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# Thinking with images: Exploring representations of masculinity in a male dominant educational environment

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UNIVERSITY OF THE
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# Thinking with images: Exploring representations of masculinity in a male dominant educational environment.


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## Declaration

**Surname:** Chinhangane

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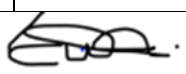
**Due date:** 15 March 2023

**Full Topic:** Thinking with images: Exploring representations of masculinity in a male dominant educational environment.

**Declaration of Original Work:**

I, Eunice Chinhangane, know and accept that plagiarism
(i.e., to use another's work and to pretend that it is one's own) is dishonest.
Please confirm the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| **X** | I declare that the attached research report is my own work. |
| **X** | I understand that while I am encouraged to use quotes from sources and the ideas of others to support my answer, my research report should not be just a collection of quotes. My own understanding and thinking need to be evident in my writing. |
| **X** | I have acknowledged all direct quotations and paraphrased ideas. |
| **X** | I have provided a complete, alphabetized reference list, as required by the APA method of referencing (described in the Referencing Handbook). |
| **X** | I have not allowed, and will not allow, anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work. |
| **X** | I understand that the University of the Witwatersrand will take disciplinary action against me if evidence suggests that this is not my own unaided work or that I failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing. |



Signed: _____

Date: 15 March 2023

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# 1. Introduction

In the 1862 novel *Fathers and Sons*, Ivan Turgenev writes: the drawing shows me at one glance what might be spread over ten pages in a book. These words convey the popular notion that a picture can generate many thoughts and ideas if it is 'read' well. In order to 'read' these pictures well, one must be visually literate. Visual literacy is critical in today's world as learners are confronted with visuals in almost every aspect of their lives. However, exposure to this onslaught of visuals does not imply that learners know how to critically analyse and navigate all the images that come their way (Cappello & Walker, 2016). Visual literacy skills need to be practised and developed and are not usually learned "unaided by osmosis"; learners need the facilitation of a teacher to hone these skills (Guinibert, 2020, p. 173). We teach visual literacy in order to enhance learners' ability "to code and decode images and thus create, interrogate, disseminate, and utilize visual knowledge" (Benzon & Hauser, 2019, p. 16).

The concept of visual literacy was first proposed by Debes (1969). The concept will be discussed further in the Literature Review chapter. Debes (1969, p. 7) stated that:

> Visual literacy refers to a group of vision competencies a human being can develop by seeing at the same time he has and integrates other sensory experiences. The developing of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, and/or symbols, natural or manmade, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication.

When used to educate, pictures, images and artworks can help teachers to move beyond methods, which favour "the written word above all other forms of communication" (Cappello & Walker, 2016, p. 317). Learning to read images develops critical literacy which is an important skill considering the saturation of images that learners come across on social media platforms as well as in their own private spaces where they are engaging in activities which involve the use of images, such as watching television and using computers. Research shows that

screen time for learners has doubled since 1999, thus indicating that there is a clear and very prevalent shift from purely printed texts to texts which include words, visuals and sound (Capello & Walker, 2016). Critical literacy, then, becomes important for learners as images are prolific in their environments. Having the ability to fully engage with these images gives learners an advantage. For example, Cappello and Walker (2016) argue that in the classroom, images can be used to begin difficult conversations as they are deemed to be more accessible to learners compared to written text alone. Where written text can be intimidating in terms of the level of language used to explain challenging concepts, learners can view images related to the same concepts and start to discuss what they see, think and understand from the images using their own words. In this way, images can help learners articulate their thoughts and ideas when it comes to challenging topics.

The use of images as a learning tool ties in with the creative learning approach. When we speak about creative learning we “generally mean teaching that allows students to use their imaginations, have ideas, generate multiple possible solutions to problems, communicate in a variety of media and in general to ‘think outside the box’ “ (Thomson & Sefton-Green, 2011, p. 2). In this way, then, images hold the power to help us express our thoughts, share our ideas and use our imagination. Following this line of thinking, teaching with visuals could help promote equity in the classroom as the visuals allow students, who may have otherwise been struggling, access to the curriculum by helping them make sense of difficult concepts.

Tishman and Palmer (2007) discuss how works of art, which are a particular type of representation or image, are good as thinking tools. Building on their work, Yenawine (2019), suggests that works of art present cognitive, visual and thinking problems that children can unravel using their cognitive and visual literacy skills. Art (which includes a range of images), encourages thought and students find a connection between thinking deeply about art and relating this to thinking deeply and critically about the topics that the artworks explore (Danto, 2013). The development of critical thinking, and showing thinking through the analysis and discussion of images, are the aspects that my research will focus on.

Critical thinking is defined as

> …purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based (Facione, 1990, p. 2 as cited in Stupple et.al, 2016).

Critical thinking is conceptualised in many ways but theorists, such as Ennis (1989), Facione (1990) and Halpern (2003), agree that critical thinkers have common traits such as the ability to look for, understand and evaluate information in a logical and rational manner during problem solving and can find alternate solutions to problems (Shaw, Lui, Gu, 2019).

Using Visual Literacy can improve learners' critical thinking. Visual literacy requires students to use content knowledge gained over time and critical thinking skills such as synthesis and reflection to read beyond what is displayed in front of them. Visual literacy and critical thinking are skills required for students to judge the validity of visuals they will encounter in their daily lives (Krejci, Ramroop-Butts, Torres & Isokpehi, 2020).

My focus for this study, is the aspect of critical thinking wherein learners begin to reflect on and question their thinking by looking at how it differs or is enhanced by the narrative presented in images, and by comparing their interpretations with others' interpretations.

## 1.1. Aims and objectives

My aim is to use images in a process that enables the learners to recognise and articulate their thoughts on masculinity and then to ascertain whether the inclusion of images helped to develop more critical thinking about masculinity. As such, my research tests two hypotheses: the first is that images, when used with scaffolding, can help learners to develop their critical thinking skills. The second is that by developing learners' critical thinking skills, images can be used as a gateway to discussing difficult concepts, to be more specific in terms of my study, the concept of masculinity. The reason for the focus on masculinity is because it is relevant to the context in which the study will take place: a boys' only high school in Gauteng, where the boys are creating and discovering their identities in a space with other adolescents that do not necessarily think and look like them. I hope to open up

discussions on patriarchy and the meaning of toxic masculinity in the process of conducting the study.

Through this study I wished to investigate the ways in which the use of images promote critical thinking and debate about controversial issues. Here, critical thinking skills are demonstrated when learners are able to reflect on and to question the narrative presented in each image while also beginning to think about aspects such as, 'who does this narrative benefit and why?' I explored how images can be used, with scaffolding, to have difficult discussions, discussions of sensitive, but critical matters and how the process can help learners to develop their critical thinking skills. These discussions were centred on what masculinity means to school boys in a male-dominated environment.

## 1.2. Research Questions

The primary research question was:

In what ways can images of masculinity be used to facilitate critical thinking and meaningful discussions of masculinities amongst Grade 11 school boys in a male dominant educational environment?

The questions that the research sought to answer were:

- What kinds of responses did the different images elicit from the boys?
- What sort of language did the boys use while engaging with the images?
- What critical thinking does this language reveal about the boys' thoughts on masculinity?
- In what ways did the discussions around images help to develop critical thinking?

## 1.3. Rationale

Barrett (2003) tells us that when interpreting types of art we should not settle for surface level interpretations of what we see. He suggests that through using the skill of interpretation, "we not only learn about objects but also about the people who interpret them" (Barrett, 2003 as cited in Carpenter, 2005, p. 87). In this way we see the potential power of art and images as learning tools to learn about art, life and each other. However, since visual analysis is a skill that needs to be developed it is

important to know how well learners are able to visually decode images in order to deduce from them, before we use images as tools for learning. This is why it is important to prioritise the teaching of visual literacy skills.

In other words, since we know the power that images hold, now the question becomes: what else can we use the power of images to do? Currently images are mostly used as illustrations in textbooks and on worksheets. The low status of art in schools, and that visual literacies is an almost invisible component of the Languages curriculum, shows that teachers do not use images to their full potential. The National Curriculum Statement for English Home Language stipulates that visual literacy be tested in the language examination, Paper 1, and it makes up only 28.6 % of the paper (DoE, 2011). Research like Yenawine's (2019) suggest that images are powerful learning tools. This research and the proposed methods become useful for teachers who seek alternative methods in their classrooms. As stated by Cappello and Walker (2016), the written word is still favoured over other methods. The introduction of images as part of a multimodal approach will promote inclusivity in the classroom, especially in light of literacy levels in our country being poor. In the year 2020 3.7 million adults in South Africa were illiterate (Khuluvhe, 2022). Teachers can use images to have difficult discussions and incorporate Thinking Routines to structure the discussions, and have learners gain insight from one other.

## 1.4. Outline of chapters

Following the Introduction, Chapter Two will consist of the Literature Review which focuses on studies similar to mine and exploring masculinities. In Chapter Three I will discuss the methodology for the study, Chapter Four will look at the data presentation and will be followed by the final chapter which will focus on the findings and conclusions.

## 1.5. Conclusion

This chapter was an introduction to the study as well as its aims and objectives. The next chapter will focus on the Literature Review, in which I will engage with literature that is relevant to my study in order to show the importance of the use of images in being much more than a 'pretty' addition to a worksheet or textbook.

## 2. Literature review

This chapter is a literature review of studies that are related to mine. The review will begin with conceptualising visual literacy and critical thinking, and will then interrogate studies that have explored the use of visual literacy as a means of developing critical thinking skills. The chapter will conclude with an exploration of masculinities in order to illustrate the different ways in which masculinity can be defined, to help us understand issues of gender and representation and to help guide my formulation of the questions I posed to learners when developing my data collection instruments. The data collection methods and instruments will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

### 2.1. Visual Literacy and Critical Thinking

The concept of visual literacy, first proposed by Debes (1969) has paved the way for the development in definitions for visual literacy over the years. Using Debes' definition as a starting point, Arbuckle (2004, p. 445) defines visual literacy as "the ability to comprehend pictures and other visual images". Moodley defines visual literacy as "the ability to read and make interpretations of visual images in context," (Moodley, 2015, p. 2056). Visual literacy is the ability to interpret or read information shown in the form of a graph or picture (Mendez- Garcia & Cores-Bilbao, 2021; Riddle, 2021).

Building on these definitions of visual literacy in which the researchers foreground the visual competencies that enable a visually literate person to recognise and interpret visual stimuli, I propose that visual literacy is the process whereby we see and recognise visual stimuli, interpret them and make sense of them. This allows us to successfully integrate into our environment and communicate with those around us. When we teach visual literacy, we help learners interpret visual actions, communicate effectively using the concepts they have learned, and then appreciate what they have learned by extending that knowledge to other visual works. Interpreting visual texts encourages critical thinking by having learners ask questions in order to uncover the multiplicity of meanings in a visual text, because part of critical thinking is the engagement in enquiry. When done successfully, the interpretation of visual texts gives the learners the ability to move beyond what is on

paper to the ‘real’ world and what might be perceived as ‘universal realities’ (Moodley, 2014).

