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Reflective Writing in Design

schematic diagram

Writing a studio knowledge object

Reflecting on practice is an important means of developing expertise in design. Structured reflection involves identifying significant events that lead to learning, identifying their value and considering how they will contribute to your future projects and your practice as a whole.

About this resource

This resource provides a guide for writing a structured reflection in a studio knowledge object (SKO). The studio knowledge object records learning and insights gained in a design studio course. These insights may be as small as learning a new method for improving your workflow efficiency, or as profound as a change in perspective on design or interest in a new career direction. Your specific learning moments are individual to you. By articulating them in words and demonstrating them through design you can communicate the value of your learning to others. This is the purpose of the knowledge object.

The SKO text has three main sections:

1. **Contextualising** the field of inquiry that the studio investigates gives a non-expert reader an understanding of the key issues and approaches that your reflection relates to.

2. **Reflecting** on your learning identifies key insights and learning from the studio, describing specific activities, concepts or approaches and evaluating their impact. You will probably cover 2-4 insights in your SKO.

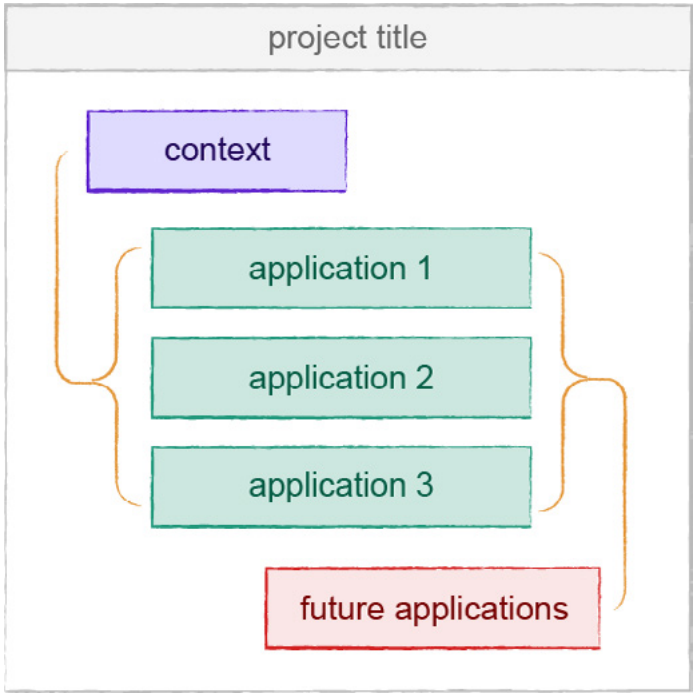
3. **Proposing future application** speculates about how you can transfer this new knowledge to other projects and how it might affect your future practice.

Schematic diagram

The way that you combine the three main sections will help to tell your story, consider:

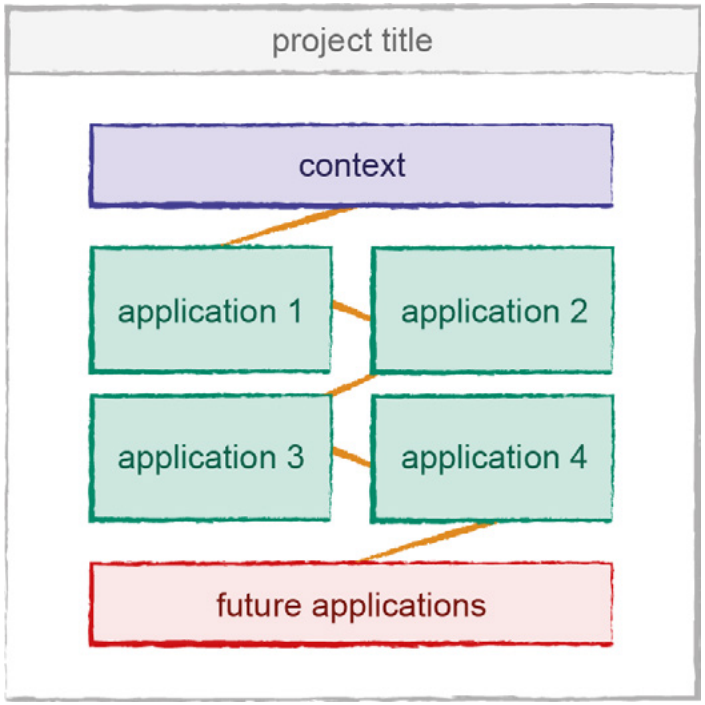
- **text** (title, headings and paragraphs)
- **images** (of your work, diagrams or other content)
- **design** (type and graphic elements)
- **layout** (arrangement)

All elements should reflect the content of your studio and the learning you have gained. Some example layouts are shown.

