CHAPTER 2

DRAWINGS AS RESEARCH METHOD

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INTRODUCTION

The use of drawings in social research is located within several broad yet overlapping areas of contemporary study. These include arts-based or arts-informed research (Knowles & Cole, 2008), participatory visual methodologies (De Lange, Mitchell, & Stuart, 2007; Rose, 2001), textual approaches in visual studies in the social sciences (Mitchell, 2011), as well as the use of drawings in psychology. For a number of decades—possibly from as early as 1935 (MacGregor, Currie, & Wetton, 1998)—psychologists and researchers have engaged children and adults in activities using varied forms of a 'draw-and-write' or 'draw-and-talk' technique that have facilitated the rich exploration of children's and adults' reflections, perceptions, and views on multiple topics and phenomena (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Furth, 1988; Guillemin, 2004; MacGregor et al., 1998; Mair & Kierans, 2007). Drawings have long been used by psychologists to measure cognitive development (Goodenough, 1926) and as a projective technique (with adults as well as with children) to explore conscious and unconscious issues and experiences. In a very real sense, drawings make parts of the self and/or levels of development *visible*.

Working with the visual is far from simple, and there are competing theories of practice about how best to use drawings and other visual texts in social research. Within the art-making community, some will argue that the art or visual text speaks for itself and that the drawing, collage, or performance exists precisely because the idea is not easily expressed in words. As Weber (2008) observed, "Images can be used to capture the ineffable …. Some things just need to be shown, not merely stated. Artistic images can help us access those elusive hard-to-put-into-words aspects of knowledge that might otherwise remain hidden or ignored" (p. 44). As researchers in the area of arts-based methodologies highlight, meaning-making through the arts is full of complexity and the artistic products are themselves texts to be read and interpreted by their producer and their audiences, including researchers. At the same time, the use of drawing as a research method typically involves more than just engaging participants in making drawings, followed by the researcher's analysis of these artefacts. When drawing is used as a research method, it often entails participants' drawing and talking or drawing and writing (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Guillemin, 2004; MacGregor et al., 1998; Mair & Kierans, 2007) about the meaning embedded in their drawing. The drawer's context (both present and past) colours what is drawn, how it is drawn,

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and what the drawing represents. As such, drawing as a research tool is often complemented by verbal research methods (Guillemin, 2004) that encourage collaborative meaning-making that allows the drawer to give voice to what the drawing was intended to convey. This collaboration is vital precisely because the drawing is produced by a specific individual in a particular space and time. This understanding of drawing (i.e., drawing as a participatory research method that relies on researcher-participant collaboration to make meaning of the drawing) forms the focus of *Picturing Research* although, as we point out in this chapter and elsewhere in the book, the richness of visual arts-based methodologies (as modes of inquiry, of representation, of dissemination, of transformation) means that we need to avoid thinking of drawings as a monolithic visual methodology. But why focus on drawings? Notwithstanding the ease (all you need is a pencil and paper) and the low-tech aspects (no need for digital cameras or even electricity), the benefits of the uses of drawings, as the various chapters in this volume attest, are many and include the active engagement of children (MacGregor et al., 1998) and adults (Guillemin, 2004; Stuart, 2007; Theron, 2008) and visible proof of research findings. Burke and Prosser (2008) talked about the ways in which drawings and other visual methods, especially when these are used with children, are really a stimulus for communication, and they argue that using the visual—especially drawings—with children is particularly critical in getting at their inner world: "Children have the ability to capture feelings and emotions through drawings and paintings while lacking an equally expressive written or spoken language" (p. 414). This same point was made by Robin Goodman in one of the opening essays to *The Day Our World Changed: Children's Art of 9/11* when he wrote:

> Special x-ray cameras for examining what children saw and felt on September 11, 2001, don't exist. The art in this collection, created in the first four months after 9/11 does, however, provide a snapshot of children's raw and immediate reactions. A private corner of the children's world of uncensored memories, thoughts and feelings is explored here in their drawings and paintings. (p. 14)

We believe that the use of drawings is also appropriate for getting at the memories, thoughts, and feelings of adults—and that sometimes it is that quick request to 'Draw. Quickly, just draw. Draw the first thing you think of.' that captures something that is not easily put into words.