Shaw et. al. (2019) agree that critical thinking is “a crucial general skill contributing to academic and career success” as critical thinkers are “able to search, comprehend, and evaluate relevant statements logically and rationally during problem-solving or decision-making processes” (p.1933). In their study, Shaw et al. (2019) administered the Russian *HEIghten* Critical Thinking assessment as well as a post-test survey to 1131 first year student sand 34 third year students. The test had been translated and adapted from English by a professional translation service “with the goal of retaining the intent and meaning of the test across two languages” (Shaw et al.2019, p. 1937). They found that Informatics (which involves extensive logical reasoning and problem-solving ) scores showed the largest correlations with the critical thinking test performance, primarily owing to the fact that logical reasoning and problem-solving are both core elements of critical thinking. The test found that there was a correlation between good test scores in the *HEIghten* Critical Thinking assessment and the students’ academic success.

Bringing visual literacy and critical thinking together in the classroom becomes important as the use of visual texts gives learners the opportunity to engage in higher cognitive processes which are related to logical analysis and evaluation of arguments (Erikson & Erikson, 2018; Moodley, 2014). Our learners live in a world where visual stimuli is dominant in media and in society and in order to engage fully with this visual stimuli, critical thinking skills must be developed and sharpened, thus allowing learners to use higher cognitive processes to successfully navigate the world and find success outside of school. Studies conducted by researchers such as Bandyopadhyay and Szostek (2019); Ennis (2018); Stupple et al. (2016) show that by developing university graduates with critical thinking skills, this can enhance innovation in the workplace and society.

## 2.2. Harvard Project Zero

Scholars at Harvard refined a means to develop learners’ critical thinking through working with analysing images in particular ways. The Harvard Project Zero programme was founded in 1967 by researchers and began with a focus on learning through the use of art. Over time they have moved to focusing not only on arts and

arts education, but also working using different tools, frameworks and approaches to deepen knowledge (President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019). They developed a series of what Tishman and Palmer (2007) refer to as 'Thinking Routines', each of which include a set of questions or sequence of steps that are used to scaffold and support student thinking, and also deepen thinking while making it 'visible' to teachers and students themselves. The way that the questions are phrased is open ended (they do not ask for a single truth or a specific point of view) which leads to critical thinking. Students are able to notice certain 'thinking moves' and these moves become available and can be useful to them in other contexts (President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019). For example, the '**What makes you say that**' thinking routine where learners would be asked the questions "What's going on?" and "What makes you say that?" which cultivates "observation, description, explanation-building and evidence-based reasoning" (President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019, p. 1).

Following the framework and approaches developed by Project Zero, Tishman and Palmer have done some notable work relating the use of images to the development of critical thinking. They highlight the findings of a research project that was conducted during the *Artful Thinking* program in the article, 'Works of art are good things to think about' (2007). The purpose of the program is help teachers create connections between art and the topics that they are teaching and to "use the power of art as a force for developing students' thinking dispositions" (Tishman & Palmer, 2007, p. 2). The program's fundamental component is developing thinking dispositions with the use Thinking Routines. Traditionally when teaching thinking, teachers and theorists made use of an "ability-centred approach" (Tishman & Palmer, 2007, p. 4). This meant that they felt that merely developing thinking skills is enough to get learners to keep using those skills on their own, and thus create dispositions. Artful Thinking, they argue, takes a "dispositional approach" in that it encourages students to use their skills frequently and from multiple perspectives, thus forming "patterns of intellectual behaviour" which learners can tap into repeatedly (Tishman & Palmer, 2007, p. 4).

The program invites students to use Thinking Routines with works of art to develop thinking dispositions and found that using these Thinking Routines promoted

reflection and discernment (Tishman & Palmer, 2007; Xu, 2023). The student participants themselves talked about what they felt 'good thinking' is and it was found that they were more likely to mention aspects of the six thinking dispositions developed by the *Artful Thinking* program. Artful thinking is developed to focus on a set of six critical thinking dispositions which are:

- reasoning – which involves building arguments and seeking evidence
- exploring viewpoints – which involves exploring things from different points of view,
- finding complexity – which involves uncovering multiple dimensions and layers
- comparing & connecting – which involves exploring juxtapositions and seeking connections
- questioning & investigating – which involves posing questions and finding avenues of inquiry
- observing & describing which involves close looking and representing

Tishman and Palmer (2007) used a Thinking Routine called '**I used to think, now I think**' to collect perceptions from 85 students about how art can be used to learn and connect to concepts taught at school. This Thinking Routine does not simply reveal what one thought about a particular topic and what one thinks about it now. It encourages people to construct their ideas in the moment and it promotes "reflection and discernment by setting up a dichotomy around which people can organise their ideas" (Tishman & Palmer, 2007, p. 6). Following the thinking routines, the participants felt that art invites inquiry because it is complex and has depth. They felt that this allowed them to develop their curiosity and thinking skills when engaging with art. The participants realised that art is in many places and has different forms but learning that art is much more than just a painting. They also stated that art is fun and beautiful because it allowed them to learn in different ways (Tishman & Palmer, 2007). In similar studies, it was found that the use of thinking routines in the classroom strengthened and supported students learning and thinking (Ibanez Wolberg & Goff, 2012; Salmon, 2010).

Following the work of researchers using thinking routines in the classroom, my project used images of masculinity in conjunction with selected thinking routines to work with learners' visual literacy skills in order to discuss the difficult concept of masculinity. My project, like some post-humanist theories emphasises a learner-centred approach as it foregrounds the opinions and knowledge that learners bring (Tishman & Palmer, 2007).

## 2.3. Using Visual Thinking Strategies to read visual texts

Cappello and Walker (2016, p. 317) believe that the use of visuals and visual thinking "can provide access and strategically scaffold curriculum to help students reach their academic goals." They conducted a study in which they followed seven teacher participants from three South-western schools in the United States of America, teaching different grades, who shared their experiences when they integrated Visual Thinking Strategies (subsequently referred to as 'VTS') as a supporting tool for learners' close reading of visual texts in their classrooms. Much like the Artful Thinking program's Thinking Routines, VTS is a sequenced questioning protocol that is used to develop thinking and observational skills which leads to a close reading of visual texts (Cappello & Walker, 2016; Walsh-Moorman, 2018). The protocol has three target questions which are:

1. What's going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What more can you find?

Cappello and Walker started off with the belief that visuals can be used as instructional scaffolds that can then facilitate understanding as students work through complex texts (2016). They worked closely with the participant teachers for over six months. The research began with meeting the teachers and having semi-structured interviews about the teachers' teaching beliefs. They then had sessions where they collaborated with the teachers in terms of planning lessons that integrate VTS and the researchers then modelled the questioning protocols with learners in classrooms. After training, the researchers then coached the teachers and refined the lesson plans before the teachers implemented these lessons in the classroom. Each of the participating teachers selected images from sources such as paintings,

diagrams and photographs and presented these images during their lessons on a topic of their choice. The teacher participants reported that using VTS yielded positive results. They found that using visuals promoted student equity, it helped to provide access to complex terms, it helped students engage in accountable talk and make meaningful contributions in their discussions, and also created a safe space for students to engage and take risks within the lesson (Cappello & Walker, 2016). One teacher used images from a book to help her grade 5 learners learn about slavery. She found that using the images in the book helped the learners visualise what actually happened as opposed to just reading words about what happened. She felt that the use of images broadened the children's understanding of the topic.

## 2.4. Putting Thinking Routines into action

In their article, Ritchhart and Perkins (2008, p. 57) show how Thinking Routines can be used practically in the classroom to help learners "ponder topics that might not seem to invite intricate thinking at first glance" but once the routines are implemented as classroom learning tools, they helped learners have a deeper understanding of the content. They followed a teacher and her pre-school class in a school in Melbourne, Australia. The teacher implemented visible thinking in her classroom over two years for a project called 'Cultures of Thinking'. The teacher used the Thinking Routine '**Think-puzzle-explore**' to discuss the collapse of a mine that had taken place in 2006 in Beaconsfield, Australia. The learners showed interest in this event and the teacher gave them the prompt '**What do you think you know about the Beaconsfield Mine?**' and gave them paper to draw their ideas. The students were keen to share their ideas and as the sharing continued, the teacher followed each learner's statement with the question '**What makes you say that?**' The responses were documented by the teacher and she found that the learners began to justify their ideas without prompting. These questions are structured so that the learners make an argument (what do you think you know about the Beaconsfield Mine?) and justify their claims with evidence (what makes you say that?). The teacher then moved onto questions learners may have surrounding the mine collapse by asking '**What are you puzzling over or wondering about the mine?**' She found that some questions focused on the cause of the collapse while others

explored the rescue of the two miners that were trapped. After collecting the learners questions, the teacher then asked them '**How will we explore our puzzles?**' and the learners suggested different avenues such as reading newspaper and magazine articles, watching news reports on television and possibly visiting the mine. Learners then began to collect information and brought it to class to share with their classmates and continued to form new theories about the mine collapse and rescue in light of the new evidence found (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2008).

During these lessons, the teacher fostered thinking in multiple ways: she showed an interest in her learners' ideas, through observing her learners in their discussions she recognised the opportunity for deeper learning by prompting them to justify their responses and she respected and encouraged her learners by asking what they "think they know" as opposed to what they "know" which allowed them to explore possibilities rather than operating within predetermined answers. This method "encourages the sharing of tentative ideas" as learners "engage in conversation focused on personal thoughts rather than definitive knowledge" (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2008, p. 60).

In similar studies, Gholam (2019); Sepulveda Larraguibel and Venegas-Muggli, (2019) felt that it was crucial that thinking routines are meaningfully and effectively integrated into the curriculum to reinforce thinking skills, creativity, and make learning visible. Both these studies concluded that the use of thinking routines helped students obtain better academic results.

## 2.5. Responding to artworks using different modes

In the United States of America, the Harvard Project Zero initiative that is discussed in Tishman and Palmer stands out as very important in linking critical thinking to the use of images. In South Africa, however, not many researchers have pursued this. There is one study that was conducted in a museum that uses art as an educational tool.

In their study, which was run in the Wits Art Museum, Kearney and Leyde look at the important and many times controversial social issues of migrants and hairstyles, which were driven by the content of the exhibition at the time. They created educational resources aimed at learners between the ages of 12 and 14, which

contained activities that “emphasised observing the artworks carefully and then responding to them using multiple modes” in order to give participants the opportunity to move beyond verbal and written answers (2015, p. 66). The researchers used the social constructionist theories of learning to develop the resources and allowed for the learners to add their own written or drawn responses to the artworks, thus enabling them to contribute some of their own knowledge to the resource.