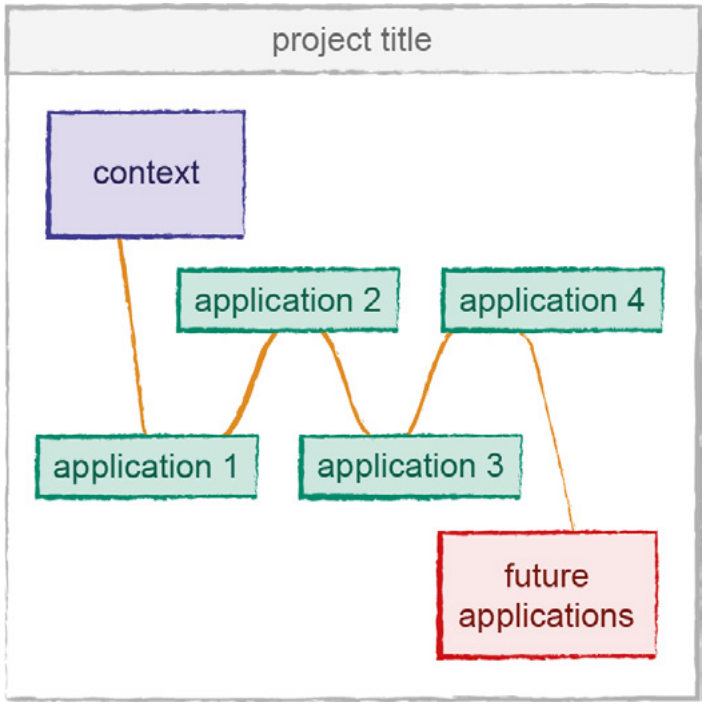


Example 1

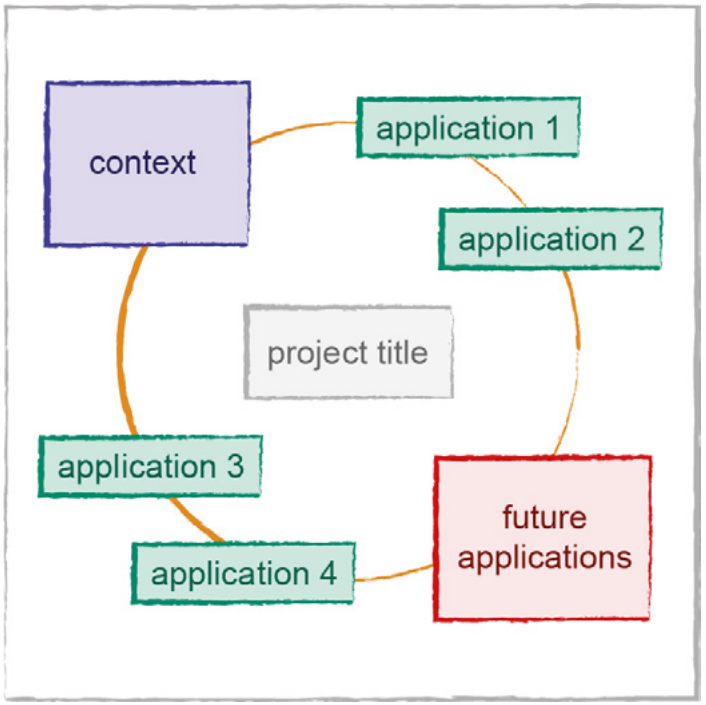
Schematic diagram cont.



Example 2



Example 3



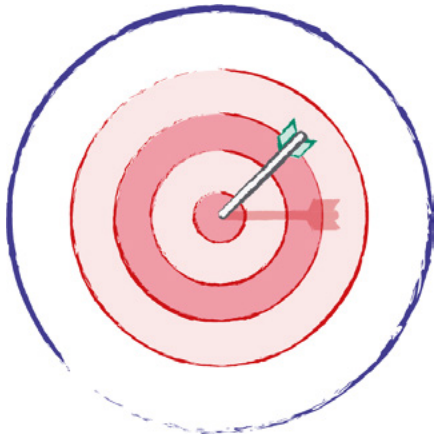
Example 4

Contexualising the field of enquiry

This section serves as an introduction to your studio knowledge object. It outlines the particular field of design practice or inquiry investigated in the studio. The design field needs to be described with enough detail to give a non-expert reader a good understanding of the key issues and approaches that your insights relate to.

The context outlines:

the focus of
the design field or studio.



the aims and intent
of the field of practice.

the key thinkers, practitioners, methods and approaches.

