

**MOMENTS, MEMORIES,
MEANINGS:
A NARRATIVE DOCUMENTARY
OF LIVED EXPERIENCE IN
SOCIAL DESIGN EDUCATION**

ALETTIA VORSTER CHISIN

ARTIST'S PROOF

ARTIST'S PROOF

INTERDEPENDENCE

A.V.



**MOMENTS, MEMORIES, MEANINGS: A NARRATIVE DOCUMENTARY OF LIVED
EXPERIENCE IN SOCIAL DESIGN EDUCATION**

by

ALETTIA VORSTER CHISIN

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Technology: Design
in the Faculty of Informatics and Design
at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

**Supervisor: Prof. J. C. Cronjé
Co-supervisor: Dr E. M. Pepler**

**Cape Town
November 2012**

DECLARATION

I, Alettia Vorster Chisin, hereby declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.



Signed

9 November 2012

Date

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to explore design education and designing as social practice; working with and for others to inform a more sustainable and meaningful future. Ways in which the lived experience of participants in the discipline of design, in the culturally diverse university and community contexts can be harnessed for social benefit, are interrogated. Themes are explored around the value of different world views and forms of knowing in design education to inform design research, in order to extend the knowledge paradigm to include lived experience not only as site of knowledge formation, but also of wisdom acquisition.

The thesis presents an amalgamation of professional practice, creative practice and narrative set in qualitative research methods appropriate to the designer and artist who desire to work with lived experience in the academic context. Lived experience informs all we do and each educational event and encounter ought to be appraised and responded to in a contextually sensitive way. An important aspect flowing from this amalgamation is the recognition and analysis of the co-existing relationships of the roles inhering in the educator and the student. In order to immerse oneself in research and teaching, all aspects of the process have to be lived and filtered through the senses. This implies resisting abstractions by grounding research, teaching, design and making in the experience of the moment. The original contribution of this research then, is the synthesis of design, art and narrative writing that accompanied in a parallel line, the academic writing process to culminate in this design folio — a testament to grounding the research project in practice. Pedagogical approaches and lived experience embodied as re-contextualised expressions in design teaching, supervision and creative practice, are presented in the folio.

The boundaries of qualitative methods were tested with narrative and life writing, autoethnography, poetry, studio observations, extensive journalling, drawing, photography and printmaking processes.

The results showed that a phenomenology of the senses in creative work, and locating the designer in her or his biography, is where original and imaginative design resides. Social and cultural aspects are some of the foundation stones of design education and ought to be informants of the creative process until the finish.

Furthermore, authentic openness is required in supervision and teaching to facilitate deep listening, interpretation, intuition and “in-seeing” in educational encounters. Finally, being an active creative practitioner in design teaching is as important if not more important than content knowledge in that discipline, since the active practitioner “becomes” the Other through the collective dimension of design work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank:

- My supervisors Prof. Cronjé and Dr Pepler for their inspirational leadership.
- The National Research Foundation for their financial assistance towards this research with the *Improving Academic Qualifications* grant. Opinions expressed in this thesis and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author, and not necessarily to be attributed to the National Research Foundation.
- The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) for its financial assistance towards this research.
- The Research Office at CPUT for their assistance with administration of the grant, and Liz for her assistance with editing.
- My colleagues and the Design Research Activities Workgroup for their intellectual contributions to the research and their moral support, particularly Mugendi for being the thesis police.
- My colleagues Karen and Avryl for standing in for me during the sabbatical period.
- Mike, Leo, and Bella for continuing with the legacy of adventure and the love of learning new things.
- Jules and Ilaria for providing a second home.
- Ma Delene vir haar onderskraging en finansiele hulp met die bind van die ontwerp folio's.
- Al my familie, ook die in New Zeeland vir hulle aanmoediging van ver.
- Alma vir die geskenk van ets en grafika: dit het my navorsing hart gegee.

DEDICATION

For Mike

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii	Chapter 3 Vignette 1	25
Abstract	iii	3 First Vignette: Buhle	26
Acknowledgements	iv	3.1 A teacher's reflection: thoughts about your struggle	26
Dedication	iv	3.1.2 Background to Buhle's story	27
Chapter 1	2	3.2 Research methods	27
1 Introduction	3	3.3 Buhle's story: school, language, design and a tale of two cultures	29
1.1 Background	3	3.4 Analysis of Buhle's story	32
1.2 Role of the researcher	4	3.4.1 Language: the devil is in the detail	32
1.3 Rationale	4	3.4.2 Rastafari: a culture of Afrocentric consciousness	33
1.4 Exploratory research questions	5	3.4.3 A culturally responsive pedagogy	34
1.5 Focus of the research	6	3.4.4 Setting the stage for future success by doing design	35
1.6 Contribution of the research	6	3.5 Implications and lessons learnt	35
1.7 How to read the research	6	3.6 Conclusion	36
1.7.1 The Vignettes	7	3.7 Retrospection	36
1.8 Making the design folio	8	Chapter 4 Vignette 2	39
1.9 Retrospection	8	4 Second Vignette: Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan, Sipho	40
Chapter 2	11	4.1 To whom it may concern. Teachers' journal documentary entry: November 2005	40
2 Literature review and research methodology	11	4.2 Background	41
2.1 Ontology underscoring research in the creative disciplines	11	4.3 Design: a changing programme in an altered landscape	41
2.2 Phenomenology and lived experience: inner and outer words	12	4.4 Research methods	42
2.2.1 Teaching design based on lived experience	13	4.5 Biography and lived experience in topic origination	43
2.2.1.1 Wisdom through writing: life writing and autoethnography as link between the cultural and personal	14	4.6 Discourse in the design studio: primary and secondary approaches	44
2.3 Sharing more than formal content knowledge: lived experience as social capital in the university and the community	15	4.6.1 Learning styles in the design studio: surface and deep preferences	44
2.3.1 Learning in the African collective	15	4.7 Research project results: practical outcomes, learning preferences and discourse approaches	45
2.4 Multi-disciplinarity and the consolidation of design foundations	16	4.7.1 Rose	45
2.5 Design in flux: balancing market objectives with social design	17	4.7.2 Zeke	46
2.6 Conscientising consuming	18	4.7.3 Elizabeth	46
2.6.1 Consuming with a more humane economic logic in mind	18	4.7.4 Jane	47
2.7 Research design and methodology	20	4.7.5 Olan	47
2.7.1 Research methods	21	4.7.6 Sipho	48
2.8 Narrative vignettes	21	4.8 Discussion of the research project results	48
2.8.1 Buhle	21	4.9 Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan and Sipho. Teachers' journal documentary entry: November 2006	50
2.8.2 Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan, Sipho	21	4.10 Implications and lessons learned	50
2.8.3 Transcending cultural and disciplinary boundaries	22	4.11 Conclusion	51
2.8.4 I participate, therefore I learn	22	4.12 Retrospection	51
2.8.5 Limen	22	Chapter 5 Vignette 3	54
2.8.6 D�enouement: letting go	22	5 Third Vignette: Transcending disciplinary boundaries	55
2.9 Retrospection	23	5.1 Multi-purpose centre: Qabaka Crescent	55
		5.2 Research methodology: the Fibre-Arts Design Project	56
		5.2.1 Reflections on the Fibre-Arts Design Project	56
		5.3 Social design in the community context	56
		5.4 Working towards the Together range	58

5.5	A reconsideration of the role of craft and design: learning in community with others	60
5.6	Craft and design as partners in contemporary design practice	61
5.7	Design research as social practice	63
5.8	Conclusion	64
5.9	Retrospection	65
Chapter 6 Vignette 4		68
6	Fourth Vignette: I participate, therefore I learn	69
6.1	Group supervision in postgraduate research	69
6.1.1	Design research and supervision	70
6.1.2	Supervision and learning in the DRAW context	70
6.1.3	Format of a DRAW meeting	71
6.2	The research approach	71
6.2.1	Research methods	72
6.2.2	The recorded sessions	72
6.2.3	The questionnaire	72
6.3	Social DRAW: an interdependent home space	73
6.3.1	Philosophical DRAW: Ubuntu and the spirit of communalism	75
6.3.2	Supervisory DRAW: co-creative supervision practices	76
6.4	Consolidating the DRAW support model	77
6.5	Conclusion: real change happens when there is a strong strategy	78
6.5.1	Future directions	79
6.6	Retrospection	79
Chapter 7 Vignette 5		81
7	Fifth Vignette: Limen	
	Printmaking and the art of tracing moments, memories and meanings	82
7.1	Background	82
7.2	The Detour	83
7.2.1	Living knowledge: tracing the thinking body, reflecting body and experiencing body	83
7.3	Threshold concepts and limbic phases	95
7.3.1	The limbic phase of creating: making and designing	96
7.3.2	The limbic phase of teaching	97
7.3.3	The limbic phase of researching	97
7.3.4	The limbic phase of learning	98
7.4	A pedagogy of the senses: reinforcement for social design education	99
7.5	Retrospection	101
Chapter 8		103
8	<i>Dénouement</i>	104
References		107
List of Figures		114
Appendices		115



MOMENTS, MEMORIES, MEANINGS: A NARRATIVE DOCUMENTARY OF LIVED EXPERIENCE IN SOCIAL DESIGN EDUCATION

Our storied lives are never only unique and idiosyncratic accounts of individual and isolate experiences. Instead our stories are always part of a network of communal and collaborative stories, a network that knows no beginning and no ending. As human beings we are inextricably and integrally connected like fire and water and air and earth, sustained by an ecology of ancient elements (Carl Leggo, 2010:53)

1 INTRODUCTION

This is my story. A journeyman to the cause of learning, I offer an account of my travels as a design educator over the last twelve years, in the form of a narrative documentary. The documentary explores the social nature of design education in evolving contexts.

By reflecting on just over a decade of teaching design, a space was opened up — a liminal and in-between space — which enabled me to re-examine the design landscape. In this landscape I live, work and teach. Limen invited various moments, memories and concepts to be braided into a meaningful exploration so I could “re-connect” with my passion for teaching (Breen, 2005:162) and creative expression. A re-connection in the sense of deepening my awareness and understanding of what it means to be involved in the complexities of people’s lives and creative strivings. The sections in this study are presented as an introductory chapter, a literature and methodology chapter, followed by five vignettes that map those lives during that time, continuing to the last chapter: in a sense a retrospective exhibition in image and text.

The iterative, reflexive process of interrogating my own teaching and supervision practices was underscored with theoretical perspectives in an attempt to avoid judgement and power play in my role as teacher. Reflection, enriched by theoretical and philosophical entry points, consequently helped me form a better understanding of my own bias and positionality (Nelson, 2009:26) in the lecturing situation. Holistic and emergent paradigms were actively sought, informed by the work done by Van Manen (2007) and Nelson (2009), amongst others, supported by life writing as a method of reflection to encourage action (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1). The concept of culturally responsive teaching was given form by valuing the lived experience of all in the research process; and embodiment was seen as a shaping influence in the emergence of the research methods used in the vignettes.

The need to renew my own imaginative and creative base in art and design as research method became urgent as I developed the parallel layers of reflecting on lecturing and writing about supervision. At times I conflate the use of the concepts art and design, both being generative and based on meaning-making and symbolism. Historically, the roles of

artist and designer were not separated (Nelson, 2009:111). Doing design and art is different to theorising about design and art. I had to get my hands dirty and do: draw, make marks, etch, make prints, do imaginative field work. From this autobiographical point of view, by being both the researcher and the researched, as described by Heydon (2010:130), I filtered questions through the sieve of living them.

The discomfort of “not knowing” in the research process is paralleled with the discomfort of “not knowing” in creative processes. I found that generation is much more uncomfortable than imitation, as Breen (2005:162) emphasises when he says that “if your research endeavour is uncomfortable, you know you are close to the edge”. Being close to the edge was where I discovered inspiration, exploring the in-between-spaces of limen.

1.1 Background

Design is traditionally a consumption-driven industry and discipline, but contemporary design is characterised by change and increasingly also by environmental and sustainability discourses (Vezzoli, 2007:39-61; Tukker *et al.*, 2008:2; Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:138-153). The sub-discipline of Surface Design, in which I am a lecturer at a local university of technology, equally is a changing field and remains hard to define. Its precursor, Textile Design and Technology, occupied a more traditional place within the design disciplines and was characterised by a close association with Fine Arts methods and techniques.

The Textile Design and Technology programme changed its curriculum and name in 2006 to respond to large-scale upheavals in the local clothing and textile industry, precipitated by global changes in that industry and affiliated design industries (Chisin, 2003:23-24). The digital transformation of designing and production processes in a knowledge-based economy (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:141), has also necessitated a very different approach to preparing students for a workplace in flux. Apart from professional requirements, graduates need to be adept at team work and ought to be socially and culturally attuned to a multi-cultural workplace; completely prepared for the demands of life-long learning in whatever form it presents. Employment patterns have become more contract-based, and flexibility and adaptability are key elements in gaining and maintaining employment.

Against this background then, Surface Design is framed to bring a holistic, if at times ephemeral measure to the domain of design education. Surface Design may display conceptual, applied or vocational orientations, but it is firmly rooted in the traditions of art and of craft, with the concomitant “higher order thinking” typical of design [its products] and its digital processes (Craft and Design Inquiry, 2011). I lived with many questions about the rationale for teaching students Surface Design. This study explores some of those questions and reflects what I have learned about the dichotomy inherent in the design disciplines: its market and socially driven ambitions, the transient nature of design, the need for activism and critical engagement in design, design as a developmental tool and the value of personal creative practice in lecturing and supervising design projects. Undergirding the exploration is the notion of the social nature of design teaching, particularly in the unique demands presented by the young and evolving discipline of Surface Design.

1.2 Role of the researcher

Mapping the vignettes for this study started in early 2000. A paper on design education in a multi-cultural society was my first foray into academic territory, the “traditional academic paradigm” (Breen, 2005:162), with its accompanying demands. It required rigour, structure, consequential thinking, conventions, arguments and questions. I ventured into this territory with a measure of reserve. The traditional academic paradigm was very different from the one I was familiar with — the practice-based, creative paradigm of art and design — that holds dear imagination and subjectivity as inherently valuable.

Imagination and subjectivity thrive in a climate of unpredictability, an idea I link to Breen’s (2005:162) notion of the educator being true to “emergence and interconnectivity”, concepts that do not sit comfortably alongside the traditional paradigm either. The prescriptive (traditional) academic paradigm struck me as mimetic rather than generative. Imitation rather than innovation was a concept I was familiar with in my career as a textile designer. Although part of the creative industries, the local clothing and textile industry was positioned to cut risk by following established market trends rather than by leading through innovation.

Living in Australia while conducting research for the Master of Education degree (2002 – 2003), in a society so different from the one I was accustomed to, was a liberating experience. The perspective that this egalitarian context provided, allowed me to process through academic writing, experiences and beliefs formed in disenfranchised South Africa.

Intellectually at least, intransigent boundaries between social equality and inequality were starting to soften. In addition, the writing process excavated numerous emotional, psychological and spiritual beliefs I had held growing up as a white person under a repressive government. Issues of privilege, complicity, guilt, strife, and stereotypical behaviours were unpacked to make sense of my professional life under new conditions.

I continued scrutinising my teaching and supervision practices — in the disciplines of design — upon returning to South Africa. Design (and art), with their essentially subjective underscoring (Nelson, 2009:64-66), cradled a personally relevant exploration yet again into matters of creativity, ethnicity, community, language and culture. They provided a canvas onto which I could paint tentative, but alternative themes around power, change and individual agency in design education amidst stories of the unfolding of democratisation as experienced in higher education.

What I gained as a reluctant academic over the years then, was the insight that the exploring, examining, and enquiring nature of research suits the meaning-making trait I had acquired as a printmaker and designer. Attention to detail and iteration, as in art and design, became an ally in academia.

1.3 Rationale

Instances of life-long learning such as described above, had contributed to a personal, situated practice perspective in a variety of ways. From this situated perspective, learning is acknowledged as having a social character (Lave & Wenger, 1991:45-54), and lived experience informing the social designer became a central theme in the study. The learning experience therefore is the lived experience, and not merely the reception of factual knowledge and information (*ibid.*). Questions about design disciplines that have become increasingly interdisciplinary, and their place and significance in contributing to the field of design in addressing human needs today, also became prominent.

In concert with previous research which investigated inclusive teaching practices and curriculum development with identity and culture as key informants in learning experiences (Chisin, 2003), this study continues exploring themes around multi-cultural inclusion and internationalised participation in local design education. The themes are built around a web of stories that trace the connection between the participants and their personal ontology in

learning and doing design in a complex world. The approach of “living inquiry” is adopted (Sinner *et al.*, 2006:1224) in this study, whereby research is situated both in and between the “values, needs, interests and actions of communities and where the issues studied have local resonance and global relevance” (Sullivan, 2010:58).

Complexities that constitute design and design education have increasingly been informed by cultural and sustainability agendas. Cultural specificity and place result in a differentiating signature in many design expressions. In addition, contemporary design research offers new interpretations of processes, artefacts, forms and systems (Brenna *et al.*, 2009:4), relating to various forms of cultural heritage. These include tangible elements of heritage such as landscape, city or product, as well as intangible elements such as traditions and craft. New interpretations in design research, when partnered with sustainability tenets, go well beyond product to embrace the concept of promoting the quality of human interaction with artefacts in order to re-define our relationship with design (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:141). Inherent in design is its embodied and performative nature, and in producing the material aspects of design, designers themselves participate in a constitutive process as they negotiate the significance of artefacts and actions in design practice (Ehn, 2008).

I propose extending Bourriaud's (2002:13) argument, in which he discusses “relational art” as a re-definition of the current role of art as “ways of living”, to include the current role of design as “ways of living”. Bourriaud advises that an opportunity presents itself, a “chance” to be in the world in a different way, drawing on living artworks:

This "chance" can be summed up in just a few words: learning to inhabit the world in a better way, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution. Otherwise put, the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist (Bourriaud, 2002:13).

Similarly, in re-evaluating the role of design and our relationship with it, an opportunity is created to re-define the way we think about our world, including facile consumption, disposable relationships with product and with others. Re-defining the way we think about our world and working with this “chance” in “learning to inhabit the world in a better way”, is unpacked in the vignettes with reference to the local design education landscape, which is culturally sensitive and aims to incorporate lived experience for the benefit of the participants.

The theme includes an exploration of pedagogical approaches and lived experience embodied as re-contextualised expressions in design teaching, supervision and creative practice. These expressions are positioned to complement current research projects in the design disciplines — to strengthen the philosophy of social design — while developing alternative research paradigms for broad-based inclusion in these disciplines. The concept of the “social” designer and the potential for students and lecturers to embrace such a “social design” approach to design research, are explored in the research questions.

1.4 Exploratory research questions

The research questions unfolded into themes, inviting exploration. Design curricula and post-graduate research foci need to engage the contemporary value system in design — namely social design — which is responsible and ethical while acknowledging the complexity inherent in changing to sustainable consumption and production patterns (Tukker *et al.*, 2008). Social design implies a shift from a “product-based” system to a “solution-based” design system to alleviate environmental cost (Leong, 2008:217). From this perspective, social design is based on relationships (also with products), with quality not quantity as the objective, on human interactions and a design philosophy which is culturally sensitive and socially inclusive.

Looking at the enmeshed character of education and social change, pertinent to the South African education context (Chisholm, 2004:13; Badsha & Cloete, 2011:3), how do we respond as a design community of practice in a particular context to this nexus of challenge and possibility? The research questions guiding the study are:

- 1 How best can the lived experience of students and lecturers be harnessed for meaningful and academically beneficial engagement with design research tasks in multi-cultural, studio-based education?
- 2 Which pedagogical approaches and supervision practices will best support post-graduate students in their research trajectory and guide them to the successful completion of their degrees in selected design disciplines?
- 3 How can a social design landscape be co-created by participants in a community of practice to promote surface design as a developmental tool while enhancing its inter-disciplinary nature?

4 What is the value of personal creative practice and reflection in design teaching and postgraduate supervision?

1.5 Focus of the research

Design, focusing on product and projects for “the satisfaction of human needs responsibly”, as argued by Margolin and Margolin (2002:25), ought to include a philosophy which is asset-based (Allen, 2007:16), and ontologically rooted, concentrating on the building of communities and relationships. The focus of the research is therefore the ways in which lived experience in the discipline of design and in the culturally diverse university and community contexts can be harnessed as social capital and applied for social benefit. In the South African context, particular forms of knowledge have been subjugated historically and new forms of knowledge have gained prominence. As themes are explored around valuing different world views and forms of knowing in design education to inform design research, the knowledge paradigm is extended to include lived experience not only as site of knowledge formation but also of “wisdom” acquisition.

1.6 Contributions of the research

The research is embedded in the educational and design fields. Design research offers an opportunity to respond to a variety of challenges in the educational and social arenas by working from a participatory and collaborative paradigm. Pedagogical approaches in teaching, learning and research that take cognisance of the potential of lived experience as social capital are offered as contributions to the research in the following ways:

- Lived experience is explored as a valuable resource in developing design research topics, solutions and interventions that are beneficial in sustaining and advancing the well-being of participants.
- An examination of personal teaching practices in a specific context and the value of different world views are explored to encourage dialogue and advance inter-cultural communication and learning in the design studio and classroom.
- Educational experiences are extended to non-traditional sites of learning for the benefit of the participants as described in the university/community collaboration that

focuses on knowledge exchange and the need for collaborative product development strategies.

- The current understanding of the relationship between craft, design and art is interrogated in a local setting, illustrating how innovation is facilitated when disciplinary boundaries are blurred.
- The social designer engaging design as a developmental tool contributes to well-being and enrichment.
- A supervision approach based on co-creation of knowledge in design research projects that acknowledges learning as social practice and promotes participation and collaboration, is advanced.
- Postgraduate students and supervisors benefit if lived experience is used ontologically to deepen personal relevance of research topics by immersion in own practice.
- The co-existing relationships of the roles of researcher, teacher, artist and designer are advanced as locus for experiencing living knowledge and wisdom acquisition.

1.7 How to read the research

The “thesis-by-article” format was adapted to accommodate a more organic flow which harmonised with the open-ended, non-prescriptive nature of design. Research in design ought to “embrace the poetic; it needs to contact the psychological, with sundry emotional associations; it needs to contact the phenomenological and the imaginative” (Nelson, 2009:114). In order to “contact the phenomenological and the imaginative”, the methods and format changed in keeping with the qualitative paradigm of an unfolding research design (Trahar, 2009). This option allowed for the research process to indeed develop organically, since the unfolding research design (Trahar, 2009) and “ideas of emergence” (Breen, 2005:162) demanded a climate of flexibility.

The study is presented as a set of free-standing vignettes, each forming a whole to represent the sum of the parts (refer Fig 1.1). Together with Chapters One, Two and the final Chapter Eight — the *dénouement* and release after the vignettes — the sections are presented in an “art-book” folio format, the *design folio*, to form a harmonious whole. In addition, my personal creative practice extended to become part of the folio since each section is

concluded with a visual summary that serves to weave a visual thread through the chapters and vignettes.

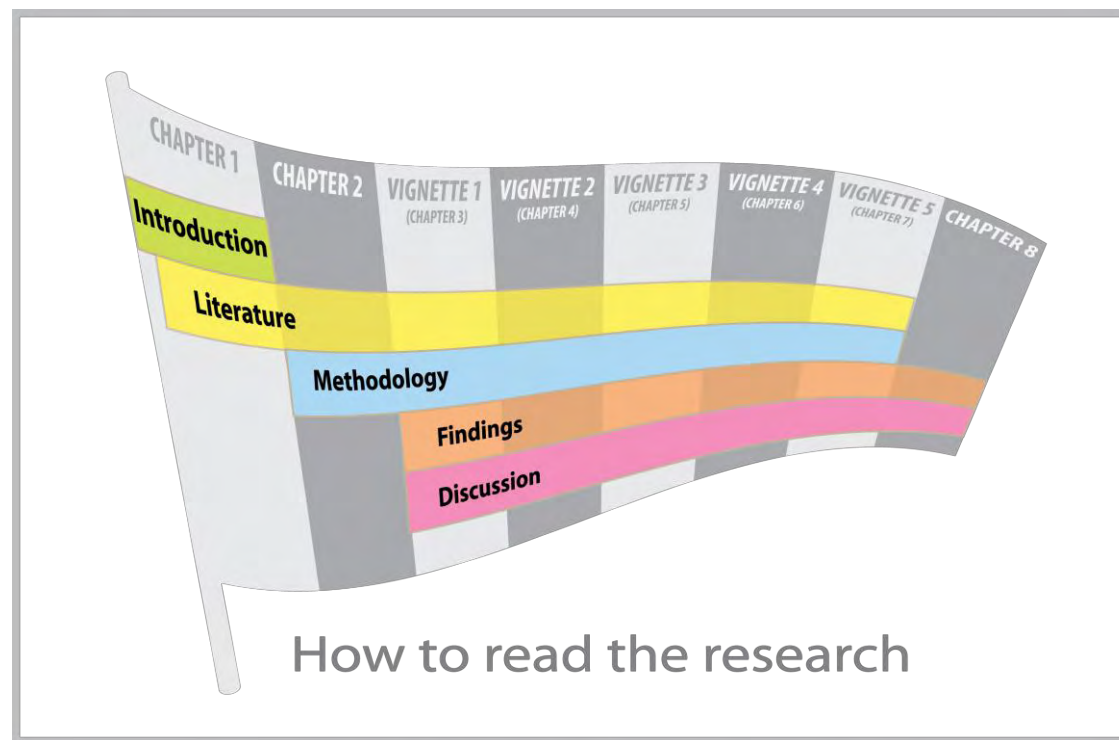


Figure 1.1 How to read the research. Chisin, 2012

Literature and research methods pertaining to all the sections are presented in the second chapter. Chapter Two is indicative of my philosophy that nothing is separate. Here I present literature and research methodology that dovetail to support the notion of appropriate methods in the visual arts and design fields where “the character of artistic progress is better understood in an ontological sense, rather than an epistemological sense” (Nelson, 2009:8). Method and literature need to fit together seamlessly to underscore the concept of the researcher — as creative practitioner — as central to the study. From an ethical perspective, approval was obtained from the Faculty of Informatics and Design’s ethics committee (Refer Appendix A). Due procedures were followed to ensure that the study complied with all ethical considerations. Identities are protected except where permission was given by participants to use photographic material.

1.7.1 The Vignettes

The first vignette provides an opportunity to consider the influence that cultural diversity exerts in a specific higher education context during one-on-one encounters. I consider my teaching practice from an interpersonal and culturally specific position in order to appraise

beliefs and experiences. This is done with a view to exploring the potential for reciprocal learning and development of student and teacher.

Vignette Two takes the theme further by investigating the group learning experiences and learning approaches of culturally diverse students in a design studio context. It is posited that embodied knowledge and cultural ways of knowing play an important part in the adoption of learning preferences which ultimately influence academic success.

Vignette Three firstly examines the relationship between craft and design with reference to a project which was developed with, and set in a local community. Craft design is firstly discussed as a catalyst for change in this setting. Secondly it provides an analysis of the project against a current understanding of the craft, design and art nexus and how innovation occurs when disciplinary boundaries are blurred.

Vignette Four interrogates changing pedagogical contexts which require a responsive attitude with regard to design research supervision. It elaborates on experiences and lessons learned through a co-creative approach to postgraduate supervision which draws on an empathetic understanding of members in a learning space. The value of such an approach is argued for because of its capacity to break down the hierarchy that supports power differentials, similar to a critical pedagogical approach (Ippolito, 2007:752-753), to enhance both the supervisor and student learning experience in a specific community of practice.

Vignette Five, *limen*, changes the theme as I turn eyes inward to use myself as the research instrument (Spratt, 1997:143; Longhurst et al., 2008; Nelson, 2009:98,117). What did I learn in the process of becoming a student again? How were my perceptions and personal experiences changed in reversing the student/teacher roles? Why would my learning experiences and creative practice exploration be of interest to other educators and students doing research or supervision? Since I was interested in exploring threshold concepts as described by Meyer and Land (2005:374), I had to be true to living the research project in uncertainty until the last moment.

