner in which we negotiate our place in our culture by departures from what is considered to be the norm (Bruner, 1990). In terms of this reflective quality and the sense we make in retrospect, it is understandable that we might become removed from the event. To illustrate, Matthew was asked to cut a picture out of a magazine and the teacher emphasised it had to be cut out neatly not torn. He has difficulty using the scissors and the cutting was jagged and ripped. The teacher gave him a detention because she thought he had just ripped the picture out carelessly and was unsympathetic to the reasons he gave. His mum contacted the school to complain and as a result Matthew did not do the detention. Referring to ‘scruffy cutting’, Matthew’s story seems to have the right shape as an exploration of ‘breach and exception’. Involvement in an activity was introduced, there was a twist and

CHAPTER 2

a sense of injustice in the situation and it was ultimately resolved with mum as the hero. Matthew had been treated unfairly and the teacher had misunderstood the reasons why that activity had created difficulties for him. As a masked discourse, this story could be an example of an exploration of such a breach and could be described as a representation of the complex school-mum-Matthew, relationship. The reliability of it as a true account on a specific time and date starts to become irrelevant. Ricoeur's description of narrative as mimetic, in the re-presentation of an act in time, explores the space between event recollection and re-telling. The narrative is a mediated representation that has been interpreted and reinterpreted for a range of different purposes.

Drawing on mimetic practices - Matthew described drawing from direct observation. He looked up at some objects and inadvertently moved his pencil. He looked back down at his drawing and attempted to 'make it up'. He described trying to 'trick the teacher' by making it up by not looking at the objects that were meant to be drawn. The teacher, looking at what he had done, asked him to start again.

There may be parallels here with the concepts of truth in representing a narrative. The notion of truth related to recording from direct observation relates to the honesty of recording as a direct response to that which is being observed. As a parallel, the story is a remembered account or a representation. The element of not 'getting it right' was given significance in the story, as was Matthew's aim to 'trick the teacher' by making up part of the drawing. He was aware that making it up was not what observational drawing was about. Matthew resorted to a remembered image rather than a directly observed representation and then made connections with this as a trick or con. Both acts, the drawing and the story, may be undermined by the claim that they do not adhere to a 'truth'. It is difficult to be certain whether or not Matthew had an original aim to 'trick the teacher'. This may have been added to his re-telling of the story, as an embellishment or addition. The point for discussion therefore does not relate to the truth of the story but the implications for the basis of the recounted version.

As the narrator of this tale I have also created a story, a representation of three hours of conversation edited for a purpose and concerns over the validity of the narrative and the responsibility to provide a reliable story does not sit with the participant. This is essentially a dilemma for the researcher, and the representation of the narrative by the researcher is subject to these same questions regarding truth and validity. These considerations are not only limited to the story as it is told. The way in which participants narrate their experiences and how these are recreated as written narratives is one concern yet a further consideration relates to the role of the reader. It is the final act in the making of a meaningful story that will come from the reader and in bridging the gap between fiction and life the reader also has a significant role.

A further concern in relation to concepts of truth and reliability relates to the production of the narrator's identity. Matthew does not have a static identity but one that shifts, represented through this range of stories. Identities are not stable (Atkinson, 2004; Plummer, 1995) and many stories can arise out of the same event.

Although Ricoeur (1991) sees this as a limitation, in being unable to fix meaning, Wood (1991) suggests that an advantage of narrative is in being able to create and interpret these flexible identities. It was difficult to disassociate the Matthew in his art and design lesson from the Matthew, a thirteen year old with a reading age of 17.9 who was in a lower set for English because of the physical demands of handwriting. Although asked specifically about drawing, his school experiences generally appeared to focus on other more dominant issues.

The range of stories explored in my first meeting with Matthew was overwhelming. As I sat and listened I was presented with a range of incidents that related to his school experience. These seemed tied together as a 'multiplication', with his experiences of observation within other art and design stories told via a design technology lesson, with the undertone of poor parental relationships with the school and a concern about the 'unfair' treatment he was receiving in his English lessons. Editing the stories to focus only on the detail of his experience of observation in his art lessons would fail to take these complexities into account. Blumenreich (2004) argues that life history and, by implication, narrative demands contextualisation, the alternative being the creation of an autonomous individual with compartmentalised experiences. The socially situated nature of narrated experiences is also recognised by Plummer (1995) who argues that a denial of this 'situatedness' might result in a dominant research voice which, in turn, could be interpreted as unreliable. There are, however, obvious tensions for the researcher pursuing specific research questions whilst attempting to create natural opportunities for conversation. Getting participants to focus on specific questions or issues can be very demanding until you realise that it is they who should be defining the points for discussion.

NARRATIVE CASE STUDIES

The focus for this enquiry relies heavily on narrative analysis, but the organisational structure involves the development of four cases. I refer to 'narrative case study' since I am conscious that the data included for consideration of each case make the stories. Smaller narratives are analysed but each case study as a whole can be read as a narrative of experience for each participant. The separation of participants and the bringing together of other sources, drawings and school reports, for example, mark the data representations as case studies, referring not to the methods of analysis but to the 'choice of what is to be studied' (Stake, 2005:443) and the way that this is grouped for focussed attention. A case study is an organisational structure, grouping information together and separating it out as distinctive and separate in order to optimize what can be found in individual rather than generalised experience.

The focus on the individually defined case has resulted in case study methodology being described as the poor relation of social science research methods, contested for a lack of rigour. Yin (2003) suggests that case study has been challenged by traditional concepts of the aims for research to produce replicable studies and generalisable findings, yet it is this characteristic that is most appealing for those wanting to explore the particularity of specific situations and circumstances. Yin and Stake both advocate case study as well suited for exploring individual complexity.

CHAPTER 2

As an organisational device, the separation of the participants into case study chapters has allowed me to explore each of the individuals, acknowledging their particularity. The four cases are individual, although the final discussion in Chapter 10 emerges from common threads pulled as the cases rub against one another and the theoretical framework. Each case speaks of the others and to the others and some comparisons are made between participants, but the cases are marked more by the ways in which they differ than the ways they are similar. Each chapter is also only a partial telling, restricted as it is by the focus of this research and the limitations of representation.

Ylijoki (2001), referring to the work of Mishler and Polkinghorn, makes the distinction between ‘narrative analysis’ and the analysis of narratives, where data do not need to be identified as narratives, defined by plot and sequence, but can be examined from a narrative perspective. Here it is possible to group collections of data for a narrative reading:

... narrative analysis follows the logic of a narrative mode of thought. Researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings, and configure them into a story or stories. In other words, the aim is to discern a plot that unites and gives meaning to the elements in the data as contributions to a specific goal or purpose. (Ylijoki, 2001:24)

This has formed the basis of the presentation of a collection of data in the form of the case study chapters where a range of data is presented as an individualised narrative shaped by the particular stories of each of the participants. In some cases stories emerge with a very clear narrative form yet in others, a range of different experiences form the basis of narrative themes that have emerged from the data.

I have been able to draw on pieces of documentary evidence in addition to verbal testimony. This has related to drawings and sketchbook material offered to me during my conversations with participants which, in some cases, included grading information and teachers’ comments. It also included, in the case of two of the participants, old school reports. These additions to the personal narratives allowed for the reflection of an ‘official discourse’ which added a further dimension to the stories. These reports, as reifications of teacher and school-based discourses, provided additional public, reductive accounts as data to be written into participants stories embodying a language of normalisation in grading information and descriptions of pupil performance that could be drawn on in a consideration of the breach between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The number of participants was limited from the outset and by design, with a small number identified. Miles and Huberman (1998) outline this as the initial stages of data analysis, by limiting the scope of the research prior to undertaking the data collection. In work that prioritises the individual and particular there is little advantage in exploring multiple perspectives via an extended sample. Although Charmaz (2005) questions the rigour attached to the development of theories based on small samples that do not even attempt to reach saturation in terms of emergent ideas and theories,

the concepts of saturation and generalisation are rejected here in favour of the particular and specific with the focus on narrative and case study, both selected for the appropriateness of a consideration of individual experience as has been previously discussed.

The complexity of the field of special education and, more specifically, the literature relating to dyspraxia is explored in Chapter 4, with comorbidity and subjectivity both key factors in identifying, labelling and researching individual characteristics and experiences. Four participants of a similar age with an officially recognised diagnosis may be perceived to have created a tidy project, yet my random group has its own validity in respect of the locus of power for self definition and the nature of comorbidity and the problematics of a 'clean' sample (Geuze, Jongmans, Schoemaker and Smits-Engelsman, 2001). The four participants included three adults and one adolescent: Craig, an adult, fully embraced his identity as dyslexic and is self-diagnosed as dyspraxic; Alex, another adult, claimed to have a degree of scepticism regarding his recent 'official' diagnosis of dyspraxia and the implications this might have, claiming 'I'm still not wearing the T-shirt'; the third adult, Elaine, was the only practising artist who acknowledged that her dyspraxia was unofficial in status; Matthew was an adolescent boy 'officially' recognised as 'dyspraxic' by the relevant school authorities. All participants were white and could be loosely defined as middle class, given their careers or parents' occupations.

Narrative research has a specific focus on the particular experiences of the individual. Thus, although comparisons might be drawn in the analysis of the narratives, the aim is not to identify commonality or make generalisations but to focus on the particular. The identification of a 'clean' sample, as it is described in some existing studies (see Chapter 4), also renders the aim to identify a large number of pupils with similar characteristics, futile. The participants are markedly different in age, experience and gender. They do not all share a formal diagnosis of 'dyspraxia' either and this is significant in terms of the power/knowledge discourse and concepts of labelling. This challenges the assertion of the legitimate and authentic voice as one that is defined only by those with the authority to identify differences as individual and medical deficits. The choice of participants is an active one that creates a challenge for the research but this reflects an aim to embrace the complexity of definitions of this field of inquiry and to contest accepted definitions of 'clean' samples in order to acknowledge the messiness of categorising lived experience.

Craig, although 'officially' recognised as dyslexic, with an educational psychologist report as 'evidence', identifies himself as dyspraxic and dyscalculaic. In my initial interview with him he confessed 'I've got a provisional educational psychologist report saying I'm dyslexic but nothing to say that I'm officially dyspraxic ... that was from my own reading, so I'm self diagnosed.' I was, at first, concerned that I would be unable to draw on his experiences since he lacked 'professional authentication' of being dyspraxic. Similarly, Elaine raised this issue in an initial email saying 'I am not actually diagnosed with dyspraxia therefore it is unclear whether my coordination difficulties are a result of undiagnosed dyspraxia or of my muscle condition (which is neurological).' I wondered whether either narrative was valid and whether I should have included only those with 'officially' recognised dyspraxia,

CHAPTER 2

yet this would seem to run contrary to the political motivation of the inclusive nature of this work, the complexity and flexibility of labelling (Norwich, 2008) and the positioning of the research within the power/knowledge discourse (Foucault, 1980).

There was a further ethical dilemma in selecting the participants, which related to my own reservations about the ways that adolescents might talk about their experiences. I had spoken to a very articulate adult who seemed to relish the prospect of talking about his own educational history but wondered how a young adult would engage in this process. I was concerned about Matthew's ability to story his experiences and was aware that a different approach might be required.

My own reactions and preconceptions are interesting on reflection. It now seems curious to me that I had worried about an adolescent's ability to recount his experiences, and I am conscious that this speaks more of my own preconceptions and understanding than the ability of young adults to make sense of their experiences. Matthew spoke easily and confidently. My experience however, was different to earlier interviews with adult participants. There was a distinct power imbalance and my attempt at naturalistic conversation felt inappropriate, particularly in the earlier interviews. He gave his consent but the original contact was made via his parents. The adult contacts by contrast were made on a personal and professional level, with one relationship starting from my attendance at a dyslexia awareness session lead by the participant. The conversations were very different in style and the adult/child relationship cannot be ignored no matter how democratic the aim of the process. It is possible that Matthew may have felt an obligation to his parents to be involved in the research project. It was difficult to know whether or not he could have declined his parents' request or suggestion that he talked to me.

The role of the participants and my engagement with them has therefore been a significant factor in the way my understanding of methodology has developed. The power dynamics between researcher and participant are always there and should be acknowledged and explored. The differences in the power relationships between researcher/researched and adult/adolescent seemed to emphasise the particular nature of differences between the participants since each one is an individual and the nature of the relationship between them and myself is therefore appropriately different. Fine (1994) suggests that the spaces between the researcher and participants need to be acknowledged and explored in order to avoid what is described as 'the imperialism of scholarship' (p. 73). She suggests that 'working the hyphen', acknowledging the space between the self and other is essential. She says:

Working the hyphen means creating occasions for researchers and informants to discuss what is, and is not, "happening between", within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose story is being shadowed, why, for whom and with what consequence. (p. 72)

The shadowing of the story, I would argue, is an inevitable consequence of the research process as 'real life' experiences are converted into academic text.

The aim of the research is to explore and question social and educational practices, yet I was conscious of the potentially negative effect that this may have

for participants, since their involvement could have been perceived of in relation to a 'special educational need' or them being regarded as 'less' able. There were clearly ethical considerations in relation to how the research would be experienced by these participants as a 'vulnerable' group already 'othered' (Fine, 2004) by their experiences of being dyspraxic. It was important to develop an open relationship with participants and explain the focus of my research as on educational systems rather than personal deficits. I was anxious to develop methods that would not require any direct performance or 'testing' of the drawing ability of the participants. One pupil had agreed for me to talk to him but was explicit in his demands that I did not come to see him at school in front of his 'mates'. In addition to this, my initial reading regarding alleged difficulties for those with dyspraxia, meant my observation of their drawing performance seemed highly inappropriate. The research approach therefore demanded that I consider the meanings participants made of their personal experiences within the social/cultural context of their education rather than attempting to measure any individual 'difficulty'.

Research Method

Clear guidance on specific methods for narrative studies are difficult to find since there are no rigid and standardised procedures and the approaches are particularly flexible (Manning and Cullum-Swan, 1998). The work of Catherine Kohler Riessman (1993) has been particularly significant for me in finding my own working methods and I have drawn on her work significantly in this section. I have adopted the three stages she outlines (p. 54–63) to explain facilitation or narrative telling and gathering data; transcription of interviews; and the analytical approach to the narratives I have constructed from interviews and other data included in the case studies.

Facilitating Telling

The open interviews were based around the concept of a conversation in order that the narratives would emerge and to some extent be 'naturally' occurring. The interviews could be described as conversations, in that the aim was for communication to take place in a 'naturalistic' way although my role as researcher, the use of note taking to record, as well as the use of recording equipment, contradicted the ways I had advocated this as a 'natural' process. Although there may be a 'natural drive' to develop a narrative, the attempts at conversation were obviously contrived.

The naturalistic character of narrative was apparent, as stories surfaced when participants appeared to be more relaxed, and explanations of experience began to emerge out of conversation. In my earliest interviews, I was not committed to employing a narrative approach, yet the first conversation and subsequent transcription created a real sense of curiosity for me. A story was often employed by a participant in order to provide exemplification of a particular argument or offered as an example of a specific type of event or happening, and as a means for the participant to explain or represent certain ideas. This was at once appealing and compelling.

CHAPTER 2

Participants appeared to turn to story as a means of explaining their experiences. Indeed, the first interview flowed so well from story to story that I rarely interjected since the participant was commanding and highly motivated to speak about his experiences.

This method corresponded with my role as a researcher, finding ‘data gathering’ to be most effective through conversation and personal contact and ‘the spinning of a good yarn’, significant for the socially situated nature of these stories (Ylijoki, 2001). One person’s experience sparks off a recollection of your own which you might quite naturally want to share and in that way you begin to contribute to the development of the stories that emerge. Goodson and Sikes (2001) suggest this degree of empathy and story sharing is highly appropriate in developing life stories. The personal and particular is as relevant to the researcher as it is to the participant. However, the degree to which the researcher might become complicit in creating and contributing to the narratives is problematic.

There are difficulties in the ways that participants could talk about their experiences, since explanations via language are always removed from physical experience. The confusion and uncertainty expressed by Craig, for example, in the extract below emphasises the separation of experience and articulation as he attempted to describe the process of observing an object. The difficulties were in expression and translation from one form of understanding to another culminating, in the need for reassurance that this was making sense, reassurance that I falsely gave because it was difficult to make sense of what was being said:

Craig: the thing is

- I would more likely
- to view it consciously
- I wouldn’t be viewing it
- it’s very difficult to describe
- it’s not
- to talk about it being sort of like a 3D model in your head is a bit of an exaggeration but to say that it’s a static thing
- that’s not how I view it
- it’s not a
- it’s
- it’s very difficult to describe
- it’s not
- do you?
- does this make sense?

Claire: Yeah

Further to the facilitation of narratives was the collection of other data including school reports and any available drawings. These add a richness to the stories and are drawn on for the ways in which they speak to the narratives and offer points of departure from what is said, yet they are not as readily analysed in narrative terms. They have been inserted in the case studies at significant points to punctuate and enhance the narratives and subsequent analysis.

Transcription

The ways that the spoken word is represented in text always involves ‘selection and reduction’ of an initial interview (Riessman, 1993:56) and there are a number of ways that this work can be approached. Initially I made field notes during my first meetings but full and comprehensive reflections afterwards. I wanted to have a first meeting with participants without the pressure of recording the conversation and was able to use this as a point of reference for the next recorded interview. Some stories were revisited during the second meeting but there were also points of departure where stories were omitted or appeared to change in the degree of significance accorded them by the participant. Reflections from these first stories allowed me to develop potential avenues of enquiry and prompts in the second interview. The interim analysis which took place whilst gathering data informed the interviews that followed as a process of inductive analysis, and Huberman and Miles (1998) support this iterative process as a means of strengthening the internal validity of a project when data is collected in response to emergent themes.

The second meetings were recorded and fully transcribed firstly as a structured means of listening again, and also because this offered a piece of text that could be annotated at a further stage of analysis. Initially the transcripts included pauses and ‘disfluences’ (Riessman, 1993) but later versions included in conference presentations and seminars were ‘cleaned’ and distanced from ‘real talk’, not only to make them accessible but also because I was conscious of the ways in which participants would be represented. Riessman is critical of this approach, exemplified in her critique of the work of Ginsburg (Riessman, 1993:26–33), who focuses on specific aspects of plot rather than a detailed narrative analysis. This cleaning of the text and representation of analysed chunks of story summarizes and glosses over, making the details of language less visible. This approach to narrative analysis is identified as a significant tension between a content focussed approach and one that reflects a detailed analysis of form.

At the point of transcription I was aware of ‘visual chunking’ in the text which corresponded with extended conversation more easily defined as narratives. The early stages of conversations often included very brief exchanges. However, later sections of interview started to become extended and these aspects of the narrative were more easily recognised. Again this experience encouraged me to revisit the other transcriptions with this notion of visual chunking in mind and this assisted with the identification of more extended sections for analysis.

Advised by Riessman’s approach, I revisited the most significant aspects of narrative to develop a second transcription in order to consider pauses and disfluences that may have been significant in forming the ways the stories were told. Again, the plot features of breach and exception were significant but on this second transcription the form that the narrative took became more significant, where the form and structure of the telling informed the definition of a breach in the story. The narrative extracts are represented as ‘cleaned’ text but I have applied Riessman’s use of line separation to indicate pauses and disfluences to assist in identifying where the form of the text supports breach and exception in the subject content. This is the form in which they appear in the book.

Approaching Narratives Analytically

Manning and Cullum-Swan (1998) refer to analysis of narratives as being part of a subtle theoretical framework in comparison to harder edged positivistic, technical or statistical work. Narrative analysis ranges from thorough analysis of linguistic features to approaches described as 'loosely formulated, almost intuitive' (p. 246) and I am conscious of having leant towards this 'intuitive' means of interpretation. Early analysis took place during the transcription process and notes were made on initial ideas about the narratives. Annotations were also made in the margin of verbatim transcriptions, passages re-read, and summary sheets developed from the interviews. Although a distance is created between the original conversation texts, Riessman (1993) describes this process of translation and interpretation as necessary and productive (p. 14). Further to these techniques for analysis was the development of 'conceptual/theoretical coherence' identified by Miles and Huberman (1998:187). The analysis is not derived solely from the data or from a purely empirical source, since the derivation of the theoretical aspects relates to other reading and existing concepts (those related to inclusion for example) as well as the power dimensions and hierarchies and hegemonies of existing art and design educational practices. The analysis was undertaken with these aspects in mind.

Themes were grounded from an initial analysis, yet I am conscious that grounded theory does not accurately convey this process of analysis, since 'theories' have not been grounded from the data. I prefer to refer to the products of this analysis as grounded narratives based on this process being a method of analysis rather than a means of deriving theories (Charmaz, 2005). The theoretical framework for analysis outlined in Chapters 3 to 5 creates a context by which breach and exception in the narratives became particularly relevant. The conversations were open interviews that meandered sometimes aimlessly off the point but, at the first stage analysis, points that had seemed irrelevant became significant when read through the structures of breach and exception. It was during these conversations and the subsequent re-listening that the theoretical framework for the work began to become informed and shaped. The conversations became very much a part of an iterative process and this stage of the analysis draws on a grounded approach as a tool for flexible analysis described by Charmaz (2005).

Further to the inductive analysis outlined above has been the role of writing in analysis of the literature as well as the narratives. Bell (1999) suggests that the majority of reading should be done at the beginning of a research project and should take the form of an 'extensive study of the literature'. However, this work reflects a piecemeal approach via an initial serendipitous delving into the literature followed by a more recent and systematic search. My initial engagement with the literature can effectively be seen as a means of establishing the direction of the literature search, but this process has also been influenced by conversations with participants and colleagues. As such the literature search has been much more of a recursive process than Bell (1999) suggests, informed by the reading, but also the 'thinking writing' that has developed my analysis (Adams and St. Pierre, 2005). For example, an early decision to disregard clinical research because of the sociological nature of this work has been dramatically revised, since it is the emphasis on the medical model

of dyspraxia that provides a substantial aspect of the discussion and it needs to be presented and referred to. It is important that these discourses are made visible. Bell indicates that a review should provide the reader with a picture of the state of knowledge and the major questions related to the subject being studied. It may therefore be argued that there was clearly a place for the clinical research from the outset and that I have taken the long way round, yet for me this has confirmed the reading, writing, thinking loop that is key to the iterative and reflexive nature of the qualitative research process.

The writing process, as a means of thinking and actively constructing ideas, has been significant, and this process of writing as a form of enquiry is advocated by Richardson and St Pierre (2005:279). Informal and formal writing has been significant with regular writing in a research journals, field notes and reflections on reading or on the development of my own thoughts and ideas. I have been heavily influenced by writers who, writing about the writing process, acknowledge, celebrate and promote the use of writing as a tool for thinking (see Watson, 2006 for example) and I am increasingly drawn to the ways that free writing or generative writing (Elbow, 2001) can be utilised as part of the research process. The writing, research and analysis processes of qualitative research are inextricably linked and I acknowledge the contribution that writing can make as part of the research process as well as a means of generating this representation (Wolcott, 2001; Penketh, 2008).

Qualitative research, in interpreting the world, has the capacity to be a creative and imaginative practice. The particular focus on alternative approaches in the writing of autoethnography, for example, reflect both the dilemmas and opportunities open to those in pursuit of this form of enquiry (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, Holman Jones, 2005, Richardson and St Pierre, 2005, Maclure, 2006). I am conscious that for me the data collection, analysis and writing acts owe as much to what can be imagined as they do to empirical forms of visual, oral and text-based evidence. This may be a point for debate, in view of the traditional epistemological perspective that equates knowing with a highly empirical and scientific truth seeking. In a climate of methodological conservatism, it is not necessarily an advantage to acknowledge the connections between the art of the imagined and educational research, yet I would argue that the connections and mental leaps that need to occur in narrative analysis owe much to what can be imagined. The connections we make between shared colloquial stories and established theory demand that we can visualise what might not be immediately evident in order to comprehend aspects of our lives. We can read, theorize, talk, analyze, and write about research but we might also draw in order to transform our understanding. The challenge lies in communicating that transformation, and the written and spoken forms can be as elusive as the visual in that respect.

CHAPTER 3

INCLUSION AND EDUCATION

Sites for Disciplinary Power

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a theoretical context, acknowledging the increasing emphasis on ‘inclusive’ education, with ‘participation’ (Barton, 1997) as an underpinning concept. This has significance here since it provides a structure for developing an argument that there are pupils who are culturally excluded by particular concepts of participation. Here this is explored via drawing from observation, a skill by which particular abilities in art might be defined, since this highly individualised technology is used to assess pupil performance against culturally defined norms relating to both representation and participation.

The range of literature relating to concepts of inclusion in education reflects a complex and changing field (Lawson et al, 2006; Graham and Slee, 2008), evolving from the recognition of a specific area of learning defined as ‘special educational needs’ and the ways in which specific categories of children are educated. This field is also characterised by, conflict and dilemma (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006; Norwich, 2008; Armstrong, 2003), with pupils, parents, teachers and a range of agencies negotiating shifts in policy at personal and local level as well as from the perspectives of national and international moves to implement change (UNESCO, 1994). The field of special education is recognised as an equally complex set of social processes (Tomlinson, 1982; Barton, 1988). Much of the discussion around inclusion has been located around practical strategies for including children in mainstream schooling, yet the complication relates to the production of a concept of inclusive education and the ways in which we ‘explicate the discourses of inclusion’ (Graham and Slee, 2008:279). The challenges are therefore philosophical and conceptual as well as practical.

INDIVIDUALISATION, NORMALISATION AND THE CREATION OF THE ABNORMAL

Inclusion and education are inextricably linked, and these combined terms provide a complex site for negotiation between the individual and the social body. This book, sitting uncomfortably as it does across observational drawing practice, art education and dyspraxia as a ‘learning disability’, must take into account some discussion of ‘special’ education and contemporary discussions relating to inclusive education. In this chapter I explore some of these complexities by introducing a theoretical framework for this book based on processes of ‘individualisation’,

CHAPTER 3

‘normalisation’ and the creation of the ‘abnormal’ in relation to education as a ‘disciplinary method’, adapted from Foucault’s writing about punitive mechanisms in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1991).

Read (1970) suggests that recognition of individual difference and the contributions that they might make, because of their ‘individuality’, is central to a concept of democratic education. He suggests that there is a choice:

... between variety and uniformity: between a conception of a society of persons who seek equilibrium through mutual aid: and a conception of society as a collection of people required to conform as far as possible to one ideal. In the first case, education is directed towards encouraging the growth of a specialized cell in a multiform body: in the second case, education is directed towards the elimination of all eccentricities and a uniform mass... In democratic practice each individual has his [sic] birthright: he[sic] is not material to be poured into a mould and given a hallmark. (1970:2–4)

This hypothesis, described as the ‘educator’s dilemma’, centres on the role of the individual, conformity and difference as central and inseparable aspects of this philosophical discussion about education. It could be argued that our philosophies of education are shaped by our understanding and positioning in relation to these key principles which also underpin the development of inclusive practices.

The tension between the social and individual is at the heart of inclusion, a term which encompasses a range of concepts from technical organisation and provision, to philosophies regarding social organisation. However, to describe it as a binary may be simplistic due to the composite sites that form this discourse (Marks, 1999). A central concern of this book is the production of inclusive, and exclusive, practices by the social organisation of educative systems based on identification of the ‘norm’ in relation to observational drawing as a specific practice, and the creation of the ‘dyspraxic ideal’ (discussed more fully in Chapter 4) which exists in relation to a standard or ‘normal’ concept of human physical and cognitive development.

Ideas that are central to the theoretical framework of this book are introduced in this chapter, specifically ‘individualisation’, ‘normalisation’ and the ‘abnormal’ (Foucault, 1991). These three related themes, connected by the ways in which society and the individual interact, can be considered as part of the ‘political technology of the body’ in which, Foucault suggests, ‘might be read a common history of power relations and object relations’ (Rabinow, 1984:171). Power relations are central to the political imperatives that connect education and inclusion. Who will be included and in what? What types of ‘technologies’ exclude and how? Who decides on the rationale for inclusion and who has the power, the will, or the knowledge to include are significant points for consideration in this work.

Foucault discusses the role that the ‘political economy of the body’ has within complex social functions such as education where the individual can be shaped or moulded and where particular types of control, he argues, can be exerted over ‘the body’:

... power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.

This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a focus for production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination... the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. (Foucault, 1984:173)

Within such a framework for production, the individual body may be subjected to both inclusive and exclusive practices as it is shaped by disciplinary discourses into becoming productive. Read celebrates the individual as a 'specialised cell' to be nurtured, but Foucault's discussion of individualisation provides a different reading. The 'docile body' is described as one which 'may be subjected, used transformed and improved' (Rabinow, p. 180), and the methods of control are enacted in subtle ways on the individual rather than *en masse* via disciplinary coercion. Foucault describes the emergence of these disciplinary methods in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as sites of power and domination. He says:

The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, or at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. (Foucault, 1984:182)

Education as a disciplinary power, works on the 'docile' or malleable body of the individual where it becomes an object and target of power. Significantly, special education discourses, with their own vocabulary and systems of identification and remediation, can also be identified as specific sites of exclusionary power within the broader frame of education (Dunne, 2008). The ways in which obedience and usefulness are defined within this discourse are also significant here in the creation of particular types of educable subjects. Inclusive education aims to include the excluded and works within this discourse as a compensatory accommodation for those individuals who are identified as less obedient or less useful to the particular discipline of education and to the social body as a whole. In discussing some of the principal ideas related to the social organisation of inclusion, Graham and Slee (2008) recognise that acknowledgement of inclusion must, by implication, create the excluded (see also Slee and Allan, 2001).

Normalisation with a focus on the individual resonates with concepts of inclusion as the exertion of disciplinary power:

Instead of bending all its subjects into a single, uniform mass, it separates, analyses, differentiates, carries its procedures of decomposition to the point of necessary and sufficient single units...Discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. (Foucault, 1984:188)

Individualisation becomes a technology by which differences can be identified and adaptations to training or education made as part of the processes of normalisation where the individual can be measured against a norm or average.

The identification of dyspraxia, explored fully in Chapter 4, by comparisons against age related norms for physical and cognitive development, is a useful example

CHAPTER 3

of such processes. Average or 'normal' developmental characteristics provide a backdrop for the observation of the 'abnormal' identified within a further disciplinary regime, child health (Foucault, 1980:166). The obedience and usefulness of subjects within this discourse relate to their individual characteristics, which are set against a 'norm' as a 'pupil ideal', a set of characteristics that embody a learner that is ready, willing and able to learn (sat up straight and still and displaying attentiveness by eye contact indicating both listening and observation, for example), personifying an ideal learner who is largely compliant to hegemonic learning systems and practices. This 'pupil ideal' allows for the creation of disaffection, unwillingness and inability to learn where a range of personal characteristics might be read as evidence of the spaces between the individual and the ideal or desirable, and which may as easily be based on social and cultural differences as concepts of individual difference.

What is also significant in this consideration of observational drawing practice is the opportunity for a parallel discussion of the role that observation has as a technology for individualisation and identification of the abnormal within these disciplinary regimes (Rabinow, 1984:189; Foucault, 1991). Observation appears as central to the power knowledge discourses within education, expressed by Foucault as hierarchical observation systems which allow for scrutiny by others as well as self regulation. This is exemplified by Bentham's panopticon prison design, where the observer, situated in a central observation tower, is surrounded by individual cells allowing for the observation and subsequent self-regulation of the subject (Foucault, 1991:200). The interchange between the observer and the observed is significant, as are particular ways of seeing. The presumption that there is a 'shared' or universal view ignores the positioning of the observer and the role that hegemonic ways of seeing have within discourses of power such as child health and education, as the 'normalising' lens becomes the 'normalised' lens. Slee and Allan (2001:178) discuss the extension of schooling as a 'significant force for disablement' via these mechanisms for observation. They suggest:

Schools are cartographic police. Exclusion proceeds through deep structural and broad cultural mechanisms to invigilate a shifting spectrum of diversity. Generally speaking, the boundaries in this sub-map are sharpest along the lines of disability, race, gender, class, sexuality, bilingualism, ethnicity, and geographic position.

The personal attributes of the 'other', individuals or particular groups in society, are offered to bridge the gaps that are generated by educational practices which generate and reinforce hegemonic values. The role of observation will be developed more fully in Chapter 5 in relation to ocular-centrism (Jay, 1993), but the connections between observation as the basis of 'scientific' knowledge underpinned by particular concepts of vision and visibility, is also recognised here as a technology implicated in the definitions and conceptions of inclusion.

INCLUSION AND 'SPECIAL' EDUCATION

Recent moves towards inclusion in education have grown out of a wider, international movement for social change outlined in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994).

This could be described as a significant catalyst for more recent moves towards inclusion in education promoted as an early objective identified by the then new Labour government in 1997, resulting in guidance for schools to support this mission (DfES, 2001; DfES 2004). However, discussions of inclusive approaches in education often centre on debates regarding specialisation (Armstrong, 2003) and the dilemmas regarding the physical re-integration of pupils into mainstream education (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006). By considering the role of specific art practices, this book explores exclusive approaches to teaching and learning in art education. This relates to the ability of all pupils to be able to participate effectively in their learning, specifically in mainstream education, with a focus on what Booth (1996) describes as ‘participation in the culture and curricula of education’.

Concepts of inclusion, although with significant origins in social equity, have become almost synonymous with discussions about the ways in which ‘special’ education is provided and the dilemmas that exist in offering the most effective means of educating a physically, socially and culturally diverse student population. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006:15) suggest that inclusion is often referred to in the context of the needs of disabled pupils, but they refer to ‘diversity among all learners’ rather than locating the focus on a specific group. Rather than inclusion centring on a recognition of difference however, it is more frequently located within the ‘special education’ discourse whereby pupils are identified as different, grouped accordingly and taught in different ways and in different locations. However, a simplistic interpretation of the practical arrangements for educational provision may fail to confront the nature of socially constructed attitudes towards ‘special education’ and disability (Riddell and Watson, 2003) that emerge from the processes of normalisation within systems of education, which are also located around issues of race, gender and ‘the politics of masculinities’ (Slee and Allan, 2001:175).

Barton (1998) and Norwich (2008) identify participation as a key concept in any discussion of inclusive education. Barton says: ‘inclusive education is about the participation of *all* children and young people and the removal of *all* forms of exclusionary practice’. However, ‘the removal of all forms of exclusionary practice’ is problematic when located within the special education discourse, originating from ‘benevolent humanitarianism’ (Tomlinson, 1982) or ‘liberal pluralism’ (Benjamin, 2002) which situate learning problems with the individual. This acknowledges a power dynamic where individuals, recognised as having a learning deficit according to concepts of a ‘norm’, are identified by professionals in positions of power. Educational Psychologist reports, teachers’ comments within reviews and the views of medical practitioners may all be considered in relation to this. Interventions are introduced in order to assist the individual in order that they might participate more fully in their learning. Inclusive practices become part of a process of normalisation where individualised interventions (via an Individual Education Plan (IEP), for example) can be accommodated through very specific measures that identify deficit and subsequent remediation that connect the individual with an ideal.

Although Barton identifies participation as a key concept in relation to inclusion, this is problematic since participation can still be discussed from this seemingly benign position. Tomlinson (1982) argues that ‘Special Needs’ education,

is considered within a concept of ‘enlightened and advanced’ forms of caring for weaker members of society, yet this concept of inclusion recognises that those to be included are already excluded. This drive to , identify, label and intervene, forms the real dilemma discussed by Norwich (2008), where recognition of the specific needs of the individual can be described as a form of exclusion, but where failure to act can deny participation. What are central to this discussion of inclusion through participation are the decisions about what constitutes *meaningful* participation and how this is legitimised. Particular sites for learning, for example, designed to maximise participation via alternative and specialised provision, do not necessarily legitimise the types of learning that occur within those places (Armstrong, 2003; Collinson and Penketh, 2010). Similarly activities can be open to participation in action, in that the individual may be able to take part in a particular activity, yet the ‘outcomes’ may remain marginal and illegitimate by processes of assessment. For example, a pupil may physically participate in a drawing activity, yet the drawing product may be assessed as below the standard expected for a pupil of that age in comparison to others in the class. Physical participation via the location of learning does not necessarily legitimise the learning that is taking place. Within this discussion, ‘participation’ appears to be aligned with hegemonic practices that favour the few, and the inability to participate becomes identified with failure or a ‘disability’ in respect of learning. The identification of the ‘abnormal’ is a necessary aspect of those systems designed to identify those who are ‘more able’ or academically elite (McHoul and Grace, 1993:72).

Foucault argues that social organisations, such as the compulsory education sector, demand the identification of the ‘normal’ and the ‘abnormal’ (Foucault, 1991). The identification of special educational needs and the expanding discourse surrounding this field appears to be built around the rights of the individual to an appropriate education, yet there is a social dimension to the need to identify and separate different types of learners, since such practices comprise the ways in which hierarchical structures are required to function. The identification of conditions such as dyspraxia or dyslexia is aligned with a political imperative to have a functionally literate workforce as a means of contributing effectively to economic development. The need to train this social body generates a need to identify those who might not be trained as effectively. Foucault (1980:172) suggests that:

... the body – the body of individuals and the body of populations – appears as the bearer of new variables, not merely as between the scarce and the numerous, the submissive and the restive, rich and poor, healthy and sick, strong and weak, but also as the more or less utilisable, more or less amenable to profitable investment, those with greater or lesser prospects of survival, death and illness, and with more or less capacity for being usefully trained.

McHoul and Grace (1993:68), discussing ‘normalisation’ in the work of Foucault, suggest that social organisation and administration demands that we ‘investigate the dividing line between the ‘normal’ and the ‘abnormal’’. Following this argument, the construction of the terms such as ‘able’ and ‘disabled’, for example, is essential in order for individuals to be identified for the way in which they might fit within

a social organisation. It is possible to argue that such social organisations create disability (Oliver, 1988) or that disability would not exist if it were not for these systems. For example, a society that bases academic ability on specific principles of literacy is, it could be argued, disabling pupils, by increasing age-related expectations of what it is to be literate. In the same way, an education system that demands a high degree of fine motor control in very young children, for the ‘early’ learning of writing, for example, would need to identify those whose skills have not developed in relation to a specified age related expectation. This can be extended from these specific skills to other generic learner dispositions such as eagerness, attentiveness and personal organisation in the creation of the ideal pupil as one who is compliant to educational contexts (Graham, 2007). Skills and abilities that develop differently with the individual can therefore be problematised and created as a learning disability or deficit.

Florian (2005:97) suggests that not all ‘disabilities’ result in a special educational need, suggesting that ‘learners are located along a multidimensional continuum of the human condition and these locations change over time’. The existence of a norm does not reflect a fixed and clearly defined centre, as Graham and Slee (2008) explain, but one that is fluid and is itself regulated in the ways in which it defines those who are ‘normal’. There is therefore a tension when flexible aspects of individual learner identity are set within the concrete of systemic and cultural practices that have fixed approaches to age related ability (for example) and this is of particular significance to the creation of dyspraxia set as it is against age related expectations for specific aspects of ‘child development’. The emphasis on ‘developmental dyspraxia’ stresses the transient nature of this ‘Specific Learning Disability’ (Sigmundssen, Hansen and Talcott, 2003).

Much of the discussion still emphasises provision for the individual as the location of tensions between integration and separation and how the individual might best be accommodated within the education systems. It is rarely the curriculum and the cultural relevance of subjects that is questioned in relation to potentially exclusive practices in education. Dudley-Marling (2004) attempts to shift the locus of deficit and offers a useful discussion in this respect, suggesting an alternative conception of how learning might be considered. He suggests that ‘Learning and learning problems dwell in activities and cultural practices situated in the context of social relations rather than in the heads of individual students’ (p. 482). He goes on to describe school structures and organisations as ‘neither natural or normal’ places for effective learning to take place where systemic failure is rationalised as a failure of the individual (p. 484), suggesting also that ‘learning disabilities’ (more specifically a US term), created by inappropriate school structures, would not exist without the school context.

ART EDUCATION AND EXCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Art education will be explored more fully in Chapter 5, but it is useful to make the connections between some specific characteristics of art as a site for learning and the principles of inclusion that are being discussed here. In considering art education and specific approaches to drawing, it is possible to discuss how a critique of

CHAPTER 3

inclusion through participation might be applied. Such a discussion, I suggest, reveals something of the embedded nature of exclusive cultural practices in the discipline when it is positioned as a subject in compulsory education. However, there are elements of art education and more particularly drawing practice that are sympathetic to a reading of exclusive individualising practice outside of formalised systems of education.

As a starting point for a consideration of ‘inclusion’ in respect of art education, curriculum guidance suggests the existence of a reactive approach to ‘provision’. The following discussion of the national curriculum for art provides a useful exemplification of this positioning of inclusion as ‘postscript’ rather than ‘preface’. A retrospective discussion based on ‘what to do for those who are already excluded’ appears to come relatively late in curriculum guidance. It could be argued, for example, that the guidance for inclusion offered to support the art and design curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 ‘additional inclusion information for art and design’ (QCA, 2009) was designed to promote participation for those pupils who might not otherwise have the opportunity to engage fully with the curriculum. However, the advice offered immediately positions the learner as one who needs ‘special treatment’, since it advises:

To overcome any potential barriers to learning in art and design, some pupils may require:

alternative tasks to overcome any difficulties arising from specific religious beliefs relating to ideas and experiences they are expected to represent

access to stimuli, participation in everyday events and explorations, materials, word descriptions and other resources, to compensate for a lack of specific first-hand experiences and to allow pupils to explore an idea or theme

alternative or adapted activities to overcome difficulties with manipulating tools, equipment or materials

The guidance indicates that it is the pupil who ‘may require alternative tasks’ or ‘alternative or adapted activities to overcome difficulties’ and this requires that such pupils be identified in order to be accommodated, including those of an ‘other’ religious belief, those whose observational experiences need compensating for, and those who may be less able to manipulate materials or tools. These accommodations have within them implicit and hegemonic understandings of appropriate skills for working with materials and tools, ‘difficult’ or apparently restrictive religions, and socially determined perceptions of valid observational experiences.

