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The role of drawing in promoting the children’s communication in Early Childhood Education.

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Declaration

I hereby certify that the material which is submitted in this thesis towards the award of the Masters in Early Childhood Education and Care is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any academic assessment other than part-fulfilment of the award named above.

Signature of candidate:

..............................................

Date
ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of drawing in children’s communication at the preschool level. The role of the teacher was addressed and the significant role of drawing in enhancing children communication skills was also examined. A qualitative approach was adopted and semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers, and observation of twenty-two children participants were involved in this research. The overall number of participants were twenty-five; three teachers and twenty-two children. The research was conducted amongst children of four to five year olds in a preschool centre in Dublin, Ireland.

The findings from both the interview and the observation provided an opportunity to explore and better understand how children use drawing as a medium of communication in preschools and the teachers’ role in facilitating children’s communication through drawing. The findings highlighted the need to value children’s drawing and to provide them with the opportunity of expressing themselves through drawing.
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List of acronyms

**ECEC**: Early Childhood Education and Care

**KG**: Kindergarten

**NCCA**: National Curriculum Council for Assessment

**OECD**: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**UNESCO**: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

**UNCRC**: United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Children develop ideas through the exploration of the environment and by interacting and communicating with adults and peers through play and other experiences (National Council for Curriculum Assessment; Aistear, 1999). These experiences include using drawing as a means of communication, which is the focus of this research. There is a great deal of research that focuses on the psychological aspects of children’s drawing (Pillar, 1998). However, there is a relationship between drawing and communication, which have been highlighted by many researchers in the literature review. The communicative and the meaning making aspects of drawing play a significant role in children’s development.

Children have different ways of expressing themselves and make meaning out of the world around them, therefore the medium of drawing affords children the opportunity to make their thoughts and emotions known to the adult world (Anning, 1999). Drawing helps children to organise their ideas thereby constructing meaning from their experiences. Since children in their early years have little vocabulary, drawing is a useful tool that teachers use to enhance their communication skills. Many class activities are drawing oriented, for instance shapes are drawn to explain a concept in mathematics. Children often express their sentiments such as denial of love, deprivation of attention, friendless or failure, anger, or anxiety through the pictures they create (Lewis & Greene, 1983). In addition, in most of the activities for early years, such as storytelling, exploring nature, describing people, animal and events, teachers can encourage and enrich young children’s self –expression and creative thinking by asking them relevant open questions while they are drawing and thus help them develop their communicative abilities (Bartel, 2008).

1.2 Rationale

The topic for the research was chosen based on both personal interest and professional point of view. Personally, the researcher developed an interest in children’s drawing based on her profession as a special needs educator. In the course of delivering her service to a child with language difficulties, she realised that, this child preferred to use drawing to interact
with the teacher and his peers. Therefore, this researcher felt this thesis has provided an opportunity to explore in detail, how children use drawing to communicate.

On a professional level, it is important to acknowledge the fact that children at the preschool level have very little vocabulary, hence there is the need to help improve their language competence. Therefore, drawing is one of the various activities that can be used to promote children’s communication skills. A great number of researchers stressed the aesthetic and the compositional aspects of children’s drawings, usually focusing on the developmental sequences or diagnosis of particular difficulties (Cox, 1992). Nevertheless, more recent research emphasises children’s drawing as a means of communication and meaning making (Anning & Ring, 2004), and for mental growth (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987).

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the role of drawing in promoting children’s communication skills. Many adults and teachers do not read meaning into children’s drawing. Sometimes, teachers just occupy children with drawing activities without recognising its significance. Adults often misunderstand the role of drawing in children’s learning, instead the focus on children’s drawing is mark-making leading to writing rather than communication (Ring, 2001). Children express themselves through drawing depending on a situation. For instance, when children are happy or sad, they have a way of showing it in the form of pictorial representation or drawing. Drawing forms the foundation for other learning areas in preschools. Children’s drawing abilities can be nurtured to enhance their communication skills. Teachers approach to drawing as a communication tool, can aid the holistic development of children at the preschool level. This approach to learning identifies the specific skills and experiences each child brings to the learning situation and works together in involving children in a constructive dialogue with others (Brooks, 2003).

Furthermore, this research sought to explore the teacher’s role in facilitating children’s communication skills through drawing and how children’s drawings are interpreted. Teachers have an important role in facilitating children's artistic development (Bae, 2004). Children’s ability to use drawing significantly in communicating, depends on the teaching methods and the teachers’ interest, therefore the valuable role of the teacher in relation to children’s drawing was discussed in this research. Drawing, which is usually referred to as the universal language of childhood (Rubin, 1984), is regarded as a valuable tool that allows children to
express their experiences, therefore there is the need to examine the factors that contribute towards children’s communication in relation to drawing.

Key words: Drawing, communication, early childhood.

Drawing is a form of meaningful mark making that tends to satisfy people for different purposes, which suggests that it provides people with different visual presentations depending on how they view it (Hope, 2008).

“Communication is any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective state. Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes.” (National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities, 1992, p. 2 cited in Valenzuela, 2002).

Early childhood education refers to children’s educational interaction in different settings, which aims at fostering the child’s healthy growth, development and learning (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002).

1.4 Aim of the research

The main aim of this research was to determine the role of drawing in developing children’s communication skills in early childhood education. It is important to recognise the importance of communication through drawing and how these drawings are interpreted. Children are exposed to many activities apart from its aesthetic value that facilitates the learning process. Children learn to draw and draw to learn in order to make sense of and represent the worlds in which they are nurtured (Anning, 1999).

1.5 Objectives

The objective of the study was:

• To discuss the role of drawing in enhancing children’s communication skills.

• To identify the various ways by which teachers use drawing to facilitate children’s communication.
1.6 Research questions

1. What role does drawing play in facilitating communication for children in early childhood education?

2. What is the role of the teacher in promoting children’s communication through drawing?

1.7 Overview of the research

Chapter one outlines a brief introduction of the research, the overall aims of the research, definition of terms, rationale of the topic, and the purpose of the study. In chapter two, views of other researchers in relation to the topic are highlighted. It reviews the use of drawing to facilitate children’s communication in preschools; it also discusses the role of the teacher in promoting children’s communication through drawing. Chapter three, focuses on the methodology aspect of the research. It also focuses on the theoretical framework supporting the research, and it explains the data collection procedure, which was used for the research. These include, research design and tools, research participant, and sampling. The findings from the data were analysed and discussed in chapter four. Chapter five contains the recommendations, limitations, and the summary of the research.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

Drawing and its relationship to children’s development has been one of the areas of interest to many researchers including therapists, historians, educators, and psychologists that can be traced as far back as the 19th century (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Some researchers are interested in drawing as a therapeutic intervention for children with developmental difficulties (Kramer, 1979; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). Others view it from the perspective of meaning making, communication, and visual representation to foster teaching and learning (Kellogg, 1970; Golomb, 1992; Matthews, 1999, 2003; Anning and Ring, 2004; Hope, 2008). In addition, Piaget, 1956; Lowenfeld, 1965; Cox, 1992; Brooks, 2003 and Malchiodi, 1998 analysed children’s drawings from a psychological point of view. Many researchers have centred their study on children’s scribbles, their drawings of human figures and other aspects of their lives and how these are representative of communicative values relating to children’s development (Kellogg, 1970; Goodnow, 1977; Cox, 1992).

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECCE) is recognised globally as the education of children during their early years. Early childhood is defined as the period from birth to eight years old, and it is a remarkable period for cognitive development, which lays the foundation for subsequent learning, and development (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization -UNESCO, 2006). The United Nations Commission on the Right of the Child- UNCRRC (1987) recognises Early Childhood Education and Care as a fundamental right of the child.

Being a participant of the International Master in Early Childhood Education and Care (IMEC) programme, this researcher draws on research in the three participating countries including Ireland. In Norway, the term used for early years education is Barnehage which literally means Kindergarten and is for children under six years, while compulsory school starts at six (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development -OECD, 2006). Barnehage, which shares the European tradition is in two parts; 1) social aspects offer day care services and they are open all day, while the educational aspect is on part-time basis
where both care and learning take place (OECD, 1998)). In the Maltese context, ECCE is categorised into child/day care centres for children from 0-3 years, and KG (Kindergarten) centres for children between 3-5 years, and formal schooling starts at age five (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2006).

However, the Irish context has a slightly different approach to early years education, which covers the period from birth to 6 years, and these include early childhood services such as full and part-time day care for children from 0-3 years (Crèche, Montessori, Steiner, High Scope, child-minders) and pre-primary (infant classes) for children between 4-6 (Department of Education and Skills). Early childhood education is given prominence in Ghana, where this researcher comes from and comprises crèche or day care (0-3 years); kindergarten (4-6 years) and formal schooling starts at age six (UNESCO, 2007). ECCEs in the various countries mentioned above have a common aim of promoting the growth of the child through care and learning. However, there are some variations in relation to the cultural context of the countries. Though Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is a name that is accepted internationally, each country has its own way of referring to ECEC. For instance, Barnehage is used in Norway, KG (Kindergarten) in Malta and Ghana, and pre-school or ECEC are used mostly Ireland.

Nevertheless, much discussion have evolved in the ECEC sector nationally and internationally with regards to the term used in describing the diverse types of provision for children in the age range, birth through to six years (Hayes, 2007). Therefore, for the sake of this research, which is being conducted in the Irish context, it will be appropriate to use the term “preschool”. It is an undeniable fact that culture has influence on preschools and how ECEC is understood, depends on the local traditions, cultures, and the organization of primary school of a particular country, therefore it is very important to acknowledge diversity in this regard (Dahlberg et al., 1999; Nsamenang, 2006; Woodhead, 2006). This points to the fact that, preschool education reflects the culture of a specific country or nation and drawing enables children to express themselves and represent themselves in a culturally acceptable manner (Matthews, 2003).

