What Stick Figures Tell Us about Irish Politics

Sharon Feeney
*Technological University Dublin*

John Hogan
*Technological University Dublin*

Paul F. Donnelly
*Technological University Dublin, paul.donnelly@tudublin.ie*

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Sharon Feeney, Paul Donnelly & John Hogan, College of Business, Dublin Institute of Technology

Where we come from

The student’s narrative:
- 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

What we interpret:
- Image of Ireland and euro - interesting in context of the question
- People debating, questioning, seeking consensus – perception of Irish politicians?
- Unhappy people under a cloud of taxes and other charges

Interpreting the drawings
- Reflect the learners’ personal understanding and experiences
- Many approaches to analysing learner-generated drawings
- Storytelling - drawings - there is a narrative element
- Pattern and decoration tendency to give additional detail, shape and order to drawings (Hall, 2008)
- Sample of 7 drawings out of over 1,100 so far collected

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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 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

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Contact us
- Sharon Feeney, BS&S Director of Policy Research, DIT, Aungier Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
  e: sharon.feeney@dit.ie
- Paul Donnelly, BS&S Research Centre Director, DIT, Aungier Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
  e: paul.donnelly@dit.ie
- John Hogan, BS&S Research Centre Director, DIT, Aungier Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
  e: john.hogan@dit.ie
  w: www.johnhogan.net

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