This Vignette demanded life writing since it “constantly explores, contests, and negotiates the imaginative possibilities of knowing and being in the world” (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:2). It also required autoethnographic enquiry since autoethnography attempts “to discover the culture of self, or of others through self” (Ricci, 2003:594) by taking up a creative pursuit last practised two decades ago – printmaking.

Autoethnographic verse was used at times to afford readers an opportunity to “interpret my writing through their own experiences” (Ricci, 2003:591-593). Photography and film were used selectively to explore the meaning of working creatively with design research and its questions; translating these into images at times to provide an intertextual layering. This part of the research offered a liminal space which, over time, allowed for inchoate ideas to ripen: a conceptual space that in turn gave way to the unravelling, or *dénouement* of Chapter Eight. With the process disentangled, the reader and writer separate to go their individual ways, enriched (it is hoped) by the mutual experience of interpreting a teacher’s story.

1.8 Making the design folio

Since this is a design thesis, due consideration had to be given to detail, from the style and layout of the folio, to the look and feel of the final product. The design folio offered many challenges in terms of its final design and choice of materials. Materials were selected where possible in line with the ethos of environmentally compatible design. I wanted to use paper stock that did not contain chlorine bleach and was manufactured with an environmental rating. My first choice was the locally manufactured and 100 percent recycled paper *Reviva Natural*, but at 85gsm was too lightweight for the A3 format and not opaque enough. The 105 gsm was prohibitively priced. I decided to use cream-coloured *Munken Pure* stock instead, since it offers a warm yet firm hand, and at 120gsm has the body to support the format. Unfortunately it is an imported paper (from Sweden), a factor I tried to avoid. The manufacturer, Arctic Paper, is however certified by a number of environmental certification systems (Arctic Paper, 2012).

The endpapers are locally manufactured. The fully recyclable and acid-free *Enigma Wove* ivory stock offers resilience at 160gsm, together with a smooth yet tactile finish. After printing and binding the prototype design folio on a combination of cream-coloured *Munken Pure* and standard white bond, it became clear that the cream stock was in fact too yellow and made for a “thick” and monotonous read. In addition, from a design point of view, the cream-coloured paper functioned well to demarcate sections in the folio, while the white bond functioned well to indicate textual sections and made for a crisper read. The white bond used is Xerox Colotech 100gsm. Although Colotech is not recycled paper, the Xerox Corporation is committed to procuring paper from companies that adhere to environmental, health, and safety practices, with sustainable forest management in their own operations and those of their suppliers (Xerox, 2012).

The artworks are all printed on 200gsm *Hahnemühle* etching board, imported from Germany. I stored the paper in a portfolio after completing my higher diploma in Art and Design in the 1980s, and it remained in impeccable condition. One reason for this is that the boards are acid free and age resistant in compliance with environmental specifications that exceed German government standards (Hahnemühle Fine Art, n.d.). Protecting the artworks is *Enduro Ice* tracing paper; stock with a delicate texture and firm hand.

The folios are printed with powder toner on the Konica Minolta Bizhub C552 machine. Powder toner is more environmentally compatible than liquid inks, some of which are solvent based. Machines are produced at ISO-certified factories, are energy-efficient, and recycled material is used in their production (Konica Minolta, 2012).

The printmaking studio protocol of re-using materials wherever possible, reducing waste and chemicals, and working with an awareness of others and possible impact on the environment, was observed during the printmaking practicum. The slip covers were hand-felted from natural, pure Merino long-staple wool tops and I needle-felted the *Interdependence* motif onto the covers before the final felting process meshed the pouches completely. No chemicals were used during the felting process. Theory and practice converged in the making of the folio, enabling me to embody the research process in a tangible way.

1.9 Retrospection

“Tribe” sets the scene as members stride out to explore the research landscape. Leading the motley crew is Madonna of the Barn, wrapped up in a cloak of anticipation. King and Queen are sporting their ceremonial dress and Jack, faithful doppelganger, is speechless. Members gaze in all directions; the start is without bearing. A dark mass is blowing towards them. The compass points to doing and finding the way means trudging across the expanse. Joker reminds the tribe to look at the world with wonder and curiosity and have some fun along the way.



I would love to read more writing in design which is about experience, stories, other circumstances. To contemplate a new start with objects (or images) via an exploration of memories, appearance and logic of the object in the researcher's experience would enliven the field currently overwritten by empiricists. I would rather we seek the subjective thrill, the element of inspiration in discourse, the imaginary life of the object (Robert Nelson, 2009:114)

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Making art, designing a textile print, teaching ... nuances of a multi-layered embodied experience colour all these activities. They are not separate, and threads connecting aspects of my creative and teaching practices are worked into the cloth of lived experience. Immersed in the research and situated in its landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:63), I assume a subject position which allows for the recognition and analysis of an ontological stance embedded in radical humanism and interpretivism (Cronjé, 2011:3).

Thus situated in the research and having taken up position, I am mindful of the fact that no teaching, learning, thinking, doing or anything else for that matter happens from a neutral point of view “for it is not view at all” (Goldberg, 1994:19). These activities are socially and culturally determined and are contextualised temporally (Bourdieu, 1967; Vygotsky, 1978; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:1,2,3). From this context identity and culture are brought to bear on research — as well as on educational and creative experiences — with the recognition of a nuanced subjectivity “infused with social pressures and prejudice and a sense of their history” (Nelson, 2009:42).

This chapter serves to contextualise the study from a theoretical, philosophical and positional entry point (Nelson, 2009:26), with an account of the methodology used in the five vignettes, concluding the chapter.

2.1 Ontology underscoring research in the creative disciplines

I subscribe to the position of the researcher as central in the research and creative project. Specific and compatible research methods are used to underscore the significance of centrality and subjectivity in design and creative practice. Nelson (2009:58) asserts that it is exactly this subjective nature of art and design which is its lifeblood. Shaping influences in this research are research methods that Nelson (2009) explores in his book *The Jealousy of Ideas: Research Methods in the Creative Arts*, methods that are compatible with artistic motivation and aspiration in academia. There he argues that research in design has to embrace rationality but also ought to consider seriously:

[...] the social, the ideological, the ethical; and therefore it [design research] has to be critical. Further, design research must embrace the poetic; it needs to contact the psychological, with sundry emotional associations; it needs to contact the phenomenological and the imaginative. All of this before we get to the aesthetic, that eternal discourse about the beauty of form (Nelson, 2009:114).

Literature and research methods need to dovetail to support the notion of appropriate methods in the visual arts and design field which, like “the character of artistic progress is better understood in an ontological sense, rather than an epistemological sense” (Nelson, 2009:8). Although the nature of being and world view are central to the creative project, a particular theory of method and grounds of knowledge is nevertheless employed to describe the project and the research process, since ontology and epistemology are not as distinct as once might have been assumed. This is so because “being and knowing cannot be easily separated” (Longhurst *et al.*, 2008). Ontology establishes and shapes our understanding of being and what “is” (Van Manen, 2007:18) and our knowing flows from being and what “is”.

Similarly, I discuss the literature with a view to acknowledging the researcher as designer/maker, in the dominant position in research. Nelson (2009:42) advances the theme “method as me”, which speaks to the salient position of the artist, musician or writer situated prominently as subject matter in his or her research. But, the personal stories emanating from this position have to be nuanced and infused with all the complexities which constitute time and place to prevent discussions from being shallow and boring, and therefore creative research “remains, paradoxically, a task of referencing” (Nelson, 2009:42). To position oneself meaningfully therefore, the personal method has to be a dialectical and thoroughly thought-through construct. The creative researcher positioned historically, is aware of the present and past, while enacting the now to produce the next historical moment. A dialectic “between the past, the present and the future” is accomplished when meaning is ascribed to certain events through stories, “to bring the past into the present in order to shape the future” (Lindseth & Norburg, 2004:149).

The theme “method as me” also speaks to the phenomenological perspective which values the senses and the body as locus of meaning-making which is part of cognition. Design research has to deal with many considerations such as rational, critical, poetic and imaginative ones, and as Nelson (2009:114) points out, all of these are precursors to aesthetic considerations. In an attempt to put forward the interconnected nature of research

methodology and literature in the study, I present the literature first and follow through with method. At times then the two mesh, for instance in the next section when discussing the broad phenomenological perspective. This perspective is similar to one which Van Manen (2007:20) refers to as a phenomenology of practice which does not “think” the world, but “grasps” the world, and Nelson (2009:58) and Merleau-Ponty (2005) regard as meaning-making through the senses, especially through perception.

2.2 Phenomenology and lived experience: inner and outer worlds

Phenomenology is an accompaniment “to the artistic imagination and the discussions that support it” since it is rooted not in abstractions but in experience (Nelson, 2009:55). I also view phenomenology as a philosophy of the senses (Merleau-Ponty, 2005) and interpret it as a research method which uses the body as an instrument of research (Longhurst, et al., 2008). It is also a perspective and an approach to meaning-making which includes the phenomenologist’s attempt to “understand participants’ perspectives and views of social realities” (Leedy et al., 1997:161) as experienced subjectively (personally) and inter-subjectively (collectively) (Husserl, 1969:176). Inter-subjectivity allows for empathy and participation in a shared world by not objectifying the other but by experiencing another person from their point of view through putting “ourselves into the other one's shoes” (Beyer, 2011). Phenomenology is a thoughtful reflection on “the lived experience of human existence” and inasmuch as this reflection has to be largely devoid of abstractions, it offers an opportunity for reconsideration guided by a preoccupation with meaning (Van Manen, 2007:12).

Philosophical traditions that sit alongside art see phenomenology as the most prominent in valuing experience as the basis for and most beneficial aspect of the artist’s awareness (Nelson, 2009:55). Experience as the carrier of consciousness is assigned to memory at that moment, and becomes part of being (*ibid.*). The domain of design is well suited to a phenomenological mode of enquiry, since it references the individual and individual experience, which is predicated on subjectivity “and is not intrinsically referential in the bibliographic sense” (Nelson, 2009:55), but referential in the positional sense.

Lived experience presents itself in a pre-reflective state as primal awareness which makes up our experiential existence, and reflection interprets this state which shapes our consciousness (Van Manen, 2007:16). Lived experience “signifies givenness of internal

consciousness, inward perceivedness” (Husserl, 1964:177). On a practical level, lived experience is gained through navigating our way through situations, relations and actions (Van Manen, 2007:16), which we can reflect upon with hindsight. We do not find ourselves as abstractions in the world but living the world, with meaning residing in the corporeal, tactile aspects of our life world and not in some primal realm (Heidegger, 1975:25).

A phenomenology of practice implies an alternative experience in understanding the world; not “thinking” the world but “grasping” the world (Van Manen, 2007:20). In exercising the alternative understanding, which is based on immediate apprehension by a sense rather than reasoning, the world is grasped “pathically”. In the bigger picture the pathic relates to corporeality (Van Manen, 2007:20). Being attuned to the pathic may help extend our inner life world to find expression in professional activities through a different language, one which is open to the feeling and personal aspects of that context (Van Manen, 2007:22).

Nelson advances the argument that the phenomenological tradition has currency in the creative arts since artists prize their personal view and subjectivity highly (Nelson, 2009:58). Therefore the phenomenon in essence is secondary to the person’s response to it (*ibid.*). That is, the individual’s construction of the meaning of the phenomenon, as opposed to the phenomenon as it exists external to the person, is of value (Leedy et al., 1997:161; Nelson, 2009:58), the “I-ness” of the person who represents is significant:

Hence the prestige of perception among artists ... Via phenomenology, perceptual discourses work in favour of analysis of seeing but not on a systematic level of representation (for example, perspective). Perception is not about laws of retinal or neuronal activity but the investigation of a personal response. It poses challenges to methods of standardizing seeing and hearing, touching, organizing human movement, and so on. It stresses relativity and subjectivity, the I-ness of the person who represents (Nelson, 2009:58).

As part of the creative disciplines, design operates in a field that is not ruled by exact and discrete expressions and forms of knowledge. It values the experience of the designer and artist to bring original — *sui generis* — suggestions to the generative work at hand; even whimsy. *Artweek.LA* (Anon., 2011), for instance, featured an art exhibition which explored contemporary artists’ playful examination of the theoretical space between art and life, working with ordinary and day-to-day material, much like the phenomenologist would do.

Similarly, the Design Indaba annual conference in South Africa has featured many accomplished designers over the years who explore the capricious, whimsical space for

inspiration, innovation and product development. This is frequently done with a view to producing design outcomes with a strong social and developmental component (Design Indaba, 2012).

In the same way that Nelson (2009) endorses the liberating aspects of phenomenology as a suitable method in imaginative projects, I view phenomenology as both a philosophy of being and a method of enquiry and meaning-making (refer Fig 2.1). This position underscores the study and my teaching practice. Observing, listening, talking, touching and smelling; all form part of a dialectic with other and self in doing design and teaching it.

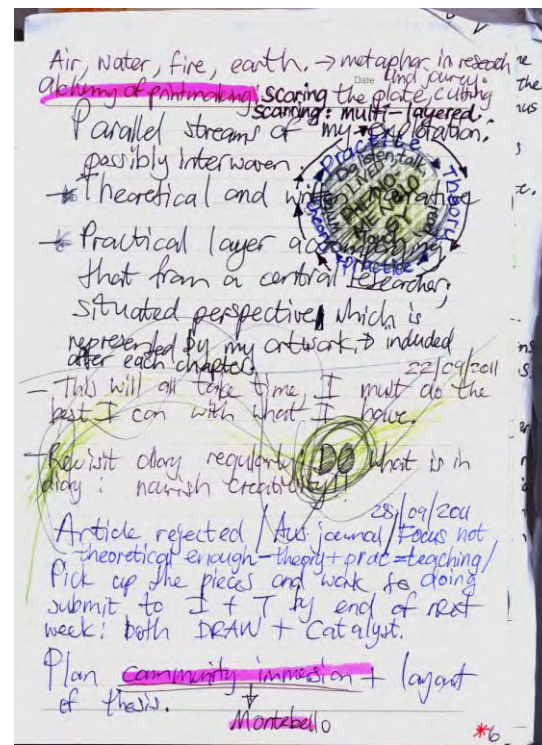


Figure 2.1 Iterative phenomenology journal entry

2.2.1 Teaching design based on lived experience

Since the phenomenological approach underpins my design teaching, lived experience is used as a compass in research and creative activities. From an ontological and biographical perspective, exploring a research topic that has personal meaning is emotionally engaging and intellectually stimulating (Leedy et al., 1997:161), increases the chances of successful completion of the research, and of making a valuable contribution to the discipline. Making use of the senses and body as part of cognition, reflecting on experiences to give shape and

content to awareness, and grasping the world through sensing and feeling are required (Van Manen, 2007:20), in addition to having appropriate content knowledge in the field of study.

Phenomenological researchers have a profound personal interest in their topics which is “a characteristic more common to phenomenological research than to other approaches” (Leedy et al., 1997:161). In my supervision practice therefore, I also encourage students to develop research topics which are firmly ontologically rooted in and based on their experience, to sustain interest during the lengthy research process. Acknowledging the ontological and subjective underpinning of design is indeed a requirement if design research is to advance.

Although the ubiquity of design assigns it to the daily functions of the world, the origination of our designed world remains highly subjective, “image-driven ... emotional” (Nelson, 2009:113). Design is a tough field to sum up; it has strong roots in empiricism and market presence, yet it is frequently based on emotional currency which is well illustrated in the lifestyle and fashion domain, the latter “in its structure, highly arbitrary” (*ibid.*). The paradoxical nature of design has been described as an “interface discipline between artefacts and contexts, inner and outer systems” (Jonas, 2000:45).

The design researcher needs to be familiar not only with the demographic variables and complexities inherent in design, but also needs to be in touch with the intangibility of historical moments which describe the present differently to the past (Nelson, 2009:113). The focus areas of social design with its aims of design for development (DfD), but sustainable development (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:4), and design for sustainability (DfS) (Vezzoli, 2007:51) are central in keeping with the “historical movements and moods” (Nelson, 2009:113), especially in postgraduate design research. Social design is responsive to context and aims to, amongst other things, promote social equity and cohesion (Vezzoli, 2007:143) insofar as it places the person/people first and aims to apply design for the benefit of people and communities.

Ethical dilemmas facing designers today, such as environmental depletion and humanitarian crises, force educators and designers alike to adopt a more expansive, tolerant and social world view (Vezzoli, 2007:28; Van Niekerk & M’Rithaa, 2009:67-69). Consequently, teaching and supervision activities that encourage social design practices and are sympathetic to the multi-cultural complexion of the contemporary student cohort are essential. Educators need to bring into line “academic and intellectual discourse within our communities-of-practice and

society at large whilst simultaneously taking cognisance of our ethical responsibilities towards our student body, not as their superiors, but in the humility of service to them” (Van Niekerk & M’Rithaa, 2009:67-69).

Flowing from this, a collegial space was created where lived interest in particular research areas could be explored actively, a space closely aligned to the cohort model of supervision and support as described by De Lange *et al.* (2011). This collegial space is discussed in Vignette Four, and the lived experience of participants in a postgraduate research forum is documented in the form of co-creative supervision practice.

Inextricably linked to the phenomenological project of lived experience is the life writing aim in research, that of integrating through writing “inner and outer knowledge” to create mutual wisdom and temporality that is supportive of life and the future of the young (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan 2010:1). To achieve a measure of success in this, Bourriaud (2002:3) advises that we have to inhabit “the world in a better way”.

2.2.1.1 Wisdom through writing: life writing and autoethnography as link between the personal and cultural

Hasebe-Ludt and Jordan (2010:1) describe life writing in research as a method which “seeks to understand what it means to be human in the contemporary world, to act responsibly and to act dialogically in the world”. Life writing research is informed by the “wisdom traditions” such as literature, poetry, art, indigenous knowledge systems, feminist spiritual traditions, and “other related epistemological and wisdom traditions” (*ibid.*). These traditions use life writing enquiry to access the core of wisdom. Practising life writing provides a way to be mindful of one’s interactions with others and the moments which shape behaviour and conduct. Also, life writing is a reminder, a way, to be present in the educational moment by noticing instances of shared and lived experiences of students and educators (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1).

An autobiographical writing style and an autoethnographic account feature a layered consciousness which connects the personal with the cultural (Ellis & Bochner, 2000:739; Ricci, 2003:595). Autoethnography subscribes to the postmodern, ontological stance that reality is provisional, local and co-created, and that truth cannot be known with any certainty (Ricci, 2003:593). In an attempt to understand the life world of others, the autoethnographer

positions herself in a social context, ready for interaction with no pretext to objectivity. Resulting from this, autoethnographic writing eschews silent authorship with its objective connotations (Ricci, 2003:593; Trahar, 2009). Authors are by choice present in their work as they use their own position through personal experience to gain insight into the bigger culture that they are part of in their specific contexts (Ricci, 2003:593).

Exclusivity (attempts at discrete boxing of qualitative forms of enquiry) is futile as these forms rub off on each other in the evolutionary cycle of prevailing wisdom in the field. Ricci (2003:595) argues that there is space for alternative methods of enquiry and that autoethnographic enquiry foregrounds the “voice of self” as it contributes to “the knowledge base of sociological phenomena”. This is not to say that this type of qualitative enquiry is without method. Finesse in the way that “voice of self” is deployed as a research method, assures the opening up of space — aeration — to allow the reader ingress. Auto-ethnography affords both reader and writer a new experience “to learn, to discover, to co-create” in the narrative (Ricci, 2003:594).

Richardson and St. Pierre (2005:962) assert that critique in the postmodern paradigm of traditional qualitative writing, has softened and enlarged the ethnographic field to include what Richardson calls “CAP [creative analytical processes] ethnographies”. These may well soon be the most coveted portrayals of the social, “because they invite people in and open spaces for thinking about the social that elude us now”.

Exposing the self in text — the authenticity of that self-exposure — may move the reader from reflection to action. To transcend superficiality, the narrative needs to be mined from a lived experience, “a revealing narrative from the self-of-the-writer” (Ricci, 2003:594). Therefore, narrative enquirers reflect and question their own biography intensely and openly, offering the possibility to use reflexivity for the enrichment of research [also] in intercultural communication (Trahar, 2009).

In the following sections, design education and research are explored with a view to setting the stage for the sharing of experiences in design research of students and educators, prioritising holistic understanding situated in lived experience (Trahar, 2009).

2.3 Sharing more than formal content knowledge: lived experience as social capital in the university and the community

There are numerous courses of action in the world pertaining to what we do, how we do it, and where we interact, situated within different communities of interest (Gee *et al.*, 1996:4). Sociocultural theory positions people as mapping out interactions and social practices in various social institutions — such as universities, churches and community organisations — at different stages of their lives (Vygotsky, 1978; Gee *et al.*, 1996). The social process of learning is dynamic and is mediated by supportive interaction with others in a community of interest.

For these mapped-out interactions and learning experiences to be beneficial, contextually meaningful connections need to be forged with other, related social practices for the effective transference of knowledge through interdisciplinary connections. In this way, curriculum and content are linked with the real world, or life outside the university (Diamond, 1998).

Enrichment in the context of socially responsive design research and the capacity of education to promote conditions for social transformation in a particular community (outside the university) is investigated in Vignette Five. In this vignette, socially responsive design concentrates on establishing products, services and systems for community benefit in order to balance social design and market-directed design (Margolin & Margolin, 2002:25) for the effective satisfaction of human needs in a sensitive and sustainable manner, on a small scale (Tukker *et al.*, 2008:2).

Design research and design ought to be used in a variety of settings and places locally, from an individual and collective point of view, to “improve social equity and cohesion in relation to stakeholders” (Vezzoli, 2007:148). Community and university collaborations are important, since, if “we are serious about ... learning throughout life in formal, non-formal, and informal settings” as proposed by Odora Hoppers (2008:2), we need to engage with informal and non-formal learning and not habitually turn to well-established but frequently inaccessible formal learning institutions. Strong bonds need to be formed between informal and formal learning loci and events.

Formal learning is out of reach of the majority of South Africans and Africans, but Odora Hoppers (2008:2) argues that educational development should be based on what is available to the greater number of African people especially in rural areas. From this reality should arise a re-linking of “education and lifelong learning with humanity, and [preparation] for the

systematization and integration of diverse social and knowledge capital into mainstream processes” (*ibid.*).

The diverse social and knowledge capital which Odora Hoppers refers to, does not only include pre-democracy knowledge systems in South Africa which did not enjoy credence historically, that is indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) such as the African philosophical discourse of *Ubuntu* (Odora Hoppers, 2002; Venter, 2004), but also “honouring the location of the self” and the wisdom traditions (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005:965; Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1). When linked with current educational thinking in curriculum advancement, and working from the wisdom paradigm, knowledge capital includes embodied knowledge and lived experience (Van Manen, 2007:16; Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1). Indigenous theory of method in particular is closely linked with place and asks for an established knowledge of a person’s environment and interaction with it (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:2). In this way, the postmodern situation allows “us to know ‘something’ without claiming to know everything” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005:961).

The wisdom traditions paradigm widens knowledge constructs to include, apart from reason, a personal and philosophical responsibility to be in the world in an authentic, present and ethical way (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1). These principles are echoed in the wisdom traditions of the *Ubuntu* philosophy (Bhengu, 1996:5). Including this expanded view as part of knowledge capital therefore, represents a more empathic approach in an ethnically diverse society, since it mediates an “arrogance of practice, which is still rife in formal institutions that are confidently, and without qualms, determined to continue with the monochrome logic of Western epistemology” (Odora Hoppers 2002:vii).

2.3.1 Learning in the African collective

Learning that occurs and is constituted when experienced within the collective is well documented as communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991:94; Wenger, 2010:1). Learning as a social process encompasses the person holistically as a meaning-making being. Foregrounding the social aspect does not deny the individual identity, but rather frames it in the context of the capability of the collective, which the individual may or may not mirror in his or her own practice (Wenger, 2010:2). Communities of practice and learning in the collective resonate with the philosophy and principles of African collectivism, African

humanism or *Ubuntu* (Bhengu, 1996:15; Venter, 2004:153; Van Niekerk & M'Rithaa, 2009:153,154).

In keeping with the wisdom traditions that value the practices or life experiences of individuals and communities as ongoing loci of knowledge formation, *Ubuntu* is well positioned to act as an African philosophy of education (Venter, 2004:150), and indeed as a pedagogy of inclusion (M'Rithaa, 2012). *Ubuntu*, also described as a philosophy of inclusion, plays out as a practical example of the interconnectedness among members of a community, and its role includes the regulation of some functions in the community (Venter, 2004:156). As such it is “the embodiment of African culture and life style” (*ibid.*). The legitimacy of adopting this philosophy from a non-black African perspective may arise with Bhengu's (1996:23) construction of *Ubuntu* as a black African, and at times an even more specific, local South African (Zulu) expression.

M'Rithaa (2012) posits that the lens, the voice of the person arguing or proposing *Ubuntu*, is germane to understanding the rationale that accompanies that discussion. It may be ideological or political, spiritual, motivational, or philosophical. *Ubuntu* is flexible, pliable but also fragile. It has a lack in the tripod of its knowledge construction which is a weakness in *technê* (technology) (M'Rithaa, 2012). *Phronesis* (ontology) forms a strong leg, as does *epistêmê* to a degree (grounds of knowledge), but the latter ought to be articulated more specifically in the educational context (M'Rithaa, 2012). Hence, it is in the areas of epistemology and particularly technology that *Ubuntu* can be strengthened as pedagogy.

Educators and researchers need to unpack its foundation and distil its essence to inform a moment in the African design educational arena which is ready to leapfrog Western unsustainable habits (Vezzoli, 2007; Tukker *et al.*, 2008; M'Rithaa, 2012). It is exquisitely poised to make rich and contextual, yet internationalised contributions to the area of Design for Sustainability and Design for Development (M'Rithaa, 2012). *Ubuntu* can be used as a guide to steer everyday interactions by — an audit to gauge benevolence — because the spirit of *Ubuntu* includes not only people, but the environment, systems and objects. It asks that in a spirit of “authentic openness we engage with all things alive or living or that support life: environment, animals, humans, plants” (*ibid.*).

Learning in the African collective includes design which, when practised as “situated doing and undergoing”, facilitates an experience and expression that belongs to a collective dimension (Ehn, 2008). Design can be used in the collective to deepen social interaction, for

instance in the sharing of meaning, the sharing of objects, and engaging with artefacts in a place (*ibid.*).

2.4 Multi-disciplinarity and the consolidation of design foundations

Design research is well-known to be troubled at times regarding its epistemological origins. Design is inter-disciplinary by nature, and in some cases the various disciplines are closely related, such as product design and mechanical engineering design (Love, 2002:352), while in other cases they are not. The discipline's epistemological origins may derive from a number of domain fields like architecture, fine art, traditional practice, craft making and typography, amongst others.

Following this, contemporary design research continues to draw from many different domain fields. Jonas (2000:44) refers to the possibility of design as a groundless field; one which perpetually re-creates its own ground and therefore is its own ground. This strengthens the idea that it has no real (classical) disciplinary foundation and it borrows, possibly opportunistically, from whatever field seems appropriate at the time. This situation leads to difficulties in “transparently validating theories against their ontological, epistemological and theoretical contexts” (Love, 2002:346).

Love (2002:345) argues in favour of a specific and precise, cohesive epistemology regarding “designing and designs”. That goal seems to be diminishing with a large number of new design-related professions and fields emerging which are not yet included in the sphere of design research. Love outlines some adverse consequences of this situation which include, amongst others, a “lack of clarity about the scope, bounds and foci of fields of research and theory-making about designing and design” (Love, 2002:346). Designing is a widespread and indispensable component in human activities and futures, and consequently presents a prominent field of investigation in contemporary society.