The guidance acknowledges that learners might face barriers to learning and that ‘special’ arrangements might be required in order for full participation to take place. The barriers for learning are situated with the individuals and their ‘differences’ that need to be compensated for. The suggestion that ‘some pupils may require...’ positions the individual in need of additional support where it might otherwise have offered the opportunity for a critique of the curriculum, as a culturally defined set of practices. All pupils, for example, have some kind of observational experience yet the guidance suggests that these experiences are valued differently and that

some are in need of compensation. 'Exclusion' could therefore be described as existing out of a model for non-participation. In the context of art education, this could be discussed in terms of curricula and teaching based on hegemonic practices that also underpin assessment decisions that come to define concepts of pupil 'ability'. The 2009 orders for art and design at Key Stages 3 and 4 offer an alternative statement for inclusion, and the QCA website provides guidance on 'Equalities, diversity and inclusion in art and design (QCA, updated 2009) under a number of headings including:

- identifying and teaching gifted and talented learners
 - planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties
- Both imply the identification of the exceptional and 'abnormal'. The guidance included under 'planning for inclusion' confirms the separation of particular pupils whilst acknowledging that 'planning an inclusive curriculum means shaping the curriculum to match the needs and interests of the full range of learners.' The following groups become exceptional by their identification in order to be included in the curriculum:

- the gifted and talented
- those with special educational needs and disabilities
- pupils who have English as a second language
- the different needs of boys and girls

The identification of these groups requires the intensification of procedures for identification and surveillance related to the previous discussion of this aspect of Foucault's work.

The limitations of the competitive education system, Barton (1997) argues, appear to create an increasing demand for the recognition of those who are at variance with an ever decreasing definition of what it is to be 'normal'. However, I would also argue that the specific nature or characteristics of some art education practices are defined by being exclusive and, as a result, can act in defining and excluding certain types of learners.

Woodrow (2007) discusses Western education systems that prioritise individual knowledge and individual rights and autonomy rather than the role of expert, authority and traditional concepts of knowledge, yet I would suggest that the role of authoritative expert is highly relevant in secondary art education, with its adherence to the 'artist' as a model of the talented individual. Art, as a school subject, is derived from and informed by fine art, design and craft, each located differently within social and cultural practices and all, to some extent, varying in the levels of participation desired and encouraged by different societal demands. For example, some elements of art, influenced by 18th century fine art practices, are necessarily based on elitist principles, with work produced by the few for the enjoyment or moral and religious redemption of the many. Craft and design are suitably different, drawing on the role of the artisan, with work produced having a utilitarian as well as aesthetic role. The positioning of art as a taught subject is based on a model that prioritises the exemplary work of the individual defined as uncommonly gifted, and such an adherence to elitist principles align it with exclusionary practices as a means of preserving a set of specific qualities.

CHAPTER 3

Graham (2006) discusses the existence of a centre as a significant concept for 'inclusion' since the word 'include' suggests 'bringing in'. Graham and Slee (2008:284) continue:

It would be reasonable to argue that there is an implicit centred-ness to the term 'inclusion', for it discursively privileges notions of the pre-existing by seeking to include the Other into a pre-fabricated, naturalised space.

There are however a number of centres, and the existence of specific disciplinary practice in respect of art education is significant here. Observational drawing practice based on hegemonies of representation (Jay, 1993) and explored more fully in Chapter 5 also create a centre to which pupil performances might be drawn or from which they might be repelled.

Bourdieu (1993) offers a useful frame for discussing inclusive and exclusive practices related to the role of culture in the reproduction of social structures. Art education offers a compelling context within which to consider the symbolic capital of art production within the cultural power relations of educational practices. Art in compulsory education can be considered as a 'concrete social situation governed by a set of objective social relations' (p. 6). Within such a social system, technical skill and accomplishment can be viewed as a form of 'symbolic power'. Individuals can be perceived of as having a form of 'capital' by the physical talents they display. This can be understood as a form of 'habitus' where players become legitimated by their physical practices:

to enter a field (philosophical, scientific, [artistic] – my addition) to play the game, one must possess the habitus which predisposes one to enter that field ...one must also possess at least the minimum amount of knowledge, or skill, or 'talent' to be accepted as a legitimate player (p. 8)

Within this discussion inclusion takes place via participation, yet it is the nature of participation that is significant since it has to be the type of participation that ensures legitimate inclusion. To take part in the activity is not sufficient to ensure meaningful participation since the 'quality' of the participation and degree of talent or skill is also important.

The individualised role of the Western artist, depicting religious, royal and cultural events, or as the talented, tortured individual, commenting on but also removed from society, creates the artist as the 'other'. The focus on the artist as celebrity (Bourdieu, 1993) can be described as contributing to the elite principle of the talented individual, with the focus closely aligned to concepts of authenticity and quality in the work produced. Eisner (1972) suggests that there is something particular in the way we discern ability in art, suggesting that this 'concept of talent has caused mischief' in art education. He says:

Whereas one would not want to deny that some people have great ability in an area of study or practice, the concept 'talent' has all too often been conceived of as dichotomously distributed ability, something that one either has or does not have. Yet there is hardly a human ability I can name that is so distributed.

The overwhelming majority of man's [sic] abilities are developed in different degrees. (p. 115)

The concept of ability or talent in art defined here is particularly problematic in relation to this aspect of education which appears to mark art education out for special consideration. Art practice can thus be viewed as a technology for defining the individual and exceptional.

The inclusion of a range of cultures and a range of historical periods, as well as contemporary art practices, (the move to ready-mades, installations and the adoption of technologies, for example) potentially moves art education, production and consumption to a more democratic, inclusive or participative domain, yet the cultural resonance of such practices creates conditions where they remain 'on the edge' by transgressing 'conventional forms' (Grenfell and Hardy, 2007:177). Contemporary drawing practices, for example, are distinctive in the way they resist or subvert 'the centre' and seek to exclude themselves from acceptable and accepted practice. Downs, Marshall, Sawdon, Selby and Tormey (2007:ix) offer a collection of contemporary drawing that 'touches the limits of drawing' and challenges 'what drawing can be'. Cornelia Parker's 'Pornographic Drawing' (2005) made from a dissolved confiscated video tape offers a useful exemplification of this discussion.

Bourdieu's discussion of 'disgust at the facile' (Bourdieu, 1984) allows for a consideration of exclusionary practices in the production of art as culturally desirable. The socially acceptable, easily understood or aesthetically unchallenging, too easily claimed and understood by a mass population, is described as 'facile' and excluded from a centre which is defined more by what might be considered remarkable than what is accepted as the 'norm'. It would seem that the closer art practice comes to the centre as potential for mass participation, understanding and assimilation, the more distant it becomes from being defined as 'credible' art practice. There is a significant space between contemporary art practices and the curriculum for art as it is currently taught in UK secondary schools which may offer a clearly defined and conservative centre of practices based on the development of specific technical skills (Downing and Watson, 2004).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Barton (1997:232) argues that within any discussion of inclusion 'the purpose and social function of schooling are crucial issues demanding serious exploration.' My extension of this would be with regard to the purpose and social function of art education. I argue here that art education can be constructed on elitist principles resulting in the meaningful participation of the few. If the subject is defined for pupils as based on the ability to master specific technical abilities, pupils might well decide that it has no real relevance for them. It is potentially the discipline itself that becomes excluded by the interest and participation of a minority (Hughes, 1998). Although promoted as a central learning activity (Canatella, 2004) drawing from observation, within this context, may become marginalized and limited in terms of its capacity for promoting learning.

CHAPTER 3

In framing this book around the experiences of participants identified as having coordination ‘difficulties’, I am potentially de-centering them from the ‘norm’ (Graham, 2007; Graham and Slee, 2008). From the outset the intention was not to marginalise or contribute to the exclusion of these individuals but to consider the role that observational drawing can have as a technology for constructing particular pedagogic identities. The focus on technical accomplishment in art education has made me consider the implications for such individuals, yet it is the specific cultural practices that are subject to scrutiny. The narratives included in this book provide stories of the ways in which cultural practices in art education are experienced. As such this enquiry is justified in an attempt to explore the need for the type of cultural reconstruction advocated by those seeking to move inclusion beyond political rhetoric and into the lived experience of education and society (Slee, 1999:127; Benjamin, 2002).

In exploring aspects of the theoretical framework directly related to the complex concepts of inclusion, this chapter has provided a partial context for the book. This has also allowed for more specific arguments related to inclusion in compulsory art education to be introduced. The nature of art, observation and representation as exclusionary technologies will be developed more fully in Chapter 5. The next chapter outlines the ways in which the ‘dyspraxic ideal’ is represented in a range of literature and offers a further dimension for understanding the potential for the de-centred nature of individual experiences.

CHAPTER 4

CREATING THE ‘DYSPRAXIC IDEAL’

INTRODUCTION

The ‘dyspraxic ideal’ presented here is the creation of a text which explores the ways in which dyspraxia is identified and defined in medical and educational discourses. Here I aim to identify and clarify the relevant terms for this research, explore the range of definitions for dyspraxia by considering the ‘dyspraxic ideal’ as it is produced by a reading (and writing) of the literature. ‘Ideal’, in this context, relates to a set of concepts that exist only in the form of an idea. Tangible, lived-experiences, offering concrete representations of this ideal will be discussed in the narrative case studies presented in the narrative case studies.

Further to this and relevant to this chapter are the processes of normalisation (Foucault, 1991) created by medical and educational systems of acculturation and, within this, the production of the ‘abnormal’ and the ‘docile body’. The dyspraxic ideal, I argue here is created by both discourses, and this Foucauldian framework for discussion, introduced in Chapter 3, provides part of the theoretical underpinning for this chapter.

This chapter has been structured around the exploration of a number of key themes:

- the definition, incidence and characteristics of dyspraxia;
- clinical studies related to this field with a focus on visual and sensory processing
- the intersection of art and design as a subject in education and texts relating to dyspraxia
- the relationship between drawing and handwriting
- literature based on the voices of experience of people with dyspraxia

This literature review has proved demanding in that the majority of the literature included appears to reinforce notions of individual difficulty and deficit that are counter to the theoretical concepts underpinning this research. More specifically, the majority of the literature reviewed here is suggestive of a model of disability derived from a concept of individual deficit rather than a culturally created phenomenon exacerbated by societal demands that require a child’s development to adhere to a specific set of age related norms.

It is possible to discuss each of these themes in relation to Foucault’s ideas regarding the role ‘complex social functions’ play in processes of normalisation (Foucault, 1991). The definition of dyspraxia against a concept of ‘normal’ physical and cognitive attributes, the use of a medical discourse to identify and situate difference within the individual and provide ‘scientific’ evidence of a learner pathology, the interconnectedness between medical and educational discourses, and the role of the family in the identification and management of such differences are evident in a range of literature. The occlusion and subjugation of particular types of experience

CHAPTER 4

by authorities invested in particular ways of knowing is evidenced in a range of texts reviewed in this chapter. Reid (in Jones, 2005) offers a useful exemplification of some of these ideas, here for example discussing the essential need for the identification of individual difference:

It is crucial therefore that the specific characteristics – and how these characteristics may provide a barrier to the child completing a specific task within the curriculum – are identified. This means that the task, curriculum and environmental considerations will be key elements in an intervention programme. (Reid, 2005:15)

Such discourses locate the difficulty as being *within* the child, where there is a sense of urgency that these characteristics are identified. The child is established as ‘problem’, with their personal characteristics pathologised. Interventions now have to be created that mark the child out as remarkable, different and ‘other’ than the norm. Here the need to identify difference is ‘crucial’ in order that adaptations can be made for that scrutinised individual, yet the particular ‘meducational’ systems at work are made invisible by the specific adaptations that are made in response a claim for individual ‘need’. This critical review aims to make these hidden discourses visible through my reading and re-writing of such texts.

A key factor in investigating this topic comes from a substantial gap in the literature at the intersection of art and design education and dyspraxia. There are a number of manuals for parents and professionals, many of which seek to support students and staff in educational settings and confirm dyspraxia as a learning related ‘disability’ in need of attention from a range of professional bodies. These texts relate to identification and intervention and are heavily reliant on concerns for other dominant curriculum areas, largely those that are text based, as a result of concerns about poor handwriting. There is some focus on physical education, because of the mechanical nature of this subject that can be problematic for some, and also because of the therapeutic nature of physical activity in the support of pupils diagnosed as dyspraxic. Art and design is briefly mentioned in these texts, and the strategies suggested illustrate a vague understanding of the pedagogy of the subject. As a result, this is often within the context of physical assistance and there is little engagement beyond the technical aspects of the work and ways to avoid accidents and spills.

Early literature largely relates to the definition and identification of coordination difficulties and establishing the need for further understanding and acceptance of the existence of coordination difficulties (see Gubbay, Ellis, Walton and Court, 1965 for example but also much later work that indicates that understanding dyspraxia can still be limited in Cousins and Smith, 2003). A sizeable majority of more recent literature is clinical in nature and relates to specific aspects of research conducted over the last thirty years by multidisciplinary agencies. (i.e. cognitive research, neuroscience, physiotherapy, optometry). Fewer studies relate to the experiences of those with dyspraxia and, because of the developmental nature of coordination difficulties, there is a greater emphasis on literature focusing on early childhood. The experiences of adolescents and adults appear to be less well explored although work being currently developed emphasises the longitudinal nature of experiences and a developing

concern for life as an adult with coordination difficulties. Research by Cousins and Smyth (2003) and help manuals specifically written for adults with dyspraxia reflect this developing field of interest, suggesting an extension of intervention and 'support' into adolescence and adulthood (Colley, 2002).

The literature can be divided into help manuals for parents and professionals, with explanations on the nature of dyspraxia and suggested strategies for intervention, and the research which is largely scientific and which reflects a largely positivistic rather than interpretative approach. There is a smaller number of publications which offer 'insider perspectives' but there appears to be little in the way of research that attempts to interpret these within their cultural context. Research offers both quantitative and qualitative perspectives but often within a positivistic paradigm. There are few studies advocating interpretative or narrative 'ways of knowing' (Bruner, 1986) although there is a recent move to include 'authentic' voices as a means of enhancing understanding. An example of this developing area of interest is a DVD called *Living with Dyspraxia in Schools* produced by the Dyspraxia Foundation, and showcased at their national conference in November 2006, which was based on interviews with secondary pupils (Dyspraxia Foundation, 2008).

Within the context of integrated provision Zoia, Barnett, Wilson and Hill (2006) refer to the need for a raised awareness regarding coordination difficulties for all practitioners, yet there is a distinct lack of subject specific work for teachers of art and design, in contrast to other subjects that do have a focus. It is not my aim to contribute to the production of the dyspraxic pupil as a body in need of specialist remedial help, but the treatment of art and design in the literature may reflect and reinforce the marginal nature of the subject within the curriculum. I would argue that the oversimplification of art and design, where it is evident in the literature, as a purely mechanical activity requiring coordinated movement offers a further area for exploration.

The problematic nature of the language used in some of the literature is evident and it becomes increasingly challenging to progress with this chapter without acknowledging that, in addition to the problems associated with defining the terms of this research, the vocabulary used is indicative of a medical model that may reinforce individual deficit. Much of the literature indicates a clear concern with 'deficit - diagnosis - remediation' (Mortimore and Crozier, 2006) and as such is clearly rooted within a medical model of disability, supported and explored in the earlier discussion of normalisation in Chapter 3. My initial reluctance to engage with the clinical research in this area came initially from a sense of being beleaguered both by the extensive range of the studies and the medical language used, but also by the sense that it was alien to the sociological nature of the my own research project. It is not insignificant that the majority of research currently being undertaken in this area is of a clinical or medical nature and that there are far fewer studies that seek to explore social and educational context. The prevalence of this clinically based work, with an emphasis on identification of deficit and subsequent remediation, may offer a parallel with the medicalisation of education where epistemological perspectives are drawn from the need to identify pupils' problems and provide a form of remediation for their 'difficulty'. The focus on clinical literature serves to reinforce the already

CHAPTER 4

established concept of ‘pupil (child) as problem’ that may mask more challenging questions related to concepts of pedagogy and educational research.

MacIntyre and McVitty (2004) provide illustrative examples of the normative criteria for assessing movement in relation to age related expectations. The initial recognition and subsequent diagnosis of dyspraxia may be in relation to predicted milestones (or cultural expectations) and it is not coincidental that observations of difference and degree of difficulty appear exacerbated when children enter formal educational settings. Ripley (2001) and Sugden, Wright, Chambers and Markee (2002) express concern for pupils in transition from primary to secondary education for example where the child’s level of ‘impairment’ is static (or non-progressive) but the effects of it are exacerbated by the demands created by the move to a structure and organisation that is initially challenging for many pupils. Portwood’s (2003:1) reference to the need for diagnosis when coordination difficulties impact on academic progress could serve to emphasise the concept of disability as a product of the social setting and organisation of learning. The standardisation of particular social processes and the role they play in identifying individual variance is highly significant here.

In their study, Peters, Barnett and Henderson (2001) recognise that dyspraxia is a condition only clearly identified in the ‘developed’ world, signifying a socio-cultural dimension to the ‘dyspraxic’ experience. Kirkby (2004) asks ‘Is dyspraxia a medical condition or a social disorder?’ and offers a discussion of dyspraxia as a medical or social phenomenon, but her argument falls short in respect of a full and meaningful discussion of the potential ‘over-medicalisation’ of a phenomenon. She discusses the role of diet and a sedentary life-style in a paper that does not live up to the expectation of the title since the social context is not fully explored. Miyahara and Register (1999) indicate that although the effects of dyspraxia may be overwhelming, ‘it is only in those privileged cultures that can afford to recognise and manage the problem’. The extent to which privileged cultures contribute to the production of dyspraxia is not explored.

‘DYS’-ING ‘DYSPRAXIA’ – AN EXPLORATION OF THE DEFINITIONS OF COORDINATION DIFFICULTIES

Dyspraxia is a term used to define ‘difficulties’ with the development of physical coordination related to sensory processing. Definitions are problematic, because of the range of ‘impairments’ that may be experienced and also because of the ways these are defined by a range of agencies. Dyspraxia is identified as a condition that not only affects the coordination and execution of movements but also the planning of movements prior to carrying them out and is independent of an individual’s level of intelligence. The Dyspraxia Foundation refers to dyspraxia as ‘an impairment or immaturity in the organisation of movement’ (The Dyspraxia Foundation, 2007). Ripley (2001:1) indicates that:

Developmental Dyspraxia is found in children who have no significant difficulties when assessed in using standard neurological examinations but who show signs of an impaired performance of skilled movements. Developmental

Dyspraxia refers to difficulties which are associated with the development of coordination and the organisation of movement.

Even in the pursuit of an early and simplistic definition there is a degree of disruption with Ripley's extension into 'Developmental Dyspraxia', and an early discussion of the language of the labels used is essential at this point. Dyspraxia is not the term officially recognised by clinical researchers and is described as a subtype (Dixon and Addy, 2004) of Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD) the term given official recognition in the American Psychiatry Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV) (in Elliott and Place, 2004), a source regularly cited at the point of definition in clinical studies. Clinical research largely embraces the term DCD, but this has come relatively recently with an attempt to unify work under one label, and provide a common frame of reference for research and dissemination with an attempt to confirm this status via the establishment of the International Society for Research into DCD (ISR-DCD) at the Professional conference in Banff, 2002 (Mandich and Polatajko, 2003).

Mandich and Polatajko (2003) discuss the introduction of the World Health Organisation's framework for health and disability, the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health (ICF). They indicate that the ICF model recognizes the importance of the interaction between person and environment in the creation of concepts such as health and disability, suggesting that it is not only the impairment that needs to be considered but 'the context of everyday life' in the way our understanding can be developed.

The terms developmental dyspraxia, dyspraxia, developmental coordination disorder (DCD), fine motor deficits, motor deficits, clumsiness and clumsy child syndrome (for example) are symptomatic of a developing field, but also of the linguistic nuances reflective of the range of agencies and professions researching and writing about the subject. This multidisciplinary development also connects with Foucault's discussion of the intensification of the medical gaze which takes different forms and includes the family as a significant partner in medical acculturation (Foucault, 1976). I have retained the term dyspraxia largely because that is the term used and understood by the participants in the research, and because it encompasses not only the 'output' movement implications (what can be seen to be occurring), but also the motor planning aspects (planning prior to movement). The detail of a specific vocabulary may be essential to practitioners within a certain field, but this may also perpetuate the concept of difficulty that surrounds a definition and subsequent understanding of coordination related conditions (Peters et al, 2001). This problem with definitions and the roles of different professionals in authorising the 'condition' are also highly significant in relation to what I will call the 'status' of the participants in this study, since the ways in which they are authorised in relation to dyspraxia varies.

Historically, dyspraxia has been referred to as 'clumsiness' or 'clumsy child syndrome', and was identified in research at the turn of the last century. Peters, Barnett and Henderson (2001) refer to 'clumsiness' identified as a 'defining symptom' as early as 1909 by Dupre in an article that referred to 'debilite motrice'. Research in this field can be plotted from the beginning of the twentieth century although there are some difficulties in working towards a clear definition of dyspraxia due to

the multidisciplinary approaches to diagnosis and the growing numbers of labels for developmental coordination or motor difficulties. Jean Ayres (1974) in her key text on sensory integration theory refers to both apraxia and dyspraxia.

Sigmundsson, Hansen and Talcott (2003) indicate that, although developmental clumsiness has been discussed in literature for at least 60 years, there are still difficulties with definitions and describes these as both vague and unclear. Peters et al (2001) refer to a high degree of confusion over appropriate labels between clumsiness, dyspraxia and Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). The term 'clumsy', although identified as a negative and out-dated term, was identified by them as taking historical precedence and as the term that is most widely understood by a range of professionals. Although some in their study used different labels interchangeably, others are aware that there appears to be more than a semantic difference and that the language may reflect a range of differing conditions.

Geuze et al (2001), in their review of 176 papers based on research into DCD, indicate that this term was introduced in 1987 but did not begin to appear in published papers until 1992. Clumsy or clumsiness was the preferred term in the majority of papers they reviewed (with 41%), followed by DCD (with 26%) and, according to this study, developmental dyspraxia was preferred in only 6% of the papers. Miyahara and Register (2000) investigated the use of three terms, developmental dyspraxia, DCD and clumsy child syndrome (CCS). Parents and professionals agreed that CCS was largely negative. Although professionals and scholars were more familiar with the term DCD, parent groups make use of the term dyspraxia in both the United Kingdom and abroad.

Dixon and Addy (2004:7) refer to an extensive list of terms including clumsy child syndrome, minimal brain dysfunction, l'enfant maladroit, motor learning difficulty, developmental apraxia, agnosia and sensory integrative dysfunction. A more generic yet vague term 'motor learning difficulties' is referred to by Chesson, McKay and Stephenson (1990). A more recent review of clinical research by Zoia et al (2006) refers to 'specific disorder of motor function', recognized for at least a century with a gradual increase in awareness over the past 30 years, and makes reference to the large numbers of terms. The term 'neurodiversity' or a 'processing difference' (unpublished leaflets by 'Key 4 Learning Limited') have been used to describe dyspraxia, dyslexia and aspergers syndrome amongst other conditions although this term is used in other contexts more specifically to describe autism. Biggs (2005) includes dyspraxia within the autistic spectrum yet this is not widely acknowledged in other literature reviewed.

It is not only the labels or terminology that differs, but also the characteristics. The raft of manuals developed to support parents and professionals largely begin with the notion of the problematic nature of definitions of the range of coordination related conditions, the labels used by a range of professionals and the variation in the characteristics of conditions. Geuze et al (2001) offer a detailed discussion of the variations in diagnostic criteria used by professionals researching coordination difficulties and aim to propose a protocol by which such criteria can be more fully established in order to enable studies to be more effectively replicated. This paper indicates that some of the diagnostic criteria are established to fit the specific nature of

the research being conducted. This move to formalise and authenticate particular bodies of knowledge is a means of creating conformity to enhance the quality and validity of research yet this may also be read as the authorisation of particular types of scientific knowledge that occlude other ways of knowing (Foucault:1980). It could be argued that the ability to replicate studies within research systems can also exclude individual voices and particular experience.s.

The relationship between dyspraxia and a perceived difficulty to learn is most apparent in its inclusion under the vague umbrella term Specific Learning Disorders/Difficulties (SpLD), a generic term for a wide range of 'learning difficulties' that also includes dyslexia, dyscalculia and autistic spectrum disorders. The implications for the use of this term are that an individual has a specific difficulty that has an impact on their ability to learn with the impairment defined in relation to a very specific and traditional concept of how we learn and the environments in which we may learn best. Learning is a clear point of intersection in this study between dyspraxia and drawing from observation as a central pedagogic practice.

As I have already established, this study makes use of the term dyspraxia to align it with a participant perspective, and also to give recognition to the understanding that those included in the research consider themselves to be defined to a greater extent to being dyspraxic rather than having DCD or being clumsy. It would be disingenuous for me to recreate their stories under the guise of DCD simply because the medical discourse dominates definition. There is also a desire on my part to disrupt the authority of the clinical model, emanating from the development of the use of narrative as a mode of enquiry. As such I recognise the potentially powerful role that language can have in the construction of individuals' ideas and identities and the role that a label can have as more than a passive conduit for description.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSPRAXIA

The language used to define the nature of dyspraxia locates the problem clearly within (not just *with*) the individual, yet makes a clear connection with a socially constructed disability. To illustrate this further, a range of literature explored here describes characteristics and offers specific activities that may be problematic, as evidence of the disabling effect of poor coordination. The ways in which these characteristics are offered here create the 'dyspraxic ideal' against which the case studies, and the hypothesis relating to drawing from observation, are positioned.

Dyspraxia is described by Dixon and Addy (2004) as 'an impairment' in gross and fine-motor organization. They describe individuals with an inability to plan and organize their movements and claim that this can often have an impact on their daily routine. Kirkby and Drew (2003:6) define the differences between DCD and dyspraxia as being that the 'child with dyspraxia has a praxis/planning problem and does not know what to do and how to move, whereas the child with DCD has difficulties with coordination and execution.' Boon (2001:14) indicates that gross motor skills may be affected, resulting in awkward movement and poor balance and coordination. Fine motor skills are described as being affected resulting in difficulty with manipulative skills such as holding pencils and pens. Speech and language may present

difficulties in some cases and there may also be implications for the development of social skills, and difficulties with attention span and concentration. In addition to this there may be poor visual motor skills, resulting in difficulty with copying pictures, and poor spatial awareness. Alloway and Temple (2005) also indicate the potential for difficulties with working memory in children.

In early research referring to clumsiness or developmental apraxia by Walton, Ellis and Court (1962) and Gubbay, Ellis, Walton and Court (1965), detailed case studies are presented which explore a wide range of the types of difficulties encountered, and illustrative examples of writing and drawing are offered. Perceived difficulties include an inability to recognise whole pictures, difficulties with spatial recognition or representation, difficulty in understanding simple meaning in pictures and difficulty in understanding the representation of cubes. In addition to this, the case studies presented describe immature writing and drawing, speech difficulties, slowness of movements, right-left disorientation, delayed walking, inability to hop or jump and a range of other perceived difficulties. Further to an exploration of specific characteristics of clumsiness, the papers also provide a discussion of the social implications for children presenting with these characteristics. The studies indicate that these difficulties appeared not to be related to the child's overall intelligence and suggested that a number of these pupils were deemed lazy as a result of a lack of understanding of the condition. They make a clear connection with the developmental nature of dyspraxia demonstrating that the children appeared to make improvements as they developed and/or learnt how to overcome their difficulties.

Dyspraxia, as a developmental condition, is discussed by Ayres (1974) who makes the connection with the developmental process explicit. She describes 'praxis' as:

... not just movement but the learned ability to plan and direct a temporal series of coordinated movements toward achieving a result – usually a skilled and non-habitual act. It is the end product of a developmental process involving afferent synthesis of the entire past ontogenetic experience related to a given motor pattern. (Ayres, 1974:170)

When a child is unable to draw on past experiences of a learned act or to generalise an ability to perform a specific act they may be defined as dyspraxic. All children need to learn the ability to carry out specific tasks but once these are learnt can usually transfer those skills. A dyspraxic child may have to re-learn how to carry out specific tasks before these can become habitual.

It is suggested that the international estimate of the incidence of dyspraxia is about 6% of the population in children between 5 and 11 years of age (Gupta, 1999; Mandich and Polatajko, 2003), but it may be difficult to identify a clear figure as a percentage of the population affected, due to the range of definitions used and the criteria employed by different agencies. The population is also treated in such statistical and hegemonic creations/representations as homogenous and there is no recognition of differing social factors, ethnicity or gender. The number of children identified with dyspraxia appears to be increasing and Portwood (2004) indicates that this may be as a result of societal change, diet and the increase in sedentary life styles having a potentially detrimental affect on child development. There is also the possibility that increased awareness and diagnosis may be linked to the increased

number of children being identified as a result of the formalising of pre-school education. It could be argued that the increased awareness of a means of categorising and pathologising particular learner traits has resulted in this increase.

CO-MORBIDITY OR CO-OCCURRENCE

A further complexity to a study based on dyspraxia relates to the incidence of co-morbidity with other conditions including dyslexia, dyscalculia, autism and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, conditions related by their contravention of the concept of the malleable and easily trained 'docile body' (Foucault, 1991) of the 'ideal pupil'. Portwood (2003) suggests that the degree of co-morbidity with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autistic spectrum disorders and dyslexia for example is high being between 40% and 45%. She indicates that Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and ADHD present difficulties with concentration, making it difficult to isolate some aspects of behaviour that are shared between these conditions. Shattock and Whiteley (2004) provide an example of a biomedical research project exploring the links between dyspraxia and autism in terms of similarities and shared symptoms.

Kirby and Drew (2003:4) describe co-morbidity as 'the rule rather than the exception' indicating that there is difficulty in identifying 'clean populations that do not have a mixed profile'. They refer to research (by Henderson and Barnett, 1998, and Clarkin and Kendall, 1992 for example) where there is difficulty in determining 'whether one condition is in fact a symptom of another.' Traditional sampling techniques appear unreliable and there are clear difficulties for clinical research in that it is difficult to replicate research with groups that do not have a shared set of 'medical' characteristics but that may also be rendered 'different' in terms of class, ethnicity and gender. The focus on 'clean' medical samples based on biological similarity could be perceived as highly problematic when considering the 'performative' nature of activities and the potentially situated nature of experience (Rosengren and Bradwell, 2003). There are similar difficulties when attempting to talk to participants about their experiences of art education and dyspraxia where school experiences may be dominated by their identification with dyslexia. This will be discussed later in relation to Craig's story, in Chapter 7, which is dominated to a greater extent by his dyslexic experience.

Dyspraxia belongs to the group of three 'dys's' (dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia), with dyslexia at times used as an umbrella term to accommodate the others (in West, 1996 for example). There appears to be a distinct hierarchy of interest and research, with the majority of literature on dyslexia, possibly as a result of an emphasis on literacy due to societal requirements for a literate population and the changing definitions of what it is to be 'literate'. There is less work based on dyspraxia and less still on dyscalculia (difficulties in relation to numeracy), although this appears to be an expanding area of interest. There is a high degree of co-morbidity between these three areas and delineation between them is difficult since some characteristics are shared. 'Poor organisation' is an example of a characteristic claimed by both dyspraxia and dyslexia.

CHAPTER 4

Kaplan et al (2006) reveal a further complexity in questioning the terminology of co-morbidity proposing that it could be a misleading term signifying that the disorders are independent of one another. They indicate that the conditions are not independent and co-morbidity does not therefore provide a satisfactory explanation for the ways in which the developmental problems are in fact related. Other texts however do not engage with this degree of difficulty. Dixon and Addy (2004) offer one amongst many texts for parents and teachers that discuss dyspraxia with little reference to comorbidity and discuss the identity of the specifically dyspraxic child throughout.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Dyspraxia is inextricably connected with a concept of child development and, as already discussed, is defined in relation to particular age related expectations and maturation. Foucault (1980:172) refers to the 'problem of childhood' in discussing the rise of medical acculturation and the role of the family in monitoring and managing the early stages of life. Within these systems he describes the family as the most 'constant agent of medicalisation' (p. 173). Child development has been subject to an increasing range of multidisciplinary interventions that intersect health, education and social well being such as 'Every Child Matters' (DCSF, 2004) all designed to manage childhood. Early life stages, previously less well monitored, are now increasingly managed. These are not inert discourses that are merely descriptive and reactive to conditions in the UK. The political focus on child poverty and interventions such as Sure Start, locate child rearing very firmly as a political objective. Child development is situated within particular forms of practice where a concept of 'development' is state supported via interventions and monitoring to assure entitlements to early education, health care and protection, for example. 'Development' in a medical discourse relates to specific weights and sizes of babies, for example, with distribution curves that indicate those above or below an 'average'. Within such discourses, child development becomes a site of difficulty and intervention.

The concept of child development is also subject to hegemonic discourses which authorise and prioritise particular cultural, class and gender assumptions about a range of ways in which it is possible for a child to 'develop'. As the child reaches school age, development shifts from health monitoring to education, where age related expectations in terms of intellectual 'development' are conflated with an ability to learn. Within the educational development discourse, particular concepts of education become associated with creating the optimal opportunities for children to develop in socially desirable/acceptable ways (associated with white middle-class values, for example). The ways in which gender is reflected in the literature on dyspraxia offer a useful reflection on particular hegemonies that underpin the conceptualisation of child development in this discussion.

GENDER

Gender plays a significant role in the ways in which pupils appear to be defined as dyspraxic and this is recognised here although a full discussion of this dimension

of concern is beyond the scope of this book. A gender bias in the identification of coordination difficulties is acknowledged in a number of texts. According to Ripley (2001) and Portwood (2003) 80% of diagnosed cases of developmental dyspraxia are male while Zoia et al (2006) indicate a ratio of 3:1. The provision of support for pupils identified as having a Special Educational Need (SEN) or an additional need illustrates a gender bias which may reflect something of the power/knowledge discourses at play within gendered systems of education (Paechter, 2000). However, there may also be a cultural dimension to identification in that it is possible that boys display certain characteristics more likely to gain the attention of teachers (Daniels, Hey, Leonard and Smith, 1999). Historically, there was a greater concern for the identification of dyslexia in male children, for example, because of their socio-economic role and related expectations. It could be argued that identification of a learning related disability was less significant for female children who may have been expected only to marry and have children (Gaine and George, 1999:65). A similar argument could be pursued in relation to ethnicity where low expectation potentially correlates with low levels of identification. Dyslexia is frequently identified as a white middle class phenomenon, but there is no discussion of this more specifically in relation to dyspraxia.

A further argument is based on possible neurological differences between the sexes. Portwood (2003:19) explores concepts related to brain development to support the gender differences in identification. Accepting that gender is both a binary and a natural occurrence, she indicates that there are neurological reasons for differences between identification in male and female children referring to research from Yale University's Centre for Learning and Attention at the University of Iowa. This research explores gender differences in hemispheric specialisation which could indicate that boys' brains do not as easily compensate when there are difficulties in the development of the right hemisphere of the brain. She concludes that boys and girls can learn differently as a consequence of this. Such discussions of gender and brain function are not unproblematic. Fausto-Sterling (2000:115) offers an interesting discussion on 'Sexing the Brain' where she interrogates the role that science has played in exploring and defining gender roles through studies of neurological difference insisting that:

...scientists do not simply read nature to find truths to apply in the social world. Instead, they use truths taken from our social relationships to structure, read, and interpret the natural.

There is also some variation in the identification ratios of boys to girls in different age ranges (Portwood, 2003:50). At age 3–7 years the ratio is 3:1, and in the junior and secondary school ages 8:1. She indicates that 'the ratio of 8:1 for this age group does not suggest that the dyspraxic proportion has changed but merely that boys are more likely to be identified.' In the Further Education sector more women than men are diagnosed. This may suggest that the social situation has a direct impact on types of appropriate behaviours and expectations. It may be that male students with dyspraxia may have reached a stage of disaffection and withdrawn from education by their late teens. Portwood (2003) also suggests that a failure to acknowledge the

CHAPTER 4

developmental differences between girls and boys could potentially lead to an inaccurate identification of 'failing boys'.

Boon (2001) is explicit about referring to 'he' because of the strong gender bias evident in the identification of the condition and Dixon and Addy (2004) also acknowledge this fully in their introduction yet this literature comes to create and reinforce rather than represent this gendered perspective. Chesson, McKay and Stephenson (1990) indicate gender as an additional concern as part of their study, indicating that girls with motor learning difficulties may be missed as a result of the types of behaviours that may be exhibited. Theirs was a study of 31 children only two of whom were female.

SELF ESTEEM AND DYSPRAXIA: A HURDLE TO CREATIVE ENGAGEMENT?

The impact of low self esteem on people with dyspraxia is well documented in the literature and this is a significant area in relation to the development and experience of dyspraxia as a cultural phenomenon. Self esteem is related to the way in which we define ourselves in relation to the world we encounter and our relationships with others in the world. There is a dual argument here in that some advocate a full recognition of dyspraxia in order to guard against issues of low self-esteem that might emerge from ignorance to the condition (Gubbay, 1965) where others recognise the impact that labelling of conditions may have on the psychological development when self concept is aligned with low expectations (Wearmouth, 1999; Norwich, 1999; Green, Baird and Sugden, 2006). A pupil's perceptions and experience of a 'disability' could create a barrier in addition to the physical manifestation of a 'condition' or 'problem' and this provides a clear focus in a range of support texts written for parents and professionals (Ripley 2001; Ripley et al, 2003; Kirkby and Drew, 2003 and Portwood, 2003).

Ripley et al (2003) emphasise the role of self esteem, giving examples of parents', teachers' and the child's comments to illustrate her concern. She identifies the erosion of self concept starting early, as a result of negative initial experiences and failure, indicating that:

If the underlying problems and the issues surrounding self-esteem are not addressed, a child at twelve years may have adequate handwriting...but have negative feelings about himself /herself as a learner, towards school, towards adults and his/her own future. (Ripley et al, 2003:12)

However, low self esteem is not a specific trait that is related to dyspraxia but a by product of a child's experiences and relationships. Dixon and Addy (2004:117) suggest that a child 'only knows that he operates differently from his peers because he is constantly told so'. They illustrate their point by asking the question 'how can a child feel valued if he is constantly being asked to change?' possibly suggesting a lack of flexibility in educational and social systems that require the individual to learn in specific norm referenced ways. Macintyre (2000) also discusses the potential existence of a comparative ideal to which a child may compare herself or be compared against, yet which may be an ideal which many children may not match.

There are concerns for the way in which specific characteristics of dyspraxia may be misread by teachers and the ways in which this reading of a particular pedagogic performance can contribute to a pupil's sense of self. Munro, Butler, and Major (2005) refer to postural control, with some children appearing slumped and lazy, indicating that teachers had frequently remarked on pupils adopting positions different from those of others in the class. Orton (in Ripley et al, 2003) discusses the perception that children who were delayed in reaching development goals were 'lazy, careless and of low ability' and that this was linked to the development of a 'sense of inferiority'. Ripley indicates that this is still the case for many where dyspraxia is not recognized or fully understood (Ripley et al 2003:64). These descriptions of the dyspraxic pupil suggest a physical presence that contravenes the accepted model of the 'ideal' pupil, perceived as an attentive and keen learner or a 'docile' body, both eager and compliant (Foucault, 1991:170). The dyspraxic pupil, outlined above, suggests the exhibition of different pupil attributes more readily associated with a lack of enthusiasm as well as a lack of ability to learn in appropriate ways, connecting physical presence with a particular type of learning 'performance' that might be read by others as disengagement or learner pathology. Poor self-esteem is therefore not directly attributed as a characteristic of dyspraxia but a reaction to the ways in which particular differences result in expulsion or revulsion of the 'other' (Butler, 2006) as a result of the assertion of 'culturally hegemonic identities' or hegemonic learner identities.

Macintyre (2000) reflects on the role that the individual can have in contributing to low self-image, referring to 'reciprocal analysis', where self-image is based on what people think others think of them. The role of others in the creation of self esteem is recognised here, where parents are described as the first critical influence on self-perception. During a child's early years the emphasis changes to teachers, and their peer group takes on a greater significance. In discussing the role of the peer group Macintyre outlines the relationship between children where the peer group act as role models and a direct source for comparison. It is possible to make a direct, although anecdotal, link here with the way in which pupils often compare their drawings within a hierarchy of ability which is well established and understood by a peer group. Within any group pupils will usually be able to identify the individuals who are particularly good at a specific activity such as drawing. This direct connection between drawing engagement and comparative levels of perceived ability will be developed more fully in the study.

Self-esteem is a central concept in current learning theories. Claxton (2002), in his work on Learning to Learn describes four characteristics of effective learners: resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity. All require a degree of learner, and personal, confidence. The recognition in the new national curriculum for art and design (QCA, 2008), with its emphasis on mistake-making and risk taking, also supports a view of an 'empowered' and confident learner but, more importantly, one who appears to be able to exert a good deal of control over their own conditions for learning. Self-esteem is at the heart of these concepts of learning and this is a significant theme to be discussed in relation to the participants in this study.

CLINICAL RESEARCH

From the clinical research perspective, there appears to be a developing area of interest and activity with an increase in research in this area over the last thirty years (Zoia et al, 2006). Geuze et al (2001) refer to 176 publications, providing an indication of both interventionist (those that evaluate a particular type of intervention or remediation) and non-interventionist research, including work establishing assessment and identification procedures, carried out up to and including 1999. A more recent review by Zoia et al (2006) indicates current clinical research being undertaken by a wide range of professionals. The article identifies the growing interest of an international community and collaborations between interested groups including researchers, clinicians and policymakers. Current literature reflects the multi-professional dimension to this research, with physiotherapy, occupational health, psychology, psychiatry and neurology just some of the fields reflected in the work to date. The DCD-VII conference in Melbourne, Australia in February 2007 reflects a similar diversity in relation to the oral presentations, papers and posters reflected in the conference programme.

Some aspects of this clinical research, related to visual and sensory processing, are particularly relevant to this consideration of the experiences of drawing from observation for pupils with dyspraxia. In the following section I do not offer an unproblematic acceptance of scientific discussion but aim to use this to explore the ways in which the dyspraxic ideal is produced and appears to be biologically fixed within the physical body of the individual.