When the learners completed the activities stipulated in the resources, it was found that because they had been given agency and ownership by adding their personal opinions in their engagement with the artworks, the learners were able to not only remember the details of the artwork but also have a deeper understanding of the issues portrayed by the work (Kearney & Leyde, 2015).

This study was about responding to art with an art museum as the location. It shows how the use of art as a learning tool can help learners understand concepts such as the social issues around forced migration and the links between hair and identity in Africa, better. However, this study not about using art with the classroom as a location. It shows the power of images as a way to discussing difficult issues but it takes place outside of the classroom.

Like the work done by Kearney and Leyde (2015), the design of my study incorporated a multimodal approach in what the learners did. This will be detailed in Chapter Three.

## 2.6. Understanding Multimodality and Multiliteracies

The school environment has had a preference for monomodality for years as many forms of assessment required writing as a primary mode of response. This dominance of monomodality has begun to reverse as we see the increase of multimodality. Multimodality is “the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined” (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 20). Because meaning is made in many different ways, there has been a call not only for multimodal approaches, but for ‘Multiliteracies’. The concept of Multiliteracies was taken up by many scholars as a way of challenging “singular, universal literacy restricted to monolingual, monocultural and rule-governed standard forms of language” (Gee 1996; Street

1995; Pahl and Roswell 2005 as cited in Stein and Newfield, 2006). The pedagogy of Multiliteracies has a basic principle of plurality and in this way allows for multiple ways of creating and making meaning.

Stein and Newfield (2006) cited a study on English education using multimodal pedagogies by Kendrick, Jones, Mutonyi and Norton (2006). This study, by Kendrick et al. (2006) was conducted in Uganda with its purpose being to show how incorporating multimodal practices can be used to English language learning in a multicultural and multilingual classroom. The authors used "multi-sensory, arts-based approaches" to develop the children's English in a community where English is a third or even fourth language for the majority of the learners (Stein & Newfield, 2006, p. 13). By using mediums such as drama, drawing and photography, they were able to give learners opportunities "to perceive and situate themselves in new ways within their societies and communities" (Stein & Newfield, 2006, p. 13). Using dramatic performances and photography, the children were able to discuss and reflect on issues of HIV/AIDS and how this affects their lives. They were able to learn about and understand what HIV/ADS is, how it affects communities including theirs and from this, understand the importance of taking care of themselves. This method was far more successful compared to traditional methods, such as distributing pamphlets, in attracting the interest of the youth. This study shows the importance of multimodal practices in education and how they can help learners deepen their understanding of concepts that they may not otherwise have understood through traditional methods like reading and writing.

Multimodal pedagogies have the potential to make classrooms more democratic, inclusive spaces in which marginalised students' histories, identities, cultures, languages and discourses can be made visible (Stein & Newfield, 2006, p. 11) and thus become relevant to my study as it was conducted  a multi-cultural school, with learners who come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.

## 2.7. Exploring masculinities

Masculinity is roughly defined as qualities that are associated with men or boys. As our understanding of identity, and the ways in which behaviours are learned socially have evolved due to time, location and many other factors, theorists have realised

that gender is constructed and thus, masculinity has become a complex concept to define. From the moment we are born, depending on our reproductive organs we are categorised as male or female and these categories come with certain attributes. Males are expected to identify both biologically and socially as men and there are expectations that come with this identity. In this way one's body "appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed" (Butler, 1999). Men are (usually) biological males claiming rights and privileges attendant to membership in the dominant gender group (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009). Carrigan et al. (as cited in Schrock and Schwalbe, 2009) define masculinity as a "**configuration of practices**", which is important as common beliefs hold that masculinity is something that is innate while gender and queer theorists challenge these ideas. As stated by Butler (1999, p. 6), "gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" and in this way becomes a 'practice. These practices are those which have the effect of subordinating women. This definition, however, is problematic as it does not adequately explain which of men's practices constitute masculinity (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009).

Further studies conducted over the years have led to current thinking in the field treating masculinity not as singular concept but as plural. There is not just one form of masculinity, it is said, but rather there are multiple masculinities.

Traditional understandings of gender view masculinity and femininity as rooted in biology and that personality attributes associated with men and women represent natural expressions of inborn and immutable traits (Berdahl, Cooper, Glick, Livingston & Williams, 2018). Gender scholars have debunked many of the biological beliefs about gender by looking at how culture and other social structures create and reinforce gendered behaviour. Like race and social class, gender is a stratified system that operates at the individual, interactional, and organisational level (Berdahl, Cooper, Glick, Livingston & Williams, 2018). Therefore, masculinity and femininity are not simply different things that have the same value, but reflect a gender system in which (masculine) men have higher status, more power, and greater privileges than women, or less masculine men (Ridgeway Smith-Lovin, 1999).

## 2.8. Conclusion

This chapter presented definitions of visual literacy and critical thinking as well as engaged with studies that have been conducted in different education settings to develop visual literacy and critical thinking skills amongst diverse learners.

I explained the manner in which Capello and Walker made use of Visual Thinking Strategies, which are similar to the use of Thinking Routines, in the classroom and they found that when the learners used a combination of these strategies, in the resulting conversations, they teach each other, bring new observations, offer opposing views, and thus widen the discussion at hand (2016). I intend to use a similar approach in my classroom where the Grade 11 learners would use a combination of Thinking Routines when responding to images of masculinity so that they could teach and learn from each other. In Chapter Three, the research design, data gathering and data analyses methods, as well as the research tools will be discussed in depth.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research design that my research followed. I will give a brief overview of the context and participants of the research and then detail the methods of data gathering, and methods of data analysis. I will also discuss the data gathering instruments I developed as well as the ethical practices I followed. Rationales for the choices of images, time frames, and tasks given to the participants will be presented as I engage with each of these aspects of the research.

## 3.2. Research context

The study was conducted at an all-boys high school in Johannesburg, Gauteng at which I am currently employed as an English teacher. The school consists of approximately 870 learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12. The learners are of different races and come from diverse households with different socio-economic backgrounds. The group that was used for this research is a Grade 11 class which consists of 29 boys. Of the 29 boys, 9 gave their parent's consent to have their writing, artefacts and images used as part of the study.

The boys are all part of the school's 'Mentorship Program', which is a program that was designed by the school's senior management team with the help and input from an educational psychologist. The program is aimed at offering support beyond the academic curriculum to the boys as the school recognised that a large number of the boys came from the surrounding areas which are poverty –stricken and filled with crime and poor role models, while some came from single parent households. The boys are all assigned a mentor teacher (14 boys per teacher) and they meet once a week to discuss matters such as "dealing with emotions", "drug use and how this can affect your life" and "how to be a gentleman" (Mentorship program, 2020). The boys are adolescents in an environment where masculinity and ideas of what masculinity is are prominent as it is an all-boys school that prides itself on sporting achievements and participation in sports is not only encouraged but also expected.

The research was conducted with the Grade 11 B class, which I teach. There was possible bias as I have a relationship with these learners. To manage this I ensured that the presentation of data was as the participants wrote it so that the participants

are validated (Smith & Noble, 2014). The open ended questions of the Thinking Routines and the selection of images outside of the images we worked with in the classroom allowed for the participants to have their own agency and answer using their own background knowledge. The school streams the learners according to their marks. The classes are grouped using the letters A to F, with the C, E and F classes being to 'top' classes as these boys are mostly top achievers in English, Mathematics and the Sciences, and the A, B and D class being the 'bottom' classes with a mixture of Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy boys who do subjects that are not part of the Science stream. The assumption and perhaps bias from educators is that the boys in the A, B, and D classes are to be taught enough to just pass as there is no expectation that they can achieve beyond a certain level.

The research design was created and structured so that it could be conducted as part of the English curriculum. Visual literacy is geared at developing the skills of reading and viewing which are skills that are viewed as central to successful learning. The expectation is that learners will develop proficiency in reading and viewing a wide variety of texts and in doing so, "recognise how genre and register reflect the purpose, audience, and context of texts," (DoE, 2011, p.10). The study was incorporated into language lessons as part of the visual literacy section so that all learners could benefit from the study by developing their reading and viewing skills. However, to comply with ethical best practice, data was gathered only from those learners who assented to participate and whose guardians gave consent for them to participate. This is explained in more detail below.

### 3.3. Research participants

Being between the ages of 16 and 18, the boys are beginning to consider their future outside of school in terms of what they want to do with their lives, where and how they want to live their lives, but also thinking about the kind of people they want to become i.e. forming their identity.

Because they are in Grade 11, the boys are already quite literate (despite the fact that they have been streamed into a 'bottom' class) and have been exposed to Visual Literacy lessons for a few years now. Visual literacy is taught from primary school as learners are expected to interpret graphs, respond to images in storybooks and engage with texts such as cartoons, (DoE, 2011). I chose this group not only

because I have access to them as their teacher, but also because they have not reached matric yet, where time is constrained as they prepare for their high-stakes final examinations, so I could have additional time in class to develop my teaching practices and experiment on what works and what does not work. Developmentally, this group is at the point where they are exploring and examining “psychological characteristics of the self in order to discover who they really are, and how they fit in the social world in which they live” (Steinberg & Morris, 2001, p. 91). Thus they are an interesting group to work with as they aim to discover who they are as they prepare to leave school and step into the world in a few months’ time.

This study attempted to find out how the participants thoughts of masculinity can be revealed by using images and Thinking Routines to develop critical thinking. This began with a pre-test to determine what learners’ current thoughts on masculinity were, followed by a mall walk (as research can and should be conducted in social spaces) during which they were meant to gather images according to instructions given to them on a task sheet. The mall work is to help learners see gender enacted in a public sphere. They would then make use of thinking routines in the classroom, alongside the images, to scaffold the use of images in helping to develop critical thinking. The learners were also required to use images to create a collage which depicts their thoughts on masculinity before the use of the Thinking Routines and their thoughts on masculinity after the use of Thinking Routines. This collage would be accompanied by a post-test which will show the learners’ thoughts in a written form.

## 3.4. Methods of gathering data

This is a post-qualitative study using methods of the Interpretivist paradigm. Post-qualitative research foregrounds the move from traditional practices of qualitative research which began in the 1900s with written accounts of field experiences, which were said to be objective despite the obvious bias in that they were written by those in power to propagate colonialism, and moving, over the course of decades, to a point where its methods were questioned creating conflict in how qualitative research was conducted (Le Grange, 2018). Post-qualitative research recognises that there has been significant changes in humanity, such as the growth of technology, and therefore embraces these changes by allowing researchers to begin research without set methodologies and no privileging some forms of knowledge over others

thus opening itself up to be able to engage “challenges of a contemporary world” by inviting us “to think, feel and act differently” (Le Grange, 2018, p. 9).