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Reflective Writing in Design

Example 1

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What field of practice does the studio investigate? What is the intent of this field of practice? What are the key approaches/ methods and who are the key thinkers in this field of practice? What are the implications of these for design practice (yours/others)?	The studio, Shaping Nature Experiences, is an introduction to the field of interpretive environment design. This is a rapidly changing field; the complexity and range of techniques and subject areas involved in the process of designing an exhibition makes this a dynamic and intriguing discipline. Exhibition design, or interpretive environment design, is a multi-disciplinary field that involves the interweaving of many different elements of media and communications to provide transformative experiences for visitors (Bayer 1961). The field of interpretive environment design is distinguished by three main themes - designing for learning and play, immersion and interactivity. As a designer, and potentially as a future art director, I am conscious that memorable, effective and impactful interpretive environments can offer experiences that engage and enrich visitors' lives, and are a means of changing their perception of the world.	Describes context of the studio in a specific design field Identifies the aim/focus of the field of practice Refers to methods/ approaches and theories/ thinkers/practitioners Indicates meaning and value for your future practice

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 1

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
Generally context paragraphs describe the field of practice in the present	The studio, Shaping Nature Experiences, is an introduction to the field of interpretive environment design. This is a rapidly changing field; the complexity and range of techniques and subject areas involved in the process of designing an exhibition makes this a dynamic and intriguing discipline. Exhibition design, or interpretive environment design, is a multi-disciplinary field that involves the interweaving of many different elements of media and communications to provide transformative experiences for visitors (Bayer 1961). The field of interpretive environment design is distinguished by three main themes - designing for learning and play, immersion and interactivity. As a designer, and potentially as a future art director, I am conscious that memorable, effective and impactful interpretive environments can offer experiences that engage and enrich visitors' lives, and are a means of changing their perception of the world.
Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	

Example 2

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What field of practice does the studio investigate? What is the intent of this field of practice? What are the key approaches/ methods and who are the key thinkers in this field of practice? What are the implications of these for design practice (yours/others)?	This studio, Design for social change: climate change and food security, looks at the social role and ethical practices of communication design. Social change is a major influence on professional communication design as design can help to connect people to global issues which appear incredibly complex. This design field is human-centred; it requires in-depth research on people and issues that affect them, as well the people who can help. Mapping, creating archetype categories, observing case studies and the six spheres tool help designers to form strategies that are realistic and empathetic. Finally, the presentation from Studio Thick encompassed everything we've learnt in this studio and how these skills are implemented in the industry today. All of this helped me develop a deeper, personal understanding of the strategy which I felt was conveyed in my final presentation. My new understanding of socially responsible and sustainable service design will be used in my future practice.	Describes context of the studio in a specific design field Identifies the aim/focus of the field of practice Refers to methods/ approaches and theories/ thinkers/practitioners Indicates meaning and value for your future practice

Example 2

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
Generally context paragraphs describe the field of practice in the present Context paragraphs may also describe the future use of your learning from this field of practice. Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	This studio, Design for social change: climate change and food security, looks at the social role and ethical practices of communication design. Social change is a major influence on professional communication design as design can help to connect people to global issues which appear incredibly complex. This design field is human-centred; it requires in-depth research on people and issues that affect them, as well the people who can help. Mapping, creating archetype categories, observing case studies and the six spheres tool help designers to form strategies that are realistic and empathetic. Finally, the presentation from Studio Thick encompassed everything we've learnt in this studio and how these skills are implemented in the industry today. All of this helped me develop a deeper, personal understanding of the strategy which I felt was conveyed in my final presentation. My new understanding of socially responsible and sustainable service design will be used in my future practice.

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 3

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What field of practice does the studio investigate? What is the intent of this field of practice? What are the key approaches/ methods and who are the key thinkers in this field of practice? What are the implications of these for design practice (yours/others)?	The Design for Social Change studio is to design for social innovation, reframing complex problems into practical outcomes that can be integrated into people's lives Working with Oxfam we have had the opportunity to explore complex systemic issues of climate change and food security through design and research. The field of practice explores how design can help make people understand how big problems are relevant to their daily lives. Approaches and methods used in this emerging field demonstrate ways to promote and support human-centred research and design using ethnography-research skills, and holistic and systems thinking. The studio includes case studies and presentations of social-oriented programs, businesses and NGOs. An 'impact design agency' like Studio Thick works with companies such as Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank that require sustainability and service design to meet their social and community responsibilities. This field of practice is a way to spread information, ideas and messages to contribute to shaping mentalities and making the world a better place to live. I hope the field continues to develop and become recognised as an actual pathway for designers in the future.	Describes context of the studio in a specific design field Identifies the aim/focus of the field of practice Refers to methods/ approaches and theories/ thinkers/practitioners Indicates meaning and value for your future practice