SOME METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS: ON WORKING WITH THE HAND-MADE

Our use of the term 'hand-made' hearkens back to the national discussion on the role of the arts in addressing HIV and AIDS that was held at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in September 2010 (see also Chapter 1). There, the group of assembled researchers, artists, and arts practitioners struggled to form groups for discussion purposes based on the particular arts-focus. In the end, the emergence of three broad (but, of course, overlapping) categories emerged: the Digital,

Performance, and the Hand-Made. Into the last category fell collage, paper making, tapestry, doll making, quilt making, and drawing. The issues around working with these various texts are many but perhaps the question that we are most frequently asked is one like this: "Help! If I use this work in my research, what do I do with the data?" To answer that question, researchers need, we believe, to locate their work within a methodological community (or communities); this is crucial. As noted above, there are several communities that we see as being particularly relevant, although we note that there are overlaps between and amongst these communities—arts-based or arts-informed qualitative research, participatory visual methodologies, and textual approaches within visual studies. Here, we offer a brief overview of each, and also direct the reader to more extensive descriptions and discussions of this work.

Arts-Based Methodologies

The use of the arts (drawing, collage, drama, dance, photography, and video to name only some of the modes) in qualitative research brings together researchers and artist-practitioners working in such areas as image-based research (Weber, 2008), arts-informed research (Knowles & Cole, 2008), and a/r/tography (Springgay, 2008). Shaun McNiff (2008) offered a useful definition of the domain of arts-based research:

> [It] can be defined as the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expression in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. (p. 29)

For McNiff and others working in the area of arts-based research, there is a distinction between studies that focus on the process of artistic expression itself (and hence consider the participation of the artist, the genres of expression, the audience, and the impact of the work) and those that use drawing, collage, performance, and other artistic modes as more conventional forms of verbal data.

Participatory Visual Research Methodologies (PVRM)

This body of work focuses on the use of the visual (photography, video, digital storytelling, drawings) as a participatory methodology and is often regarded as one aspect of community-based research. This area, informed by the study of the visual in the work of such researchers as Marcus Banks (2001), Sarah Pink (2001), and Gillian Rose (2001), combines a focus on the producer and production process and the ways in which producers/participants can be engaged in informing the study of (and, sometimes, the analysis of) issues that are critical to them. PVRM is increasingly used as a critical approach to intervention research in such areas as health, education, community development, and social work and is seen as a way of empowering community members to identify social issues and also to imagine solutions to these. As with arts-based research, the visual in PVRM can serve as a

mode of inquiry, a mode of representation, a mode of dissemination, and a mode of transformation.

Textual Research in the Social Sciences

Although not entirely separate from either arts-based research or PVRM, textual research offers a set of analytical reading strategies that may be applied to visual and other artistic texts as well as to the study of objects, to things, to what Daniel Miller called 'stuff' (2010), to documents, and even to the self-as-text. Working across a variety of disciplinary areas including cultural studies, literary studies, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, and art history, textual studies re-frames what counts as data, how it can be read, and where. How can a school playground, a shopping mall, a toilet, a UNICEF document, and, in this case, a drawing, be read? As argued elsewhere (Mitchell, 2011), this does not mean that there is no place for the producer's voice (see previous section) but rather that there is space for more contextualised readings. How is the drawing read, for example, when it is displayed in a classroom, as part of a community-exhibition in a public space, or on a billboard display promoting a campaign on children and peace-building? Buchli and Lucas (2000), as archaeologists studying material culture, wrote about a child's drawing uncovered as an artefact left behind in an abandoned British council flat. In their analysis, they attempt to piece together a story of abandonment through the close reading of various texts, including documents, the spread of children's toys, and a drawing.

Critically, as researchers who are interested in the transformative potential of research suggest (see, for example, Boydell, 2009), the engagement of participants may go well beyond 'data collection', thus signalling a value-added component to the work in terms of therapeutic potential but also a cautionary in relation to what drawings may stir up. Although this book is not specifically framed within an art-as-therapy approach, we need to remember that much of the arts-based literature of Cole and MacIntrye (2008), Conrad (2006), and Gray and Sindig (2002) highlights the potential for a research space to also be a space of healing. In work in the area of PVRM, there is often reference to empowerment, engagement, ownership, and agency—all aspects of work with drawings that suggest an afterlife to the research.