VISUAL PROCESSING

A number of studies explore the connection between visual processing, dyspraxia and learning difficulties, yet the context of the 'learning' appears less well explored. Difficulties with some drawing activities may relate to this element of sensory processing rather than, or in addition to, difficulties with pencil grip and manual dexterity. Early work by Jean Ayres (1974:173) illustrates a link between dyspraxia and difficulty in visual tracking, commenting that 'eyes that will not follow a volitional command make desk work most demanding.' The relevance, usefulness and effectiveness of 'desk work' as a location for learning are not explored here and sit almost invisibly as the accepted physical conditions. More recent clinical research indicates a connection between difficulties with visual processing and dyspraxia. Lord and Hulme (1988) make a direct connection between visual perception and coordination by exploring the links between visual perception and motor control and this is one of the few studies that relates specifically to drawing ability. Wilmut, Wann and Brown (2006) establish that shifting the gaze ahead of hand movement is a natural part of developing hand movements with accuracy. This study indicates that there are differences in the coupling of eye and hand movements in children with DCD, where the eyes get too far ahead of the hand, and that this can result in a perception of slowness in carrying out complex sequential tasks. The situated nature of such 'perceptions of slowness' are not discussed.

Deconinck et al (2006), in a study that considers the visual contribution towards walking in children with DCD, suggests that the findings indicate that there is an increased dependency on visual control and that this may be associated with a poorly developed internal sensorimotor model. Sigmundsson, Hansen, and Talcott (2003) and Sigmundsson, Whiting, and Ingvaldsen (1999) identify a range of literature related to the relationship between visual deficits and motor coordination difficulties. Sigmundsson, Hansen, and Talcott (2003) provide a clinical exploration of the ways in which the brain processes visual information and conclude that there is a relationship between developmental clumsiness and visual processing deficits. Alloway and Temple (2005) indicate that children with DCD showed comparatively striking deficits in visuo-spatial working memory tasks, describing visuo-spatial working memory as significant in linking movement planning and control. Sigmundsson and Hopkins (2005) indicate that the visual processing problems of 'clumsy' children contribute to, or strongly determine, movement problems and learning difficulties, in a study linking problems with visual processing and learning difficulties. Gubbay (1975) in Sigmundsson and Hopkins (2005) reported that 50% of children with DCD have trouble with schoolwork and that these problems might be located in poor visual recognition abilities. It is significant to note that these studies do not attempt to explore the appropriateness of these learning experiences, which remain unquestioned and constant as a backdrop against which individual deficits are explored.

The translation of clinical research related to visual processing into help manuals provides exemplification of how these specific problems may have an impact on curriculum engagement or the routine of daily life. Kirby and Drew (2003:42) describe visual spatial perception as how 'a person perceives the relationship of external space to his body as well as objects in space relative to other objects', and suggest that, in addition to the potential problems with sensory processing, there may be specific difficulties related to visual perception. Portwood (2003:71) describes the use of optometric assessment for some children undergoing initial diagnosis and there is a discussion of ocular motor instability which could affect tracking objects from left to right, as well as problems with focusing. She identifies three areas here: the first, *amplitude of accommodation*, relates to the ability of the optical lens to change shape in order to view objects that are near or far or for 'close work' for example; the second, *accommodative lag*, can affect the ability to focus on words on a page, for example, indicating that this can result in some children focusing on the page behind instead of the words; the third, *accommodative facility*, refers to the ability eyes have to relax and concentrate. Portwood (ibid) gives an example of the significance of this for children looking at a board and then re-focusing on the page of the book in front of them. This is significant for observational drawing which requires the constant moving and shifting of the eyes from one area to another and could be relevant if observational drawing presented greater difficulties than other drawing activities. Dixon and Addy (2004) indicate that some may have difficulty in completing jigsaws and producing 'dot to dot' drawings, for example, due to poor 'visual closure', a function which enables us to guess at whole objects even though we may only see them partially.

CHAPTER 4

Kirby and Drew (2003:39–44) explore visually related difficulties, identifying these as either physically related to focusing, eye movement and saccades (tiny jerks of the eyes when viewing a static object) for example, or perceptual, including visual spatial awareness, differentiation between figure and ground, and visual memory. They suggest that children with poor visual discrimination have difficulty putting parts together to make a whole and have problems identifying ambiguously represented objects. Kirby and Drew (2003:42) also explore visual memory suggesting that it is dependent upon, attention and concentration, good observation, speed and motivation, claiming that children with poor visual memory may successfully reproduce an object from observation, but may have difficulties reproducing it when the object is taken away. This may suggest that children may have difficulty working from their imagination if the imagination works as a visual store.

SENSORY PROCESSING – CONNECTING THE IDEAS

One of the most significant aspects of literature relating to dyspraxia is that which makes a connection between sensory processing and motor planning prior to co-ordinated movement. During an activity such as drawing from direct observation of objects the relationship between the brain, hand and eye are evident and explained fully in Betty Edwards' 'Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain' (1992). It is the coordination of these aspects that appears potentially problematic in considering the dyspraxic ideal.

Ripley et al (2003) illustrate a 'feedback loop' to explain the link between the environment and sensory processes, and suggest that disruption to any one of these could result in coordination difficulties. I would suggest that such disruption could make an activity such as drawing from direct observation potentially more problematic. However, there are a whole range of other factors relating to drawing that may have relevance. Rosengren and Braswell, (2003:63) discuss changing constraints in relation to task variation that offers a more 'authentic' framing for class room experience than the unmediated 'feedback loop':

Task constraints will change as the specific tasks the child is confronted with change. These changes may involve variations in the instructions a child is given in a particular drawing session, or variations in the frictional coefficients as a child attempts to draw with a different drawing implement. Constraints always interact, so changing one constraint impacts on the entire system, yielding significantly different outcomes.

This discussion of the interplay between systems appears to offer a perspective that shifts to a consideration of context rather than the location of individual deficit.

The theoretical and practical applications of work by Jean Ayres (1974) related to sensory integration is widely referenced in many texts related to developmental coordination difficulties (Dixon and Addy, 2004; Portwood, 2003, for example), specifically in relation to the explanation she gives of the relationship between neural processes and the senses. In this work she makes clear connections between sensory

processing and learning difficulties, advocating intervention as a means of remediation. Outlining sensory integration therapy, Ayres suggests that:

Sensory integrative processes result in perception and other types of synthesis of sensory data that enable man [sic] to interact effectively with the environment. Disorders of perception have been reasonably well established as concomitants of early academic problems. (Ayres, 1974:1)

This overview reflects a deficit approach to learning for those with sensory integration 'disorders' and proposes that the deficit is the reason for aspects of academic learning being difficult. However, it should be acknowledged that the relationship between 'learning disorders' and early academic 'problems' or failure may relate to inappropriate teaching methods, for example, and a social model of disability would suggest that pupils with this type of 'deviation' are failed by an education system that has insufficient flexibility to meet specific and individual difference. This will be discussed later but it is relevant to present these ideas now and recognise the role that a body of literature may have in the production of dyspraxia as a disability that results in a negative impact on the perception of the abilities of particular pupils.

Ayres (*ibid*) acknowledges the role that sensory stimulation plays in the ways in which children develop. She indicates that if the information received by tactile receptors via touch, for example, is not precise, the brain does not have a sufficient basis to develop an accurate body awareness, and this could result in poor motor planning. When children are at an early stage of development, she argues, learning via movement is vital, in that it enables us to cultivate the capacity for habitual movement. Individuals with dyspraxia, Ayres suggests, can find it more difficult to develop these habits and must therefore re-learn an activity each time it is attempted.

Ayres outlines the functions of three main sensory receptors and Ripley et al (2003) makes the link with developmental dyspraxia and the ability to manage sensory information via these three forms of processing. The first of these are the tactile receptors which are cells in the skin that send information to the brain. Ayres (p. 172–3) explains the limitations that problems with this can cause. 'If a child cannot tell which finger is receiving a tactile stimulus, he [sic] cannot be expected to know well how to move that finger in a skilled manner in manipulation of objects or use of tools including a pencil.' Dixon and Addy (2004:20) describe children with dyspraxia struggling to develop visual form constancy (knowledge about properties of objects such as shape and size), indicating that this is due to receiving incorrect information regarding an object from a 'dampened sense of touch.' Touch is established as the key sense in early child development, and the connection between this sense and the development of fine motor skills appears obvious. Dixon and Addy (2004) suggest that this area is affected in the majority of children with dyspraxia. They also describe the effects that can occur with perceptual constancy, 'the ability to perceive an object as possessing variant properties, such as shape, position and size' (2004:17), for example, if sensory integration is disrupted. They make a clear practical connection with specific areas of the school curriculum that may be affected, suggesting that 'difficulties in form constancy also affect judgement of size, which in turn influences drawings, physical education, handwriting and mathematics.'

CHAPTER 4

The second of the processes described by Ayres is related to the vestibular apparatus in the inner ear, which Ripley et al (2003) describe as significant in that it responds to shifting head position, and the coordination of head, eye and body movement. This also enables us to coordinate left and right sides of the body. Lastly the function of the proprioceptive system, present in muscles and joints, gives us an awareness of our body position, enabling us to carry out familiar actions without us needing to rely on visual confirmation of our position. As a result of this, regular adjustments need to be made to a person's position in order to respond to external stimuli in our environment. Again Dixon and Addy (2004:21) provide an example of the effects of this, with some having difficulty in differentiating between figure and ground, for example, as a result of relatively poor perception of their own position in space. This is related to the way in which we develop an awareness of how we look and move and understand how to position ourselves in space or in relation to other objects and people. Ripley (2001:34) indicates a relationship between oral and verbal ability and dyspraxia suggesting that some may have problems with vocabulary which involves space and time indicating that these concepts may be particularly confusing.

Dixon and Addy (2004) describe the negative implications for poor sensory processing resulting in a difference in spatial perception, and the language of deficit is evident here. This quote is significant also for the clear connections that are made with immature and erratic drawing, and will be considered more fully with the literature that makes a specific connection with art and design and drawing:

Many children with dyspraxia will have a dysfunctional position in space and this will reflect in a poor understanding of self-image, poor appreciation of the body's proportions, and a lack of appreciation of laterality. Self-drawings will be immature and lacking in detail, and proportions may be erratic. The child may perceive himself differently from his peers and may be unaware that he appears different. (2004:24)

What is also significant here is the discussion of the definition of the dyspraxic ideal in comparison to a norm. The child in this discussion 'appears different' to a norm that is neither named nor defined.

Dixon and Addy continue in describing specific examples of problems resulting in poor spatial awareness, indicating that some children may have difficulties representing three-dimensional objects (2004:35). What is absent in this discussion is the positioning of those who are assessing the 'immaturity' in these 'self-drawings', their frames of reference and what constitutes immaturity in drawings produced by children or adults. It is possible that many of us may have difficulties in the representation of three-dimensional objects, and this may relate to the particular drawing systems that we might employ and that are culturally defined. Three-dimensional representation of objects is offered here as if there were only one way of representing three-dimensions rather than multiple (Willats, 1997) and that most 'normal' people can employ without difficulty. Forms of representation, and particularly drawing, are claimed within this medical discourse and used to define individual deficit as if entirely unproblematic. This engagement with representation appears to offer a

clear and unmediated sightline through to the individual deficit, yet such practices are culturally constructed and defined. This discussion of norms, related to drawing and representation, is more fully explored in Chapter 5 which investigates the context for art education, drawing and representation.

ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION AND DYSPRAXIA:
THE INTERSECTION OF TWO MARGINAL FIELDS

Dixon and Addy (2004:67) refer to a study by Addy (1996):

A group of twenty-five children with dyspraxia aged 9 to 11 years were asked to comment on the subjects they were involved in at school. Each child un-animously stated that school consisted of three subjects: writing, art and PE. In addition, each reiterated 'I am rubbish at all of these subjects.'

What is less clear is whether a group of twenty-five children not identified with dyspraxia would have given a similar response yet it may suggest that there are aspects of art education that may be less enjoyable or present pupils with a poor sense of achievement. There is little discussion of this and art as a subject appears comparatively less well explored than other subjects that are largely text based.

Although Lord and Hulme (1988) discuss drawing ability from a scientific perspective, this is not within the context of art and design pedagogy. The intersection between information about coordination difficulties and art and design as a specific subject area taught in schools appears to be extremely limited, as is research related to dyspraxia and art and design education. An exception to this is the work currently being undertaken by Rankin, Riley and Davies at the Swansea Institute (2007) which explores dyslexia and the teaching of drawing. This section of the literature review therefore refers largely to manuals produced for professionals and parents in order to support children more effectively in school. In these contexts, art and design is treated largely as a mechanical/technical skill with an emphasis on manipulative control, and the treatment of the subject within these contexts appears to confirm it as low in status in comparison to other disciplines. For an art and design teacher the level of engagement with subject pedagogy and the subsequent advice is inadequate. This apparent lack of concern is contradictory in light of the emphasis on 'immature drawing' as an initial indicator of a coordination difficulty.

Boon (2001) indicates that drawing and writing may be problematic but, in a section dedicated to art and design, the priority is given to the organisational skills of the teacher. There is no attempt to discuss the pedagogic aspects of the subject, and Boon goes on to discuss practical problems such as knocking paint pots over, wearing overalls and covering tables with newspaper. The types of learning that can be achieved during an art and design lesson are not discussed and the emphasis is on controlling mess. In comparison, her discussion of music reflects an attempt to discuss the specialist nature of the subject using specific language related to that discipline:

It may well be difficult for a dyspraxic child to beat time, keep rhythm or play softly but the type of activities frequently practised during music lessons

CHAPTER 4

can be of enormous benefit in developing rhythm, listening and co-ordination skills. (Boon, 2001:54)

Other texts (Brookes, 2005 for example) discuss specific curriculum areas but fail to mention art at all. Dixon and Addy (2004) refer to specific challenges for pupils and indicate that 'distorted figure-ground discrimination can have a profound effect on reading, writing, physical education and maths.' This would seem to have implications for aspects of some types of representation in art and design yet the subject is not included in this listing. Pickles (2004), in her final chapter (based on music and art), considers the exploration of a range of media and the use of photographs to illustrate work as a substitute for drawing. Ripley (2001) outlines difficulties with visual perception and ocular-motor control, specifying other curriculum areas, yet art and design or drawing are not referred to.

In addition to the lack of subject knowledge for art and design teachers, there is a similar lack of engagement with the specific nature of drawing. Ripley, Daines and Barrett (2003) indicate that 'drawing involves many aspects other than motor control and is therefore not dealt with' in a chapter curiously headed 'Handwriting and Drawing'. Kurtz (2003) similarly makes no mention of drawing in any particular detail, although there is quite a full discussion of handwriting and the technical difficulties that may be experienced.

My argument here is that drawing is first acknowledged to be a different type of activity from handwriting but is then not fully investigated or explained. Drawing and handwriting are frequently conflated. Although there are natural similarities in the two activities, 'immature' drawing (a problematic and socially constructed concept) is frequently acknowledged as a defining characteristic of dyspraxia. Some texts advocate that drawing may be a useful strategy for pupils to communicate their ideas where handwriting is difficult (see Ripley, 2001 for example), and this suggests some contradictory messages regarding the role and value that drawing may have. Although Ripley (2001) offers the use of these other forms of visual representation as an alternative to handwriting, she also acknowledges the challenges such alternative modes of representation may provide for some pupils for whom spatial perception is a related difficulty.

Following some initial discussion on the types of challenges that may be encountered in art and design, Dixon and Addy (2004) appear to be exceptional in their treatment of the subject and offer some recognition of it as a vehicle for learning for all students. They offer quite specific and subject based information about the types of challenges that could be encountered and give a relatively full account of ways in which art and design lessons could be planned as wholly inclusive. They suggest that there is scope within curriculum guidance to move beyond a reliance on particular forms of naturalistic representation, and advocate an emphasis on design, pattern and texture. Their focus, however, remains on art education as an exploration of these formal elements. They describe some of the difficulties for a pupil with dyspraxia in relation to art and design:

Particularly poor form constancy and position in space will seriously impede the child's ability to reproduce three-dimensional objects, proportions will also be erratic and self-drawings will be very basic and often disjointed (2004:35)

They go on to discuss the perceived limitations for pupils with dyspraxia indicating that:

The attempts of children with dyspraxia at drawings and paintings may appear to be very immature and lack creativity, and it may be assumed that the child lacks imagination. (2004:141)

They conclude by dispelling the myth that children with dyspraxia may be less creative and attempt to provide practical advice in order that pupils can benefit from working in art and design. It could be argued that they are also contributing to the production of the dyspraxic ideal as one who cannot draw, rather than presenting an acceptance of a broader definition of drawing and the ways in which this can function by adhering to the idea that a drawing that is uncontrolled or immature has less value. In their attempts to dispel the myth of dyspraxic lack of creativity they may reinforce the unquestioned assumption of the connection between apparent immaturity and a lack of creativity.

Other texts indicate the types of challenges that may be encountered in relation to certain types of drawing. Ripley (2001:45) discusses the difficulties which could be encountered if a pupil with dyspraxia finds spatial perception challenging suggesting that this may lead them to have a problem with interpreting a range of visual-spatial information including pictures, maps and diagrams (Portwood, 2003).

Werenowska (2003) offers some personal perspectives on experiences of compulsory education. Some contributors to this volume of personal narratives, poems and short stories discuss specific school subjects, but art is mentioned infrequently. It may be that this supports the supposition that art and design has little relevance for some or that it is a subject with a low status. A number of the narratives refer to the impact of poor handwriting and although some admit to having little confidence with their drawing ability it does not seem to have had the same degree of impact as issues relating to handwriting. Gilheany (Werenowska, 2003:18) describes art and music as 'no go areas' because of his poor manipulation and visual-spatial awareness. McKinley also refers to the impact of dyspraxia on a practical level. He says:

This was why I found making objects in craft, woodwork and metalwork class difficult, for I couldn't remember the sequence of operations. I also had visuo-spatial difficulties, which were due to poor eye-hand co-ordination...In maths and tech drawing classes I found it difficult to follow instructions, visualise a shape or drawing, and commit it to paper. (McKinley, 2003:23)

He does however go on to recommend the pursuit of a practical hobby as being of great benefit in providing a creative outlet suggesting painting or the arts and crafts discussing this in therapeutic terms.

Rankin, Davies and Riley in an unpublished paper, begin by establishing the high percentage of art and design students with dyslexia or dyspraxia in higher education although there is little discussion of why this may be the case. The focus for their work relates to the notion that students with dyslexia and dyspraxia may encounter difficulties with drawing due to memory issues and tracking of objects, and goes on to outline work that includes conducting brain scans of individuals whilst they

CHAPTER 4

are drawing to illustrate differences in individual's brain activity when drawing from life and drawing from imagination. It is argued that this is done in order to provide a greater understanding of different learning styles and to enable the development of more appropriate teaching methods and strategies. Although the study appears to take a clinical approach to brain function whilst drawing, the conclusions, that a broader definition of drawing should be employed, suggest a move towards an inclusive approach for all students. The indication that provision for students should be enhanced by a form of medical screening however is highly problematic. There is an acceptance of particular types of hegemonic practice in relation to drawing and particular forms of representation and an assumption of the identification of learner deficit as an essential starting point for teaching.

DRAWING FOR DIAGNOSIS

It could be argued that the function of drawing, as a product that can be used for clinical diagnostic purposes, is alien to the creative nature of the activity. Children use drawings for a range of different purposes, many of which may relate to process and meaning making rather than product and representation. It may be that drawing for diagnosis of impairment or assessment of ability may contribute to the creation of the identity of a child with dyspraxia as one who cannot draw. There may also be a relationship between the diagnostic function of drawing and the 'aesthetic' decisions art educators may make in relation to a pupil's ability. The inclusion of immaturity of drawing as a key characteristic of dyspraxia suggests that it is now absorbed into the canon of defining features. It is possible that this may communicate as much about our cultural definitions of the role and function of drawing as it does about the nature of dyspraxia.

Drawing as a means of charting child development has a long standing connection with the work of Ebenezer Cooke and James Sully, pre-dating Dr Cyril Burt in 1921 (Carline, 1975) and the development of the Goodenough intelligence test (Cox, 1992). The analysis of different types of drawing have been linked to a child's manual, mental and imaginative development and it is therefore used as a means of diagnosing developmental 'problems' (Cox, 1992 and Rosengren and Braswell, 2004). Gupta (1999:19) outlines the role that drawing can play in testing, identifying it as a curious type of 'busy work' that might offer insight into the achievement of particular grapho-motor milestones:

Give a paper and a few crayons to the child to draw a house, a tree, and a person.

Drawing keeps the child busy and also serves as a good projective test.

Drawing is used in a number of studies in order to determine the level of disruption to coordination for some children with dyspraxia. Early studies by Gubbay et al (1968) include drawings produced by children with dyspraxia, with a commentary on the drawings that relates to the identification of a specific problem. This medicalisation of drawing as a tool for psychological investigation results in a quantitative analysis of the specific attributes of a drawing. For example Jolley, Fenn and Jones' (2004) use of a scoring system to identify expressive characteristics in children's

drawings, leads them to conclude that children's expressive drawings improve with age while Hodgson (2002) provides a neuroscientific investigation into the key features of children's drawings.

Rosengren and Braswell (2003:56–75) offer a particularly useful argument in respect of the discussion of drawing, handwriting and concepts of child development. They explore the similarities between drawing and writing, suggesting that both are 'constrained by similar influences', both involve sophisticated tool use and that they are also both attempts to communicate with others. Drawing is described as a precursor to writing, suggesting that both have traditionally been associated with reflecting changes in skill in relation to age. They refer to this maturational perspective that appears significant for researching child development in relation to drawing (Cox, 1992). Rosengren and Braswell suggest that the following assumptions are made in research related to drawing and development (p. 59): drawing and writing development are governed by maturation and internal factors relating to the child and there is stable progression in moving from being a young child to an adult. They suggest that because so much research relates to this stable progression, drawings have been used as a means of assessing motor development, cognitive development and socio-emotional development. They comment:

All of these assessments are based on the notions that 'normal' children of a given age will produce highly similar products...and that all drawing outcomes will be based on similar internal representations. (p. 59)

They continue later in this chapter to suggest that 'The fact that the drawing outcome is found to vary significantly with changing task constraints makes a purely maturational account of drawing untenable' (p. 69). Of greater significance still to this study is this final quotation since it is the holistic drawing experience that is little explored in literature connecting dyspraxia and art education, yet it is this that is highly significant to the experiences of the participants included in this study:

The parameters of the drawing task (e.g. pitting speed vs accuracy) and the cultural milieu (especially in terms of writing systems) in which one becomes an experienced drawer provide other contexts in which these various constraints interact. Together, these and other factors help shape the interplay between constraints on drawing behaviour.

The new analysis of the seemingly accepted logic connecting drawing and development offers a refreshing perspective and a useful point at which to move the discussion from the marginal field of drawing to the dominant focus on handwriting. The discussion of drawing in relation to art education will be returned to in Chapter 5.

HANDWRITING

In this section I will outline the main areas of discussion related to handwriting and dyspraxia, and draw parallels with drawing from direct observation. A range of research has produced a consensus that poor handwriting is one of the most commonly shared characteristics for children with dyspraxia (Addy, 2004). Jean Ayres (1974:1974)

CHAPTER 4

gives a summary of potential difficulties experienced by a child with dyspraxia, describing writing as 'an extremely and usually overly demanding task for an apraxic child just entering school.' The predominance of information on handwriting difficulty, and programmes for intervention reveal a belief in this as a central component of learning within a literacy based education system, reflecting a cultural concern that we can write rather than draw. The emphasis on handwriting is also identified in the narrative case studies, where it is confirmed as a central concern.

Anna Barnett's keynote address (see also Sugden and Chambers, 2005) at the Dyspraxia Foundation Conference, 2006, included an analytical description of the handwriting process, effective in outlining the complex processes involved. Her approach advocates a more systematic approach to teaching handwriting for a sustained period in a child's early education. She describes how young children can be challenged by the need to combine the recall of letter shapes with the coordination required in the physical representation of graphic symbols. Handwriting is also established as a highly complex activity by Smits-Engelsman, Niemeijer, and van Galen (2001), but as one that can become more easily executed as skills become habitual. Older children, develop the ability to write without making conscious decisions to recall word and letter shapes and can therefore focus on the manual aspects that the activity requires. Ripley, Daines and Barrett (2003:34) make connections between mastering handwriting and maturational development, outlining age related expectations for drawing and handwriting. A significant aspect of their argument is the claim that continued practice has less impact on improved motor skills than the child's neurological development. Both arguments suggest that there are aspects of writing that become unconscious over time, and the process, for most, therefore becomes an easier one. It is claimed that such habits are not as easily developed by a child with dyspraxia.

Drawing from observation is a similarly complex activity in translating three dimensional shapes onto a flat plane. There is the need for visual processing, and this is combined with the manual dexterity required to put pen to paper. I would argue that there is a further complexity to drawing in this way, since there are no set numbers or shapes such as the use of graphemes in handwriting, to use in a drawing and this may therefore be more problematic since it is less habitual in nature. Although particular drawing schemas may be employed to denote a house, for example, drawing less familiar objects from observation does not allow these to be used in depicting unfamiliar shapes and forms. To explain further, I would suggest that drawing from observation is problematic because there is a constant reliance on the need to process visual information and identify a means of representation. Pupils who are encouraged to draw directly from what they can see do not have the benefit of memorising specific shapes and forms and habitual actions are less likely to be developed. My hypothesis here is that the need for the continued combination of visual processing and manual dexterity may contribute to this being a challenging activity.

Difficulties with handwriting can have serious implications for pupils' learning in the majority of subjects, and this may account for the dominant role that handwriting related issues take within the literature. Zoia et al (2006) and Smits-Engelsman (2001)

describe the impact of coordination difficulties on academic achievement, stemming from poor handwriting skills. Macintyre and McVitty (2004:83) refer to handwriting as a key learning tool and potential vehicle for the approval of 'successful' learning.

It is used extensively throughout school to communicate thoughts and ideas and record calculations. 'Good handwriting' leads to 'neat work', often a source of praise, especially in the early years.

They continue by making a very clear connection between handwriting that functions both as a practical skill and as a potentially inaccurate indicator of learning or understanding.

...the immediate impact of poor handwriting can disguise the content of what is written to the extent that assessments are distorted by focusing on poor letter formation and word layout rather than the imaginative content or even the structure of the story or poem.

It is possible to make parallels here with what could be described as idiosyncratic drawing forms, where a pupil's representation may be understood differently from their aims as a result of particular approaches to drawing (Atkinson, 2002). Again these ideas relating more specifically to art and design education will be explored more fully in Chapter 5.

Addy (2004) indicates that increased demands in school can exacerbate difficulties and 'issues' become more prevalent as expectations are increased. As children become older, the expectation for habitual handwriting increases and problems are emphasised. She indicates that:

In order to develop fast, fluent handwriting, children need to have refined kinaesthesia, efficient motor planning, accurate hand-eye coordination, intact visuo-motor integration, and in-hand manipulation.

The emphasis on speed and time as a learning constraint is combined with the need to be able to apply appropriate pressure and employ spatial organisation. She continues by explaining that it is also important to be able to write without looking at every word or letter in order to be able to write from a board, for example, or from dictation.

An exploration of specific difficulties with handwriting development may offer parallels with drawing. Dixon and Addy (2004:25) discuss the role of spatial relationships as a cause of difficulty in relation to handwriting development. They describe 'confused laterality', which can cause letter reversal or problems with letter orientation and poor spatial planning on the page as well as an inability to judge spaces and distances that would also have relevance when drawing from observation. Ripley et al (2003:70) identifies difficulties with the memory of writing patterns. They explain that the eye is confused by having to check on hand movements as well as organisation, evaluation and direction, and that this leads to messy writing. They also discuss the role that proprioceptive feedback (information fed back to the body by receptors which inform further actions or movements) should have in this activity, and make a direct connection between sensory integration and handwriting. The discussion here relates to planning for movement being informed by sensory

CHAPTER 4

feedback and the compensatory facility that visual monitoring can provide when this feedback is less effective. Although such strategies are employed, this may result in slower writing and increased pencil pressure. Macintyre and McVitty (2004) describe visual perceptual difficulties discussed in relation to reading, difficulty in making visual judgements and placing objects in space. Again, similar discussion could be applied to drawing from direct observation.

In considering poor handwriting or immature drawing as a key characteristic of dyspraxia, the social and cultural dimension of the 'condition' becomes apparent. Dyspraxia becomes a disability when handwriting, as an educational tool for communication, starts to present a barrier to writing and, by implication, learning. It may also become a mistaken signifier for lack of engagement, laziness or lack of understanding, when pupils work slowly or lack sufficient accuracy in their written communication. A parallel argument could be made for the way in which we interpret pupils' drawings. Lack of a recognised, and often age related, level of technical skill may be considered to signify an inability to understand and use specific forms of representation. An unfinished drawing, lacking detail and produced in a time constrained environment, might be read as a lack of pupil engagement in the activity. The drawing created by a pupil with coordination difficulties may be interpreted as reflecting a lack of understanding of visual concepts, an argument supported by the discussion of the role of cultural differences in representation developed by Atkinson (2002).

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

The relevance of personal narrative has been explored more fully in the methodology sections of this work and is an important focus for this research. Literature that gives some precedence to the voices and experiences of those with dyspraxia is relatively limited in a field that is defined by the notion of professional expertise. 'Real' voices of experience are used as vignettes to provide examples of the impact of dyspraxia but these are mediated by an expert voice (in Elliott and Place, 2004, for example). Jones (2005:7) introduces the inclusion of dyspraxic voices in *Developing School Provision for Children with Dyspraxia*:

Their accounts help to provide the reader with empathy for their plight and in doing so provide curriculum coordinators with the anecdotal evidence that will help shape the educational environment that these children are expected to participate in.

Here it is not only the dominance of 'expert' voice that is problematic, but the 'benevolent humanitarianism' (Tomlinson, 1982) that oozes from 'empathy for their plight' which creates a disempowering context for experience.

There are a small number of texts based on the narratives of those with dyspraxia and this has a particular interest for me in light of the methodological approach I have taken for this study. A number of these, produced by charitable organisations, have sought to provide a vehicle for prioritising the 'lived' experience. This literature offers a different perspective from the medical expert by prioritising the voices of those who have a direct experience. It also provides some understanding of the types of

school experiences that children/adults may have had and may enable us to form an understanding of the ways in which dyspraxia is culturally defined and regulated. Much of this literature recounts life experience but some is fictional and also worth consideration. The emphasis on clinical studies in the literature highlights the alternative perspective that a fictional text can bring to developing an understanding of the social context for dyspraxia.

Stephen Harris in Trouble: A Dyspraxic Drama in Several Clumsy Acts by Tim Nichol (2003) combines the story of a dyspraxic boy, during his transition into secondary education, with practical ideas and information. Although fictional, the book is written from Stephen's perspective and is a definite attempt to present an 'insider perspective'. There is a sense that this must be based on an individual's 'real' experience. It is important to indicate, however, that this insider perspective is used a creative tool and the presentation of an authentic voice emanates from a professional, removed perspective (the experiences of a teacher) rather than personal one. Biggs (2005), in comparison, writes as an adolescent with dyspraxia using the vehicle of her own experiences and relationships to convey information about dyspraxia to professionals as well as others with dyspraxia. Practical advice is given alongside some stories of her experiences, with a large focus on 'surviving' school, and a prevailing sense of humour. The focus for this publication is on the duality of dyspraxia, with the author at once recognising the limitations of the condition and also the opportunities. The forward by Jamie Hill has a particular focus on the relevance of expectations in relation to notions of disability and an acknowledgement of individual difference.

The Dyspraxia Foundation website has a link to a personal website established by a teenage boy, which gives an insight into his diary entries and personal reflections of his experiences and there is a distinctly authentic feel to his postings as he recounts his daily encounters. Although there is a sense of authenticity here there is an uncertainty about how this personal expression is situated and what function it can perform. Weidner (2005) offers a 'snapshot' of 'real' experience as a challenge to 'textbook fantasy', reinforcing the suggestion that lived experience and professional voices are not always in accord.

Werenowska (2003), in the publication *Dyspraxic Voices* by DANDA (Developmental Adult Neuro-Diversity Association) provides a forum for adults to reflect on their experiences. DANDA is run by and for people with autism spectrum disorders, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyspraxia and other related conditions. This publication focuses on adult experiences or stories with an emphasis on 'dyspraxic voices'. Their life experiences include fictional accounts, poetry and emails as well as more traditional autobiographical accounts. Amanda Kirby, in the introduction, emphasises the unique nature of each experience and suggests that a number of perspectives should be considered to ensure that we consider not 'the classical or typical' but the individual.

Some Ideas to Conclude

The literature reviewed here suggests that the intersection of drawing and dyspraxia is both restricted and potentially restrictive in contributing to the confirmation that

CHAPTER 4

children with dyspraxia have difficulties with drawing, yet the discussions around immature drawing and particular difficulties with representation do not question the adherence to hegemonic forms of representation or other hegemonic practices in relation to the medicalisation of education. The literature largely confirms pupil difference in relation to coordination as a medical ‘deficit’ or an educational ‘problem’, without exploring systemic practices that may be inflexible in adhering to a set of socially constructed norms.

This study will explore individual and personal experience where they intersect with education as a set of hegemonic practices. I believe that there are some significant implications for all who may feel that drawing and by implication art education has no relevance for them.

This study does not aim to extend the emerging body of literature that is developing in relation to the personal, individual and lived experience of people with dyspraxia. Rather it seeks to question the lack of visibility of particular discourses that contribute to the construction of the dyspraxic ideal. The invisible seam or intersections between a range of medical and educational discourses that are employed to provide a means for particular pupils to be able to ‘survive’ systems of practice appear to go unquestioned and their ‘authority’ is confirmed by their invisibility. To explain further, medical and educational discourses become inseparable particularly in the identification of ‘Specific Learning Difficulties’, where their joining occurs via a range of implicit practices situated within educational and medical practices designed to provide individual and tailored solutions for children who appear ‘less able’ to learn within existing systems. The expertise of a range of agencies, and habits of practice derived from routine systems of intervention result in the exercising of forms of power but also in the confirmation of such powers. The habitual nature of such practices confirms and reasserts their centrality to particular systems of thought.

I have aimed within this review to draw out the ‘dyspraxic ideal’. In doing so I have produced a case that, according to ‘the literature’ there is an argument for suggesting that pupils identified as dyspraxic might find drawing from observation to be a difficult activity. The medical reasons for this have been presented as a justification, yet I am also highlighting the detached ways in which such discourses exist, removed from the situated context of learning experiences and ‘complex social functions’ where an activity, such as observational drawing, might sit. The lack of interrogation of particular educational approaches emphasise both the anonymity and the implicit nature of these teaching systems.

The following chapter provides an introduction to a similarly complex system, that of art education, and the ways in which art and learning are related. More specifically, I will focus on drawing from observation within the field of art education. I will return to ‘the dyspraxic ideal’ in the narrative chapters when I reflect on the stories of Matthew, Craig, Alex and Elaine and their ‘dyspraxic’ experiences of drawing from observation, in order to explore the ways in which this ‘ideal’ sits within the complex social functions of art education.

DRAWING FROM OBSERVATION

The Pedagogical and Epistemological Context

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the current context of art education in the UK. It also examines the origins of thinking and beliefs in relation to the epistemology and pedagogy of the subject, and the positioning of drawing from observation within this discourse. The interrelationships between these are highly significant for this discussion since it is the situated nature of participants' experiences of drawing from observation that is the focus. In outlining this context, I will offer an examination of the origins of current compulsory art education practices analysing the role of a skills-based art education which places drawing from observation as a central practice.

Teaching skills is identified as a defining aspect of compulsory art education, and 'observational drawing' is offered as an essential component within this set (Downing and Watson, 2004). This constructed activity, based on drawing and observing, will be deconstructed, and representation, through the act of drawing, discussed as a central, hegemonic practice. I will argue, however, that it is not only 'conventional visualities' (Atkinson, 2002:80) that may be contested, the reading of the marks that we make 'of the world', through systems of representation, but also the nature of the marks that we make 'in and on it' (Dexter, 2006:6). For participants in this research, it is the situated nature of this particular practice that takes on significance in the ways in which their concepts of ability are framed by themselves and others. Drawing from observation, although open to semiotic and hermeneutic readings for example (Atkinson, 2002), may also be explored as a situated activity, located within specific types of practice such as an examination or for a piece of homework, significant as different contexts associated with learning. The relationship between drawing from observation and particular educational situations will therefore be explored.

Although frequently described as problematic (Usher and Edwards, 1996; Hardy, 2006) a postmodern perspective on current and historical practices in respect of art education may offer a useful means of interrogating the source of the possible connections between pedagogy and dominant practices such as drawing from observation. Contemporary art education is critically examined in this chapter as composed of systems of thought that have become both implicit and dominant (Foucault, 1980:81). Maclure (2006) discusses the role that postmodernism might play in educational research as a means for disrupting established and traditional perspectives. She discusses her interest in its 'capacity for unsettling the arrangements of the disciplines or domains it tangles with'. She continues:

postmodernism's dubious gift to educational research, and in particular to methodology: to unsettle the still core of habit and order in the uncertain hope of

shaking things up, asking new questions, estranging the familiar.(Maclure, 2006:223)

This capacity for ‘estranging the familiar’ will be drawn on as a means of interrogating the origins of practices and beliefs about art, drawing, observation, achievement and ability. Hardy (2006:7) makes a specific and direct connection to postmodernism, as a way of thinking about art education, by offering the potential for ‘resistance to the exclusivity implied by long-held aesthetic principles’. In drawing on these post-modern perspectives I aim to challenge the potential of absolute definitions of engagement in relation to drawing from observation and the exclusivity Hardy describes.

Hardy also suggests that learning and teaching theories and postmodernism are complementary in providing a set of principles for an effective pedagogy. He claims that postmodernism provides a context for Socratic dialogue, for example, where ‘modernist’ concepts, in comparison, appear to be aligned with absolute ways of knowing. This emphasis on dialogical rather than transmissive approaches to learning (Atkinson, 2008; Poerksen, 2005) is of particular relevance to the participants’ narratives and the final discussion, as well as being significant to particular philosophies of art education explored here.

For this chapter it is, however, important to acknowledge my aim to employ a Foucauldian approach to unearthing ‘subjugated knowledge’ forms that may be obscured by the ‘formal systemisation’ of art education practices (McHoul and Grace, 1993:16; Foucault, 1980:81). These may appear, on the one hand, to exemplify a centre of ‘safe and static’ practice (Hughes, 1998:41), yet this may also obscure the hierarchical and dominant nature of such systems of thought which through particular hegemonic practices may form the basis of ‘normalising’ judgements about learners (Foucault, 1977:184).

In exploring the nature of observational drawing and its relationship with learning, through formal systems of education, it is useful to begin with a short exploration of this potential connection. Art education should, by its very nature, imply a relationship between art and learning, yet this relationship is not necessarily assured. For some, learning and art engagement are inextricably linked. Read (1970:1) begins with this argument: ‘The thesis is: that art should be the basis of education’, positioning art as a means by which we might know the world and understand our experiences of it. Matthews (2003) offers art activity as central to the way in which children begin to make sense of the world. He is explicit in referring to development rather than learning, suggesting that art has a role to play within the way we grow into the world and make sense of our experiences of it. Our physical engagements with art activity enable us to explore the world around us, and these interactions form the basis of our learning. An alternative perspective would suggest that we use the visual arts as a means of reflecting what we know of the world as a summative rather than formative action. However, art education may be perceived of as the way in which we come to understand and enact our understanding of ‘art’. In this respect art education becomes a means of exploring itself by using particular methods and processes that are themselves the subject of the curriculum. These concepts of art education are not necessarily as polarized as I have described them here, yet these reflect some evident tensions.

Art education, as a formal combination of education and art also appears to have at its centre a tension between the individual and society that resonates with the earlier discussion of inclusion and participation in Chapter 3. Read (1970:2) suggests that a person may be educated 'to become what he is' or 'to become what he is not'. Here, education relates to nurturing the latent potential of the individual or changing the individual since in becoming what we are not, Read describes the eradication of 'idiosyncracies' or individual differences. It is possible to understand Read's discussion as the tension between 'normalisation' and conformity through organised social training versus the development of individuality. An art education, with an emphasis on creative individuality, appears to offer the potential for the acknowledgement of difference within Read's argument and education through art appears to offer this capacity for learning. However, we must also be aware of the social, political and institutional organization of education and the ways in which the concepts of individuality are framed, particularly where individual difference 'needs' to be managed.

Art activity, providing a physical and sensory engagement, Matthews (2003) argues, is at the heart of learning, yet he describes the ways in which the discipline is 'harnessed' within curriculum structures as potentially damaging in its effects on a child's development. Baldacchino (2008) goes further to explore the paradox of art education and the distinction that inevitably exists between education and learning when what can be learned 'with' art must be sacrificed for what can be 'made useful' and quantified as countable within the qualitative systems of education. Eisner (1972) discusses 'contextualist' (art education for utilitarian purposes) and 'essentialist' (art education as a unique contributor to human experience) justifications for the teaching of art where individual and societal consequences are evident in both. Drawing on the work of educationist and philosopher John Dewey, Eisner stresses the intrinsic value that art education can have in the development of human experience, suggesting that this can be distorted by moves to utilize art education for other means. It could be argued that Dewey's appreciation of the aesthetic as a central aspect of child development, and the wholeness of experiential understanding that could be facilitated by art education, is substantially challenged when subject to the structures and organization of contemporary compulsory education.

Specific practices, such as drawing from observation, can be subject to these considerations since, as a practice employed within art education, it may be associated with being a means of learning, a way of enhancing experience or as a process by which pupil ability might be assessed. It may also be considered as an essential skill, transferable to particular work contexts. However, the ways in which particular practices are employed may contradict presumed relationships to learning. To some extent drawing from observation appears to have a clear connection with learning of and about the world, yet within certain settings it is possible that it may not contribute to learning at all. Matthews questions this strong adherence to drawing from observation as a means of enabling children to learn. He suggests that representation of objects at the heart of drawing is 'completely wrong' (p. 207), and continues:

... simply forcing children to draw from life will not itself speed up development. Indeed, my evidence and experience convince me that the reverse is

CHAPTER 5

true – premature instruction in drawing from observation damages development (2003:109)

Although there is a clear connection between observation and drawing, their relationship with learning may well be complicated by the context and systems employed to structure such activities.