Example 3

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
Generally context paragraphs describe the field of practice in the present	The Design for Social Change studio is to design for social innovation, reframing complex problems into practical outcomes that can be integrated into people's lives Working with Oxfam we have had the opportunity to explore complex systemic issues of climate change and food security through design and research. The field of practice explores how design can help make people understand how big problems are relevant to their daily lives. Approaches and methods used in this emerging field demonstrate ways to promote and support human-centred research and design using ethnography-research skills, and holistic and systems thinking. The studio includes case studies and presentations of social-oriented programs, businesses and NGOs. An 'impact design agency' like Studio Thick works with companies such as Telstra and the Commonwealth Bank that require sustainability and service design to meet their social and community responsibilities. This field of practice is a way to spread information, ideas and messages to contribute to shaping mentalities and making the world a better place to live. I hope the field continues to develop and become recognised as an actual pathway for designers in the future.
Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 4

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What field of practice does the studio investigate? What is the intent of this field of practice? What are the key approaches/ methods and who are the key thinkers in this field of practice? What are the implications of these for design practice (yours/others)?	This design studio, Shaping Nature Experiences, provides an advanced level of engagement in communication design for learning institutions like museums and zoos. This design field seeks to engage visitors through immersive and interactive environments and experiences, based on a constructivist theory of free-choice learning. The guiding principles of interpretation design are to engage, educate and inspire through carefully designed exhibitions. The field of interpretation design is guided by these principles and employs a myriad of overlapping strategies and frameworks. These target exhibition narrative, communication aims and their effectiveness, audience needs, degrees of interaction, and approaches to learning. The frameworks of Falk, Dierking and Adams (2007) aim at allowing the audience to contribute and to engage on multiple levels for an immersive and engaging experience and provide a basis for my design. As a designer I seek to apply the principles of free-choice learning to exhibition design in order to generate a partnership with the viewer and create a journey through the content that is open to broad as well as individual responses.	Describes context of the studio in a specific design field Identifies the aim/focus of the field of practice Refers to methods/ approaches and theories/ thinkers/practitioners Indicates meaning and value for your future practice

Example 4

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
Generally context paragraphs describe the field of practice in the present	This design studio, Shaping Nature Experiences, provides an advanced level of engagement in communication design for learning institutions like museums and zoos. This design field seeks to engage visitors through immersive and interactive environments and experiences, based on a constructivist theory of free-choice learning. The guiding principles of interpretation design are to engage, educate and inspire through carefully designed exhibitions. The field of interpretation design is guided by these principles and employs a myriad of overlapping strategies and frameworks. These target exhibition narrative, communication aims and their effectiveness, audience needs, degrees of interaction, and approaches to learning. The frameworks of Falk, Dierking and Adams (2007) aim at allowing the audience to contribute and to engage on multiple levels for an immersive and engaging experience and provide a basis for my design. As a designer I seek to apply the principles of free-choice learning to exhibition design in order to generate a partnership with the viewer and create a journey through the content that is open to broad as well as individual responses.
Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	

Reflecting on your learning

The main section of the knowledge object contains a series of reflections on your studio learning. Reflections identify key learning and insights gained through critical incidents in the design process and activities in the studio.

Articulation of your learning through reflection supports learning-by-doing and transfer of learning from one studio to another. The aim is to identify general principles from specific learning experiences, linking practice with design theory and methods.

Step-by-step guide for each reflection

1 Identify

Identify an insight. This is a new understanding that emerged from the studio activities or your design process. It may be a practical, theoretical or critical understanding such as a new awareness of certain factors in the design process, a new method that improves your efficiency, a deeper understanding of a particular issue, a connection between a particular theory and practice, a model that supports your interrogation of a problem, or a framework for evaluating design outcomes.

2 Describe

Briefly describe the incident that led to this insight. What was the catalyst?

Reflecting on your learning

Step-by-step guide for each reflection cont.

3 Interpret

Interpret the insight. Explain the connection between this insight and the methods, principles and theory of the design field.

4 Evaluate

Evaluate the significance of this new understanding for you. This may relate to the further development of the project or future design projects, or to your design process or the way you think about design.

5 Plan

Plan how you might transfer this new understanding to future projects and/or practice. Speculate about how this new insight might change the way you approach a design task in the future.