ALL ABOUT METHOD

In this section of the chapter, we focus more on the actual 'doing' in social research involving drawings. We include attention to data collection, to working with the drawings, and, finally, we remind the reader of the positioning of the researchers—ourselves—in visual studies.

Part 1: Pointers to Using Drawings in Visual Research

We start by noting that there is not a single, prescriptive approach to using drawing as a data generation tool. In some studies, participants were invited to make simple

line drawings individually (e.g., Guillemin, 2004; Stuart, 2007); in others, participants were invited to produce metaphoric or symbolic drawings individually (Theron, 2008); and in still others, participants produced group-generated symbolic drawings (see Chapters 12 and 14). More recently, researchers have adapted the 'draw-and-write/-talk' technique to include story-boarding (see Chapter 16) and cartooning (see Chapter 15). Nevertheless, even as it is apparent that drawings lend themselves to flexibility as a data-generation tool, there are a number of preferred ways of engaging participants in the making of drawings, particularly if ethical and participatory ideals are to be upheld. The following points offer some recommendations in this regard, based on our experience of using drawings as data generation tools.

A reassuring invitation to draw. Not all participants are confident about their talent for drawing, even when they are willing to draw. For this reason, when we are inviting participants to draw, the invitation needs to reassure them that the focus is on the content of their drawing, and not on the quality of it as a drawing. Researchers need to emphasise this when they first broach the possibility of a participant's engaging in a study that will entail making a drawing (or drawings). Researchers need to repeat this assurance in the letter of information, on the consent form, and again when the drawing activity commences. The importance of setting participants' minds at rest about the lack of emphasis on artistic talent is independent of the type of drawing that participants are invited to make (e.g., an individual simple line drawing, a group-generated drawing, a cartoon, a metaphoric drawing).

A choice of drawing tools. Drawing tools really depend on the demographics of the invited participants. If, for example, the participants are suburban children from a well-resourced primary school, paper and coloured pencils will be familiar apparatus. If, however, the participants are adult villagers from a remote, rural area, these tools could invoke anxiety. In this latter context, drawing on the ground (using sticks or sharpish objects) might be more appropriate.

Ideally, participants need a choice of culturally and contextually congruent drawing paraphernalia (e.g., coloured pencil crayons, lead pencils, felt-tipped markers). Some participants prefer more 'artistic' media, such as pastels or chalk. Regardless of the medium chosen, in our experience, colour facilitates richer expression and often affords participants a greater sense of satisfaction, both with regard to the process of creating the drawing and the completed product.

The type and size of paper will be influenced, in part, by the anticipated dissemination process: If participants' drawings will (with their permission) form part of a public display, then larger and more durable paper (e.g., thin cardboard) might be more feasible. However, some participants are intimidated by poster-size pieces of paper, so participant comfort should be factored in. Overall, it might be best to provide participants with a choice of paper.

A leisurely pace. When data generation includes the visual, researchers need to respect the maxim of 'going slowly, taking time' (Galvaan, 2007, p. 156). Participants who agree to participate in drawing activities preferably need the time to engage with the researcher prior to drawing. We recommend (as does Guillemin, 2004) that researchers spend at least one session getting to know research participants before engaging them in a drawing activity: Participants are often more comfortable with drawing when the researcher is more familiar to them.

Figure 2.1. Example of a written prompt that stimulated the drawing of a South African soccer player.

When some rapport has been established, and participants have been reminded that the quality of their drawing is not important, the drawing activity (already agreed on in a prior ethical procedure—see Chapters 4 and 6) can be initiated. Although researchers have been known not to provide a specific instruction, prompt, or drawing brief, many do (Carlson, Alan Sroufe, & Egeland, 2004). In our experience, a specific prompt provides structure and contributes to richer data generation. It is often preferable to give both a verbal and written prompt (see Figure 2.1) and then to allow participants the opportunity to process the prompt

and visualise their responses. “Going slowly, taking time” (Galvaan, 2007, p. 156) applies to the drawing activity too: Participants need enough time to visualise and to draw—making the drawing is contingent on a process of reflection and of finding a way to express this pictorially.