Before considering the central role that drawing from observation has in art education it is useful to consider the culturally dominant role played by observation within Western systems of thought since this has shaped the epistemology of the discipline. Jay (1988:3) refers to sight as the preferred sense of the modern era, connecting the visual with the ‘modern’ ontological emphasis on factual accuracy and truth. Within his discussion of ocularcentrism, he establishes the connections between the visual and the principles of modernity, exploring the hegemony of Cartesian perspectivalism as ‘*the reigning visual model of modernity*’ (p. 5), and associated with what was perceived to be the ‘natural’ experience of sight. Of significance also was the relationship between this ‘scopic regime’ and the development of scientific investigation via the visual observation of evidence (Jay, 1993:70). What Jay is anxious to explore here is that although there was not only one ‘true vision’ it was the Cartesian view that came to shape Western knowledge concepts and forms of representation. This visual tradition characterised by the use of perspective from a single static viewpoint, and privileging the observer as distanced physically and emotionally from the subject, was aligned not only with truth and knowledge but also with the divine, in representing a God’s-eye-view.

The development of perspectival representation had a further impact on the ways in which particular visualities could be communicated. Jay discusses the de-narrativisation or de-textualisation of painting and the shift from the representation of ‘ennobling stories’ to the representation of skill in the use of the technologies of Cartesian perspectivalism, where the skills in representing stories began to take on more importance than the stories themselves:

That is, as abstract, quantitatively conceptualised space became more interesting to the artist than the qualitatively differentiated subjects painted within it, the rendering of the scene became an end in itself (Jay, 1998:8)

Within this visual system the ways in which the observer and the observed are positioned is significant and the use of technology is evident in the development of these ideas. Crary (1988:31) discusses the role of the camera obscura between the late 1500s and 1700s as:

... an apparatus that guaranteed access to an objective truth about the world. It assumed importance as a model both for the observation of empirical phenomenon and for reflective introspection and self-observation

The camera obscura also assumed ‘an infallible vantage point’, creating an authoritarian role for the isolated and private observer that was detached from other sensory experiences, a concept that shifted with the development of physiological research that supported the ‘visionary capacities of the body’.

Observation, in this reading, may be identified within a positivistic paradigm and associated with ‘truth’ and knowledge of unquestionable ‘facts’ and therefore aligned with the scientific empiricism outlined by Jay (1993) and associated with a white, western male view (Mulvey, 1975). Dalton’s discussion of the relevance of art education for working class girls (2001:43) also supports connections between objective observation and the male gaze. It is worth noting however, that within Foucault’s exploration of the Benthamite panopticon, the observer is also subject to observation and is equally constrained and empowered by observation.

Foucault’s (1976) exploration of social organisations and disciplinary power (Rabinow, 1984:189) recognises the dominance of the visual, and forms of knowledge, monitoring and surveillance that situate the role of observation within the power/knowledge discourse. Foucault’s discussion of the medical gaze, for example, positions the role of the observer as one who has knowledge (through what has been observed) and therefore power over that which is being observed, as a result of the types of knowledge that can be gained via the act of observing:

So many powers, from the slow illumination of obscurities, the ever prudent reading of the essential, the calculation of times and risks, to the mastery of the heart and the majestic confiscation of paternal authority, are just so many forms in which the sovereignty of the gaze gradually establishes itself – the eye that knows and decides, the eye that governs. (Foucault, 1976:88–89)

Further to this, however, is the subjugation of another knowledge form in that which can be imagined, which is discussed here as a potential disruption to the ‘purity of the gaze’. This will be a significant factor in later discussions of the role and importance of developing images from the imagination rather than observed starting points, for some of the participants, and the dominance of observation as a means of confirming or denying drawing ability and, by implication, individual concepts of ability in art as a discipline. Foucault suggests the clinician needs to reduce the imagination in order to observe more effectively. His description of the imagination as something that can ‘anticipate what one perceives, find illusory relations, and give voice to what is inaccessible to the senses’ suggests that within the work of the clinician, and therefore scientific and medical discourse, what can be imagined is unreliable and undesirable (Foucault 1976:107). This subjugation of the imagination acts to prioritise and validate what can be observed as relating to direct physical experience and reality rather than illusion.

Cannatella (2004) makes a direct connection with the way in which observation appears to offer the potential for the development of drawing skill because of the public nature of imitation and the concept of observing perceived of as a common and universal activity. He argues that the object, always there for comparison, acts as a means of enabling us to refer to the original object whilst striving to represent it as accurately as possible. This perspective suggests a direct and unmediated line between the observer and the observed, defining the activity as one of perception and connecting with Jay’s exploration of a dominant scopic regime (Jay, 1993). The resultant drawing, although recognised as a representation, is considered to have a direct link with the original object with observer as conduit for simply re-presenting

the object. The suggestion here is that each observer not only sees the object in a similar way, but also shares the means of interpreting it with others. The differences occur in the ways in which these perceptions are re-presented and these differences might be interpreted as describing a range of ability. However, this observation of a 'universal vision' (Bryson, 1983) fails to acknowledge any concept of cultural determination and interpretation of the external, which removes the objective role of the observer as well as the object as an external referent and the reproduction of the image is open to a greater degree of subjectivity and interpretation.

Observation relates to the way in which we see and take notice of the external world, yet the ways in which we see and interpret an object result in subjective interpretations rather than objective analysis and representation of a universal view; Hockney's discussion of the impossibility of objective observation - 'we always see with memory' - (Hockney, 2009) is relevant to this discussion. Observation appears to be connected with truth, knowledge, and a direct connection with the 'natural' world. It is argued by some that it is an unmediated way of experiencing the world, and that drawing from direct observation relates to the representation of a physical and unchanging reality via our sensory perception of that external place. The observation and representation of a universal reality relates to what Husserl describes as the 'natural attitude' (Bryson, 1983), the basis of scientific knowledge, from a concept suggesting that there is a constant and fixed idea of reality. Atkinson (2001a:67) makes the distinction here between vision and visuality, where seeing (and representation) is a situated activity. In discussing the work of Crary, Atkinson refers to the etymological root of 'observer' as not 'to look at' but 'to comply with', suggesting that the ways in which we look are defined by 'specific codes of visual representation'. Atkinson suggests: 'An observer is not one who sees the world 'as it is' but one who is formed within specific conventions and codes of visuality' (p. 68). The relationship with concepts of truth, honesty and objectivity are therefore disrupted by the connections we make between the way we see and the social conventions that determine particular types of visuality.

The connection with what can be observed and definitive concepts of truth is evident in the work of John Ruskin as well as here, for example, in a pamphlet produced by the Royal Drawing Society in 1928, some time after Ruskin's death, which claimed that drawing was of 'supreme value in general education' since it 'facilitates the learning of unchangeable *facts* of nature...[my emphasis]' (Carline, 1975). Bryson argues, however, that 'reality' is subject to cultural constraints and therefore cannot be fixed, and suggests that to believe otherwise fails to acknowledge the historical context for the evolution of such concepts as well as the cultural processes that result in the different ways in which we interpret the world.

Atkinson (1999, 2002), drawing on Bryson (1993), discusses the implications for art education where the teaching and assessment of skills related to the representation of reality from this concept of the 'natural attitude', essentially represent the adherence to a false doctrine that fails to acknowledge the role of culture, society, the individual and the use of technologies. This has particular relevance for this study in view of the significance attached to drawing from observation and the accuracy of representation as a significant determining factor in the identification of ability and,

subsequently, knowledge of the discipline. In this next section I refer to my own teaching practice to provide some further context for this discussion of art education and drawing from observation within the secondary sector, allowing for a discussion of subject pedagogy and epistemology within a contemporary context.

THE CURRENT CONTEXT

A range of literature related to art education is concerned with a reappraisal of the subject as an area of study within compulsory mainstream education. One central theme within this discussion is the nature of subject pedagogy and epistemology including questions regarding what constitutes knowledge of the subject, how teachers might teach such a body or bodies of knowledge and the ways in which pupils might best learn of, about or through the subject (Matthews, 2003; Hope, 2008; Atkinson, 2002). There is also a concern that art education is based on a tradition of teaching a specific set of practical skills (Downing and Watson, 2004; Hughes, 1998; Swift and Steers, 1999; Matthews, 2003). This approach to art education centres on teaching pupils how to acquire and potentially master the techniques and skills traditionally associated with the subject. Formal curricula (National Curriculum and programmes of study) and informal curricula (particular teachers' and departmental practices based on official and unofficial frameworks) are built around a set of skills which appear essential for pupil engagement with the subject. It is significant that I am placing my writing within this context since, although there is a good deal of discussion about skills development, within prescriptive curricula, the relevance of this in terms of inclusive educational practices and the social model of disability has been less well explored.

I recognise the 'static, safe and predictable' practices described by Hughes (1998:41) and the limited and limiting approaches to learning and teaching in the subject explored by Swift and Steers (1999). Dated as these references may now seem, such practices are also evident in more recent work (Atkinson, 2002, 2004, 2006; Matthews, 2003; Downing and Watson, 2004; Mason and Steers, 2006) and also in my own teaching. I offer the anecdote below as a summary of some of my own experiences with a view to positioning myself and my own readings of these texts. This personal reflection on professional experience, extolled by Schön (1991) is a useful way of connecting lived experience with evidence from a range of literature, writing oneself from the outside to the inside (Carlson, 2005). It is therefore a means by which I can reflect on both my inclusion within a centre of practice and my exclusion from the participants' experiences. The following reflections are useful in providing some acknowledgement of the particular systems that may shape department and individual practice.

Pupils, on entering my class in year 7, were initially given a short test which, on reflection, was highly problematic for a number of reasons. This was usually their introduction to me and to the subject in their secondary school and was based on an aim to try to provide a numerical level to describe their competence in the subject. Following the introduction of the requirement to report a level of achievement for all pupils at the end of Key Stage 3, it was deemed necessary to provide an 'accurate'

level as a starting point for each pupil, on the move from their primary school. Some pupils transferred with this information but it was often mistrusted for a range of reasons, including doubt of primary specialist subject knowledge, the prospect of inflated grades at the end of Key Stage 2, and the fear that this would create an unrealistic target grade for our own performance management of the 'value added' at the end of Key Stage 3. A test appeared to be the most effective way of identifying each pupil's level of ability, since it was time bound to one lesson and provided the same range of activities against which pupil 'ability' could be 'measured'.

The test included drawing an object from observation, questions about colour theory, a small piece of design work and a question to identify any knowledge or recollection of looking at the work of others. The role of examinations will be developed later in relation to the narratives, but it is useful to recognise here the role these tests had within a discourse of 'normalisation' (Foucault, 1991). Foucault discusses the ritual of the examination:

The examination combines the techniques of an observing hierarchy and those of a normalizing judgement. It is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify, and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates them and judges them. That is why, in all the mechanisms of discipline, the examination is highly ritualized. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth. (Foucault, 1984:197)

The role of drawing from observation, as a ritualised activity within processes of examination, has significance here for the ways in which pupils were asked to perform as learners in their first art lessons. Pupils were assessed against teacher concepts of what might constitute a particular level ability in the subject and comparatively against others in the class within a nationally recognised framework of age related expectation, measured against text based descriptors. In this way, those performing above, below or at a national standard could be identified, recorded and 'treated' accordingly. These decisions, however, were based on a limited range of activities with pupils encouraged to respond in specific ways that were governed by time, space and their ability to read and interpret instructions.

The examination is a significant process in terms of identifying a 'norm', but the particular activities are also significant in their inclusion as the technologies by which 'the norm' may be identified. Observational drawing was employed as a technology for identifying 'pupil ability' via a 'ceremony of power' (Foucault, 1984:197), with individuals in a controlled environment required to demonstrate both their 'visuality' and technical control. Although drawing from observation was an activity employed in a range of formal and informal teaching situations, it can be read as both controlled and controlling activity in the way it has been described here, and this is significant for the way in which this specific activity produces the 'ideal pupil'. Drawing from observation, as it is described by Edwards (1982), requires (and creates) a particular type of silent, concentrated behaviour. Edwards outlines medical theories to support the different roles of the left and right hemispheres of the brain, arguing that, with particular exercises, the right hand side of the brain

can be trained to draw more effectively. The scientific explanation she offers for training the brain to switch from the dominant left to 'less dominant' non-verbal right side of the brain produces a pupil who, when drawing, is still, compliant, obedient and silent. In observing they can become almost invisible, yet they are also easily observed.

This first term at school provided a significant focus on drawing from direct observation, using and practising mark-making techniques, different qualities of line, tonal shading and cross-hatching and developing these in sketchbooks in order to keep a record. I used a number of drawing exercises to encourage pupils to develop their observational skills and the lessons built up over the first half term culminating in a number of studies and sketches. Following a spiral curriculum design, where 'core' skills were introduced, revisited and built on for each of the first three years, pupils developed their skills via directed, prescriptive projects designed to enable them to develop these practical competencies.

Research by Downing and Watson (2004) aimed to identify the content of the curriculum in secondary schools, and levels of engagement with contemporary art. Although a relatively small study, the findings can be described as indicative of contemporary practices in secondary art education and provide useful research within which to frame the pupils' experiences within my own department. All schools included in this research were described as having a clear attachment to the development of skills, with painting and drawing identified as the dominant medium. They also identified the centrality of skills, including the use of materials, particular techniques and observational drawing:

Observational drawing featured as a specific skill taught in 13 (38 per cent) of the modules in the randomly identified schools and was frequently highlighted as a valuable skill.

The work of artists was more likely to be drawn on to support the development of skills rather than ideas or concepts. Art skills are described as the 'bedrock' of the curriculum particularly at Key Stage 3 where the curriculum focus is on the development of a set of skills to be applied as part of a more independent approach at Key Stage 4. A comment from a teacher participating in this study, 'School is about teaching skills, and from there pupils go on to produce more conceptual work' (p. 61) reinforces this concept as fundamental to a pupil's initial experience and the essential knowledge required before independent, ideas-based work can be attempted. It also suggests both a hierarchy of learning and a distinction between the mechanical and intellectual aspects of art education.

Potentially there are a wide range of elements that a pupil might be taught, but specific skills such as drawing from observation and painting are identified by Downing and Watson as being prioritised as a main focus for development. Other areas appear to be given less priority. The ability to work in three dimensions, less easily accommodated within poorly resourced departments, appears to be less important, as do those aspects connected with crafts such as printmaking, for example. The preferred skills set identified here suggests that there is an adherence to a specific and definitive set of techniques that are potentially exclusive, based on a canon of

western fine art (Downing and Watson, 2004). The assessment of pupil learning via aesthetic decisions about these culturally defined and limited range of products, may also be described as exclusive, since it is based on this limited frame of reference. The constructed activity, ‘observational drawing’, is identified as an essential part of the curriculum and could be described as an exemplification of these practices.

There are contrary perspectives which reflect a concern that contemporary art teaching does not prioritise the teaching of observation and skills to the extent that it should (Cox, 1993). These arguments do not discuss the place of formal skills as a contested area but accept that they are central to art education and practice and see their demise as a failing. Cannatella (2004) for example provides a justification for an adherence to drawing from direct observation as an underpinning skill for art education, claiming that this appears to be becoming an outmoded form of practice, under attack from contemporary approaches to art practice. Similarly an online discussion thread (see appendix) suggests some frustration on the part of a small number of art teachers in the secondary and further education sectors, regarding ‘a worrying trend’ evidenced in a lack of basic skills in relation to drawing from observation. Although an informal discussion, the postings here position observational drawing as a practice central to the teaching of art. For those contributing to the forum, these skills appear to be a reification of the discipline, and there is a sense that they are being eroded. This posting by ‘cheeky pea’ introduces some of the main themes of concern in the discussion:

As the first criteria is specific in Recording from Observation, there were very few pupils who had actually done this, sat down & looked at something and drawn it. There didn’t seem to be any connection in how important observing things were. We have a selection of excellent books in both the art department and school library, yet these were not utilised. It seems that fast food culture has crept into our area, in that pupils want things instantly, at the click of a button and are not prepared to sit and spend the time drawing. We are addressing this very issue throughout our Key stage 3 and 4 teaching, by introducing all of our projects with an observation drawing start to it, so hopefully by Year 11 they should be experts.

There is an implication of a decline on the part of teachers and pupils alike, and a sense that this loss of a central skill is detrimental to art education. The discussion emphasises frustration with pupils who appear to want instant results and a reference to a ‘fast food culture’ resulting in the decline of traditional skills which, in contrast, appear to demand a degree of time and effort that a new generation of pupils is unwilling to give. The relationship between the use of new technologies for research and a discussion of observation are interlinked with both aspects identified as evidence of a cultural shift that appears to have resulted in a decline of traditional skills. Interestingly, although the discussion appears to be based on aspects of art education, it is the generic nature of the learners that is questioned. The issues appear to centre on a particular set of expectations regarding pupil behaviours and a particular work ethic rather than discipline specific concerns related to art.

The lack of evidence of this skill appears to indicate a lack of tenacity on the part of the pupil, reflecting poorly on teachers who themselves appear unable to

draw with confidence. The ability to master these skills, it seems, can define the learner as 'expert' in the subject, and the implication is that those who do not must remain as novice. To some extent this expectation to engage with observational drawing appears to operate as a process of normalisation since it creates a sense of homogenised experience or standardisation operating as the basic diet for pupils whose ability can be matched against an expectation to at least engage in this type of activity. Interestingly, the discussion thread does not focus on the quality or nature of pupils' observational drawing but rather the lack of attention being paid to it almost as a ritual act or rite of passage, a labour that must be given due time and respect on the road to 'expertise'.

This discussion, whilst suggesting that such skills are in decline, in contrast to research by Downing and Watson (2004), in fact serves to reinforce the importance of drawing from observation as part of the 'bedrock' of formalism. There is a range of potential reasons for such an emphasis and adherence to the development of particular skills usefully explored by Atkinson (2006). Specific practices, such as drawing from observation, offer a solid point of identification with the subject and such practices are so strongly identified with the discipline that they 'become' the discipline. Atkinson (2006) argues that such approaches prioritise teaching above learning, resulting in dominant teacher roles and the subjugation of the learner. The emphasis on teacher voice obscures the learner and potentially denigrates them as idle and uninformed.

Atkinson explores teachers' and trainee teachers' attachment to particular practices providing a rationale for the ways in which they are reproduced as beliefs about learning and teaching in relation to the discipline:

... it is through these specific discourses and practices that they are able to identify art practice, themselves as teachers and their students as learners. They recognise who they are and what they do within such discursive practices and their limitations (Atkinson, 2006:19)

Teachers and trainees identify with the frustrations of being an art teacher and recognise their roles and the need for their interventions by a concept of deficit. They can effectively be defined by what is absent in their pupils or colleagues.

Formal documentation, it is argued, is a significant factor in the development and maintenance of such pedagogical and epistemological beliefs. Miles (1999) refers to the curriculum as identifying a body of knowledge that must be transmitted, connecting its function clearly with the pursuit of skills but also with a particular form of teacher-centred pedagogy.

Formalist approaches to teaching art are based on a concept of art education that prioritises the transmission of a set of particular, culturally specific, skills.

Maclure's (2006:224) discussion of the degree of uniformity emerging from the dominance of the curriculum suggests that there is little space for individuality on the part of learner or teacher, where there is 'fear of uncertainty, suppression of dissent, diversity, complexity and unpredictability'. However, Downing and Watson (2004) suggest that individual teachers and departments do have a degree of autonomy and power over both what is included in the curriculum and how the subject is taught (see also Hulks, 2003 and Burgess, 2003). Although the individual teacher

might act independently, the extent to which they are influenced by assessment and monitoring processes, including the inspection cycle and examination specifications is also significant (Hardy, 2006). Atkinson (1999:139), in his critical analysis of the National Curriculum for Art, argues that it reinforces a formalist interpretation of the subject and contributes to the construction of specific practices, but also to particular definitions of pupil ability. He explores the use of language here, identifying the influence that national frameworks have in relation to the development of both teacher and learner identities. The potential limitations of the curriculum, as a formal package of a definitive set of ideas, to be delivered in a specific way, are also recognised.

If art education has a central concern with the development of specific skills there are implications for the way in which the learner (and teacher) is positioned and defined. Within the skills-based paradigm pupils in their first year of secondary school need to be taught specific skills. By definition they are viewed as unskilled and this positions them largely within a deficit model of learning. Atkinson (2006) describes the subordination of learning to teaching within this context, where teaching is transmission-based and pupils lack agency. The teacher, demonstrating their role as technical expert, transmits their knowledge to pupils who passively receive it through repetition and the physical rehearsal of the specified skills. Such a model of learning does not encourage the learner to contribute to the construction of their own understanding but rather to replicate specific physical acts in an unquestioning and uncritical way (Poerksen, 2005).

The philosophies underpinning the models of learning outlined above are also significant for the types of learner and teacher identities that are formed (Atkinson, 2002; Atkinson, 2006). Atkinson's work on pedagogised identities is significant here since it provides a useful discussion of the ways in which such practices can position or subjectify learners. He suggests that learners within such contexts can become 'pathologised', producing work that does not match a particular teacher (or national) expectation and that this subsequently provides a starting point for remediation as opposed to teaching. Also of significance is what this betrays of our concepts of the child learner as fundamentally flawed and one who needs correction and training on the road to adulthood, discussed more fully by Matthews (2003).

If learning through art places such a focus on skills development, the emphasis on the physical re-enactment of specific practices and judgements about the success of the learning taking place is also connected very firmly with the physical and aesthetic expression of this learning. A drawing, for example, exists as an aesthetic product defined by level of skill. The concepts, processes and development underpinning the work are obscured by the finished product. Skill and technique are connected strongly with ideas of physical competence and conceptual development. Skills are identified with particular types of cognition, yet these emerge from evolving systems of thought that position both learner and teacher (Atkinson, 2002). The dominance of specific taught skills are therefore replicated in the ways in which pupils' work is assessed and technical ability can be described as a dominant discourse in that it becomes a significant factor in determining a pupil's level of ability within the subject.

Art teachers and pupils are, arguably, subject to the immediate constraints of a formal curriculum as well as to the regular surveillance and monitoring of the

assessment and inspection systems, yet the belief systems that underpin these practices are also developed over time in less immediate ways. As I have reflected on the centrality of drawing from observation within both my own drawing practice and teaching, I have had cause to consider the origins of such views regarding the value and essential nature of such work. Beliefs about these ‘systems of knowledge’ (Foucault, 1980) that confirm formal skills and observation as central practices in art education are developed over time, and an exploration of some historical background is therefore useful in attempting to understand the development of these systems. Such structures, Foucault argues, are not devised by one body and imposed on another but are developed as ‘discursive formations’ through power dynamics or relationships, with both bodies contributing to the development of such systems (McHoul and Grace, 1993:21). The dominant role of formal skills and drawing from direct observation are not imposed by a central powerful body, but have evolved into a dominant discourse in art education as a result of the interrelationships of a range of players who have generated and confirmed the validity of these dominant practices over time. Read (1970) also comments on the social dynamic of educative practices, anxious to avoid the implication that there is a centre that exercises power. Using this framework, it is possible to consider teachers, pupils, educationalists and theorists as active participants in co-constructing and reinforcing particular discourses.

Of further interest, in Foucault’s (1980) discussion of the identification and recognition of dominant discourses, are ‘subjugated’, ‘unofficial’ or ‘occluded forms of knowledge’. In this discussion of the development of dominant practices in art education, it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding forms of knowledge and methods and processes that are considered less influential (the role of the imagination, for example) by referring to the historical context for the development of the leading epistemologies and forms of pedagogy in relation to art education.

BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Several centuries would have to elapse before the child’s real needs in art would be recognised, and before it would be realized that these needs lie in the broader field of art rather than in the mere acquisition of skill with pen or pencil or in accuracy of hand and eye. (Carline, 1975:23)

I start this part of the discussion with a quote from Carline (1975) largely because of the irony evident in light of the preceding discussion. It would seem that, writing in the early 1970s, Carline had a sense that art education had begun to recognise areas of significance that did not rely purely on notions of technical skill. This statement and the subsequent discussion suggests that although this might once have been the prevailing belief, concepts of art education had in fact broadened from a very specific formalist focus to include a greater emphasis on the development of ideas and imagination. Dalton (2001:87) discusses the way in which the distinction between progressive, related to self-expression, and rational ‘the formal traditions of objective and academic drawing and realism’, began to be integrated into secondary art education. However, the apparent emphasis on current teaching of skills in

CHAPTER 5

compulsory art education suggests that one of the prevailing epistemological beliefs about art education still positions the subject as relating to ‘mere acquisition of skill with pen or pencil’ and that the development of ‘accuracy of hand and eye’ determines curriculum content as well as a concept of pupils’ ability.

Although I do not aim to provide an extensive historical survey of art education, Carline offers some useful thoughts on early pedagogy in respect of drawing. Dalton (2001) describes the foundations of contemporary art education as based on nineteenth century industrial modernisation, yet a consideration of earlier less formalised art education is also useful. The dominance of a formalist approach to art education is evident in this discussion of 17th Century art practices where early experiences were based on learning technical skills. Carline refers to a description of some introductory activities for pupils learning to draw:

for the space of a week or thereabouts to draw circles, squares of all sorts, a cylinder, the oval form with other such-like solid and plain geometrical figures with a swift hand (Carline, 1975:26)

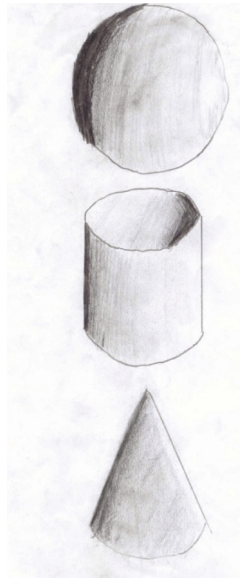


Figure 1. Matthew's tonal studies.

Looking at the drawings (Fig. 1, included above) produced by one of the participants in this research, the description of a 17th Century introduction to practical skills appears to offer a neat parallel with this more recent experience of art lessons in the first year of secondary school. The emphasis on ‘a swift hand’ is significant in this description, with the aim to develop rapid, almost intuitive, skill rather than a slow and deliberate style. Carline suggests that these types of practices did little to

encourage originality and imagination but he also indicates that there was also little room for these aspects in the 1970s, at the time of his writing.

It appears that there was a very clear reason for the focus on these technical aspects in the 17th Century. The explicit aim was not to encourage expression but to refine technical skills. The goal from the outset appears to have related to the development of skill through the teaching of drawing with a clear connection with writing development, from as early as the 16th Century. With the advent of industrialisation and the need for a technically skilled work force, the focus became more clearly defined and was based on a utilitarian aim more than an aesthetic principle or desire for cultural enrichment and individual development. The emphasis on working from observation by Alexander Cozens in 1749, for example, (Carline, 1975) is described as a departure from these traditions not only for the focus on working from observation but also in light of the way in which he encouraged the development of imaginative responses. Cozens' approach is suggestive of his concern that anybody could be trained to copy from nature but that the value of art was in being able to imagine and interpret. He appears to have been concerned with more than technical skill, and the connection between imagination, observation and the development of the artist is evident here.

Drawing as a 'genteel accomplishment' existed alongside technical training but there appears to have been a class distinction identified by Denis (1996) who discusses a clear division in practices in the 19th Century in terms of art education. Dalton (2001) also indicates a gendering of art education at this point, for male public education and female private pursuit. The middle and upper classes were more likely to undertake art education (and specifically drawing) that related to the development of 'high' or 'fine art', whilst others were more likely to be trained via the transmission of craft based skills and copying. The working classes needed to be trained and skilled for industrial processes and the way in which they were taught to draw reflected this type of education. Within this model, the role of the imagination and individual creativity appears to have had as little relevance as the need to work directly from observation.

John Ruskin's work in the 1850s signalled a distinct shift in art education and this was aligned with a more specific focus on the educational value of drawing and the role of recording from direct observation with his classes for 'working men' (Haslam, 1988:155). There was a greater concern with the contribution that art education could make to the spiritual and moral as well as the cognitive development of the individual. Read (1970:3), in outlining two hypothesis of education, relates his discussion to the development of a 'moral conscience':

This moral conscience has been responsible for the development of those finer qualities in man [sic] which make up civilisation, and our object as educators is not to eliminate those qualities, but to encourage their growth.

Within Read's discussion of education as a moral discipline here is the 'educator's dilemma' between the realisation of individuality and the societal requirement for conformity, a discussion already introduced in Chapter 3. However, the recognition

of a focus on education as the basis for individual development as a 'birthright' is also significant to Read's philosophy of education through art.

The centrality of first hand or direct observation shifted art education to a position where individual response was promoted and the cognitive aspects of image development became as essential as the physical and technical. Drawing from observation was directly connected with a means of experiencing and learning about the external environment as well as training for work, although this was still a contributing factor in the education of men at the Working Men's College. Read (1972) discusses Ruskin's writing of *Modern Painters* (1846) and the recognition of an adherence to observation with strong connections with empirical forms of knowledge and truth and the scientific method. However, Read also recognises the transformative nature of the imagination discussed by both Ruskin and William Blake. Although observing the external world was a significant element, there was also some recognition that striving to merely imitate or reproduce was inadequate without 'the central fiery heart' of the imagination (Ruskin in Read, 1972). What seems significant in Ruskin's approach is the connection between art education and the development of thought via a combination of the physical and cognitive but more specifically through looking and drawing. Central to this belief was the value of teaching perception. Haslam (1988:154) says Ruskin understood perception 'as a sort of visual thinking with association as part of, and not subsequent to, the act of seeing', emphasising that his central belief was in the value of teaching perception since 'once we see keenly enough there is very little difficulty in drawing what we see.' Haslam also explores the way in which Ruskin connected looking and drawing with the development of analytical skills and communication, and working from observation was a central aspect to the way in which Ruskin's philosophies of art and education came together (Ruskin, [1857] 2007).

Ruskin's influence can also be seen in the work of James Sully and Ebenezer Cooke who developed research into children's art and art teaching in schools. Cooke and Sully laid the foundations for the recognition of stages in drawing development which was summarized and continued by Sir Cyril Burt in *Mental and Scholastic Tests* (Read, 1970:116) where he made connections between medical and educational discourses to develop influential yet contestable frameworks for determining intelligence (Chitty, 2007). Within these stages, drawing is firmly connected with age progression and cognitive development and control is also viewed as progressive. Cooke was also to lead reforms of child art education which prioritized an understanding of the particular nature of the child and acknowledged this as being as important as the specifics of the teaching systems employed (Read, 1970:169).

A further significant development relates not only to the way in which art education became a central aspect in educating young children but also to the redefinition of children as intrinsically capable of artistic endeavour and creative expression. The emergence of child art coincided with a shift in emphasis from a specific focus on skill as a central tenet. The emphasis on the development of practical skill and drawing from observation was challenged by the emergence of the New Art Teaching Movement and the New Education Movement of the 1930s and 1940s as well as

the work of Richardson and Cizek who worked with pupils to develop imagination based art work (Richardson, 1948; Carline, 1975 and Holdsworth, 1988). Richardson rejected the technical focus of her own art education, and examples of pupils' work, with an emphasis on working by visualizing imaginative responses, appear far removed from some of the more traditional skills-based concepts of art education. She commented:

In the past, when drawing was a hand-and-eye training, there were seldom more than half a dozen children in class who excelled. Now that we have the loftier aim of finding and freeing the potential artist in every child, our task of teaching drawing, though difficult, is far more worthwhile and full of hope. (Richardson, 1948:61)

Drawing was recognised for its educational value but this coincided, in the early twentieth century, with the development of child psychology and the use of drawing as a means of identifying aspects of cognitive development. The emerging concept of the child as 'artist', in the work of Froebel, Sully, Ablett, Cizek and Richardson for example (Carline, 1975 and McDonald, 1970), ran parallel with the use of drawing to identify stages of development (and by implication, departures from a norm, as discussed in the previous chapter). Read's child centred approach to the creative development of the individual was also influential in this respect. Based on empirical cataloguing of drawings, Read developed a system of identification of psychological types based on stylistic classification. Advancing learner focused rather than teacher led approaches, Read emphasised art education as an arena for creative outlet rather than directed input (Read, 1970; Eisner, 2002). However, the categorising of the work is not unproblematic due to the authoritarian approach employed and the social context which was undeveloped. Viktor Loewenfeld's work is also significant in this respect for its emphasis on individual meaning making and expression of experience and the connections made between psychology and the physical 'autoplastic' or bodily experience (Golomb, 2004).

The role and position of drawing provides an interesting exemplification of the ways in which scientific and educational discourses began to intersect at a time when formal education became compulsory from an early age. Drawing, recognised as a means of educating children, could also be used as a means of tracking child development, enabling it to function as a means of surveillance, monitoring and identification of those children who might not fit specific age-related expectations. A drawing produced as part of a learning activity might also provide evidence for those charged with identifying individual deficits and subsequent remedial support.

Although expressed here as parallel developments, the 'child as artist' and 'child as developing adult' present tensions for the way in which art education has evolved and continues to swing between the polarities of a skills based national curriculum and an open-ended child centred approach. Learning a specific set of formal skills appears to have been dominant in evolving concepts of art education and I would argue that this is now bound by the medical discourse as well as the educational and art-based. Richardson's concepts of art education with a pedagogy of 'love' as a central tenet seems idealistic yet exciting and vital, far removed from the regulated and controlled systems associated with recent practices.

DRAWING FROM OBSERVATION AND 'THE' PREFERRED
AESTHETIC OF THE SKILFUL HAND

A sketchbook... can obviously fit into pocket or bag to be available at all times, making it possible for the owner to record any unexpected but visually worthwhile moment. It can be an aid to training the powers of observation and the visual memory in such a way that no one day should pass without some observation having become part of the students storehouse of visual material for future use as appropriate. (Taylor and Taylor, 1990:60)

It is a central purpose of art education that pupils should learn to look at things to the point where the eye sees clearly and analytically. It is one of the art teacher's responsibilities to organize experiences in such a way that their pupils pay close attention to what is in front of them in contrast to merely glancing. (DES, 1983)

Drawing from observation, within more recent literature, is identified as one essential skill with the two activities 'observing' and 'drawing what is being observed' clearly connected. However, in discussing drawing from observation, we are considering two distinct activities that have become subsumed into one form of practice. As a construction of these two activities, it appears to have become representative of a focus on specific taught skills and an essential element of the prevailing orthodoxy of the formalist tradition (Hughes, 1998; Atkinson, 1999; Atkinson, 2001; Matthews, 2003; Mason and Steers, 2006 and Downing and Watson, 2004). There are therefore two distinct, yet connected, lines of discussion: the first concerning the nature of the observation tradition, and the other relating to definitions of drawing and the subsequent expectations that appear to reflect a very particular and specific aesthetic style and/or representational practice.

In attempting to explore why observation is considered an essential and fundamental element in contemporary art education, it appears difficult to separate it from concepts of drawing skill. The manner in which observation is practised is often through the vehicle of a very specific approach to drawing, and the drawing product, it seems, has to 'look good' for it to be considered evidence of 'good looking', or to 'look real' in order for it to be considered 'real looking'.

Observation appears to have become defined as *the* way of knowing, and the representation, or drawing in this case, appears to reflect the quality of the way in which the object is observed and understood and, subsequently, the way in which the discipline is learned. Drawing from observation suggests creating a record of the way in which an object has been seen and therefore understood, and the quality of this understanding appears to be defined by the aesthetic product. It needs to reflect a sufficient degree of resemblance to the original object and also needs to possess particular physical qualities, in order to be considered successful. Technical or formal skill and the ability to draw accurately from observation appear to be inextricably linked. The next part of this discussion will therefore focus on attempting to explain why there appears to be a preference for particular approaches to a specific drawing aesthetic and why an 'uncoordinated' or slow, awkward or heavy handed approach is undesirable.

Drawing has always taken a wide range of forms and has traditionally been used for a number of different functions and it is beyond the scope of this study to provide a survey here. However, particular concepts of drawing do appear to dominate. Craig-Martin (1995:9) offers a useful historical overview of a range of drawing practices, identifying the position of those that may be identified as deviant:

There are two principal misconceptions about drawing. The first is that there is a single form of 'good drawing, a way of making drawings that is somehow basic and 'common sensical' (naturalistic representation), against which those drawings taking other forms are considered deviant. The second is that all drawing in the past conformed to the rules of 'good drawing', deviant drawing being exclusive to our own century

Of significance here is the range of practices that have existed over time and the suggestion that degenerate drawings are perceived of as relating to more recent practices in comparison to the hegemonic tradition concerned with representation. Craig-Martin offers a view of drawing with the potential for:

spontaneity, creative speculation, experimentation, directness, simplicity, abbreviation, expressiveness, immediacy, personal vision, technical diversity, modesty of means, rawness, fragmentation, discontinuity, unfinishedness, open-endedness

The definition that he uses for drawing appears to offer tremendous potential for this to be used as a vehicle for learning. These characteristics are well aligned to the current national curriculum for art and design, for example which prioritises, amongst other ideas, individual learning, risk-taking and a range of approaches to drawing (QCA, 2007). This aligns with the principles of recent approaches regarding Learning to Learn (Claxton, 2004), for example, where these distinctive features of drawing may also connect it with a technology for promoting learning. However, the association with the observational/representational tradition challenges some of this potential. 'Creative speculation', 'personal vision', 'technical diversity' or 'unfinishedness' may be particularly problematic when drawing is described more specifically as drawing from observation and when this is applied to particular formal learning situations such as examinations. The 'problem' of 'unfinishedness' appears to contradict a view of the 'ideal' pupil for example, a theme that will be discussed later in respect of the narrative case studies presented in the next section.

Dexter (2005:6) suggests that drawing signifies 'honesty and transparency' since:

... all the marks and tracks, whether deliberate or not, are there for all to see in perpetuity. Any erasures or attempts to change the line mid-flow are obvious – drawing is a form that wears its mistakes and errors on its sleeve. Oil painting, by contrast, is an art of accretion and concealment.

However, the positioning of drawing within the 'official' contexts of schooling may mean that such transparency can lead to vulnerability for those learning through drawing. Although as a form it may be constructed as open and honest, the ways in which drawings may be read or assessed may suggest that such transparency is undesirable. The narratives suggest that some might seek to conceal or imitate particular

CHAPTER 5

drawing practices because of the types of transparency indicated here. Drawing is offered as a transparent vehicle for illustrating development or thought, yet this is in itself a socially constructed interpretation. Within art education it is not necessarily the visibility of error that is significant but the importance that this might have for those who decide what constitutes error and what this might signify for the learner. What is also significant is who takes responsibility for acknowledging and defining 'error' and who engages in 'correction' or 'erasure' as well as the degree to which work *can* be erased.

Bourdieu (1984:468) discusses embodied social structures where thoughts, ideas and value judgements are part of this linguistic construction. Within his discussion of this social production he offers a series of 'antagonistic adjectives', some of which appear to be highly relevant to the categorization of individuals in respect of their drawing production:

The network of oppositions between high (sublime, elevated, pure) and low (vulgar, low modest), spiritual and material, fine (refined, elegant) and coarse (heavy, fat, crude, brutal), light (subtle, lively, sharp, adroit) and heavy (slow thick, blunt, laborious, clumsy) free and forced, broad and narrow, or, in another dimension, between unique (rare, different, distinguished, exclusive, exceptional, singular, novel) and common (ordinary, banal, commonplace, trivial, routine), brilliant (intelligent) and dull (obscure, grey, mediocre), is the matrix of all the commonplaces which find such ready acceptance because behind them lies the whole social order. (Bourdieu, 1984:468)

These 'antagonistic adjectives' offer a linguistic framework for the way we might understand the positioning of specific drawing practices within an educational context. The concept of drawing difficulty might reflect a 'difficulty' with representation but may also reflect difficulty in production of a particular aesthetic. Heavy handed but adhering to aspects of western representation may also suggest a type of difficulty – this is the 'aesthetics of ability' – the ways particular drawings are produced that might indicate immature or less sophisticated approaches to drawing. The way that we understand particular aspects of art production sit within these socially constructed domains, polarising the 'light' and 'heavy', for example as more or less able. A drawing displaying heavy, fat, crude and brutal marks, demonstrating a heavy, slow and clumsy hand appears less desirable than a lively and refined approach (Ruskin, [1857] 2007).

Carline, introducing the 'long established respect for neatness and precision', discusses the specific instruction given to pupils regarding the type of pressure to use in a bid to produce a light sensitive mark. Carline's discussion of Elizabethan drawing tuition reflects a concept of the pupil who is unskilled as one who presses too hard, carving lines into the paper. I remember asking pupils to imagine their paper as if seen through a microscope. I would ask them to picture the tiny peaks on the bumpy surface and draw as if they were just touching the tops of these peaks. Carline says:

We can well imagine these boys of Elizabethan times...while they slowly and awkwardly press hard with the pencil as if carving their lines rather than

drawing them, and having frequent recourse to the breadcrumbs. A lighter touch would be constantly urged. (p. 21)

Carline makes a clear distinction between drawing and this ‘carving’ activity employed by the unskilled, claiming that they do this ‘rather than’ draw. It is worth noting the social position of those boys being tutored, who themselves would be trained to be ‘gentle’ men rather than ‘working’ men. He goes on to suggest that another tutor of the time, John Brinsley, advised his pupils to draw ‘leisurely and lightly’. Carline reflects that he ‘urged his pupils to use the pen or pencil as ‘the painter doth’, allowing it to ‘glide or swimme upon the paper.’ (p. 22). Again there is a suggestion that a light touch is desirable, and the reference to working ‘leisurely and lightly’ suggests that being able to work in a seemingly effortless and dextrous way was a central component of what needed to be achieved by a pupil learning to draw and write since both activities were often conflated and drawing viewed as a means of developing the desired skills for writing. Further to this Carline (p. 129) also refers to a quote by Selwyn Image regarding his experiences of John Ruskin:

... when Ruskin saw what I had done, he took the pencil from me, remarking that I might be using a crow-bar, and showed such delicacy and variety in its handling

The heavy-handed use of the pencil as a ‘crow-bar’ is roundly rejected for the delicate touch associated with an ability to draw well. In his drawing instruction book *The Elements of Drawing*, originally published in 1857, Ruskin emphasises delicacy and refinement as a defining factor in ‘good’ and ‘beautiful’ work:

It would be bad advice that made you bold...There is one quality, and, I think, only one, in which all and great and good art agrees – it is all delicate art. Coarse art is always bad art. (Ruskin, [1857] 2007:27)

Within contemporary art education, although we are aware of a range of approaches to drawing, it is possible that we might still consider the leisurely, light, sensitive, delicate and controlled attributes of fine art drawing as more compatible with definitions of ability than the slow, deliberate, erratic and heavy-handed carving of a crow-bar. It is also possible that we might consider the quality of observation evident in such drawings as more effectively achieved than in a drawing that embodies the less desirable aesthetic attributes.