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 1

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	My specific insight from this studio is that I can use strategy to form an enduring connection with an audience. This is important in this studio because we want to affect social change. My initial strategy was complicated and unrealistic. I was trying to solve too much. I realised my strategy required a great consideration of my chosen archetype. By building skills in mapping I made very clear correlations between climate change and food security, their current effects on third world communities and the very real threat they pose to our future. Mapping my own connection to the victims of these effects formed a strong sense of empathy and responsibility to take action. Strengthening my skills in interviewing and researching helped me to develop a persona archetype. As I sought to understand everything about them to design a more direct mission and informed touch points, I began to see what could be realistically addressed. I think this studio has challenged and strengthened a range of my personal and professional skills as a designer: how my strategy can appeal to the target audience, how they might interact with the strategy and how I can develop a long-term connection between my strategy and the audience.	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Example 1

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A reflective paragraph identifies a change in learning over time from the past to the present/future Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	My specific insight from this studio is that I can use strategy to form an enduring connection with an audience. This is important in this studio because we want to affect social change. My initial strategy was complicated and unrealistic. I was trying to solve too much. I realised my strategy required a great consideration of my chosen archetype. By building skills in mapping I made very clear correlations between climate change and food security, their current effects on third world communities and the very real threat they pose to our future. Mapping my own connection to the victims of these effects formed a strong sense of empathy and responsibility to take action. Strengthening my skills in interviewing and researching helped me to develop a persona archetype. As I sought to understand everything about them to design a more direct mission and informed touch points, I began to see what could be realistically addressed. I think this studio has challenged and strengthened a range of my personal and professional skills as a designer: how my strategy can appeal to the target audience, how they might interact with the strategy and how I can develop a long-term connection between my strategy and the audience.

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Reflective Writing in Design

Example 2

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	The most useful and interesting insight I have gained from this studio is the importance of research methods for creating end-user profiles. Before this journey, design research (for me) was about making mood boards and identifying basic audience demographics. Without downgrading the importance of these methods, I now recognise that there can be a lot more to research than that. In the Design for Social Change studio I have gained an understanding of specific research methods such as case studies, interviews, customer journey mapping and building comprehensive persona profiles. These methods help designers understand the complexity of the problems and then develop strategies for social change that actually have some validity and meaning. These ways of understanding the user or customer were very helpful in designing my Oxfam Student Month project. I am confident that this new understanding of research methods for identifying and targeting specific users will be beneficial for my future design practice.	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Example 2

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A reflective paragraph identifies a change in learning over time from the past to the present/future	The most useful and interesting insight I have gained from this studio is the importance of research methods for creating end-user profiles. Before this journey, design research (for me) was about making mood boards and identifying basic audience demographics. Without downgrading the importance of these methods, I now recognise that there can be a lot more to research than that. In the Design for Social Change studio I have gained an understanding of specific research methods such as case studies, interviews, customer journey mapping and building comprehensive persona profiles. These methods help designers understand the complexity of the problems and then develop strategies for social change that actually have some validity and meaning. These ways of understanding the user or customer were very helpful in designing my Oxfam Student Month project. I am confident that this new understanding of research methods for identifying and targeting specific users will be beneficial for my future design practice.
Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 3

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	From this studio I have a new understanding of how psychology underpins exhibition design for learning and play environments such as zoos, museums and the like. Throughout the course I was exposed to immersive and interactive design principles; that combine sound, visual, text and spatial elements to create positive learning environments. At the Melbourne Museum and the Melbourne Zoo the exhibitions are created with attention to elements such as: goals or challenges to overcome, stimulus of the senses, feelings of control and minimal distractions. Lidwell, Holden and Butler (2003) suggest these elements are necessary to create a successful immersive experience. Stevenson (1994, p.32) highlights the effectiveness of interactivity to 'inspire and provoke exploration ... and to tempt people to look more thoughtfully' at the displays. Through designing my own miniature suitcase exhibition in this studio, I have gained an understanding of how to undertake integrated design for learning and play. Falk and Dierking's contextual model of learning (2012) suggests that a visitor's personal, sociocultural and physical context all work together to shape their experiences and what they decide to absorb and learn from an exhibition. The idea that the visitor contributes...	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Example 3 Cont.

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	to the learning process, which is a feedback loop between museum and visitor, allows for more flexible and positive, interactive play and learning. Appreciating how these elements combine with the use of different mediums and techniques will assist me in my future practice to create memorable, impactful and effective learning and play environments.	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Example 3

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A reflective paragraph identifies a change in learning over time from the past to the present/future	From this studio I have a new understanding of how psychology underpins exhibition design for learning and play environments such as zoos, museums and the like. Throughout the course I was exposed to immersive and interactive design principles; that combine sound, visual, text and spatial elements to create positive learning environments. At the Melbourne Museum and the Melbourne Zoo the exhibitions are created with attention to elements such as: goals or challenges to overcome, stimulus of the senses, feelings of control and minimal distractions. Lidwell, Holden and Butler (2003) suggest these elements are necessary to create a successful immersive experience. Stevenson (1994, p.32) highlights the effectiveness of interactivity to 'inspire and provoke exploration ... and to tempt people to look more thoughtfully' at the displays. Through designing my own miniature suitcase exhibition in this studio, I have gained an understanding of how to undertake integrated design for learning and play. Falk and Dierking's contextual model of learning (2012) suggests that a visitor's personal, sociocultural and physical context all work together to shape their experiences and what they decide to absorb and learn from an exhibition. The idea that the visitor contributes to the learning process, which is a feedback loop between museum and visitor, allows for more flexible, and positive interactive play and learning. Appreciating how these elements combine with the use of different mediums and techniques will assist me in my future practice to create memorable, impactful and effective learning and play environments.
Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 4