Improving human futures is one of the chief roles of designing because deliberate (design) actions are planned to have consequences for our future (Love, 2000:242). Designed artefacts have social, ethical and environmental effects which form the basis of the utility of designs. Social effects manifest since designing is aimed at creating change for people and ethical effects manifest since designers make choices which depend on human values and reside in the sphere of ethics. Environmental effects manifest since all designing is meant to alter

human environments, with sometimes adverse effects that are secondary in importance to the intended change in environments (Love, 2000:242). For these improved human futures to materialise, however, sustainability practices have to underpin all design endeavours (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008).

In agreement with Jonas's (2000:44) argument of design as a "groundless field", Nelson (2009:111) writes: "With design, so often associated with the tangible regimes of manufacture, we enter the borderless." Although it may be a disadvantage as described by Love (2002:), and Jonas (2000:44), who refers to relinquishing of disciplinary autonomy, being "borderless" or "groundless" also offers advantages. Not being fixed to a theory of method or specific domain field enables design researchers to navigate, as a matter of course, wider disciplinary waters.

Since Jonas's (2000) groundless field argument and Love's critique, design as a discipline has consolidated its foundations to a large degree and in a number of ways. From a design research perspective, researchers such as Buchanan (2000), Love (2000; 2002), Friedman (2000), Margolin (2007), Fletcher (2007), Vezzoli (2007), and Manzini (2009), amongst others, are changing the approach to designing and design research. As design theorists and activists they have made substantial contributions in the areas of philosophy of design and social design fields such as design for development (DfD) and design for sustainability (DfS). They have added to the consolidation of theoretical foundations of design research, while demanding a critical reconsideration of harmful design methods.

The design industry, however, remains in a dilemma which is tricky to resolve. It needs to cut its cloth to suit the humanitarian/environmental project but also to suit market ambitions (Tischner, 2008:160). A new foundation for design that comes from within, which is "both practical and philosophical, a science of making and a philosophy of realizing artifacts with and for others" (Krippendorff, 2005, reviewed by Ehn, 2007:56), is of critical importance in designing for human futures in a sustainable and sensitive way.

2.5 Design in flux: balancing market objectives with social design

From a social and sustainability perspective, design and design education in the South African and local university context need to get in step with the growing discourse in design, namely the social agenda of design, or design for social sustainability (Jégou, 2008:181; Tischner,

2008:159; Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:141). The social agenda of design strives to be responsible and ethical, compared with the traditional model which favours the design and production of disposable or cyclical products for easy consumption, with profit as prime motif and scant regard for the consequences (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:146). Designers can no longer perpetuate a century of "designing superfluous products for saturated markets" (Tischner, 2008:159). Instead, design must engage with "real problem-solving and radical changes towards more sustainability of production and consumption systems" (*ibid.*).

Designing and design education have become important players, adding a powerful voice in promoting change towards a more ethical and sustainable future. This can be seen in an increasing number of global and local initiatives that are actively encouraging change such as the educational Learning Network on Sustainability (LeNS) – Africa project, launched in 2009, that targets "an audience of lecturers and students from various design disciplines in order to orientate them towards pedagogic and didactic applications of Design for Sustainability and Product-Service Systems" (M'Rithaa, cited in Bergevoet *et al.*, 2010:1105). Although there are a growing number of design networks and designers that advocate sustainable solutions and eco-efficient practices, they remain in the minority and their activities are seen to be relatively idealistic and not quite professional (Tischner, 2008:160).

A mandate for social design which addresses human need and social justice is outlined by Margolin and Margolin (2002:28), who argue that "one reason why there is not more support for social design services is the lack of research to demonstrate what a designer can contribute to human welfare". Design research has in fact been active in exploring its role in the area of social justice and social injustice since the 1970s, but it is a vastly complex domain and the complications for design have not been adequately analysed (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:147). Margolin and Margolin (2002:28) pose a number of questions that the social designer ought to engage with in an effort to contribute to finding "real" solutions to this complex situation:

What role can a designer play in a collaborative process of social intervention? What is currently being done in this regard and what might be done? How might the public's perception of designers be changed in order to present an image of a socially responsible designer? How can agencies that fund social welfare projects and research gain a stronger perception of design as a socially responsible activity? What kinds of products meet the needs of vulnerable populations?

From a research point of view, participant observation is a useful research method for social designers because it allows entry into social settings to observe and document the setting,

either alone or as part of a multi-disciplinary team (Margolin & Margolin, 2002:28). Here issues of participatory design and collaboration become important, since the social designer should not impose ideas and solutions (Ehn, 2007) when engaging with groups and communities.

Ehn (2007) advocates the use of participatory design methods which include the concept of user-centred design. The voice of the community has to remain prominent in collaborative projects since communities' exercising agency is central in addressing issues of sustainability on all levels (Vezzoli, 2007:123-130) Also, sustainability in design is not a fashionable notion or a matter of choice anymore, but the only way to a future on the planet (Vezzoli & Manzini 2008). In the balancing act then of working with market forces while remaining people-centred, the zeitgeist has prominently shifted to embrace intelligent ecological and collaborative alternatives in design to combat environmental degradation caused by over-consumption (Tukker *et al.*, 2008). These alternatives need to be explored vigorously in design research as well to enable a shift away from commodity to conservation of valuable resources.

2.6 Conscientising consuming

A shift has started from consuming unsustainably to consuming with conservation in mind. Examples abound of local and global communities taking responsibility for their consuming preferences by re-evaluating their lifestyle habits in a number of ways. Jégou (2008:179-196) describes some activities of the Sustainable Everyday Project which aims to, through strategic design intervention, support the growth and dissemination of promising solutions towards sustainability.

Manzini *et al.* (2008:268), for instance, link social design innovation with the sustainability discourse in the global Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles (CCSL, 2009) project. The CCSL project was launched as part of the Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles, within the United Nations decade-long "Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production" (CCSL, 2010) and was supported by the Swedish Ministry for Sustainable Development. The CCSL aims were to involve communities in creative ways to take charge of their lives and environments by negotiating sustainable design solutions and thereby exercising personal and collective agency (Manzini *et al.*, 2008:268).

The CCSL Africa project was launched in June 2009 in Johannesburg, with a view to establishing the CCSL philosophy in Africa, with a focus on emerging urban societies (CCSL, 2009). Some of the initiatives that were started globally (Europe, Brazil, India and China) included examples that had good potential to be introduced locally too, for instance "self-managed services for the care of children and the elderly; new forms of exchange and mutual help; alternative mobility systems; socialising initiatives to bring cities to life and networks linking consumers directly with producers", amongst others (CCSL, 2010).

The first exploratory CCSL workshop took place in February 2009 in Cape Town, South Africa. It was organised at a local university of technology by a senior academic in the Design Department (M'Rithaa, 2012). Included in the project methodology was "collecting local cases and discussing those with experts in a process organized in partnership with African design schools" (CCSL, 2009).

2.6.1 Consuming with a more humane economic logic in mind

Designers have often contributed and still contribute to the wasteful production and consumption lifestyles the world over (Thackara, 2005; Manzini, 2009; Vezzoli *et al.*, 2009). Extending the sustainability discourse to the fashion and lifestyle industries, which are steeped in a tradition of pernicious consumerism, is necessary but more difficult. Fletcher (2007:120-135) advocates forming closer relationships with items of clothing and concentrating on quality of product rather than on quantity. She challenges designers to take responsibility for their practices by adopting and promoting more sustainable ways of designing. This challenge is frequently last on the conventional designer's list, amongst other factors, since the individual has no real agency or insight in the overall planning and strategic processes, works against very tight turn-around times, and focuses more on creative aspects of the design process.

Increasingly designers of luxury brands, however, have the ability to prescribe trends and influence consumers' buying decisions. From a sustainability perspective, this can be either helpful or harmful. Baretto Martins and Vasco (2007:4) note that in 1989, for the first time, the fashion industry publicly paid attention to negative environmental consequences resulting from the manufacturing process of fashion items. On this occasion, the British designer Katharine Hamnett highlighted the detrimental impact of cotton pesticides in the fall/winter collection titled "Clean up or Die". Consumers are becoming environmentally sensitised in the

area of cotton production, and support is growing for organic alternatives (Baretto Martins & Vascounto, 2007:3) that shun all use of chemicals and pesticides.

In contemporary fashion and product design, it is in vogue to be branded as ecologically aware and environmentally responsible, but this principle has frequently been linked to “green-washing” and is in some cases exclusively aimed at gaining market share (Bergevoet *et al.*, 2010). Although “branding” environmentalism can be a constructive way to heighten awareness of environmental degradation, appropriate action needs to accompany awareness. Scepticism around green-washing remains, but many global brands pledge percentages of profit towards environmental causes and give assurances of more sustainable standards in their operations and planning. For instance, the PPR Group (holding company of many luxury brands like Gucci, Balenciaga and Stella McCartney amongst others) released a five-year social and environmental plan for reducing harmful business practices in a wide array of areas (Guardian, 2012).

In order to design more sustainably, designers have to take whole life-cycles into account (Barreto Martins & Vascounto, 2007:12). This means that manufacturing or growing materials for producing the product, the distribution of the product, its use and ultimately its disposal, are all regarded in its entirety (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:61), that is, in its life-cycle as a whole.

From a largely product-centred approach, however, the focus has shifted to a broader spectrum to fulfil “a given demand of needs and wants” (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:143) based on sustainable consumption and production behaviour. This given demand may be illustrated by the complexity inherent in the four-pillar interpretation of design for sustainability, namely the “selection of resources with a low environmental impact, design of products with a low environmental impact, design for an eco-efficient system and design for social equity and cohesion” (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:144). The pillars do not reflect a “chronological evolution” nor do they define exact boundaries between them (*ibid.*).

Barreto Martins and Vascounto (2007:13) advance the argument that the product itself should present a “more humane economic logic” which transcends the thrill of ownership. Transcending the thrill of ownership is replaced in many instances by the pleasure of re-discovering interdependence and re-connecting with the community (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:138-158). Consumers are progressively increasing their capacity for making changes in their consuming habits by connecting with others, for example, the “kids’ clothing chain”, a

system based on handing down clothing familiar in a family setting, but here in the larger community (Jégou, 2008:186).

The trend to localise production and consumption and for consumers to support products that tell a story with which they can identify, is gaining ground, since people are increasingly “using the power of their purchases to express their activism on global issues” (Bergevoet *et al.*, 2010: 55). In this way, the responsibility challenge that Fletcher posed to designers can be extended to ordinary people. They can use their power as consumers to focus on the centrality of people in the world of design, by changing consumption habits in their community. This, in turn, may strengthen the capacity of communities in formulating and mainstreaming more sustainable lifestyles (Manzini, 2009; M’Rithaa, 2009). As Cipolla (2009:233) elaborates, with respect to re-affirming community and interpersonal interactions in design, “no participant can be easily replaced, because together they produce ... community, a common story”.

A balanced approach ought to inform design teaching and research in order for the new value system in design to be strengthened and to become embedded in the design industry. This value system can go a long way to satisfy human needs in a responsible way (Margolin & Margolin, 2002), based on sustainable consumption and production behaviour (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:143) and being in the world in a better way (Bourriaud, 1998:3). In design research, the academic community can build on the common story of social design, by plugging into forums which support its principles. Postgraduate research topics that are grounded in a personal, situated practice perspective and contribute to design for social equity and cohesion (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008:146-150) in the local context need to be encouraged actively.

Design teaching, supervision and research require an authentic, open and responsive attitude to exploring complex issues. The research methods that I used to explore these issues were not so much “selected” in the standard methodological sense, rather they “presented” themselves as the research process progressed, and are discussed next.

2.7 Research design and methodology

The typical research design did not mesh well with the fibre of this research. Stating the research problem, presenting the aims and introducing the research questions did not suit the phenomenological, exploratory and interpretive nature of the study. As an interpretive researcher, and in agreement with Guba and Lincoln's constructivist view (1994:109; 2005:193), I subscribe to the ontological position that social reality is locally and specifically co-created by people, and that reality is established by our definition of it. My aim was to bridge polarities of mind and body during the research process: in my creative methods, in what I observed and experienced, and in my interactions with other participants. A non-dualistic ontology was embraced to support the epistemological notion of "findings which are literally created as the investigation proceeds" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:111). I needed to leave a space open for the findings to be "created".

Phenomenology, as discussed in 2.2, is used in this research as a philosophy of the senses; a perspective and an approach to meaning-making anchored in lived experience. This includes a phenomenological attempt to come to grips with people's varied perspectives and from a research angle to "understand participants' perspectives and views of social realities" (Leedy et al, 1997:161). In the fullest sense, phenomenology references the individual's interpretation of the meaning of a phenomenon, in contrast to the independent existence of the phenomenon (Leedy et al., 1997:161; Nelson, 2009:56). The thing experienced, or being scrutinised "may be an event, a relationship, an emotion, or even an educational programme" (Leedy et al., 1997:161).

From this perspective the outcome of the study was never conceptualised as "merely" the answering of research questions. The outcome was located in uncertain territory until the last. The only certainty was that the outcome would be the result of a reflection and an exploration. Outcome, as part of a process which fully absorbs the researcher or designer, constitutes more than the doing and arriving at a result. Nelson (2009:21) reminds us that *process* [my italics] is much preferred to method in the creative arts, since it entails more than just the making but that it is in fact "a kind of belief system".

The curious exploration of phenomena via the "belief system" of process, asks for the suspension of pre-conceived ideas. This is done to afford a phenomenological methodology which is opposed to pre-set, unchanging ways of doing and thinking that aim to regulate the research project strictly (Van Manen, 1989:29). The phenomenological method as "counter-

method" offers a way of enquiry which is fluid and relational (refer Fig 2.2). The "paths (methods) cannot be determined by fixed signposts. They need to be discovered or invented as a response to the question at hand" (ibid.).

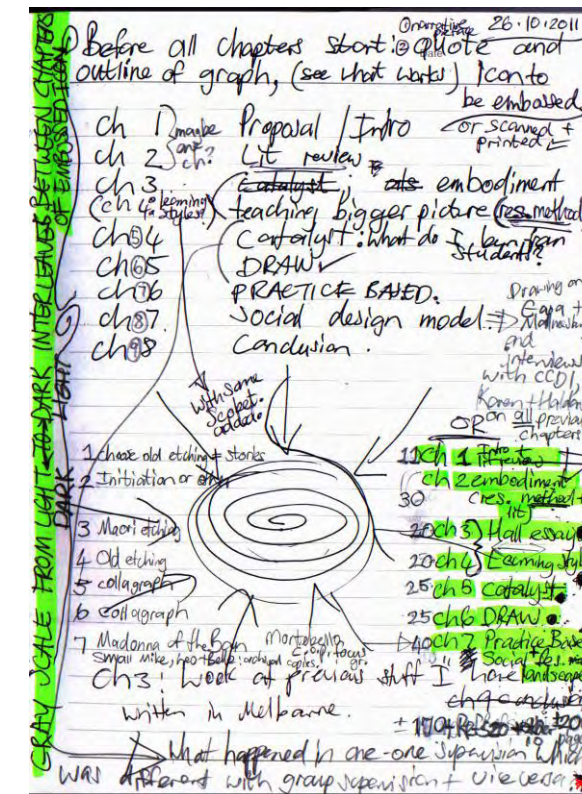


Figure 2.2 Paths to the question journal entry

The exploratory research questions were really only markers along the way. Cronjé (2011:5) describes the relationship between the research aim "to explore", and the result of that aim, topographic representation along metaphorical lines. The traditional idea of an explorer brandishing a map, compass and binoculars is invoked and the expectation of such an expedition is to return with a topographic chart of the area (Cronjé, 2011:5).

I did not have the reassurance of a map to consult during the course of the study. I had to draw up my own as I went along. With the compass of lived experience and receptiveness, and binoculars of reflection and iteration, a "topographic chart of the area" was contoured which is at best, provisional. Reading the chart may require some "in-seeing" and the suspension of "theoretical, prejudicial and suppositional intoxications", in the style of the phenomenologist or poet (Van Manen, 2007:11).

2.7.1 Research methods

A bricolage of qualitative research methods is used in the study. This was needed since the chapters and vignettes are windows into my teaching and creative practices that explore different but co-creative instances of knowledge production and sharing. Each “window” required a research method suited to that particular setting and exploration. Lived experience documented in the form of a textual and visual narrative enquiry formed the methodological mainstay.

Appropriate research methods “emerged” and “presented” themselves as the study unfolded (Trahar, 2009) and autobiographical events were given weight in the space between theory and life-stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:41). The research methods included unstructured and semi-structured interviews and conversations, studio observations, reflective critique, site visits, focus group discussions and questionnaire surveys. Reflection naturally constituted a large part of this process, and material collected for the vignettes was iteratively examined to probe significance and note changes which occurred during the research process. Reflective practices included photographic documentation, video documentation, journal recording, drawing, printmaking and designing. Data in the form of visual material and stories were collected in naturalistic and real-life settings to gather layered and richly descriptive input and accounts from the participants (Miller & Brewer, 2003:193 & 239), over a period of 12 years. A short exposition of the specific research methods used in the five vignettes is presented in the following section.

2.8 Narrative vignettes

Despite the fact that I grappled with the current relevance of the first two vignettes at first because of the time frame involved, the nature of the challenges described there have in fact, if anything, deepened over time. This is in keeping with growing complexity in the student and educator cohort demographic and design research content. The cyclical nature of some of these educational challenges became evident upon reflection and documentation.

2.8.1 Buhle

In the first vignette I aimed to strengthen my personal awareness of a particular phenomenon. The phenomenon was an event which traced a meritorious student’s under-

achievement, my interpretation thereof and mutual meaning-making of a complex situation at a particular historical moment. I attempted to see the world from Buhle’s perspective, drawing on social realities as experienced subjectively and intersubjectively (Van Manen, 2007:12). Intersubjectively, Buhle and I shared and exchanged in a mutually accessed space, a reaching out and into the other person’s space to enrich a personal understanding of the other, the event and our individual motivation.

Personal interactions and conversations with the student were documented during the course of 2001, by using biographical journalling methods aligned with auto-ethnography (Ricci, 2003; Trahar, 2009) and narrative enquiry. These methods were supported by detailed observations done in the studio setting. I sought to re-establish contact with Buhle in January 2012 and succeeded. The vignette tells the story from my point of view as well as from Buhle’s point of view, and ends with a reflection of the event.

2.8.2 Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan, Sipho

The second vignette expanded on the one-on-one encounter with Buhle to include the learning events of a group of six Surface Design Bachelor’s students. The intention was to unpack reasons behind some successful and some unsuccessful attempts at originating research topics ontologically and completing their research in time to qualify at the end of that academic year. The design students’ learning events are explored in a qualitative manner by observing their learning styles in the studio, and by analysing their research dissertations and studio work as examples of creative practice in a culturally diverse, studio-based learning context.

A series of conversations with a colleague who taught the group as well were recorded as part of my journal documentation, to unpack in more detail a complex learning and cultural situation. This was done to explore the influence of culturally embedded ways of knowing in the origination and development of research topics. Once again, a reflective methodology underscored the exploration. Reflective practitioners acknowledge and appreciate the significant contribution of reflection in contributing to a deep understanding of a particular event. Reflection was used by students and lecturers alike in the form of journalling, photography, studio critiques and peer review sessions.

2.8.3 Transcending cultural and disciplinary boundaries

Expanding the learning event even more in the third vignette include mapping a co-developed learning event off-campus, involving various participants from diverse backgrounds. Qualitative research methods were used by a Master of Design student in a practice-led, Design for Development (DfD) inspired research project, which I documented.

From a supervision point of view, the insider/outsider methodology was used, akin to the participant/observer position. I conducted informal conversations and bi-weekly supervisory meetings with the student for the duration of the research project (2006 – 2009). Thompson (2010:4) argues that the insider/outsider perspectives of qualitative research perform different functions. From an insider perspective, knowledge is dialogic (meaning-making) and reflective rather than analytical (meaning-capturing). Both dialogue and analysis informed my supervision practice at different times during the event to shape a reflective critique of her study, and the contribution that emanates from the fields of art, craft and design as they transcend disciplinary boundaries in a progressive way (Elk, 2011; Guille, 2011 & Hagen, 2011).

2.8.4 I participate, therefore I learn

Interested in exploring the social and academic support aspects that a cohort model of supervision offers, the fourth vignette draws on a narrative method to describe the learning event and workgroup experiences of postgraduate students and lecturers from different perspectives. Berger and Luckmann (1966:130) argue that it is important to have access to and understand people's separate social constructions of reality, in order to "define them reciprocally". Not only do we "live in the same world, we participate in each other's being" (*ibid.*). In this vignette, postgraduate topics are examined deeply through non-prescriptive conversations based on holistic understanding, which in turn is anchored in lived experience.

Narrative enquiry is "grounded in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology" and it concentrates on "the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences", looking to bring perceptivity that matches the intricacy of human existence (Trahar, 2009). Located within the narrative paradigm, I adopted an interpretivist position. The interpretivist supervisor/researcher is central in making meaning of the world and events in it. The influence, value and meaning of group supervision practices were explored from March 2009 until March 2011. These group supervision sessions were convened every week and lasted

about three hours each. The research methods used to describe the sessions can be divided into two sections: the recorded sessions and the questionnaire surveys, with narrative enquiry underpinning these two methods.

2.8.5 *Limen*

Vignette Five changes the theme as I examine the internal landscape by using myself as the research instrument. More questions than answers materialised. What did the personal learning event of living the research and writing it up mean and how did the process of becoming a student again change my perceptions about creativity and learning? How were my personal positions, my "social locations, interpretations, and personal experiences" (Chase, 2005:666) changed in reversing the student/teacher roles? The appointment of my own printmaking teacher was a milestone in my research exploration because I wanted to learn new things and experience being a student. The question persisted: would my learning experiences be of interest to other educators and students doing design research and supervision?

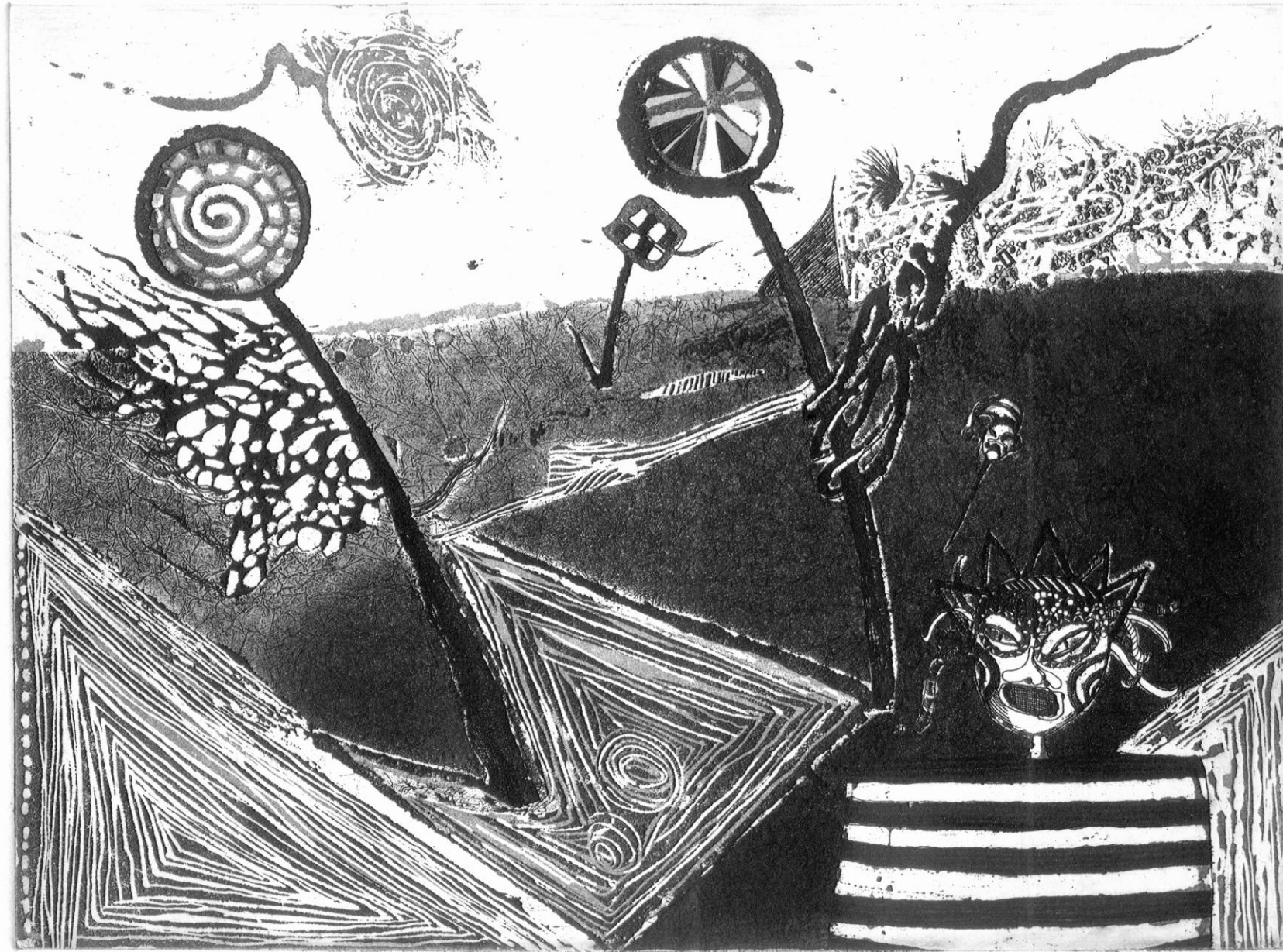
Since I was interested in exploring threshold concepts as described by Meyer and Land (2005:374,375), I had to be true to living the research project in uncertainty. This chapter demanded complete immersion in exploring a number of activities and processes; narrative enquiry, life writing (Neilsen, 2002), autoethnography (Ricci, 2003) and printmaking provided tentative but consistent markers along the way. Autoethnographic verse, poetry, photography and film were also used to explore the meaning of working creatively with research questions and themes; paraphrasing them into images at times to provide an intertextual layering of meaning and expression.

2.8.6 *Dénouement*: letting go

Despite my best efforts to let go after *limen*, Chapter Eight appeared. It represented an opportunity to tie up the loose ends and fly the flag of experiences lived and lessons learned, one more time. The chapter ends with a moving image; a short film clip to add some mobility after the stasis of yoking the pages to many words and images.

2.9 Retrospection

“Method or madness?” portrays Jack against the first landmark of uncertain possibility, only a little way into the exploration. Is it method or madness to conflate the literature review and research methods? In moulding the two together in a chapter, is it possible to answer to a phenomenology of practice which does not “think” the world, but “grasps” the world? (Van Manen 2007:20). Grasping the world as it presents, not pre-empting it? On the right, “segment” tree represents emerging, alternative methods as sections that lead to a central point, the lens, magnifying many possibilities of how the research question themes might be answered. Segment tree is encircled with ropes pulling it in the opposite direction; the tug of traditional, “safe” research methods. On the left, “spiral” tree represents literature. The calibrated periphery portrays literature from different disciplinary fields that informs the research, dissolving into a spiral with a central point that echoes the lens of methods. A web of literary possibilities is cajoling spiral tree away from segment tree, but the trees’ angle indicates their inclination to remain together.



The secret in education lies in respecting the student (Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803 - 1882)

Interrogating issues of culture and identity in education is inevitable. It is also indispensable to the reflective practitioner's research (Schön, 1983). Educators need to consider thoughtfully the personal and professional influences that cultural diversity exert in higher education, in order to acknowledge the worth of numerous world views and forms of knowledge (Gay, 2002:108; Trahar, 2009). Yet, this does not seem to be the case since university lecturers investigating their own practice are in the minority (Trahar, 2009).

Having assumed a subject position that recognises and reveals "partialities and potentialities" (Goldberg 1994:19), I needed to look critically at my own teaching practice to appraise my belief system, my position, values, and cultural background. I needed to excavate personal bias and explore the potential for reciprocal learning through reflection (Schön, 1983) and the development of both student and teacher.

Examining my teaching practice in a specific context allowed me to explore the value of different world views by means of this co-constructed narrative enquiry. This was done with a view to be responsive to inter-cultural communication and learning in the design studio and lecture theatre, thereby deepening my understanding of a particular interaction to inform future action. Buhle's story provided the setting for this enquiry.