Children in preschools use many symbols to create meaning and to represent reality within the medium of drawing. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal and these forms of communication can be facilitated through drawing. A child may not have the vocabulary
for expressing himself fully, but may be able to represent his intentions and emotions through drawings. As indicated by Wright (2007), drawing gives children the opportunity to create, share, and convey meaning using two modes, which embrace distinctive features such as verbal and non-verbal. “Communication is emphatically not confined to the verbal channel for we also communicate through clothing, houses, images, representations in film or literature, and our material goods generally” (Finnegan 2002, p. 19). Children’s drawings are thought to reflect their inner worlds, depicting various feelings and relating information concerning their psychological status and interpersonal style (Malchiodi, 1998). There is a clear indication that children use drawing to convey their “hidden” ideas, which they cannot express verbally, therefore children's personal narratives, formed in an attempt to order and explain the world from all aspects of their experiences, are often part of the silent language that embodies thinking (Ring, 2001).

The teacher’s role is paramount in enhancing children’s communication through drawing. For children to develop an interest in drawing, they must be encouraged or supported by an adult with the necessary tools to achieve a positive result. According to Edwards, Gandini, and Forman (1995), the teacher’s role serves as a dispenser of occasions and it is very important for the child to see the teacher as a resource, which he can depend on for help rather than being seen as a judge of his work. In addition, the teacher’s role is to use appropriate methodology in facilitating children’s communication through various drawing activities.

### 2.1. Definition of communication

The world is surrounded by many things, that communicate to us in many different ways, and this can be verbal or non-verbal. Finnegan, (2002, p.19) defined it as follows: “Communication is emphatically not confined to the verbal channel, for we also communicate through clothing, houses, images, representations in film or literature, and our material goods generally”’. This obviously suggests that, communication is not limited to only spoken language, but other variables contribute to making it the medium of expression, and these includes drawing, which is the main focus of this research.

A similar definition below, seeks to address the issue of receiving or giving information that pertains to the needs of individuals using signs or symbols and words. Communication starts
from birth using many different ways of giving and receiving information (NCCA- Aistear,,
1999).

Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or
unconventional signals, may take linguistic or non-linguistic forms, and may occur through
spoken or other modes”. (National Joint Committee for the Communicative Needs of Persons
with Severe Disabilities, 1992, p. 2)

2.2 Definition of Drawing

Hope (2008) defined drawing, as a form of meaningful mark making that tends to satisfy
people for different purposes, which suggests that it provides people with different visual
presentations depending on how they view it. Hope (2008) further emphasised that the term
drawing can be used to describe a product and a process at the same time. By a product, she
refers to the end result of mark making and process refers to the on-going drawing activity.
This definition is in line with what this researcher wants to investigate because children draw
purposefully to communicate a message to and about the world around them. It also confirms
what many researchers including Hope, Anning and Ring (2004) have noted, that, children
use drawing to develop, create, communicate and record their thoughts. Drawing as defined
by Matthews, (1999) is a dialectical process through which children use visual media as a
means of expressing their emotions and by using different forms of images that emerge on a
drawing surface. It is therefore worthy to note that children can use different forms of
drawing media to articulate their inner feelings as well as making their thoughts conspicuous.

2.3 The role of drawing in children’s communication

Drawing forms an integral part of enhancing the development of children in their early
years. There are various roles that drawing plays in facilitating the teaching, and learning
process, as well as the language development of the child. Children begin to form symbolic
thoughts with any object they can lay hands on (Kress, 1997). Drawing helps children to
understand symbols, signs and representations which later become crucial in their encounter
with signs and symbols in home and school (Matthews, 2003), which implies that children
use signs and symbols as the basis of their language development. Matthews further
emphasised that when children begin to draw and paint, they begin an intellectual journey,
which comprises musical, linguistic, logical, mathematical, and aesthetic aspects.
Furthermore, drawing is an activity that allows children to symbolize what they know and feel and it is a very essential outlet for children whose vocabulary, written or verbal, may be limited (de la Roche, 1996).

In addition, children can use drawing to express emotional moments such as excitement and sadness. Pictorial arts serve as a vehicle for creative development and provide opportunity for self-expression (Cox, 1992). Bartel (2010) claimed that there is a sense of emotional satisfaction when children model with clay, draw with crayons or make collage with recycled scraps. When children are able to make an artistic statement, it boosts their moral and gives them joy for having made that particular activity. Bartel (2010) explained that, drawing is essential for human survival and success, therefore toddlers learn to draw before the first grade (age four). He outlined some reasons why drawing is essential to the lives of individuals and to children’s development; he said that drawing helps to develop the mental abilities of children, because the mind is always thinking during the process of drawing. Through drawing, children’s confidence is improved, new discoveries are made, and stories can be articulated. Drawing helps us to give and explain instructions much better than words and it is useful for recording and keeping track of historical events. In furtherance of the above statement, Hope (2008) described drawing as a powerful and accessible tool that allows children to learn and understand the ideas of others in order to effectively develop, generate, expand, and communicate their own ideas. Therefore, drawing for children has a great impact on their facility to communicate and on their development as a whole. However, Brooks (2003) declared that through discussions about children’s drawing, children can be helped to remember and retrieve their memories from their drawings.

“Drawing acts as bridge between the inner world of imagination and reason and the outer world of communication and sharing of ideas (Hope, 2008; p11). Additionally, Hope, (2008) identified some key uses of drawing as follows; drawing helps to generate and develop ideas, it clarifies ideas, observations and relationships; it represents and analyses concepts and it develops understanding and communicates with others. These perspectives explain why drawing is useful in developing children’s communication in the early stages of life. Hawkins, (2002) described the role of children’s drawing in three levels; cognitive, affective and linguistic. Cognitively, drawing is an action that provides children with a rich way of thinking, knowing and exploring their worlds, affectively, it is a means of allowing children
to express and develop their emotions, and linguistically it provides opportunities for children to develop their visual language.

**2.4. Drawing as cognitive development**

Children’s ability to draw and portray their intentions has a relationship to their intellectual development. The kind of drawing activities that children are engaged in, help in developing their cognitive abilities through the discussions and reflections they make on the various drawings. Brooks (2003) confirmed this when she emphasised that, having a dialogue with children whilst they are drawing, plays an essential role in promoting the mental function of children and therefore it becomes a powerful meaning-making tool. This obviously suggests that, when children are able to think deeply about what they have drawn and share their understanding, it enhances their intellectual abilities and various drawing activities of children are a reflection of their cognitive competence (Piaget, 1956).

Drawing can be used to explain a concept thereby increasing children’s understanding since it serves as tools for remembering, and discussion about a drawing helps children to retrieve their memories from the drawing (Brooks, 2003) and children’s engagement with art-making may give an essential balance of the child’s intellect and emotions (Lowenfeld, 1965).

**2.5. Drawing as emotional development**

Drawing offers children the opportunity to express and control their inner feelings. The various indicators exhibited in children’s drawing, when well observed, will help determine the status of the child’s emotions at a particular time. For example, a child in a happy mood can make bold drawings to indicate his happiness. In accordance with this, Malchiodi (1998) pointed out that; a child’s drawing is thought to reflect his inner world, which shows various feelings and information in connection with his psychological status and interpersonal style. In addition, Lowenfeld (1965) declared that, a child’s art expressions is a documentation of his personality, since children exhibit their personal characteristics in their art performance. This implies that children can exhibit some elements of their emotional state and character in the kind of drawings they make.

**2.6 Drawing as social development**
Communicating with others during the process of drawing promotes children’s social growth (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987). These authors emphasised that when children are able to interact with their peers, it gives them the ability to live cooperatively in society. When children show, and talk about their drawings to friends and adults around them, it builds their social competence. Vygotsky (1978) mentioned that children are part of the social community who depend on adults as a source of information about the nature of art. Children’s quality interactions with adults and their peers have great impact on their learning and development (NCCA, 2009).

2.7 Drawing as pre-writing skills

Apart from the communicative role of drawing, it acts as an avenue for developing the motor skills of children in the early years. Drawing and the drawing media help children to develop their dexterity for future writing skills. In this sense, drawing is regarded as an important activity in preschool context because in terms of fine motor development, it serves as precursor to writing (Einarsdottir, 2009). The use of scribbles, lines, and shapes are all drawing activities that help children to prepare adequately for reading and writing in formal school (Kellogg, 1970). Additionally, children develop skills for building foundations for literacy by making sense of both visual and verbal signs, which are later developed for reading, and writing (DfES 2008a, cited in Hall, 2009). Nonetheless, Kress, (1997) emphasised that drawing is the early form of writing by children and it is seen as powerful means of representation. However, Goodnow (1997) believed that, seeing drawing as pre-writing skills will undermine the creative aspect of children’s drawing, which implies that the creative aspect of drawing should be considered as well.

2.8. Drawing as a therapy

Drawing has a therapeutic function in the lives of children who might need additional support in their education. Malchiodi (1998) believed that drawing is an effective way for children to show their self-esteem, emotions, social competence and other hidden personalities and this obviously shows how drawing plays an important role in identifying children’s problem and finding solutions to them. Art as a therapy provides support for one’s ego as children use drawing as non-verbal communication to express their emotions (Kramer, 1979). Therefore, emotions can often be better expressed in drawing more than in the spoken
word, which makes it accessible for therapists to identify and develop interventional strategies to solving problems.

The family has an impact on the constraints on child’s meaning making, as parents for example see it as a mess when children practice their drawings everywhere including walls, upholstery and bed linens (Anning & Ring, 2004). Siblings can also contribute to the communicative abilities of children’s drawing, through their interaction during the drawing process. Siblings can provide support when they discuss their emotions through their art works, even though sometimes this results in an argument (Newman, undated). This gesture will eventually enhance communication and social skills as they interact and share ideas with others about their drawings.

2.9. Understanding and interpreting children’s drawing

It is often difficult for adults or teachers to interpret and read meaning into children’s drawing and therefore, they see children’s drawing as mere mark making without recognising its significance or value in terms of its interpretation, or what children are trying to portray in their drawings (Anning & Ring, 2004). “Creating, establishing, developing, and communicating meaning become the reason for drawing” (Hope, 2008:p 45). Similarly, Hopperstad (2010), suggested that, children’s drawings convey meaning and helps them to articulate ideas and understandings in different ways to that of verbal language and in ways that they may not be able to verbalise it. This implies that children can use drawing to express their thoughts more clearly than using expressive language.