The leisureliness of the pace will understandably be influenced by the prompt. If, for example, participants are asked to produce a group-generated symbolic drawing or visual metaphor, this would probably take longer than meeting a request for an individually produced simple line drawing. If participants are asked to produce a series of drawings (as in a storyboard or cartoon), this could probably translate into a number of hours of reflection and drawing, which could mean that researchers should provide participants with the prompt and the drawing materials and return at an agreed time to collect the completed drawings.

A shared analysis. When psychologists use drawings to make human experience, perception, or emotion visible, a clinical analysis of the drawing alone is never sufficient. To make meaning out of what they are seeing, more astute psychologists engage their clients in a participatory manner and ask them to collaborate in the process of analysing and understanding the drawing. In other words, a clinical analysis of the drawing itself (the visible) is insufficient to provide deep understanding. In a very similar manner, drawing as a research method is more than just engaging participants in making drawings, followed by researcher-based analysis of these artefacts. When drawing is used as a research method, it entails participants’ drawing and talking (or writing) (Backett-Milburn & McKie, 1999; Guillemin, 2004; MacGregor et al., 1998; Mair & Kierans, 2007) about the meaning embedded in their drawing. This collaboration is vital precisely because no visual product can be neutral: The drawing is produced by a specific individual in a particular space and time (Rose, 2001). The drawer’s context (both present and past) must colour what is drawn, how it is drawn, and what the drawing represents. As such, drawing as a research tool must be complemented by verbal research methods (Guillemin, 2004) that encourage collaborative meaning-making and allow the drawer to give voice to what the drawing was intended to convey. When the analysis is shared in this way, valid knowledge production occurs. In other words, once the drawing is completed, it is vital to ask the participant to describe and interpret the image. This needs to include what the drawing is illustrating (i.e., what the drawing means), and, if colour was used, what meaning the participant attaches to the colour. It can also be useful to ask the participant to comment on the spatial organisation of the drawing (Guillemin, 2004). This interpretive description can be done verbally (and audio-recorded) or in writing. In our experience, verbal explanations are best provided out of earshot of other participants so as to prevent one participant from influencing another. We have also learned that when written explanations are provided, it is a good idea to read these in the participant’s presence to ensure mutual understanding.

A discussion of what the drawing means, and/or clarification of the explanation, often prompts further relevant data generation. These data add to the emerging understanding of the phenomenon in question. For example, the 16-year-old boy

who drew the picture in Figure 2.1 explained his drawing as follows: "I want to play soccer when I am big. I want to have money. I want to play for the national soccer team, for South Africa." This explanation (and the subsequent conversation) helped the researchers to understand that the street youth who made this drawing believed that soccer and playing for a national team meant having enough money and a better life. Only once the participant was invited to interpret his drawing, did the deeper meaning of soccer as an opportunity for a better future and a chance to dream become apparent. The chapters in this book often refer to how participants helped researchers make sense of the drawings (see Chapters 8 and 11, for example) and, in many instances, how this shared analysis encouraged richer researcher understanding of the phenomenon in question (see Chapter 15, for example). When drawings are group-generated, the clarification of the drawing could also be group-generated (see Chapter 12 for an example of this).

The preceding collaborative process informs the analysis of the drawings as collective. So, when the researcher then engages in a process of analysis (e.g., content analysis, thematic analysis) of all the drawings generated in a research project, this collective analysis encompasses both the drawn contents *and* the participants' interpretations of their drawings. Once the researcher has identified patterns and themes emerging from the collective drawings and the participants' interpretations, the researcher needs to return to the participants and ask their opinions on the emergent findings. In other words, the shared analysis occurs in the initial interpretation of the drawing and again in the analysis of the collective drawings. In this way, the participants are acknowledged as knowledge producers and respected as the experts that they are (Mertens, 2009).