Positivists usually marginalise the meaning-making activities of social actors, while interpretivists focus on these activities and the individual’s intentions, reasons and motives behind the activity (Scott & Morrison, 2005). Getting the participant’s perspective, as the insider, means that we also get the outsider accounts of the participant’s beliefs and intentions as they are individuals living in a wider society. This process has, as a starting point, the principle that the beliefs and practices of individuals are what constitute the subject matter of research, and goes beyond just the accounts given by participants about their intentions, plans and actions (Scott & Morrison, 2005).

Like other post-qualitative researchers, my approach to knowledge is situated within post-humanist discourses which are relevant to the South African context as post-humanism “is the catalyst for new ways of thinking and doing research” (Le Grange, 2018, p. 1). Post-humanism as a theory stems from the idea that human beings have the ability to manipulate all of life as well as the ability to destroy it. However, just as humanity has this ability, so do non-human objects such as biological warfare thus showing the blurred lines between the humanity and the non-human (Le Grange, 2018). The images used in the study, although non-human, have agency in that they become catalysts for ideas, responses and discussions from the learners. As the learners respond to the images, they use what they view to shape their ideas on masculinity and the development of these ideas is what I am interested in finding out in the study.

My study made use of a multimodal approach in the data gathering by making use of the research with visual/art-based processes and enquiry-based and post-qualitative research processes. Multimodal approaches acknowledge that learners have their own agency, are resourceful and “creative meaning-makers who communicate using the communicative potential and multiple resources of their bodies and of their environment to interconnect” (Stein & Newfield, 2006, p. 10). Because multimodal pedagogies encourage the use of various modes, they promote inclusivity and have the potential to make classrooms more democratic spaces in which marginalised students can be heard and given the platform to perform without the limitations that come from using monomodal practices.

I used the framework developed by Eldridge, who says that when conducting research, the researcher must respect traditional ways of being and knowing while creating new knowledge and they should ground their work on the lives of the participants and learn from their lived experiences (2008).

The framework consists of six guidelines:

- Research needs to connect to Native philosophies and principles and researchers should consider indigenous ways of knowing as valid, legitimate and important
- The researcher must respect and try to reflect traditional ways of being and knowing while creating new knowledge
- The researchers should ground their work in the lives of Native people and learn from their lived experiences
- The researchers must conduct research that has the potential to transform
- Research must be conducted from a good heart
- Native people should have control over who is allowed to research them and what is done to them (Eldridge, 2008, p. 43 - 45).

While the participants in the study do not have control over who will be researching there, ultimately, my intention was that the research I conduct must be ethical and respect the prior knowledge and ways of being that the learners come into the classroom with. I made use of methods that are culturally appropriate to the context that I am working in. The knowledge that learners came in with about what masculinity meant to them was not judged. As a researcher, I simply listened to their point of view and made notes in my journal without mention of any of the learners' names. The use of Thinking Routines allowed learners to express themselves as the questions were open-ended and thus did not expect a singular view. The practices that were used have the potential to transform current practices in research in that they are multimodal.

The learners began the process with a pre-test where they were given a writing exercise to complete in the classroom (refer to Appendix A). When they arrived for the lesson I told them that we would use the lesson for the first part of the data collection for my research project. I reminded them that although all of them will complete the activities, as the activities are part of the English curriculum, only those

who have given consent will have their writing used as part of my data presentation. There will always be issues of power, ethics and access in research projects due to the stratification in educational settings (Scott & Morrison, 2005). As the teacher, I have power in the classroom and thus it was important to remind the learners that they have power to make decisions as to whether their work can be used or not. I handed out the worksheet with the words 'I think that masculinity means…' and I asked them to write as much as they could in response to the prompt. I gave the learners 20 minutes out of the 45 minute lesson to complete this.

The next step required the learners to take a walk through their local mall. Each learner was given a score for the walk and required to have his cell phone on him so that he could use it to take pictures within the mall according to the instructions on the score. The learners learn about masculinity from their social environments, thus the mall as a social space can help them deepen their understanding by seeing how certain ideas about men are portrayed and how this leads them to believe certain ideas about what being a man means. I gave the learners the opportunity to ask questions about the score beforehand and gave them one month to complete the task so that they could have extra time, including the weekends when they are shopping with their parents, to go to the mall. The purpose of using a mall as an educational site is because "transformative education occurs in a variety of sites, including those who would not…be regarded as educational" (Mayo, 2003, p. 49) and learning takes place in all kinds of settings and activities (Gutiérrez, Engestrom & Sannino, 2016). The walking methodology is taken from the *WalkingLab* project which is an interactive tour led by the youth as a means of exploring their local communities through walking (Springgay & Truman, 2018). When putting together the walking methods artists draw from the idea of a 'derive' – which is a playful experimental practice with the intent of moving about a city without a focused trajectory but with a strong consciousness of the environment (Springgay & Truman, 2018). The purpose of using this method was to make the boys more aware of their surroundings. Education needs to move beyond just what we teach in classrooms so that we can create a society that has critical thinkers who can communicate well and articulate themselves in meaningful ways while navigating the world around them. As a researcher, I also completed the mall walk and took pictures according to the score. I hoped that this would encourage the learners to complete the mall walk as

they realised that I was not giving them a task that I would be unwilling to complete myself.

Following the mall walk, I displayed the images using the projector; this was a combination of images that I have selected from the internet and the images taken during the mall walk. I used a double lesson (1 hour 30 minutes) and as a class, we had a discussion about each image, beginning with the images from the mall walk. The purpose of this sharing is to allow the learners to 'generate new knowledge through...analysis, to disseminate their findings to others, and refine their new understandings through feedback on that dissemination (Fung, 2017, p. 20).

Some of the images that were added to the list of images discussed are:




**Figure 3.4.1: Men as providers**

This is an image of a man whose hands are filled with dirt after a hard day of work. The caption reads "Men are providers" showing that this man has worked hard, physically, to provide for his family. In history, there has long been a gendered division of labour with men seen to take on the more physically demanding roles of hunting while women would play for caretaker role (Wood & Eagly, 2012). I anticipate that the learners will see this image and think that it makes sense for a different time period. I anticipate that the learners will say that in the olden times when subsistence farming was a mode of life, it was expected for men to do much of the physical labour to provide for his family.



**Figure 3.4.2: Male Teacher**

This is an image of a male teacher assisting a learner in his classroom. Traditionally in the workplace women tended to be in occupations which were deemed to be people-centred such as teaching rather than occupations which were thing-centred (Wood & Eagly, 2012). This is a strange depiction (a soft-hearted male) in a familiar setting (a classroom) which is uncanny and I anticipated that the learners would see a gentle teacher who cares about the well-being of the learners in his classroom and see this as something normal despite what traditional views of male teachers are.



**Figure 3.4.3: Male ballet dancer**

This image is of a male ballet dancer. Ballet was originally a male-dominated art but overtime has become heavily associated with women. I anticipated that the learners

would view this image and think that while there is an association with ballet being a "female" art, the skill and athleticism needed to do ballet are what is important.

I made use of an adapted combination of thinking routines from the Harvard Project Zero Initiative (refer to Appendices B -E) which was developed "to help teachers create connections between art and the topics that they are teaching" (Tishman & Palmer, 2007, p. 2).

### 3.5. Classroom implementation

Following the discussion of all the images, during the next double lesson I asked the boys to give their input by casting their votes using a ballot system, on which images we would use for our discussions moving forward. They selected five images from the ones I had gathered, in this way the participants themselves were given agency, as they actively contributed to the research tools, which is a form of ethical practice (Eldridge, 2008).

The learners were placed into groups of five. There were learners who did not wish to be a part of the study. These learners were reminded that they would still be a part of the process as these lessons where a part of the language curriculum. Participants were grouped together and non-participants were grouped together. This was simply to help maintain their confidentiality as they would not write their names on any of the worksheets, therefore this grouping would ensure that the participants' sheets were not mixed with the non-participants sheets.

The five images that the learners selected were made into one document and displayed using the projector and the learners were asked to respond to these images by using a combination of Thinking Routines. In classrooms, just like in the world, learners will find themselves having to work as individuals or in groups and engaging with others in groups helps learners expend their own knowledge (Ritchhart & Perkins, 2008).

The learners completed the first Thinking Routine **'See, Think, Wonder'**. They were given a worksheet to write down their individual responses to one image each from the five that were displayed by using the '**See, Think, Wonder**' Thinking Routine, which is a routine for exploring works of art (See, Think, Wonder Thinking Routine: President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019). The learners wrote down what they saw in each image, what they thought about the image and

what the image made them wonder. They were given 20 minutes to complete this and then 5 minutes to each share their responses within their groups.

The next step was for the learners to use the **'True for Who'** Thinking Routine which is a routine for exploring truth claims from different perspectives. The routine was explained and demonstrated to them. To ensure understanding, we practised the routine together using one of the images that were not selected as part of the final five. They responded to the questions, which had been adapted for clarity, from the '**True for Who**' Thinking Routine:

- What kind of situation was the claim made in?
- Who could have made that claim?
- What were their intentions in making that clam?
- What are the possible consequences of making this claim?

As a class, we came up with five perspectives from which we could view the images. This gave the learners agency by allowing them to choose how the images will be viewed.

The learners were given 45 minutes to complete the 'discuss' and 'brainstorm' steps as a group. Thereafter, each learner in the group chose a perspective to 'dramatize' the images from. The learners were given 15 minutes to consider the perspective they had chosen before presenting their dramatization to the group. The routine includes the following steps:

> Discuss – What kind of situation was the claim made in? Who made it? What are people's interests and goals? What was at stake?
>
> Brainstorm – Look at all the different points of view you could make this claim from.
>
> Dramatize – Choose a viewpoint to embody and imagine the stance a person from this viewpoint would be likely to take. Would they think that the claim is true? False? Uncertain? Why? Speak from the viewpoint and say:
>
> > My viewpoint is…
> >
> > I think this claim is true/false/uncertain because…

> What would convince me to change my mind is… (True for Who Thinking Routine: President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019).