Furthermore, the Reggio Emilia approach, as described by Edward et al, (1998) acknowledges the fact that children can use graphic and other media to explore and express their feelings and to communicate their constructions much more readily and competently than spoken words. In a similar development, Hope (2008) argued that drawing can be used as a discussion document amongst a group of children whereby they use drawn images and sketches to communicate amongst themselves, therefore the ability to share views with others through drawing depends on the shared capability of reading drawing symbols. This indicates that children, who are engaged in drawing activities, can use their drawings to generate discussion thereby enriching their communication skills.
On the other hand, it is often common for teachers and adults to interpret children’s drawing the way it suits them, which may not be exactly what the child intends to communicate as indicated by Brittain (1999) that, adults sometimes misinterpret children’s drawing which change the meaning in their drawing performance.

2.10 Drawing to communicate / drawing activities

Drawing gives children the opportunity to express themselves in many different ways. For children with limited vocabulary it is an effective way of communicating with their peers and adults, both in school and at home. Drawing is regarded as a universal language and it offers children a valuable release for emotion, which may not be verbalized, and it serves as a means of communication (Sedwick & Sedwick, 1993). When drawing is used as a tool for communication, children are able to express themselves and make meaning out of the world around them. Using drawing as a means of communication helps the process of making ideas, thoughts, and feelings available to others (Adams, 2006).

Children have many messages to communicate in their various drawing activities. In their pictorial presentations, they usually draw themselves as a form of identity or self-expression, and they can draw the figure of a man or a boy, a woman or a girl to represent gender, as well as drawing many things that are of interest to them, like cars, buildings, family, trees, cultural events and many more. All these representations are made through drawing to communicate to the people around them, as indicated by Danko-McGhee and Slustsky (2003) art helps children to communicate their understanding and interpretations of the world before they are able to express themselves verbally, and feelings expressed in arts often communicate better than words (Seefeldt, 1995).

Drawing human figures are common features in children’s drawing performance. The kind of figures that children draw can represent aspects of their personality in one way or the other. For instance, Klepsh and Logie (1982) interpret long legs or large arms in children’s drawing as a desire for power to control other children, while Koppitz (1968) sees it as the child’s willingness to help others. On the other hand, children draw to describe their friends, family members, and influential people in their community. Cox (1992) shared the same view with Karen Machover (1949) that, when a child draws a person it signifies self-identity. Moreover, Hawkins (2002) explained that drawing is a powerful media through which
children perceive their self-image, therefore drawing a human being is a representation of who they are and reveals a sense of self-identity.

In a related development, Kellogg (1970) in her analytical research on children’s drawing, observed that children use anatomy such as hair, breast, phallus, pregnancy to show differences in gender, as well as clothing such as shorts, skirts, hats, for easy identification of males and females. Children often want to represent reality in their drawings, however, this could be difficult in some situations, as teachers may misinterpret children’s inclusion for such graphic details. For instance, a teacher may see a child displaying sexual organs in his drawing as being naughty; however, the child may also see his drawing to be incomplete without those features (Brittain, 1999). On the other hand, if a child is not able to show all the visible parts in his drawings, it gives a signal that he has difficulty in drawing or he just left them out for a purpose, for example to describe a person with a disability. When some parts of the body are omitted in children’s drawing, it is a sign of something odd in how they perceive the world (Goodnow, 1977).

Children are engaged in different drawing activities either for fun or for expressing themselves in various ways. Scribbling or mark-making, symbols, line and shapes are all basics elements of drawing. Research indicates that, children use visual media to create and explore lines, shapes and colours in a process that have connection with intellectual domains such as language and mathematics (Matthews, 2003).

Though, many adults think children’s scribbles do not give any meaningful illustrations, Striker,(2001) emphasised that scribbling is one of the important activities of children and as the first form of drawing of a child, it should be regarded as the child’s first tool for communication. She further stressed that children scribble for a purpose and it signifies the process of growth since scribbles are made in developmental stages. Striker continued to explain that scribbles could be a reflection of the child’s emotions and personality. For instance, adults and teachers can use the scribbling made by children to determine whether a child is happy, sad, healthy, or anxious. Scribbles mean a lot to children as they give children enjoyment, help then to release tension and release emotions.
2.11 Developmental stages of children’s drawing

Children in preschool can use any form of mark to represent an idea, even though adults may not see any resemblance or link to what children wish to communicate by using those marks. As far as scribbles seem to resemble a known object, the child can easily recognise and name it (Taylor, Branscombe, Burcham, & Land, 2011) What children are able to draw is very much determined by the age and experience of the child and as they draw, they try to talk about what they are drawing. Taylor et al, (2011) further argued that, children construct concrete ways to represent what they know and symbolise their experience through the various forms of drawing and as they grow, they move from the scribbling to pre-schematic stage by being able to use marks as representations of ideas. In a similar comment made by Gentle, (1985), young children communicate in all kinds of ways such as words, gestures, marks, and movements and as they grow, their experiences widen through their capabilities of forming, communicating, and sharing those experiences.

Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) identified six artistic developmental stages of children; Scribbles (2-4 years); around age two the child begins to make disordered marks for fun, and conscious creations occur at age three which provide a vivid record of the child’s thinking process. Pre-schematic; (4-7 years); after several activities in scribbling, the child at this stage, is able to produce more detail in their marks and can tell stories about the marks he has made. Schematic (7-9 years); at this stage children develop a set of symbols to draw definite objects, and the child identifies relationship and space in his drawings. Dawning Realism in the gang age (9-12 years); this is where the child becomes independent in his drawing, showing more details to represent reality. Pseudo-Naturalistic stage (12-14); this stage marks the end of children’s spontaneous drawing and the beginning of more adult like creations as they become critical of what they draw. The Decision-Making stage (14-16); is the final stage where children decide to stop or continue with drawing because it is a satisfying articulation of their ideas and the maturing child is transforming through adolescence to the formative artist.

The research focuses on four to five year-olds who fall within the pre-schematic stage (4-7 years). According to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) children at this stage develop schema (the visual idea) which are associated with the drawing of circular images with line in the form of human or animal representation. These writers further explained that, children at this
stage have little idea about space and therefore they tend to draw at random, without an orderly presentation and they draw to show what they perceive to be important.

Moreover, Kellogg, (1970) mentioned that scribbles consist of dots, horizontal and vertical lines, open and closed lines, loops, spirals and circles which form the basis of drawing. This study focuses on the children in the age bracket of four to five year olds, which fall within the pre-schematic stage as proposed by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1979). Most children in this category try to make their drawing more recognisable and discuss them with their peers.

2.12. The role of the teacher in facilitating children’s drawing

Promoting children’s free art expression is the same as providing them with other happy childhood experiences (Lowenfeld, 1965). The attitude of adults towards children’s drawing can in one way or the other affect children’s interest in drawing, therefore the role of the teacher is very crucial in facilitating children’s drawing for effective communication. Einarsdottir et al (2009) commented that the values adults and teachers ascribe to children’s drawings, as well as their perceptions, and expectations of drawings are important since adults’ interactions and support can influence children’s drawing. Light (1985) stated that drawing acknowledges the social construction of meaning and adults’ attention is directed to the meanings children seek to convey in their drawings.

The role of the teacher is very important in recognising the functions of drawing and other visual forms of expression- literacy, and numeracy, to enable her to enhance children’s full experience and communication (Gentle, 1985). Implying that, the role of the teacher will help children to achieve their academic goals as well as reaching their communicative potential. Moreover, children will be able to explore and communicate with the world around them through the teachers’ interest and how he/she values children’s drawing. Both teachers and children will develop confidence in many different ways of handling drawing as they use the process of drawing to explain fantasies, or to express ideas and emotions (Gentle, 1985).

Another important aspect of the teachers’ role is to provide an enabling environment for drawing activities to ensure effective communication, as well as enhancing children’s interest and confidence in drawing. For example, as Gentle (1985) noted, issues such as the organisation of space in the classroom may influence the quality of children’s early art
experiences. In her work, Striker (2001) suggested that a teacher’s positive attitude towards children’s art will promote a healthy, confident self-image and high self-esteem in children. She identified some key strategies that teachers’ should apply in developing children’s creativity. Following these strategies a teacher should be a role model and always take initiatives in the drawing activities; a teacher should also use words that can be helpful for the expansion of children’s vocabulary, for example, by verbalising why he/she likes a particular drawing. Teachers must avoid art competitions among children, as it is not healthy for children to compete with anyone, rather it is important that children work within their own set goals.

2.13. Preschool curriculum and drawing

The role of drawing in the pre-school curriculum cannot be over emphasised. The classroom environment is usually decorated with various drawings and paintings, which give an impression that children learning experiences are full of artistic activities. However, there are numerous benefits of drawing, which go beyond decoration or creativity, as far as other learning areas of the curriculum are concerned. As Brittain, (1979) and Anning, (1999) clearly stated, drawings by children are not just for the purpose of making decorations for home and schools, but it goes beyond that. Drawing is perceived as a valued element of the school curriculum, since it prepares children for adulthood by developing hand-eye skills and their visual sense (Anning & Ring, 2004). Thus, Sedgwick and Sedgwick (1993) argued that drawing is crucial in the life of every child and a necessity for their development. They further stressed that, art forms an integral part of the curriculum because it helps develop children to draw, to gain knowledge about historical events, such as museums, drama, and other interesting places and objects. This assertion was also emphasised by the curriculum guidance for preschools, (1989) that children become aware of and use other form of communication including drawing.

Drawing is used to promote creative activities in the preschool curriculum. Teachers encourage children to use their imagination during drawing activity, and to include their thoughts and impressions in their artwork, therefore drawing is termed as a means of communicating (Edwards et al, 1998). The national curriculum framework in Ireland, Aistear proposed that the learning environment and children’s interaction should be rich to promote both language and content by creating social interactions with adult and peers through the
provision of materials, activities and opportunities (NCCA, 2007). This, however, suggests that children should be given the opportunity to interact with the environment through appropriate activities and materials. Similarly, a variety of drawing media such as pencils, charcoal, crayons, chalk, and many more are the effective ways for children to discover different ways of exploring and interacting with the environment (Curriculum guidance, 1989). Children need many opportunities to draw, interpret, and revise their drawings; therefore, the teaching and learning environment must offer support, time, and opportunity for children to achieve this aim (Brooks, 2003).