3.1 A teacher's reflection: thoughts about your struggle

Thoughts about your struggle
remained with me for long
the bond between us tenuous
or unseen yet strong?
a woman belonging
to the world of
black
and the world of
white

in the world of black
creative and different one
with dreams new dreams beyond tradition
of doing, designing
freedom ambition
in the world of white
not speaking words out loud
brave but alone in pale spaces enshroud
inspiration so near ... savouring the cloud
thoughts about your struggle
whispered in my head
connection gone
or unseen yet strong?
a woman belonging
to the world of
white
and the world of
black
in the world of white
strange and solemn one
with dreams old dreams of darkness
of etching the velvet
extracting the light
in the world of black
no words to call out proud
one fear amidst many
of silence
a mute complicity pact
Thoughts about your struggle
remained with me for long ...

3.1.2 Background to Buhle's story

Buhle's story started in 2001 when she approached me for academic advice. She was experiencing difficulties in her first year at university, then known as a technikon (analogous to polytechnics in other countries) and colloquially referred to as "Tech". Higher education access was opening up at the time, and Buhle was one of a handful of black students to have enrolled in the Textile Design and Technology programme. I taught the subject Textile Design Technology to her first-year group. Confident, articulate and sophisticated, with a flair and passion for design, she nevertheless became de-motivated with the subject and started losing interest. She was unable to engage with the subject content meaningfully, and found classroom and studio interaction with peers difficult. Buhle's de-motivation was reflected in poor grades initially, and resulted in her failing the year end examination.

With many factors potentially contributing to Buhle's difficulties, I was unsure where to start in unravelling her story. I did not want to jump to conclusions and focus on what appeared to be apparent reasons for her de-motivation and poor performance. I needed to be sensitive to and understand her educational experiences holistically, and traced them back to secondary school. This was a time in her life that had had a shaping and decisive influence on her career choice and university studies, notably because of the political and social changes happening at the time.

Teachers sensitive to students' "stuck places" having a possible ontological dimension, are encouraged to cultivate "a third ear that listens not for what a student knows ... but for the terms that shape a student's knowing, her not knowing, her forgetting, her circles of stuck places and resistances" (Ellsworth, 1997:71). Buhle articulated her "circles of stuck places and resistances", the difficulties she experienced with the subject and her peers in the following way:

1. She struggles with lectures because the subject area is "dense" with new information and the presentation of the content is too fast.
2. She is unable to take down lecture notes because she cannot follow the technical language and new concepts.
3. She is unable and unwilling to participate in group learning exercises because she feels intimidated when working with other students who are "brighter" (her words).

4. She is Rastafari and uses cannabis for religious and cultural reasons, and this consumption interferes (her words) with her concentration and consequently her grasp of the particular subject.

She has become increasingly de-motivated and has started missing lectures, withdrawing from studio critiques and group learning projects because of these reasons, adding to her problems in mastering the subject.

Buhle's difficulties played out against the background of a racialised and multi-cultural society, six years after the first democratic elections. South Africans were struggling to make and share meaning of a divisive past and a present hinged on reconciliation, while attempting to negotiate the future. Our society provided fertile ground for examining — in the educational arena — the connections between language, identity, culture and learning.

Competency levels of school leavers and entry level standards of the first-year students were as diverse as their cultural backgrounds. Students' secondary education differed significantly, ranging from private school tuition, "Model C" tuition representing former whites-only schools (Roodt, 2011), to "Coloured-education" and "Bantu-education" at the bottom of the ladder with poor infrastructure and facilities. Buhle matriculated from a "Model C" high school in 1998, with English as the medium of instruction, but with isiXhosa as her home language. Language issues and the fact that she attended a "Model C" school became a central theme in Buhle's narrative.

3.2 Research methods

In order to address Buhle's concerns meaningfully, I had to see things from her point of view. From an empathetic perspective (Webb, 1997:197), I had to keep my bias in check (Goldberg, 1994:19), and not allow the obvious (from my point of view) eclipse other factors contributing to her difficulties. Phenomenological research methods support an empathetic perspective, since at the core, phenomenologists attempt to improve their "understanding of the meaning an experience has for others, as well as for themselves" (Leedy *et al.*, 1997:161).

Therefore I employed a phenomenological and ethnographic approach in this reflective narrative enquiry, and needed appropriate theoretical links to support this approach. Educationally, drawing on theories of reflective practice (Schön, 1983; 1987) and the pedagogy of culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002) provided insight.

The work of representation (Hall, 1997) also provided some theoretical support because of its link with symbolism and meaning. Culturally responsive teaching recognises the importance of “using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively” (Gay, 2002:106). Representation offered a measure of “objectivity” and made me aware of personal “partialities” when teaching in the design studio, by allowing me to examine cultural practices through a different lens in the university context – a context that reflects society since it is “a microcosm of the social”, in a setting that “serves as an intersection of social mobilities” (Goldberg, 1994:24).

With the narrative enquiry, I aimed to strengthen my personal awareness of a particular phenomenon: an event which traced this student’s under-achievement, my interpretation thereof and mutual meaning-making of a complex situation at a particular historical moment. Drawing on social realities as experienced intersubjectively by undergoing “acts of empathy” (Beyer, 2011:14), my conscious intention was suspending personal preconceptions by attempting to see the world from Buhle’s perspective. Intersubjectively, Buhle and I shared and exchanged, in a mutually accessed space, a reaching out and into the other’s life world.

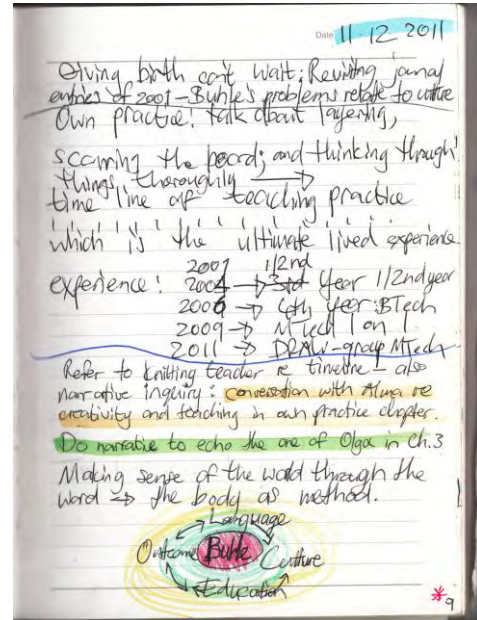


Figure 3.1 Buhle’s world journal entry

Personal interactions and conversations developed gradually during 2001 which resulted in building a mutual sense of trust. These interactions with Buhle were documented by using autobiographical journalling methods aligned with autoethnography, and autoethnographic

verse (Ricci, 2003:590; Trahar, 2009) and narrative enquiry. (Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate extracts of my journalling methods.)

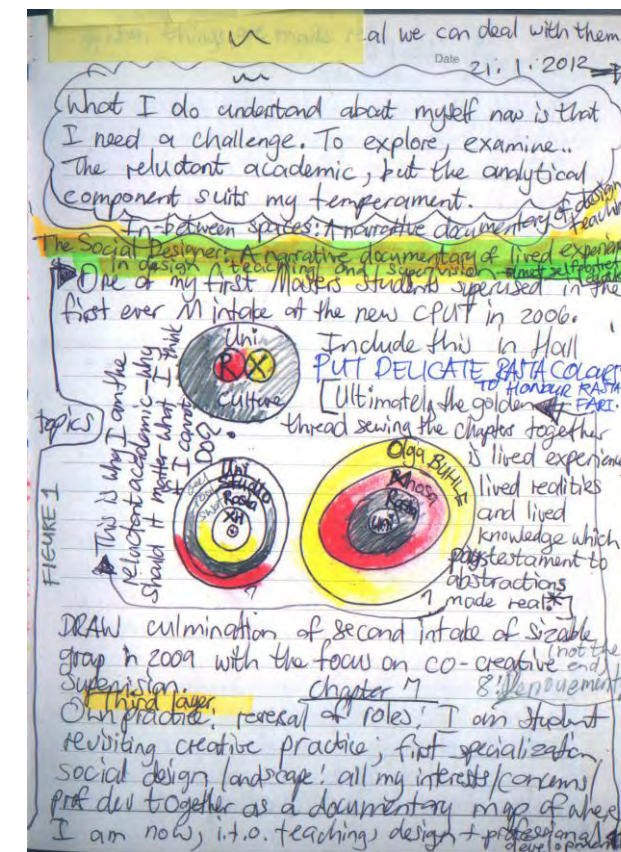


Figure 3.2 Reaching out journal entry

Narrative enquiry as a data collection method echoes the sentiment of the centrality of the researcher’s story in research, while it works sensitively with the material and stories gathered from others. It entails collecting written, oral and visual narratives in a quest to unravel the significance of human experiences and shed light on complex lives (Trahar, 2009). Observations were done in the studio setting, where I noted down aspects such as attitude, temperament, mood, confidence, interest, personal style and expression, articulation, and Buhle’s interaction with peers and lecturers.

At first in writing up this vignette, I intended to focus only on my analysis of Buhle’s academic difficulties. That strategy however, posed ethical questions. Even though her identity would be protected, did I not need Buhle’s permission to include the story of her troubles in the study, seeing that it contained personal aspects too? Ought I not to bring in her voice to confirm “trustworthiness of the data” (De Lange et al., 2011:21), given the time span involved

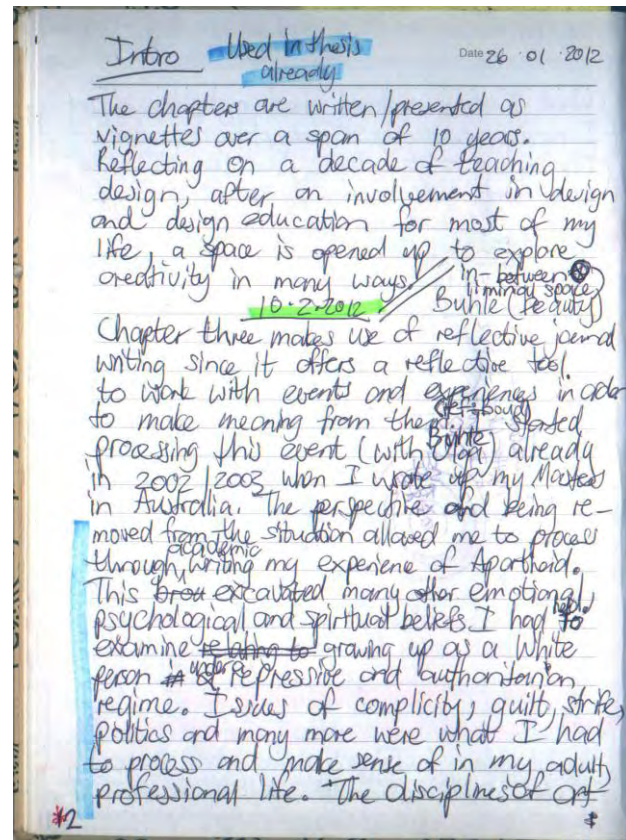


Figure 3.3 Teacher's reflection journal entry

in my retrospective analysis of the events? I firmly believed that I had to, and therefore sought to re-establish contact with Buhle in January 2012. I managed to do this and she was keen to participate in co-constructing the narrative. An open-ended questionnaire was electronically mailed to her, and the following section of the narrative is built around her recollection of the difficulties she experienced at university (Refer Appendix B) Buhle's contribution to the narrative describes the years 2001 to 2004, while "A teacher's reflection" and my analysis of her story focus on the year 2001, when I taught her. I decided to stay largely with my initial attempt at analysing the difficulties described in "Background to Buhle's story". This was done with a view to comparing my experiences of the event at the time with her experiences of the event (in a sense to gauge if the meaningful connection I felt we shared was indeed reciprocal and not retrospectively "invented"), although it is with hindsight and reflection that we make sense and forge meaning of events (Trahar, 2009). Experiences that ring true connect people, but rather than being engineered accounts of commonality, they serve as touchstones amidst difference.

Buhle's retrospective narrative made clear her own "position, values, beliefs, and cultural background" (Trahar, 2009) in the educational arena. Testimony of her discordant personal

experiences during secondary school and university emerged in the contradictions and ambivalent feelings she articulated in her narrative. Language was a main actor in Buhle's story. The power of language to forge connections or disconnections became very apparent as she recounted some of her experiences. Shields (2002:98) affirms the capacity of language to connect people, even if "it doesn't, not quite".

3.3 Buhle's story: school, language, design and a tale of two cultures

Profound changes occurred in 1994, most notably the first South African democratic elections (South Africa, 1994), the year Buhle started secondary school. She described at length the significance and value of her secondary school experiences and the support of her family. Upon enquiring about her cultural background and whether culture played a significant role in her schooling and practice as a designer, Buhle surprisingly responded that it did not. She separated cultural influences from personal influences:

In my background, I was fortunate to have been granted an opportunity to study in a Model C high school (1994 – 1998), hence the fluency vocally, hence the assertiveness, hence understanding that art was a form of expression, and the family that I came from also encouraged such expression (within boundaries such as respect). Cultural background did not really play any significance in my design [practice]; however personal influences played a role in that I have always been an intuitive designer (meaning I've always designed what I felt comfortable with). In hindsight, that is why you would find that I migrated more towards the practical side of the subject [Textile Design Technology, rather] than the theory side of the subject (which is less of feelings and more of facts). I also found that when I design what I feel, it was always better for me to explain that design as it was from the heart!

This quote also indicates that she preferred to make meaning through the symbolism of images which she compares to feelings, rather than language and text which she compares to facts. Regarding aspects of cultural background and identity, Buhle responded that she had always seen herself as "an extraordinary black African girl, growing [up] in the 21st century". She qualified this statement by linking her uniqueness to privileged schooling and clarity about her professional ambition and her personal understanding and contextualisation of what it means to be creative:

I have...a funny way of looking at things, being able to bring a “new” angle to issues and as a result I was always involved in rather mature conversations. I do believe that going to the Model C school then, moulded me into an assertive, proud young lady.

The change in schooling system, in culture and in language from a black school in the township area to a white school in the city of Cape Town, presented Buhle with a significant challenge. Issues of language became a defining experience upon entering high school and affected her confidence and self-esteem considerably. Although she declares, “I have always been an English speaking person, most of the time it is English I speak,” she avoided speaking English at first in secondary school. Art classes became a sanctuary because less talking was required:

Prior to joining the Model C high school I also came from the black schools and I was one of the top achievers there, HOWEVER little did I realise then that when I move[d] to the new school [the] major language shift (from mostly isiXhosa to English) will be a challenge, and it was! I was not sure how to handle that so I pronounced English words incorrectly, my behaviour was not befitting this new school, [I] became a laughing stock ..., for the first couple of months my confidence levels dropped intensely! I did not like this new school, however school work had to be done. Art was one of my school subjects and it was the only class I enjoyed because it is the only class where we did less talking! So by the time I got to the tertiary level, I had built this barrier towards having to converse, but based on my personality I defended myself when the need arose, in most cases mixed with tears of anger for being pushed to that extreme!

Subsequently at university (then the technikon), the predilection remained for not participating in discussions unless it was familiar territory; that is, talking about practical subjects:

So at the tech, my confidence levels grew more so, because most of the practical times the talking was based on my work, which was easy for me, but further than that I could never participate in theory classes because of protecting myself from saying the wrong things!

Buhle draws a parallel with a student in class who completed “matric”, the national senior certificate examination, in a black secondary school. Despite being talented, he was not as successful in his personal contextualisation of creativity and what was expected at university (as she had been), because the black schooling system disadvantaged him:

...in the first year there was a black student in the textile class called Lucky, he was coming from outside Cape Town (not sure about which province), he was also a product of black schools. He struggled with understanding the creativity levels expected from the course itself, and he gave up ...

Peers were a shaping influence in the design studio and lecture theatre as well but not necessarily a supportive influence. Buhle felt she had no peers (no friends) to study with since all her black friends were in other classes:

My challenge with being the only one [black student] studying textile design is that [at] any point in time I struggled with something or when [I] had to study for a theory test, I did not have peers to study with, for all my other black friends were in different classes. The white classmates did not understand my challenge of not wanting to say the wrong answers in their groups and therefore I saw myself studying alone, and in most cases spent my time procrastinating for the fear of addressing my real fear.

Another shaping influence in Buhle’s educational experiences was the fact that she practised Rastafari. That set her apart from white peers even more, and incurred sanction from authority:

One of the lecturers back then, had serious issues about it! Not the religion itself but the drug! She has always felt that it slowed down my creativity and thinking; I had differing views. For I felt that the cannabis is firstly not a drug, it is a herb. I also felt that it increase[d] my creativity in that by this time I realised that I was stronger in the practical side and therefore had to push myself a bit further to compensate for the theory side. There were times that I did not feel like painting, the herb helped in setting the mood for the creative juices to start flowing. It also helped in concentration especially when I had to sit myself down for theory test the next day. Did it help ... in hindsight, for a short while during my tech days. When I started working it did not help because it really did slow down my thinking, more so for the retail environment I chose, where one has to be dynamic and think on their toes all the time!

Regarding her learning experiences in first year, Buhle described how she started analysing why she did not like certain subjects and started developing tactics for learning in order to turn the dislike into a learning curve:

It only hit me at the tech that in life there are subjects I will love and there are subjects I will not like; instead of procrastinating towards the ones I do not like, and therefore settling for mediocrity, let me learn about the subject I do not like, also being clear as to why I do not like

it. Once I have this sorted out, it should be easy to address the [dislike], turning them to learning curves or finding a tactic of learning about this subject I don't like, in a way that I will enjoy!

The tech started instilling in me the concept of working smarter [rather] than harder, but I only got to start understanding this in 3rd year, during my practical classes, especially during the planning stages of the project.

With regard to the shaping influence of the predominantly white environment on her position, identity and culture, Buhle responded in a positive and open manner. Significantly, she viewed being the only black woman in various educational and professional situations, a privilege:

I have always been privileged enough to be the only black girl/person in a mostly white environment, at high school this was the case, at the tech, this was the case, at my first workplace this was the case. I have always believed that white people in general have a smarter way of working (which fascinated me all the time), hence my quest of wanting to work smarter [rather] than harder. In the work place I spent [time]sponging off my colleagues in [a]quest to work smarter; little did I realise that it had little to do with a formula they press to get an answer, it has a lot to do with CONTINUOUS DEDICATION UNTIL THEY SEE THE RESULTS THEY WANT! I have always been a procrastinator when I do not like to deal with an issue, until I am left with no choice.

Upon painting a fuller picture of her studies at the time, and describing a national design competition that she was a finalist in, Buhle remembered moments of knowledge contextualisation which became the catalyst for a professional career in fashion fabric buying with one of the national retail companies:

In 2002 I repeated the 1st year; because I had failed the previous year, it was a devastating period for me because I had to meet new classmates, and I had to convince myself not to see myself as a failure but to ... understand where I went wrong. The beauty of repeating that year was that the new class I had joined pushed me a notch as they were more creative and a bigger class [...] full of group politics. I really did not like being in that class but I quickly learnt to turn the situation to work for me. I quickly adapted to these new levels and soon that gave birth to new determination, to working smarter, to new dedication, to asking when I do not understand, to putting in extra time to “learn the subject”, to learning to enjoy textile design with its perks!

The national design competition included all the above-mentioned steps as a guide, and as a result, I then became one of the finalists! Yes it was that simple ... the [client] brief was [designing] a storage solution, and I thought of something that I have always struggled to keep neat and in control ... my underwear. It is forever all over the show, and I do not like packing underwear when I travel. So the storage [concept] was based on this ... on being able to stack it [underwear storage container] without taking up much space. The [textile] print was based on the shape of a leaf. In hindsight, being a finalist in this project helped me because that is how the retail company spotted me, and head-hunted me! (refer Fig 3.4)



Figure 3.4 Buhle with her storage container. Photo: Mr Price Home, 2003

3.4 Analysis of Buhle's story

3.4.1 Language: the devil is in the detail

The subject Textile Design Technology contained both theoretical and practical components. It served as an introduction to producing textile designs to industry-specified standards. Familiarisation with new methods, technical terminology, and dovetailing theory and practice were required in mastering the subject. A range of competencies and skills was needed to engage with this new knowledge successfully which included:

- Identification and description of materials (fibres, fabrics and products) and the technological processes pertaining to design concepts and technologies
- Identification, sourcing and description of cultural, historical and design trends/movements and the application of theoretical, historical and contemporary issues to creative design
- Competency in accurate observation, drafting skills, using experimental media and techniques relating to the preamble of the design process
- Application of analytical colour theory
- Description of two- and three-dimensional design in a variety of products
- Competency in rudimentary technical calculations required in various aspects of textile technology
- Identification, description and utilisation of materials and technological processes pertaining to design concepts and technologies
- Identification and application of appropriate marketing tools for the promotion of design ideas and products
- Sufficient oral and written skills for data processing and the promotion of design ideas and products
- Competent intermediate skills in word processing and computer-aided design

From this rather complex set of competencies, the first two proved to be the most problematic for Buhle. The rest of the skills had been in some way or another, touched upon in secondary school and related to the practical component of the subject where less talking and more doing were required. Buhle remembers: "Art was one of my school subjects and it was the only class I enjoyed because it is the only class where we did less talking!"

Students may experience some trouble and uncertainty in living through conceptual transformations needed to engage with new knowledge meaningfully. They may feel "stuck"

in between spaces — the familiar and the unfamiliar — and need an impulse or shift in outlook to get unstuck (Meyer & Land, 2005:377). Through personal contextualisation of new knowledge, and by scaffolding it on existing knowledge and using a variety of support mechanisms such as "mentoring or peer collaboration" students may be guided to change their outlook to enhance potential for additional growth on a personal level (*ibid.*). Original connections may be formed to deepen an understanding of the field, which eventually results in "academic enculturation" into the subject or discipline (Samara, 2006:120). This did not seem to happen in Buhle's case in Textile Design Technology during her first year for a number of reasons, but language and self-worth factors (Ladson-Billings, 1995:160) seemed to be central.

Although most students face a range of challenges upon entering university, including linguistic and social ones, the first two difficulties mentioned in "Analysis of Buhle's Story" can be linked substantially to language concerns. That is, her inability to interpret lectures because the subject area is packed with new information and the presentation of the content too fast, and her inability to take down lecture notes and make sense of the subject by re-interpreting notes because of complex technical language.

Hall (1997:1) asserts that language is central to meaning-making and is one of the "media" used to produce and exchange meaning. It is a symbolic practice that represents thoughts, emotions and ideas in a culture and is used to make sense of the world. Buhle is unable to make sense of the lecture and cannot produce nor exchange adequate meaning through the medium of language, the "privileged medium" of sharing meaning with other people (*ibid.*). She is unable to interpret the lecture in her own words, form a personal understanding of the content and replicate that in her note-taking for further reflection and action. Since most South Africans have been denied access to education in a preferred or commonly acceptable language such as English, through repressive political and educational practices, meanings are often neither produced nor shared adequately, as was illustrated in her case.

In addition, meaning and its material forms provide the milieu in which representation can be understood comprehensively, namely real-life practices of signifying and interpreting that "require analysis of the actual signs, symbols, figures, images, narratives, words and sounds – the material forms – in which symbolic meaning is circulated" (Hall, 1997:9). Meaning is therefore not exclusively constructed in the medium of language, but in all the symbolic practices. It was in the visual, material domain of imagery and textile design then, that Buhle

preferred constructing meaning, “ ... because most of the practical times [during practical studio assignments] the talking was based on my work, which was easy for me, but ... I could never participate in theory classes because of protecting myself from saying the wrong things”, and “I have ... a funny way of looking at things, being able to bring a ‘new’ angle to issues and as a result I was always involved in rather mature conversations”.

The third difficulty that Buhle experienced is linked to a historically racialised society and to language, namely her inability and unwillingness to participate in group learning exercises because of feelings of intimidation when working with other [white] students who are “brighter”. She remarked: “The white classmates did not understand my challenge of not wanting to say the wrong answers in their groups and therefore I saw myself studying alone, and in most cases spent my time procrastinating for the fear of addressing my real fear.” Her real fear in this instance refers to cultural difference, being an outsider but competing with insiders at an advanced level, and in the process of competing she did not want to embarrass herself by being negatively evaluated for giving the “wrong” answers.

In highly racialised societies certain cultural and political practices add to the replication of inequalities based on race in institutions and further afield (Brah & Deem, 1986; Mac an Ghail, 1996). These inequalities remain entrenched in our society and they manifest in many ways in educational institutions. In the classroom and lecture theatre in particular, concerns around the academic command of English as the medium of instruction play out. The workings of such a society, where the majority of people were denied privileges and rights afforded other groups such as access to quality education, exclude the epistemologically disenfranchised (Odora Hoppers, 2002b) by and large from the production and exchange of, and full participation in, knowledge creation.

In the group context, Buhle withdrew from collective learning activities because she felt intimidated by the “clever” students. Their “cleverness” mostly stemmed from an established enculturation in the group and a comfortable negotiation of the classroom and design studio’s creative culture and function. A privileged upbringing, and schooling supported by a technical and subject-specific command of English cultivated in a homogenous culture, contributed to their shared conceptual frameworks. The clever students are those who belong to the same culture, meaning that they “interpret the world in roughly the same ways and can express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world, in ways which will be understood by each other” (Hall, 1997:2).

3.4.2 Rastafari: a culture of Afrocentric consciousness

The fourth difficulty Buhle experienced was a cultural, and depending on the viewpoint, a sub-cultural one. She was a practising Rastafari. An Afrocentric consciousness ideology focusing on the importance of black culture and identity, the Rastafari movement encompasses themes such as the use of cannabis for religious and cultural reasons, and the rejection of the norms of Western society (Hamid, 2002). Followers assert that the smoking of cannabis enjoys Biblical sanction, is an aid to meditation and religious observance, and a facilitator of enlightenment (Hamid, 2002:37). From this perspective cannabis is viewed “primarily as a cultural good [...] which in order to have perceptible effects on humans, must be integrated into a broader cultural pattern incorporating much more than only the use of the pharmacological substance” (Hamid, 2002:25). Many more aspects underpin Rastafari, but Buhle’s difficulties centred on smoking cannabis and her motivation for its continued use.

She used cannabis for various reasons, and explains that: “I felt that the cannabis is firstly not a drug, it is a herb. I also felt that it increase[d] my creativity... there were times that I did not feel like painting, the herb helped in setting the mood for the creative juices to start flowing.” This consumption did, however, interfere with her concentration and consequent grasp of the particular subject (as explained to me and noted in her difficulties), although she declares: “It also helped in concentration especially when I had to sit myself down for [a] theory test the next day.” Choosing one over the other was not as straightforward a choice as it may seem.

Knowledge and ideas are socially constructed, culturally specific and historically located (Spratt, 1997:152). As part of the mainstream Western (white) culture and its knowledge systems, I heeded Odora Hoppers’ (2002:13a) argument that “the exclusivity that accompanied the rational and linear frameworks of Western knowledge has, in practice, meant that cosmologies that did not fit into that framework were dismissed and ridiculed”. I had to check my bias in trying to understand Buhle’s difficult choice. At the time, from a white cultural perspective, Rastafari was typically afforded neither the status of a culture nor a religion. From a conventional Xhosa cultural perspective, it was more sympathetically viewed because it was perceived as a black cultural expression, but it nevertheless did not command the status of traditional cultural and religious practices. Buhle integrated Rastafari into “a broader cultural pattern” which made it much more valuable than merely the consumption of a “pharmacological substance” (Hamid, 2002:25).

It was a meaning-making convention which she reflected in her unique personal style and expression: elegant outfits trimmed with subtle touches of green, gold, red and black; a short dreadlocked hairstyle; and at times, an outward attitude of haughty self-assurance. Rastafari provided her with a unique and proud black identity and formed a bulwark against others and the institutional culture which excluded her. This part of Buhle's story resonates with those of African-American students who experience school as being foreign and intimidating, because of cultural codes in dressing which may be sanctioned (rather than particular forms of behaviour), as proposed by Ladson-Billings (1995:161). School, and university in Buhle's case, is seen as a place where these students cannot be themselves.