One recurring theme in some of the introductory discussions of drawing tuition by Carline (1975) suggests that a preoccupation with error and mistake-making might have some significance. Peacham’s drawing manual of 1606 advises:

... be not without the crummes of fine white bread, to rub out your lead and coale, when you have done amisse’ (H. Peacham, *The Art of Drawing*, 1606 p. 13, in Carline)

Mr John Smith, a drawing teacher in the 1700s, claimed that teaching drawing was a drain on his time because his role involved correcting drawing mistakes that his pupils had made. His role in relation to pupils drawing was to ‘correct all the errors therein and make them perfect before they can proceed any further.’ It was the master’s role to correct and the pupil could not continue until that particular stage had

been corrected. Outline and proportion had to be done ‘correctly’ before advancing onto shading, again an interesting conception of what constitutes error and the ways in which the pedagogue manages the processes of correction. Similarly, in the 1840s students attending the National School of Design were unable to move from the elementary class unless they could ‘draw with correctness’ (p. 76).

Foucault’s description of the ‘bench of the ignorant’, to where learners, unable to pass to the next stage, were confined, has relevance here (Foucault, 1991). The concept of mistake-making reflects a lack of drawing ability and positions knowledge concepts as relating clearly to the polarities of correct and incorrect, right and wrong. Interestingly, and to return briefly to the earlier discussion of observation, Wolheim describes observation as both ‘honest and correct’ (in Cannatella, 2004) situating it as a definitive activity that acknowledges the potential for inaccuracy also to be positioned as dishonest.

Matthews (2003:35) discusses the ways in which processes of art education connect concepts of error in the drawing with concepts of error held within the individual. He suggests that pedagogy based on drawing development as wholly ‘natural’ may well result in a ‘laissez-faire’ attitude or approach in teaching. However, he continues, if children’s drawings are perceived of as ‘deviant and incorrect versions of a superior form of representation to come’ then both child and drawing will be seen as deficit and in need of correction. The teacher becomes defined as ‘corrector’ and authority, creating a specific pedagogic relationship based on dominance and subjection. The ‘light touch’ and sensitivity advocated in drawing may be associated with the ease of erasure and eradication of mistakes. Drawing practices may therefore also relate to a different type of concealment through erasure, where correction also allows for the removal of the pupil. The individual is potentially removed by erasing idiosyncrasies in the drawing and modifying drawing to an ‘acceptable’ aesthetic. However, the difficulty in erasing the heavy handed mark allows the subject to be made visible and remain so, clearly marked by their errors; drawing in this discussion becomes a technology for individualisation.

In exploring the ways in which participants have experienced drawing from observation, this chapter has helped to provide some context for the positioning of this activity within current subject pedagogy. The main points to take forward from this chapter are that drawing from observation appears to be a practice that, although once excluded from skill development by an emphasis on copying, now occupies a central role in the development not only of technical skill but also the ways in which we can promote a visual understanding of the world around us. A main point of argument is that recording from observation and particular aesthetic approaches to drawing have become conflated and it is not only the cultural activity associated with observing but also the ways in which those representations are conveyed that can be potentially problematic. Of further significance are the ways in which pupils are produced against ‘normalised’ concepts of drawing production, not only in relation to hegemonic forms of representation but also in respect of dominant aesthetic qualities of pupil drawing.

Particular forms of representation and the aesthetic qualities of drawing are associated with the ideal pupil by becoming technologies of individualisation by

which pupils can be normalised. The 'ideal' representational drawing, demonstrative of a skilful hand, becomes a centre for defining particular types of art practice and particular 'types' of pupil. It is against such pupil 'ideals' that the 'dyspraxic ideal' can be produced and described in terms of immaturity and poor coordination in respect of drawing.

The attention paid to observational drawing produces the pupil as one who must seek and acquire certain types of knowledge of the world which prioritise a particular type of visuality. As essential practice, it produces the pupil as visual knowledge seeker, knowledge reproducer and re-presenter of what is observed via a particular concept of technical (physical) ability. Although recent educational rhetoric espouses individualised approaches to learning, the social and cultural construction of a hierarchy of practices, prioritising specific approaches to learning and teaching, appear to militate against such individualised approaches. An imperative for pupils is that they must learn how to observe in certain ways promoting a specific view of the world. It is potentially a physically controlled and controlling technology that encourages a compliant observer and a particular type of ideal learner.

In Chapter 2 I outlined the methodological approach I have taken to researching 'dyspraxic' experiences of drawing from observation. The following chapters make use of the theoretical and contextual context that has been built in Chapters 1–5. The four narrative case studies presented here allow for the interrogation of individual experiences of drawing from observation within the complex sites of art education and the 'dyspraxic' experience.

CHAPTER 6

MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION

Matthew was 14 years old and was in Year 9 at a community comprehensive school. He was at the point of making decisions about the subjects he would be studying for GCSE. Matthew has 'official' recognition that he is dyspraxic due to an Educational Psychologist's report resulting in regular liaison with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator and provision of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in recognition that he has a Special Educational Need. This chapter is based on two interviews with Matthew and my initial conversations with him and his parents and includes reference to a number of drawings, as well as comments and grades from his school subject reports for art.

His parents were present for our initial meeting, although not for the recorded interview, and played a part in directing some of the stories that emerged. They contributed to the co-construction of Matthew's narrative and shaped some of the earlier dialogue and I was conscious that the stories told were jointly constructed, and introduced by either his mother or father. Some evolved into shared stories that had begun to adopt an almost mythical quality both in their re-telling and for what the narratives had begun to represent in terms of Matthew's broader school experiences. Bruner (1990) describes this co-construction of shared family stories that begin to represent more than the story as it is told, and I was conscious that this shared telling was different in nature from the account of events that were described to me by Matthew on his own.

Although Matthew agreed to participate in the research, the contact had to be negotiated by one of his parents. It is possible that Matthew might have agreed to participate out of a sense of obligation to his parents', or that he may have been influenced by their motivations for involvement in the research. During the initial conversation with them I was aware that they had some reservations about the ways in which the school had dealt with a number of challenges that had arisen for Matthew as a result of an emphasis on handwriting. The underlying narrative from the parents' perspective appeared to relate to the conflicts with the school about a range of 'mis-understandings' involving tensions between teachers' expectations of Matthew's ability and their perceptions of any specific difficulties. I was conscious that, because of the need for parental permissions, I might well have had a view of Matthew's experiences that were filtered through his parents' seemingly negative experiences of the school. It is important, therefore, to acknowledge the difference in this interview from those conducted with adult participants if only to reference the direct presence of others during part of the interview process.

My initial conversations with Matthew's father provided me with a view of his experiences that did not seem to be substantiated in the interviews with Matthew. Matthew's dad described his son's experiences of art education in far more negative terms than Matthew, who spoke of some of his art lessons as more fulfilling and enjoyable than my initial contact had lead me to believe. There were inconsistencies that emphasised the differences in perspective between the stories that Matthew told and his father's perceptions. However, it is also possible that Matthew was constructing the stories of his experience differently depending on the purpose, context and reason for telling. This does not create problems in determining the validity of what was said, but it does exemplify the situated nature of this research approach and the facility that we all have for re-telling stories of our experiences from different perspectives and for a different audience.

Interviewing Matthew provided me with a means of challenging my own pre-conceptions of the way a young adult might talk about his experiences. On my re-reading of the transcripts and the field notes made following my first visit, I am reminded of how self-conscious I was in trying far too hard to work towards facilitating the 'telling of stories'. I was also conscious of wanting Matthew to understand that I did not want to talk to him because I thought there was 'something wrong' with him. I was reluctant to address the issue of dyspraxia directly and was trying to avoid any suggestion of contributing to the 'problem learning' discourse that was evident in the conversations I had had with his father. I decided not to mention dyspraxia and to focus on Matthew's art experience and it was he who referred to this directly. I reflected on this first meeting in my research journal, commenting:

Matthew sat down next to me after shaking hands and a few introductory sentences were exchanged. Where to start? So Matthew I want to talk to you because you're dyspraxic!' I think not. I started by talking about art and design and what he was doing but he said 'and you want to know about dyspraxia'. I found myself saying 'yes but it's really more about what you're doing in art and design'.

Although I aimed at a relaxed unstructured approach to the interview it was, at times, awkward. I was an adult and a researcher interviewing Matthew because he was dyspraxic, and I was conscious of the problematic nature of the power dynamics in relation to this interview and the ways it differed from the interviews with other adult participants (Blumenreich, 2004). Matthew was extremely polite and cooperative and it was difficult to match this representation of him with his father's account, a few weeks, earlier that Matthew had been in trouble for firing a 'BB' gun on a school bus. There were some stories that would be told in this exchange between researcher and participant and there were others that would be saved for a different audience.

I was also conscious that Matthew's participation in the research might have an affect on his engagement with his remaining art lessons. At our second meeting Matthew suggested that there was a possibility that he would be exempt from the observational drawing element of his Year 9 exam. I wondered about his involvement in this research and the possibility that the Special Educational Needs Coordinator

(SENCo) had made a decision to remove him from this element because of my research. I had met with her briefly at an early stage in the work and outlined the project to her, but I was conscious now that my decision to research the experiences of drawing from observation with Matthew may well have resulted in the SENCo thinking that he would be best served by not actually sitting the exam. He had been required to take part in similar exams in Year 7 and Year 8 and it seemed too much of a coincidence that she had now decided to withdraw him from this aspect of the work. I felt uncomfortable with the suggestion that Matthew might have been marked out for 'special' treatment because of a misapprehension about my work and that this had been based on only a brief conversation.

A further power dynamic existed between Matthew and his parents, and at times I felt uncomfortable when they began to describe Matthew's dyspraxic characteristics and specific school-based incidents. I was conscious that Matthew shifted between being almost invisible during these parts of the conversation and becoming the audience, prompting his parents to tell him more. Bruner's discussion of narrative within families as a means of understanding family politics (1990:84) is particularly useful in considering this co-construction of Matthew's role as audience and narrator. Whilst contributing to an explanation of events, it appeared he was also making sense of them himself by listening to this re-telling.

Although I did not want to problematise Matthew's learning by making dyspraxia the focus of the interview, I was aware that this created a tension in the research relationships that were developing. Matthew and his parents became involved in the research because of what I might have been able to offer in developing others' understanding of dyspraxia and the impact it was having on Matthew's education. As I became more involved in the research I wanted to distance myself from a specific focus on the 'problems' of dyspraxia, yet motivation to participate in the research appeared to centre on the ability to air some of the difficulties that had arisen from specific school experiences. I wanted to concentrate, on a very specific practice in art education, drawing from observation, yet it was difficult to ignore Matthew's other educational experiences.

Matthew's story is characterised by his perception that he is neither 'good' nor particularly 'bad' at art and this is supported by his school reports which indicate that his work and approach are largely 'satisfactory'. What is interesting about the story that emerges from these sources is the significant role that drawing from observation has in his early art education in secondary school. The school reports and his descriptions of the work suggest an emphasis on skills development in these initial experiences. His references to specific pieces of work centre on drawing from observation and the role that this has in determining his ability and that of his peers.

A number of narrative themes emerged in relation to Matthew's experience of drawing from observation. The position that observational drawing appears to occupy as a technology for determining Matthew's ability, particularly in relation to the official discourses of examination and reporting, is discussed using the Foucauldian framework developed in Chapter 3 and the dominance of the observational discourse is offset against the 'facile' qualities of 'other' art practices (Bourdieu, 1984); the ocularcentric nature of Matthew's art and design experiences is discussed in

relation to particular concepts of vision and visuality as well as technical skill introduced in Chapter 3 and developed in Chapter 4; finally, the role that observational practice has in shaping concepts of comparative ability in relation to teacher perceptions is also developed, and the role of teacher as 'expert' and producer of exemplary practice offers a point of discussion for the ways in which this creates tensions for Matthew.

These narratives are discussed under the following headings:

- Drawing from observation as a dominant and regulatory discourse
- 'cock a la doodle ee doing' – ocularcentric representations of direct experience
- Observation, representation and perceptions of teacher expectation

In addition there is a dominant breach in Matthew's narrative relating to his experiences in English where his 'dyspraxic' experiences dominate and conflict with the demands of having to handwrite his work. This appears tangential to this study about observational drawing, but is highly significant in the way in which Matthew's learning is pathologised. This narrative is discussed at the conclusion of the chapter as a 'gaping maw', the meta-breach that consumes all others.

DRAWING FROM OBSERVATION AS A DOMINANT AND REGULATORY DISCOURSE

Although there was a good deal of generic discussion of Matthew's experiences, observational drawing appears to have played a significant role in his art education, having a central role in his end of year examinations, for example, as well as being the focus of specific attention in his subject reports. It is discussed within this section as a dominant discourse (Foucault, 1980) in that it is a focus for Matthew's discussion of his experiences of art, but it also appears to have a central role in examination and assessment and therefore in contributing to judgments regarding ability within the discipline. It is also discussed here as a regulatory discourse, particularly in terms of the ways in which it was experienced during the examination process where regulation also extends to physical control, compliance and 'ideal' pupil behaviour. Within this context drawing from observation may also be described as a technology for physical control and normalisation. Matthew spoke about the drawing that he had done for his year 8 examination:

Matthew: In Year 8 we had a scrunpled up piece of paper

- we had a cup
- a mug and we had an apple
- it was like the cup there
- the apple there
- the scrunpled up piece of paper there
- and we had to draw it but each week it was quite hard because you'd put the apple a little bit further than it was last week so it was quite difficult to get all the objects in the right place again

Claire: So how many weeks did you do that for

- that observational drawing?

Matthew: We had two lessons a week and we did it for ten lessons so that was about five weeks

Claire: Right

Oh so it was quite a long time you'd spent on that so what was the finished drawing like?

Matthew: It was quite decent like erm the apple didn't turn out that good – the scrunpled piece of paper was alright but the mug was pretty good

Claire: Were you quite pleased with that piece of drawing?

Matthew: Yes

Claire: So is there anything you've not enjoyed? any particular thing in art and design?

Matthew: Erm observation drawing I don't like doing because they take too much time and she expects so much detail

Claire: So why was that do you want to just what I want you to try and do is sort of like picture yourself in that and tell that as a story about you know what happened when you had to do a particular observational drawing and the sort of things you were asked to do

Matthew: We were asked to make sure we could get all the right we had to make sure we had an ellipse at the top and the bottom ellipse we had to make sure we had the exact shape and then the apple we had to you know how it dips in when it gets to the top we had to try and capture that and then for the scrunpled up paper we had to like shade where like if it folded over another and you could still see under it you had to like shade that bit in and you had to get quite a lot of detail but it was like not actually hard It's boring just looking at something and drawing it

Claire: So you don't find that...

Matthew: No

Claire: Is that cos you're not using you're not doing your imaginative part ?

Matthew: I don't really think it's that artistic cos it's drawing something else that's there you're not like using your imagination it just doesn't feel like your work.

Matthew identifies each of the objects that appear connected only by being brought together for this long examination, lasting for over eight hours (Matthew's lessons lasted for 55 minutes and he had about ten lessons on this drawing). His understanding of this art activity related to his ability to represent these objects and he talks about the degrees of success with each one.

Matthew identified specific aspects that he perceived were required in the drawing. This description illustrates Matthew's understanding of subject specific language and the focus on representation including the particular features that are required (the use of ellipses for example) and he is conscious about getting 'the *exact* shape', the need for detail and the emphasis on being able to 'capture' particular visual elements in his drawing.

A breach in this narrative comes between the official and dominant status of drawing from observation within the school examination structure and the lengthy time spent on it, defining this as a central aspect of art practice, and the way in which Matthew describes it as removed from 'real' art. He suggests that this type of work was not particularly difficult but 'boring'. Having provided this detailed description, Matthew dismisses the work as dull, recognizing it as removed from his own concept of what art should be. Matthew is aware of the teacher's expectation of detail in a drawing from observation (commented on in his Year 8 school report). However, the lack of detail in his work, which may be attributed to a lack of concentration and directly connected with dyspraxia (Portwood, 2003), may also be as a result of his lack of investment in the activity. A dislike of this type of art production appears to be inhibiting his engagement, as does his concept of what constitutes art and his unwillingness to engage therefore appears to be epistemological rather than technical. The art examination may be of importance and significance for the teacher's assessment of Matthew's ability and it could be described as acting as a dominant discourse, yet for him the work appears removed from what he would define as artistic activity. This may well be reflected in his mark which in turn may be interpreted by the teacher as the 'inattention' referred to in his report for Year 9. However, there is a further breach in this narrative when the assessment of the activity is taken into consideration. Matthew gained a mark of 75% for this drawing and it seems to have been comparatively successful for him despite his identification of this activity as removed from his own definition of what art should be.

The significance of drawing from observation to Matthew's art education in secondary school is confirmed by the place it has as the main form of examination in Year 7 and Year 8. In Year 9 there was an additional design element to his exam, but pupils were still expected to make a drawing from observation, and this represented 50% of the examination mark. Matthew's experiences appear to reveal an emphasis on drawing from observation, and the role that this has in the examination process is significant in identifying this as a dominant discourse in terms of the role that it has in determining pupil ability. The end of year examination provides a focus for teacher and pupil, acting as a main form of assessment of achievement and ability. The fact that drawing from observation has a role within the system of examination here emphasises the perceived importance it has within the art curriculum. It also emphasises the role that this specific activity has in defining the very nature of the

subject. Knowing in relation to art education appears to be directly connected with regular regulated engagements with observational drawing.

Matthew's experience of art examinations, with an emphasis on drawing from observation, has a key role here indicated by Foucault (1991) in his description of a 'ceremony of power'. Observational drawing is embedded within the social definition of knowledge fully sanctioned and authorised by the examination process (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). Foucault continues with his description of the examination as a means of identifying and authenticating knowledge transmission and providing an archive of documentation (in this case Matthew's school reports based on the National Curriculum level descriptors discussed later in this chapter) that can serve to identify and describe the specific aptitudes of individuals in order to situate their levels and abilities. The examination is firmly connected with the process of normalisation as a mode of exploration of difference and a method of documentation of these differences.

Further to this, the examination, with demands for physical control and overt demonstrations of attention, might also be considered in the context of the production of the 'docile' body and the 'ideal' pupil (Foucault, 1991; Graham, 2007). Pupils are required to sit, look and draw. Movement is restricted, as is communication between other pupils, and a space is confirmed for teacher as 'expert', observer and disciplinarian. The examination creates the 'ideal' environment for the concentration and focus required for observational work and the pupils may be more likely to remain compliant since the space is regulated within the official discourse of school examination and reporting.

Referring to Matthew's art subject reports, it is possible to consider the ways in which they reflect the dominance of drawing from observation and contribute to this narrative reading of Matthew's case. The school reports provide an official and expert view of the judgments made on individual attainment, and secure the connection between drawing from observation as an authorised tool within the processes for determining artistic ability.

Year 7 Subject Report for Art and Design:

Subject: art and design	Set: N/A	Attainment: D	Effort: 2	Exam: 50%/D
-------------------------	----------	---------------	-----------	-------------

The year seven Art and Design course aims to build on existing skills acquired at primary school, initially focusing on developing a greater understanding of the visual language, whilst exploring a variety of media and techniques and the work of artists, craftspeople and designers

Very good A	Good B	Satisfactory C	Below average D	Needs development E
----------------	-----------	-------------------	--------------------	------------------------

Observation skills	D
Creative skills	C-
Research and preparation	C

Matthew has worked with interest this year and steady progress has been made. He has demonstrated some competence in the use of media and techniques, however, projects frequently lacked detail, and help was needed to achieve depth in his artwork. He has been positive in classroom discussions, sometimes giving answers which displayed both knowledge and understanding. He must now aim to build on the new skills learnt this year.

There are limitations on what reports can convey as brief summaries or generalizations, yet they can become a reification of concepts of ability. Although the work of other artists (designers and craftspeople) is referred to, there is a definite emphasis on skills development and this exists within a concept of age related development. The suggestion is that a foundation of skills will have been laid to be built on in the secondary context via the use of a range of media and techniques. Matthew's progress in year 7 is discussed specifically within the skills based discourse outlined in the curriculum content, and the teacher's comment in the second section emphasises the priority given to the development of these technical skills.

Of further interest is the apparent weighting given to observation skills. Although Matthew scored a C- and C for creative skills and research and preparation respectively, he gained a D for his observation skills apparently based on the mark of 50% that he gained for his exam drawing, and he ultimately received a D for his overall subject grade. A point of interest is the way that observation is identified as a discrete skill and the apparent dominance this had in the teacher's overall grading of Matthew's ability. Drawing from observation could be described as a means by which Matthew, working below an average standard, is defined as less than satisfactory or working below the expectation for the 'norm'. Although he is able to demonstrate understanding, a lack of detail and depth is an area for development. He is removed from a 'centre' of practice, defined as less than satisfactory, based on his performance in relation to drawing from observation and more particularly on an insufficiency of detail. The drawing (Fig. 2) is produced in deliberate, broken



Figure 2. Matthew's Year 7 exam - observational drawing of a trainer.

lines and lacks the detail of fastenings, for example, although it is difficult to know the reason for this. If the drawing was done as a time bound activity, it may be incomplete. Lack of detail is highlighted within his reports for Year 7 and Year 8 as an aspect of his work that needs improvement. This emphasis on detail becomes accepted as a means of demonstrating ‘finishedness’ as an ideal characteristic of a drawing.

Included in a folder of drawings was an observed pencil drawing of a plant form (Fig. 3) drawn in heavy outline and shaded. The drawing is made with a good deal of pressure with the feel of the pencil marks deep into the surface of the paper. The ghosts of previous drawings are apparent on the page, since it seemed that they could not be fully erased. This observed drawing could be described as offering a breach from the light, sensitive and fluent marks associated with ‘the skilful hand’ discussed in Chapter 5.

Matthew’s art folder also showed a focus on the development of technical skills, with tonal exercises and the depiction of solids as an example of this (Fig. 4). Matthew commented on having particular difficulty with getting a range of tones with a biro and on the heavy area of dark shading on the sphere and this was some of the first work produced by Matthew in Year 7. Those done in biro could not be erased but here it was the medium that appeared particularly problematic in terms of the way a range of tones could be achieved.

Bourdieu’s antagonistic adjectives offer a useful means of reflecting on these drawings and the way in which they may be read as ‘free’ or ‘forced’ as ‘*coarse (heavy, fat, crude, brutal)*’, ‘*light (subtle, lively, sharp, adroit)*’ and ‘*heavy (slow thick, blunt, laborious, clumsy)*’. His teacher however notes that he has ‘some competence’ and the overriding concern is with detail. The aesthetic dimensions suggested by Bourdieu appear either irrelevant or invisible, possibly obscured by Matthew’s



Figure 3. An observed drawing of a plant form.

CHAPTER 6

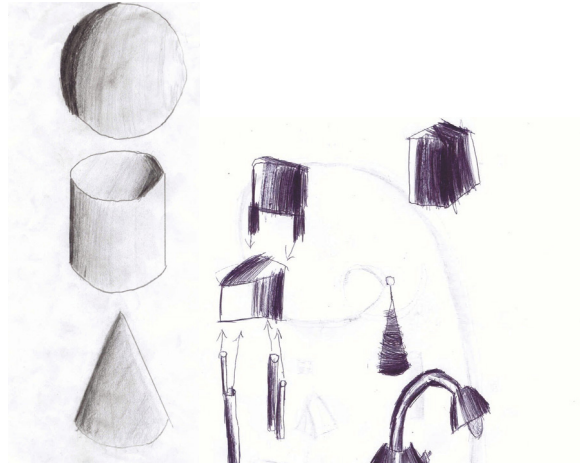


Figure 4. Tonal exercises produced early in Year 7. The drawing on the right was the first piece of work produced by Matthew after his move to secondary school.

positive attitude and level of interest. Matthew's acknowledgement of this struggle to achieve a range of tonal values, with the biro particularly, mark these drawings as labored rather than subtle and lively. The drawings appear to reflect a physical struggle focused on the use of a particular media.

His report for year 8 confirms the staged building of skills from year 7, but now with a broadening of media and techniques, suggesting that Matthew has learnt specific skills and can apply this learning to an increasing range of applications. His year 8 examination, the drawing from observation discussed earlier, appears to have been successful, which perhaps accounts for the shift in grading from a D to a C in this area of his work. Although Matthew still needs to improve 'depth and detail' in his work, he appears to be making progress. The format of this report is slightly different, now including a National Curriculum level indicator, but there is the same emphasis on observation skills, and he appears to have made some progress in this area gaining a C, which marks him out as satisfactory in this aspect of his work. The Year 9 report also included here offers a further opportunity to consider the central role of observation as an essential skill prior to studying at GCSE in Year 10.

Year 8 Report for Art and Design:

Attainment: 4b Effort: 2 Exam Mark %: 75

Subject Outline:

The year eight Art and Design course aims to extend and build on the knowledge and skills acquired in year seven, whilst continuing to explore a wider variety of media and techniques. The projects set, aim to be a little more challenging and will continue to encourage pupils to appreciate and be informed by, the work of artists craftspeople and designers.

	A – Very good	B – Good	C - Average	D – Below average	E – Needs development
Observation skills			*		
Creative skills			*		
Research & Preparation				*	

Teacher’s Comment on pupil’s progress:

Matthew has generally worked with enthusiasm and made pleasing progress this year. He has been receptive to using new media and techniques but sometimes found difficulty gaining depth and detail in his work. He has worked hard and often to the best of his ability. Classwork was often better than homework.

Area(s) for further development:

Try to be a little more organised in your approach to research and preparation. Aim to spend full and quality time on homework.

Year 9 Report for Art and Design:

The year nine Art and Design course aims to extend and build on the skills acquired in years seven and eight, expectations are higher, in preparation for GCSE and end of KS 3 assessment levels.

	1–5
Attitude	2
Behaviour	2
Organisation	3
Presentation	2
Homework	3

	A (V Good)	B (Good)	C (Av)	D (Below Av)	E (Needs Development)
Observation skills			*		
Creative skills			*		
Research & preparation			*		

Teacher’s Comment on pupil’s progress:

Matthew has worked well in most areas competently using a range of media and techniques to express his ideas in both 2 and 3 dimensions. Homework has varied and some projects lacked thorough preparation. He has responded well to most of tasks set the results were of a reasonable standard when he was focused. At times inattention has resulted in a degree of underachievement.

Area(s) for further development:

Aim to be more consistent

Aim to focus more fully

Matthew's subject report in Year 9 provides a similar subject outline, describing this year as the final part of the preparation of skills before formal qualifications in Year 10. The course is effectively described here as preparation for the examination subject and Year 9 provides a particular focus in terms of the examination structure for reporting at the end of Key Stage 3. As a subject outline, this identifies the incremental nature of the course in that it builds on skills and this is viewed as a preparatory stage for both GCSE and the final assessment for Key Stage 3. Skills are viewed as incremental and chronological and the emphasis is very clearly within the regulatory framework of examination and assessment processes.

The written comments and grades suggest that Matthew has performed at a satisfactory level. It would seem that the work was accessible to him and that he was included in this centre of practice in being marked out as satisfactory, yet he did not achieve the target grade (Level 6) which implies that he has underachieved in this subject or at least worked below that target level. His 'inattention' in class is identified as the main reason for his lack of achievement and, on the numerical table below, it is his organisation and homework that are only satisfactory. It is possible to see Matthew's art performance as de-centred from the norm of a national target for achievement as well as from 'ideal' pupil behaviour in terms of attentiveness and organisation (Graham, 2007). It is interesting that observation skills are identified independently from research, although presumably this could also be considered to be a form of visual research. It is also interesting that 'observation skills' and creative skills are separated within this assessment structure, again prioritising observation as separate from and dominant to other activities.

The comments on the report indicate that Matthew has underachieved and that, with more focus and consistency, he would have done better. Matthew is 'average' at art and design and the improving factor is one of application. In considering the teacher comments, it is useful to revisit Bourdieu's ideas on social and cultural practices where actors are not in a vacuum but set within real social situations and relations (Bourdieu, 1993:6). The art Matthew made was developed under the guise of autonomous and aesthetic production, yet it is described within the socially and culturally defined relationship between pupil and teacher. Matthew's drawing can be viewed, therefore, not as the work of an autonomous being but as the product of the social and cultural practices that position him as a satisfactory pupil and his teacher as one who offers targets for improvement that relate less to the production of art than to the production of the ideal pupil.

Homework and thorough preparation appear to be the main areas for development. In comparison, 'observation skills' are positioned firmly as a teacher directed, classroom-based activity independent from the self-directed research work with which Matthew has not fully engaged. The ten lessons over a five week period spent on the observed drawing in Year 8 confirm the centrality of this to the Key Stage 3 curriculum at Matthew's school. The development of observation as a skill is regulated

within the teacher-led domain with greater control over levels of participation than could be afforded if it was situated as homework.

The positioning of observational drawing as a central aspect for assessment and reporting locates it as a technology for normalisation (Foucault, 1991), since pupil performance can be identified as below or above average. The further reference to national curriculum levels in his Year 8 and Year 9 reports identifies a national expectation that Matthew does not meet, yet there is nothing that connects his below average performance with dyspraxia. Matthew appears 'normal' in terms of his art assessment yet this normalisation eliminates him from being 'good' at art. His average ability in drawing from observation, recorded in Year 8 and Year 9, normalise him within a 'satisfactory' average, yet he excludes himself in a later confirmation that his work is not exceptional. In his discussion of his own perceptions of ability, it is this exceptional ability across a range of activities that assures 'meaningful' participation. Those who are defined as average are excluded in this circumstance and it is the abnormal as exceptional who become 'authentic' participants defined by a particular talent. Eisner (1972) acknowledges the singularly problematic relationship between visual arts education and concepts of talent. Matthew recognises drawing from observation as a central element in defining such concepts of exceptional ability.

Matthew's reflections on his ability can be viewed in terms of this comparison between him and his teacher but also between him and others in his class. However, their comparative ability appears to be based on levels of technical skill rather than ideas and imagination, for example.

Claire: So how would you rate yourself
you seem to quite enjoy your art and design work but you were saying that
it's not something that you'd want to pick in your options why don't you
think that you'd...

Matthew: Because erm
It's not like one of my best subjects
I enjoy it sometimes but it's not one of my best subjects
I'm not that good at it but I enjoy it

Claire: Why don't you think you're that good?

Matthew: I don't really get that good marks and stuff and then
I'm not very good at actual observation drawings and stuff
but I like
I don't mind drawing like in my own time

Claire: So who do you think is the best at drawing in your class?

Matthew: Kev.

Claire: Why?

Matthew: He's got a really good imagination and he's really skilled at drawing.

Claire: But obviously you've got a good imagination.

Matthew: I've got the imagination
but I'm not that good at drawing

CHAPTER 6

Claire: Why don't you think...

Matthew: I don't know

I'm good at doing stuff like that (referring to Fig. 5)

but I'm not very good at drawing things like that (referring to Fig. 4).

Claire: And do you think you have to be good at both those things?

Matthew: Yes

because like shading and stuff that's what she really marks you on not your imagination.

Matthew's concept of his ability in relation to art production relates specifically to the way his work is assessed and, although he enjoys the subject, his and the judgments of others, become the dominant feature. Within his perception of his lack of ability is the space that drawing from observation occupies. Drawings developed from the imagination appear to have less significance for Matthew in this comparison of his own ability with that of 'Kev', but this is set within the context of the assessment system. He suggests that observational exercises are aspects that he is not good at. While it is possible that he identifies this specifically because of the focus of my research, observational drawing does appear to have been at the centre of his secondary art education.

This narrative theme identifies drawing from observation as a dominant discourse within Matthew's experiences but could relate to the experiences of any pupil. There appears to be no connection here with a 'dyspraxic' experience and no discussion of any particular difficulties. Matthew appears to have participated fully with this activity and has been recognized as largely 'average' via the employment of observational drawing as a technology for determining pupil ability.

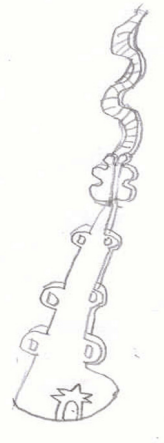


Figure 5. Building drawing developed as a 'doodle'.

Matthew's description of work produced from his imagination offers a useful point for contrast with his observational drawing experience:

We were asked to make just like a doodle thing and make interesting shapes and stuff
 I didn't know I could actually draw but it came out pretty well
 I thought it was going to look really bad
 but it actually came out alright.
 Well at the minute we've got three watches to do and ones drawing like a proper picture and ones like drawing a repeat design so you get tracing paper but
 trace like a pattern type of thing then like flip it over and do it again then go over it that makes a repeat pattern and then
 the other one we're doing is like a doodle with fine liners so that one looks pretty good

Matthew enjoys drawing these 'doodles' (e.g. [Fig. 5](#)) or drawings from his imagination. In his previous comments he describes drawing from observation as removed from his concept of art since it is representing something that is already there. The imaginative drawings are more appealing to him possibly because he enjoys producing them. The doodles appear to be successful but may be perceived to be of less worth. Presumably these drawings would be assessed as showing the development of 'creative skills' yet their role is less well defined than the drawings from observation which have a confirmed status within the curriculum.

The sense of easy enjoyment rather than disciplined application locates the 'doodles' within the domain of the facile and suggests that they may have less value for Matthew and within the educational structures in school (Bourdieu, 1984:486). The amount of concentrated time allocated to the observational drawing exam, compared with the rapid production of these images, contribute to this perception of a lack of value. The choice of the word 'doodle' locates this type of drawing in a more playful domain than the rigorous observed drawing, although it could be argued that both ways of working have a place within art traditions. Observational practice appears to be a dominant factor in determining the level of artistic ability and is suitably prioritised within the curriculum and the assessment process. In contrast, Matthew's views on drawing from observation ('I don't really think it's that artistic - it's drawing something else that's there, your not like using your imagination...it just doesn't feel like your work...') are lost, buried and therefore subjugated as, in Foucauldian terms, 'naïve knowledge' lacking any authority or basis (Foucault, 1980:82). It could be argued that Matthew's enjoyment of this type of drawing activity also represents a form of subjugated knowledge. He later acknowledged that, although he felt pleased with these drawings, he was aware that he also needs to be able to draw representational images from observation in order to be considered 'good' at art. Matthews (2003:101) discussion of the lack of value placed on spontaneous visual representation and expression seems particularly relevant to what Matthew was acknowledging here and to this narrative of observational drawing as a dominant and regulatory discourse.

'COCK A LA DOODLE EE DOING:
OCULARCENTRIC REPRESENTATIONS OF DIRECT EXPERIENCE



Figure 6. Matthew's observational drawing of a cockerel.

The cockerel drawing (Fig. 6) was volunteered at my first meeting with Matthew and there was a real sense of pride that was shared by his mother and father who all agreed that it reflected an improvement in Matthew's drawing. I recalled in my research notes:

Cockerel drawing – a pencil drawing with coloured pencil, drawn from a secondary source, no background, but highly detailed. Mum later said 'Did you show Claire the cockerel drawing' and all agreed that it was a really good piece of work. Mum suggested that it demonstrated a real improvement in his drawing skills.

This is the first point of discussion since the drawing was heralded by Matthew's mum as a sign of progress and the best piece of work he had done. It is therefore possible to identify the drawing as a breach in the narrative of parental expectation related to Matthew's poor performance in art, recounted in earlier discussions with his father. The drawing of the cockerel was identified as a point of departure and evidence of his developing ability and therefore a comparatively positive observational drawing experience.

My own reaction to this drawing is interesting however, since I had assumed that it had been made from a secondary source such as a photograph or another drawing rather than the direct observation of a bird. I was surprised that he had experienced drawing the cockerel from direct experience but was also conscious that I was making a judgement on the quality of the image. My notes related to my judgements

MATTHEW

regarding the validity of particular drawing responses and reflected my beliefs that a drawing from a secondary source was of less value than a drawing from direct observation. I brought this belief about the drawing to the second meeting and there was a further breach therefore in terms of my own expectations and the way in which the drawing had been produced. Matthew showed me the drawing again offering an explanation:

Matthew: It's supposed to be a cockerel.

Claire: Yes I know
I remember you doing that
It was really detailed.
so I wondered if we could just look at your drawings and if you could just talk through
I know that you already did this last time
but just talk through how you did the drawings and just how you went about making the drawings really...
Matthew: Of the cockerel?

Claire: Yeah and then we could look at the other drawings as well.
Cos I remember that you were doing these weren't you?
You were going to use small sections of those to do some design work.

Matthew: Yeah
for the cockerel what we did we had to make sure that we had the right body shape so its supposed to be like
kind of like a heart type thing on the side
and then we had to make sure we had all the feathers in the right place
What we had to get ideas about how
where the feathers were going to go
we had two cockerels in the back of the room so like we could go

Claire: What real ones?

Matthew: Yeah

Claire: Stuffed ones?
Matthew: No they weren't stuffed they were actually
because one of our supply teachers like
she's got a farm type of thing with birds and so she brought two cockerels in

Claire: Oh wow.
that's fantastic
so did you make this from other drawings of a cockerel?

Matthew: No.
we researched cockerels
we got some pictures of cockerels to try and help us and we just had to draw it from side on and then we kind of made our own feather designs and stuff

CHAPTER 6

we could only use certain colours cos like you can't have any random funky colour pink cockerels
so we could only use like a brown
dark blue
dark green
red and some others

Claire: So how did you use looking at the cockerels?

Matthew: Well we'd use it for certain feathers

like for the wing feathers

we'd see how they're shaped and then like how they're positioned like next to each other

Claire: So was it easier to get that sort of information from looking at them

Matthew: It's easier than getting it from a picture.

Claire: Right yeah why's that d'you think?

Matthew: Probably cos like it's easier to see it in real life

cos it's harder to see where their actual wing bone and stuff is on that (pointing to a small internet picture of a cockerel) but if you look at a real cockerel you can see where it is.

Claire: Right excellent

I didn't realise that they had brought the cockerels in

so what was it like?

can you just say what it was like in the classroom on that day then

Matthew: Noisy.

we've got

our art department has like

we've got stairs

there's one upstairs and one down stairs and then there was two upstairs and two downstairs and then like they were all cock a la doodle ee doing each other ...

Claire: Were they?

that's crazy

so did they keep them in...

Matthew: no they took them home

They took them home after

they were in like a small cage

Claire: That's incredible that

I thought that you'd done that just from using other drawings.

The story he told about making the cockerel drawing provided an interesting justification for the role of drawing from direct observation and the value that this might have for providing a rich multi-sensory experience. Matthew appears convinced of

the value of working directly from the cockerel, identifying that this allowed him to see and understand how parts of the cockerel fitted together, an aspect that might be difficult to understand in a flattened photograph. Matthew describes how he was able to observe and use information and commented on the way the drawing process was complimented by the use of secondary source materials.

The activity underlines the primacy of the visual experience. Matthew implies that one aim of producing the drawing was to reproduce a naturalistic image of the bird. The observation of the live cockerel offers an external referent for Matthew in order to compare his drawing in terms of anatomical ‘correctness’, when he talks about getting the ‘right’ shape. He observes the colours and the form and uses this information in his work, yet Matthew’s description of the noise, with the cockerels ‘*all cock a la doodle ee doing each other*’ evokes a memory of the whole experience and this was reflected in the way he spoke about this as a humorous anecdote. Employing a narrative reading, Matthew’s response and the drawing, offer the potential to consider the breach between an emphasis placed on the visual representation in comparison to the rich multi-sensory description of the scenario. I detected a sense of enjoyment of this novel experience and the finished product, the drawing, was only one aspect of this series of lessons, yet the mark that this would receive from the teacher would have been based entirely on the visual representation. The drawing from observation is removed from the lively, vibrant, comical description offered by Matthew and offers a reading of an ocularcentric learning experience.

Matthew experienced drawing from observation as a useful and stimulating activity, yet his recollection could belong to any member of the class. His description and the drawing produced do not mark him out for particular consideration in relation to issues related to concentration or coordination and speak more of a shared remarkable event than a specifically dyspraxic drawing experience. This narrative emphasises the space between direct experience and observational drawing, confirming the gap between the event and the representation. In terms of Matthew’s drawing performance and his parents shared concepts of his ‘ability’ in art, the drawing suggests a closing of the gap as evidence that he has begun to make progress.

Observation, representation and perceptions of teacher expectation Matthew frequently refers to his art teacher negatively, discussing the expectations that the teacher has about art production, specifically in relation to her own ‘expert’ drawing ability. When asked how the teacher marked his drawing, Matthew suggested that the decisions were based on concepts of technical skill but also on a highly subjective decision about ‘how it looks’:

they mark it on accuracy, erm
 then skill used
 and then just how it looks
 the thing is she
 the really annoying thing is that she expects everyone to draw as good
 as her
 say it was like a really good drawing but it’s not as good as hers then
 you’re not going to get a really good mark

CHAPTER 6

Matthew identifies his teacher as good at drawing, but this level of skill is described in negative terms since it provides an unfavourable source for comparison - an ideal that might never be attained. The art teacher needs to be able to work as a convincing practitioner, yet this can also cause tensions within the art room where issues of 'talent' create a breach between pupil and teacher performance. Matthew referred specifically to an example of an observational drawing to explain his point:

this girl called Hannah in year 7
when we were drawing the trainer
do you know how you get running trainers and you've got a bit of material
where it like laps over each other?
it's got like two materials on?
well she'd drawn one of them and it looked **really** (Matthew's emphasis)
good and then she (the art teacher) gave that it wasn't that good and she
needs to put more shading and stuff into it
it was actually like a really good picture but 'cos it wasn't as good as hers
that it's not a good picture

When Matthew talks about the way work is marked, he relates it to a piece of representational observational drawing. His own description of the quality of Hannah's drawing is based on the way she was able to represent the overlapping fabric on the shoe, and he tells this story to emphasise the impression he has of the 'quality' of this drawing. The twist in the tale comes as Matthew suggests a sense of unfairness in the way the teacher marks and comments on this work. Matthew describes Hannah's work as 'really' good because she is able to represent certain features, but the teacher's role is brought into question here when Matthew identifies her as the arbiter of a certain concept of quality. Matthew's perception is that the teacher's decision is based on her own levels of drawing skill.