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	Through the Design for Social Change studio I have moved from looking at design as a purely physical/ product-based activity to a deeper appreciation of designing for human meaning. Through the application of the six spheres of sustainability, I can appreciate that a designer creates systems and strategies. Before this, I considered design research to be just mood boarding and basic audience demographics. I am now able to acknowledge that there can be more to it than that. Over the past 13 weeks, we have touched on so many different ways of approaching design ideation: visualising thoughts, processes, systems, stories and more. For example: from ethnographic research, interviews and persona profile building I learned the benefit of comprehensive research; from peer and teacher feedback I was able to see my project with a more critical eye; through mapping I could see my project's strengths and weaknesses; by making a slight change to the research process I allowed for empathy for the target audience and those affected by the issue, to inform the design. Applying sustainability systems and strategies will enable me to address more spheres in designing for deeper human meaning and connectedness in my current and future practice.	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 4

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A reflective paragraph identifies a change in learning over time from the past to the present/future Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	Through the Design for Social Change studio I have moved from looking at design as a purely physical/ product-based activity to a deeper appreciation of designing for human meaning. Through the application of the six spheres of sustainability, I can appreciate that a designer creates systems and strategies. Before this, I considered design research to be just mood boarding and basic audience demographics. I am now able to acknowledge that there can be more to it than that. Over the past 13 weeks, we have touched on so many different ways of approaching design ideation: visualising thoughts, processes, systems, stories and more. For example: from ethnographic research, interviews and persona profile building I learned the benefit of comprehensive research; from peer and teacher feedback I was able to see my project with a more critical eye; through mapping I could see my project's strengths and weaknesses; by making a slight change to the research process I allowed for empathy for the target audience and those affected by the issue, to inform the design. Applying sustainability systems and strategies will enable me to address more spheres in designing for deeper human meaning and connectedness in my current and future practice.

Example 5

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	It was immediately clear that the most beneficial approach for each project in the studio, Shaping Natural Experiences, was to encourage the audience to craft their own experience instead of prescribing it for them. Being introduced to constructivist theory provided awareness of the recent shift to free-choice learning in society and insight into a visitor's need for voluntary entertainment with substance. Specifically notable was *Living in a Learning Society: Museums and Free-Choice Learning* (Falk, Dierking & Adams, 2007) in which I found many useful frameworks to evaluate a visitor's experience. Feeling first-hand how exhibitions like *Bugs Alive!* and *Romance Was Born: Express Yourself* used different environments, voices and interactives to simultaneously create a universal yet individual-specific journey through the content reinforced the need to be open to broad responses by a viewer and have structures in place to offer support. Collectively these elements contributed to the realisation that if, as a designer, I can create a partnership with the audience, the essential pieces of communication will be conveyed more efficiently and also more effectively to allow for individual audience response and free-choice learning.	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Example 5

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A reflective paragraph identifies a change in learning over time from the past to the present/future	It was immediately clear that the most beneficial approach for each project in the studio, Shaping Natural Experiences, was to encourage the audience to craft their own experience instead of prescribing it for them. Being introduced to constructivist theory provided awareness of the recent shift to free-choice learning in society and insight into a visitor's need for voluntary entertainment with substance. Specifically notable was Living in a *Learning Society: Museums and Free-Choice Learning* (Falk, Dierking & Adams, 2007) in which I found many useful frameworks to evaluate a visitor's experience. Feeling first-hand how exhibitions like *Bugs Alive!* and *Romance Was Born: Express Yourself* used different environments, voices and interactives to simultaneously create a universal yet individual-specific journey through the content reinforced the need to be open to broad responses by a viewer and have structures in place to offer support. Collectively these elements contributed to the realisation that if, as a designer, I can create a partnership with the audience, the essential pieces of communication will be conveyed more efficiently and also more effectively to allow for individual audience response and free-choice learning.
Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 6