Although an easy-going student, Buhle's disposition was linked to confidence levels regarding performance in the classroom, especially during stressful times such as tests and evaluations. To all appearances, however, Buhle's interaction with peers and other lecturers was comfortable, but for these stressful times. In reality, she had to negotiate operating in the two worlds of her "home community and the White Community" (Ladson-Billings, 1995:162), a situation I was very aware of. In the institutional culture of learning, drug use is not condoned and no exceptions are made for particular cultural expression.

If the definition of culture is understood as the sharing of values and meaning of a group or society (Hall, 1997:1), I now have a better understanding why she experienced these difficulties. Buhle was excluded by her own actions (withdrawing from her peer group), those of the other students (inability to interpret the world in roughly the same ways), and the historical moment (seven years after democracy). She was unable to negotiate meaning with a culturally diverse peer group that included, amongst others, Coloured, Indian, Zulu, Venda and White students, and to translate that meaning into positive interactions and actions to advance her academic success at university and in the particular subject.

The power relations of the moment militated against her inclusion. Difference in culture may be marked both symbolically through representational systems and materially through processes of inclusion and exclusion of social groups, according to Brah (1996:140). The interpretative nature of culture as reflected in meaning and representation implies that meanings cannot remain unchanged forever. Attempts to secure meaning however, facilitate the intervention of power in discourse (Hall, 1997:10). Also, when meaning is thought of more in terms of effective exchange and less in terms of "truth" (Hall, 1997:11), it may be seen as "... — a process of translation, which facilitates cultural communication while always

recognizing the persistence of difference and power between different 'speakers' within the same cultural circuit".

The fifth difficulty Buhle experienced was a culmination of the previous ones. Various factors impeded her progress in the subject as they impacted on each other. Becoming de-motivated and missing lectures, withdrawing from studio critiques, and distancing herself from group learning projects, added to under-achievement and failure. Seen in the light of Buhle's narrative, this highlighted several teaching and learning challenges arising from the multi-cultural and multi-lingual composition of the student body which were not addressed adequately at the time.

3.4.3 A culturally responsive pedagogy

From a culturally responsive teaching perspective, "the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning" is recognised (Ladson-Billings, 1994, cited in Brown University, 2012), but is frequently hard to apply. Many touchstones mark culturally responsive teaching, all of which are relevant to answer to increasing diversity in the university context. They include, amongst others, "positive perspectives on parents and families, communication of high expectations, learning within the context of culture, student-centered instruction, culturally mediated instruction, reshaping the curriculum, and teacher as facilitator" (Brown University, 2012).

Although the previous criteria were discussed with African-American school students in mind, Ladson-Billings (1995:160) argues that successful teachers "demanded, reinforced, and produced academic excellence in their students". Improved self-esteem of students is an important factor, but culturally relevant teaching asks that "teachers attend to students' academic needs, not merely make them feel good" (*ibid.*). Clear communication of high expectations is important in providing the configuration for intrinsic motivation and in encouraging a positive environment.

Learning within the context of culture needs to be encouraged because home culture and language in divergence to those of school or university may put the student at a disadvantage (Brown University, 2012). A way to achieve concordance, is to vary teaching strategies, amongst other methods. Using cooperative learning, to introduce especially new material to students, is advocated (*ibid.*). This was one of the teaching strategies I employed; that is,

using group-learning strategies to maximise learning in the first-year group where several languages were spoken and different cultural codes prevailed.

The group of white students was culturally more homogenous and took to group and cooperative learning comfortably. Buhle did not participate in the group-learning processes, largely owing to the reasons outlined previously. We discussed and decided upon some interventions to help her overcome social isolation and lack of peer support in respect of her academic and language needs. First of all, these included additional tutoring from the institution's Language and Writing Centre. Although a constructive step, it had to be implemented sensitively since it was perceived by some students in the group as a "stigmatised" intervention. Being singled out even more for remedial reasons may well have helped jeopardise the initiative. Buhle started attending sessions at the Language and Writing Centre but discontinued them since she found them of little value and a substantial addition to her work load.

3.4.4 Setting the stage for future success by doing design

Finally, the area that Buhle was particularly strong in, namely, design practice, became a showcase for her creative ability and imaginative solutions to design problems the year after she failed Textile Design Technology. She was selected as one of the finalists in a prestigious national design competition. Buhle had designed a collapsible, cylindrical, three-tiered canvas storage container for underwear. The textile print was based on organic shapes and she originated a stylised leaf motif which she executed as an "all-over" design, making use of a natural colour palette. The finalists were featured in the media and Buhle remembers: "In hindsight, being a finalist in this project helped me because that is how the retail company spotted me, and head-hunted me."

The origin of her designs, their techniques and execution, did not particularly reflect her own cultural signature. This was possibly a contributing factor to its inclusion in the finalists' selection, since the market was geared largely towards satisfying the needs of the mainstream Western (white) consumer. This is relevant from a current design perspective, since the subjective underpinning of design (Nelson, 2009:113) is seen as the lifeblood of the origin of a culturally authentic (Hagen, 2011) and connected product, a position now established in design.

In contemporary design, local identity is celebrated and is seen to counter the homogenous nature of global design (Elk, 2011; Hagen, 2011). A distinctive design language helps to establish a foothold for South African designers in the international market. Marianne Fassler (2012), a well-respected South African fashion designer, asserts that creative designers have to be original and unique, and can only succeed if truly connected to time and place in the world. She sees herself as a white African designer with no connection to Europe. Fassler embraces an alternative, non-prescriptive and cross-cultural fashion design sensibility conceptualised to "challenge the dearth of really original, interesting design work in South Africa" (Fassler, 2012). Many designers have been honing their situated response to international design in the recent past, but some still "turn to the international media for their inspiration" (Fassler, 2012). Influences which manifest in culturally specific creative outputs, however, have helped to anchor a local identity displaying a rich, authentic design quality (Chisin, 2003:89). In the areas of fashion, textile, surface and product design, acclaimed local designers have used cultural specificity and place as the hallmark of their signature ranges to expand market opportunity.

3.5 Implications and lessons learned

The potential for meaning-making and reciprocal learning in a complex educational context, at a particular historical moment, lay at the heart of this co-constructed narrative.

Looking back after many years at Buhle's difficulties, I realise that my arguments in relation to her under-achievement were rather naively constructed. Many other complex factors were at play which influenced her academic career. Also, the emphasis on cultural aspects overshadowed design aspects because of the prominence of race and ethnicity issues at the time. Documenting the event nevertheless provided an impulse to approach teaching from an empathetic, authentic and open point of view (Webb, 1997:197), and initiated a sensitivity to inter-cultural experiences which still underscores my professional practice.

By examining my own practice and reflecting on Buhle's story at a time when multi-cultural education at the university I was teaching at was still in its infancy, I hoped to explore the value of a different world view and strengthen my understanding of it by building dialogue around specific challenges. This retrospective narrative enquiry (Trahar, 2009) provided me with many useful markers along the way in multi-cultural design education.

In hindsight then, my interpretation of Buhle's academic, cultural and social challenges was either too simplistic or too abstract. From a practical point of view, targeted interventions co-developed with Buhle and the rest of the group potentially could have yielded better results in addressing her academic and social needs. In the teaching context, concretising classroom instruction through demonstrating practical application by using, amongst others, examples and scenarios (Gay, 2002:113), result in "pedagogical bridges" which help with knowledge construction and the formation of original connections. These bridges connect prior knowledge with new knowledge, the known with the unknown, and abstractions with lived realities (Gay, 2002). Lived realities and experience in turn may strengthen the ability to make original connections which illuminate thinking and inform scholarly practice. Lived experience expressed as an embodied ontology facilitates a way of engaging with the world to enact one's positionality and voice.

Did I engage adequately with Buhle's lived experience? This was an area I did not explore sufficiently in my response to her academic difficulties. The "examples and scenarios" ought to have included culturally specific and appropriate examples to facilitate knowledge construction and original connections in that subject. Lessons could have been adapted to include ways of communicating and learning that are more familiar to students from diverse backgrounds. This is an aspect that surfaced more in my teaching practice as I analysed preferred learning styles and ways of including cultural preferences in learning situations, as discussed in Vignette Two. Also, in order to engage lived experience a structured facilitation needs to be offered that will clarify the student's ontological position in relation to others in the group, in the social context of learning. A strong personal contextualisation of knowledge is needed. This can be sparked by a structured facilitation, a profound personal experience, reflection or other lived impulse which may precipitate the personal contextualisation.

3.6 Conclusion

This narrative points to an organic process of developing inter-cultural communication and learning in the design studio and lecture theatre. In a changing educational context, Buhle and I examined belief systems, positions, values and cultural backgrounds. Culturally responsive teaching methods and cultural sensitivity emerged as areas demanding urgent attention and action. It has taken many years to achieve some form of cultural equity, including the importance in teaching and learning of cultural difference and legitimacy of

other voices. The institution had started a transformation process when I left to study in Australia. Upon my return, the first black rector of the institution remarked: "The Cape Technikon is a very different place to when you left" (Balintulo, 2004). This observation challenged me in many ways.

Did we as teachers transform? Did I transform enough in my teaching methods and world view to practise an inclusive pedagogy in line with respecting all students? In our context, social constructions, political discourse, and ethnicity will always be an integral part of education, no matter what it is that we teach. Therefore, my practitioner writing and research has, from the outset, focused on culture, language, ethnicity, and all the constituent parts of difference. Now the focus is shifting to include the constituent parts of commonality in concordance with difference, by developing an authentic voice to sit comfortably with the discomfort of all that a heterogeneous society brings, Goldberg (1994:24) since the establishment of "homogeneous social arrangements, even in the academy" requires the suppression of heterogeneity.

Staying with the theme of cultural agency in learning, the next vignette describes the process of supervising the creation of culturally unique design solutions by a multi-cultural group of fourth-year students in the Surface Design programme. The students' knowledge acquisition processes and learning preferences are analysed, amongst other factors, as possible determinants of their academic success.

3.7 Retrospection

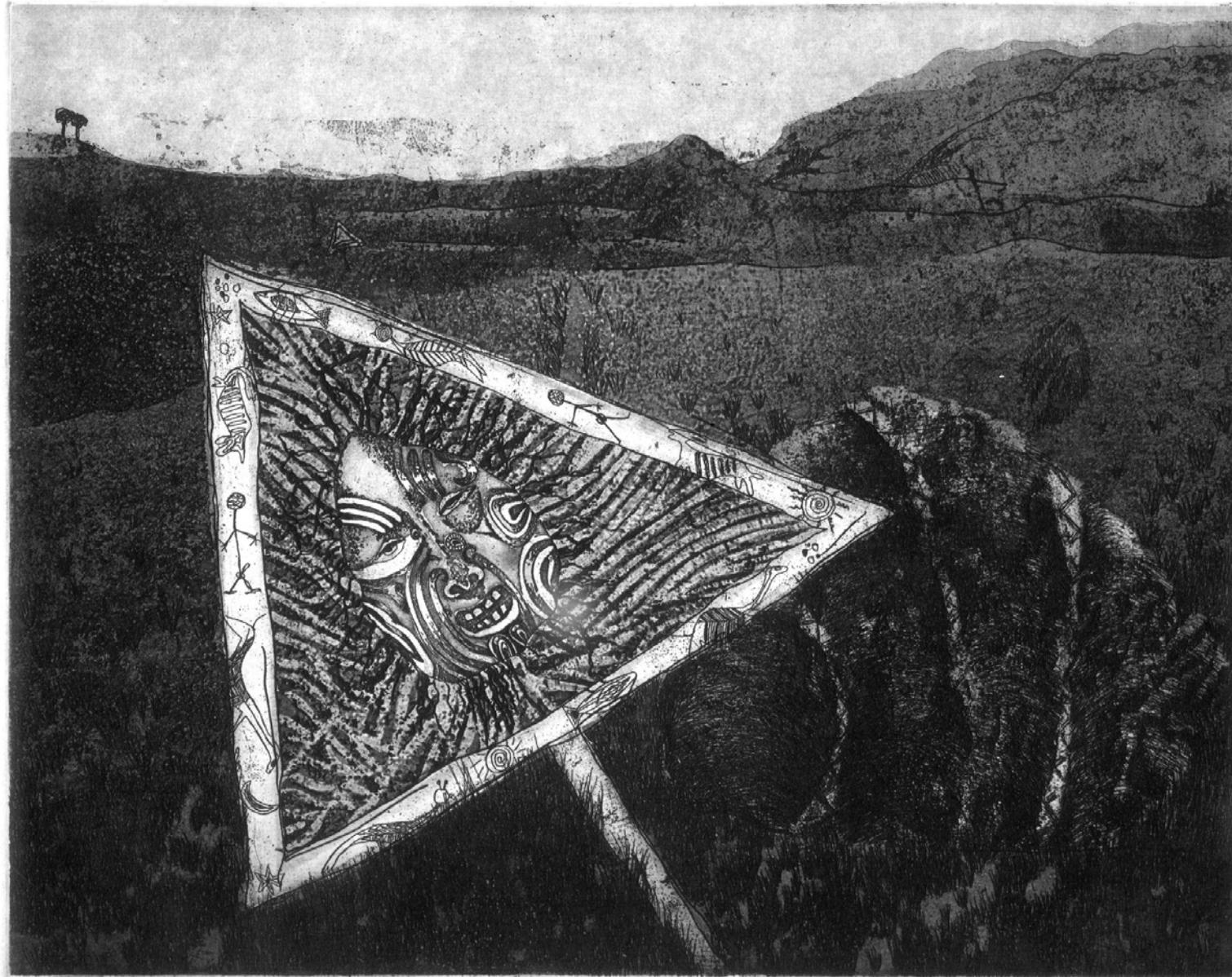
Only upon encountering similar difficulties in engaging with new knowledge and trying to contextualise it, the way Buhle had done, did her story resonate with me from a lived experience point of view. My own learning experiences in Australia left me, at times, the outsider.

The personal contextualisation of new knowledge regarding the correlation between iconography and text in the fine art discipline of printmaking occurred upon reflection, when I examined an etching entitled "Yield!" which I had done some years ago. We frequently understand and ascribe meaning to events in hindsight, and I realised my interest in social and cultural difference and creative expression rooted in a cultural context was already present in my undergraduate work. The etching in question depicted a yield sign – perched askew in an

arid landscape – with the image of a Maori tribesman located in the triangle. The symbolic meaning of this image was one of conceding to marginalised cultures and minority groups, some of whom are confronted with obsolescence in the face of pervasive westernisation.

Language “stands for” ideas, emotions or abstract concepts in a similar way that visual images “stand for” ideas, emotions or abstract concepts (Hall, 1997:1). In visual language then, the medium of etching afforded the actual image (and the text I used to discuss it) the signifier form, and the concept and idea of conceding to minority groups and the ubiquity of westernisation, the signified. Signifying therefore visually and linguistically functioned as a sign that conveyed meaning. Consequently meaning could be constructed and exchanged between me, the viewer/reader, and the image and text.

I chose to rework “Yield!” and present it as a visual summary of this vignette and particularly of Buhle’s story, since her narrative speaks of being marginalised, and of inhabiting an in-between space.



That's what learning is. You suddenly understand something you understood all your life, but in a new way (Doris Lessing, 1919-)

Learning is social practice (Bourdieu, 1967; Vygotsky, 1978; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:1). It also occurs within a particular context. Studio-based design education provided the context for this learning event. The studio is a valuable resource insofar as instruction in this space is premised on one-to-one tutorials and group critiques (Duggan, 2004:71). This is a particularly useful aspect in getting to know intimately the “contextual factors, cultural nuances, discourse features, logic and rhythm, delivery, vocabulary usage, role relationships of speakers and listeners, intonation, gestures and body movements” of students from different ethnic groups and how to accommodate them in educational spaces (Gay, 2002:111).

Learning as contextualised social practice includes an ongoing process comprising the interactions of students, teachers, knowledge and setting (SAQA, 2003). Student/teacher interactions require the use of holistic pedagogical methods in the development of studio practice, based on “a closer fit between students’ home culture and the school” (Ladson-Billings, 1995:159), thereby catering to the different needs of students. “Culturally relevant teachers utilize students’ culture as a vehicle for learning” (Ladson-Billings, 1995:160), but how is this achieved?

Using students’ culture as a vehicle for learning is a particularly tricky requisite in the local context. English is the medium of instruction at the UoT, despite the recognition of 11 official languages that support social interaction models as diverse as the students and lecturers themselves. What do holistic pedagogical methods encompass then in this instance? Also, if knowledge construction is a process of making meaning through interaction (McKenna, 2003:218), what type of interactions between students, teachers, knowledge and setting will yield the desired result of mentoring students successfully towards the completion of their design degree while preparing them for changing times? How do we as lecturers accommodate different learning preferences and discourse approaches in the design studio? How do we “hold the space” (KaosPilots, 2011) while being mindful of individual students? The design projects and learning experiences of Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan and Siphon provided the setting for this exploration.

4.1 To whom it may concern

Teachers’ journal documentary entry: November 2005

Robin and I are reading the prospective Bachelor of Technology students’ letters of motivation for entry into the new programme in 2006. We share some thoughts about the students as we go through their letters. They are three years down the line with their studies in Textile Design, and in a good space. It is a strong and cohesive group. Next year will be a challenge. Will they be flexible enough in their thinking and doing to cope with mostly self-directed study and the new direction and identity of the programme? Surface Design is a coat of many colours. Not so much focus on product, a shift in thinking ... also for us lecturers ... the whole department in fact. We smile when we notice that most letters start with the same salutation despite the fact that there are no male lecturers in the department: “To whom it may concern, Dear Teacher, Dear Sir or Madam...”

Rose: “Textile design is my passion and I would really like to get the opportunity to further my studies in this field by doing my BTech degree. I believe that I will have so much more opportunities in the textile industry if I have a degree behind me. I have not decided on a specific project or problem anything yet, but I have a lot of ideas as to what I would like to concentrate on and what I would like to accomplish [sic].”

Zeke: “I think I should be given a chance to express myself and make use of the knowledge that I have gained in my three years of studying. I think the university needs people like me who make use of chances if they are available. The theme that I have is the importance of textiles and fabric in human life. I have a vision and a goal. I want to bring back the dignity of the textile and fashion industry in South Africa, by making people aware of the importance of this industry in our daily lives. BTech is when one is given a chance to express themselves and I strongly believe that the standard of education and intellect is going higher and everyone must be given a chance to go as far as they wish in their academics [sic].”

Elizabeth: “It will be interesting to do BTech in Surface Design. Besides it is a necessity in this era that we are living in. Life is no longer about being technical only ... this makes it essential for one to aim higher in furthering one’s studies. The competition in a working environment is high. BTech is an important time for one to develop some competency as one prepares for the business world where life is real. At the end of BTech I’m expecting a better, well

informed and qualified me ready to adventure into life. This will be the time dedicated to myself. What will make it more interesting is that it is structured different from the three years I had here in the university [sic].”

Jane: “I would like to complete my studies successfully, including the fourth year when I will specialise and build up contacts that may come in useful in future ... I have to discuss next year with my parents ... I need their support but I am very motivated to make a success of my studies. I believe in myself [sic].”

Olan: “During these three years of study, I started from a person who does not understand textile design and eventually begin to discover diversity of the designing field in this course. Thus I come to realise this is something I want to pursue. I am interested in the technological, cultural and social side of the textiles industry. When I am consistently experiencing the bitterness and the sweetness of the journey of creation, I discovered some questions which are worthwhile to be discovered. But at the same time I am facing the problem of knowing that the more I tried to dig the land of knowledge, the more I started to know how poor the knowledge I had possessed. I then understand that it is necessary for me to study further in order to push myself to the next level of qualification of the design field. The career field I am interested in so far is fashion industry, trend prediction, home textiles and social outreach. I strongly believe after finishing my fourth year of study I will definitely know more about the career I will be passionate about for the rest of my life [sic].”

Sipho: “I wish to parachute into a higher curriculum of academy. Since BTech is seen as a standard portfolio of learning in the world at large, allowing me to proceed with my academics would be a sound investment for the country’s investment. Achieving this with dedication and hard work, I trust that my appeal to you is sound. Making me one of the few creative black faces in the Textile Design Industry, my work as a designer speaks for itself. Researching has never been my strong point, but I have seem to overcome this by starting to upgrade myself by indulging in books that will strengthen my vocabulary. Outside recreation like poetry and listening to meetings of the SRC have encouraged me to accelerate myself in being a better individual academically. I wish to conclude by saying that UNIVERSITY needs me as the future of design. I am here to make a difference and you will be proud to say one day, ‘That is one of our students’ [sic].”

As we finish reading the letters of motivation, we note again how students share much more than their plans for the year ahead. They share their dreams and vulnerability, and hopes for

their future. We use the messages to gauge commitment and intention, but also to read between the lines and listen for anxieties and difficulties. Interviews with the applicants are scheduled for the following week, always a good time to sound out priorities, intention and commitment.

4.2 Background

Teaching imports the “macro-level societal context” into the “micro-level classroom” context (Ladson-Billings, 1995:160). The unfolding of democratisation in higher education in South Africa has been a tricky process (Roberts, 2006; Sehoole, 2010). It is a process characterised by disparities on many levels — mirroring the societal context — and one in which complexity abounds.

Since the mid 1990s, educational programmes and curricula in South Africa came under scrutiny. The call went out to higher education institutions (HEIs) for the inspection and amendment of curricula to address epistemological grounds and assist in the transformation of education (Lockett, 2001: 53). The epistemological grounds included the need to assimilate subjugated and new knowledge in curricula, to help promote citizenship, to accommodate diversity and engender a culture of human rights (Roberts, 2006).

Design research and curricula too, have to be responsive to the needs of a multi-cultural and increasingly internationalised student body. Complexity around teaching diverse students asks for cultural alignment between teachers and students in an ethnically diverse classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995:160), and also in studio-based education. This requires different approaches in different scenarios, and no single strategy can be applied as a standard solution. Socio-cultural, educational and personal contexts need to be considered. Learning and the Surface Design curriculum are not discussed as a syllabus which outlines content, but rather in a broader context, that of learning as contextualised social practice.

4.3 Design: a changing programme in an altered landscape

Design education is no stranger to coping with change. This is partly due to a fragmentation in design practices “driven by disciplinary and professional demarcations” (Love, 2000:242), which means that a high level of adaptability was and is required in the various design

disciplines. Friedman (2003:508) argues that “the field of design embraces the profession, the discipline, and a shifting and often ambiguous range of related cognate fields and areas of inquiry”.

The design students referred to in the journal documentary reflection had to cope with change and demands at many levels too. Increasing pressure regarding high-level proficiency in digital technology, the importance of arts/crafts skills, the incorporation of social, ethical and environmental issues in design and greater expectations at the university of technology, and ultimately a changed workplace and society have all added to the pressure (Love, 2000:249).

A shift in the choice of research topics in Surface Design — topics that were previously more vocationally focused and discipline specific when the course offering was Textile Design — was aligned to curriculum changes to engage a wider industry base. The curriculum was conceived not to design only for an expanded industry but also for “improving human futures” (Love, 2000:242). This was needed partly since the specific and narrow area of design specialisation required for the local textile industry (under threat and consistently downscaling), became questionable. Love (2000) argues that human futures are at the centre of design activity since design is aimed at creating positive change for individuals and societies by responding to social, ethical and cultural concerns. Casting the net wider, the new Surface Design programme started focusing on social design, and research topics veered towards the Design for Sustainability (DfS) field, including ethical and environmental design and socially responsive design.

As reflective practitioners we are aware of the impact that our preconceptions, value systems and personal beliefs may have on our understanding (and shaping) of students’ learning events. To balance our views with the students’ perspectives, their experiences and frameworks were actively and extensively drawn upon during the biography seminars and studio critiques. Aspects such as learning approaches, ontological views and cultural positions were therefore examined to help us understand the difficulties encountered by some students during the design research process. In other words, we sought to put ourselves in their shoes.

4.4 Research methods

Against this backdrop, Robin, a colleague in the department, and I started an active dialogue around the importance of design as social practice and design for social responsibility. In designing with and for other people, designers need to be able to see the world from different perspectives. In studio-based design education, “care and authentic openness to the Other” (Webb, 1997:197), may help lay the foundation for an expanded perspective. With this, we took into account that “academic knowledge and skills, when situated in the lived experience” of students (and teachers) are of more value and meaning (Gay, 2002:106). Academic knowledge and skills embedded in cultural relevance are also more accessible. This speaks to the principles of culturally responsive teaching (Cazden & Legget, 1981; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982; Gay, 2002) and culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Robin and I aimed to strengthen our understanding in this narrative enquiry of the influence of culturally embedded ways of knowing in the origination and development of students’ research topics. The research dissertations and studio-based design work of six Surface Design students were selected as a culturally and academically representative sample of their creative research. Best practices and challenges with regard to their diverse learning context are explored. The design students’ academic success is analysed in a qualitative manner by investigating their learning styles and a reflective methodology is used as the basis of the exploration.

As reflective practitioners (Schön, 1983) we appreciate the significant contribution that reflective research methods offer, especially over time, to teaching and learning in the creative disciplines. Reflection serves to support the basic tenet that meaning cannot be imposed by direct instruction, but is rather created by the students’ learning activities, their approaches to learning, and the interaction between participants (Biggs, 2003). Reflection also provides students and design lecturers with an opportunity, in a particular setting, to deepen processes of understanding and active participation. The technical-rational base of professional knowledge is countered by Schön’s (1983:69) notion of an alternative epistemology of practice “which places technical problem-solving within a broader context of reflective inquiry ... and links the art of practice in uncertainty and uniqueness to the scientist’s art of research”, and also that the “practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion” in ambiguous or exceptional situations (Schön, 1983:68).

We gathered data monthly in 2006 during studio critiques, and reflection was used by students and lecturers alike in the form of reflective journal-keeping, photography, and peer-review sessions. By examining the research dissertations and studio-based design work of six Surface Design students — selected to reflect a culturally and academically representative sample — challenges and best practices with regard to a diverse learning context in studio-based education were explored. Informing this exploration are the students' design research processes, their frames of reference or perspectives made known in their lived experience and embodied knowledge, and their preferred learning styles (Webb, 1997:205-208).

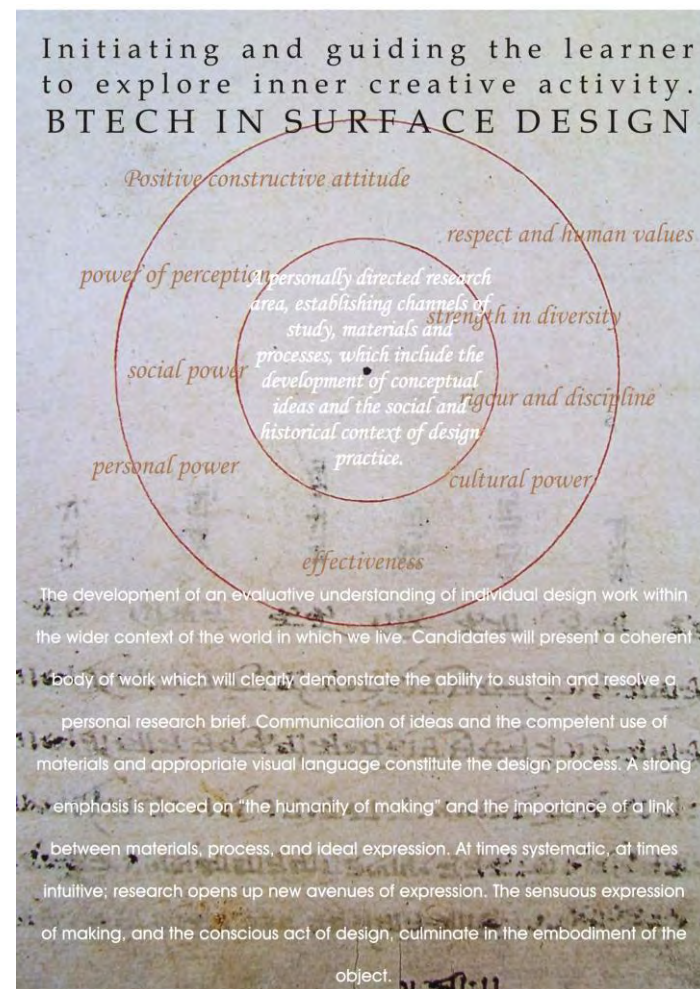


Figure 4.1 BTEch study guide. Photo: Chisin, 2006

4.5 Biography and lived experience in topic origination

The Surface Design research topics originated and were developed during a seminar series focusing on biographical modules, with the goal of mining students' lived experience and cultural ways of knowing. The modules trace the parallel between the students' individual life

history and the biography of humanity as represented in the history of art and design. Art/design history is explored in this context as “outer biography” — the bigger picture — while individual history is explored as personal biography — the intimate picture — with its outer manifestations and inner creative activity. The modules are summarised in the study guide (Refer Fig 4.1).

