What Stick Figures Tell Us about Irish Politics

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Where we come from
- Previous work involved students using freehand drawing in critical self-reflection
- "Doing research with people, rather than on them" (Bray et al. 2000: 7)
- Shared sense of experience - freedom to express in non-traditional manner
- Drawings, enjoyable, simple, yet deceptively revealing
- Learning experience an unfolding collaborative process of inquiry

The student’s narrative:
- Government pillaging citizens for every cent

What we interpret:
- Negative relationship between Ireland and EU
- Enlarged Irish government shaking money from citizens and EU collecting the money
- Other small EU stick men – other EU countries – approving

Doing freehand drawing
- First class, provided students with A4 sheet and pre-printed instructions:
  - Side 1: "Through a drawing answer the following question, "What is Irish Politics?"
  - Side 2: "Now, in your own words, describe/explain what you have drawn"
- Drawing (10 - 15 mins):
- Describe/explain what had been drawn (10 mins)
- Bridge gap between intended message and onlooker’s interpretation
- Divide students into groups of 5 for discussion (25 mins)
- Rapporteur recorded discussion
- Second class facilitated debrief of class
- Rapporteur noted on flipchart sheets; opened floor for discussion

The student’s narrative:
- An illustration of an endless series of questions to our political leaders, with no answers in return

What we interpret:
- Numerous hard questions are addressed to the figure – presumably a politician
- "A few say's "I don’t know"
- Sense of uncertainty and confusion

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