Matthew's description of this episode places skill levels and representation at the heart of drawing. He describes in detail why he felt the drawing was good, by indicating the nature of the representation. There appears to be no sense of mystery to the marking process and Matthew is quite clear that accuracy and levels of skill used are but he also refers to the catchall phrase indicating that the work is marked on 'how it looks'. There is a sense here that such decisions based on hegemonic forms of representation and visuality are acknowledged as subjective (Atkinson, 2001).

The power relationship between Matthew, his peers and the teacher is significant in his view of how work is marked and the role of pedagogic language within the development of these relationships (Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint Martin, 1996). The role that these players have within this Foucauldian 'field of power' (McHoul and Grace, 1993:21) reinforces the ways in which teacher and pupil co-construct these relationships. Here drawing from observation provides a clear point for comparison between levels of ability which define pupil and teacher within the discipline.

Power is located with the teacher not only because of her role but also, interestingly, because of her level of technical ability which Matthew assumes creates a negative relationship between her and the way she views the work of others. This relationship is based on a hierarchical and competitive concept of ability.

Matthew's perception is that because she has a good level of technical ability others are deemed to be less capable. It appears to be acceptable that Matthew can recognise another pupil as 'elite artist', yet the art teacher's role as 'elite practitioner' results in a degree of resentment since her comments on the elite students work appears to be an attempt to undermine the pupil's status.

THE 'GAPING MAW'

Matthew is de-centered from the norms of participation in the English (subject) curriculum as a result of his technical difficulties with handwriting. Although Matthew's 'dyspraxic' experiences were not directly apparent in terms of his art and design education, they were significant in this 'dominant' curriculum area. The physical aspects of handwriting were of particular concern, and his performance in this subject dominated early discussion. Although this might appear insignificant in terms of the research relating to drawing from observation, it is highly significant in the way Matthew experienced his art education. Within the lexically dominant curriculum, English was a point of conflict and tension (between Matthew and his teacher, teacher and parents, and parent, Matthew and school) as a result of Matthew's difficulty with handwriting, and this dominated his school experience. In terms of Matthew's narrative in the context of inclusion, this was a very significant point and to ignore it would be akin to treating Little Red Riding Hood as a story about a child with a red coat, ignoring the presence of the wolf behind the tree. Matthew's experiences of English present a definite breach in concepts of performance and ability, the dyspraxic ideal and ideal learner behaviour. This was such a dramatic and significant part of the narrative, that any discussion of his experiences of art and drawing from observation can only remain a sub-plot.

In terms of the 'dyspraxic ideal', there is a significant breach between the ideal pupil, Matthew's cognitive abilities and his technical ability via his handwriting. Matthew has a reading age of 17+ but is placed in set 4 for English because he has difficulty writing quickly and for sustained periods of time, impacting on his examination performance. As a result of a sense of injustice, there are points of conflict with his teacher and his mother regularly intervenes. Although he can sometimes use a keyboard he has been told that he must improve his handwriting by practice. As a result of being in set 4, he will only be allowed to study English Language rather than Literature and Language. He is excluded from the full curriculum as a result of the technical emphasis on handwriting rather than his cognitive abilities. Handwriting operates as a technology employed within the examination processes as well as a technology for normalisation. Matthew's learning is identified as problematic because of his inability to master this particular technology. His observational drawing experiences slip into the gaping chasm of this dominant breach by which Matthew is excluded from aspects of schooling reserved for those capable of high levels of academic performance and the ability to write quickly and fluently by hand.

Matthew did not choose to study art beyond Year 9. He devours novels and performs well academically in mathematics and languages and has gained a place

CHAPTER 6

on an engineering course with the possible prospect of a future apprenticeship. It could be argued that his story resonates with a description of a process of self-elimination whereby individuals remove themselves from an engagement with assessment through fear of being unable to meet expectations (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977). The UK system of opting for preferred subjects for examination presents a ready-made opportunity for avoidance or self-elimination. It is interesting to note that only a few subjects can be eliminated from pupil choice at the point of 'options'. Other areas for study remain core to the curriculum but art is one of those subjects that can be easily excluded. Matthew acknowledged his own lack of talent and referred specifically to drawing from observation but also his ability to produce tonal exercises to a good enough standard. Matthew appears to have a satisfactory level of ability in the subject yet this is evidence of a lack of a particular talent. In terms of his dyspraxic experience, it may be that insufficient detail and a lack of coordination, evident in the difficulty he acknowledged in assessing pressure, contributes to his sense that art is a subject at which he does not excel yet it is difficult to make a clear connection. What is evident is that Matthew does not consider himself to be included in an exclusive 'centre' of talent and he contributes to his own exclusion by his adherence to what counts as 'art'. Drawing from observation appears to play a significant part in the way he defines his ability and the relevance of art as a school subject for him. The contribution that this makes to his dyspraxic learner identity is occluded by the emphasis on literacy and more specifically handwriting as a dominant skill in his compulsory secondary education.

CHAPTER 7

CRAIG

INTRODUCTION

Craig was in his early thirties at the time of this interview. His narrative is based on memories of childhood and adolescence and his current experiences. He left his mainstream comprehensive school at 16 with two GCSEs, working as a laboratory technician for a short time before returning to college and studying on an access course. Entering higher education as the first in his family and as a mature student, he gained a first class honours degree. He now has two postgraduate degrees in late Roman history and works within the Learning Services department in a university.

I first met Craig at a dyslexia ‘awareness raising session’ where he introduced himself as dyslexic, dyspraxia and dyscalculaic, a combination of aspects on the dyslexic spectrum. However, in a later interview he acknowledged that he had no official diagnosis of dyspraxic and I worried about the legitimacy of including his voice in this study. Returning to his description of this self-diagnosis, I was interested in the relevance of this in relation to the problematic definitions of dyspraxia and consequent diagnosis:

my own dyspraxia
I haven't officially been diagnosed but I've
from my own reading and research I have realised that I am dyspraxic but it
was never recognised at school or dealt with
I've got a provisional educational psychologist report saying I'm dyslexic but
nothing to say that I'm officially dyspraxic and the same with the dyscalculia
I've realised
but that was from my own reading so I'm self diagnosed

As I stated in Chapter 2, my heart sank at this declaration, yet on re-reading and considering the study as a whole, I started to question why I should not include Craig's narrative. It would have been easier to ignore his voice yet this would negate much of the complexity regarding definition and diagnosis in the literature. There was a sense of persuasiveness and plausibility in the way he spoke of his ‘dyspraxic’ experiences that resonated with the definitions I had read. I was concerned about the sufficiency of evidence supporting his claim, but was probably more concerned about the ways I would justify his inclusion as a participant within the official and authoritative structures of a research community. In some respects, his inclusion as a participant is an enactment of the emancipatory research approach pursued through the use of narrative. This confession can also be identified quite clearly as a narrative breach where Craig claims a dyspraxic identity from a process of reading and realisation, but also in a comparative sense to his awareness of others in his family who were dyslexic.

CHAPTER 7

When asked more specifically about dyspraxic characteristics he said:

there are times where I will trip up over my own feet or spill coffee over myself or walk into a wall and there are other times where I can't hold the pen properly or do things like that.

there is fine coordination difficulties and there is larger scale difficulties with coordination

I think it's a mixture of the two

I don't think it's quite a neat separation and there's good and bad days as well

on a bad day I will spill coffee everywhere and trip up over my own feet and things like that

so it's those kind of things

Much of what is described could happen to any of us, yet perhaps the frequency of occurrence and the extent to which we become known to others by these characteristics is significant. We might all spill a drink or bump into things, but experiencing this on daily basis and with others who do not do this as regularly can result in the development of a self-concept of one who is comparatively poorly coordinated. There is a degree of subjectivity in the decision about whether Craig does or does not make a convincing dyspraxic, yet the interrelated nature of dyslexia and dyspraxia, and incidence of comorbidity identified in the literature (see for example Portwood, 2003; Kirkby and Drew, 2003; Kaplan et al, 2006) might also strengthen Craig's claim.

The aspects of Craig's story relevant to this research concern the way he describes learning art at school and, more specifically, to his experiences of drawing from observation. However, these are not necessarily the most significant encounters for Craig. The way he describes other aspects of his education are important for the way in which his experiences of drawing from direct observation are positioned. When Craig introduced himself, he referred initially to dyslexia, describing this as the 'core thing', and this appears to have dominated the way that his experiences of compulsory education and, more specifically, his art education have been shaped. Craig's narrative positions him as relatively unaccomplished in relation to his art education, yet this is in contrast with the formal qualification he gained in the subject. This is also set within the context of the apparently dominant challenges resulting from his experiences of dyslexia. It is also useful at this point to acknowledge that there is a range of discourses around definitions (and the existence of) dyslexia, but this is beyond the scope of this enquiry. The interest here is in the apparent dominance of 'dyslexia' and by implication the aspects of the curriculum that appear to be defined by cultural concepts of literacy (see Collinson and Penketh, 2010 for a fuller discussion).

Craig's life at school was overshadowed by his experiences with literacy and his 'exclusion' or removal to 'Hut 5' which he described as a 'remedial' facility further defined by being spatially removed to the outer edges of the school grounds (Armstrong, 2003). His experiences of dyslexia shaped his early school career and still have a large impact on the ways in which he engages with those involved in

the compulsory education sector. In asking about his experiences of drawing from observation, it is important to consider these experiences since, as already stated, he describes himself as primarily dyslexic. Experiences of 'dyspraxia' are therefore filtered through the comparatively dominant effects of this dyslexic lens and Craig regularly pulled the discussion around to his dyslexic experiences of school.

It is argued that power sits with the researcher (Fine, 1994; Clough, 2002), yet the relationship with Craig did not seem to fit with this concept of roles and this was exacerbated since our meeting took place whilst I was at the very early stages of my research. Then a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, I had only recently moved from mainstream secondary education into higher education. During his awareness raising sessions, Craig (already an established member of staff) made it clear that he had nothing but contempt for the education system and, more specifically, the majority of teachers within it. Although this later became a source of humour, our initial meetings were set within the context of challenge and resistance to certain practices in special education, many of which I had previously accepted. Craig strongly contested the term Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), for example, and I had left labels such as this unchallenged prior to beginning this work. Craig provided me with the opportunity of working with a confident, aware 'subject' who, as a result of his prior educational experiences, refused to be subjugated. His passion and the sense of injustice, evident in the session I had attended, added to the strength of his voice. The research in this case did not 'give voice' to the participant; rather he took the opportunity to use his voice and saw participation in the research as a means of being able to do this to best effect.

In terms of this power relationship, Craig seemed to me to have a dominant role, yet this also speaks more of my own limited knowledge and awareness of the relationships between researcher and participant at that time. In being able to recount this story from my perspective I am aware that this re-writing of Craig, as a dominant and dominating participant, is shaping the way his story will be read and that he is now excluded from this process of representation. In more recent conversations I have discussed these power relationships with Craig. Although he has a strong and often defiant stance in sessions with groups of students, who are teachers, he still perceives them to be in positions of authority. This is significant for me since, although Craig appeared to me to be extremely assertive and knowledgeable, he was responding to me as someone he perceived to be in a position of comparative authority as a teacher and researcher.

The conversations with Craig have enabled me to realize that however well intentioned and invested I am in this work, I am always to some degree removed from the personal and emotional effects of the lived experience. At first I resisted this, convinced of my own commitment. However, acknowledging this distance has been a vital element in understanding the differences in perspective between participant and researcher. I am grateful to Craig for his support with this work and for his role in enabling me to hear a voice that positioned his own educational experience within the realms of the political. Craig takes every opportunity to talk about his early experiences of mainstream education and the personal consequences this has had for him. This study is only one of the forms that this has taken.

'BUT OF COURSE, I WASN'T GOOD AT ART'

Craig's experiences of drawing from observation are set within the wider context of his more generic experiences of education, yet I have focused more specifically on these aspects in order to align the narrative more closely with what I had hoped to investigate in this research. I am not describing all aspects of Craig's narrative, but selecting and reconstructing based on my analysis of what was said in response to the research questions. There is a limitation to this approach in terms of the authorial voice created and the potential for some aspects of the narrative to become de-contextualised. However, there is also the issue of relevance, clarity and internal coherence of the study. The context of Craig's experience is relevant and my re-writing of this demands recognition of the authority of the researcher. I have used Craig's statement '*but of course I wasn't good at art*' as a key phrase to characterise an overarching theme in his narrative, and will explore the ways in which this belief is aligned with physical engagements with different types of art production, his beliefs about the nature of observation and representation, and also with the ways in which he draws on comparisons with others to identify himself as in some way exceptional in his lack of ability in relation to the practical aspect of art production. The way in which Craig identifies himself as 'abnormal' in respect of his art practice draws on the earlier discussion (in Chapter 3) of Foucault (1991) in respect of individualisation, normalisation and the creation of the abnormal.

I have focused on five plots that unify elements of Craig's narrative derived from my interview and supporting documents, and will discuss these in relation to the theoretical framework and discussions set out in the previous section. Of particular relevance to this chapter are: the discussion of normalization, outlined above, and the ways in which observation and representation are connected with coordination; the ways in which Craig describes himself as de-centered from norms of practice as a result of his association with the 'dyspraxic ideal' through his art production, which draws on the discussions of inclusion in Chapter 3; the emphasis on particular types of visuality as norms of practice, which is based on the discussions developed in Chapter 4; and finally the acceptance of certain forms as participation as less legitimate and 'facile' (Bourdieu, 1984), also introduced in Chapter 4.

These themes are developed under the following headings:

- A physical breach: 'one of my early memories is the pencil physically going through the paper'
- Dyspraxia and comparative art performance as sites for individualisation and normalisation
- Modelling success as 'devious' art practice
- Problematising saying, seeing and understanding: difficulties with visuality and representation
- Mapping illegitimate spaces for art practice: unauthorised imagined drawings and 'facile' fantasy landscapes

A PHYSICAL BREACH

Although vague about his earlier memories, Craig was able to recall an incident from his secondary school. This is described as a physical breach, where his pencil

physically punctured the paper, but it also exemplifies a narrative breach where Craig identifies himself as removed from a centre of 'normal' art practice (Graham and Slee, 2008). This aspect of his narrative resonates most strongly with the way in which a physical puncture signals him as removed from a centre of accepted physical activity and Craig describes his lack of physical control as an aspect that sets him apart.

Claire: I wonder if you could just give some ideas about your own experiences of art and design?

Craig: Well my only memory really is of secondary school
I can't remember anything about my primary or nursery school
I remember sitting in an art class where we had to draw a bowl with fruit in
I think it was one of those still life things
and I,
at that stage I hadn't learnt how to hold the pen or pencil properly
so I was holding it far too hard and one of my early memories is the pencil
physically going through the paper I was pressing it so hard
so of course I had to ask for a new bit of paper which made you feel a bit of
an idiot when you just ruined one piece of perfectly good paper

This was returned to later in the interview when Craig was describing a series of fantasy landscape maps that he had drawn and I asked if we could return to the question of pressure and this initial recollection:

Claire: Can we just go back?
you know you were saying that that original one of the drawings that you did
when you were looking at that still-life arrangement and your pressure was
very, very hard on the paper
when you were doing the maps was that as big a concern?

Craig: I think because I was younger then
cos that would have been when I had just started secondary school so I was
probably about eleven and I hadn't
it was only gradually as I was learning to write that I learnt to reduce the
pressure on the pen
I've still got quite a boney area of my index finger from when I was holding
the pen too tight and I still hold the pen too tight but for some reason in the
maps I
I think if you feel the other side of them I think there is still an imprint isn't
there?
but I don't think it was as bad and I don't know looking back on it maybe that
was a bad day because you
it's not something I did regularly
I mean I would draw too hard and sometimes I would
you know it would be almost on the other side
but that was almost as I'd put
you know as soon as I'd touched the thing

CHAPTER 7

the thing had just gone straight through
it was just one of those things that I was
I think I was just having a bad day

This was just the sort of thing I had in mind. This was an excellent example of a story that seemed to encapsulate the very essence of what I had anticipated might be *the* dyspraxic drawing experience. Although I had asked Craig a generic question about his art education he had immediately focused on this incident which positioned drawing within a very traditional setting, drawing the archetypal still-life, a bowl of fruit, from direct observation. Craig describes the feeling of stupidity when he needs to ask for another piece, an aspect which resonated with the literature I had read on self-esteem and self-image in relation to dyspraxia and special education (see Ripley et al, 2003 for example and Macintyre, 2000).

Craig's description appears to place the focus on the physical drawing technique that he employed, rather than any specific mention of the observation of the objects, with the degree of pressure and control as a significant feature, expressing a greater concern with his drawing 'in the world' (Dexter, 2005) than 'of the world'. In a later conversation Craig suggested that it did not matter how well you could observe if you did not hold the pen properly. His perception of his own lack of ability in this narrative appears to be connected with practical and physical activity rather than one of perception and representation.

The story is introduced as an example of a typical and traditional approach in an art lesson and the breach in participation in this activity is located solely around Craig's individual physical performance, defined by his inappropriate use of pressure and possible lack of coordination. His lack of ability to hold the pencil properly results in a physical breach and this marks him out as exceptional in having to request another piece of paper. The way in which this is experienced as a public act within the educational context, and the need to 'ask' for more paper, means that Craig feels 'like an idiot' and situates his learning experience firmly within the realms of social activity. He has not demonstrated the degree of skill to be described as a legitimate player (Bourdieu, 1993:8), a theme that is developed further when he discusses his family and their comparative abilities.

This is significant in terms of the way in which Craig experienced drawing from observation as a regulated activity within a public space, and the implications that this had for the way in which he was able to negotiate mistake-making. The breach around puncturing the paper is exacerbated by the need to 'ask' for another sheet. The public nature of this mistake marks Craig out as different, and it is this breach that has highlighted this as a memory for Craig, rather than any discussion of the type of drawing and its perceived 'quality' of representation. The story is also of interest in that it brings together issues of coordination and observational drawing under one experience, with the breach in the learning activity coming as a result of physical coordination rather than any assessment of Craig's ability to draw.

This short narrative positions the physical aspect of the observational drawing process at the centre, with one overly physical act, too much pressure, as a potential source of failure, embarrassment and individualisation. Referring back to Ruskin's discussion of refined and delicate drawing (Ruskin, 2007) and Bourdieu's antagonistic

objectives, discussed in Chapter 5, Craig's drawing breach signifies the undesirable aesthetic qualities of the untrained hand. Craig is potentially excluded from a centre of accepted art practice by this breach.

DYSPRAXIA AND ART PERFORMANCE AS SITES FOR NORMALISATION AND INDIVIDUALISATION

This theme does not follow a narrative structure, in that it is not a single story with a plotting of events over time, but is one that is made up of several responses from Craig relating to the way in which he has made sense of his own abilities in comparison to others. Craig's discussion of his own lack of coordination in comparison to the ability of others provides a plot line that weaves through his interview. In subjecting his account to a narrative reading, with particular attention paid to breach and exception, this extract offers a useful exploration for the way in which Craig defines himself in relation to both dyslexic and dyspraxic ideals. Art production becomes the technology of normalisation (Foucault, 1991) by which he defines himself as dyspraxic and this is related specifically to a particular concept of art being related to dominant concepts of representation and visuality (Atkinson, 2001).

Claire: Can you just introduce yourself just in any way that you would choose to introduce yourself

Craig: My name's Craig

I'm dyslexic, dyspraxic and dyscalculia

I'm doing a PhD in late Roman history at the University of (x)

my own dyspraxia

I haven't officially been diagnosed but I've

from my own reading and research I have realised that I am dyspraxic but it was never recognised at school or dealt with

I've got a provisional educational psychologist report saying I'm dyslexic but

nothing to say that I'm officially dyspraxic and the same with the dyscalculia

I've realised but that was from my own reading so I'm self diagnosed

Claire: How do you recognise the differences between the definitions of dyslexia and the characteristics that you have that relate to dyspraxia?

Craig: Well first off there would be I suppose the clumsiness

most of my family or most of my male relatives are dyslexic but I'm the only dyspraxic that I'm aware of and they're all

their physical coordination is very good

my father restores clocks for a living and my brother's an artist

I've got other uncles and relatives who work with their hands and are very

good with their hands and both of my cousins and my father have been long

distance runners and very good athletically so growing up I was always very

conscious that I was the clumsy one and I would break plates and knock things

over which none of the rest of my family ever did

not being able to distinguish right from left

CHAPTER 7

a tendency to speak my mind when perhaps I shouldn't is another dyspraxic trait also I suppose
there are overlaps between dyslexia and dyspraxia but when you're in a family with other dyslexics you're aware if you're somehow different from them and because I have since realised that my father and brother are both dyslexic as well and I can actually distinguish the difference between them and my father is very good at art as well
so both my father and my brother are very very good at art and I'm not to say the least and they're both very good at craftsmanship of various descriptions and I would struggle with that kind of
that kind of thing partly because of the physical coordination more than anything else

Craig places a particular emphasis on 'clumsiness' which, as he develops a comparison with other male members of his family, becomes identifiable as a clear breach between the exceptional and the ordinary, central to the way in which he has defines himself as dyspraxic. Dyslexia in this context appears as a 'norm' against which Craig compares his poor coordination and becomes identified as the 'abnormal'. This dyslexic identity is also legitimized and confirmed by a psychological report. He is at once included within a circle of shared dyslexic experience but then claims exception on the grounds of his poor coordination, defined by him via the 'political technology of the body' (Foucault, 1984) by which he identifies and potentially regulates himself.

There is a further breach identified here in terms of art production and the exemplary performances identified with his father and brother. Craig, in justifying his claim to dyspraxia, locates his argument in a discussion of his comparative ability in art production and this becomes the technology for his individualisation (Foucault, 1991). His father and brother are also described as dyslexic yet he distinguishes himself from them because of his lack of coordination, and he refers specifically to their practical abilities in relation to their coordination. Craig describes dyspraxia in comparison to a description of the exemplary art practices of his father and brother reminiscent of Eisner's (1972) discussion of problematic talent introduced in Chapter 3. This was referred to later in the interview, as Craig continued to highlight his father's ability to produce work that conformed to particular forms of representation.

Craig: I suppose I did feel an element of frustration with both my father and my brother were very, very good at art so it's a case of well they're very good at it why am I not good at it sort of thing and I think there's another problem later on in that the art teacher because my brothers ten years older than me had known my brother when he had come through the school so she was expecting me to be wonderful at art because she knew my brother was very good at art and my brother and her son were friends and she knew my father so there was this expectation that I would be good at art as well and of course I wasn't and it was you know you could see she was incredibly disappointed but it was a case of well at that time I didn't realise I was dyspraxic as well so there was this sort of expectation to be good at art but of course I wasn't good at art

Again Craig is identified as the exception in respect of his comparative lack of ability in relation to being good at art. His performance in the subject creates a point of tension in his perception of the ways others conceive of his abilities. Within the narrative there is a distinct sense of breach between Craig's perception of the teacher's expectation and her disappointment with Craig, which he retrospectively attributes to dyspraxia.

Craig: [if] I can't physically draw something in the detail that it needs to be drawn I don't particularly want to do that because I know I can't get it as good as it should be so there is this sort of perfectionist bit coming out art would have been something that was nothing to do with me really and I suspect that is because I grew up in a household where both my father and my brother are incredibly good at art and I don't mean just good at art I mean my father
I've seen my father's
my father doesn't paint very often but he can paint very naturalistic and realistic landscapes and my brother
I think he tends to
then he did portraits
now he does more modern stuff because he's done an art degree so I suppose I was very aware that they were very good at it and if my father wanted to build or make something because he's of that
because of his job and also he would be doing any maintenance around the house he'd never get a builder in to do it I think he did once but through gritted teeth
he would draw and design what he was going to do and he would do it so quickly and so professionally
as good as a professional draftsman

The reference to his father's 'naturalistic and realistic landscapes' and his brother's portraits provide a source of comparison against which Craig reads a pathology in his own lack of ability. I detected a distinct sense of pride as he spoke, and although this analysis provides a focus more on content than form, the pauses and repetition surrounding the description of his father's work gave added weight to what was said. Craig's potentially ordinary art production becomes pathologised by the apparently exceptional ability of his father and brother. They become the ideal from which Craig is removed, and it is his comparatively ordinary ability that becomes abnormal.

There is a further significant breach in Craig's narrative in his claim that he was not 'good' at art when the interview transcript is placed alongside his school reports. Contrary to his assertion that he was unsuccessful, he appears to have made good progress. In the first three years of his secondary school his reports reflect positive general comments on his progress. The reports alternate between the subjects 'pottery' (in year 1 and 3, now years 7 and 9) and 'art and design' (in year 2, now year 8) and his GCSE report has the specific title of '3-dimensional studies'. His early reports refer to his good attitude and his improving level of ability. In year 2, for art and design, the teacher comments on his sculpture work, but also comments that 'he has shown good ability in his observational drawing' (Fig. 7). In year 3, his skill level

CHAPTER 7

is described as good, as is his ability in relation to three-dimensional design. In the first year of his GCSE, his mature attitude is commended and the teacher describes his work as 'improving technically all the time'. The reports appear to chart Craig's positive attitude and developing maturity within a framework that emphasises his improving levels of skill and technical ability in an art environment that seems heavily weighted in favour of three-dimensional work. There is comparatively little emphasis on drawing although, interestingly, the report that is based on 'art and design' is the one report that provides a specific focus on drawing from observation. This description of Craig as a pupil with 'good ability in his observational drawing' clearly contrasts with the one who confessed '*but of course I wasn't good at art*'. Craig appears normalised within this official discourse in relation to his abilities to draw from observation, marking a departure from his own described lack of ability.

Although Craig stitches his dyspraxic identity together with his lack of ability in art, it appears to be unsubstantiated by the technologies of school assessment and reporting where he appears to be closer to the 'ideal' pupil than the 'dyspraxic ideal'. There is a sense of incongruence between aspects of Craig's narrative, his school reports and the fact that one of his two GCSE passes was actually in art. Although he might have felt that he lacked ability, Craig appeared to have comparative strengths in this subject and a reading of these reports charts a steady progressive

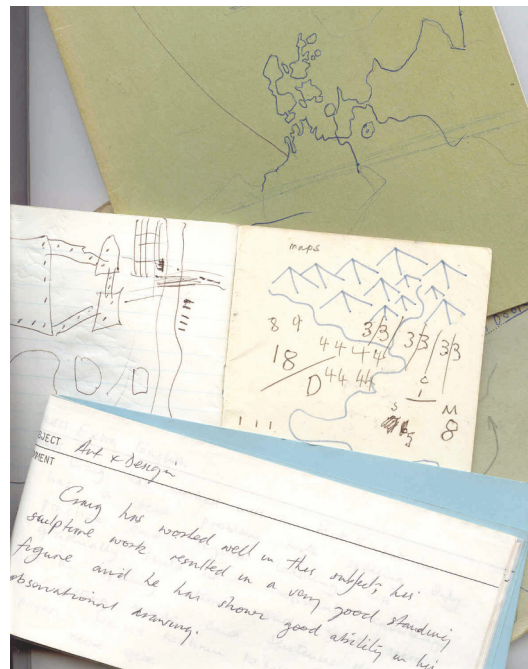


Figure 7. A school report for art and design with some of Craig's sketches for fantasy maps and landscapes.

technical development and a manipulable, ‘docile’ body (Foucault, 1980), developing a mature approach which appears unproblematic in the way in which he was engaging with his art education and being effectively trained. He is identified as dyslexic, and art, as a practical subject then requiring relatively little in the form of written work, appears to have provided him with a subject that was not dominated by the demands of literacy. The school reports offer a point of departure from the familial comparisons that resulted in the claim to being poor at art. He gained a grade B for GCSE art and described this as ironic and the result of a ‘devious’ approach to adapting the projects. This is explored in more depth in the third narrative theme related to 3-D success and devious art practice. Drawing from observation is a technology that is negotiated within the complex social sites of formal education where he appears to be ‘normal’ and the family where he defines himself as ‘abnormal’.

MODELLING SUCCESS AS ‘DEVIOUS’ ART PRACTICE

Craig focussed on the development of three-dimensional work as part of his GCSE art and design course, explaining the ways that this had allowed him to negotiate concepts of mistake-making. This aspect of his narrative contrasts with the still-life drawing experience that hinged on making one significant mistake. Craig’s comparative success here appears to be focussed on his facility for working with errors, an element that was not apparent in his earlier description of drawing the still life from direct observation.

Craig: the art and design we did was mainly working in clay
 it was pottery based and the main piece of pottery that I did for that was to
 create a ruined tower so that the actual mistakes were already built in so it
 wasn’t noticeable plus the fact that I built it up from bricks made of clay
 it was supposed to be a ruined tower
 it didn’t have to be neat and wonderful and at the same time I was building it
 up slowly in sections and that way avoided making mistakes because if I make a
 mistake with one block I could always reduce it in size with my hand
 you know squash it and remould it and then attach it rather than ruin the
 entire thing by making one small mistake
 I worked on the separate components and built it up like a kit if you like

The choice of subject in the ruined tower (Fig. 8) is significant in itself since it had imperfections, by design. Craig ironically describes constructing the ruin but being unable to ‘ruin it’ since he could construct it in small stages. He describes working on a piece that did not need to be ‘neat and wonderful.’

I think they gave us a list of things to choose and one of them was ‘decay’
 and I thought well if it’s not very good I can just say it’s decayed so therefore
 I chose the ruined tower
 it was good in the fact that the mistakes were built in so I
 therefore
 if it didn’t look right I could just say oh well it was part of the piece so
 it was me being devious more than anything else.



Figure 8. Craig's ruined tower.

Craig recounts this story about making the piece of work highlighting the fact that he was working in an almost subversive way by being able to use mistakes within the making process. There is still an emphasis on the work looking or not looking 'right' however, and there appears to be the need to find a justification for a departure from an expectation that it should look 'right'. The perception that Craig needed to be devious suggests that working with mistakes in the way he describes did not have a legitimate part in this making process. Craig's description of the physical processes involved in constructing the tower illustrates an intersection between the physical/ technical focus and concepts of mistake-making. Being able to physically re-shape and change the dimensions of the work as a means of 'correcting' enables him to achieve some success with this aspect of the making process.

Craig also recalled the role that observational drawing had played for him in this project saying:

we had to produce charcoal and chalk sketches of what we'd produced and very slowly and very carefully I tried to get the image of what I'd produced

Drawing from observation is significant here although it appeared to have less importance for Craig, who immediately went on to describe a further piece of three-dimensional work. He had produced the ruined tower using imperfections as part of the character of the work and had then observed the model and attempted to capture 'the image' of it. The description of the drawing process, mirrored by the way in which this was described: 'very slowly and very carefully' emphasises the care he took. Again this compares with the trial and error, moulding and reshaping, described when using the clay. The two stories are suggestive of Craig on the one hand designing something in order for it to be achievable and on the other aiming to capture something ('I tried to get the image...') that seems more tentative. Craig appears active in his participation in developing the tower but both passive and submissive in rendering the drawing.

The extended descriptions of work were based on these three dimensional clay sculptures, and his drawing is comparatively invisible, reduced here to a few lines of text. Observational drawing was positioned as a secondary activity and a means of recording what had been made, after the event. It appears to have had no direct relevance at the point of inception of ideas, but was used as a means of representing what had previously been constructed in a different form. However, although the sculptural aspect appears dominant here, Craig suggests that his success was less legitimate and based on his ability to manipulate the theme of the work in order to make it accessible by making error part of the production. The sculptural activity appears more open to 'creative speculation', 'experimentation' 'personal vision' and 'unfinishedness' that Craig-Martin associates with drawing (Craig-Martin, 1995).

PROBLEMATISING SAYING, SEEING AND UNDERSTANDING

Although reluctant to problematise Craig's engagement with observation, I was drawn to aspects of the interview where he appeared to be describing potential visual disturbance or saccades (Kirkby and Drew, 2003). In his discussion of the use of a grid to support technical control, this also extended to a consideration of ways of seeing.

I suppose it's working in a controlled environment and if you've got the smaller box with which in to work then that's manageable
that's a coping strategy I suppose
whereas if you're given a blank piece of paper with no control and no grid on it and no way of working your eye skips all over the place you can't
you know
you can make mistakes whereas if you're focused just on that square it's easier to deal with

Craig suggests here that the use of a grid can offer some support for the visual skipping he describes, which might resonate with descriptions of visual disturbance identified in the literature (see Chapter 4), and might indicate that for Craig, drawing from observation might offer more challenges than the issues related to pencil grip. This was an interesting development in the interview that had focused largely on physical production rather than perception, yet it was also problematic since Craig struggled to explain ways of seeing objects:

I think the other problem is that when I look at an object I'm not seeing it
I tend to
It's almost like I'm viewing it from more than one angle
I don't know whether that's
is if I'm looking at something I have to keep looking back to make sure that
it's
it's the right thing

Previous aspects of Craig's experiences had focused more specifically on coordination and technique, and the 'observation' element had until now had not been discussed,

CHAPTER 7

but this element of ‘looking and drawing’ was explored for the first time here. What was significant about this for me was the difficulty that Craig had in explaining the comparisons he was attempting to make in relation to ways of seeing an object and retaining a mental image of the object he is attempting to draw. The oral articulation appeared to reflect the problematic nature of visualising and representing what could be observed. Significant for me also was the difficulty I had in understanding what he was trying to explain. Again Craig resorted to a comparison with his father and brother in order to make sense of his perceived difference in the way he approached looking at and drawing from objects, this comparison again marking Craig out as different from a norm that he associated with their exceptional abilities.

they do it fine
so I think it is an issue for me is the motor control and how I’m how I’m
doing it cos I know I’m not really coordinated very well but it’s also
I think that when they see something they’re seeing it in it’s entirety and they
can hold it in their memory so they’re just adjusting their memory each time
they look at something and I tend to look at things and I tend to look at them
as an object

In attempting to make sense out of his experience, Craig suggests that he has difficulty in retaining an image of the object he is observing. However, we cannot know how his father or brother would approach a similar activity or what evidence Craig has for thinking that he performs less well than others in this respect. Craig’s perception of his own differences in relation to this is more significant than the ways in which his father and brother might look at and record objects, and again Craig uses this comparative dimension to describe himself as an exception. He appears to identify himself as ‘abnormal’ by being decentered from the centre of their exemplary practice (Graham and Slee, 2008). Craig continued to explain how he sees an object:

Well I suppose the thing is I would more likely to view it consciously
I wouldn’t be viewing it
It’s very difficult to describe
it’s not
to talk about it being sort of like a 3D model in your head is a bit of an ex-
aggeration but to say that it’s a static thing
that’s not how I view it
it’s not a
it’s
it’s very difficult to describe
it’s not
do you
does this make sense?

At this point I reassured Craig that this did make sense, eager for him to continue. However, I was aware that this fragmented explanation really made little sense to me and I was uncertain of what it was he was trying to explain. The skipping shifting

oral representation of this visual experience appeared problematic. He picked up the cassette box off the table, using it as a visual prop as he continued:

if I'm looking at that tape
 I know very well the bottom end of that tape is like that
 I don't need to turn it around cos I know it's like that cos I've already seen it
 like that
 so when I'm looking at that I'm seeing through the piece of card and I know
 very well what the reverse looks like so if I were asked to draw that
 that knowledge
 I wouldn't be able to get the knowledge of what it looks like from below out
 of my head if I were trying to draw it

Craig found this aspect of experience difficult to describe and I found it difficult to understand, but I also wondered how much sense I could make of any verbal description of what occurs when a person attempts to draw what they have seen. Craig seems to be suggesting here that he has difficulty in observing and recording and that these difficulties relate to ways of seeing and remembering rather than the aspects of physical coordination related to pencil grip. This concern with the complexity of observation as a means of perceiving and being able to represent an object is problematised here, but this might result from a difficulty in articulating the process rather than a 'problem' to learn from. Craig's comparison with his father and brother however, suggest that Craig believes his own aptitude for this type of activity to be inferior to theirs. The way in which Craig identifies this as a difficulty with observation and recording however is relevant to this study and Craig offers this activity as problematic and insurmountable in comparison to the ways in which he was able to describe modelling his ruined tower. Drawing from observation appears to operate as a technology by which Craig's 'problems' of perception and concepts of ability become remarkable.

UNAUTHORISED, IMAGINED DRAWINGS AND 'FACILE' FANTASY LANDSCAPES

Observational drawing for Craig had taken place in regulated and authorised classroom spaces yet other drawings emerge in different environments which I describe here as 'unauthorised' since they sit outside official forms of recognition and are drawings on book covers and in small note books. They are 'doodles', visual experiments or evidence of imaginings that are not marked or assessed and have been produced possibly at times when Craig should have been doing other things, as they appear on text books for other subject (Fig. 9). Matthews (2003:182) describes intolerance for art production that is unsupervised or unstructured and argues for a reassessment of this type of unsupervised art activity which he describes as undervalued. Further to this he suggests that this type of art activity may be actively repressed as a result of the social control exerted by formalised learning environments (p. 36).



Fig. 9. Doodles on Craig's exercise books.

Craig recalls:

I suppose because I was reading a lot of history but I was also reading a lot of trashy science fiction and fantasy and things like that and of course in all these novels they have a map at the beginning and I suppose because I wasn't having a particularly good time at school I tended to retreat into my own little world and I do remember sitting in classes drawing different types of maps they would be doodles on bits of paper or in texts books just because I was playing with concepts of landscape

Craig describes this type of drawing as part of his retreat into another world, the creation of an 'unreal' space, partially in response to his exclusion from other formal learning environments. These drawings are removed from what could be observed directly in 'Hut 5', for example, and Craig emphasises this saying 'It was partly an escape and partly a fascination with landscapes'. This alternative and imagined landscape offers a point of departure from the real and observable, and Craig is clear that this type of drawing is removed from the field of legitimate art practice. This resonates with Craig-Martin's discussion of the misconceptions about 'good' drawing as related to naturalistic representation (Craig-Martin, 1995:9). The drawings are produced on 'bits of paper' and there is a reference to 'playing' which offers a marked contrast to the way in which he had engaged in drawing his clay ruin in the authorised setting of the art room where he was drawing *'very slowly and very carefully'*. There is also a point of departure here with the first observational drawing story of the still life and the punctured paper. Numbers and symbols overlap and litter the paper alongside mapped landscape fragments. There is a sense of escape in this description that speaks more of Craig's unhappiness at school than concerns over his drawing ability, and the drawings appear to have been produced in a comparatively unconstrained environment.

Craig also showed me a huge map made up of 42 A4 drawings some of which were highly detailed (Fig. 10). This larger drawing project took him a number of years,

probably more than five, although the detail is vague, but he is quite clear that this drawing for him at the time was removed from his 'school art' experience and he related it more to his fantasy role play games and a strong interest in history and geography. It is interesting that his reference to this set of drawings is used here to emphasise the lack of relevance his conception of art had for him.

I viewed them as maps

I viewed them as depictions of that fantasy landscape

I didn't view them merely as art

Now obviously as an adult and somebody who's read more widely I could realise that they probably are art in that sense but in terms of in terms of when I was younger I wouldn't have viewed them as art art would have been something that was nothing to do with me really

The huge landscape and the book cover doodles reveal an enduring relationship with drawing yet this is peripheral to the drawing described as part of his formal art education. Interestingly, Craig suggests that the drawings were something other than 'merely art' indicating perhaps that they were valued differently and the emphasis was on the drawings for the role that they had for him outside of the 'school art' setting. He also described how the form of the landscape was informed by some knowledge of geographical and topographical features. The strong connection with fantasy, the imagined landscapes and the way in which Craig describes them as being something other than art also contrasts strongly with his belief about his father and brother's ability in art which is clearly connected with their ability to draw and paint as a means of representing 'reality'.



Figure 10. Craig's fantasy landscape comprised of 42 A4 drawings.

CHAPTER 7

Craig also went on to describe the map drawings in comparative terms. This time he describes the process of making the maps and compares this to the challenges of having to work precisely with technical drawing.

there was also technical drawing which we did at school
that was a nightmare again because of similar problems of coordination and
because the angles had to be precise
the angles had to be a certain way whereas the maps
the maps
you'd broken it down into squares and then you're using set symbols and
those symbols I'd learnt to draw because I'd already learnt to do that in the
sketch maps so and the symbols for a hill or a mountain or a forest are very
simple and if you get them wrong you can rub them out and start again
I was doing it for enjoyment
I know that sounds strange but bearing in mind that art was not something I con-
sidered myself to be good at or really something that I did.
I viewed them as maps.
I viewed them as depictions of that fantasy landscape.
I didn't view them merely as art

Craig refers to the 'nightmare' of trying to achieve the degree of precision required for technical drawing. Again the maps are described as offering a different type of experience. Craig suggests that they could be broken down and drawn in squares using a grid similar to the one described earlier in relation to handwriting practice. This segmenting of the map allowed him to work on small sections with simplified symbols. His comment about easy erasure of mistakes appeared to make the prospect of getting it wrong seem acceptable. There is a sense that this form of representation, with a marked removal from reality, was an accessible form of practice, but it is also significant that in being accessible it was also removed from Craig's concept of authorised art practice located in naturalistic and realistic representation. In becoming accessible, the fantasy landscapes are in the realms of the 'facile' (Bourdieu, 1984). Although they offer a form of participation in art activity, Craig recognises them as external to a centre of legitimate and regulated art practice which appears to confirm his exclusion.

Originally produced in pencil, pencil crayon and biro these drawings are now laminated. On handling them I was conscious of the deep indentations made by Craig in the process of drawing and wondered how easily the marks could have been erased. In many cases the marks could still be felt even through the plastic covering. Craig was also conscious of this when he asked 'I think if you feel the other side of them, I think there is still an imprint isn't there?' and he acknowledged that 'sometimes I still hold the pen too tight' yet this did not appear to have any detrimental significance to the way in which Craig produced these drawings. The physical indentations on the drawings do however serve as a reminder of Craig's potential departure from the drawing 'ideal' presented by Ruskin's emphasis on the delicate and refined touch (Ruskin, [1857] 2007).

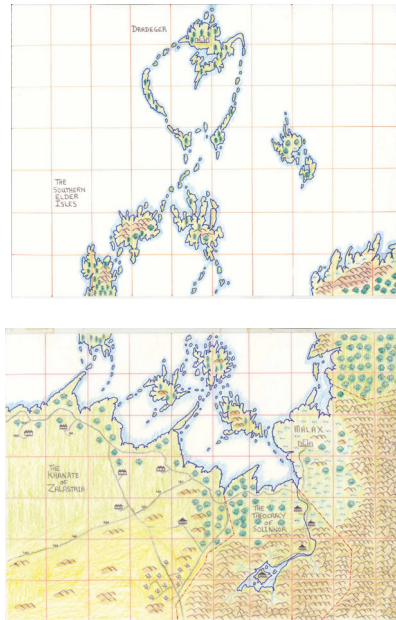


Figure 11. A section of Craig's fantasy landscape map.