2.14. Conclusion

The literature reviewed here draws together research findings and critique by other researchers on the significant role of drawing and its impact on children’s communication. This chapter discussed the influence of drawing on children’s communication in a preschool setting. The functions of drawing were identified as playing an essential role in children’s holistic development at the preschool level (4-5 year-old). These roles were discussed in relation to language/communication, cognitive, social, and emotional developments, as well as looking at drawing as a fundamental development of writing skills, and as a therapeutic intervention for children with language and emotional difficulties. The teachers’ role in facilitating children’s communication was addressed in this section. The literature also highlighted the developmental stages of drawing and how children’s drawings are interpreted or understood by teachers. In conclusion, the literature has provided detailed evidence to support the claim that drawing has a great impact on children’s communication and their development as a whole (Anning & Ring, 2004; Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1987; Brooks, 2003; and Gentle, 2005).
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The central aim of the research was to investigate the role of drawing in aiding children’s communication and to identify the teacher’s role in facilitating communication with four to five year-old children through drawing in a preschool setting. This research was based on the social-cultural theory perspective of Vygotsky, (1978) Anning and Ring (2004) who explored the influence of the socio-cultural context on children’s drawing and its communicative abilities.

This chapter outlines the research paradigm underpinning this study and the corresponding methods used in seeking to answer the main research questions as well as looking at the research design, research tools, and the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Theoretical framework

This research is based on the socio-cultural theories of development, which emphasise the importance of the socio-cultural context as being a crucial aspect of children’s learning and development. This theory, which was proposed by Vygotsky (1986), describes learning as part of social events and it occurs as a child interacts with people, objects, and events in the environment. Therefore, Vygotsky (1978) argued that the child is seen as a social co-construct of meaning who plays a significant role in the world and his immediate environment. Vygotsky believed that children’s abilities are influenced by the culture in which they grow; therefore, the socio-cultural theory provides an opportunity to better understand children’s learning process and the factors such as adults, peers, and the environment that influence that process.

Children’s expressions are viewed as meaningful within the human sphere of their own culture; therefore, children become essential cultural learners when they are guided by the participation of adults (Rogoff, 1990). Similarly, Brelster and Thompson (2002) noted that the cross-cultural experience of children’s artistic abilities and aesthetic values are products of socially mediated processes and the kinds of educational opportunities and limitations of the surrounding context. The external social world is gradually transformed by the child
through the mastery and appropriation of signs (Vygotsky, 1999). This statement implies that children can use drawing in a gradual and effective way to enhance their communication skills. In view of these statements, this research looks at the role drawing plays in children’s communication. The sociocultural perspective as described above, as an important component to consider when examining children’s communicative skills.

3.2 Research questions

In order to explore children’s communication through drawing more deeply the following questions were asked;

1. What role does drawing play in facilitating communication for children in early childhood education?

2. What is the teacher’s role in promoting children’s communication through drawing?

3.3 Research design

This research is a case study that seeks to find out how children use drawing to communicate and the teacher’s role is in enhancing this communication. A qualitative research approach was adopted throughout this study. Qualitative research involves the use of data to investigate unique issues associated with interpretative tradition that focuses on institutions or people with the aim of finding multiple truths from different perspectives (Robert-Holmes, 2006).

Observations were used to identify how drawing can be utilised to mediate communication in preschools. The observation provided the opportunity to conduct the research in a preschool setting during ‘drawing time’. Furthermore, the observation allowed the researcher to identify the potential benefits of drawing in children’s communication skills and in other areas of development. Both children and teachers were observed thoroughly on how drawing was used to promote communication in preschools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers to solicit their views on how children communicate through drawing.

Observation is defined as a process of recording real-life experiences of one or more people to evaluate the overt behaviour in controlled and uncontrolled situations (Yin, 1994).
Though the observation was a non-participant observation, the children initiated interaction with the researcher by showing and talking about their drawings. Denscombe, (2006) described the semi-structured interview as the outcome of open-ended questions that provides the interviewee the opportunity to elaborate on the topic under study. This design was chosen in order to give the participants the chance to express their views on the issue under discussion as well as to help in providing answers to the research questions.

3.4 Data collection

The data collection was carried out over a period of three weeks. The table below provides an overview of the design of the study. The interview for each person was between 20 – 25

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<td>Permission letter to school authorities</td>
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<td>June, 2012</td>
<td>Revision of methodology</td>
<td>Findings and analysis</td>
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*Table 1*
3.5 Research participants/sample

The sample for this research was located in a preschool setting in Dublin. The significant participants who were involved in the study were three practitioners (two females and a male) from the centre. Observation was conducted in two classes of 4-5 year olds in the pre-school class. Class A consists of twelve children with three teachers, while class B consists of ten children with two teachers. The total number of participants were twenty-five.

3.6 Data analysis

All the three teachers were given letters of consent forms with details about the purpose of the research. Time and dates were arranged to suit all the participants and questions for the interview focused on the research questions. In order to avoid ambiguity, to get more information, and to give ample time for the interview, participants were given an outline of what would be discussed before the interview. Furthermore, participants were made aware of the intention to audio record the interviews (see Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in a relaxed manner, which gave both the researcher and the participants confidence to ask and answer questions appropriately. Having obtained the information from the sample, it was transcribed and analysed (Barbour, 2007).

3.7 Ethical issues

Ethical issues are a very delicate component in research and therefore need to be handled with care. In order to gain access for the data collection, a general consent was sought from the head teacher of the school. An Informed Consent letter was also given to individual participants (teachers) with details about the research, and participants willingly agreed to take part after being presented with all the necessary information.

3.8 Summary of methodology

This research focused on the use of observation and semi-structured interviews as methods for data collection. Both the observation and the interviews provided qualitative data for the analysis and discussions. Data was collected in one preschool centre in Dublin with the main participants being three teachers from the centre and twenty-two children, aged between four and five years old from two class groups. The qualitative random sampling proved to be successful for this kind of data collection. The semi-structured interviews were
found to be suitable for both the researcher and participants alike who appeared comfortable and interested in participating.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4 Introduction

The findings presented in this paper were obtained using qualitative research methods with the main tools being observation and semi-structured interviews that were organized into four major themes. The interpretation of the findings ascertained to bring out the realities in the quest to analyse and evaluate how teachers and children use drawing to communicate in various class activities. Three observations were conducted on separate dates, whilst the interviews were conducted individually with teachers, which contributed greatly to the significant role of drawing in children’s communication in the early childhood setting.

Additionally, this analysis will determine the extent to which the views of teachers reflected in practice and whether the practice was comparable to the themes that emerged from the data as identified in the literature.

The themes that emerged are as follows:

• Drawing for the development of language and communication skills

• Drawing as a way of learning about other subjects.

• Drawing to express identity, relationship, and emotions.

• The role of the teacher in facilitating children’s communication through drawing.

4.1 Drawing for the development of language, and communication skills

Data obtained from the first observation of a class of twelve indicated explicitly how drawing could be an effective way of promoting communication with children in preschool education. The teacher showed them a portrait of the artist, Vincent van Gogh, and told them a story about him as the children listened attentively. The teacher then used the picture to generate discussion by asking the children to point out what they saw in the picture, and to talk about it. According to Curtis (1998), pictures serve as excellent stimulus for discussion and can be used to develop children’s language skills and stimulate their imagination.
Children began to name the facial features such as eyes, nose, mouth, ears, as well as talking about the colours in the picture, which confirmed what Matthew, (2003), and de la Roche, (1996) noted in section 2.3 that, drawing is an activity that allows children to symbolize what they know and feel. Based on the facial features identified in the picture, children began to touch and name their own facial features. The teacher used the opportunity to involve all the children in the activity by asking individual children to name the parts of the body. Children did this activity with enthusiasm as they sang a song about the parts of the body with the teacher. Teachers need to direct children’s attention towards relevant features or objects and by careful questioning, children gain understanding and are encouraged to join the discussion thereby gaining knowledge of the world around them as well as increasing their vocabulary (Curtis, 1998). The teacher subsequently used the previous drawings (self-portraits) made by the children to continue the discussion on self-identity. Smith (1998) noted that, in order to focus children’s attention and sharpen their perception on the subject at hand, teachers must firstly involve children in a discussion on what they are going to draw. The activity was introduced by asking the children to identify some differences and similarities in the drawings. Some mentioned the gender of their portraits, whilst others talked about the height, the colour of hair and the emotions and actions expressed in the facial gestures such as sad, smiling, and talking. This evidence has been mentioned in section 2.6 of the literature review by Hawking, (2002) who said that drawing is a powerful media through which children perceive their self-image, therefore drawings, showing human beings are a representation of who they are and reflect a sense of self-identity. The teacher placed an emphasis on the fact that each individual is different, special, handsome, and beautiful, children were jumping and giggling on hearing this. The teacher said; (to the children) ‘because every individual is different and special, each and every one of you is going to help me identify his/her drawing of your self-portraits.’ The teacher showed them drawings (self-portraits) made by the children themselves to the whole class one after the other and each child was called to identify his/her own drawing of him/herself. Interestingly every child was able to recognise his/her own drawing.

Apart from the names of individual children written on each drawing, it was not easy for the teacher to identify the drawing that belonged to each child, but the children were able to say; “this is my drawing, I made it myself”, ‘I have two eyes, two ears, one nose”, and much more. Children named the parts of the body with ease, as discussed in the lesson
earlier on. The teacher used affirmative words such as ‘nice’, ‘beautiful’, ‘fantastic’, and ‘brilliant’ to appreciate children’s work and to boost the children’s self-esteem. This discussion also helped children to understand and remember what they had learned about the facial features and body parts, as indicated by Hope, (2008) and Brooks (2003) in section 2.3. Anning and Ring,(2004); section 2.2, which emphasised how drawing serves as a tool for remembering, and retrieving memories on a particular subject or event. This activity further promoted children’s understanding and identification of the parts of the body that come in pairs (ears and eyes) as well as the single ones (nose and mouth). From the above observation, it was evident that drawing has a great value in aiding children’s communication as this simple activity of facial drawings generated a lot of discussion and the teacher used this opportunity to encourage each child to say at least a word or a sentence. Another valuable aspect of drawing in the class was how the teacher used drawing to facilitate the language development of Daniel, a Chinese boy who had very limited English vocabulary. She asked Daniel to tell her about his drawing and he said, “it is Daniel”, the teacher continued to ask, “who is Daniel?” Pointing at himself, he said, “it is me”. When children discuss the process of art and art materials, they develop fluency as they learn new words; therefore, drawing is essential for integrating children who come from non-English speaking backgrounds into English speaking communities (Koster, 2009).