Following the dramatization, each learner was given a worksheet to fill in. I adapted the thinking routine and used the prompts:

The image claims that

My viewpoint is

The reason/s for my viewpoint is/are

My conclusion/stance is

What would convince me to change my mind is

As the final step, the learners were given the task of creating an artefact. This was to be a collage made by making use of a combination of the images the learners and myself took on the mall walk and the images I compiled from the internet. As part of the multimodal approach, creating a collage allows the boys to move away from just being consumers of images, to now being creators of images. Multimodality foregrounds the notion that "learning is not only a linguistic accomplishment, but is also linked to the dynamic interrelationship among the different semiotic modes of meaning, such as the linguistic, the visual, the gestural, the spatial or the audio mode, which individuals can draw on to derive and produce meaning" (Papadopoulou & Avgerinou, 2019, p. 5)

To create the collage, the boys were given printed copies of the images and instructed to add some of their own from magazines, newspapers etc. The collage was to be created in a way that shows two distinct halves: one half which depicts what they used to think masculinity meant and one half which depicts what masculinity means to them now. As part of what it means to be a visually literate individual, the person should be able to design and create meaningful images and objects as well as other forms of visual media (Benzon & Hauser, 2019). This is why it is important for the participants to create an artefact which was accompanied by a one page rationale where the learners used the '**I used to think…Now I think…**' Thinking Routine which is used for reflecting on how and why our thinking has

changed (I used to think…Now I think…Thinking Routine: President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019).

The materials used by the learners to create the artefacts can be understood as agential in that the boys put the artefact together using a combination of images that they felt best conveyed their thoughts on masculinity. van Oers writes that learning is always related to actions that are performed by the learning person. He draws on the teachings of Aristotle, who viewed learning in terms of a theory of doing. Aristotle believes that "for the things we have to learn before we can do, we learn by doing" (van Oers, 2008, p. 5). Through the process of making an artefact, learners move from being users of images, to being creators of images as their artefacts were put on display (with their consent) for other learners in the class to see and respond to. In this way they were responsible for the knowledge that they created and found value in thinking deeply about the process of making. This is the same concept that Kearney and Leyde write about as they state that by allowing learners to create their own content "the observer becomes a maker of knowledge and finds personal value in the museum" (2015, p. 79).

Because this study is centred around creative learning, I adopted the philosophy of creative learning researchers who start with the view that there is not a set of 'facts' about creative learning that are waiting to be found and documented but rather that "it is through the research process and engagement with 'data' that they will bring new understandings into being" (Crotty, 1998; Freebody, 2003; Pring, 2000 as cited in Thomson and Sefton-Green, 2011 p. 8).

## 3.6. Summary of data collected from participants

At the end of the research process I had collected the following sets of data:

1. Participants written responses on the pre-test 'I think that masculinity means..', the '**See, Think, Wonder**' and '**True for Who**' Thinking Routines worksheets
2. Images of the collages
3. Artefact motivations/'**I used to think…Now I think**…' Thinking Routine

Drawing on a range of methods and techniques of data collection helps with getting an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon that we are investigating (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011 as cited in Dean, 2018). The method of the study makes use of

Barrett's Taxonomy in that it has aspects of all five levels of cognitive demand which help to develop critical thinking (Reeves, 2012). The learners will be expected to move from the Literal Comprehension level (where they look at the images and simply describe what they see), to the Appreciation level (where they will have to look at their own responses to the images and discuss them from the perspective of someone else). Thus my study is designed to develop critical thinking dispositions by encouraging thought on all five cognitive levels of Barrett's Taxonomy.

## 3.7. Methods of data analysis

This study makes use of a post-humanist theoretical framework which guides the approach to research design as well as the data analyses. A post-humanist diffractive method of analysis will be employed from which themes will emerge. A diffractive methodology entails attempting to understand the world by placing emphasis on material experience, which means all materials involved in the study have a relation to one another and will therefore impact each other (Bozalek & Zembylas, 2017). Such a methodology goes against the idea that "a researcher can be taught tools or techniques about a world which is independent of and at an ontological distance from the researcher" (Murris & Bozalek, 2019, p.1505) and results from reading texts through other texts (Ceder, 2018). For this study, I have collected four sets of data: the participants' worksheets with their responses to the Thinking Routines, their collages and their rationale as well as my own field notes and journal reflections collected during the research process. The reason for this is so that I can observe the development of their thinking about masculinity. Because the thinking routines build on each other in terms of cognitive demand, this will be a useful way to see how the use of images to drive the discussions has helped the learners to develop more meaningful answers as they begin to reflect on their thoughts with the 'I used to think…Now I think…' routine. The creation of the artefact and the accompanying rationale are important as we see the learners move from consumers of knowledge to creating their own knowledge and thus finding personal value in this knowledge.

Interpretivists believe reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed and thus, the researcher's practice must be very reflexive (Dean, 2018). This means that in analysing the data I must be aware of my position as a female researcher working

with boys, who is also their teacher in that space and how this dynamic may impact how I interpret the data.

Thematic analysis is a method in qualitative research used to identify patterns and themes across a data set, allowing the researcher “to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 1). Boyatzis (1998) described thematic analysis as a translator for those speaking the languages of qualitative and quantitative analysis, enabling researchers who use different research methods to communicate with each other. Braun and Clarke (2006) and King (2004) argued that thematic analysis is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights. It will be used in this study to analyse and identify themes in the responses of the participants on their thoughts on masculinity.

## 3.8. Ethical Considerations

The discussion of a topic like masculinity is a sensitive one. The participants in this study are minors who come from households with different values and belief systems that will naturally shape their views of what masculinity is. It was made clear to the learners prior to the discussions that they may hear thoughts that differ vastly from theirs and they need to be open to listening and giving their opinions and feedback in a respectful manner. As the teacher, I ensured that I moved equally in between all the groups (whether they are participants or non-participants in the study) as a form of classroom management.

There were issues of power on three levels: an adult working with children, a teacher working with learners as well as a researcher working with participants. I needed to ensure that this does not harm the learners or make them feel obligated to participate should they not feel comfortable to do so. For example: I made it clear that participation in the process is compulsory as it is part of the classroom activities, however, the use of the participants’ responses to the discussions, their artefacts and rationale would only be used as part of the findings of the study when full consent was given by the participants and their parents. Obtaining consent to conduct research projects, and therefore gaining access to research settings, requires researchers to give as much information to participants as they can about

the purposes of their enquiry, their methodological approach and their dissemination and reporting strategies (Scott & Morrison, 2005).

I applied for ethics approval as this study involved participants who are underage and are thus vulnerable. The learners may have felt that choosing not to be participants will hinder their relationship with me as their teacher and thus have a negative impact on their results. It was reiterated that while participation is mandatory as this will be a part of the Visual Literacy lessons, the participants of the study will not gain any academic advantage nor any advantages in the learner-teacher relationship compared to the learners who choose not to be participants. Learners and parents were told beforehand that the activities, while important for formative assessment in terms of developing the learners' visual literacy and critical thinking skills, were not part of any School-based Assessment (SBA) marks and thus had no impact on term and year marks. I made it clear that I would also participate in all the activities myself, to assure the learners that no harm would come to them as I, as the teacher, am willing to engage in the same activities that they would be doing.

While anonymity could not be guaranteed among the boys themselves as they are in the same class and know each other, and I, as their teacher and the primary researcher, know them, I ensured that my research preserves the confidentiality of my participants by ensuring that I did not display their names on the data that was collected. For the findings, I used names such as 'Participant A' as a means of protecting the identities of the participants. The learners were placed into their groups according to whether or not they were participating in the study; non-participants were placed together.

I obtained ethics approval from five entities:

- The Gauteng Department of Education as the study is to be conducted in a government school (see 'Documents for the marker')
- The University of the Witwatersrand School of Education Ethics Committee (Clearance certificate number: 2022ECE005M)
- The school that the learners attend (see 'Documents for the marker')
- The parents/guardians of the learners as the learners are still minors

- The learners themselves have given their assent to be part of the study as it is their intellectual property (their discussion sheets, artefacts and rationales) that has been used in the research

All the data collected during the research process was kept by me in a locked cupboard in a classroom with limited access and the images taken of the participants' collages and rationales are kept on a phone and laptop that are protected by a password and have controlled access.

## 3.9. Ethical practice

As stated previously, the aim was not to change the boys' perceptions of masculinity but rather to reveal their ideas to themselves during a series of critical group discussions, and use those discussions to develop their critical thinking skills. It was, therefore, important that as a researcher I was aware of the different perspectives because as a researcher I must respect traditional ways of being and knowing (Eldridge, 2008). The goal of developing this framework is to ensure that Native communities are not harmed and actually benefit from the research because in the past they were exploited by researchers and the research was done "on" them instead of "for" and "with" them. Research must be ethical and the methods used must be those that are appropriate to the context the researcher is working in.

## 3.10. Conclusion

This section was centred on the methodology of my study. I have discussed the instruments used for data collection, the methods used for data analysis as well as the ethics and ethical practice involved in the study. The following chapter will focus on the presentation of data from the study.

# 4. Data Presentation and Discussion

This section is a presentation of the data gathered from the participants of the study over the course of four months. The data will include worksheets that show the participants' responses to the selected Thinking Routines mentioned in Chapter Three as well as some of the collages created by the participates. The presentation will speak to the data gathering process and show a step-by-step presentation of how the data was gathered and some insights regarding the data.

## 4.1. Research participants

Although I hoped that all 29 boys would complete all the steps associated with the research project as it was embedded in their Visual Literacy lessons, which is part of the language curriculum, only 9 boys gave their assent as well as their parents' consent for their writing and collages to be used as part of my data collection. The whole class completed all the tasks for their curriculum, and to minimise any perceptions of bias, I only collected the research data after the assessments (SBAs) for the term were concluded.

## 4.2. The data gathering process

Step one: The learners began the process with a pre-test where they will be given a writing exercise to complete in the classroom (refer to Appendix A). When they arrived for the lesson I told them that we would use the lesson for the first part of the data collection for my research project, which we had spoken about before. I reminded them that although all of them would complete the activities, only those who had given consent would have their writing used as part of my data presentation. I handed out the worksheet with the words 'I think that masculinity means…' and I asked them to write as much as they wished to on the worksheet and gave them a time limit of 15 minutes.