On initial readings of Craig's transcript, I identified a strong connection with the physical aspects of drawing recounted via short narratives about the making process. However, there was an underlying and recurring theme that related to ways of seeing and representing that which Craig identified as both 'truth' and 'reality'. I was aware that there was an implicit thread to the narrative 'but of course I wasn't good at art' which positioned Craig's drawing experience within the context of his aim to represent an ideal image that was defined in terms of being both 'naturalistic' and 'realistic'. His identification with being not very 'good at art' appeared to be strongly connected with his understanding of the physical art product as a representation of a Kantian perspective of the ideal image or universal truth (Crary, 1988). When he tried to get 'the image' of his ceramic tower by representing it in drawing he described as an unequivocally correct view of what needed to be produced. Similarly his concern when observing an object, in having to keep looking to make sure that it was 'right', emphasises the polarity of right and wrong in terms of representation.

Further to this, Craig offers technical drawing as a form of representation that has greater validity because it involves 'depicting something as it would be' and he suggests that this might make more sense than what he perceives to be a traditional representation in art which makes the use of perspective, a phenomenon he frequently described as 'a lie'. He describes 'traditional art' as making less sense, but this is also expressed as being less truthful as a form of representation:

I mean I suppose even though I wasn't particularly good at technical drawing
I could see its value because it was depicting something as it would be

CHAPTER 7

so you would have the side
you know
you would have it from all angles
so that made much more sense than a traditional piece of art
for me art was just a very complicated way of lying
if you want to show something as it really is or will be you use a plan or a map
or you draw it as it is rather than draw it as it looks two metres away from you

The accuracy of Craig's argument, as he philosophised about the meaning of art and representation, for him appeared to centre on this discussion of truth in representation. He continued discussing perspective and iconography as other forms of a complex lie, and identified this as a reason why he enjoyed maps as a form of representing reality. There is a distinct breach here though in Craig's overarching narrative, where he relates concepts of quality in his father's art with realism and where he acknowledges particular forms of 'traditional' art as associated with a lack of 'truth'.

The significance here relates to Craig's emphasis on types of representation as more or less legitimate and their adherence to a concept of truth. There is, of course, a sense of irony since Craig's large maps, considered as an effective means of representing the 'truth', are based on a fantasy landscape, and he describes them as both symbolic and fictional in their representation, as stemming from a desire to draw reality. This desire to represent the ideal is then translated into a reflection on his own ability to represent the ideal. Because he cannot physically attain the ideal which includes 'detail' and concepts of perfection, he does not want to engage, yet the removal of the need to represent an 'external reality' appears to enable Craig to have a greater sense of freedom and enjoyment in making.

The significance of Craig's discussion of more or less convincing forms of representation is important here because of the focus that he places on representations of the truth, and the connection that this has for him in the perception of his own physical limitations on being able to attain the unattainable. A discussion of the physical processes of looking and drawing and coordination appears inextricably linked with Craig's beliefs about how we represent the world and the types of representations that can be described as legitimate. Craig's narrative connects the processes of re-presentation with looking and drawing, with beliefs about how the external, physical world might most effectively be represented.

CONCLUSION

Craig experienced drawing from observation as a mechanism associated with particular forms of representation dominated by a focus on comparative coordination. His other reference to drawing from observation was related to a tentative and careful drawing that he made as part of his examination. Within these accounts, drawing from observation does not appear to have a particularly large focus, nor does it appear to operate as an exclusionary practice. What is more evident in Craig's discussion is a clear belief in his lack of ability in art as a whole and that this is connected with an understanding of what can be classified as art and connections he makes with western systems of representation. This belief in his own comparative lack of ability in being

able to use perspectival systems, for example, appear to distance his own art activity from a legitimate centre of practice (Bourdieu, 1993; Graham and Slee, 2008). His ability compares unfavourably with that of his father because of this emphasis on a particular idea of visuality that he accepts as central to art activity.

Craig appears to have a very clear belief that his imagined maps and the contrived ruin deviate from legitimate art practice. The ruined tower offered opportunities for Craig to draw on his own interests in history and use his imagination. Observation was drawn on to supplement this work by being a reproductive means of recording rather than being generative and creative.

In his school experience, there does not appear to have been a particular emphasis on drawing from observation and there is an emphasis on the development of work in three dimensions. Craig's description of constructing the tower appears to offer a highly inclusive approach, where he was able to negotiate mistakes and work to his own strengths in order to produce a successful outcome, a B at GCSE. It is clear though that this slice of Craig's experiences represents only a partial reading, yet it is Craig who has selected these particular aspects in recounting his experiences. The cultural restrictions that appear to have significance for Craig relate to the abilities of his father and brother and the ways in which this fits with Craig's implicit understanding of what art is or should be. His compulsory school experience is only one of the factors contributing to Craig's beliefs about systems of representation, legitimate art activity and the relevance of this to his own perceptions regarding his lack of ability. What is evident from this reading of Craig's narrative is that observational drawing practice in school sits within a number of different and complex social sites, difficult to separate in order to examine. To explore Craig's observational drawing experience in isolation would be to negate this complexity. Craig's recounted experiences of drawing from observation are referred to in order to exemplify his coordination 'difficulties' and appear to remove him from meaningful participation in art production. Similarly he appears to remove any success he has in art practice to fields of production removed from representations of the observable world which he seems to view as having less legitimacy. The dyspraxic ideal, the uncoordinated 'difficult' body appears to be irreconcilable with Craig's perceptions of legitimate art practice. However, within the context of his compulsory education, it is possible that the art room provided one of the most inclusive opportunities for engagement for Craig as a learner.

CHAPTER 8

ALEX

INTRODUCTION

Alex was in his late twenties at the time of the interview. He was a graduate of a Scottish university where he had studied art history and currently worked with media and technology assisted learning at another university. Alex went to school in Scotland and had done Scottish 'O' level and Higher, qualifications, equivalent to the UK General Certificate Secondary Education (GCSE) and Advanced level respectively, as practically based art qualifications, but then gone on to study art history as an undergraduate. In our first meeting he had suggested that this was as a result of his perception that he lacked the high degree of skill necessary to continue with the practical dimension. He was keen to emphasise that he did not consider that this was in any way related to a 'learning difficulty' but suggested that his decision to continue with theoretical/historical rather than practical art was connected with a lack of confidence in relation to his physical production of art work and his concept of the levels of skill that would have been required in pursuing a practical art subject into higher education. I had spoken to Alex about this study about a year before the interview and now returned to interview him more formally, intrigued by the reasons he had cited for his departure from practical art production as part of his compulsory education into art history as a first degree.

The interview with Alex was very relaxed in tone and comparatively conversational. I shared stories with him and the shape of the transcript reflected this chunked exchange of stories rather than the stilted and brief exchanges, in earlier interviews with Matthew, for example. On listening to the recordings, this sharing appeared to reflect an 'authentic' conversation rather than an interview, yet I was also conscious that I had shaped and directed what was being said. Although there may have been a greater subtlety to the interview, with less direct and overt questioning, this was still about *my* research rather than a conversation with Alex. Such 'naturalistic' approaches to data collection can mask the ever present research relationship. The conversation that emerges, however casual, is still driven by the motives of the researcher and it may be perceived of as a fabrication or stylistic device that imitates the way in which two people might engage in dialogue.

There were a number of very clear breaches in Alex's narrative and these were particularly evident in his departure and 'self elimination' from art practice as a result of his perception of his level of ability. Representation and observation appeared central to the ways in which he discussed this shift from engagement to disengagement with practical art activity, and his inclusion and exclusion from particular forms of practice. This forms a narrative 'core' to this chapter.

In Alex's 'life story' his recent diagnosis of dyspraxia can be discussed as a breach, signalling a significant point of reflection for him prior to his participation

CHAPTER 8

in this research. At the time of our first meeting, Alex had recently been diagnosed as dyspraxic, encouraged to go for an assessment following his brother's disclosure that he had recently been identified as dyslexic. His recollections and memories of past experiences considering his art education were now re-shaped by this relatively recent diagnosis, causing him to reflect on his art production and experiences of drawing from observation. Pauses and disfluences (Riessman, 1993) in the transcription reflected the way in which he appeared to be thinking and possibly making connections when asked about dyspraxia and his memories of drawing. It is possible to question whether his recollections of observational drawing were 'dyspraxic' or not. My conversations with him made me consider the validity of his experiences as dyspraxic 'after the fact'. Although Alex was now 'diagnosed' as dyspraxic it does not necessarily follow that his earlier educational experiences were influenced by dyspraxia. For Alex, this diagnosis provided a significant point of resistance for him in the way he defined himself:

I'm still not wearing the t-shirt it has to be said I'm kinda still sort in a semi-state of denial erm and
I don't think I ever will
I don't see myself
I know my problems cos I've just like forgotten to do something there
erm when I was trying to remember lecturers names when I was in a meeting with Sue recently
I can't remember the names
but yeah I still don't see myself as having a problem in that way
Actually yeah I do but then I'm sure other people do who are not dyspraxic
this is why
I suppose this is why
I'm
I always have a healthy amount of scepticism with anything anyway
this is why I have a scepticism with that
of course people do forget certain things
erm they have memory lapses or sometimes they get their letters mixed up
occasionally (stress) but that doesn't necessarily mean they should be pigeon-holed in that way or to use the term it's a spectrum isn't it?
well the spectrum is human nature really isn't it?
If you go
want to take it that way?
so some people might be a bit more forgetful well when does that actually fall into being dyslexic or dyspraxic.

Alex actively discussed the contested nature of dyspraxia and the way in which this defined him and his current and prior experiences. He resisted this 'label' and the processes of normalization suggested by the potential separation between him and a recognized 'norm'. Alex connects himself as part of a continuum of abilities rather than acknowledging a concept of deficit that removes him from common experience.

Alex identified issues with his memory as of particular concern for him although he was keen to stress that he could remember those things that he felt to be significant

such as ‘track listings’ and lyrics from a Public Enemy song. He identified having trouble with some of the abstract tasks he was given, such as working with a random order of numbers. He suggested *‘I can’t do that but I can tell you the track listing of ‘Loves Forever Changes’*. Alex was not convinced that he had anything ‘wrong’ with him and referred to his supposed memory difficulties *‘I think if it’s important to me then it will stick but if it’s superfluous information it’ll just go’*.

The characteristics of Alex’s ‘Specific Learning Difficulty’ as memory related and potentially connected with spatial awareness (he spoke about being unable to do a task that involved taking a number and flipping it over) highlights the close relationship between dyslexia and dyspraxia. It is unclear as to the extent to which any of these aspects may have influenced Alex during his years in compulsory education. The attribution of certain difficulties in retrospect is a danger with this uncorroborated narrative, yet Alex did not appear to attempt to problematise his learning at school in light of his recent ‘label’. The reflections on his art education were offered as pre-dyspraxic memories and it could be argued that what Alex had to say about his experiences of art education spoke more of his particular understanding of what constitutes ‘art’ than experiences that had been defined by dyspraxia.

Alex was no longer involved in making art, apart from the ‘odd doodle’ he described making whilst talking on the phone, and his narrative was marked out for the absence of practical work. Additionally there were no school reports and little else to support what Alex was saying, and his departure from making art was emphasized by Alex who commented ‘now I just talk about it’. Language replaces practice here with Alex’s narrative yet his detailed description of his last still-life drawing later in the chapter gives the practical dimension some presence.

The narrative themes explored in Alex’s narrative case study relate to the ways in which he recalled inclusion and exclusion from participation in art education, with observational drawing and western systems of representation as significant factors. Alex made some direct connections with concepts of a dyspraxic ideal as he reflected on his own responses about observational drawing. The following narratives have been derived from plot themes running through the interview: the first draws on the shift from being the excluded graffiti ‘bad boy’ to the inclusion in authorised art practice; the second theme explores the experiences of Alex and his brother as they negotiate particular types of ideal pupil behaviour associated with observation and concentration; and the final narrative is based on the last observational drawing that Alex had done for his ‘higher’ examination, which explores the significance of particular media and the role of play and mistake-making. These narratives are discussed under the following headings:

- Including the ‘bad boy’, excluding representation
- Docile bodies, concentration and observation
- Memories of observational drawing – mistake-making and media

INCLUDING THE ‘BAD BOY’ – EXCLUDING REPRESENTATION

This first narrative is based on the ways in which Alex shifts in and out of a ‘centre’ of art practice. This account begins with inclusion in art practice yet it concludes

CHAPTER 8

with a departure from full participation located around drawing from observation. Alex described his early experiences of art and design at school where he was a 'bad boy', disengaged from his schooling. His involvement with unauthorised forms of art practice via graffiti appears to be a product of his 'bad boy' behaviour in opposition to concepts of ideal pupil behaviour (Graham, 2007). However, the ways in which he was able to draw on this practice provided a space for inclusion in participating in formal art education as he was brought in to a centre of practice. Alex recapped on his early experiences:

Alex: Yeah I had quite an open minded art teacher at the time and growing up in the mid-eighties and getting very interested in 'hip hop' music and hip hop as like a life style and part of that is graffiti and you know sort of 14 or 15 and someone in my class said oh that's Alex's work cos I did it in the school obviously illegally

Claire: What on the wall?

Alex: Yeah – yeah bad, bad boy and my tutor said yeah it's ok it's not brilliant you should really have a look at this and he gave us a copy of 'Wild Style'

er sorry 'Style Wars' the video which was a documentary from the late 70s, early 80s basically documenting the whole rise of graffiti in New York and he said you should find about these guys and just gave me his books and other resource material to try and develop my style and see what else is going on and that was great cos it did but then I stopped doing that obviously because I got caught and didn't like the punishment that was meted out.

Claire: But did that translate into art projects like for your exams...

Alex: yeah sorry I'm wavering away there yeah for my O grade he'd given me the opportunity to do a piece graffiti on paper just with like marker pens and coloured pencils and I got an A for it.

Claire: so what, prior to that, do you have any memory of doing things like drawing from observation you know like traditional approaches?

Alex: Erm (long pause)

I think that was one of the things that may have fed into my uncomfortableness in pursuing art cos I was never

I was Ok (stressed)

competent at drawing from observation but the drawing I was kinda more interested in was

I suppose it was like graphics like lettering and cartoons and I suppose more y'know like 2000AD and like that kind of comic style of drawing and it was never really about sitting drawing this fantastic apple with light and shade and things like that and that's like

I was Ok at it but (pause)

not brilliant

not good enough I don't think...

Claire: why do you say that?
Not good enough
what in comparison to...

Alex: er in comparison to
eh
yeah aye
I'm obviously very critical of myself as well
not good enough for me
when you see like
I don't know other people's actual drawing skills
mine's always never
never matched that

Alex is described as the disaffected 'bad boy' but his art teacher recognises this encouraging him to participate via these previously 'illegitimate' forms of art practice that take place in street spaces outside the legitimising art studio and beyond the 'gaze' and control of the art teacher (Foucault, 1976). Alex appears to be included by the capacity to be able to draw on less conventional forms of art practice related to urban culture and removed from 'traditional' art practices. The art teacher, in encouraging Alex's out of school interest, works beyond the constraints of the formal educational environment where the work was generated outside the art room and not subject to assessment or any form of external recognition. The teacher initially appeared to have limited control over Alex's art activities and does not specifically direct Alex but supports him in developing work that Alex has already established for himself. He appears to embrace this 'outsider' activity yet the work ultimately finds its way into the classroom where it becomes authorized as a piece of 'good' work with an A at GCSE equivalent. Alex has some degree of autonomy in his choice of subject and method of production, although this art practice is eventually harnessed within the examination structure. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977:143) discuss the power of the examination system in 'consecrating the values linked to a certain organization of the educational system'. Alex shifts from outsider to insider through this assessment practice. The art teacher here appears significant in being able to bridge the gap between school art and the unauthorised practices Alex was engaging with. Alex's art experiences are framed within the relevance of a certain type of life and culture to which he appears able to relate. Although potentially decentered as a 'bad boy', he is offered the opportunity to be included in a centre of authorised art practice (Graham and Slee, 2008).

Alex could be described as having a meaningful level of participation here and his work is given 'official' recognition via the assessment systems, yet the breach in this narrative comes when he discusses observational drawing. Although he appears to be a legitimate participant, this is questioned when he discusses his level of competence with observational drawing, and he identifies this as a specific reason for his dissatisfaction with his own ability. His acceptance of a level of competence marks him out as 'OK', yet this is inadequate in terms of Alex's expectations and his perceptions of the ability of others. Alex signals his removal from an elite centre

of practice, and this is directly related to observation and representation. His technical abilities are not pathologised within this discussion, but the acknowledgement of his own lack of any kind of remarkable talent (Eisner, 1972) is sufficient for him to self-eliminate (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977:153). Observational drawing is directly referred to as a particular practice that identifies Alex as a less legitimate participant by not being ‘good enough’. Ironically Alex recognises that he identifies too closely with the ‘norm’ of adequate practice to be identified as exceptional and talented.

There was a long pause at the beginning of Alex’s answer to my question, specifically regarding drawing from observation. He suggested that this was one of the aspects of art production that he felt less comfortable with. His description of the ‘fantastic apple with light and shade’ shines off the page as an example of the type of traditional representational work he describes that he was ‘OK’ at. He is critical of his ability as ‘not good enough for me’, but he also discusses this in comparison to the ability of others. Alex appears aware of the normalising discourse surrounding the production of particular types of drawing and the desire for exemplary practice in representation.

The influence of the art teacher becomes apparent again when Alex discusses the range of art work that he had produced. The lack of emphasis on ‘3D realistic drawing and painting’ is attributed quite specifically to the ‘graphics background of the teacher:

You did have to do like still-lives
but I think my art teacher at the time was more from a graphics background
as well so he
we had things you don’t even see anymore like lettrasetts you know to look at
letters and to do our own alphabets and that kind of thing so there was definitely
some like 3D realistic drawing and painting but the things I remember is the
graphic stuff

Alex’s teacher is recognised here as offering a potential bridge between that which is authorised and that which is not. His engagement with particular types of art practice appeared to generate greater opportunities to participate in art and design related activity, yet observational drawing appeared to close these opportunities down. However, this exclusion was derived from Alex’s concept of what observational drawing represented as a ‘gold’ standard of elite practice based on ideal representations (Bryson, 1983).

The role of observational drawing in Alex’s compulsory education is significant in the way that it was repositioned and reprioritised when he moved to study for ‘higher’ level. For Alex it was this move to advanced study that brought a greater focus on the representation of objects. This memory of observational drawing emphasises the way in which this particular practice was authorised within the examination system, reinforcing the processes by which it was legitimated and confirmed as a hegemonic practice.

Alex: The higher that was all 3D stuff (meaning representing 3D rather than sculpture)

Claire: And what was that like?

Alex: it was Ok but that was you know
 that was also kinda knocked out of me cos it was
 I suppose it was all just drawing and painting
 there was not any opportunity for doing graphic stuff or encouragement
 perhaps but it was OK
 I got a fairly decent mark
 a B which is OK [with a sense of resignation in his voice]

Claire: Did you feel like that was not good enough?

Alex: No
 not good enough
 it's all or nothing.

Alex describes this shift in focus as if it had taken the wind out of his sails ('that was all kinda knocked out of me'). Although earlier study appears to have provided scope for his particular area of interest the advanced level was heavily directed to representation, drawing and painting. Ironically, the focus on the development of independent learning in further study post-16, as preparation for higher education, appears dominated by this single approach. In addition to this, the dominant mode of learning at this higher level sits uncomfortably with Alex since he positions himself as 'OK' with this type of work. Here the focus on the representation of images brings Alex into conflict with his own perceptions of his ability. Alex's comment that it was all or nothing suggests an absolute. The drawing was good enough or not, right or wrong. Although gaining a B, Alex is dissatisfied with his own performance and appeared to have lost something of the enjoyment of the type of graphics work that had brought him success. The drawing and painting Alex describes from the higher-level work, working directly from experience, seem at a distance from the cultural relevance that the graphics based work had for him. The cultural dimension to these different types of work is significant since the graffiti based work was good enough for school walls and could be translated into GCSE equivalent, but this work, with its roots in youth street culture, did not appear to have a place at the higher level where drawing and painting and the representation of objects were dominant aspects of the curriculum.

For Alex, it is a particular form of representation that is associated with observational drawing practice. The use of perspective appears to have been a particularly challenging aspect of working from observation, and Alex recognizes that this was one aspect of the work he had never mastered. He suggests that this form of representation is directly connected with observational practice:

I suppose if I'm looking at that and thinking about how I'm going to draw it
 my perspective
 I know when I've got it down would be a bit skewed and I was never fantastic
 with perspective so that was why my drawings always looked a bit too flat or
 a bit squint
 I never really mastered that

Alex's choice of language is interesting in that he has a concept of needing to have 'mastered' a particular form of representation. He is clear that the drawing he

produced betrays his lack of exceptional ability since he was 'never fantastic', but this is directly connected with a very specific form of representation which is unquestioned as the correct way to represent space, emphasised by Alex's admission that he made mistakes working in this particular way.

Alex spoke about his university course and his decision to opt for what he describes as a very traditional form in 17th Century Dutch paintings. Although Alex claimed that he now wished he had studied a different period in art (the 1950's) he still appears convinced of this 17th Century painting as exemplifying work of the highest quality, and he is conscious that his own concept of art, as 'all about people who can draw fantastically and paint fantastically...', appears to be the main factor in him making the decision to talk and write rather than draw to represent.

but yeah for the rest of it very traditional and I did make the choice and go down the sort of craft skill route the whole
I studied 17th Century Dutch painting because it was all about people who can draw fantastically and paint fantastically and capture the 3D of a room or people's faces and that type of thing
but yeah I suppose it's high ideals
high expectations about how things should be done
I had very high minded ideas about what art should be and the skill
I was sort of enraptured
that's why 17th Century Dutch and Venetian periods

Alex's narrative was characterised by the value he placed on particular types of art production that he associated with high ideals and high levels of skill, and this is clearly discussed in relation to representation. It is his belief about the nature of art that determines his place as someone who cannot contribute to this discipline. Alex has excluded himself from a particular type of elite art production. Within this discussion, coordination and dyspraxia appear irrelevant, where exemplary practice and contribution to the discipline appear to be restricted to those who might be determined as particularly talented in the production of a very specific form of representation. In addition to this, the particular period Alex has focused on, is not simply 'all about' representation of the physical. Alex describes such work as if it were the depiction of objective reality (Jay, 1993) rather than the employment of particular stylistic conventions to convey social and political comment, and these periods are reduced to being a reflection of skill without content or social meaning.

Observational drawing is harnessed within authenticated examination practice but for Alex is associated with specific forms of representation. Alex's narrative fixes these elements firmly together as a set of processes that render him incapable of meaningful participation. The exemplary and elite nature of the Dutch paintings he describes contrasts with his 'adequate' responses to drawing from observation.

DOCILE BODIES, CONCENTRATION AND OBSERVATION

Observational drawing was discussed as an activity, which required a particular type of concentration and physical compliance. Within this narrative theme, Alex connects drawing from observation with particular types of ideal pupil behaviour

related to concentration. Engagement with observational drawing appeared to provide Alex with conceptual challenges regarding the quality of representation yet it was also discussed as a particular technology that demanded concentration and compliance. Although he was able to draw on his own experiences to discuss this connection, he also referred to his brother's participation and exclusion from drawing to illustrate his point:

Claire: so in retrospect do you think now it's only recently that you've had formal recognition of dyspraxia do you think that had any impact at all on your art education?

I know it's hard to say.

Alex: I don't know cause you could attribute it to that and that's maybe put me off the course of continuing to do it or it is just because of my high standards and that's why I ended up talking about art rather than actually doing it and I still to this day

you know I'll doodle on the phone but you know I don't do any sort of sit down concentrating

I suppose there is a concentration element to that as well actually you know the focusing and sitting down and staring at something for a while and that seems kind of less interesting or less engaging than taking a line for a walk on the paper

you should talk to my brother about this

I don't know if you know he was diagnosed as dyslexic recently which is one of the reasons I went down that path

but he only found out when he was 31 and he was excellent at drawing from the imagination but he just didn't have the patience so he'd get a really bad mark for a lot of his schooling because his concentration was so poor and particularly his drawing

he was quite talented but he would never have the patience or concentration to sit down and draw something that was in front of him

it was all imaginative stuff

Alex accepts focused concentration as a defining aspect of observational drawing and suggesting that there is no additional difficulty but that this seems less interesting than engaging in other types of work. He considers drawing from observation and the levels of concentration required, acknowledging the need for a focused approach. Here, observational drawing is described as an activity that requires attention as well as control and in being so appears less appealing.

In recounting his brother's story Alex draws on the narrative feature of the breach between his brother's 'talent' and the suggested inequity in the poor marks he received, since although he had the talent to produce excellent drawings from his imagination, he was unable to employ the types of personal physical discipline that is required. Here observational drawing appears to act as a technology by which Alex's brother can be identified as less than ideal since, although he has 'talent', he lacks the ability to demonstrate ideal pupil attributes. Significantly this shifts the discussion from one related to the 'quality' of representation and technical skill to an ability to

CHAPTER 8

sit still and concentrate for long periods of time. Alex connects his own experience with a distilled version offered by his brother's story. Drawing from observation is identified as a central aspect of their art education and a point at which both might be identified as departing from the ideal. Within this discussion, drawing from observation is located as a technology that exemplifies as well as exerts control over the physical body, and any limitations on the potential for this identify those that might be less well trained (Foucault, 1991). This narrative reflects tensions where Alex and his brother meet drawing from observation as a method of teaching directly connected with physical control and concentration.

MEMORIES OF OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING – MISTAKE-MAKING AND MEDIA

Alex gave a very detailed description of the last drawing he had done for his higher level, reflecting both on the subject of the drawing and his use of materials. There is a clear focus on drawing from observation from a number of objects perhaps arranged as a still-life. Although Alex does outline the objects used, the use of materials becomes a focus for the way in which he reflects on this drawing:

Claire: Can you remember that last drawing that you did for your higher level?

Alex: Yeah I can actually it was a still-life in colour charcoals?
pastels it's pastels isn't it?

in fact it was two actually a black and white one
which I thought was the better one
and a colour one and it was (indicating with his hands)

sea shell
mackerel

black on the back here with some nice pattern on it and something random
and I can't remember what the random thing was but yeah that was for my
higher

I liked the black and white one I like working in black and white

I'm not very strong with colour but I always like working with charcoal it's
quite tactile as well

you can get your hands dirty
move it about

when you're actually drawing with a pencil you will get to that stage when
working with a pure line drawing it's just not cutting it whereas when you're
doing with charcoal

because of the nature of it

you know rather than it being a pristine line it's fuzzy

you can mess about with it

it builds it up and it's a bit richer

There was a sense of enjoyment as Alex spoke about making this drawing, about getting his 'hands dirty', and there was a sense of play that working with charcoal facilitated. He makes a distinction between working with 'pristine' pencil lines and the almost playful quality of approximation with the use of the softer medium.

Returning to the objects though, Alex lists them and their formal qualities. The drawing can be described without reference to a wider context. It is a still-life drawing seemingly without any contextual presence and a means of representing the formal qualities of particular objects. Alex describes the sensuous nature of the experience as if in an apparent vacuum. Alex is convinced of the value of drawing from observation, in a similar way that Matthew articulates the benefits of working directly from a source to gather information when he discussed his drawing of the cockerel.

the last drawing that I did I've absolutely no idea
 I'd do just doodle on the phone it's always the same kind of thing little sort of
 hip hop characters
 I think that's why drawing from life is really good because it brings in shapes
 that you're never gonna do when your trying to recall from imagination or
 memory cos you just get stuck in a rut

He suggests there are benefits to working from observation as a means of contributing to visual memory, as a resource or store of images that can be expanded by reference to the external world. Without this way of working, the suggestion is that the same drawings keep emerging out of a kind of habitual practice. In this way drawing from observation is recognised as a means of engaging with the world and is seen to be of benefit as a way of enhancing experience not only as a means by which we might regulate our own art production. The drawing that Alex describes was central to his examination for his higher level qualification and observational drawing was harnessed directly within this system of practice. His participation via this system of examinations at once secures him within a centre of practice whilst also denying him the elite participation that would have come with a higher grade. Alex is convinced of the usefulness of drawing from observation yet it is fixed in his memory as strongly connected with examination performance and a summative assessment of his ability.

Alex discusses his experiences of drawing from observation as directly connected with compulsory art education. Alex appears 'decentered' by his recent diagnosis of dyspraxia but is resistant to this and acknowledges a continuum of human attributes and characteristics. His art practice appears unrelated to his diagnosis of dyspraxia, yet he draws on connections between ideal pupil behaviours and the types of concentration required to produce observational drawing. In the case of his brother, he appears to relate concentration difficulties with dyslexia. Alex recognises observational drawing practices as being very much at the heart of the regulatory assessment systems of art education and appears disconnected from this centre of practice by a lack of belief in his technical ability to master particular types of representational practice associated with Western perspectival systems which he identifies as clearly connected with drawing from observation. Alex appears to be included via his participation at a 'satisfactory' level, but this excludes him from the exemplary practice he associates with observation and particular forms of representation most clearly identified with Western hegemonic systems.

CHAPTER 9

ELAINE

INTRODUCTION

Elaine is an adult in her mid-twenties and is working as a professional, exhibiting artist. Elaine's narrative offers a significant contrast to those of the other participants. She is the only one of the four included in this research who has continued to study art as a practical subject in higher education. She is also the only one of the four participants who is still actively engaged in the production of art work. The majority of her narrative includes a discussion of drawing practice relating to work done outside of her formal art education. However, it is also her brief reflections on her secondary school art education that provide a significant contrast to the other narratives.

Elaine had worked with technicians when producing work as an undergraduate and they assisted her with aspects of her exhibitions, due to the physical nature of the work she wanted to produce and display, and the coordination difficulties she identified. Examiners on her course challenged her over the amount of help she had received and the connections here between the concept of art production relating to the skilful hand appeared to resonate with Elaine's experiences as an undergraduate on a fine art, sculpture, degree. She discusses drawing from observation as a central aspect of her practice, from the perspective of one who identifies with having a physical disability. The ways in which she has developed strategies to produce and exhibit her work and the ways in which she engaged with physical production of the work was a potential source of tension during the assessment of her final exhibition.

My initial contacts with Elaine were through a number of e-mails. These 'conversations' provided a useful starting point for further discussion and I was also able to view some of the recent work that she was producing via her web pages. There is a difference between the interviews based on transcriptions of the spoken word and these written interactions. E-mails can be modified and edited by the participant prior to sending. They are not the same as the transcribed interviews which did not give the participants the same opportunities for reflection on what had been said, yet they may appear more spontaneous than a formal written account. The e-mails seem to sit somewhere between the spoken and the written word and suggest a different type of communicative space offering links to Elaine's work via the social networking opportunities of 'My Space' which, although immediately accessible, was also transient and is no longer available.

Elaine is the only female participant. The nature of this research does not offer any kind of representative sampling, but the ratio of 3:1 reflects the disparity between male and female pupils recognised as having some form of learning difficulty. Boys in compulsory schooling are more likely to be diagnosed as having dyspraxia

and this may reflect cultural norms about types of behaviour and levels of ability apparent in a gendered diagnosis. Following a medical model of diagnosis it is argued that boys are more prone to dyspraxia and dyslexia (Portwood, 2003), yet this is acknowledged here as a contested terrain was discussed in Chapter 4.

Elaine was anxious to establish the disputed nature of her perceived disability, acknowledging that she was unsure as to whether her coordination difficulties were associated with dyspraxia or not. The difficulty with diagnosis and the degree of comorbidity for those with dyspraxia was also discussed in Chapter 4, and the inability to determine what some might describe as a 'clean sample' is highly problematic (Rosengren and Bradwell, 2003). The suggestion of dyspraxia potentially being, or not being, a factor in particular experiences appears to reflect the context specificity of this learning related disability. Elaine wrote:

I am not actually diagnosed with dyspraxia therefore it is unclear whether my coordination difficulties are a result of undiagnosed dyspraxia or of my muscle condition (which is neurological). If I am still of use to your research please let me know.

I decided that Elaine was of 'use' and that her reflections offered some distinct differences to the experiences of others. The focus on drawing from observation, art production and physical coordination and definitions of ability make Elaine's short narrative highly relevant.

Elaine was working as a professional artist and exhibiting her work at the time of this first contact, moving from a comparatively supported environment, with the potential for technical assistance in higher education, to a more isolated position without the infrastructure of technical support provided at her university and, arguably, without the technical support that might be afforded by a more established or affluent artist. The type of art production that she has engaged with may be perceived as constrained by physical limitation yet can also be considered in terms of offering different types of potential and the opportunity for participation. Elaine suggested that her difficulty in working with 'traditional' sculptural materials and techniques enabled her to develop work with a difference, and she appeared to embrace the opportunities that using a range of materials presented for her.

I have learnt that certain ways of working suit me more than others. My disability makes it difficult to operate a spot welder (although I really enjoy welding). However, I am fine with sewing, casting, simple woodwork and gluing things together. I find that this gives me quite a lot of scope and that in a sense the limitations give my work a unique edge (there are a lot of massive metal sculptures about but not many people make work with liquid silicone!)

Her reference to a contemporary female artist, Tracy Emin, and the use of stitched fabric to develop sculptural forms also appears to have provided an opportunity for working in accessible and less traditional ways and again this type of contemporary art influence singles out Elaine's experiences as distinct from the other participants.

At school I enjoyed papier-mâché. I liked making 3D forms even then. Also I did a lot of collage/painting as I was/am interested in texture. There was not

much opportunity to do sculpture but I did sculpture where possible. In my A levels I moved from papier-mâché to stitched fabric inspired by Tracy Emin.

This chapter offers a story of exception to the other narrative cases and provides a breach in the reading of the participants' experiences. To some extent her case offers points of departure from school practice and, therefore, discussion of observational drawing practices that sit outside the regulatory discourses of compulsory education and the systems of assessment associated with it. There is a sense that she acknowledges that she is decentered from a 'norm' of physical activity, yet she discusses her participation from within a centre of participation in art practice. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, there are a number of centres of practice. Elaine, acknowledging a physical disability, may be perceived of as excluded from participation in some activities (such as spot welding on large metal sculptures), yet as a practising artist she may also appear as an 'authentic' participant in art practice, a status from which even the most physically 'gifted' of pupils would be excluded by their association with school art practice, as opposed to being an exhibiting and practising artist.

Elaine's experiences of working from observation are discussed as the following narrative themes: the first offers an exploration of the apparent focus on 'accuracy' and 'perfection' in association with an 'ideal' perception of observational drawing and the subsequent tensions for Elaine's art practice; the second narrative centres on the existence of private spaces for observational drawing and the subsequent permission this establishes for the production of 'messy' drawings; and the final theme relates to the connection between the ownership of observational practice and the relationship with the ways in which personal knowledge about the environment may be sought. The narratives are discussed under the following headings:

- Accuracy and perfection as ideal observational practice
- Private spaces and messy drawings
- Owning observation as personal knowledge seeking

ACCURACY AND PERFECTION AS IDEAL OBSERVATIONAL PRACTICE

When asked directly about her experiences of drawing from observation, Elaine indicated that this had formed a significant part of her school experience, but she was keen to emphasise that the approach taken by her teacher prioritised 'mark-making and expression' rather than accuracy. Elaine makes a connection between accuracy and drawing from observation. What is also significant is the role that the teacher may play in the reinforcement or challenging of certain views on what may or may not constitute drawing from observation. However, although Elaine's teacher did not focus on the role of accuracy, Elaine describes her own frustrations with her perceived inability to draw accurately.

Claire: I would be really interested to know about your school experiences of art and design particularly drawing. Did you do much drawing of observed objects?

Elaine: Yes we did quite a lot [of drawing from observation] however the teacher was more interested in mark-making and expression so accuracy was

CHAPTER 9

not too much of an issue however, I am a perfectionist and have always been frustrated by my lack of accuracy.

Elaine described herself as a perfectionist suggesting that she connected the concepts of drawing from observation with accuracy and perfection. The association between this particular art practice and concepts of 'high quality' in the term perfection (with all the associations with flawlessness, faultlessness, precision, rightness and excellence) suggests that Elaine was striving for this within her own drawing but had been unable to produce work of the 'right' type. Elaine was clear that her teacher was less likely to focus on accuracy and their interest in mark-making and expression, as a way in which one might respond to drawing from observation, suggests that the focus may have been on something other than a closed representation in a particular style, with 'expression' possibly suggesting a personal response and a degree of freedom to make marks that may not have been 'accurate'. Ruskin (2007:22) connects a slow controlled mark with accuracy where 'the real difficulty and masterliness is in never letting the hand *be* free, but keeping it under entire control at every part of the line'. Here accuracy is connected not with visual similarity but with the physical control exerted over the drawing. It is impossible to know what Elaine's teacher would have been interested in but the suggestion that it was Elaine that strove for perfection and accuracy is marked out as different from the motives and expectations of the teacher. Although Elaine might regulate her own drawing practice, there is a sense that permission appears to have been given, by the teacher, for a range of responses to drawing from observation.

Observational drawing is identified with a range of purposes not only representation. Elaine's description of the centrality of drawing in her work as an artist offers a range of different perspectives, as she appears to use drawing in a number of different ways. She describes drawing and observation as removed from her own descriptions of striving for perfection whilst at school, as she uses drawing for a range of purposes, none of which seem dependent on the degree of accuracy previously described.

Claire: Do you do this [drawing from observation] now as part of your own work?

Elaine: Sometimes, usually at the beginning of a project. If I am doing site-specific work I usually start by drawing bits of the site I am interested in. I find this a useful way of familiarising with the surroundings. I usually also take photos as I draw small details, as these usually interest me more than the whole and I need a wider more accurate perspective as well.

The role of drawing from observation in this description does not relate to a particular style of representation but the use of looking and drawing as a way of understanding the environment. The drawing product appears to become less relevant and the drawing activity is also supplemented by the use of photographs. Interestingly Elaine shifts from drawing to photography, employing a different type of technology in order to include a 'more accurate perspective', suggesting that this would not be realised in her drawing but that 'accuracy' is both desirable and necessary in

informing her work. Here the ‘freedom’ to select technology to support the nature of her observations marks a distinction between her experiences and the experiences outlined in the previous case studies.

Elaine describes working in an autonomous way. Others do not direct the drawings that she produces and she uses drawing as a tool, which is only one part of the making/understanding process. The drawings are process rather than product focused and the elements of observation do not relate to an attempt at reproduction of an external referent, but are rather a means of developing her understanding of the local environment. What is also significant in her descriptions of autonomous activity is the absence of teacher in conceptualising the work, and as audience and assessor. She decides the focus of the drawing activity and employs drawing for different purposes dependent on the context. The drawing, to develop her understanding, does not sit within an educational context. It is for personal use and is therefore different to the observational drawings described in the other narratives where the drawing products could be seen as having a role in the assessment process and therefore a role in the formation of particular learner identities. Although Elaine describes these drawings as objects she might learn through, they are not formalised within an educational setting. Paradoxically, this description of drawing as removed from a formal education setting appears to offer opportunities for learning to take place (Baldacchino, 2008) and this is confirmed by the way Elaine positions the drawings for her own reference. I asked her about the role that drawing had for her:

Claire: Do you do any drawing now?

Elaine: Yes but mainly for personal reference however I am producing some sculptures with drawn elements at the moment.

Claire: What types of drawing?

Elaine: The sculpture with drawn elements involves very simplistic drawn shapes that work within an overall form and become 3 dimensional. They draw different elements of a place together and are intended to be semi recognisable as wallpaper/furniture patterns but also suggestive of natural growths. So I would describe them as sculptural drawings - they take on form and shape and both encompass and transcend observation.

Elaine described drawing as having a central role in her art production, but in this description her sculpture work and the description of her drawings begin to merge into sculptural drawings that involve recording from observation but are discussed as objects that go beyond what has been observed. The observed element, although directly related to the art product, is acknowledged as not the only element of this work. Elaine’s use of the word ‘transcend’ is significant here since by definition the work she produces appears to have more value than only as a product of observation, suggesting that they go above and beyond a direct representation. This sense of departure between her work and the objects she observed is recognised as a strength rather than the weakness that was alluded to in previous narratives, and there is also some resonance with the ideas of Ruskin and Blake (discussed in Chapter 5) where observation as representation and imitation is perceived as inadequate and

the imaginative ‘difference’ that can be inserted by the artist adds value. Within this discussion the observational drawing shifts from representation as reproduction to the production of something new and unique.

Elaine experiences drawing from observation as a central and integral aspect of her art practice. It is employed as a technology that promotes her participation, although it is only one way in which she gathers ideas and information that inform her practice. She can work autonomously to move between different ways of observing in order to devise the most appropriate forms of production for her purpose. It is possible to consider Elaine’s participation with and through drawing from observation as an ‘ideal’ participation in learning and practice. In decentering observational drawing from a formal learning environment it emerges here as a narrative space for being included in a centre of learning. Elaine appears less subject to concepts of regulation than other participants. However, it may also be possible to consider Elaine as a product of particular forms of regulatory power that have created her as a disciplined subject now trained in the processes and practices of meaningful participation. It is also possible that Elaine’s drawing practice, authenticated by her status as an art graduate, now has a different type of ‘symbolic power’ by which she can participate in ‘a field of restricted production’ (Bourdieu, 1993:15). Elaine as a practising artist sits within a different type of cultural field from those involved within a compulsory art education setting and, as such, she may be perceived as a legitimate player.

PRIVATE SPACES AND MESSY DRAWINGS

As well as this combined sculpture/drawing product, Elaine describes ‘sketches’, and the way in which these other drawings are described distinguishes them from other more formal drawing. A sketch by definition implies something that is unfinished, or a starting point, again locating this type of work as process rather than product focused. She said:

I also sketch. My sketches are a way of jotting down ideas and are done with whatever I have access to biro/eyeliner/pencil or whatever I have to hand, flyers/bits of newspaper/sketchpad. They are intended for my reference only and include bits of annotation. They are messy and would confuse a more ordered mind.