A civic dissemination. The old sayings 'a picture is worth a thousand words' and 'a picture tells a story' foreground the power of drawings. Drawings are veridical, and are often easily comprehensible advocates. They broadcast pressing social messages in irrefutable ways. They give voice to the traditionally voiceless (see Figure 2.2, for example), encourage expression, and demand attention. For all these reasons, drawings are ideal dissemination tools: They can be displayed as collages, as individual posters, as themed exhibitions; they can be reproduced on banners, t-shirts, shopping bags or turned into screen-savers. Regardless of how they are used, their use makes knowledge accessible. More importantly, using drawings (with the participants' permission) as a means of making study findings known facilitates public dissemination at community level. 'Research as social change' (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993) is subsequently potentiated.

Figure 2.2. Drawing by a female, rural teacher indicating how the HIV&AIDS pandemic has incapacitated her as a teacher.

As noted in Chapter 4, a civic dissemination necessitates participant participation: Participants need to be sure that they want their drawings made public; they need to lead the process of deciding which drawings are displayed, where they are exhibited, and the form such an exhibition should take. In this way, participants continue to express ownership of their drawings, even if these drawings are no longer in their personal possession. Finally, if a decision is made to archive the drawings in a public space, following their use in some form of unrestricted dissemination, participants need to sanction this, particularly since it implies the potential for public use over which participants will have no control. Another possibility, as is taken up in Chapter 7, is the idea of a restricted site where the drawings are seen and explored only by the participants and research team.

To illustrate the above suggestions, we refer to the study "Resilient Educators (REds)" conducted by Theron, Geyer, Strydom, and Delport (2008). In this study, the researchers wanted to understand whether participation in the REds program (an intervention aimed at encouraging educators challenged by the HIV&AIDS pandemic to function resiliently) enabled educators to adapt positively to the challenges of the HIV&AIDS pandemic. One of the ways in which the researchers set about determining this was to ask participants to make specific pre- and post-

REds symbolic drawings. The researchers implemented the recommendations described above, as summarised here in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. REds: A case study

Recommendation	*Application in REds*
1. A reassuring invitation to draw	Teachers who volunteered to participate in REds knew from the outset that they would be asked to draw, as part of the REds pre- and post-testing. The researchers emphasised that although teachers were invited to draw, they had the right not to draw. If teachers chose to draw, how well they drew (or not) was unimportant because the researchers were interested in what would be drawn—the researchers made this clear during the consent process and again just before teachers made drawings. This reassurance was repeated in the written prompt printed on the pages given to teachers to draw on: 'Draw in the space below (remember: it is not about how well you draw but about what you draw).' The researchers did not provide erasers in an attempt to discourage participants from trying to produce 'perfect' drawings.
2. A choice of drawing tools	Participants were handed blank A4 pages and a variety of coloured pencils. In some instances, participants were also offered felt-tipped markers. What the participants chose to draw with was entirely up to them.
3. A leisurely pace	REds researchers asked participants to sit comfortably and visualise how the HIV&AIDS pandemic had affected them. Participants were asked not to sit too close to one another. The researchers did not rush this stage of the process and allowed participants to reflect quietly and independently. Participants were then asked to draw what came to mind. The following specific prompt was given: *When you think of how the pandemic has affected you, what symbol comes to mind? Draw your symbol in the space below.*

	 *Figure 2.3. Example of pre-REds drawing by a female REds participant from QwaQwa. The drawing was made with a thin black felt-tipped marker.*
4. A shared analysis	Participants were asked to make meaning of their drawings by writing a couple of sentences on a second sheet. Researchers made this request verbally and repeated it in writing at the top of the second sheet: *Write 2–3 sentences in this space that explain your symbol*. The REds participant wrote the following in explanation of Figure 2.3 above: Due to high death rate as a result of HIV/AIDS pandemic thousands and thousands of children are left orphaned as a result of this pandemic. Many children are left with no one to look after them, they end up begging for food in the streets. They become our (teachers) problem. They affect me. Alternatively, participants were asked to complete the following sentences: My symbol is … I chose this symbol because … What my drawing is saying … The colour … represents … Participants who preferred not to write an explanation talked the researcher through their drawings while the researcher recorded and transcribed the explanations. In their analysis of the drawings collectively generated by REds participants, researchers went back to some of the participants and engaged them in consensus discussions around themes emerging from the contents of their drawings and initial participant interpretations (see, for example, Theron, 2008; Theron et al., 2010).