In the design education context, students are encouraged to align outer biographies and personal biographies to help change the role of design from a product-oriented activity to a systemic and strategic one (Manzini, 2007). This implies a changing role of design that embraces social innovation to make technology more human again. Also, design has to contribute to make the world a more sustainable place by shaping relationships and by valorisation of existing physical, social and cultural local resources (*ibid.*).

It became apparent during the first semester that despite the ontological foundations of the biography modules, some students experienced great difficulty in directing and advancing the research process actively. The topics were refined after the modules during individual meetings with lecturers, supported by studio critiques in which peers and lecturers participated. This interactive context was beneficial to some students, but others withdrew and rarely participated in these studio-based activities.

As lecturers we started questioning our own influence and perspectives in guiding their research processes. Were we unintentionally imposing external frameworks on students since value systems and “the subjective influence of the researcher’s [or educator’s] identity is seen as unavoidable ...”? (McKenna, 2003:219). That is, imposing frameworks from a culturally specific perspective that were not necessarily inclusive of the diversity in the group? The design discourse, encompassing the production of knowledge not only through language but also action (Hall, 1997:44), based in the studio in this instance, was related to the dominant Western discourse, which might have marginalised the viewpoints and values central to other discourses (Gough, 2001:13).

In addition, complexity characterises the design research process. In this case, as with other practice-based research topics, students have to be able to manipulate image and text skilfully in order to convey their concepts. This is a juggling act and Hockey and Allen-Collinson (2000:350) state that “anxiety about the need to incorporate theory into the project sometimes disrupted students’ practice fundamentally, so that the student lost confidence in the practice and became theory-directed”. Efforts at dovetailing theory and practice may also

result in the project becoming overly practice-based, with theory as an add-on. Smith and Dean (2009:1-38) allow for a reciprocal relationship between theory and practice in creative arts research. Practice-led research and research-led practice are both methods that ought to function iteratively to advance the research project.

4.6 Discourse in the design studio: primary and secondary approaches

Students enrol for two practice-based subjects and a theory subject, equally weighted, which together constitute the Surface Design research project. A holistic and comprehensive understanding of the design process and research problems is advocated in the biography seminar series, with a focus on a personal understanding of “the connections between particulars and gestalt” (Dahlman, 2007:281). In the process of cultivating this comprehensive understanding, two approaches and learning styles were noted in the student group during the development of the research project: the primary discourse approach and the secondary or academic discourse approach (Gough & Bock, 2001:96), underpinned by deep and surface learning styles (Webb, 1997:195).

The primary discourse approach and the secondary discourse approach (learned or academic discourse approach acquired in social institutions beyond the family) as discussed by Gough and Bock (2001:96), were first identified during the seminar series in the first term, and were tracked for the duration of the year. It appeared that some students employed a multi-dimensional discourse approach. The primary discourse approach has more in common with African norms which are embedded in the collective and value oral tradition highly (M’Rithaa, 2012). It is also in a sense, “one’s home discourse” (Gough & Bock, 2001:96), reflected in ordinary conversation that demands no expertise or linguistic know-how as condition for participation.

The secondary (academic) discourse approach is explained by Gough (2000:53) as having more to do with “apprenticeship to western rhetorical norms – the shape of thinking and writing and talking which takes on a culturally quite unique form of discourse ... [it] is strongly based on a rapid journey to a point”. There are, however, examples of secondary discourse in “oral” cultures, which share certain features with “literate” cultures’ secondary discourse approaches (Gough & Bock, 2001:96). Secondary discourse in “oral” cultures is characterised by a slow style of speech, a circling of the point, and the use of pauses to facilitate brief moments of reflection (Gough & Bock, 2001:98). Instances of secondary

discourse use in, for instance, the Xhosa culture, include rhetoric engaged in ceremonies, “traditional legal discourse, praise poetry and folk tales” (*ibid.*).

Although the two approaches differ in their origination and intention, they are not mutually exclusive. Some of the structural features of “oral” secondary discourse are similar to those found in academic secondary discourse. Both include a coherent framework, an opening and a closing phase, and a thematic, stanzaic structure (Gough, 2000). Both primary and secondary discourse approaches may include features of surface and deep learning styles.

4.6.1 Learning styles in the design studio: surface and deep preferences

Surface and deep learning preferences have been critiqued extensively in a number of ways, but there remains much food for thought in the debate (Beattie *et al.*, 1997; Webb, 1997). Webb (1997:205) mounts a critique of the binary nature of the deep/surface metaphor, and suggests bridging the polarities by acknowledging the value of both approaches. He equates the partiality for the deep approach in academia with the Western tradition of valorising the concept or idea, as opposed to the rote learning of “words, symbols, representations” (*ibid.*). Webb (1997:206) questions whether the non-Western tradition may well value a surface approach as illustrated by the history of “learning by ritual chanting (prayer; times-tables), ... oral histories, genealogies and mantras learned and passed on by repetition”. Also, the fact that one is subsumed within the other suggests that they are at work contemporaneously (Webb, 1997:207).

To help bridge polarities, it may be more useful then to look at learning *orientations* to provide richer insights into students’ learning processes (Beattie *et al.*, 1997). Beattie *et al.* (1997:1) argue, however, that the “deep-surface distinction” is appropriate in examining certain facets of student learning including “learning intentions, learning styles, learning approaches ... and learning outcomes”. The specific context in which the distinction is applied must be defined carefully. Moreover, it is unrealistic to assume that a deep approach to learning is universally desirable, since it may be necessary, given the nature of the knowledge to be acquired, to adopt a surface approach as Webb (1997:206) asserts.

Beattie *et al.* (1997:1) argue that there are “several components which influence a student’s overall learning orientation”. The learning orientation comprises the learning style and learning approach and is established in part by the “student’s personality, motivation and

study methods and partly by contextual factors such as the learning task, the attitudes and enthusiasms of the lecturer and the forms of assessment” (*ibid.*). They argue for a fuller understanding of the multifaceted and relational character of deep and surface learning and its interface with the teaching and learning environment to improve educational strategies.

Students with a preference for a surface approach to learning tend to engage with the “shell” of a particular learning task first. They work with the obvious and literal acquisition of knowledge and employ rote-learning methods, *but* deep learning may be present simultaneously (Webb, 1997:207). Biggs (2003) contends that students favouring the deep approach engage the task meaningfully by using the most appropriate cognitive activities for achieving their goals. Deep learning styles display appropriate background knowledge and a well-structured knowledge base, the ability to focus at a high conceptual level, and the ability to work with principles, underlying meaning and successful applications (*ibid.*).

The following figures illustrate some of the practical outcomes and theoretical components of their research projects, and outline students’ learning preferences and discourse approaches. The success of these strategies in their research projects is discussed and measured against submission of their projects for the final assessment.

4.7 Research project results: practical outcomes, learning preferences and discourse approaches

4.7.1 Rose

Rose, an animal-lover, developed her research topic in line with the current international animal anti-cruelty sentiment in the fashion industry. This means that animals should not suffer in any way if fleece, fur or hair is obtained for use in the fashion industry and that harvesting should always happen in a humane way. Angora rabbits, Merino sheep, Alpacas and German Shepherd dogs were among the animals used for their coats. The harvesting methods included shearing of fleece and gathering of shed hairs.



Figure 4.2 Rose. Photo: Suskin, 2006

Rose started her research process in the first term by keeping a reflective journal that included readings, recorded thoughts, concepts, verse, songs and sketches to inform her creative process. During the interactive seminar series in the first term, she paid particular attention to the notion of an embodied knowledge. Macklin (2006) describes embodied knowledge as grounded in tactility and the senses, and not only in the intellect, as does Shilling (2002:101) with his notion of “placing the mind *in* the body”. Rose linked the conceptual problem with embodied memory during making, and developed a range of garments in line with the various archetypes depicted in selected fairy tales (refer Fig 4.2). Her preferred way of working incorporated concept and practice, drawing and designing, felting the fleeces, and dyeing them with organic dyestuffs while recording the process in her journals.

She continued her engagement with the topic on a multi-dimensional level, and achieved success in the final assessment when she qualified as one of the top two BTech students in that year.

4.7.2 Zeke

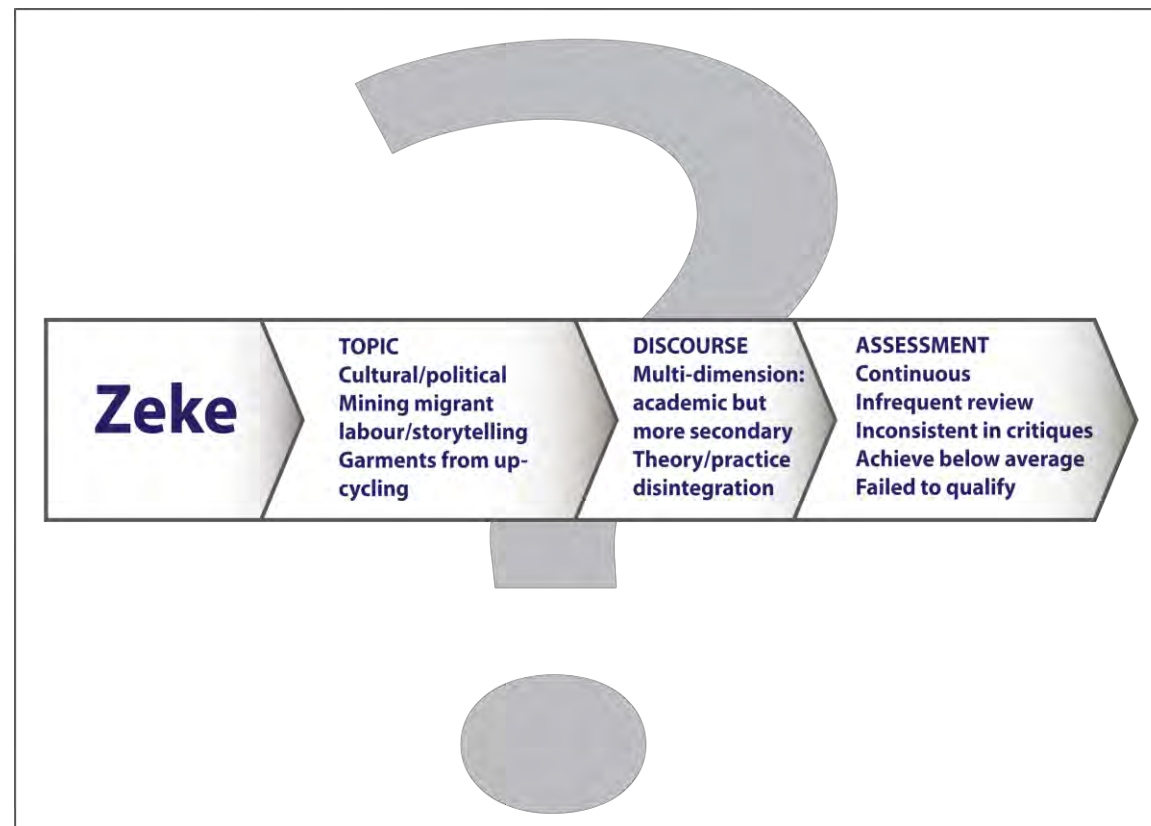


Figure 4.3 Zeke

A politically active student, Zeke developed a research topic that investigated the phenomenon of migrant labour in South Africa, with particular reference to the mine workers on the Witwatersrand gold mines. Interest in the topic originated through childhood experiences when her father, a mine worker, shared stories at length from the workplace with his family. The story-telling tradition was in keeping with the secondary discourse approach, and of great consequence to the student because her father seldom went home. Zeke sought to bring a fresh and positive perspective to this controversial labour practice, by highlighting the integrity and inner strength required from the workers to perform strenuous and often dangerous physical labour to secure a livelihood. Her creative response to migrant labour issues was to analyse items of worker clothing, and by de-constructing and re-constructing them, originate a range of clothing to enhance awareness of and honour the worker.

Zeke also started her research process in the first term by doing reflective journaling, including reading, recording thoughts, concepts, verse, songs and sketches. During the

interactive seminars, she enthusiastically spoke about her topic and its cultural and political relevance. We encouraged the embodied knowledge approach at the seminar series, and it seemed to have been effective at first, with Zeke drawing on her background and personal experience for the choice of fabrics, styles and creative techniques. She failed, however, to link the conceptual problem with embodied knowledge during the process of making; in fact the process of making was largely lacking. Instead she continued to *talk* about what she planned to do without producing much evidence (refer Fig 4.3). Zeke interpreted the topic literally, and was concerned with detail from the outset. She was largely unable to visualise the project holistically. This in turn resulted in her struggling to reconcile the dissertation and the practical body of work. Zeke ultimately was unable to respond adequately on the conceptual, academic and practical levels.

4.7.3 Elizabeth



Figure 4.4 Elizabeth. Photo: Suskin, 2006

A patriot who loves her country, Elizabeth wanted to design textile prints and fabrics that are culturally specific in a Botswanan textile market characterised by European-inspired prints. Elizabeth started her research process in the first term by doing reflective journalling that included reading, recording concepts and thoughts, songs, poetry and drawings. She attended the interactive group seminars, and explored the notion of embodied knowledge extensively, a guiding factor in her practice and theory. She focused specifically on balancing her learning approaches.

She was consistently on time for studio critiques and presentations, and she continued her engagement with the topic on a multi-dimensional level. As the year progressed, she developed her topic independently and qualified as one of the top five BTech students in that year (refer Fig 4.4 for textile range).

4.7.4 Jane

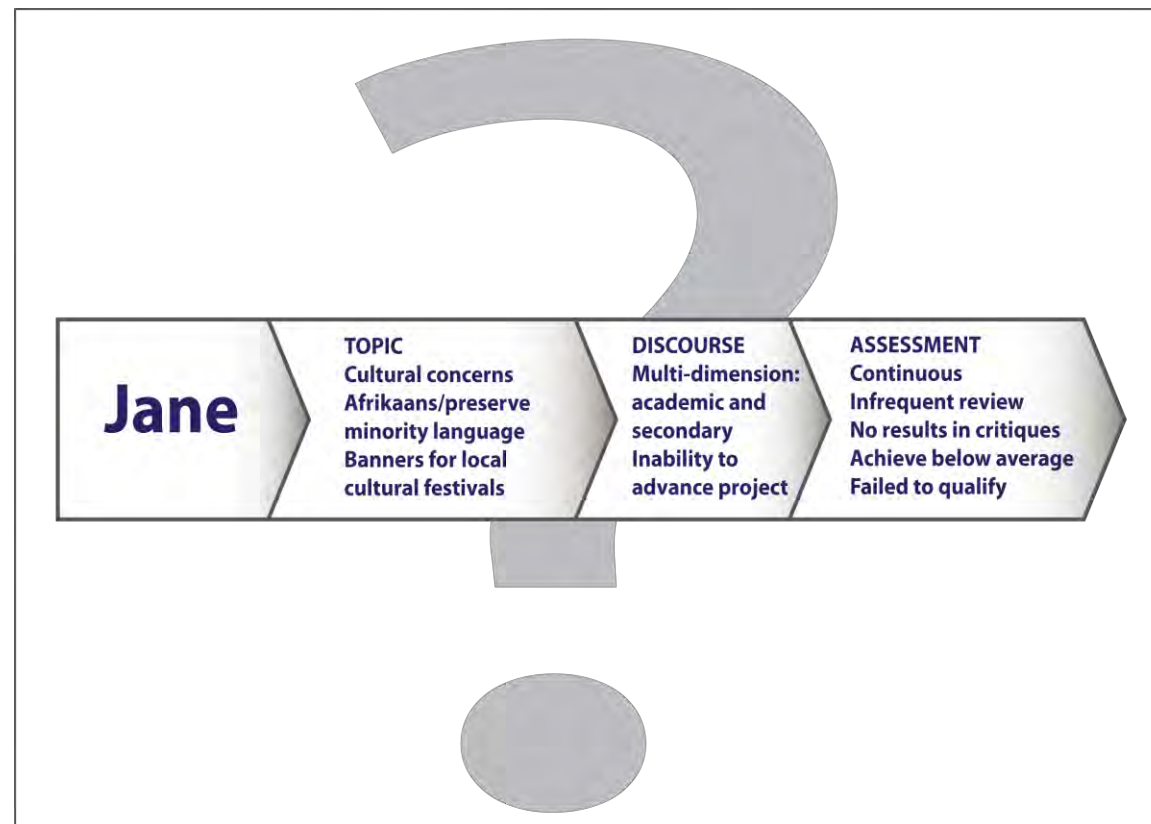


Figure 4.5 Jane

Passionate about the preservation of the Afrikaans language, Jane wanted to make a contribution to its promotion and use. She made little use of reflective journalling, and instead tried to negotiate with the group and lecturers to provide right and wrong answers, a strategy she found hard to change. Jane did, however, investigate the topic on a multi-dimensional level at first, making use of an academic discourse approach and a secondary discourse approach underpinned by a surface learning approach. She could not advance the research project beyond the initial stages and was unable to progress to a deep learning approach (refer Fig 4.5). Jane interpreted the topic too literally, and was concerned with detail from the start rather than visualising the global outcome as the project developed. This in turn resulted in her inability to reconcile the dissertation and the practical body of work as an iterative unit.

4.7.5 Olan



Figure 4.6 Olan. Photo: Suskin, 2006

A deep cultural interest in the tradition of Origami inspired Olan’s research topic. She focused on how this traditional, creative paper-folding technique could be used differently to manipulate fabrics in the design of a range of garments. The range formed the foundation of a classical wardrobe with less need for extensive seasonal upgrading. Her objective was to illustrate how excessive consumerism can be controlled through promoting trends in minimalism (refer Fig 4.6 for garment range).

She investigated the topic on a multi-dimensional level, making use of an academic discourse approach and a secondary discourse approach underpinned by deep and surface learning approaches. She also attended the interactive group seminars, but at times found it hard to move away from the theoretical concepts underlying deep learning and transforming them into practice. Philosophy and theory were deep anchors in her research process.

4.7.6 Sipho



Figure 4.7 Siphho. Photo: Suskin, 2006

Passionate about cultural Xhosa practices, Siphho focused on enhancing traditional Xhosa elements inherent in selected practices to inform the range of contemporary menswear.

He investigated the topic on a multi-dimensional level, making use of an academic discourse approach and a secondary discourse approach underpinned by deep and surface learning approaches. Although Siphho made extensive use of the secondary discourse approach, he indicated that his preferred learning approach was academic discourse. At first his academic arguments were somewhat incoherent, but subsequently he developed a more balanced learning approach and his arguments were clearer and more to the point. He also attended the off-campus interactive group seminars, and focused on balancing his learning approaches. Siphho explored the notion of embodied knowledge extensively as he drew directly from his own experiences in a personal cultural context to underpin his research process.

4.8 Discussion of the research project results

From a broader perspective, the difference in students’ academic success and pass rates can be ascribed to a range of factors including historical ones. Apartheid in general and apartheid education particularly influenced students from traditionally disadvantaged communities and formed their educational experiences (Gough & Bock, 2001:102).

Significantly, both Zeke and Siphho are Xhosa and share a similar socio-economic background. Their academic outcomes were disparate; one qualified and the other failed. Both Rose and Jane are Afrikaners and share a similar socio-economic background; Rose qualified and Jane failed. Elizabeth, who is Motswanan and Olan who is Korean, enjoyed a very different schooling background from the South African students. They achieved different degrees of academic success; Elizabeth passed with distinction and Olan scraped a pass. What these students had in common was the fact that they were English second-language speakers. The medium of instruction at the university of technology is English. When teaching a multi-cultural, multi-lingual group such as this one, problems inevitably arise since South Africa has 11 official languages. Zeke, Jane, Olan and Siphho identified inadequate command of academic English as a big obstacle in their learning process as it slowed down their reading and research components. It also emerged that apart from language, learning orientations and ease of navigating between learning styles and discourse approaches seemed to influence student success considerably.

When analysing Zeke's learning orientation, it became clear that she preferred the oratorical style which forms part of a primary discourse approach. Talking about her research in detail, she described the moral character of the mine workers and their impressive contribution to the South African economy. Zeke got stuck at the initial (talking) stages of concept development and focused on the literal and obvious solution to the design problem. This is also a feature of surface learning, and she was unable to advance the concept by deeper investigation in order to focus on the underlying meaning of main ideas, on themes, principles or successful applications (Biggs, 2003). Rather, she was inclined to circle the same point, a feature of the secondary discourse approach in "oral" cultures (Gough & Bock, 2001:96).

Jane also subscribed to this learning orientation as she described the noble character of the 'Voortrekkers' (pioneers) and their impressive contribution to the development of South Africa. According to Gough (2000:55), the moral tone that is noticeable in some secondary discourses "may have as its basis a perception that knowledge should relate to and direct behaviour, that it is an intrinsic part of *Ubuntu* (African collectivism) rather than something for and in itself". African norms, as personified in the *Ubuntu* philosophy, have as an integral component the principle of collectivism (Bhengu, 1996:5). The community is more important than the individual. *Ubuntu* is a belief system that prioritises the "sacredness" and the importance of the human being in personal conduct throughout life (Bhengu, 1996:10). The moral tone that Gough (2000) refers to was employed by Zeke, Jane and Rose.

The notion of knowledge as behavioural mediator and ethical driver, particularly in arts and design, is articulated by Ashton (2000), Baker and Wormald (2000) and Love (2000). From a different perspective then, the moral narrative component in Zeke's and Jane's secondary discourse approach, when serving as behavioural mediator, may have a positive contribution to make during their design process and in their peer group. It seems, however, that the moral aspect of the secondary discourse approach has to be linked with aspects of the deep learning approach to advance student success – a link that Zeke and Jane failed to make. Upon reflection, this stage in the development of Zeke's and Jane's research projects required additional English language support. Support possibilities included specific tutorials by first-language speakers in order to engage the student in conversation to clarify and advance thinking and concepts.

Embodied knowledge was used as a form of thinking and knowledge production which employs *all* the senses during the experiential moment of making. Therefore, "a dialectic of

'bodily' thinking ... in which the senses – activated while making – become the catalyst for the fusion of multiple selves, which grounds intuition in the creative process, the thinking body becoming the source of design ideas" (Macklin, 2006:552). This type of thinking is less the product of premeditation, but rather presents as action itself (Macklin, 2006:553). Embodied knowledge as meaning-making method was successful in conflating set divisions, for instance between theory and practice, learning preferences and discourse approaches. Embodied knowledge afforded students in the multi-cultural group the opportunity to work from a personal and culturally relevant locus in which to situate their research projects.

Rose and Elizabeth, on the other hand, did not seem to have a preferred way of learning, but used the various approaches in a balanced way. They subscribed to the notion of learning orientations and their interface with the teaching and learning environment (Beattie *et al.*, 1997:1). The notion of an embodied knowledge found ultimate fruition in their research projects as they embedded their learning experiences in the "thinking body" as the "source of design ideas" (Macklin, 2006:552). The combination of learning orientations linked with embodied knowledge appeared to influence student success most positively.

Rose used her belief system as an animal rights activist, campaigner and environmentalist and her personal history successfully as an embodied ontology in the making process. Elizabeth did the same, exploring her research project from an African female designer's perspective in an attempt to replace dominant colonial textile design with a local design expression. In other words, their creative and learning processes were deeply embedded in the notion that only they could bring to the research project what they did. This is consistent with a key concept in embodied knowledge, namely that the individual's body carries, as impressions in the senses, an idiosyncratic life-history.

A personal history can be used by the individual as an embodied ontology. The embodied ontology or autobiography, can, and should be used as a means to secure the lived experience of students for critical engagement with design learning tasks. Students bear memories and experiences that are activated through doing, which result in outcomes beyond their intentions (Macklin, 2006:558). When autobiography is used optimally during the design process, the student is completely immersed in the research problem and is able to advance the project in a self-directed manner while giving expression to her or his particular identity and culture. This is relevant since the globalised nature of design frequently leads to design solutions of a homogeneous kind, devoid of a particular identity (Rytel, 2007).

Sipho and Olan also favoured a multi-dimensional approach to learning, underpinned by the use of embodied knowledge, which they expressed in their projects as moral activism and environmental concerns. These design concerns are echoed by Love (2000) who asserts that design is aimed at creating positive change for individuals and societies by responding to social, ethical and cultural concerns. Furthermore, an ethical design research programme/ curriculum will respond to these concerns by seeking to instill in students the ability to discern what ethical design entails and to practice it as professional designers (Stewart & Lorber-Kasunic, 2006).

The teachers' journal entry of November 2006 provides a crisp, clear summary of these six case studies.

4.9 Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan and Sipho

Teachers' journal documentary entry: November 2006

Rose's motivation letter had us a bit concerned. She said very little then and achieved so much this year. She concentrated on and accomplished what she set out to, dare we say, with ease? The archetypes in the fairy tales were imaginatively, uniquely and biographically depicted in her felted collection. Wonder and awe were visitors there too.

Zeke had such a clear vision and goal. Thinking big but necessary thoughts. We need the clothing and textile industry and we need to do everything in our power as designers to make people aware of its importance. Jobs are disappearing at an alarming rate. She wanted to express herself and the first term went so well. Where did our in-reading not meet her vision?

Elizabeth grabbed this time she dedicated to herself and did it with such joy and commitment. Her work speaks of a vernacular aesthetic that is rich and considered. The concept of a locally designed and printed national cloth to replace colonially imposed options took her to creative heights. The self-directed structure of the programme suited her intention of working towards becoming a better, well-informed and qualified designer ready to engage with new possibilities.

Jane did not make it to the end of the year. The intention to complete her studies successfully did not start on a good footing. There was much prevarication in the first term. We did not sum up her intention clearly from the start, our reading between the lines failed Jane ... language and

culture really were big obstacles to her growth. We need to re-assess students at risk at regular intervals, and co-design solutions

Olan explored and experienced more bitterness and sweetness on the journey of creation than she had imagined. But tears and emotion do lead to opening up the heart of wisdom which was her desire. Reading over her letter of motivation again with the intention to dig the land of knowledge, nothing could have been closer to the truth. Digging the land of knowledge of the self as well as the knowledge of things and doing. She is closer now to the career that she will be passionate about for the rest of her life.

Sipho's imaginative and engaged body of work did parachute him into the higher curriculum of academy. The words which were heartfelt this time last year had to be lived to achieve a deeper understanding of his creative wellspring and commitment to the programme. What a rewarding, proud moment to reflect on the opportunity to have mentored him, sharing his troubles and travels this year.

4.10 Implications and lessons learned

As the journal entry shows, students display particular cultural ways of knowing in design learning, and embodied knowledge plays an important role in the adoption of learning styles. This in turn may ultimately influence their academic success. The curriculum, topic origination process, studio-based practices and critiques, teaching methods and assessment practices ought to include a broader epistemology that allows space for subjective and emergent paradigms and new knowledge. That is, mentoring students must allow space for social and cultural values to emerge and to be acknowledged in the development of creative processes.