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What insight(s) did I gain through the studio? Which significant events, theories, methods, thinkers and practitioners contributed to your insight? What do you now understand and how does it affect your practice?	One significant insight from this studio was learning the distinction between creating more generic designs that aim to do everything at once and creating a more considered concept that could offer depth if examined beyond face value. While my initial design approach was to create concepts that deliberately focused on one specific audience or methodology, I discovered that each concept could be enhanced (and made more accessible) when it accommodated multiple strategies and diverse visitor needs. Influential moments in the [exhibition design] studio that led to this breakthrough include *Think:Feel:Do - Model of Visitor Interaction*, the student presentation on *Streakers, Strollers and Studiers* and my discovery of *Developmental Milestones Framework* (World Brooklyn, 2004). The combination of these in-class presentations, excursions and critical discussions epitomised the model of free-choice learning philosophy and demonstrated how to accommodate different learning styles (in an immersive learning experience). This considered approach to content delivery results in a more stimulating, memorable and engaging educational experience. It demonstrates the potential effectiveness of multiple strategies being implemented in unison for future design projects that require engagement for learning.	Identifies a specific new insight or understanding that changes an approach or practice Refers to methods/ approaches, events, thinkers/theories/ practitioners Indicates the meaning and value of the insights and its effects on future practice

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 6

Structure | Language features

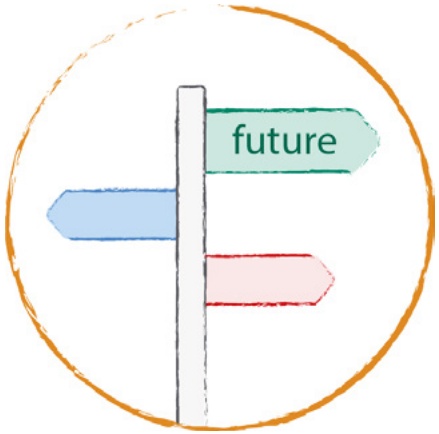
Features	Paragraph structure
A reflective paragraph identifies a change in learning over time from the past to the present/future Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	One significant insight from this studio was learning the distinction between creating more generic designs that aim to do everything at once and creating a more considered concept that could offer depth if examined beyond face value. While my initial design approach was to create concepts that deliberately focused on one specific audience or methodology, I discovered that each concept could be enhanced (and made more accessible) when it accommodated multiple strategies and diverse visitor needs. Influential moments in the [exhibition design] studio that led to this breakthrough include *Think:Feel:Do - Model of Visitor Interaction*, the student presentation on *Streakers, Strollers and Studiers* and my discovery of *Developmental Milestones Framework* (World Brooklyn, 2004). The combination of these in-class presentations, excursions and critical discussions epitomised the model of free-choice learning philosophy and demonstrated how to accommodate different learning styles (in an immersive learning experience). This considered approach to content delivery results in a more stimulating, memorable and engaging educational experience. It demonstrates the potential effectiveness of multiple strategies being implemented in unison for future design projects that require engagement for learning.

Proposing future application

The final section of a studio knowledge object speculates about how you can transfer this new knowledge to future projects and professional practice. The aim is to develop your design expertise by applying lessons learned from this studio and from your structured reflection.

The context outlines:

what is the **value** of these insights to your fields of interest?



what are the **implications** of your insights for your future practice?

will they **influence** your career direction?

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 1

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What aspect(s) of the learning in this studio will you draw on for future design practice? techniques What techniques will you transfer to your future practice? What meaning and value does this have for your practice? How might you apply this understanding to your future practice?	In the Design for Social Change studio I have changed my approach to design from a focus on things to a focus on ways. My role as a designer has become clearer through a more profound understanding of the need to create systems and strategies. I have been challenged to see how my creativity and unique way of thinking can be used to create deeper human meaning and connectedness through applying the six spheres of sustainability, using empathy to determine better connectedness, and using feedback as part of the design process. So much of my previous design education has taught me that to be a designer is to make things. I no longer think that. I feel liberated to know that through these new ways of being, doing and living I can create a career for myself as a designer who can make a difference.	Focuses on a specific aspect of your learning that will be used in the feature Indicate some of the approaches/methods/ theoretical bases you think may transfer to your future practice Shows a shift in your understanding/thinking Identifies the approaches in this field you propose to apply to your design practice

RMIT UNIVERSITY

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 1

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A future application paragraph describes how your past learning and reflection will influence your future practice Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	In the Design for Social Change studio I have changed my approach to design from a focus on things to a focus on ways. My role as a designer has become clearer through a more profound understanding of the need to create systems and strategies. I have been challenged to see how my creativity and unique way of thinking can be used to create deeper human meaning and connectedness through applying the six spheres of sustainability, using empathy to determine better connectedness, and using feedback as part of the design process. So much of my previous design education has taught me that to be a designer is to make things. I no longer think that. I feel liberated to know that through these new ways of being, doing and living I can create a career for myself as a designer who can make a difference.