5. A civic dissemination	A community-focused dissemination of drawings generated by REds participants is currently in process. Drawings like those in Figures 2.2 and 2.3 are being used to create themed posters to raise public and government awareness of the need to support teachers who are affected by HIV and AIDS. For example, Figures 2.2 and 2.3 form part of a poster that illustrates teachers' empathy for learners who are HIV+ or are affected by HIV and AIDS and how this empathy has the potential to jeopardise teacher resilience if teachers continue to be unsupported in their efforts to care for learners made vulnerable by the pandemic. Teachers who participated in REds and post-graduate students who acted as REds facilitators are collaborating with REds researchers to finalise the choice of themes, the selection of pictures to illustrate these themes, and the logistics of the public displays.

We have used here the example of one project that used drawings, but how to use drawings as a data-generation tool is not cast in stone. Nevertheless, because the value of drawings (both as knowledge production and as dissemination tool) is foregrounded in researcher-participant collaboration, any use of drawings that does not start with participatory process may invite criticism.

Part 2: Working with Drawings as Visual Images

As the preceding example of the REds project illustrates, there are many points of entry for working with the drawing process, ranging from (1) a consideration of what the individual participants themselves say about their drawings (either during interviews or in their captions), (2) an analysis of the shared discussions, (3) a thematic analysis of key issues (with supporting evidence of the drawings and commentary), (4) the responses of audiences at the time of civic dissemination (Who says what? Which images are particularly compelling to community audiences and to broader audiences? Are there thematic aspects that can be explored in audience response?), and of course, what is most desirable, and (5) the triangulation of these various data sources. But if there is no one right way to elicit drawings as research data, there is also no one way to work with the data. As pointed out in Chapter 7, the participants themselves can be involved in working with visual data with their own collections of drawings, but there is also the possibility of working across collections. Although in the preceding section we make it clear that drawing is a visual *participatory* methodology and relies on the engagement of participants, this does not mean that there is no place for analysis that runs across collections (not always possible for the participants) and analytic approaches that involve third-party audiences.

The illustrative case studies in the second part of *Picturing Research* draw attention to the various ways that different researchers generate and work with visual data. These case studies also highlight the multi-genred nature of producer

generated data—from straightforward drawings to metaphorical productions (see Chapters 9 and 10) to such genres as cartooning (Chapter 15) and storyboarding (Chapter 16). Although the bulk of the images that are presented are done as individual drawings, work done in the area of storyboarding is often carried out in small groups, raising new questions about capturing the process as well as product and follow-up discussion.

In the REds project, civic dissemination is collaborative work between teachers and post-graduate students that leads to negotiated themes and poster development. Content analysis may be useful when a third-party audience, such as the research team, is looking for the emergence of themes or key issues across a large number of drawings or across collections of drawings created by different age groups and cultures or conducted at different times or in different geographical locations. These drawings might be from the same prompt, or they may be from collections from different categories of participants. For example, if researchers and peer educators look across teacher and learner drawings of HIV representations to see how HIV and AIDS is seen (Chapter 11), they might work towards solutions appropriate to what the drawings depict. According to Rose (2001), though, the method is challenging in that it requires the analyst to consider only what is actually in the drawings and to develop interesting and coherent coding categories that do not overlap. Even when conclusions are reached by a third-party audience through content analysis, it is still possible and often desirable to take the findings back to the participants for their comments and suggestions on ways forward or indeed to work with this method to develop the codes themselves. Although the approach is useful for looking systematically across a large number of drawings to see what *is* in them, it is often important to think also about what *is not* in them and to ask questions like 'How is gender represented and why?' or 'Who is not in the picture?' or 'Why does this group's drawings never depict living positively?' Something to bear in mind with content analysis is that it has its roots in quantitative analysis, and in its mechanical way may fail to provide a means of going beyond coding and counting, which is why approaches that are more interpretive (and ideally participatory) seek to study context.