Children draw to tell stories and share their ideas and thoughts with people around them (Adam, 2006) as shown in section 2.9 and this was manifested in the third observation, when children were asked to draw their favourite rooms in their homes. Children made different drawings depicting various activities in their homes as the teachers went around the group to discuss individual children’s drawings with them. One of the drawings which caught the interest of the researcher, was a drawing made by a 4 year-old boy who explained his drawing as his ‘messy room’, with socks and toys scattered all over the room.(see fig 4). As indicated in the literature review, Taylor et al, (2011) and Kellogg, (1970) emphasised how children represent their experiences through various forms of drawing and as they grow, they move from scribbling stage to pre-schematic stage. In his discussion on the importance of children’s drawings, Victor Lowenfeld said, “for a child, art is primarily a means of expression, and it becomes a language of thought, therefore it changes as the child grows. The fact that children interact and share ideas when they are drawing, shows that drawing
plays a role in developing children’s vocabulary and it progresses as they move from one class to another”.

4.2. Drawing as a way of learning other subjects

Having discussed the picture, the teacher then paired the children around a table (facing each other) and asked children to draw the faces of their friends who were sitting opposite them. When children work together in pairs or in groups, there are most likely to have extended language and challenging discussions as they learn to take turns to listen to each other (Curtis, 1998). As the teachers went around the table, they encouraged the children to draw as well as talking with them about their drawings. There were thorough discussions on each drawing as the teacher asked children to identify the features on the faces of their friends and their functions. For instance, when a child pointed and mentioned the eye, the teacher asked, “What do you use your eyes for? The child responded; “I use my eyes to see.” The discussion continued for a period until all of the twelve children were encouraged to say something about the parts of the body. One of the children drew the teacher’s attention to one of the drawings that showed the teeth. (Fig. 1)

Child: this is Sally showing her teeth.

Teacher: why did you draw her teeth?

Child: she was talking and smiling when I was drawing.

Teacher: this is fantastic, why are the teeth important to us?

Child: we use the teeth to break food into pieces.

Teacher; wow! Brilliant, let’s give him a clap.

The above illustration attests to the fact that drawing can be used to teach other subjects and enhances cognitive development as found in section 2.4 (Piaget, 1956 and Brooks, 2003).

Many ideas emerged when children were sitting around the table, drawing and talking at the same time; some talking about their families, whilst others talked about their rooms and the objects in the classroom. This activity promoted children’s social skills as they interacted amongst themselves and were able to communicate both verbally and non-verbally while developing their linguistic, creative, and imaginative skills. The uninterrupted conversations
of the children with other children raised the quality of interaction and of the learning environment. Conversing together while drawing, made the children feel closer to their friends, which made the interactions very enriching. It was evident that all the children participated in this kind of interactive exercise, and Paul and Samuel who have communication difficulties were motivated to join in the conversation. During drawing time, children are encouraged to respond to questions or engage in a discussion as they take time to draw, recognising the co-construction of meaning (Einarsdottir, 2005b).

During the second phase of the observation, children were observed when drawing a sunflower. The teacher started the lesson by revising the previous drawing activities. This was done by asking the whole group of children “who can tell me about what we drew yesterday?” as she invited one of the children to answer the question. Children began to talk about the previous drawing of their self-portraits. This way of revising the previous lesson affirmed Bae’s assertion that, “teachers can facilitate children’s work by making related comments, reminding them of the discussions they have made before or making suggestions” (Bae, 2004, p251). The teacher introduced the new topic by showing children pictures of a sunflower in a book, and the topic for the lesson was Growth. After explaining the process of growth, the teacher drew first on an easel to demonstrate to the children how to draw a sunflower. Though the teacher was trying to make the drawing simple for the children and as a way of motivating children to draw, this act of the teacher contradicts to the claims made by Kellogg (1970), and other researchers that children should be encouraged to draw on their own. The teacher started with a dot as the base of the flower and then extended it with a line as the stem and created the ends with circles, ovals, and zigzag. It was the teacher’s effort to guide the children, but in the researcher’s opinion, children should have been left to initiate and experience their own interpretations of drawing the sunflower. The reason being that children at this stage; the pre-schematic stage, have an innate set of schema which they use to communicate through drawing, therefore drawing for them first, may compel them to attempt to imitate and to try to copy exactly the teacher’s drawing, retarding their cognitive and creative abilities. Nonetheless, Vygotsky, (1978) mentioned that, children can show some level of cognitive abilities under the guidance of an adult or more competent peers.

This activity, which took place within 20 minutes, engaged children in a lot of talking and other learning areas such as the creation of marks that contribute to the visual vocabulary -shapes (dots, lines and circles). This justifies the claim by Kellogg, (1970) that the basis of
drawing consists of dots, horizontal and vertical lines, open and closed lines, loops, spirals and circles. According to Beal (2001), children connect all these shapes to make more complex drawings later on in their development. For example, children draw circles and add radial lines to form a human figure. This claim, by Beal was confirmed in the first observation when children began the drawing of portraits with circles for the head and later added the arms, which were formed through lines.

Another interesting aspect that emerged from this activity was the recognition of colours; yellow and green. Children were given two colours each of crayons to make the drawing have some resemblance to the sunflower (yellow and green) as found in Fig.2. The teacher went around to see what children were drawing and initiated a discussion around the children’s drawing. Children began to talk about the colours whilst drawing and then, they were asked to use the yellow colour for the petals and use the green colour for the stem. This action by the teacher, was seen by the researcher as being didactic, since children should be allowed to draw on their own as indicated by Kellogg in the above discussion. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) mentioned that occasionally teachers may suggest the proper colours or form for children as a way of directing children but they end up imposing their own colour scheme and proportions unto them. Whilst the activity was on-going, some of the children began to point at some objects in the class with the colours, yellow and green. Others identified the same colours in their clothes. As the discussion continued, children talked amongst themselves about the kinds of flowers they had at home. This shows how children use drawing to communicate a lot about themselves and their environment, thereby enhancing their language competence (Hope, 2008). In addition, Vygotsky, (1978), argued that children are part of the social community, whereby adults serve as role models and are important source of information about the nature of art. This argument about the social aspect of drawing was justified during the drawing time and this provided children with the opportunity for social
interactions as they talked amongst themselves and with the teachers.

**Fig 1. A drawing showing the teeth and a smiley face by 4 year-old Andy**

As indicated by Kellogg, (1970), drawings made by children are determined by the stages of development, and this was made clear in the observation. Lowefeld and Brittain (1987) described this stage as the beginning of conscious creation of form and graphic communication. The children were between the ages of four and five, and the kind of drawing made by the four-year olds differ slightly in terms of its expressions, and how they interpreted it, compared with the five year-olds. Since children at this level were in the pre-schematic stage (4-7 years), where children develop schema by drawing at random, (section 2.10), they tried making marks to represent some specific features that to them, could be identified as were parts of the sunflower. (see Fig 4). However, a five year-old, Ava, was able to show some resemblance in her drawing of the sunflower, by showing the features such as the leaves, the stem and the main flower in the middle of the plant. (see Fig 2). Children’s ability to draw and portray their intentions has a relationship to their cognitive abilities (Brooks, 2003). The observation also provided evidence of cognitive abilities exhibited by children in their drawings as noted in the literature review; children’s art may give an essential balance of the child’s intellect and emotions (Lowenfeld, 1965). This was evident in Ava’s drawing, as she was a little older than the four year-olds, her drawing showed the leaves, stem and the petals of the flower which made it more recognisable as a
Fig 2  A drawing showing a messy room of Peter.
Fig 3  A sunflower made by a five-year-old girl

Fig 4  A sunflower made by a four-year-old girl.
4.3 Drawing to express identity and emotions

As indicated in the literature review, children draw to express their emotions, to talk about themselves and about their families (Lowenfeld, 1965; Malchiodi, 1998). Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) reiterated that “no art expression is possible without self-identification with the experience expressed as well as with the material through which it is expressed (p4). These authors believed that young children use their art and their form of expression with materials according to their own personal experiences. This was evident in the observation as some children used their drawings to talk about themselves and their families. As mentioned earlier on in section 4.1, the teachers used the previous drawings of the children’s self-portraits to encourage the children to talk about themselves. They expressed joy and self-satisfaction when their drawings were displayed, and discussed. Similarly when asked to draw their friends, some used the opportunity to draw faces with wide mouth indicating happy moments as shown in Fig 1. This illustration conforms to Lowenfeld’s claim that children develop schema at the pre-schematic stage (4-7years), and they draw to show what they perceive to be important details of the subject, (see section 2.10). The children under observation fall within this category.

Fig 5. A drawing of a class during a story-telling lesson by 4 1/2 year old boy.

According to the teacher, whose class was under observation, children are not restricted in the kinds of things to draw, therefore some children chose to draw what was of interest to
them instead of drawing what the teacher asked them to do. This freedom to choose allows children to feel comfortable and leads to more self-discoveries. Some drew their mummies and daddies in a happy mood. One boy drew a face with a wide mouth and said the wide mouth represented the smiley face of his mummy. In some cases, children used drawing for emotional expression, and to show their sense of personal identity, some of these drawings and the discussion around them reflected their inner worlds, depicting various feelings (Malchiodi, 1988). A child who drew a picture of an adult with a child showed it to the researcher and initiated a conversation around it. Though the researcher was a non-participant observer, she took the opportunity to ask the child to describe the picture;

Child: hi, have a look at my picture

Researcher: It is beautiful tell me about it.

Child: this is me, and this is my mum.

Researcher: why did you draw yourself and mum instead of your friend?

Child: I love my mum.

Furthermore, another child drew an adult surrounded by children, and when asked, she interpreted it as her teacher during story-telling lesson, therefore, the drawing of the adults represents the teachers, and the children included herself and her friends, as shown in fig 3

4.4 The role of the teacher in facilitating children’s communication through drawing

The role of the teacher was really a key factor in ensuring that children have all the drawing media and use drawing for most of their interactions. The school under observation use drawing extensively in all of the learning areas, therefore, the teachers render their roles effectively to achieve the best for the children and the school as a whole. Throughout the observations, teachers exhibited their competence in executing their roles to promote communication through drawing.