### 4.2.1. Responses to the pre-test 'I think masculinity means…'

The following table shows the participants' responses to the prompt 'I think masculinity means…' to help protect their identities, I have labelled the participants as 'Participant A' to 'Participant I' to maintain confidentiality.

| Participant A | Participant B | Participant C |
|---|---|---|
| I don't know, like not in the sense that I don't know the "dictionary" but in the sense that I don't know what it means to me personally, it's a relative term. | How males should act or behave in relation to the male gender. | Masculinity means the qualities regarded as characteristics of men, it can be the social roles or behaviours prescribed for men in a society. |

| Participant D | Participant E | Participant F |
|---|---|---|
| The way a man should act according to society. | The characteristics or traits a "man" is expected to portray/display. | The societal expectations, mannerisms and behaviours that are expected from a male. |

| Participant G | Participant H | Participant I |
|---|---|---|
| I personally feel that masculinity is the way society expects men to act, manly in a manly, hard-core manner. That means that they should not show any form of emotion or any female-like attributes, mainly within their actions. That you should be able to do hard labour and show strength, be able to provide for your family, taking lead and showing domination amongst others. Being able to think on your feet and speak for yourself without others to help you. | Expectations that has been put on men by society of how men should uphold themselves. These expectations are usually negative and may negatively impact a man's life because they feel obliged to uphold these expectations (e.g. men don't cry) | Is to do with men and their common actions or ways of thinking. Masculinity is what defines a man and how they act or think, society has given males this title. |

Looking at the participants responses overall, most of them present a heteronormative view of what masculinity means by making use of language such as "hard-core", "dominant" (Participant G) and "men don't cry" (Participant

H). They show maturity in their thinking in their responses by acknowledging that masculinity is a socially constructed concept that is centred on “expectation” (Participant E, F and H). Many viewed masculinity as something external to them where forces outside of themselves determined the meaning of masculinity, whereas only one participant (Participant A), had a questioning answer. He picked up the dictionary and looked up the meaning of masculinity and after reflecting on the dictionary definition for a few minutes he stated that he is not sure what masculinity means to him as it is “relative” (refer to Chart 4.2.4.1 below).

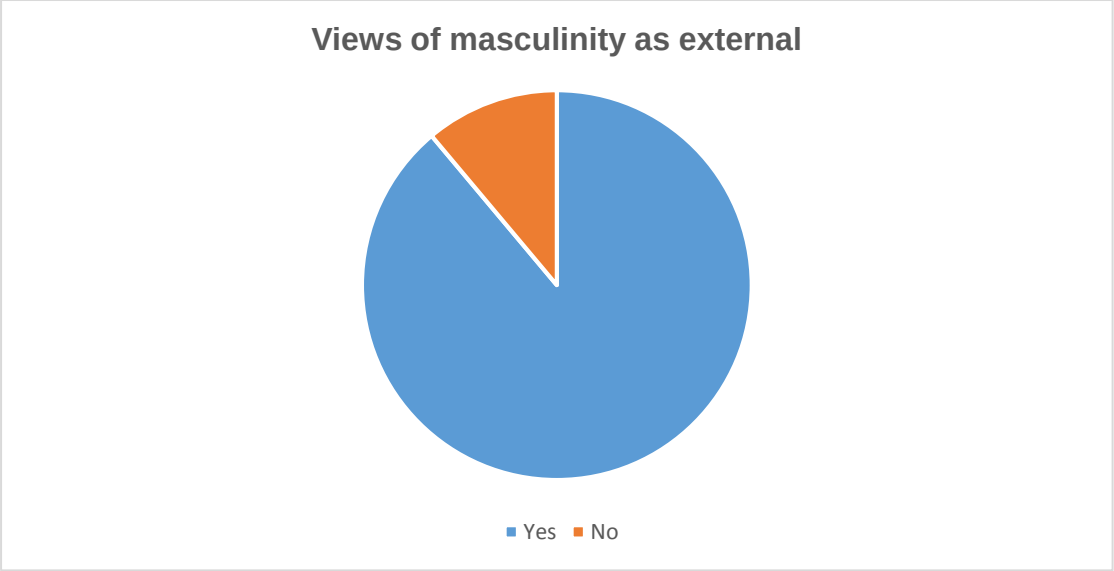



**Chart 4.2.4.1:Pre-test views of masculinity as external**

### Links to other parts of the curriculum

The use of the prompt ‘I think masculinity means’ in the study lead to the boys linking their ideas of masculinity to other parts of the curriculum. During the pre-test the group of learners linked their ideas of masculinity during a language lesson (focused on writing) to the literature set work that they had studied in the first and second term: Macbeth (refer to p. 8 – 11 of Journal). This shows that the boys could make the connection and understand that language and literature are not two separate components of studying English as a subject, despite the fact that they write two separate examinations (Paper 1: Language and Paper 2: Literature), but that there is a link between them to better reinforce their understanding and command of the language (DoE, 2011). This is indicative of the learners displaying some of the thinking dispositions prior to engaging with images. The learners showed the

‘comparing and connecting’ as well as the ‘reasoning’ dispositions. In their discussion they talked about how Shakespeare portrayed Macbeth as a man and how Lady Macbeth held “old-fashioned views of what makes a man a man” and also discussed what being a man meant for Macbeth and Lady Macbeth in relation to the society they lived in, thus exploring the juxtapositions of masculinity from the two characters and making the connection between their views and the time period they were based in (refer to p. 8-11 of Journal). The learners displayed the capacity to reason as they built their arguments based on evidence from the play i.e. they made reference to Macbeth’s succumbing to his wife’s manipulation to kill the king. Based on this, in future when teaching the text, I want to focus on not teaching it in isolation. There is room to create more links between literature and language but using multimodal methods such as selecting different scenes from the play and having learners translate them into modern English and have them direct and act out these scenes in the classroom. Considering that this class of boys is considered ‘weaker’, it is interesting to see that they display critical thinking even at the beginning of the study. This speaks perhaps to the fact that we need to review what standards are in terms of children that are considered clever and also our assessment strategies.

### 4.2.2. Gathering and selecting images

Step two: The next step required the learners to take a walk through their local mall. Each learner was given a score for the walk (refer to Appendix B) and required to have his cell phone on him so that he could use it to take pictures within the mall according to the instructions on the score. I gave the learners the opportunity to ask questions about the score beforehand and gave them one month to complete the task. After a month, the learners had not returned with any images from the mall and I gave them an additional two weeks. I did not receive any images despite the extension. During this time I had completed the mall walk myself and took pictures according to the score.

The purpose of the mall walk was to have the boys learn outside of the classroom. I wanted them to go to a place that is public but also one that they often go to as teenagers and realise how much a space like this forms our ideas of masculinity as gender is ‘acted’ out here. Unfortunately, the learners did not complete this step and in order not to derail the whole study, I used my own pictures that I took during the mall walk. As this is a post-qualitative study, I was hoping that they would bring their

own images and I could ‘hear’ their voice as they contribute to the tools of the study. Although the learners did not complete the mall walk themselves, they were able to make connections from my images to what they had seen in malls on the other occasions when they had gone. They were interested in the images from the mall as they could link these to their experiences of having been to the mall. While it would have been interesting to see what images the boys brought and speak about their experiences at the mall, due to time constraints we had to move on and use only my images.

I used a double lesson (1 hour 30 minutes) and as a class, we had a discussion about each image, beginning with the images from the mall walk. The images were displayed using the projector so that all the learners could see them clearly (refer to p. 22 – 30 of Journal). The boys talked about what they saw in each picture and shared ideas about the more ‘controversial’ pictures such as the image depicting a polygamous marriage, where some learners felt that the man was “a boss” and “cool” and “definitely the man because he can get many women”.

Following the discussion of all the images, during the next week (double lesson) I asked the boys to give their input by casting their votes by a show of their hands, although originally I wanted the boys to cast their votes on a ballot, casting the vote by a show of hands proved to be effective as it was efficient and saved us time. The learners voted on which images we would use for our discussions moving forward. They selected five images from the ones I had gathered, in this way the participants themselves are given agency, as they actively contribute to the research tools.

These are the images selected by the learners:



**Figure 4.4.4: Male ballet dancer**



**Figure 5.2A: Harry Styles**



**Figure 4.2.6: Father and son**



**Figure 4.2.7: Polygamous wedding**



**Figure 4.2.8: Woman holding a hammer**

### 4.2.3. Using the 'See, Think, Wonder' Thinking Routine

Step three: After the selection of images, the learners were placed into groups of five. Participants were grouped together and non-participants were grouped together. I assured the boys that the participants would not have any advantages; this was simply to help maintain their confidentiality as they could not write their names on any of the worksheets. This grouping would ensure that the participants' sheets are not mixed with the non-participants sheets.

The five images the boys had selected were made into one document and displayed using the projector and the learners were asked to respond to one image each by using the '**See, Think, Wonder**' Thinking Routine (refer to Appendix C). The learners were given a worksheet to write down their individual responses to one image each from the five that were displayed by using the '**See, Think, Wonder**' Thinking Routine, which is a routine for exploring works of art (See, Think, Wonder Thinking Routine: President and Fellows of Harvard College and Project Zero, 2019). The learners wrote down what they see in the image, what they think about the image and what the image makes them wonder. They were given 20 minutes to complete this and then 10 minutes to each share their responses within their groups.

The tables below shows the participants' responses to images using the '**See, Think, Wonder**' Thinking Routine.

**Figure 3.4.3: Male ballet dancer**

| Participant E | Participant A |
|---|---|
| **What do I see?**<br>I see a man doing ballet, he's dressed in tights and an open blouse, and he's well built.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>To be honest at first sight I assumed he was gay, which is obviously a negative stereotype, but ballet is usually for women so looking at him at first sight I assumed that he was gay.<br><br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder how much society has influenced our minds to automatically associate activities or clothing or even jobs based on gender. | **What do I see?**<br>I see a man that is bold and fit dancing around, he is male.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I think that he is expressing himself by dancing around, this is something that people usually do.<br><br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder if he is gay because not many men dance like this. |

**Figure 4.2.2: Harry Styles**

| Participant C | Participant D |
|---|---|
| **What do I see?**<br>A man wearing a dress.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>It comes off very feminine and most of society would say he is part of the LGBTQ+. It (society) would like to think that he is gay. I really don't care what a man wears because we are living in the 21st | **What do I see?**<br>A man in a dress, modelling.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I think its non-masculine and a man should not be in a dress as it is specifically made for women. This gives off gay vibes which is wrong. |

| | |
|---|---|
| century.<br><br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder whether society is accepting or still angry with men that have a feminine approach to life. | **What does it make me wonder?**<br>Why would he make himself look feminine if he is a man? |

**Figure 4.2.3: Father and son**

| **Participant I** |
|---|
| **What do I see?**<br>I see a man and his son who have a strong bond together.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I think it is a good thing to have a bond with the son because he, in the future, is going to be a father and must know what to do as a father, such as having a great relationship with your family<br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder if I too want to have a great relationship with my son and family. |

**Figure 4.2.4: Polygamous wedding**

| Participant G | Participant H |
|---|---|
| **What do I see?**<br>A man marrying multiple women at the same time.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I feel that can be viewed as a very masculine thing to do especially coming from an African perspective where it is fine to have multiple wives as a man. The more wives you have, the more it proves how masculine you are.<br><br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder whether he is with multiple women to prove his masculinity or if he truly does love them. | **What do I see?**<br>A man with three wives.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I think that this image represents polygamous relationships.<br><br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder if the public and the media can fully accept polygamous relationships or still believe that it feeds into masculinity and the ideology of guys being seen as more of a man because of the number of wives they have. |

**Figure 4.2.5: Woman holding a hammer**

| Participant F | Participant B |
|---|---|
| **What do I see?**<br>I see a poster or advertisement about tools and building equipment. Instead of the person being a man, which is the stereotype, it is now a woman.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I think that these advertisements aim to break stigmas in society that men are the only one who use these tools and rather | **What do I see?**<br>A picture of a young woman holding a hammer.<br><br>**What do I think about that?**<br>I think that women are not rated enough when it comes to working with metal tools. Society believes that women do not have the power to do some of the jobs because they are female. |

| | |
|---|---|
| shows that these are just objects and anyone who knows how to use the will use them.<br><br>**What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder why people thought that tools and building equipment had to be restricted to only men because there are many men out there who don't even know how to use these tools so why can't women be able to help these men if they know how to use the tools. | **What does it make me wonder?**<br>It makes me wonder if women are ever going to work in construction. |

This Thinking Routine invited boys to not only consider what they see but to engage with the image beyond what is on paper. They participants gave broad answers in terms of what they see "a man wearing a dress" (Participant C), "a man with three wives" (Participant H) or "a young woman holding a hammer" (Participant B), but moved onto to being more considerate in the answers they gave about what the pictures made them wonder "It makes me wonder whether society is accepting or still angry with men that have a feminine approach to life" (Participant C). The way that the questions are phrased becomes significant.