Elaine’s descriptions of this type of drawing define the playful, haphazard approach as she works with a range of materials, on surfaces that suggest she is not overly concerned with her idea of ‘perfection’ discussed earlier. Elaine is very clear about defining these sketches as being for her personal use only, indicating that they might also include written notes. Lastly, she confirms the preparatory and personal use of these sketches as she defines them as ‘messy’. Here messiness is associated not only with her sketches but also possibly as a representation of the way she thinks, as she suggests that they might confuse others with less messy minds. The sketches appear to operate as a way of thinking and Elaine has created a private space to engage with the ‘mess’ of thinking and making. She has permission here to work in ways that others, possibly as potential critics, may not understand. However, ‘mess’, by being a covert

activity, may be perceived as having less legitimacy rather than being a way of working that acknowledges complexity and difficulty with the representation of particular ideas and contemporary life and culture (Law, 2004). Here messiness is associated with less than ideal types of behaviour. It is interesting, in light of the focus for this research, that the drawings done for her personal use are described as 'messy' and that this is perceived of as a reason why others may not understand them fully. This separation of 'messy' appears to remove Elaine from a centre of ordered logical practice and ideal 'pupil' behaviour more appropriate to be observed by others. It may be argued that Elaine regulates her own practice in this respect.

Elaine monitors her own work and has different spaces for different ways of drawing. As an exhibiting artist she is aware that her work will have an audience, yet the ways that her work might be judged or assessed are not formalised within educational structures. However, she still shares the experiences of other participants who all, to some degree, regulate their own behaviours in anticipation of the judgements, or misunderstandings, of others. Although Elaine is free from some of the constraints offered by formal educational experiences, her art practice still sits within a cultural context where she is conscious of the different ways in which her drawings might be viewed. Drawings that may appear confused or messy are for a restricted audience of one.

Elaine referred to the messiness of her drawings again in a later email, this time in response to an exhibition of Rodin's work, where his drawings appeared to offer Elaine permission for her drawings to be messy and disordered:

My favourite artist I studied at school was Rodin. I recently saw his drawings at the Royal Academy and was happy to see that they are messy and disordered too!

Elaine, in making the connection between her work and that of a well-established artist, was happy to be able to make this connection. Rodin's work is publicly displayed at the Royal Academy and this confirms the authority of his apparently messy and disordered work, amplifying the validation for Elaine's own practice.

OWNING OBSERVATION AS PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE SEEKING

The range of Elaine's work provides a useful starting point in relation to definitions of drawing. Although her work is sculptural she also describes it as 'drawings in paper'. There is an extended concept of what drawing might be and a blurring of the boundaries between pieces in two and three dimensions. She described her recent work as 'an exhibition of paper sculptures' that incorporated drawing and there is no clear delineation between these aspects of her practice.

Elaine introduced herself as a recent graduate who had experienced some challenges in producing and exhibiting her work, and there is an early acknowledgement of the differentiation between the technical and cognitive aspects of art production. Although it appears that this technical dimension relates to hanging the work, she acknowledged that in work such as installation, it is as much about the making as the display. Elaine is clear that it is she, and not the technicians, that have produced the work although there is a potential distancing between her and

CHAPTER 9

the actual physical production as a whole. This appears highly significant particularly because of the emphasis given to the development of individual technical skills for Matthew. When she described trying to persuade others to help her with aspects of the making process she was clear about her own role in the technical production and her ownership of the work.

Elaine: I did a sculpture degree. At first I found the technical side really difficult particularly installation (not great at hanging my work but getting better with practice) I still find some things difficult and now have to rely on myself a lot more as I used to get a lot of help from technicians at uni and now work mostly on my own however, I am adapting quite well. Sometimes I do bribe people with dinner/alcohol to help me make things however I still consider these to be my work as I came up with the design and how they would be put together but I would say that as an artist I enjoy the hands on aspect of art.

This discussion of a potential support network is interesting in the way in which she acknowledged that there is a distinction between the development of ideas and the ways in which they can be physically realised. She was clear in distinguishing between the physical nature of the production (of which she was keen to emphasise her enjoyment), and the development of ideas and was clear that involving others in the making processes did not negate her role as *the* artist, since it was she who gave the conceptual impetus for the work. The dominance of the physical nature of production and conceptual 'ownership' appears reversed in Elaine's experience and, significantly, she has a greater degree of autonomy over the work she is making.

In comparison, there is no debate about the ownership of her observational drawing practices, which is firmly established as a direct physical negotiation between her, the physical environment and her art production. Observational drawing appears to be non negotiable in its role as a personal technology for the ways in which her work is conceived and exhibited. Although other aspects of her practice might be negotiated by the intervention and support of others, drawing from observation is a direct personal experience central to her art production.

Elaine has just enrolled to start a Post Graduate Certificate in Education in secondary art and design and cited this as a reason why she was particularly interested in being involved in this research. Her story is interesting in terms of the ways in which she may or may not adapt her practices in light of re-entering formal education as a training teacher. Elaine, re-entering the education system as apprentice art teacher will develop and construct her own concepts of what art education might be. Her developing identity as an artist-teacher would form a fascinating further area of work as she is shaped and shapes the educational context she has decided to re-enter as a teacher. The centre she currently inhabits as an exhibiting and practicing artist is potentially shifting to a different type of regulated participation in the production of others' art practice.

CHAPTER 10

A ‘CLUMSY’ ENCOUNTER

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter offers a discussion of a number of significant themes introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, considered in relation to a range of literature in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, together with the narrative case studies. Within this discussion is a specific focus on the following questions:

- How do pupils, with dyspraxia, experience observational drawing practices as part of their secondary art education in the UK?
- Are the concepts of ‘observation’, ‘ideas’ and ‘imagination’ exclusive in the way in which they are defined in relation to art education?
- Does an emphasis on drawing from observation reflect cultural restrictions that may impact on the nature of inclusion in art and design education?
- What contribution can this discussion make to the broader political debate on inclusion, equity and participation in educational practices?

In this book I have examined concepts of inclusion within the context of art and design education and more specifically in relation to drawing from observation. In doing so I have explored this activity as part of a centre of practice defined by skills development, where it is experienced by those who are potentially decentered (Graham and Slee, 2008) from a norm of technical coordination by being defined as dyspraxic. The narrative case studies provide a number of points where drawing from observation and dyspraxic experience meet, touch and in some cases collide. These points of contact offer sites for the exploration of social, educational and aesthetic discussions around the nature of skill, representation, observation and learning, as well as an opportunity to explore those complex systems (Foucault, 1991) that define ‘ability’ and are implicated in educational practices.

The convergence of dyspraxia and drawing from observation demands that hidden discourses, defining and situating both, are given greater visibility by questioning accepted and implicit rituals associated with learning and concepts of ‘the ideal’ learner. The development of education and medical systems of intervention that identify the ‘other’ is significant in this context, since the nature of the research requires the exploration of a ‘medically’ diagnosed learning difficulty, dyspraxia, within the field of art education. The narratives that have emerged can be described as products of these regulatory systems, where discussions of specific aspects of performance and, particularly, assessment and reporting contribute to the pedagogised identity of the learner (Atkinson, 2008).

In the narrative of observational drawing, as a central aspect of art education, the dyspraxic experience might be considered as a breach offering a conscious point of departure from ‘norms’ of practice, based on ‘the skilful hand’. It is possible therefore

to consider the role that observational drawing has in particular processes of normalisation. Breaches in the narrative case studies are drawn on to explore departures from identification with a norm of particular art practices and the norm of the ideal pupil. Here, dyspraxia becomes a lens through which pupil experiences of art education can be viewed, magnifying the role that drawing from observation plays. Participant experiences illustrate some of the limitations of the cultural and educational systems of which they are a part, yet these restrictions could equally have been expressed by any who claim 'I can't draw', regardless of an official recognition or diagnosis of a 'learning difficulty', itself a culturally specific, and contested, term. However, the situated nature of experience, significant for the ways in which participants might be defined as dyspraxic, are also relevant to the ways in which they experience drawing from observation.

DRAWING FROM OBSERVATION AS A DOMINANT DISCOURSE

In answer to the question 'how do pupils with dyspraxia experience observational drawing practices as part of their secondary art education in the UK?' it is possible to consider a range of responses emerging from the narrative case studies. Drawing from observation is experienced as a technology for individualisation and normalisation for Craig, where he referred specifically to this drawing approach as an activity that defined him as 'different' from others in his family. For him, it was their exceptional ability to create particular types of representations rather than their ability to draw from observation that marked him out as comparatively less coordinated and, this was associated with the way in which he defined himself as dyspraxic. Drawing from observation was conflated with a particular type of representation. Although a site for participation, representational ideals appeared to signal an exclusion from art practice, since there was space between legitimate participation and ideal representation.

For Matthew observation was distinctly identified as an element on his school reports, explicitly contributing to the way in which his learning in art was assessed. Within such systems, drawing from observation could also be viewed as a technology for his normalisation since he is 'levelled' according to national standards of performance. The role that drawing had for Alex and Matthew within the examination system contributes to the way in which it might also be described as being implicated in these processes of normalisation. However, these seemed only to confirm their understanding of their inclusion within a 'norm' of frustration with particular forms of representation rather than their exclusion from the 'norm' as talented and exceptional.

Drawing from observation, as a dominant discourse in defining concepts of ability, is an activity that makes a very specific contribution to learner identity in art education. This book has focused on the way in which drawing from observation functions for learners within the context of compulsory education and specifically for pupils in the secondary sector. It can be viewed as a pedagogical tool, employed as a central element in classroom practice. It is a way of recording what can be seen, yet the way that we view the world is contingent on our cultural context, dependent on our social status, ethnicity and gender among other things. Our choice of the

way we record what we perceive, and the ways these drawings are received, and assessed, as process or product, are also dependent on these systems. Drawing from observation is one of many different approaches to drawing that might be employed in art education and, for some, it may be difficult to distinguish between the ranges of functions of different types of drawing, particularly where drawing is conceptualised as one activity that is problematic. However, it is the centrality of a belief that drawing from observation involves representing a non-negotiable universal world view which may contribute to those claims of 'I can't draw'. This positioning of observational drawing within absolute concepts of knowledge creates a particular epistemological perspective that is inherently problematic if it is located as a process associated with learning.

It is, however, not only the drawing that contributes to these particular ways of understanding drawing ability, but also the ways in which language is used to construct or produce these ideas (Atkinson, 2002; Steers, 2003). Therefore the production and experience of observational drawing within a formal school system, where work is described, assessed and reported using specific language, is likely to be very different from the production of observational drawings outside this context. Elaine's experience of using observational drawing to develop an installation project outside a formal learning setting is therefore different to the experience of Matthew who produced a number of observed drawings for his art examinations during Key Stage 3. This is not only because of the intrinsic nature of the drawings but also because of the way they come to represent the producer in the words of an exhibition review or an end of Key Stage report. Although the activity is similar, the context in which this takes place appears significant for the type of learning that might occur.

Drawing from observation provided a common experience for participants. Craig, Matthew, Elaine and Alex were all familiar with this particular approach to drawing and associated it with their formal art education. They were able to articulate their experiences, yet the contexts varied and the situated nature of the activity was significant. Elaine describes drawing from observation outside a formal education setting and as a process for finding out, a means of exploration and inquiry, a way of learning how an object is constructed or how her environment and her work might be connected. It provides a means of working directly with objects with an aim at a developed understanding. Matthew's description of the cockerel drawing provided a similar view. As a process, drawing can allow for error, re-working or further investigation. In drawing from observation it is possible to play or, like Elaine, make 'messy' thinking drawings. Positioned as a product for assessment, for Matthew in school, an observational drawing becomes a different object, located within the examination process as well as other less formalised assessment systems as 'ceremonies of power' (Foucault, 1991) that create significance for such artefacts to become components in the ways in which we, and others, formally construct our judgements about learning and learners.

Alex, Craig and Matthew are all aware of what I will describe for now as an 'internal voice' that has determined that they cannot draw, or rather that they cannot draw well enough. Even Elaine is subjected to this via her claims to be a perfectionist and her concerns with accuracy. The object to be drawn stands as a reminder to

them of the space between the ideal, what is to be drawn, and their own drawing, and their perception of relatively 'high' standards, although culturally constructed and potentially developed by external forces, also appear to be self-imposed. Individuals are regulated by their cultural context, yet also appear as agents who regulate themselves, and drawing becomes a marker for comparison both with the object and with the drawings of others. Social norms relating to concepts of representation and ability in respect of art practice become internalised by the reiteration of such discourses relating to the 'quality' of representation (Butler, 1997:16).

Foucault (1980) identifies certain systems of thought as more or less dominant. This hierarchy is derived from 'discursive relations' by which some discourses are validated and others become subjugated as less valuable. Importantly, this is as a result of social processes and power dynamics that evolve between bodies rather than being imposed on one by the other. The narratives suggest that drawing from observation can act as a dominant discourse by the way in which it is employed to determine individuals' concepts of their own ability and others' concepts of individual pupil ability, yet it is not the physical drawing act that creates the dominance, but the ways in which we come to understand the role of the drawing, and this is framed within linguistic structures. Observational drawing as a dominant discourse therefore relates to the way in which the activity is situated within social settings, in this case the educational context, and the language used to define and describe learners is therefore significant.

Observational drawing is embedded within the social definition of knowledge fully sanctioned and authorised by the examination process. Foucault continues with his description of the examination as a means of identifying and authenticating knowledge transmission and providing an archive of documentation that can serve to identify and describe the specific aptitudes of individuals in order to situate their levels and abilities (Foucault, 1991:184). The examination is firmly connected with the process of normalisation as a mode of exploration of difference and a method of documentation of these differences. The school reports provide the official and expert view of the judgements made on individual attainment and secure the connection to observational drawing as an authorised tool for determining artistic ability. This expert view is not owned by an individual, in the role of the teacher, since they must also act within the systemic practices of curriculum and assessment which in itself might offer internal conflicts for them. Matthew's view, that observational drawing seems less artistic because it does not allow for individual response, is also lost, buried and therefore subjugated as naïve knowledge. Individual teacher responses might equally be subjugated within the processes of assessment and moderation of pupil work within a department, local region, or nationally via the systems that confirm standards and regulate practices.

However, as already discussed, the participants also confirm the central role of realistic representation as a determining factor in their concepts of what constitutes artistic activity. Drawing from observation is described as highly individualised with each pupil engaged in producing their own piece of work that may be perceived of as representing them, or at least a particular aspect of their ability. The drawing product provides a point of reference by which the teacher may make decisions

regarding capacity but each pupil might also gain an understanding of their place in a class order of ability. The drawing, within this context, appears to have an unmediated link with the concept of individual pupil ability.

Observational drawing within formal educational settings is experienced as a dominant discourse through the processes of examination as a controlled and controlling technology, within timed, regulated and observable teaching spaces. This has significance for the ways in which participants described their participation as time dependant and reliant on ideal pupil behaviour of concentrated compliance. Alex identified this as a concern for him but also for his brother, whom he described as unable to participate because of the need for this type of concentrated behaviour. Matthew, Alex and Craig all recounted experiences of drawing from observation as clearly connected with processes of examination. This reinforces drawing from observation as having a central role in determining concepts of ability in art education for these participants. In contrast to this are other forms of art activity apparently free from such constraints, such as 'doodles' and drawings from the imagination which appear to have less of a formal role and sit outside of the legitimising spaces of the examination. The experience of observational drawing as a centre for physical control is reinforced by its position within examination processes and this has significance for the way in which it can be considered as a learning process, an aspect of this discussion to which I will return.

It is probable that my reading of the narratives and my focus on this particular activity has contributed to this definition as a dominant discourse and this is not unproblematic. It is also worth noting that, although drawing from observation may be perceived of as a dominant discourse, it may also be considered as a potentially subjugated discipline area within a lexically based curriculum. Art education in the compulsory education system has less formal curriculum time than English, mathematics and science and is an optional subject beyond Key Stage 3. Participants who experienced challenges in other curriculum areas (such as Matthew and Craig) discussed their experiences of drawing from observation as a comparatively minor aspect of their lives in education, evidenced by them talking more about problematic experiences specifically in relation to subjects that required an emphasis on writing. Drawing from observation might also be revealed as comparatively reduced in influence by the way in which the participants conflated drawing from observation with other aspects of drawing. There is a space between the lived experience of the participants in this respect and the research process, where theorising can magnify, distort or potentially conceal issues that participants may have thought much more important. It is possible to deconstruct this text and the narratives and identify other stories that have been occluded by this further production of a dominant discourse.

THE DRAWING 'PROBLEM'

Considering the 'drawing problem' as a theme in the narratives provides a means for exploring the potentially exclusive nature of observation, ideas and imagination. Drawing was discussed as a problematic activity, and all participants described perceptions of their own abilities in negative terms specifically in relation to drawing,

although this did not always relate to drawing from observation. It is possible to consider the drawing problem as a particular narrative that emerged from my conversations with the participants. Although there was a range of experiences of drawing from observation, concepts of ideal representation appeared to be a source of dissatisfaction. The direct relationship between drawing from observation and representation appeared to make this particular type of drawing more challenging, where the drawing product could be matched not only against the concept of an ideal image but also against the work of others. Perceptions of the quality of drawings produced appeared to create concrete examples of why individuals were 'no good at art' suggesting that, for some, drawing, drawing from observation and 'doing art' were synonymous. Elaine and Alex, although relatively 'successful' in their art production and with formal qualifications in the subject, both described a 'perfectionist' element which located their own drawings as lacking sufficient qualities of representation. Matthew and Craig also acknowledged a gap between concepts of their own ability and the way in which they were able to 'capture' an image through their drawing.

'The drawing problem' was also expressed in comparative terms, where the drawings of others, identified as those who were 'good at art', were described by the ways in which their work appeared to succeed as a representation. Matthew's description of the drawing of one of his peers identifies this feature of the drawing as a means of recognising its quality. Here he identifies Hannah as someone who could draw well and explains the particular aspects of the representation:

... this girl called Hannah in year 7, when we were drawing the trainer- ...do you know how you get running trainers and you've got a bit of material where it like laps over each other? It's got like two materials on? Well she'd drawn one of them and it looked **really** (Matthew's emphasis) good...

This was not only limited to a comparison of ability within the classroom however, and Craig's definition of his father's and brother's artistic skill was also defined by an ability to represent in a 'realistic' way. Craig identifies the distance between him and art production as based on his experiences of the work of his father and brother and his perceptions of their ability.

Art would have been something that was nothing to do with me really and I suspect that is because I grew up in a household where both my father and my brother are incredibly good at art and I don't mean just good at art I mean ... my father...I've seen my father's...my father doesn't paint very often but he can paint very naturalistic and realistic landscapes and my brother – then he did portraits –

The difficulty here is in gaining an understanding of the origins of these particular beliefs about drawing. Although it is possible to consider that these may have been shaped by formal experiences of art education, there is a range of formal and informal experiences that has created this particular view of the function of drawing and, more generically, the function of art. Formal experiences of secondary education are only one aspect of a total and continually expanding and shifting experience. Both Craig and Matthew appear to be offering these others up as examples of an ideal

and there is a sense that it is Hannah and Craig's father who are exceptional in being able to achieve the type of representation described. The extent to which the 'dyspraxic experience' features in this aspect of the narrative is far less evident and not referred to directly by any of the participants. The narrative, 'I can't draw well because I can't represent the objects well enough' is familiar but the extension of this to 'I can't draw well because dyspraxia affects my ability to represent objects well enough' is never made. Although dyspraxia appears to impact on other aspects of school life quite dramatically it appears subordinate rather than integral to the universal cry of 'I can't draw'.

If not desirable, it would certainly be possible to pursue 'individual deficit' through the narratives presented, and some elements of difficulty were recognised by the participants. However, a further exploration of these serves to reinforce the situated nature of the perceived 'problems' that might be identified with dyspraxia. The production of observational drawing is described by Matthew as taking place within a controlled school environment where there is a finite amount of time spent on each activity and where all students need to work at a similar pace. The space and time to draw from observation is regulated and structured by the teacher (who herself is subject to the controls of the timing of the school day, term times and curriculum) and drawing is experienced within this controlled environment. Within an examination, for example, Matthew is required to produce an observational drawing in a set amount of time. All pupils in his class have the same time and the drawing product reflects a normalised concept of what can therefore be achieved. Observational drawing could be described as problematic since Matthew appears to have performed less well than he should because his work is unfinished, yet there may have been others in the group who failed to add detail or who did not complete the drawing and who were not defined as dyspraxic. Although dyspraxia may be offered as a reason why Matthew may not have finished the work as quickly as others, it is the timed dimension to completion that has created a regulative and problematic context for the production of these drawings rather than the specific 'problems' associated with dyspraxia, observation or representation.

Alex and Craig identify problems with understanding perspective. This apparent area of difficulty is referred to in the literature on dyspraxia, particularly in the ways in which three-dimensional forms are represented (Dixon and Addy, 2004). The ability to understand visual, linear perspective systems again appears to be synonymous with an understanding of what a good drawing should include. Alex, although relatively successful in his art production, endorsed by his B grade at Scottish higher level, expressed his frustrations with being unable to draw well enough and related this specifically to the use of perspective, a particular system of drawing, that he suggested he had 'never really mastered':

... my perspective, I know when I've got it down, would be a bit skewed and I was never fantastic with perspective so that was why my drawings always looked a bit too flat or a bit squint – I never really mastered that.

Although his earlier experiences included drawings based on graffiti and street art, the 'higher stakes' work, beyond the equivalent of GCSE demanded that he engage with particular systems of drawing that appear to have defined ability in relation to

his learning of the subject. Although Alex was aware of other means of art production he was also aware of the status of particular forms of representation that were reinforced by the examination systems. He connects his concern with perspective and representation directly with drawing from observation and this becomes a greater 'problem' as his art production is harnessed within processes of assessment at higher levels.

The drawing 'problem' and the mechanical aspects of making the drawing are also worth some discussion. Craig's narrative suggests that drawing from observation might present difficulties since his eyes skipped across the surface of a big blank page, and he indicates that the use of a grid might be useful in providing fixed points within which to locate his drawing. Again Craig draws on a comparison with his father and brother in problematising the way he sees. Here the 'drawing problem' does not relate specifically to methods of representation but to the way in which Craig can manage a particular way of working and is more closely related to the ways in which he has engaged with the drawing process rather than his concept of the drawing product. His description could relate to visual disturbances resulting from dyspraxia (see Chapter 3). Similarly, his description of being heavy-handed and puncturing the page with his pencil, relates to the physical process of drawing rather than the representational product, yet the breach in this drawing narrative results from this being a public act that resulted in him feeling like an 'idiot'. The physical nature of drawing production, however, appears to be less visible in the narratives. Matthew's drawing of a plant form shows a faint image that could not be fully erased and his drawings appear to have been done with a good deal of pressure. Craig's maps were drawn heavily with clear marks carved into the surface of the paper and Craig himself refers to this aspect of his drawing. However, it is the problem of mimetic representation that dominates the heavy handed drawings and the potential for visual disturbance. Any suggestion of individual 'deficit' as a result of dyspraxia appears subordinate to the culturally defined qualities of observed representations.

THE PEDAGOGY OF OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING

I have discussed drawing from observation as a constructed activity, involving looking and creating an action and artefact in response to what has been seen. I have also acknowledged that drawing from observation can be employed for a range of different purposes. As an activity related to learning, drawing from observation might offer a means by which pupils might learn about what is being observed by providing opportunities for close and focused looking. The drawing produced however, also functions within the educational process as evidence of pupil learning, yet it is possible to question whether drawing from observation can provide a learning process for pupils as well as a product of learning which becomes an artefact for assessment.

Baldacchino (2008) describes art education as a construct and a paradox. The ways in which art education needs to be reified within the formal structures of education contradicts the specificity of art as a subject. He suggests:

If art conforms it has no use to learning. If it becomes synonymous with learning then it is not art anymore. If there is such a thing as art's pedagogical

objective, it remains that of expressing, sustaining and fulfilling such a double bind, such a paradox. (p. 242)

It is possible therefore to question the extent to which drawing from observation can operate as a tool for learning within the current concept of art education. The artefact used to assess pupil learning does not necessarily reflect an engagement with learning nor may it reflect a connection with the principles of art practice. Drawing and observation have a central role in art education practices, and there may be an implicit assumption that they have a significant role in learning, yet it is possible to contest this assumption since in some cases it may have little to do with learning at all. It is difficult to understand how much learning is happening through and as a result of this activity and what the nature of this learning might be. Pupils produce observed drawings in an educational context but this does not necessarily mean that they learn simply by engaging with the activity. However we might also ask if this is not a 'learning based' activity, then what might it be? What role or function does it perform and why does it appear to occupy such a central role? If we accept that it has a central role in learning, then this might also force us to question our concepts of what constitutes learning and the nature of the relationship between physical control and 'ideal' pupil behaviours.

Alternatively, we may well consider that drawing from observation offers some opportunities for learning to take place. Matthew, in describing his 'cockrel drawing', offers a convincing argument for employing it as a means of being able to find out types of visual information that could not easily be gathered via the use of secondary sources. In this respect, observation provides a context for inquiry and research, both justified as aspects of learning. This differs from his description of the examinations he has undertaken. The aim here appears for him to employ techniques in order to demonstrate what has been learnt, yet the arrangement, choice and production of the drawings may have provided him with the opportunity to learn via the construction and re-working of his drawing in a relatively autonomous way, via the exam, within a managed environment. Craig's brief description of recording his clay tower via the use of drawing however suggests limited opportunities for learning. He appears to have been directed to draw his tower, perhaps to offer an additional piece of work for his examination and as a two dimensional re-working of ideas already realised in clay. Again this may suggest the positioning of observational drawing as evidence of what has been learned rather than what can be learned, largely as a result of this being performed as part of an exam. Elaine's experiences might offer a 'de-schooled' (Baldacchino, 2008) perspective on observational drawing which appears to have intrinsic value for her in enabling her to identify particular features of the environment in which her work will be displayed and this appears to be an 'authentic' informal form of learning.

Cannatella (2004) extols the virtues of working directly from observation connecting the mimetic process with learning, yet the product of observation does not necessarily reflect the full learning experience for the pupil. Drawing from observation is described as an experiential process by Matthew and Elaine and as more than a product related activity. However, the whole experiential nature of working directly happens not only via representation of what can be seen and recorded with

a pencil, and Matthew's amusing description of the sounds of the cockerels he had to draw emphasises the multi-sensory nature of this type of experiential learning. The 'cock a doodle doo' of the cockerel is lost in Matthew's pencil and pencil crayon drawing of the bird. This multi-sensory activity may have generated a number of different types of work, yet the class were directed to represent the cockerel in a particular way. Matthew's assessed drawing was significantly removed from his experience of the event and could be assessed on accuracy, detail, use of colour and whether or not it had sufficient detail, applying some of the language used on previous reports he had received for art. The drawing product is safe, restrictive and peculiarly removed from the excitement of the experience. It also reflects an ocularcentric view of what might be represented from such an experience. Observational drawing does not necessarily result in exclusion from a centre of practice, yet its relationship with assessment may result in some becoming decentered from learning by such ritualistic practice.

If we do accept that aspects of the narratives connect drawing from observation with learning, it is possible to assert that they reflect a very particular form of learning which positions the learner as receptor rather than co-creator of knowledge. In order to provide a context for this argument, I will briefly outline ideas from Poerksen (2005) and Baxter Magolda (1992) both of whom discuss epistemological development as it relates to learning. Atkinson (2006) identifies a similar discussion, drawing on the work of Cattegno who refers to the 'subordination of learning to teaching'.

Poerksen (2005) discusses concepts of 'learning how to learn' within the context of university education, where students and teachers need to engage in a dialogue that is built on mutual uncertainty in order to avoid the problems of the teaching dominating the learning paradigm. Poerksen, referring to the work of Heinz von Foerster, discusses particular epistemological positions and the 'central paradox' (p. 475) of education which at once aims to develop autonomous individuals and needs to employ a set of checks in order to force attendance and punish failures. Poerksen describes the teaching paradigm designed for knowers to transform their students. Here teaching is described as a means of dividing knowledge into digestible chunks and transmitting these portions in the most effective way. He describes the teaching paradigm:

In a game like this, learners are passive recipients; they listen, take notes and try to comprehend what the teachers mean...It is immediately obvious that that knowledge is here understood as some transferable objectified product of thought... (p. 472)

Similarly, Baxter Magolda (1992) proposes a continuum of learning where the initial stages of knowing relate to absolute forms of knowledge similar to those described by Poerksen. Here students identify knowledge from a dualistic position of right or wrong, a characteristic of the nature of empirical 'observational objectivity' associated with drawing from observation (Riley, 2008). Although this work is proposed in a very different context, that of higher education, the emphasis on drawing as an activity that can be 'right' or 'wrong' positions the school learner as one with an absolute concept of knowledge. The narratives that have emerged from the

participants' stories is one of 'getting it right', where drawing from observation is directly connected with a concept of achieving a correct answer. Although this is connected with the representation of an ideal reality (Atkinson, 2002), it also potentially identifies a particular epistemological position on the part of pupil and teacher. If drawing from observation has a pedagogic role, then this adherence to concepts of right and wrong suggest that these learners are positioned within an 'absolute stage of knowing' (Moon, 2006).

Within this absolute concept of knowledge, learners are reflecting a transmissive experience where individuals, directed to draw an object, do so within the concept of re-producing a 'correct' image rather than producing a mimetic piece of work, and Matthew's comment 'it isn't really your work' is telling of this type of directed non-dialogic experience. There does not seem to be room for him in this activity, and this leads Matthew to suggest that this type of work 'isn't really art' since it does not allow for individual response but instead the re-presentation of objects in a way that others have determined. He appears to prioritise the role of autonomy as central to his view of what constitutes art production, suggesting that Matthew considers that there needs to be a degree of agency for his work to become defined as 'art'.

Drawing from observation could be a tool for purposeful learning, yet may also exist within a closed definition of a learning activity. The representation of an object through looking and drawing suggests the representation of an image in a particular and prescribed way. The arguments proposed for drawing from observation as an essential aspect of art practice may locate this within a particular domain as a pedagogical tool. The location of the external referent by which we may check our drawing might suggest that we can modify our drawing in response to an answer. Certainly the narratives here reflect a very strong sense of getting the drawing right and the suggestion here is that there are not multiple, differing answers but a definitive version of knowledge captured in the form of an accurate drawing.

The positioning of observational drawing within this absolute concept of knowledge is also confirmed by the way in which individuals attempted to subvert the observational process and 'cheat' in order to produce a better drawing. Matthew described 'making up' an aspect of his drawing, and he was aware that this moved the activity away from the one that the teacher had designed. This story of drawing, removed from what could be directly observed, could only be framed within the realms of cheating because the drawing activity had been established as one which demanded a correct and, by implication incorrect, response. Similarly, Craig's description of himself as devious in the creation of his clay tower allows for him to build mistakes into the making process. The presence of mistakes in the ruined tower is only possible because Craig has subverted the making process to include mistakes. This suggests that mistake-making has no valid presence in the making process and is only included as a result of Craig's devious act. In contrast his description of drawing the tower and slowly and carefully trying to 'get the image of it' shuts down the potential for exploration and devious trickery. Craig appears less subversive in his description of drawing from observation.

'Mistake-making', 'playing' via doodles (as unstructured and unauthorised drawing) and the 'erasure' of work can all be discussed from this epistemological

positioning of drawing from observation as approaches that might offer opportunities to move away from the transmissive and absolute. Concepts of mistake-making suggests that there is a right and wrong way of making a drawing, yet the legitimised place of mistake-making can offer 'low risk' learning activities where pupils may readily make mistakes as part of their learning, with few consequences. Those who draw with confidence are not those who do not make mistakes but those who realise the role that error can have and have the confidence to work with it. Matthews (2003) argues that the role of mistake making is essential as part of learning. Within high risk learning activities, those that might directly contribute to formal summative assessment however, mistakes may be framed differently as evidence that the learner has not learnt effectively. For Craig, an initial mistake made him feel 'like an idiot' and required him to start again. Those who are confident with drawing are not unlikely to make mistakes but may work more confidently with the mistakes that they may have made. Elaine's discussion of the space she has created for messy work as a means of thinking through ideas is removed from the gaze of others who may have found it incomprehensible yet it appears to work for her as a means of using observation to think through ideas. However, she has created a private space for this learning.

The work of John Holt (1982) is useful here. His discussion of the place that fear has in producing particular types of learners is apposite. Holt defines intelligence as knowing how to behave when we don't know what to do (also a key concept in 'learning to learn' developed by Claxton, 2004), but he suggests that the education system encourages fear and compliance and learners less likely to take this kind of responsibility for their own learning. Like Poerksen, he identifies the teaching paradigm as one characterised by positivistic concepts of knowledge, where uncertainty is unwelcome, feared and seldom modelled by teachers. The role of fear is acknowledged here by Holt as a method of control related to a concept of correct and incorrect which can be employed most effectively if the teacher can convey a sense of the omniscient expert as one who owns the correct answers. Concepts of knowledge and learning are therefore connected here with certain types of learning and teaching behaviour. Within this paradigm mistakes are feared rather than being perceived of as an acceptable and vital source for learning. The ways that we negotiate and demonstrate mistake-making and the way in which we convey our understanding of the role and value of mistakes can be a key way in which we can encourage pupils to engage with this aspect of their learning. The narratives, with their strong emphasis on correct representation and 'getting it right', appeared to reflect compliance, certainty and a positivistic approach to knowledge.

Within formal, compulsory education attention is paid to the ways in which marks are made (and handwriting produced) and this may be reflected in an assessment of the learning that has/has not taken place. It is not only what is signified by the pictorial representations of the drawing (Atkinson, 2002) but what is communicated by the physical properties of the drawing or the handwriting. Just as we might misunderstand the symbolic signification of a drawing, we might also misconstrue the physical properties of the mark and this misunderstanding is framed within our ways of thinking about what might constitute good or bad drawing and, by implication, good

or bad learning. A comparatively uncoordinated mark might be read as the product of a careless or apathetic learner.

Drawing on some of the language used on art subject reports for Matthew, we could devise a linguistic framework reminiscent of Bourdieu's antagonistic adjectives (Bourdieu, 1984:468) to identify desirable attributes in pupils work and therefore in the pupils themselves, where speed, focus, depth, detail, care, thought and consistency are seen as desirable qualities and areas in which these pupils could make improvements. The slow and laborious identified by Bourdieu are undesirable qualities in relation to the development of the art skills outlined and are equally undesirable learner attributes. An element such as time becomes a significant feature that may prevent work from appearing detailed or make marks seem careless and therefore lacking in thought, and this has implications for the ways in which learners are created.

Mistakes may not always be perceived as intrinsic to learning however. In terms of the 'heavy handed' marks made by Craig and Matthew, these are marks, drawings etched into the surface, make it difficult to remove completely. The errors, defined by the will to erase, cannot fully be removed and are evident in the finished work. The distinction between the light and heavy allows some to mask the stages of the work, erasing to conceal the mistake, providing a façade of unpractised expertise. Where the marks are heavy, thick and laborious, the learner is exposed and the errors are visible, betraying an uncertainty that may be better left concealed. The evidence of error in marks that cannot be removed situate process too heavily within a product assessed as the representation of a skilled hand.

LEARNING 'DIFFICULTY'

Difficulty does not necessarily present a problem. To be 'difficult' does not suggest that the activity should be avoided, and working with concepts, ideas or practical experience that provides some challenge is accepted as a significant element of learning. Consider Vygotsky (2002) and the Zone of Proximal Development, which proposes scaffolded support for the ways in which we learn, recognising that difficulty, and movement from unfamiliar to familiar, is part of the learning process. However, the idea that a particular group might be presented with quite specific difficulties has further implications. If we consider a group identified as such by a learning difficulty (dyspraxia or dyslexia), and suggest that *they* have particular difficulties with their learning, we are suggesting that it is *their* ability to learn that creates the difficulty. The activity or learning object is not perceived as problematic since it is the learner who *has* a 'problem'. The learner is identified as defective or pathologised, and particular or 'special' interventions are put in place to support those learners. Teaching seemingly remains the constant as does the curriculum, as a rigid national and regulatory structure (Atkinson, 2002, 2008) which determines a centre from which individual learners can be identified as removed.

It can be argued that drawing directly from objects offers specific difficulties for all who engage with it. There are difficulties that are inherent with this type of activity, such as the demands of converting 3D objects to 2D, occlusion, foreshortening of objects, capturing movement in subjects that are not still, proportion, use of

perspective. Yet, thinking about those difficulties in representation, I am automatically perceiving this activity within the Western tradition and thinking about the challenges of particular types of representation. Drawing by looking and recording may be perceived as inherently difficult, yet I argue here that it is the context for the activity that shapes these particular difficulties within an educational setting. The concept of individual difficulty, not inherently problematic, becomes problematised within the normalising structures of formal education that prioritises the finding of answers above the posing of questions (Holt, 1982; Poerksen, 2005).

With Bourdieu's (1984) exploration of 'disgust at the facile', difficulty is viewed as desirable since it renders certain activities as less accessible to the majority, thus preserving the privileged position of the few. The predominance of difficulty within a discipline can contribute to the preservation of an elite group and offers a rationale for the rejection of moves towards inclusion as a 'diluting' and democratising principle. Bourdieu (ibid: 469) discusses the opposition between the elite of the dominant and the mass of the dominated. Within this context, 'levelling' 'trivialisation' or 'massification' are all undesirable since they relate to cultural decline via homogeneity. The 'facile', connected with ease of production or lack of challenge in understanding ('a child could do it'), becomes synonymous with a lack of worth since, in becoming achievable, the object is at once devalued. Bourdieu's (1993:8) discussion of habitus is also worth revisiting since difficulty appears to be a central aspect of becoming 'legitimate' within certain social organisations. Simple participation in activities is not enough in itself, since Bourdieu argues that entrance to a field or becoming 'legitimate' means some degree of gain. The possibility that a majority might have the knowledge, skill or talent to become legitimate would, by implication, make this less desirable. Concepts of difficulty and realization of the ideal are therefore a necessity in maintaining an elite practice.

Observational drawing appears to be framed as a difficult activity where 'success' via the creation of a suitably realistic drawing is unachievable for the majority. Other types of activity, Matthew's 'doodles', Alex's graffiti drawings and Craig's maps are all valued by them and, in their explanations, comparatively easily produced. However, they also appear to have less value, sitting outside of formal recognition systems. For Matthew, these drawings are not visible on his subject reports and it may therefore be argued that they lack the 'official recognition' of his teacher, but he also, in discussing the ability of others, discriminates against this type of drawing when he suggests that drawing from the imagination is not enough to secure the title of being 'good' at art. Similarly, Alex describes the success of his graffiti based work for GCSE equivalent, yet he is constant in his belief that it is the representational aspects of the subject that equate with high quality, and this is confirmed by the focus on observational drawing at higher level. His explanation of his wish to study the Dutch masters for his degree confirms the centrality of depiction of the 'real' within his concept of what art should be. For Alex, the representation of reality removes him from art production and situates him as a student who no longer engages with the difficulty of physical engagement through drawing.

Within the discussion of observational drawing practice the 'difficulty' inherent in representation appears to be accepted and acceptable as a common experience.

This appears to be less readily associated with learner pathology than an acceptance that 'talent' should only lie with a few (Eisner, 1972). However, handwriting 'problems' have very different implications, resulting in the identification of 'specific learning difficulties' and the potential exclusion from learning opportunities in the cases of Matthew and Craig.

The clumsy encounter between the dyspraxic ideal and drawing from observation opens other spaces for discussion of inclusive learning environments. Matthew, Craig, Alex and Elaine all described levels of participation with their art and design education, and their narratives can be described as being plotted by the ways in which they recounted experiences that signalled shifts to and from a centre of participation in art practice. For Matthew and Craig there were particular breaches in their stories of participation in education signalled not by their experiences of observational drawing but by their experiences of writing which provided an exclusionary context for their apparent lack of coordination. Their dyspraxic experience connects with observational drawing in a way that emphasises the marginal nature of art and design as a curriculum subject. In exploring the dyspraxic experience of inclusion in art education there is a twist in the tale, where it is evident that drawing from observation is a minor concern. There is a paradox here in discussing the centrality of drawing from observation. In considering the ways in which participants have experienced drawing from observation, it is possible that they may have engaged with it as a comparatively minor activity free from the high risk focus of the literacy based curriculum. Art activity for Craig and Matthew, although identified as something that they were not particularly good at, provided a comparatively safe place and a space for a more meaningful participation than could have been achieved via other curriculum areas based on the need to write legibly.

CONCLUSION

I have interrogated the complexity of observational drawing as a specific practice not within a closed community of art education but within the social and cultural domain of other critical debates within education, specifically those related to inclusion. The aim has been to explore the complexity of these sites and disrupt approaches that might seek to rationalise and compartmentalise educational experiences.

In considering the narratives it is possible to suggest that drawing from observation does function as an 'official' discourse in that it has a significant role in the orthodoxy of art education, a central and defined role that extends to its use as an assessment activity. It is official because it is part of legitimised activity organised and planned by the teacher within a set of systems that are regulated for teacher and pupil and which come to define the nature of art education and concepts of ability. Arguably it may also exist as a non-dialogic process closing down the opportunities for learning where the pupil is cowed by the experience of aiming to represent a concept of reality that remains elusive. However, I would argue that this is as much defined by the human experience as it is by the dyspraxic.

This book offers a reappraisal of observational drawing as a technology for learning, placing a particular emphasis on participants' experiences. It offers a

CHAPTER 10

contribution to the broader discussion regarding inclusion and participation by interrogating implicit and accepted practices. It acknowledges the need to develop forms of professional practice in art education that become resilient by being informed and in so being offer a form of 'academic assertiveness' (Moon, 2009) in the ways in which art education can be reconceptualised. This assertiveness can emerge from reflection and the development of research that seeks to question assumptions about traditional practices.

It is necessary to revisit observational drawing and to question and enhance the role it has in learning for all pupils, not only those who appear to display particular 'talent'. The aim is not to undermine the role that observational drawing might play in art education but to reflect on the ways in which it is positioned as a technology for learning and the ways in which it is perceived by participants in this book to be central to assessment. There is a place for understanding the context and role of drawing from observation and for making this explicit to teachers and learners in order for it to be more usefully employed by both. There is also space to contest the connections between art education and concepts of physical skill. The meeting of the dyspraxic ideal and drawing from observation is a clumsy encounter yet, in creating a disruption, it provides a rich context for further learning.