Firstly, teachers used drawing to help children acquire vocabulary thereby increasing their communication skills, this role as indicated by Gentle, (1985) was well delivered by teachers as they used children’s drawing to help children construct simple sentences like, ‘I drew myself’, ‘I have two eyes’, ‘Ava is my friend’ and much more…
Secondly, teachers provided an enabling environment with easy accessibility to drawing media; this was made possible when teachers provided children with all the necessary materials for drawing. Teachers also encouraged children by giving them positive reinforcement as they went around the classroom and looked at the children’s work, which was in line with the roles of the teacher in enhancing children’s communication as identified by Striker, (2001) found in section 2.11.

The researcher did not intend to include the therapeutic aspect of drawing in her observation, but it was evident that the teacher was using drawing to assist two children with communication problems (one with autism and another with hearing impairment). Using the various drawings as prompts or as stimulus, these children were able to express a single word or sentences. For instance, when each child was asked to describe his/her drawing, Paul (with autism) was able to say in a low voice, “this is me”. Samuel, with a hearing problem was also interacting with his peers during the drawing process. Since children know the plight of Samuel (hard of hearing) they pointed to their drawings as a way of telling him to look at it as some shouted to say it aloud to assist his hearing. Samuel sometimes tried to repeat the words of his peers, and this confirmed how drawing could be used to aid children with additional needs. (Kramer, 1979)

4.5 Views from teachers

In an attempt to discover how children use drawing to communicate and the role of the teacher in facilitating it, interviews were transcribed and categorised into the following themes (Blaxer,2006) and to ensure anonymity, each participant is presented by a letter from the alphabet ;

- The value of children’s drawing
- Interpretation of children’s drawing
- Facilitating children’s drawing
- The impact of drawing on children's communication
4.6 The value of children’s drawing

Three teachers at the preschool centre were interviewed to elicit their views on how drawing is used to enhance children’s communication. According to the teachers, huge emphasis is placed on the creative arts and drawing is one of those elements. At the beginning, children find it difficult to hold pencils but once they develop motor skills and can use pencils, it becomes possible for them to draw. Besides, drawing is a valuable way for children to interpret their world, thus there is a huge celebration when children make marks to represent something (teacher A). Teacher B also expressed the same opinion when she said drawing is very important in terms of the use of the pencil for developing writing skills. In addition talking about/ or while drawing enhances children’s language development. She emphasised that, children talk very much when they are drawing and so it helps to develop their language and social competence. Furthermore, she explained that, children’s drawing is valued by having displays of their work on the school’s notice board for parents to see and for tracking children’s achievement, as well as appreciating their work. Drawing is one component of the visual arts in the curriculum, he said. These views expressed by all the three teachers are confirmation of what other researchers such as Anning & Ring (2004), Beal (2001), and Hope (2008) have reported on in the literature.

4.7 Interpretation of children’s drawings

With regards to teachers’ understanding and interpretation of children’s drawing, all three said it is difficult to interpret children’s drawing as indicated in the literature review section 2.8. In order to understand what children communicate through drawing it is essential to talk to them and to encourage them to talk about their drawings (Wright, 2007). Therefore, the best way to understand children’s drawing is to invite them to tell the teacher about their own drawings. When children talk about what they have done, it helps them to communicate their intentions and to develop their communication skills. Narratives about children’s drawing allow them to share details about their daily activities with peers and the adults around them (Wright, 2007). Contrary to the above statement, Beal (2001) argued that it is okay if children want to talk about their work, but they should not be asked to explain their works. Nevertheless, the observation indicated that if teachers did not ask children to talk about their work, the communicative aspect of drawing which forms the central objective of this research would not be accomplished. Drawing plays an active role in the preschool under observation.
According to teacher A, drawing is part of the routine of the day, since it is used in all learning areas, and it forms part of the home activities. Even though some parents see it as a mess, they are encouraged to allow their children to draw at home as a form of learning as well as playing, since children are inclined to draw during their free time, and also based on the resources available. This is because children are motivated to draw when they are provided with the necessary materials for drawing. When children get pencils, the first thing they do is to make marks on any available surface leading to scribbling and drawing (Kellogg, 1970). For learning, parents can assist their children to use drawing to develop their writing skills, as well as for their language and cognitive development through discussion of the children’s drawing with them and providing them with the necessary drawing materials.

Teacher B believes that drawing is a closure on a lesson, thus, drawing concludes a lesson, and every time spent on an activity ends up in drawing. She also said that for visual arts and most subjects, drawing is included, because usually lessons begin or end with a drawing. This was evident when one class was observed during a science lesson entitled Growth. After discussing the process of growth with children, they were engaged in the drawing of the sunflower. The above statement underscores the importance of drawing in preschools as it forms a greater percentage of their daily activities. However, children also have access to drawing during creative playtime and during some other class activities. The centre has a writing and mark making table with a variety of pencils and crayons for drawing, (Kress, 1997)-section 2.6, therefore children have all the resources available to them which motivates them to draw, since the school places much emphasis on drawing which is an aspect of the visual arts (Teacher C). “Whenever pencil and paper are available, children will automatically draw” (Beal, 2001 p47). Matthews (1999), stressed the need for parents to encourage their children to be develop confidence in drawing by providing the physical environment, mental space and resources to explore painting and drawing.

4.8 Involving children in drawing activities

When asked about how they involved children in drawing activities, teachers explained that children are involved in drawing activities in many different ways. Teacher A stated that with her experience as a preschool teacher, she believes children like to draw, and practically children of all ages are involved in drawing (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1979). She usually shows pictures that will be of interest to them and when they get inspired, they draw them.
On the one hand, she discussed the works of some artists, and through that, children are encouraged to reproduce or copy the works of other people or draw pictures from a book. Teacher B held the view that drawing is not just for an artwork; rather it is used for everything. She started a discussion on a topic after which she asked the children to draw based on the topic, however some children choose to draw what was of interest to them. As it has been discussed children from the centre fall within the pre-schematic stage and since children’s drawings are determined by their stages of development alongside the things around them, the teacher’s response to this corresponds with the arguments made by Lowenfeld and Brittain, (1979) and Kellogg (1970), that children’s drawings are based on the stages of development. Once they are given instruction to draw, they can draw everything they wish to draw, said the teacher. Teacher C, in his explanation emphasized that involving children in drawing activities can be difficult, because they do not have the motor skills to hold pencils and crayons, so they encourage parents to assist children to do drawing at home. However, drawing is used for developing the writing skills of children (Einarsdottir et al, 2009) because children’s writing skills are based on the various scribbles.

The role of the parent is vital in enhancing children’s drawing during their developmental stages by creating a space in the home for children to draw and providing them with papers, pencils, and crayons. Providing children with the necessary support will help children discover different ways of exploring and interacting with the environment (Curriculum guidance, 1989). Kellogg (1970), confirmed that, parental influence can affect preschool children positively or negatively; for example, by providing them with good art materials or by preventing their use at home. Therefore, it is important for parents to give their maximum support for children’s drawing at home.

There are some factors that influence children’s drawing, as noted by all the three teachers. They mentioned that, children have their own ways of drawing and most often, children’s drawings are based on events with themes like Christmas, Pancake Tuesday, school trips, a visit to the art gallery and Halloween. Similarly, in the observation of children’s drawing and meaning making. Anning and Ring (2004) reported that, art activities are generally related to topics and seasons such as painting of snowdrops, Christmas, Easter, Mother’s day, birthday cards and other life experiences.
4.9 The impact of drawing on children’s communication

In an attempt to find out how drawing can have impact on children’s communication, all the three teachers confirmed that drawing have great impact on children’s communication and the teachers’ approach in facilitating children’s drawing places huge emphasis on language. Teacher A however stressed that most children at the centre are linguistically deprived, they come from home backgrounds where parents and siblings vocabulary may be very limited, and so drawing helps them to develop vocabulary for communication. Talking fluently about their pictures, and interacting with the drawing media is an effective element for developing communication skills as reported by Hope, (2008) in section 2.8.

4.10 Facilitating children’s drawing

When asked how they facilitate children’s drawing, teacher A and B believed that this could be possible by providing children with the necessary drawing materials such as papers, pencils, and crayons as well as taking part in the drawing activities. Teacher C was of the view that, if children are given the freedom to draw whatever they like, and are encouraged to describe their drawings, it promotes their self-confidence and it helps children to give a wonderful interpretation of their drawings and motivates them to draw. He emphasised that, he would try not to be deductive in what he asks children to do. ‘I give them the freedom to choose what they want to draw, as it enhances their interest and creativity’, he said. It was noted by Gentle, (1985) and Striker, (2001) that the teacher’s role is to maximise children’s interest in drawing, therefore, the positive attitude of teachers will help to achieve this. “Children are at liberty to experiment and to present ideas and actions in whatever they choose” (Wright, 2007p6). Teachers usually give children open-ended assignments, whereby children have the freedom to explore independently (Bae, 2004).

4.11 Conclusion

The results of this analysis and consequent findings have helped to address the research objectives posed in the proposal; the first objective question was to discuss the role of drawing in enhancing children’s communication skills. The above discussions have elaborated on how children develop their communication skills through drawing. Themes
emerged from both the observation and the individual interviews with teachers, gave an overview of how the practice in the preschool centre reflected the literature review.

The second objective sought to identify the various ways by which teachers used drawing to facilitate children’s communication was also achieved through observing the various activities and the responses from the interviews. It was evident that teachers’ roles are very important and critical in facilitating children’s communication through drawing, by ensuring that children have the necessary drawing media, and to generate a lot of discussion around the various drawings made by children. The role of the teacher is very important in recognising the functions of drawing to enhance children’s full experience and communication (Gentle, 1985). The findings have provided further evidence to the claim made by other researchers identified in the literature review, that drawing plays a major role in promoting children’s communication. The observation highlighted the interactive process drawing sought to bring, thus building the social skills of children.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the overall conclusions of the research and the recommendations for improvement in future research. The limitations of the research will also be addressed in this chapter. The research findings presented in the current research were obtained from a case study conducted within one preschool in Dublin, which uses drawing in most of its activities for children in the early years.