A combination of interpretive methods for analysing drawings with participants or even third-party audiences (see Chapter 11) can also be considered. This is because beyond the drawing itself, its meanings and its value lie partly in the socio-cultural context from which the drawing arises, with the individual(s) who created the drawing, or in the social practices and discourses that may have shaped the drawing. The 'draw-and-write' technique and collaboration with participants ensures that the producer's intended meaning is central, but may not be able to take into consideration broader social constructions.

Discourse analysis pays attention to drawings as social constructions. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse practices are the mediators between texts (in our case, drawings) and social practices, and they can shape and be shaping. One of the most effective ways to activate discourse analysis would be through developing questions that facilitate thinking about the relationships between the drawings as sites of meaning on the one hand, and the social and cultural practices that relate to

them, on the other. So, one might ask of a drawing, 'How does this drawing reproduce or change practices of stigma?' or 'What does this drawing say about social and/or sexual relationships?' Questions that call attention to the composition and interaction of elements in each drawing will contribute to taking a semiotic perspective on drawings themselves. Working with an audience of viewers and looking at a drawing that represents HIV through tombstones, rain, and sad faces, one may ask, 'What does this drawing mean to you?' or 'How do these three elements in this drawing combine to convey a strong message?'

Following from this, we also note the ways in which the research process might focus on the actual 'doing' of the drawing or, as Goodman called it in the 1980s, "kidwatching" (Goodman, 1985). As Wright (2007) observed in her work with young children's drawing-telling, there is a rich 'action' going on during the drawing process that can also be studied and analysed:

> In children's drawing, for example, the assembled signs can include graphically produced images (e.g. people, objects), which might also include written letters or words, numbers, symbols (e.g. flags) and graphic devices (e.g. 'whoosh' lines behind a car). In addition, this graphic content may be accompanied by children's sounds (e.g. expressive vocalisation) and imitative gestures to enhance the meaning. Hence, when children draw, they construct and interpret a range of verbal and non-verbal signs with reference to the conventions associated with this medium of communication. (p. 38)

Her work along with the work with children's drawing-telling-writing by Dyson (1990) adds an 'in process' dimension to the analysis, at least with the drawings of young children. Campbell's analysis "Two Boys Drawing" demonstrates kidwatching in action as he describes the art making of a 6-year-old and a 9-year-old. This type of observing, as Campbell explores, highlights the place of intertextuality and the performance element of drawings and the notion of 'you have to be there' as researcher in order to see (and hear) what is happening. Even the child's name may be woven into the drawing. This work also highlights the importance of video and audio recordings (something that is also emphasised in Chapter 13). Clearly, this is work that must be approached sensitively and with a concern for not being too intrusive.

"Two Boys Drawing"

Based on the sessions I spent drawing with the boys, a six-year old and a nine-year old, there are certain things I noticed, though I can't help feeling that there is a lot that is not represented by that experience. Certainly my role as both an adult and an 'art instructor' of sorts must have influenced the dynamic, as opposed to how the boys might draw and construct images on their own. It did, however, unlock memories from my own childhood, and remind me of how drawing techniques were often treated among my peers. Perhaps because of my background and formal training, I tend to see a bigger

schism between the way kids often draw at earlier ages, and the visualisation and observation process that defines drawing at more 'advanced' levels.

One of the things that struck me in particular was the relative *lack* of visualisation or reference based on sight. In one sense, it could be said that the act of drawing is, for them, not really drawing at all in the traditional sense, but something more akin to writing. Rather than describing an actual specific object, or referencing it from a sort of three-dimensional awareness in the mind's eye, it seems to be about a formula that, if followed properly, yields a specific result. The result is not necessarily an approximation of a particular person or familiar object, but an icon. It is a visual shorthand, a pictogram rather than a picture, constructed from abstract shapes, and congealed into a recognisable symbolic form.

Naturally, the act of drawing from observation can also be seen as a system of symbols, albeit on a more microcosmic level. Committing a three-dimensional object or space to a two-dimensional medium involves a certain degree of abstraction, and a system of visual codes understood between the artist and viewer. In observational drawing, one learns that specific types of mark-making can be used to describe those certain surfaces or edges that go together to create one's image, and on the receiving end, the viewer should understand these cues. Sometimes calculations are involved, to ensure that things such as proportion and perspective are maintained, in spite of the imperfect guidance of our eyes.