Curriculum and assessment practices should be culturally inclusive, in order to enhance the chances of academic success of all students. A balanced and multi-dimensional approach to learning, in the form of learning orientations linked with embodied knowledge, appeared to influence student success most positively. Academic knowledge and skills, when embedded in the lived experience of students and teachers, have greater value and meaning. Some students, however, were unable to achieve the required level of academic knowledge and skills to qualify, although research topics were mined from lived experience.

An ethical design curriculum which engenders in students the ability to recognise what is good and right in design, but also a disposition to sustain what is good and right in practice, is

required in socially responsive design research, and is needed to address human need in a responsible way. Students in this study expressed the notion of an ethical curriculum as they responded to their research topics in an embodied way. This embodied ontology was used as a means to secure the lived experience of students for critical engagement with design learning tasks, specifically in advancing their research in a self-directed manner by taking ownership of their research projects.

4.11 Conclusion

Deep and surface approaches to learning are not fixed characteristics, nor are they mutually exclusive, but describe the way students relate to a teaching and learning environment, and both have a valuable place in knowledge construction.

Learning styles and preferences, when identified early, may help students recognise their own learning strengths and weaknesses. Navigating between deep and surface learning styles effortlessly seems to help the creative processes in many ways. An overall, global perspective and a more detailed approach are both needed throughout to reconcile concept, development of topic and product, execution, reflection and revision. Building up deep learning skills, linking learning styles and balancing personal learning approaches and cultural context help advance the research projects to ensure students' academic success. In addition, identified students may benefit from support interventions in the form of language and subject-specific tutorials presented by English first-language speakers (or tutors proficient in academic English), in order to clarify and advance their research projects.

By identifying and acknowledging the value of different approaches to learning (such as deep and surface learning preferences and primary and secondary discourse approaches), and types of knowledge such as cultural or embodied knowledge, and by including these in the research process, design educators may help prevent the imposition of their own frameworks on students. Familiarisation with cultural ways of knowing and approaches to learning by lecturers and students alike will strengthen student success. Acknowledging and valuing different types of knowledge and new epistemological paradigms such as cultural/embodied knowledge and indigenous knowledge may facilitate the inclusion and self-realisation of all students. These new paradigms ought to be explicitly included in the design curriculum to promote multi-cultural student success.

The cultivation of a sense of tolerance and acceptance by focusing on the contribution that each student makes from an embodied knowledge perspective, ought to be actively encouraged in the seminars and peer-review sessions. This contribution includes a sense of creative knowledge as cultural mediator and ethical barometer that is particularly relevant in the local context. The safe and protected space of the studio can then be experienced as a microcosm of the outside world from a cultural and professional point of view.

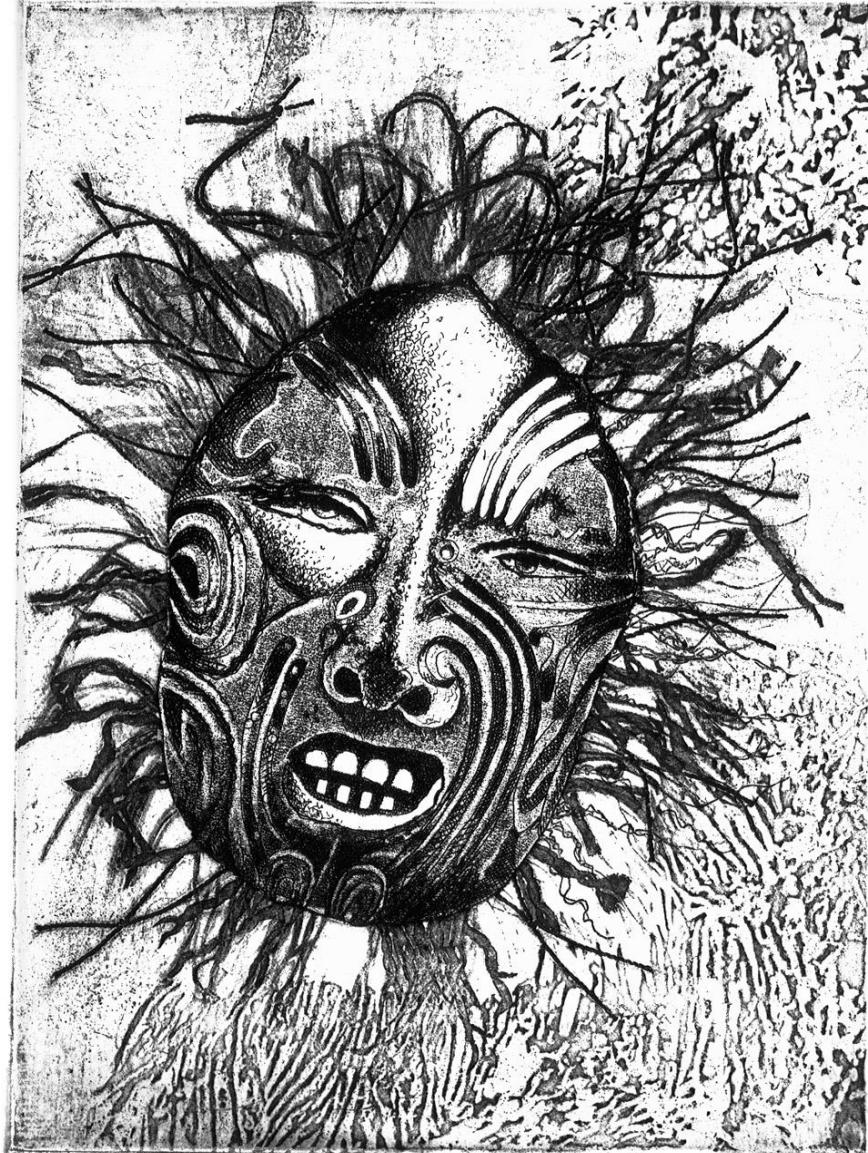
The next vignette expands the learning setting to examine the relationship between design and craft with reference to their contribution as change agents in a particular community context. The current understanding of the relationship between craft, design and art is therefore interrogated in a local setting, illustrating how innovation occurs when disciplinary boundaries are blurred.

4.12 Retrospection

This vignette was deeply rooted in my personal history. It took me back many years to my own Art and Design School experiences and tricky issues of learning, language and culture in the studio context. The image I chose with which to summarise the students' learning experiences is an etching titled "To be or not to be". Taking up the theme of marginalisation again, the images depict success and failure in academia with "To be" standing for the students who qualified and were able to speak freely, while "Not to be" stands for those who failed to qualify and were silenced. Even though the net covering the image of "Not to be" does not seem threatening, it nevertheless holds him down in a position of submission, as one not part of the dominant discourse.

Numerous factors are responsible for failure, and for success. In my own studies at Art and Design School, language was a barrier. Not being an English first-language speaker, made me quite reticent in interactive studio situations. Also, not being part of the insider group, but an outsider, presented me with difficulties even among like-minded contemporaries. I felt silenced both by the dominant insider group and my own inability to speak out and find an authentic voice. The sentiment Nelson (2009:25) expresses about artists "as the kids who, from early days, were capable of rejecting the standard because of a feeling of not being included in the standard" resonates with the difficulties I experienced then. I wanted to be part of the group but at the same time could not reconcile myself with the conformity inherent in being part of the group.

Finding my voice was a process that started in my second year when I chose printmaking as a major. Developing a different language, a symbolic one, to articulate concepts, emotions and beliefs in a repressive environment (personally, socially and politically) offered much more scope than the spoken word and turned out to be a liberating process. This *leitmotif* of finding liberation in different languages has stayed with me over the years. A body of knowledge flowed from this “*linguaging*”, and as Nelson (2009:98) so aptly describes it: “... a kind of lyrical knowledge: it is the peculiar life of connexions, derived and appreciated intuitively, and pre-eminently from the body: it is sensory or somatic knowledge, if knowledge at all”. My body of knowledge invariably found expression in academic writing, life writing, poetry, art and printmaking.



In Africa, whenever an old person dies, it's the equivalent of a library burning down (African proverb)

Craft, design and art have long been associated; a contested association at times which is open to context and interpretation. In the South African context, craft and art have long been celebrated as powerful local expressions of skill, advocacy and place. Design as relative tenderfoot has had to tread carefully to find its own sense of identity in well-established company. This vignette examines the relationship between craft and design with reference to what they can contribute when partnering as change agents in a particular context. Can craft design be deployed as a developmental tool? What benefit may be derived from that and how can momentum created by a craft design project be maintained, both in the community and in the design curriculum?

The postgraduate design programmes at the local university of technology have been following the social design model as described by Margolin and Margolin (2002) increasingly, encouraging community engagement as a research focus area. Social design offers a complement to market design with its profit motives, and focuses on addressing human needs and solving problems contextually, particularly in marginalised populations (Margolin, 2002:1; Margolin & Margolin, 2005:1). The Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP) was conceptualised along social design lines by Claudia, a postgraduate student in design at the university, and implemented as a craft design project.

The FADP was realised in a vulnerable community of elderly women living in Khayelitsha, a township settlement about 20 kilometres from Cape Town, home to approximately half a million residents. Collaboration between women from the non-profit organisation, Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids (GAPA, 2012) and Claudia was planned and executed to further the role of design as a developmental tool and to encourage community and university partnerships. Older people who reside in vulnerable socio-economic areas in the Western Cape, for instance Khayelitsha in the case of GAPA, are most strongly affected by negative life events such as poverty, the HIV/Aids epidemic, retrenchment and crime. The GAPA women experienced many of these stressful events, and indicated that they were discriminated against on the grounds of their age and not being skilled enough to re-enter the formal workplace (Stipp, 2009).

The first section of the vignette discusses the FADP project set in that particular community context, and the second section provides an analysis of the project regarding the local contextualisation of the relationship between craft, design and art, concluding with some pointers around design research as social practice. The context of this vignette is described in the journal entry of 15 May.

5.1 Multi-purpose centre: Qabaka Crescent

Journal documentary entry: 15 May 2012 am

Autumn is knocking on the trees, turning leaves into chameleons and infusing the clear morning air with a sharpness that lingers in the lungs. Many scents and sounds greet us as we follow the chorus of voices coming from the hall. We pass three women deep in conversation. Despite the cold air one woman is wearing a strappy top and dance pants. She looks up and we greet each other. “Aren’t you chilly?” I enquire. “No, I’m Sarah”. Smiles all round. “We have just finished our Nia dance class, the other women are in the hall singing. Alice is presenting a health workshop afterwards”. The community centre is very different from what I imagined from Claudia’s description. I pictured a rather formal space, like our university’s multi-purpose centre, and quiet. Instead there is activity and sounds all around. Several women wheel in a barrow full of freshly harvested, organic produce — still smelling of rich, dank soil.

I spoke to Alice, the director, some weeks ago to organise this visit. I wanted to meet with the grandmothers again, on home turf this time, to form a better understanding of their lives and creative work done at the centre. This visit as part of reflection on the FADP, will, it is hoped, bring clarity and insight that I can share with current students wanting to use a developmental design model in their research. My own filtering of the research project is necessary because some questions remained unanswered after the collaboration between Claudia and the women. What was the legacy of the FADP project? Did it contribute in a lasting way to the women’s well-being? Do they want to re-vitalise the project, and perhaps work towards new goals?

5.2 Research methodology: the Fibre-Arts Design Project

Nine grandmothers from the GAPA group participated in the FADP, because the project's aims concur with the group's mandate of skills improvement and making items for sale needed by the community (GAPA, 2012). The women expressed a need for advanced skills training to strengthen their craft practice since craft production supplements their state pensions. The aim of the FADP was to co-design and co-create a range of high-end women's accessories, focusing on training and knowledge-sharing in the process. Accessories are light-weight and lend themselves to component craft-making. They are easily manipulated by the elderly and belong to a genre they are most familiar with. The process of co-creation was intended to improve the grandmothers' and student's product development skills by experimenting with new craft techniques and consolidating existing ones through participation in a series of creative workshop sessions (Stipp, 2009:32).

The workshop sessions were conducted at the local multi-purpose centre in Khayelitsha where GAPA operates from, a venue that is available to members of the community for training and recreational purposes. Claudia recorded the sessions through observation and journal documentation, semi-structured individual interviews and discussions with the group members. These qualitative data collection methods were "important measures of their everyday life experiences" and helped Claudia gain insight into their creative training requirements but also into their social, emotional and economic challenges (Stipp, 2009:26).

The workshop sessions were conducted initially to determine the women's strengths and weaknesses and to share relevant information concerning craft techniques and fashion trend forecasts. Subsequent sessions were used to design and make components for the *Together* accessory collection, discussed in section 5.4. A participatory approach (Ehn, 2008) was used during the workshop sessions and all the participants gave input in the planning and production of the accessory collection.

5.2.1 Reflections on the Fibre Arts Design Project

The FADP, a master's degree study under my supervision, developed over four years. The extended timeline afforded me the opportunity for reflection on the project. I used narrative enquiry as a "retrospective meaning-making" method (Chase, 2005:656) and journaling (refer Figures 5.1 & 5.2), in order to come to an understanding of actions, to shape experiences into

a meaningful entity and to make connections and appreciate the results of actions over a period of time. From a supervision point of view, some features of the "insider" tradition of qualitative interpretation were present in that I explored the dialogic qualities of the event. Thompson (1998) contends that the insider/outsider perspectives of qualitative research perform different functions. From an insider perspective, knowledge is dialogic (meaning-making) and reflective rather than analytical (meaning-capturing). During the supervision process, I had regular informal conversations with Claudia in addition to bi-weekly supervisory meetings for the duration of the project. I conducted an in-depth interview with her after she completed the project in 2010, to record her personal perceptions and thoughts about the Fibre-Arts Design Project as a craft design intervention.

In addition, to gain insight regarding the contribution of this project, if any, against the background of current inter-disciplinary thinking in the design, craft and art fields as part of the wider discourse in contemporary design, I interviewed three experts in their fields. The first is the current director of the Cape Craft and Design Institute (CCDI), the second expert is the retired dean of the Faculty of the Built Environment and Design who founded the CCDI, and the third is an academic at a British university with a fashion design background.

Since the CCDI works with over 2000 craft producers and designers, the director's perspective was valuable in unpacking the relationship between craft, design and art from a craft producer's point of view and in discussing the impact that the organisation has had in foregrounding craft design in the Western Cape over the last ten years. The founder of the CCDI is a design activist/educator and a practising artist and designer. The academic expert holds the Chair of Creative Entrepreneurship and Social Equity at a British university with a personal interest and involvement in craft design projects in sub-Saharan Africa over the last 20 years. Together their perspectives clarified some of the "in-between" spaces and inter-disciplinary expressions that emanate from the fields of art, craft and design in South Africa (Elk, 2011; Guille, 2011 & Hagen, 2011).

5.3 Social design in the community context

Design used as a tool towards social equity and cohesion and towards contributing to a community's well-being, has made itself felt in the current design discourse (Margolin & Margolin, 2002:24,25,26; Vezzoli, 2007:124). Margolin (2005:1) refers to social design as responsible and ethical, compared with the traditional market-driven model which favours the

design and manufacture of products for consumption, based on maximising profit. The social agenda of design is gaining ground in the global design and research community as part of the sustainable development agenda, but the complexity inherent in balancing profit motives and answering human needs cannot be denied. The “social model” and the “market model” have to complement each other in an effort to satisfy human needs in a responsible way, because they are “not binary opposites but instead ... two poles on a continuum” (Margolin & Margolin, 2002:25).

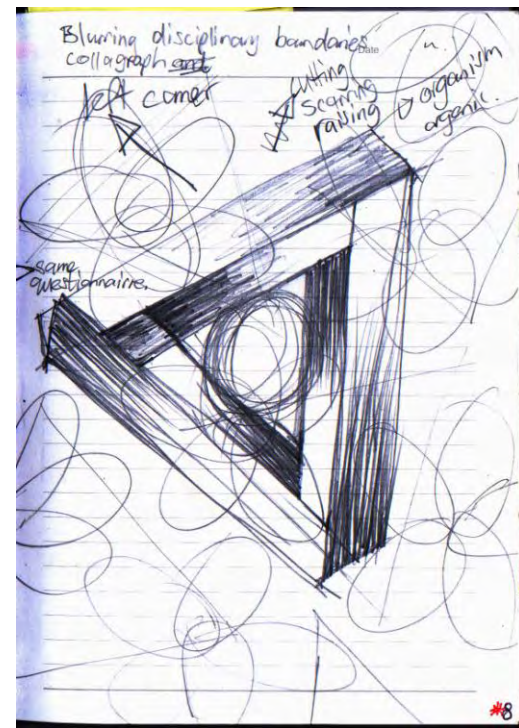


Figure 5.1 Concept sketch for “Blurring disciplinary boundaries” collagraph journal entry

Design is steadily moving away from wasteful production, or at the very least is evaluating wasteful production critically (Vezzoli & Manzini, 2008). In many instances, design is moving closer to service and social design models; it is impermanent and constantly evolving. The fluid nature of design can be harnessed to provide a contribution in a particular societal context, which is responsive to needs in that context and sensitive to changes in the context. Margolin (2010:71) asserts that when design is examined, “we study a form of human action that arises from a social situation”.

Design used in a social context generates social value which is an important resource in the community. Allen (2007:21), for instance, argues for a shift in the community development paradigm from the traditional needs-based perspective (Traditional Community Development

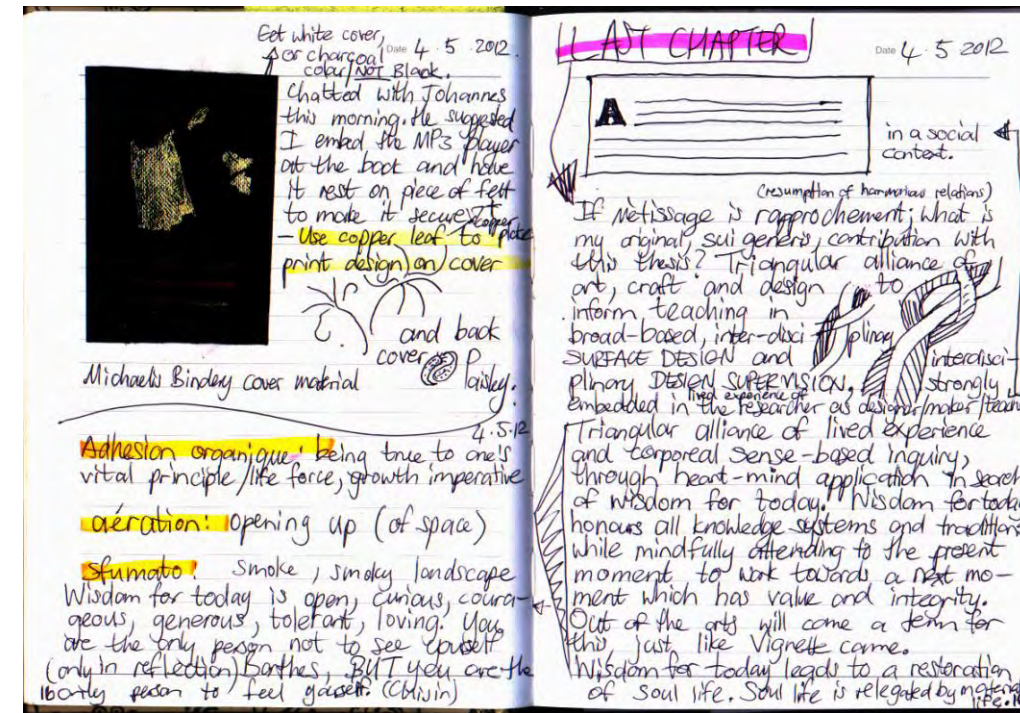


Figure 5.2 Triangular alliance of art, craft and design journal entry

Model) to an asset-based perspective (Alternative Community Development Model), with social value as the most important resource. Asset-based community development therefore has as its goal the building of communities where the change agent is relationships, whereas needs-based community development has as its goal institutional change with power as the change agent. Manzini (2007) asserts that design gives shape to relationships and ought to make the world a sustainable place underscored by social cohesion and collaborative consumption.

The asset-based conversation is about gifts and dreams, while the needs-based conversation is about problems and concerns. The view of the individual in the latter is that of a consumer or client, whereas in the former it is that of a producer or owner. Allen (2007:16) asserts that “assets are based on community ‘treasures’ including artists, businesses, churches, community colleges, cultural groups ... senior citizens and youth”, while “needs are based on community problems including broken families, child abuse, crime, gangs, housing shortage ... unemployment and welfare” (refer Fig 5.3). While both assets and needs were represented among the FADP participants, the many real obstacles and challenges present in the community were acknowledged. The women were nevertheless engaged as “producers and owners” of the project in the form of co-designers and co-creators.



Figure 5.3 Traditional needs-based versus alternative asset-based community development model (Allen, 2007:16)

5.4 Working towards the Together range

The existing creative techniques, craft skills and general project management skills in the group were considerable. Most of the GAPA members could knit and were familiar with the basic knitting stitches — plain and purl — and the other women were keen to learn. All the GAPA members were able to originate and execute complex crochet patterns and stitches. This craft method is most frequently used to earn an additional income through small batch production to create items for their own personal use and that of the community (Stipp, 2009).

Although the women were unable to read complex shadow knit patterns and openwork patterns, most participants were able to knit, following a demonstration, the complex elongated stitch and the pick-up stitch used to create pleats and ruched effects. GAPA participants were keen to learn more about the different felting processes and techniques and the first workshop focused on these felting techniques. The women were capable of performing wet-, resist- and Nuno-felting accurately after this workshop. A variety of colours and textures were incorporated into their felted sample pieces, in preparation for making felted handbags (Stipp, 2009).

Experimenting with accessory product design was decided on since the women were familiar with accessory design and origination. Felted handbags would complement the two-dimensional accessories (scarves, shawls, belts), broaden the existing crocheted handbag range and strengthen the women's product development abilities. Handbags are high value products, small enough to work with easily in restricted spaces, and are portable. Felt was used since wool is a local resource and was either obtained at low cost, or donated.

Transforming fleece into felt is a relatively straightforward process and requires minimal equipment (Stipp, 2009). Working with natural fibres and using no harmful chemicals formed part of considering the well-being of the craft producers and their environment. Manzini (2007) encourages human-scale projects at a small and local level. The most worthwhile projects are instituted as local experiments and they involve local people solving local problems (*ibid.*).

A variety of quality samples was crafted following the first and subsequent workshops, ranging from components for the handbags to experimenting with various organic and geometric shapes (refer Figures 5.4, 5.5, & 5.6). Integrating the different felting techniques with knitting and crochet techniques expanded the women's existing craft repertoire (Stipp, 2009).



Figure 5.4 Felting handbags. Photo: Stipp, 2008

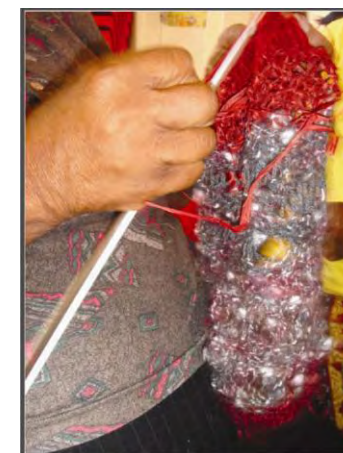


Figure 5.5 Knitting complex stitches. Photo: Stipp, 2008



Figure 5.6 Crocheting handbags. Photo: Stipp, 2008

An interpreter worked with the group initially because the elderly women had a limited knowledge of English and the student a limited knowledge of isiXhosa. Over time the relationship within the group consolidated to such an extent that they were able to expand on limited language by communicating successfully in a variety of ways, for instance visually through drawing and theme storyboards – and physically – through body language (Stipp, 2009). The following figures illustrate some of the craft design products that were developed and made during this time (refer Figures 5.7, 5.8, & 5.9).



Figure 5.7 GAPA group and Stipp, Skeleton coast summer wedding shawl; merino wool, silk satin, silk yarn. Photo: Stipp, 2008



Figure 5.8 GAPA group and Stipp, Minstrel carnival knitted tie scarf; synthetic yarn, silk ribbon, bamboo yarn. Photo: Stipp 2008



Figure 5.9 GAPA group and Stipp, Kalahari bucket bag; merino wool, karakul wool, ostrich leather. Photo: Stipp 2008

Taking ownership of the project by all concerned was an important consideration from the outset. The design and crafting processes developed slowly over many months at a pace that the GAPA participants dictated as co-producers of the project.

Close cooperation was needed in planning the project, and a “skills audit” had to be done. The women needed training in new craft techniques, particularly felting techniques, and the origination of complex knitting stitches. Claudia needed up-skilling in crochet techniques. This was the grandmothers’ specialist craft technique, and therefore they were able to share

knowledge reciprocally. Reciprocity implies participation by all the role players, an important consideration in participatory design (M'Rithaa & Futerman, 2012).

It was agreed upon that the GAPA members would craft the components for the accessory range, that the products would be designed together and that responsibility for prototyping the final items was Claudia's. She supplied the workshop materials as well as refreshments and meals. No money would change hands but rather a bartering arrangement would be followed – training would be provided in lieu of payment – an objective in line with Design for Sustainability models (CCSL, 2009). At the same time an understanding was reached that the FADP would be postponed if paying commissions were secured by the grandmothers.

This indeed happened when the women secured a commission from a national hotel group to design and craft hundreds of soft toys for use in hotel bedrooms. In this instance they were able to transfer some of their newly acquired product-development and technical skills to complete the commission.

5.5 A reconsideration of the role of craft and design: learning in community with others

The FADP is an example of a social design project that benefitted the participants in a number of ways. Claudia explained that she had started the project with particular preconceived ideas. She held certain assumptions regarding the group's productivity and creativity as craft producers, and their ability to take initiative. Her perceptions were changed once she started interacting with the GAPA women, since she discovered that the resources within that community were considerable. They had a well-established social support system and network, and were respected in the community as both care-givers and craft producers/earners. They were adroit at various craft-making methods and construction which included knitting, beadwork, embroidery, sewing and crochet. Accomplished at executing complex crochet stitches, they used slip stitch, double crochet, extended double crochet, treble, half-treble, double treble, working in rounds, and lace work in their existing accessory product ranges.

The FADP is aligned with similar Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles (CCSL, 2009) South African case studies that aim to strengthen latent resources present in a given place, and through the formation of new links, create social value. Social value was generated in this

project through adding new knowledge and skills to the participants' existing resources, knowledge bases and skills indices. Also, the value of group interaction and community involvement is an aspect the elderly women commented on frequently. Participation during the project was interactive, reciprocal and creative. The GAPA women accepted the student's role in managing the project, another pre-conception which was overturned since she assumed at the start that age and ethnic differences might not allow her to step into that role (Stipp, 2010).

On an inter-personal level Claudia indicated that she had to learn to be flexible with regard to her expectations of the pace at which production happened and the timing of general project management. Scheduled workshop times were invariably changed by the participants when paying commissions were secured. She had to exercise tolerance regarding language difficulties and other cultural differences. From a cultural difference perspective, a much deeper understanding of the isiXhosa culture was formed during the intensive contact hours necessary for the workshops, with particular reference to issues of respect, communication and finding common ground. Sometimes common ground was found in small and unexpected ways: sharing a meal or a cup of tea, celebrating together when new stitches were developed or techniques mastered, or just enjoying quiet moments of crafting the accessories (Stipp, 2010).

Claudia's experiences reflect Ehn's (2008) views that design, when practised as "situated doing and undergoing", facilitates an experience and expression which belong to the "collective dimension" of design work. Ehn asserts that design can be used in groups to deepen social interaction such as sharing meaning, sharing objects, and engaging with artefacts in a place (Ehn, 2008). Similarly, Bourriaud (2002:13) posits that the role of art and artworks is no longer to shape "imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist". Art, craft and design have the capacity to forge links between people, the "collective dimension" that Ehn speaks about, and build common ground which offers a valuable tool for social change.