The main findings of the research have demonstrated how drawing can be an effective form of communication in preschools and the active role teachers play in promoting children’s communication through drawing. In addition, the findings highlighted how drawing is used to facilitate learning across subject areas and its significance in the overall development of the child. The findings further proved that drawing has an influence on the acquisition of vocabulary in a child’s language development as evidenced in the centre where teachers used many approaches to facilitate children’s communication through drawing.

Through an extensive review of the literature and research, it was determined that drawing plays a significant role in children’s communication. The various researchers identified in the literature have determined that drawing is very important in the holistic development of the child. It was identified that children draw for a purpose and there is a purpose/intention in the various marks that children make. The child’s ability to represent meaning through drawing is determined by their developmental stages and therefore children develop their drawings from scribbles to more recognisable symbols as they mature (Brittain, 1979; Kellogg, 1970; Lowenfeld and Britain, 1987).
The purpose of the research was to explore how teachers and children use drawing to communicate in the preschool years, and the teachers’ role in facilitating the child’s ability to express himself through drawing. Therefore, throughout the research, the important and significant roles, that teacher’s play, in facilitating children’s communication through drawing was discovered and the relevance of drawing to learning about other subjects was identified. In the delivery of their practice, teachers made good use of many opportunities that drawing activities presented. The teachers encouraged children to exhibit their communicative potential through discussion with the children by asking questions about the various drawings made by them. It was also evident that children talk a lot about their drawings, therefore, the process of drawing encourages children to talk and verbalise their thoughts. Another important highlight that emerged from the findings was how drawing helped in bringing children together in terms of friendship and socialisation as noted by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987), proving that the process of art is a means of social growth.

The full participation by the staff was very helpful in this research, and has provided in-depth study on how drawing is used in many different ways to enhance children’s communication. The children’s active involvement also contributed immensely to this research through their cooperation during observation. The permission granted by the Centre to take photographs of the drawings for the purpose of the research, assisted in the final analysis.

5.1 Implication for children and teachers

Children’s spontaneous drawing allows them to share and communicate ideas about the world and with the people around them. Therefore, children should be given open-ended opportunities to use drawing as a medium to make their intentions known. “Drawing gives young children opportunities to represent intricate narratives and use them to communicate with the significant others in their lives” (Anning & Ring, 2004 p117). Children have a better chance of developing a positive attitude to learning through high quality experiences in the pre-school learning environment.

When children are exposed to many interactive activities, it enhances their communication skills and this was evident in the findings when children discussed their drawings with peers during the process of drawing. Such interactions promote children’s learning and development and help them to reach their potential (NCCA, 2009).
Drawing has been identified as one area through which children learn about other subjects; therefore, it promotes the cognitive, language, social, creative and emotional development of children as well as developing their motor skills enabling them to make early symbols that will progress over time into writing skills.

Giving children the opportunity to express their emotions through drawing is likely to promote their self-esteem, and to develop confidence in initiating their own learning dispositions through drawing. Teachers also get insights into the emotional life of children and have opportunities to respond to children’s emotions alongside communicating effectively with them through drawing.

The teaching and learning environment must provide support, time and opportunities that will enable children to pursue complexity in their drawings (Brooks, 2003) hence the teacher’s role is to ensure that children have easy access to the drawing environment and drawing media such as pencil, papers and crayons.

5.2 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the limitation to this particular research is related to its scale. Since it is a small-scale research, it is impossible to generalise the findings through a broader perspective. This research aimed to explore the role of drawing in children’s communication in preschool and the findings are associated with only one preschool, which focuses on drawing as a valuable aspect of all the various activities. The outcome would have been different if the research was conducted in a setting where drawing was not considered as part of the daily activities, which makes it difficult to place the findings across a wider spectrum. In addition, the time and the small-scale of the study did not allow the researcher to investigate how children and parents use drawing to communicate at home, therefore the findings are very specific to the preschool setting and cannot be linked to the role of drawing at home. Initially, it was the intention of the researcher to involve parents, but due to time constraints as explained earlier on, parents were not given consent letters to participate. Secondly, the researcher would have desired to conduct more observations in a cross section of different learning contexts to gain a deeper understanding of a wider range of children’s drawing and to have had the opportunity to compare their drawing process across a number of these contexts.
Moreover, since the research focuses on only the communicative aspect of children’s drawing, other important aspects that were identified during the data collection were given less consideration. Other developmental aspects could have had a more varied impact on the research findings. For example, the physical, socio-emotional, cognitive and cultural aspects of children’s development through drawing.

5.3 Strength of the study

The use of observation and interviews applied in this research allowed for clarification of the findings at each stage of the research, and the contribution provided by the participants helped to ensure the internal reliability of the study.

In addition, this study may provide some awareness on the relevance of the research on a local level for early childhood providers. Despite the fact that the findings are limited to one particular school, they may be applied in the wider arena to ensure that children’s drawings are valued in all preschools.

5.4 Recommendations

The recommendation from this research calls for a change of attitude in adults consideration of children’s drawing. For instance, in Ghana, most teachers and adults seem to have an interest in and appreciation of children’s drawing. Although some teachers put great emphasis on children’s drawing, some parents, however, see it as mess making on the walls and other surfaces in the home. Often teachers use drawing to occupy children during their free playtime. Anning (2002) noted that drawing is given little importance by some teachers who simply see it as a way to keep children occupied, and as a means of decorating the classroom. It is the expectation of many parents in Ghana to find evidence of numeracy and literacy, for homework in children’s notebooks, therefore anything related to drawing, (in some cases), implies that children are not learning or that teachers are not teaching their children. Nonetheless, some parents who value children’s drawing will display their drawings on walls, fridges, and doors and sometimes ask children to explain their drawings. In view of the above, the researcher intends to advocate for children’s drawing both in
preschool centres and at homes in the near future. In the Irish context however, especially the centre where this research was conducted, children’s drawings are valued, but as the research was a case study in one particular school, the findings cannot be applied to all preschools in Ireland. However, Aistear, the curriculum framework for preschools in Ireland, used children’s drawing to explain most of its themes; well-being, identity and belonging, communicating, exploring and thinking. This obviously denotes that through drawing, children’s holistic developments can be achieved in preschools.

Children’s drawing should be valued in terms of its educational impact on children’s development, therefore based on the findings it is recommended that drawing should be given prominence in all preschools’ learning experiences as it helps in the holistic development of children and it embraces all areas of child’s development. Drawing should be part of the school’s daily routine, since it is through drawing that children can make their thoughts and intentions known (Machioldi, 1988). The process of drawing and talking about drawing serves as tools for remembering. Discussion around the drawings that children have made helps them to retrieve their memories from their drawings (Brooks, 2003) as well as aiding children’s communication potential in general.

The observation identified that children would have added more details to their drawings if they had more time allocated to the drawing period therefore children should be given sufficient time to express themselves fully through different drawing activities. Furthermore, drawing materials of all kinds should be readily available and easily accessible for children to stimulate their interest in drawing activities. It also worth noting that children should be allowed to draw on their own initiative and at their own pace as this helps to enhance intellectual and creative abilities in children. It was evident in the findings that some teachers were didactic in terms of the kind of instructions they gave to the children regarding drawing, as well as restricting children to very limited selection of materials for drawing. This attitude of teachers was a contradiction to the assertion made by Lowenfeld and Brittain, (1987) that teachers should not impose the choice of colours on children, rather they should be allowed to make their own choices.

Another recommendation is in relation to how children’s drawings will be exposed to the outside world. Though the teachers usually display children’s work on walls and notice boards, the researcher believes that there should be a periodic exhibition of children’s work,
as this will motivate parents to give their maximum support for children’s drawing at home. Children are very much influenced by the home environment, since they spend a lot of time with their parents and siblings. Parents and siblings can foster child’s communication through drawing by providing them with appropriate materials and discussing their work with them. The best motivation that a child can get at home for his/her art expression is to feel secured, and loved in an atmosphere where sensitive relationships to objects and the environment are encouraged (Lowenfeld, 1965).

5.5 Summary

This chapter has summarised the findings of the research, and the discussions made based on the views by other researchers in the literature review as well as the method used for the research. Other areas that have been highlighted in this chapter include the limitations and strengths of the study and the recommendations based on the findings. Children need many opportunities to explore their world through drawing, and the teachers’ role is critical in helping children to reach their potential. The findings seek to establish the fact that, there were various themes that emerged from children’s drawing in terms of communication, cognitive, emotional, and social skills.

Children in their early years need to be encouraged to acquire some basic skills before they are enrolled in formal school. Much of these responsibilities lie in the hands of the preschool teachers and other stakeholders in ensuring that children are given a quality foundation to formal education. Communication plays a fundamental role in children’s development, and the discussions so far, have emphasised drawing as being one of a variety of means through which children’s communication skills can develop. This researcher believes that, children’s drawings are perceived to be insignificant by some adults, but this study has proved that drawings made by young children carry a lot of meaning that may not be easily interpreted by the adult (Hope, 2008 & Brittain, 1999). It is important for teachers to recognise the importance of children’s drawing as a tool for communication, and an effective way to nourish children’s holistic development. The basic formation of the written word begins with children’s scribbles which progresses during their different developmental stages of drawing (Kellog, 1970, and Lowenfeld 1965), therefore it should be one of the areas that children’s learning experiences focus on. Teachers should appreciate children’s drawing and be responsible for facilitating children’s communication through drawing. It should be
acknowledged that, the impact of drawing on children’s communication is enormous, and the practical approach in preschools can affect children’s interest in drawing. This research has demonstrated that children’s drawing can be used extensively in preschools to facilitate children’s communication, therefore, the researcher urges practitioners and other stakeholders to give their maximum support for its presence in early childhood education and to demonstrate motivation in supporting children’s drawing as contributing to the academic potential of the child. This research has motivated the researcher; therefore, she plans to encourage teachers in Ghana to make adequate use of children’s drawing and to recognise its importance in Early Childhood Education and Care. In addition, further and detailed research into children’s drawing should be conducted which could be aimed at the development of children’s educational needs as well as informing policy and practice in all preschools.
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Nations.