Images are also not necessarily meant to convey a whole idea. Often they are visual aides to facilitate talking points. The picture does not tell a story . . . it *comes with* a story. After the drawing is complete, the experience becomes a performance, in which the visual elements of a drawing become linked together by a verbal narration. A drawing can end up being the preparation for the main event, which is the performative explanation of the drawing.

When a child learns to draw a truck, or a dog, it is often according to a step-by-step recipe of shapes. This recipe may be passed on from schoolmates or an instructor as the 'right way' to draw these things, following a prescribed order. In this way, drawing becomes about building a vocabulary of these tricks and codes. "Do you know how to draw an airplane?" is a request for a simple formula to denote 'airplane' that may be added to one's repertoire, and repeated as needed. This pictorial language is highly imitative, but also very holistic. Television cartoons, comics, picture books, and other children's drawings all become sources for drawn/written symbols, such as text, onomatopoeic sound effects, movement lines, word bubbles, dust clouds to denote speed, or even diagonal rays to distinguish a sun from other circular objects. However, most of these methods are integrated from existing systems, rather than invented on the spot, and as such tend to be a few degrees removed from the act of looking at the object or person they seek to represent.

Six year old D talks about his friend at school who draws knights in armour, though in this case, the image is traced from a book photograph. D's own drawing of his friend's knight incorporates many of the details from the original tracing, but without any knowledge of what those details are meant to represent. The shapes are simply there because they were in the original tracing.

Nine year old J tells me about his friend from school who is very good at drawing army tanks, and offers to show me how this friend draws them. The result is a methodical exercise in formula, executed with the care and attention a student of calligraphy might use to trace out the form of a cursive capital "G". One always starts with the same oval,

followed by the circles within the oval, the box on top, followed by the smaller oval, and topped with the rectangle of the cannon and the lines to denote treads.

If asked to draw a truck, J will draw the same two-dimensional profile of a truck he was shown how to draw, without significant variation, again and again. The type of truck, or the angle it is observed from doesn't change, though it may grow or shrink, or gain colours or insignia. The basic visual components, however, remain the same. When asked to explain why those components are present, or what they represent, the child may not have an answer. For him, some of these visual details don't have a practical correlation to the original object; they are merely one of the codified components of the icon. Some forms have an easily recognisable function and purpose, like the wheels on a car. Others might be more obscure, like the bands on a knight's suit of armour, and as such become parts of the symbol without requiring first-hand knowledge of how they relate to the original object. The object becomes abstracted even as it gains a certain symbolic universality.

Part 3: Drawing Ourselves into the Research: Self as Text

Finally, there is also the possibility of considering the positioning of the researcher. With an increased recognition of the importance of reflexivity in qualitative work, and the emergence of work in autoethnography (Ellis, 2004) and self-study (Pithouse, Mitchell, & Moletsane, 2009), we think it is critical to 'draw ourselves' into the research. In Chapter 1, we consider the backstory of how we ourselves came to be working in the area of drawing and how that influences what we focus on in this book. Readers might look, then, at these accounts in Chapter 1 as examples of our 'drawing ourselves' into the analysis. In Chapter 3, Kathleen Pithouse explores more broadly the issue of 'starting with ourselves' and the uses of self-study in participatory research, and we direct the reader to this chapter for further consideration of the researcher-self in participatory research.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we provide a foundation for considering the critical issues and illustrative case studies that follow. Drawing as a research methodology has often been overlooked by researchers in search of more high-tech (and sometimes more abstract) approaches. The simultaneous simplicity and complexity of drawing, however, are key for both beginning and experienced researchers. Drawing, as we show in the REds example, can be used as a single research tool, or, as can be seen in other chapters, may be one of several research tools used in tandem. In our concern for method, we are convinced that drawing as a participatory visual methodology offers researchers in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere a rich entry point for engaging participants in issues that are important to them, for studying the act of representation itself, for reaching multiple audiences, and ultimately, for social action.

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