When we unpack the Thinking Routines, it is important to note that the way questions are phrased impact the answers that learners give. For example, if we look at Participant E's responses to the '**See, Think, Wonder**' thinking routine, we see the change in the depth of answers which he gives. When asked '**What do I see**?' he responded with "I see a man doing ballet, he's dressed in tights and an open blouse and he is well built." When asked '**What do I think about that**' he responded by saying that at first sight he assumed the man was gay but started to consider the meaning of this answer as he states that this "is obviously a negative stereotype". The sequence of questions prompted him to think and reflect on the answer he had given, because it moves from asking about what is seen, to asking about his own assumptions, facilitating considerations of the root of his initial thought by recognising that his bias is based on preconceived notions. He takes this a step

further in his response to the question '**What does it make me wonder**' as he talks about how much society has an influence over what we associate with certain genders (Participant E). The learner, through the careful phrasing of the questions posed to him, moves from simply expressing what he sees, to making displaying thinking dispositions such as "finding complexity" and "questioning and investigating" (Tishman & Palmer, 2007). He uncovers the multiple layers and dimensions by showing an understanding that in forming his own opinions, society has played a role in the views he holds. He also questions and seeks to investigate how much of an influence society has over his opinions and the opinions of others.

### 4.2.4. Using the 'True for Who' Thinking Routine

Step four: The next step required the learners used the '**True for Who**' thinking routine which is a routine for exploring truth claims from different perspectives. Before the learners began work in their groups, I revised the work that we had done over the last few weeks together. We spoke about the pre-test, the images and how we selected which ones were to be used as well as the '**See, Think, Wonder**' routine. I then explained the '**True for Who'** Thinking Routine and demonstrated the dramatization from the perspective of an artist. We discussed one of the images that were not selected (Figure 3.4.2: Male teacher). I asked them the questions adapted, for clarity, from the '**True for Who**' Thinking Routine.

We then completed the 'discuss' step by talking about each image by verbally responding to the questions, "What kind of situation was the claim made in?", "Who made it?" and "What were people's interests and goals?" Following these class wide discussions, we then moved onto the 'dramatize' step. I gave the learners agency by asking them to come up with five perspectives from which we can view the images. Following a 10 minute discussion the boys choose the following perspectives: a teacher, a high school child, a homophobe, a feminist and a traditional man.

Each learner in the group chose a perspective to 'dramatize' the images from. The groups were given 40 minutes to consider the perspective they had chosen and apply it to each image before presenting their dramatization to the group. Learners were given a worksheet to fill in (refer to Appendix D and 'Documents for the marker').

### 4.2.5. Creating an artefact

Step 5: As the final step, the learners were given the task of creating an artefact. This was a collage made by making use of the combination of the images I took on the mall walk and the images from the internet, as well as images that boys would find in newspapers and magazines. To create the collage, the boys were given printed copies of the images and instructed to add some of their own from magazines, newspapers (I provided some for them) and any other sources they would like to use. The collage was to be created in a way that shows two distinct halves: one half which depicts what they used to think masculinity meant and one half which depicts what masculinity means to them now (refer to Appendix E).

Allowing the learners to create collages shifted them from being users and consumers of images to being creators of images and thus having agency. In terms of Barrett's taxonomy, the cognitive demand of putting together the artefact would place it as part of the 'Appreciation' level, which is the highest level. Expectations of learners on this level include skills such as "identification with characters or incidents" and "critical review based on interpretation and appreciation, (Reeves, 2012, p. 47). In order to successfully put together the collage, learners had to use their previous knowledge of what they understood masculinity to be and critically review the images in order to select those that would accurately depict their thoughts. Below are two collages; these were created by Participant C and Participant H.

Both Participant C and Participant H used the collage to reflect their thoughts on masculinity at the beginning of the study, and their thoughts at the end of the study, which were further reflected in their rationale with the response to the '**I used to think…Now I think**…' Thinking Routine (refer to Appendix F). In selecting his images, Participant C shows how his thoughts on masculinity were centred on heteronormative ideas such as using power tools and exercising to his thoughts not necessarily changing, but acknowledging that there are other ways to display masculinity without sticking to typical societal norms and expectations.


BRAND NEW YOU
HAIRY TERRITORY
DOES A BEARD MAKE HIM
A BETTER PARTNER?

**Figure 4.5.2.1**




**Figure 4.2.5.2**

The following table shows the participants' responses to the '**I used to think…Now I think**' Thinking Routine.

| **Participant A** | **Participant B** | **Participant C** |
|---|---|---|
| Absent | I used to think that masculinity is how the men should be treated differently compared to boys in a certain environment.<br><br>Now I think masculinity is what the social environment expects from being a man, the behaviours that are considered appropriate for boys and men in a given society. | I used to think that masculinity was about meeting the expectations set by society and asserting dominance, especially over women. I used to believe that it was about living with specific ideologies, a man must be a provider and protector, and a man must be strong and not show emotion.<br><br>Now I think masculinity is still about meeting societal expectations but not about asserting dominance. In the modern world it is up to men to decide for themselves what makes them masculine and comfortable. Men can be who they want to be and follow good principles without having to be dominant over others. |

| Participant D | Participant E | Participant F |
|---|---|---|
| I used to think that masculinity was how much of a man you are and that you should portray those masculine traits to show that you are a man. You have to provide for your family and that you command power from people and that you should be known and heard by everyone.<br><br>Now I think masculinity is not all about power and toxicity, it's more about the good values a man needs to show and that society shouldn't paint a picture of how a man should be, but a man himself should look in the mirror and decide whether what he is doing as a man is right. | I used to think that masculinity the overpowering of women because you are a man<br><br>Now I think masculinity is the social expectation of being a man refers to the roles, behaviour that should be considered appropriate by society | I used to think that masculinity was how a man is supposed to think, speak and act? I thought it was what a man is expected to be and they have to show it at all ties. I used to think that this was natural.<br><br>Now I think masculinity is the roles, behaviours and attributes that are appropriate for men and boys in any given society. It is not biologically natural, it is rather a social or man-made concept. |

| Participant G | Participant H | Participant I |
|---|---|---|
| I used to think that masculinity was representing forms and actions society has deemed to be manly and avoiding anything deemed to be feminine, such as cleaning and cooking inside the house. Also | I used to think that masculinity meant what society expected from men. These were things like men had to be strong, dominant, providers, fearless, could | I used to think that masculinity…I would say that it was difficult to say because society determines what is masculine |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| including what you wear.<br><br>Now I think masculinity means being able to hold yourself up as a man by being confident in what you do no matter what society says. Being a man means you have power including what you do in your own life as long as it's what's right for you. | not show emotion.<br><br>Now I think masculinity means a few of the same things because I feel that men must provide for their families but they must also care for them emotionally and mentally. Things like cooking, spending time with friends and family and taking care of yourself as a man make you a man. You do not have to be aloof or try to act tough to prove that you are a man. | and what is not. Masculinity is determined by varying factors such as culture, race and location. My views are heavily dependent on who I am with and what my environment is like.<br><br>Now I think masculinity is about being yourself and letting go of societal guidelines and expectations. That I should be who I am regardless of who I am with and what their opinions are while maintaining positive values and not harming others. |

Initially 89% of the participants viewed masculinity as a socially constructed concept which meant that men were obligated by society to behave in heteronormative ways. Following the five steps involved in the study, 50% now felt that they had control over what the deemed masculinity to be, "I should be who I am regardless of who I am with and what their opinions are while maintaining positive values and not harming others" (Participant I). The graph below depicts the number of participants who viewed masculinity as something driven by society and thus external to them, and the number of participants who believed that despite what society says, they have control over how they display their masculinity.

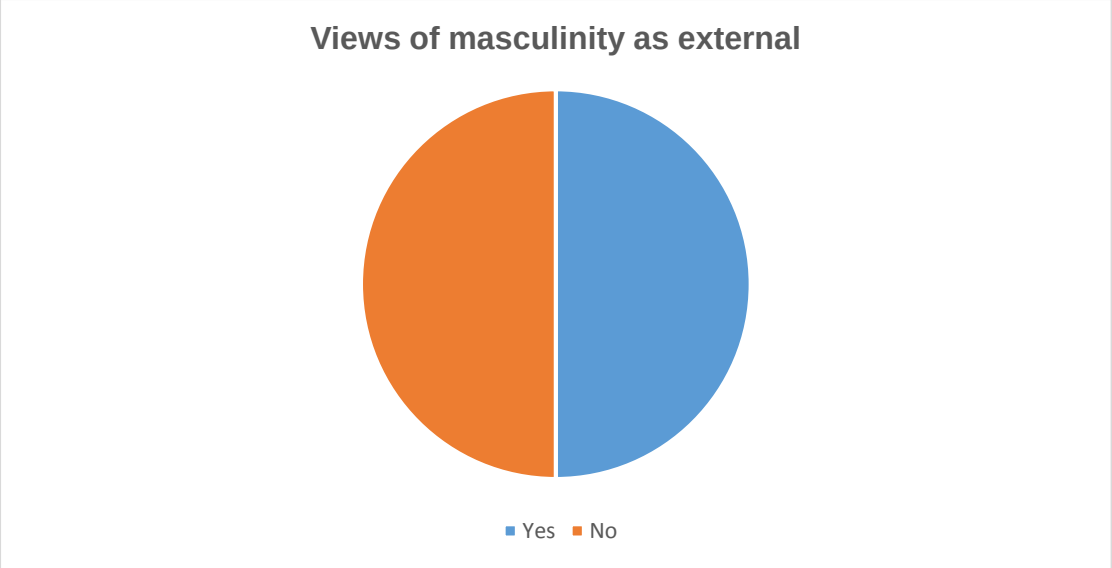



**Chart 4.2.5: Post-test views of masculinity as external**

In the post-test most of the participants had more to say in comparison to what they had written in the pre-test. Following the use of a combination of the images and Thinking Routines, used with scaffolding, the participants showed a development in their thinking. If we look at Participant D as an example, he began by stating that he thought that masculinity meant "The way a man should act according to society," during the pre-test. Following the careful use of the Thinking Routines in conjunction with the images, his responses where more nuanced. He revisits his original thoughts on masculinity and writes in more detail about what his initial thoughts were "I used to think that masculinity was how much of a man you are and that you should portray those masculine traits to show that you are a man. You have to provide for your family and that you command power from people and that you should be known and heard by everyone." When asked what he thought masculinity was now he said "masculinity is not all about power and toxicity, it's more about the good values a man needs to show and that society shouldn't paint a picture of how a man should be, but a man himself should look in the mirror and decide whether what he is doing as a man is right." He now displays complex thought as he moves away from the belief that masculinity is an idea driven chiefly by society to the realisation that it is something that can come from the self as he states that the man has to determine for himself what is right.