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Consent form

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam,

CONSENT TO BECOME A PARTICIPANT IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

The research is entitled “The role of drawing in promoting communication skills in early childhood education”. This is being carried out to elicit information from participants on the role drawing plays in children’s communication in early childhood settings”.

All participants are at liberty to choose a convenient time for the interview. This study is to fulfil an academic requirement, therefore all information provided will remain confidential, and anonymous. Your consent is needed to enable the researcher carry on with this research.

I agree to be a participant in the research and consent to be interviewed as well as be audio-recorded. I have read the information letter and agreed to the terms of participating in the research.

Signed (Research Participant): ____________________ Date__________________

Email address____________________________________

Signed (Researcher) _________________________ Date-------------------

Email address:joyceanim02@yahoo.com
Appendix B: Questions for the unstructured interview of teachers

1. How do you value children’s drawing?
   i. Do you interpret and read meaning in children’s drawing?
   ii. If yes, how do you read meaning into children’s drawing?

2. What kind of activities are drawing oriented?

3. How often do you use drawing in your class activities?

4. How do you involve children in these activities?
   i. What stimulates children to draw?

5. How do children react to drawing activities?
   i. How do you create an enabling environment for children to draw?

6. In your opinion, does drawing have impact on children’s communication?

7. Do you like or enjoy drawing yourself?
   i. If yes, how do you facilitate children’s drawing?
   ii. If no, how do you encourage children to draw?
Appendix C: Transcription of interview with Teacher A

Researcher: How do you value children’s drawing?

Teacher A: Well, I can say that drawing is a valuable way for children to interpret their world, looking at children’s drawing you can get a lot about their lives, their mum and dad, their pet. Our children are between 4 and 5 year-olds and we place huge emphasis on creative arts and drawing is one of those elements. Children find it difficult to hold pencils and as a way of developing their writing skills, drawing is used. They draw to tell about their family, pets, and everything about themselves.

Researcher: Do you interpret and read meaning in children’s drawing?

Teacher A: To interpret children’s drawing, I will say no, because we as teachers are not supposed to interpret children’s drawing we ask them to tell us about their drawings. Teachers get pleasure when children are able to make marks on papers. We are delighted to see children draw at this stage. I am not concerned about the interpretation of children’s drawing, but simple narratives can give a clear meaning to what children draw. They draw to show the smiley face of their mummies. We do not have to interpret children’s drawing, we do ask them to tell us about their drawings.

Researcher: What kind of activities are drawing oriented?

Teacher A: Children have their own ways of drawing and most often children draw based on events with themes like Christmas, pancake Tuesday, school trips, a visit to the photo gallery, children are often given the chance to draw their own way.

Researcher: How often do you use drawing in your class activities?

Teacher A: Drawing is often the routine of the day, we make sheets, pencils and crayons available for them and we often encourage parents to allow children to do painting and drawing at home even though some see it as a mess.

Researcher: What kinds of drawing are children engaged in?

Teacher A: Like I said earlier on drawing is routine of the day, so most of our class activities are centred on drawing.

Researcher: How do you involve children in drawing activities?
Teacher A: Children to draw and they enjoy listening to stories about drawings. Practically children of all ages are involved in drawing. We look at pictures that will be of interest to them and when they get inspired they draw them. We discuss the works and stories of some artists and through that we encourage to draw.

Researcher: What stimulates children’s interest in drawing?

Teacher A: Once they get access to drawing materials, they begin to draw.

Researcher: How do children react to drawing activities?

Teacher A: They love to draw, and it is a form of movement and imagination so they love to do it. The more they do it the happier they become.

Researcher: How do you create an enabling environment for children to draw?

Teacher A: By making drawing materials accessible and available for them and by encouraging them, showing pleasure in everything they draw, by going round to see their work. By allowing them to show their work and giving them a clap and praise, by putting their work in folders, displaying them on walls for children to celebrate their work, and giving positive reinforcement as children really respond to this.

Researcher: In your opinion, how does drawing impact on children’s communication?

Teacher A: Drawing place huge emphasis on language, children are linguistically deprived, they come from home backgrounds where vocabulary may be very limited, and drawing helps them to develop vocabulary for communication. Drawing tends to give children clarity of speech and vocabulary as they point and say something about their work, example this is my cat, this is daddy, this is where I live, I drew a tree, if you can get them to say complete sentences on their drawing enhances their language development. Talking fluently about their pictures is basically it can be used for language and development.

Researcher: Do you like or enjoy drawing yourself?

Teacher A: Yes, I love drawing, I love to draw and write.

Researcher: If yes, how do you facilitate children’s drawing?
Teachers A: By making the environment happy and encouraging to promote creativity, making papers, crayons and pencils available,
Appendix D: Transcription of interview with Teacher B

Researcher: How do you value children’s drawing?

Teacher B: Drawing is very important in terms of the use of the pencil for developing writing skills and also for language development, children talk very much when they are drawing and so it is helps to develop their language and their social competence.

Researcher: Do you interpret and read meaning in children’s drawing?

Teacher B: No, I don’t have to interpret children’s drawing, rather they have to tell me what they is happening in their drawing., it is very easy, when they tell me what their drawings are about, they love talking about their drawing I don’t need to interpret them myself.

Researcher: What kind of activities are drawing oriented?

Teacher B: Drawing is a closure on a lesson, thus, drawing concludes on a lesson every time spent on an activity depends on drawing, for all arts works and all subjects drawing in included and children draw everything. I don’t have to force them to draw I give them the option to draw what they want to draw, sometimes I ask them what they want to draw and they will tell me everything through what they draw.

Researcher: How often do you use drawing in your class activities?

Teacher B: Drawing is not just for an artwork, it is used for everything. I give them a topic and off they go they can draw everything.

Researcher: What stimulate children to draw?

Teacher B: errrrmm, I ask them what they are drawing and once you ask them they won’t stop they will tell you everything and I ask them to tell me what is happening in their rooms and I create stories and after discussing the story they will draw everything they want to draw about them. I print out so much more stories about.

Researcher: How do children react to drawing activities?
Teacher B: They love drawing and like to talk about their drawing and they are really happy when they draw and sometimes I put their drawings up on the wall and they look at them with admiration.

Researcher: How do you create an enabling environment for children to draw

Teacher B: mmm! Enabling environment? I provide them with sheets of papers, crayons and pencils to enable them to draw whenever they want to, and I encourage them always about their drawing, and talking about what they are going to draw first, asking them sit in a circle, and talking about the topic as they draw.

Researcher: In your opinion, does drawing have impact on children’s communication?

Teacher B: It does, absolutely! Since they love drawing, it gives them the chance to talk about what is happening in the picture and they are able to say whatever they want to say so it is brilliant for their language development. They talk to each other when they are drawing and it is a kind of socialisation as they sit round the table and talk. There are so many stories they create around the pictures.

Researcher: Do you like drawing?

Teacher B: Yes, I like it a little bit.

Researcher: so how do you encourage children to draw?

Teacher B: I draw a picture first on a board or easel and they copy or do their own in a similar way. I do enjoy drawing with children.
Appendix E: Transcription of interview with teacher C

**Researcher:** How do you value children’s drawing?

**Teachers C:** We value children’s drawing in the school by having displays of their work in the school notice board for parents to see and for children’s achievement, to appreciate their work. Drawing is one component of visual arts of the curriculum.

**Researcher:** Do you interpret and read meaning in children’s drawing?

**Teacher C:** No, I cannot interpret children’s drawing, we tell them to explain what they have placed on their drawing. It can be difficult, because I will not interpret their drawing but I will ask them to tell me about the pictures they have drawn. I will not interpret children’s drawing without asking them to tell me, looking their age they cannot draw something concrete because they don’t have the techniques to do that, but discussing it with them will help to **identify what they want to communicate.**

**Researcher:** What kind of activities are drawing oriented?

**Teacher C:** Children have access to drawing during creative playtime and during some class activities. We have writing table and mark making with a variety of pencils and crayons for drawing, but in relation to visual arts, drawing is one strand that we place emphasis on.

**Researcher:** How often do you use drawing in your class activities?

**Teacher C:** There is a fine line between drawing and mark making and it is a way of preparing children for writing, therefore it is done on daily basis.

**Researcher:** What kind of activities are drawing oriented?

**Teacher C:** We usually involve them during free drawing of objects like a house, a tree. I suppose drawing is used as an end stage of a lesson.

**Researcher:** How do you involve children in drawing activities?

**Teacher C:** Well, errrm, Involving children in drawing activities can be difficult, because they do not have the skills to hold pencils and crayons, so we encourage that they do drawing at home as well. Drawing done in school will be done in a creative way.
**Researcher:** What stimulate children’s interest to draw?

**Teacher C:** If you value what children are doing then they will be encouraged to draw. Children sometimes like drawing on their own.

**Researcher:** How do children react to drawing activities?

**Teacher C:** They love drawing, some can’t enjoy it because they think they cannot draw, others too want to be active by moving around during drawing time.

**Researcher:** How do you create an enabling environment for children to draw?

**Teacher C:** By having resources, available: a variety of media such as drawing sheets and crayons and pencils, and promoting a child-led activity.

**Researcher:** In your opinion, does drawing have impact on children’s communication

**Teacher C:** In the process of drawing, there can be different kinds of communication going on. The process of drawing can be communicative as children interact with their friends and the drawing media in general, example; I need a crayon, give me a pencil, I am drawing a picture of my mother and so on. Sometimes they are good to tell you this is my mum and I am drawing my dad. As way of valuing their drawing, is important by allowing children to enjoy their own work through the display valuing drawing as an important aspect of the visual arts.

**Researcher:** Do you like drawing?

**Teacher C:** I do like it sometimes, do a lot of doodling at my leisure time.

**Researcher:** How do you encourage children to draw?

**Teacher C:** Being creative with children promotes their confidence to draw. Children have a wonderful interpretation of their drawings, I will try not to be deductive in what they have to do, I will give them the freedom to choose what they want to draw,
Appendix F: Pictures of children’s drawing.

A drawing showing a portrait of a woman wearing glasses

Drawing by a 4 year old girl, showing herself and her mum.
Drawings showing children’s favourite rooms
Drawings of a sunflower