Reflective Writing in Design

Example 2

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What aspect(s) of the learning in this studio will you draw on for future design practice? techniques What techniques will you transfer to your future practice? What meaning and value does this have for your practice? How might you apply this understanding to your future practice?	I foresee a continued exploration of principles from the field of interpretation design in my future design practice, focusing on context and perspective. The interpretive environment brief allowed me to test different narratives and communication aims for the same exhibit at the Melbourne Museum. I now appreciate that a practitioner needs to look further afield than mere graphic identity and aesthetic integration, towards strategies and frameworks to achieve the aims of the exhibition. I have come to understand the benefit of creating different narratives that target specific ages and audiences for the same exhibit. Carefully designed environments and experiences use the principles of interpretation design to target an exhibition's narrative, its communication aims and its effectiveness, as well as its audience's needs, the degree of interaction and approach to learning. This strategy significantly improves final outcomes. I will continue to investigate interpretation design, specifically exhibition design in relation to child-centred design strategies. I will concentrate on being mindful of the context and perspective of the information being depicted to create more engaging, inspiring and educational outcomes.	Focuses on a specific aspect of your learning that will be used in the feature Indicate some of the approaches/methods/ theoretical bases you think may transfer to your future practice Shows a shift in your understanding/thinking Identifies the approaches in this field you propose to apply to your design practice

Example 2

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A future application paragraph describes how your past learning and reflection will influence your future practice Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	I foresee a continued exploration of principles from the field of interpretation design in my future design practice, focusing on context and perspective. The interpretive environment brief allowed me to test different narratives and communication aims for the same exhibit at the Melbourne Museum. I now appreciate that a practitioner needs to look further afield than mere graphic identity and aesthetic integration, towards strategies and frameworks to achieve the aims of the exhibition. I have come to understand the benefit of creating different narratives that target specific ages and audiences for the same exhibit. Carefully designed environments and experiences use the principles of interpretation design to target an exhibition's narrative, its communication aims and its effectiveness, as well as its audience's needs, the degree of interaction and approach to learning. This strategy significantly improves final outcomes. I will continue to investigate interpretation design, specifically exhibition design in relation to child-centred design strategies. I will concentrate on being mindful of the context and perspective of the information being depicted to create more engaging, inspiring and educational outcomes.

Example 3

Structure | Language features

Questions	Paragraph structure	Features
What aspect(s) of the learning in this studio will you draw on for future design practice? techniques What techniques will you transfer to your future practice? What meaning and value does this have for your practice? How might you apply this understanding to your future practice?	A critical incident for me was realising that, as a designer I need to be thinking about strategies that have lasting impact. When we were first told about our task in the studio, Design for Social Change, I was extremely cynical that I would be able to develop a strategy for communicating the importance of climate change and food security to young people. This kind of pessimism prevented me from thinking clearly about how to make a change. Taking the time to actually look at successful projects and campaigns that promote sustainable and socially just ideals made me realise that complex design tasks are achievable if we connect the right problem with the right audience in a way that hasn't been tried before. This is what I learnt from looking at case studies and what inspired my own strategy to use personas and the six spheres approaches. Knowing that communicating anything is perfectly achievable as long as you understand who you're talking to is probably the most important thing that I've learnt this semester. It has given me confidence that this field of practice is not futile and that I can continue to develop my skills in systems thinking for social innovation and sustainable design strategies.	Focuses on a specific aspect of your learning that will be used in the feature Indicate some of the approaches/methods/ theoretical bases you think may transfer to your future practice Shows a shift in your understanding/thinking Identifies the approaches in this field you propose to apply to your design practice

Example 3

Structure | Language features

Features	Paragraph structure
A future application paragraph describes how your past learning and reflection will influence your future practice Use 'I', 'me' or 'my' to demonstrate your personal and subjective response	A critical incident for me was realising that, as a designer I need to be thinking about strategies that have lasting impact. When we were first told about our task in the studio, Design for Social Change, I was extremely cynical that I would be able to develop a strategy for communicating the importance of climate change and food security to young people. This kind of pessimism prevented me from thinking clearly about how to make a change. Taking the time to actually look at successful projects and campaigns that promote sustainable and socially just ideals made me realise that complex design tasks are achievable if we connect the right problem with the right audience in a way that hasn't been tried before. This is what I learnt from looking at case studies and what inspired my own strategy to use personas and the six spheres approaches. Knowing that communicating anything is perfectly achievable as long as you understand who you're talking to is probably the most important thing that I've learnt this semester. It has given me confidence that this field of practice is not futile and that I can continue to develop my skills in systems thinking for social innovation and sustainable design strategies.

Your feedback

The Schools of Media & Communication and Architecture & Design are developing a suite of resources to support design students in their writing. The Studio Knowledge Object writing resources are part of this project.
The project team would greatly appreciate your feedback to help us improve the Studio Knowledge Object writing resources and to guide the development of support resources for other types of writing in design.

Survey link: Writing the Knowledge Object - Learning Resources Feedback