## 4.3 Conclusion

I presented the data and found that there were three main interesting outcomes. First, the learners made their own links across the curriculum, second, the phrasing of the questions helped the boys to write in more nuanced ways in relation to the images, and third, while their ideas did not shift by a great deal, they were able to articulate their ideas better following the use of images and Thinking Routines. They started to understand how representations of masculinity are used to sell goods in malls and how advertising is influenced by social ideas, and from this they realised that they have a choice about the kind of man they want to be. The next chapter will present the conclusion to the study.

# 5. Conclusion

I set out to discover how the use of images in conjunction with the use of the Thinking Routines developed by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2019) can help learners develop critical thinking skills. These skills would be evident in the learners' answers that demonstrate characteristics of Tishman and Palmer's Thinking Dispositions (2007) such as "reasoning", "exploring viewpoints" and "observing and describing". This section is a discussion of the general findings from the data presented in the previous chapter followed by discussions on Tishman and Palmer's Thinking Dispositions.

## 5.1. Revisiting the research questions

In order to answer the primary research question, at the outset of the study I set to find out what kinds of responses the different images would elicit from the boys by exploring the sort of language the boys used while engaging with the images and what critical thinking this language revealed about the boys' thoughts on masculinity. I also looked at the ways the discussions around the images helped to develop critical thinking.

**What kinds of responses did the different images elicit from the boys?**

The boys showed a keen interest in the 'controversial' images such as the image of the polygamous marriage and the image of Harry Styles in a dress. They expressed a great interest in working with these images and they were unanimous in their decision to add these images to the final five to be used with the Thinking Routines (refer to p. 22 – 30 of Journal).

**What sort of language did the boys use while engaging with the images?**

The language that the boys used initially is language that showed typical heteronormative thinking, an example of this is when some boys made the comment that the man in the polygamous wedding is a "real man" because he "can bag many women" (refer to p. 30 of Journal). They moved on to using language such as "it makes me wonder whether he is with multiple women to prove his masculinity or if he truly does love them," (Participant G). This language reveals that the participants begun from a point where they looked at the images on a surface level, to viewing

them with careful consideration with the guidance from the questions used in the Thinking Routines. The participants displayed the thinking dispositions of 'reasoning' and 'finding complexity' because they were using evidence of images they had engaged with as well as their own knowledge to beginning uncovering the different layers of masculinity, for example Participant I wrote "I should be who I am regardless of who I am with and what their opinions are while maintaining positive values and not harming others." He shows here that although his thoughts on masculinity have not shifted, he has gained insight in terms of understanding that there are multiple dimensions in being masculine and they are all valid.

**In what ways did the discussions around images help to develop critical thinking?**

The discussions, through the use of Thinking Routines helped the participants articulate themselves better and reflect on their own thoughts. Participant H began by expressing masculinity as what society expects from men which were traits such as being "dominant", "fearless" and "strong" to talking about how "masculinity means a few of the same things because I feel that men must provide for their families but they must also care for them emotionally and mentally. Things like cooking, spending time with friends and family and taking care of yourself as a man make you a man. You do not have to be aloof or try to act tough to prove that you are a man." The participant shows some critical thinking dispositions such as 'observing and describing', where he makes an observation of what society typically expects from me, to reflecting on these expectations and describing different ways (cooking, spending time with family) that men can still display masculinity.

## 5.2. Conclusion

Through this research project it was found that using images does facilitate critical thinking by helping learners develop thinking dispositions. A sensitive topic such as masculinity was handled in a mature way by the participants and although there were not big shifts in thought, the participants were able to articulate their thoughts better and reflect on their ideas. However, the presence of images is not enough to achieve these aims. Teachers should take care when using images in an effort to help learners develop critical thinking skills, they have to ensure that the tasks are

deliberately set up to help their learners develop such skills. This corroborates the work done by Tishman and Palmer (2007), who made use of carefully constructed Thinking Routines with works of art in order to help learners develop critical thinking dispositions.

Within the context of this study, it was found that images can help learners to reflect on their ideas about masculinity and then learn from their own as well as their peers' ideas, therefore, gaining new knowledge, new perspectives and new ways of thinking. It makes sense that images could be used to explore other difficult issues in the classroom setting because as stated by Turgenev (1862), an image at one glance can give you meaning and insight which might need to be spread over ten pages of writing in a book. Images offer learners another 'way in' as they are another kind of representation which allow learners' access to the curriculum that text alone does not.

Thus working with images helps to develop visual literacy skills and critical literacy when the images are used to discuss difficult topics because the image prompts thinking about aspects of the image and what it is about. The image alerts the viewer to prominent ideas in society by either conforming to or reproducing those ideas, or by challenging them. Talking with the images also helped learners externalise their own feelings because when they saw their own feelings represented, or when the images challenged their conceptions, the images showed them a new idea or a new possibility.

### 5.2.1. Limitations

This is a small scale research project which uses a qualitative case study based in one school, dealing with one grade and one gender. For these reasons, generalising the study to other schools, other grades and other genders may not be possible. It would be worthwhile to conduct the study in a girls' school to see what their perceptions would be, or similarly in a co-ed school where boys and girls are constantly interacting with one another. We may, however, make inferences in similar contexts such as other boys' schools.

It was a challenge to get buy in from the learners when it came to completing the mall walk. I undertook the mall walk myself as a means to assure the boys and their parents that this was not an adverse activity. However, due to the boys not bringing

images of their own, my images from the mall walked were used. Perhaps in future it would help to introduce the idea of the walk by first giving the learners an image that we can discuss as a class. An image of a controversial figure such as Andrew Tate, may spark the learners' interest and compel them to find more images of their own so that they can share them with the class and have more discussions. Some of the learners had great insights during the discussions but, unfortunately, did not give consent for their writing and collages to be used in the study. The depth in the answers given by the participants at each stage during the process can lead to great analysis. For the purposes of this study (small scale with limited timeframe) I chose to focus on certain aspects for analysis.

There is potential for research bias as this study was conducted at a school where I work with boys whom I teach. This can affect the dependability of the results as the boys may give answers that they think I want to hear in an effort to please me as their teacher. Despite the limitations, this study has changed how I work with images in my classroom. I now use images more often to prompt thought in my learners about the range of topics we cover according to the curriculum and use images in other aspects of the curriculum such as literature and creative writing.

### 5.2.2. Recommendations

The sophistication in the answers that the participants gave at the end of the study indicate that the use of images in a carefully thought-out process can yield positive results. The participants are a part of the 11B class, which in terms of streaming within the school, they are not academically strong. Given the depth and detail of their answers though, if these techniques can be used regularly as part of our teaching practices they can help develop learners critical literacy and ensure success for the future as they showed in this study that they began to understand how ideas are socially constructed and they showed self-reflectivity as they considered their own place and thoughts in a world filled with ideas of how things should be. If this were to be implemented over a longer period of time with different topics, it can help learners further develop these skills.

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Figure 4.2.4.4: Polygamous wedding

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Figure 4.2.5: Woman holding a hammer

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# Appendices

## Appendix A

**I think masculinity means…**

## Appendix B

**Score for Walking through the mall**

You are required to visit your local mall. Ensure that you are wearing comfortable shoes and that you have your cell phone with you. Begin at any entrance and then follow these instructions:

1. Walk into the first unisex clothing shop that you come across. Take an overall picture of the “Men’s Section” and another of the “Women’s Section”.
2. Look for a jewellery shop. Find a poster in the shop that shows a male model wearing jewellery and take a picture of it.
3. Make your way to a cosmetics shop. Take a picture of a unisex perfume bottle.
4. Find the cinema. Have a look at the posters for the movies that are being aired as well as the movies that will be released soon. Take a picture of a poster showing an action movie.
5. Go to an optometrist and take a picture of the frames for men and another of the frames for women.
6. Find a “Game” or a shop that has a hardware section. Take a picture of some tools.
7. Go to a toy shop and take a picture of a toy that both boys and girls can play with.
8. Lastly, find a shop that sells camping equipment. Once inside, look for a poster advertising some camping gear and take a picture of that.

At the end of your walk you should have a total of 10 pictures. Go through your pictures and select three pictures that you will present in class. For your presentation, you must talk about how the photos you have chosen depict masculinity. Be prepared to answer some questions that your classmates might ask regarding your pictures.

Please email all your photos to your teacher to the following email address:

**********

## Appendix C

**See, Think, Wonder**

Respond to the image that has been assigned to you by answering the following questions in the space provided:

What do I see?

What do I think about that?

What does it make me wonder?

## Appendix D

**True for Who?**

Using the perspective that has been assigned to you, respond to all five images. Your response must show the beliefs held by the person that you are representing and possible reasons why this person might hold these views.

The image claims that:

My viewpoint is:

The reason/s for my viewpoint is/are:

My conclusion/stance is:

What would convince me to change my mind is:

## Appendix E

**Creating an Artefact**

Following your experiences at the mall and the discussions you have had within your group based on the images that were given, you are now required to create an artefact that represents masculinity. The artefact must be a collage made using a combination of the images you have used for your discussions in class, the images that you collected from your mall walk and any additional images of your choice.

Your artefact must have two distinct halves: a half that shows how you used to think about masculinity and a half that represents how you now think about masculinity.





## Appendix F

**I used to think…Now I think… (This worksheet must accompany your artefact)**

I used to think that masculinity…

Now I think that masculinity…