The Fibre-Arts Design Project acknowledged and worked with embodied knowledge and lived experience as sites of ongoing knowledge construction which enriched the learning experiences of all the participants. Prototypes and samples were developed by the group using their own initiative, bringing to the project their embodied knowledge and lived

experience. Macklin (2006:558) refers to the numerous “possibilities of making as sensuous thinking leading to design rich in hapticity and the subjective physical response of the maker/designer”. The women’s “knowledge wellspring” (*ibid.*) included accomplished creative techniques in traditional craft skills, supported by communication skills, planning strategies, and a flexibility in working with day-to-day change.

The defining characteristics of a community of practice were present in the FADP project in that it was conceived, understood and realised as a joint practice which was continually renegotiated by its members (Wenger, 1999:73-84). It entailed a mutual engagement that bound members together into a social entity and it produced capability in the group in the form of routines, sensibilities, artefacts, vocabulary and styles that members had developed over time (*ibid.*).

The FADP community of practice was situated in the wider GAPA community of practice and they both affirmed each other. Many role players were also involved in the project directly and indirectly: the extended community of grandmothers with their extended families; the student and her personal and professional support system with her family, other supervisors and lecturers in the department, other designers and many more. In the next section the project is discussed against a current understanding of the interface between craft, design, and to a degree, art.

5.6 Craft and design as partners in contemporary design practice

The FADP highlighted a number of issues pertinent to the field of design today, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary being two of them. Margolin (2010:75) stresses the fact that design has transcended traditional disciplinary boundaries and is active in many fields: interaction, transportation, service design, social networks, sustainable design and many others. Design cannot be confined any longer. “Design” denotes an activity which requires “a higher level of consideration, conceptual and strategic thinking” (Craft and Design Enquiry, 2011). This is in order to be malleable enough to respond to challenges and needs in those fields.

Similarly, craft has evolved to include not only utilitarian products, but also fine-art objects, architectural expressions and designer products (*ibid.*). Nelson (2009:103) criticises the Western art history practice of “stigmatizing” craft production “of female basket weavers

and potters” for not “belonging to a paradigm of progress, innovation, formal invention; it may even be seen as quaintly backward and marginal”. This he maintains, in spite of the fact that “experiential and lyrical meanings” are imbued in the products (*ibid.*). Manzini (2007) advocates small, open, local and connected design projects and enterprises as the only way towards achieving sustainable lifestyles. What was perhaps “quaintly backwards and marginal” has gained overwhelming endorsement from current system innovation for sustainability thinkers (Tukker *et al.*, 2008) in promoting a considered slow-down in consumption and production patterns, valorising existing physical, social and cultural local resources (Manzini, 2007).

In addition, Hagen (2011) argues that individually distinct boundaries between design, art and craft have become blurred and it is important not to try to maintain traditional ones. She asserts, however, that craft and art are more discipline specific compared with design. Design as part of its methodology will cross many boundaries which craft will not, since the craft focus is not as broad as that of design if conceptual and strategic thinking is considered. For instance, design is ubiquitous and may take the form of product, service, system or policy, therefore crossing boundaries as part of its function, as emphasised by Margolin (2010) also. It may be abstract or material. Craft might be infected by design but craft will not infect areas normally developed through design (Hagen, 2011). As an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary exercise all three can be enriched by exposure to or collision with the others, also by an infusion of their different methodologies. In the case of the FADP, an innovative outcome was realised, which is an example of contemporary design practice; craft in this instance was enriched by exposure to design and its methods and vice versa. Incorporating design and craft as natural partners in the design process, and borrowing from art to a degree, is part of establishing a multidisciplinary design thinking, rich because of its pliability (Refer Fig 5.10).

From a design perspective, the range of accessories was planned according to long-term fashion trend forecasts and analyses to circumvent the seasonal turn-around characteristics of fashion items and accessories. Market acceptance and demand was tested at the *Design Indaba* “Emerging Creatives” initiative. Design thinking which “blends intuitive, analytic, creative, imaginative thinking, as well as sensibility and expressiveness” (Narvaez, 2000:40), not only underpinned the product development phase and the production of the prototypes, but the project as a whole.

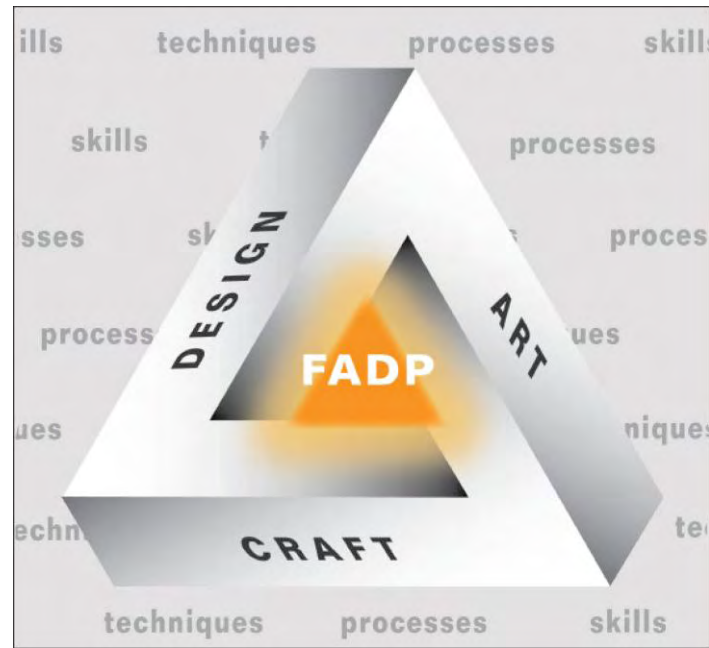


Figure 5.10. Blurring disciplinary boundaries (Chisin, 2011)

Guille (2011) supports the role of design thinking in projects to add legacy and social value to the enterprise. Design and at times even art principles regarding conceptualisation, structure and composition were followed in aspects of balance, line, texture, tone, colour and contrast in the products. Colour-way choices were developed in harmony with lasting and mostly classical fashion forecasts. Craft techniques were used in new ways and innovative combinations were developed in designing the products.

The debate around the conceptual nature of art, the utility of craft and the strategic thinking of design has found moderated expression in these designed craft products. Although craft design has started changing the way that consumers perceive craft, changing perceptions is a long process (Elk, 2011). The perceived brand value inherent in well-known designer goods is often lacking in craft design products, since building successful brands requires vast resources, including costly and extensive marketing campaigns. Elk (2011) stressed, however, that in the context of craft in the Western Cape, design and craft have conceptually been put in the same space by the Cape Craft and Design Institute.

This shared space managed to get people to think conceptually about what craft is and what the making of craft entails. It also challenges consumers to gain a better insight into the intersection of design and craft in order to understand the craft maker/producer at the centre more holistically (Elk, 2011). Consumers have become more receptive over the last decade to

craft design products. Growth in the sector has been accomplished over the last decade in partnership with interested parties and events such as the craft producers themselves, the *Design Indaba* conference, growth in the tourism market, funding initiatives from local government and other non-profit organisations. Product development is an area to which many craft producers should pay attention, and a lack of innovation linked to restricted resources or repetition of existing designs, is an area that the CCDI is addressing in their comprehensive training programme (Elk, 2011; Hagen, 2011). From the GAPA women's perspective, however, they are largely excluded from these opportunities since they do not have the means to commute to the Cape Town city centre where these programmes are offered.

What craft represents in contemporary terms can be seen from different perspectives, depending on the sphere in which it operates (Hagen, 2011). Traditional craft methods are reclaiming a place in contemporary creative practice, partly because craftsmanship is recognised as having inherent value. Accomplished craftsmanship “represents a form of heritage that includes products but also techniques, processes and knowledge embedded in people and places (Lupo, 2010). She refers to the “hybrid” relationship between craft and design as having a lengthy history, but recently it has been considered from a more advanced, cross-pollination perspective. This is done to portray examples of “‘creative’ processes profitably transferable from craft to design” and vice versa, an “‘exemplary’ design, created to be reproduced”, but exclusive each time it is reproduced (*ibid.*). Lupo (2010) emphasises that craft heritage can serve as a knowledge repository for design.

Because of environmental pressures and the fact that our planet has become threatened, existential questions regarding the meaning of life, which include our buying decisions, and the search for an authentic value system, have gained prominence (Elk, 2011). Lupo (2010) affirms that a new contemporary “authentic” is possible in craft design where factors of authenticity “become materials to be socialized (transferring them to a community) and materials of design (as innovation sources for new design).” This is congruent with the more “humane” consumption pattern (Barreto Martins & Vascounto, 2007:13) of conscious consuming, for instance, a consumer willing to pay more for a hand-made bag who feels the price is justified when the quality is evident, and the story linked to the craft product and the producer or community group has value. That is, the recognition of a value system embedded in the product means the purchase has value meaning too. In this way inherent value is linked to several aspects of the craft makers’ product cycle.

Guille (2011), however, argues that South African craft design remains “commodified”, which is problematic because craft production is not purely about the commodity but about the community and the value placed on socio-cultural relationships and beliefs. This view was somewhat contradicted by the strong endorsement of the skills training aspect of the FADP project by the GAPA participants. Although a marginal improvement in their income resulted from the project, it ought to be seen in the light of the women potentially earning a better living through craft and handwork activities in future. Any competitive advantage or skill gained, may translate into improved products and the possibility of an additional income.

Contemporary craft practice is concerned with making limited production or short runs, but increasingly with planning for the market and the production of more stock. With the market in mind and to enhance consumer appeal, traditional aspects may be retained in the contemporary craft product, but they also reflect aspects of design which move it beyond “just the artefact” (Hagen, 2011). This is reflected in Lupo’s (2010) position of highlighting a new contemporary “authentic”, but based on honouring and enacting traditional craft heritage. Historically craft is not merely “artefact”, but given wider meaning within an established cultural system, argues Guille (2011). Traditionally craft is rooted in context, whether its purpose is utilitarian, decorative or ritualistic (*ibid.*).

Art by contrast, is very much a personal product but is not necessarily geared towards a market (Hagen, 2011). It is also, like craft, an expression that is rooted in its context, has links with community and is part of the discourse of current ideas. Being an artist goes beyond producing “just the artwork” to encompass ways of living. As Bourriaud (2002:13) states when he argues for a change in the role of artworks, from being imagined and perfect (while still remaining a personal product/s) to “actually being ways of living and models of action within the existing real.” In this way the “relational art” that he is proposing is rooted in its context and has links with community, “an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space” which is a marked change from the “aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art” (Bourriaud, 2002:14). From this perspective, the FADP practically represented “ways of living and models of action”, which resonate with Bourriaud’s (2002:13) argument (refer Fig 5.11).

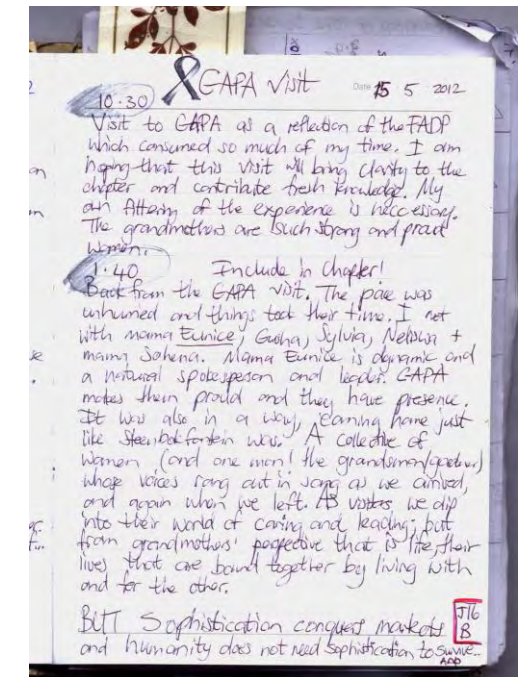


Figure 5.11 GAPA site visit journal entry

5.7 Design research as social practice

The Fibre-Arts Design Project illustrates the importance of extending the postgraduate research agenda — seen as social practice — to non-traditional sites of learning, in order to link university research topics with the real world (refer to Figures 5.12a & 5.12b). Figure 2a reflects a more traditional hierarchic approach; while student-centred, the student is enclosed tightly. Here she has to get past several gatekeepers to interact with the successive role players. Figure 5.12b shows an iterative, inter-connected approach with an expanded social discourse, opening the student to various influences, social situations and contact with all the role-players. Fuad-Luke (2012) posits that designers in current circumstances acknowledge that “there is a collective, intuitive understanding that we need to design differently to deal with today’s complex, ‘wicked’, issues. Our instinct is to reach out to each other, to expand our social discourse using the latest technological means ... social networked Living Labs, Open Knowledge hubs and festivals provide poly-disciplinary environments where new hybrid ways of knowing and designing can emerge”. These “new hybrid ways of knowing and designing” include non-technological means as extended knowledge discourses are taken account of. The Fibre-Arts Design Project started off with the traditional approach, but very

soon the iterative approach took over as all role-players started influencing one another in an extended knowledge discourse.

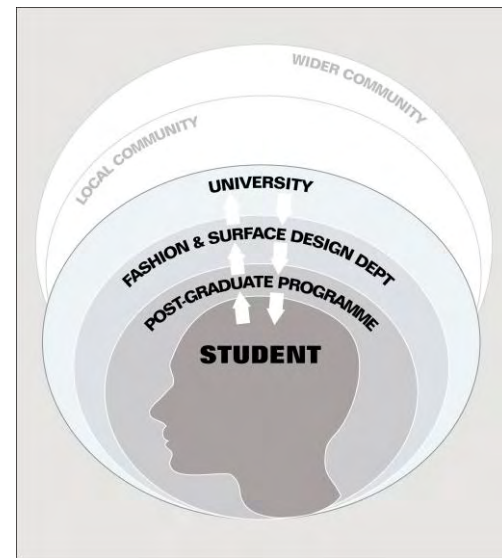


Figure 5.12a. Traditional, hierarchic approach (Chisin, 2011)

The inter-connected approach ensures that the research project and processes, driven by the student and role players, are continuously adapted and will remain responsive to changing situations and needs. The interaction of the role players legitimises the latent knowledge and lived experience of students, lecturers, participants – in short – all involved in entrenching the postgraduate research agenda as social practice.

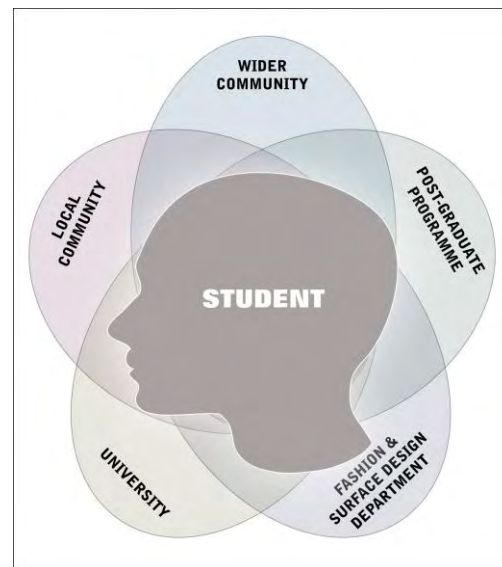


Figure 5.12b. Iterative, inter-connected approach (Chisin, 2011)

The Fibre-Arts Design Project showed that in encouraging students to engage with real-life situations in the community context, valuable contributions can be made when design is deployed as a developmental tool for community benefit. However, financial sustainability issues regarding projects such as the FADP remain problematic. Guille (2011) argues that the driver/s of a project must have a succession plan if immediate benefits are to be consolidated and sustained or there will be no legacy. Long-term legacy will bring about change, but short-term material gain is equally important, because “learning not earning is hard for poor communities” (Guille, 2011).

Although the FADP focused on learning not earning, several financial implications had to be factored into the process. Claudia carried the running costs of the project and financial implications escalated over time, bringing home the importance of immediate benefits. She started a fundraising drive and applied for various grant initiatives. Subsequently the project was short-listed for the *Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust*. This is a grant initiative which awards sustainability and poverty reduction projects in the community by recognising public and social entrepreneurs who “are the backbone of exemplary programmes”¹ but no stipend was awarded (Impumelelo Innovations Centre, 2009). The *Together* collection was shown in the “Emerging Creatives” category at the international *Design Indaba* Conference in 2009, and was well received by designers and the public.

5.8 Conclusion

This vignette examines the association or relationship between craft and design with reference to what they can contribute as change agents in a particular context. The Fibre-Arts Design Project (FADP) describes the process of co-creating an accessory range with a group of elderly women from the Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids (GAPA) group in Khayelitsha. Their lived experience in the form of technical and creative skills was put to use in the design and making of the range.

A social design model was drawn upon to inform the FADP, and skills transfer and knowledge sharing formed an important part of the process. The implementation of this model illustrated that the social and economic problems of the elderly can be addressed and improved to a degree through a well-considered and practical intervention. Investing time, energy and

¹ In May 2010 the student received a Merit Award from the Impumelelo Innovations Awards for her entry in the 2010 Sustainability Awards.

finance in a project of this kind while simultaneously and actively promoting strategies of knowledge and skills creation to help maintain the well-being of older people, accomplished this. The project encouraged participants to take charge of their lives in creative ways to exercise agency and strengthen their voice.

Allen's (2007) Asset-Based Community Development Model emphasises a shift from a predominantly needs-based perspective to an asset-based perspective, where social value is seen as the most important resource in a community. The best way forward in community development projects may well be to strike a balance between the needs-based and asset-based models. Therefore the view of the individual, as craft design producer and owner, may truly be empowering to older people as they are acknowledged as community assets, treasures and cultural stewards. Cultural stewardship was strengthened among the elderly participants in that they felt affirmed in their craft practice to such a degree that they expressed the need to pass their knowledge and skills on to others.

Seen against a current understanding of the interface between craft, design and art, the Fibre-Arts Design Project represents a moderated expression in the form of designed products of the debate around the conceptual nature of art, the utility of craft and the strategic thinking of design. In this way craft design changes the way that people perceive craft.

In the university context, the inter-connected approach with the student's being open to various influences, social situations and having contact with all the role-players, ensures that the research project and curriculum process (driven by student and role players) are continuously being fine-tuned and will remain responsive to changing situations and needs. The curriculum is a starting point; it must be enacted and engaged with in a wider context to ensure its relevance. Consequently the identification and implementation of relevant projects, in collaboration with the community-at-large, can help develop community engagement as a postgraduate research focus in the design disciplines. Ultimately, in striving to balance the profit motif which drives the development, creation and sales of designed products with the social responsibility motif, the lived experience and latent resources present in a community can be harnessed to contribute to social change and add value to that community. Craft and design have an enabling role to play here. The context of this vignette as described in the journal entry of 15 May, is now concluded with this reflection after the site visit.

Journal documentary entry: 15 May 2012 pm

Back from the GAPA visit (refer Figures 5.11). The pace today was unhurried and people took their time. With everything. I had a long conversational meeting with Mama Eunice, Mama Gusha, Mama Sylvia, Mama Neliswa and Mama Sohena. They all participated in the FADP. Mama Eunice was dynamic – a natural leader and spokesperson of the group. Belonging to GAPA makes them proud because they have presence and standing in the community, she explained. Tourists increasingly visit their shipping-container shop on the premises, and they hosted some American students recently because “we are well known!” Mama Eunice exclaimed. Their website is a marketing tool that attracts tourists, and Alice is responsible for maintaining it. I marvel at this collective of women who are vulnerable yet strong, whose voices rang out powerfully in song as we arrived, and again as we left. As a visitor I briefly shared their world of caring and leading — but from the women's perspective that is life — their lives bound together by living with and for the other. The women are indeed social designers.

5.9 Retrospection

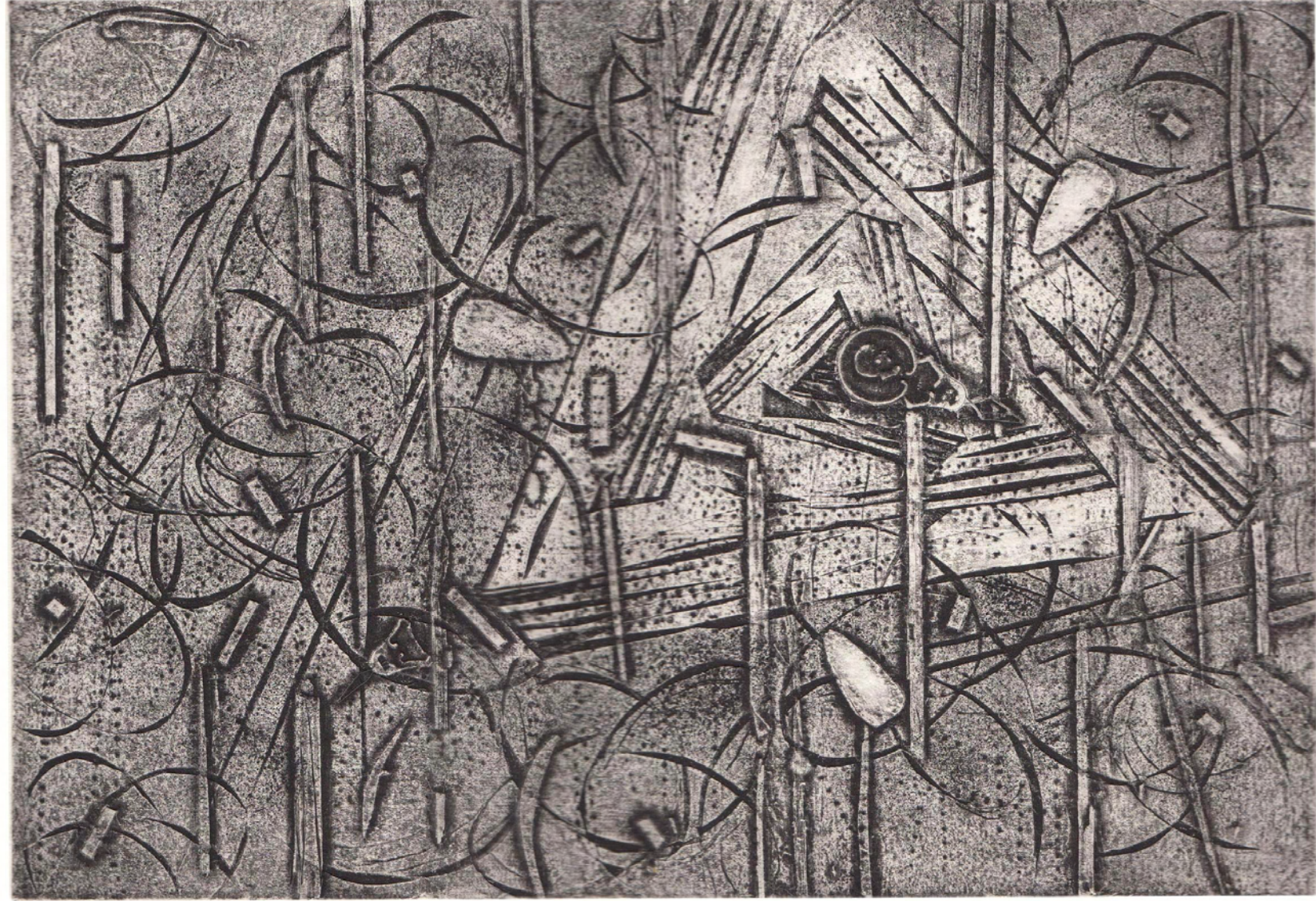
“Blurring disciplinary boundaries” works with the theme of transcendence, and asks for a re-evaluation of the current state of affairs. Designers, researchers and teachers ought to re-evaluate their positions, roles and responsibilities constantly. Design carries the responsibility of reversing its primary label of commodity to that of product, service or system which can be applied for the common good.

The infinity triangle sides in the collagraph, represent art, craft and design as an inter-disciplinary field and indicate the yielding of their distinct disciplinary boundaries. Blending the sides of the triangle also points to different identities or aspects that are subsumed in a corpus. The triangular alliance of art, craft and design ought to inform teaching in inter-disciplinary Surface Design and inter-disciplinary design supervision, strongly embedded in the lived experience of the researcher as designer/maker/teacher. Three plectra portray these roles and point to the old-fashioned needle-thread with its profiled centre which depicts the centrality of human activity in the fields of art, craft and design. This is also a clue to the subjective underscoring of these disciplinary fields.

The markings around the inter-disciplinary field indicate that design is not separate from other aspects in our lives but an integral part of our existence. Designers and design determine

fashion choices, lifestyle considerations and much more. There is hardly a sphere that is not influenced by the ubiquity of design.

Subjectivity needs to be tempered by constant enquiry – a corporeal and sense-based enquiry, which, through heart – mind application is in search of wisdom for today. I experienced this kind of wisdom in the grandmothers' interactions and craftsmanship, their sayings and generosity of spirit. It encompasses a wisdom that honours all knowledge systems and traditions. It mindfully attends to the present moment to work towards the next moment that has value and integrity. It is a wisdom for today that leads to the restoration of a soul life that has been devalued by a material life.



From time to time, the tribe gathered in a circle. They just talked and talked and talked, apparently to no purpose. They made no decisions. There was no leader. And everybody could participate. There may have been wise men or wise women who were listened to a bit more — the older ones — but everybody could talk. The meeting went on, until it finally seemed to stop for no reason at all and the group dispersed. Yet after that, everybody seemed to know what to do, because they understood each other so well. Then they could get together in smaller groups and do something or decide things (David Böhm, 1985)

The Design Research Activities Workgroup (DRAW) was initiated at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in early 2009. Its aims were to provide an academic and social support forum for postgraduate students who often experience isolation in the academic context as posited by Samara (2006), and to improve limited supervision capacity within the design departments of the Faculty of Informatics and Design. Alternative models of supervision were required to boost existing capacity and to augment the traditional and resource intensive one-to-one, supervisor-student model that Samara (2006:115) and De Lange (2011:17) describe, a model that was in place in our postgraduate programme.

An increase in postgraduate student research numbers and “the central importance of supervision for the successful completion of research degrees” (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2000:346) requires a flexible and responsive attitude with regards to supervision practices. Information about supervision in the art and design disciplines in particular “is almost negligible, particularly in the case of practice-based research” (Hockey & Allen-Collinson, 2000:346). Following Hockey and Allen-Collinson, and reflecting on how the nature of design research and supervision had changed over the last decade or two, a number of aspects pertinent to group supervision and peer-learning were identified in the DRAW forum, which are explored in the vignette. They include the influence, value and meaning of co-creative graduate supervision practice that this forum offered to participants.

6.1 Group supervision in postgraduate research

Research supervision has been the focus of studies examining various aspects of supervision practice such as the roles, strategies and styles as well issues of gender and power in the student and supervisor relationship (Samara, 2006:116). In addition, supervision as a means of support in the wider academic community and to neutralise loneliness in research is of increasing interest (*ibid.*). In this context postgraduate studies and collective forms of supervision were examined closely. Group supervision models which encourage a collective learning ethos are examined by Samara (2006) and De Lange *et al.* (2011) in education, and Ratkić (2009) in the research area of skill and technology.

The advantages of group supervision are the advancement of supervision skills, the impact it has on students’ writing process and facilitation of “students’ enculturation into the particular discipline” (Samara, 2006:115). Master’s students participating in group supervision sessions at a university in Norway supplied their research texts with specific questions to others in the group. Peer feedback is provided under the guidance of a student group leader and comments are kept concrete and constructive to accommodate the sensitive nature of the process. A time frame and clear structure are adhered to and a reflective period is built in at the end of each session to evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the session (Samara, 2006:119).

De Lange *et al.* (2011:18) explore a collaborative supervisory experience involving doctoral students at a South African university. The cohort model of doctoral supervision entails a seminar programme offered over six weekends per year, consisting of presentations, discussions, critique, feedback by peers and reflection. The cohort model is described as contributing hugely in “developing scholarship and reflective practice in candidates, in providing support and supervision, and in sustaining students towards the completion of their doctorates” (De Lange *et al.*, 2011:15).

The dialogue-seminar method was refined as a way to incorporate reflection into the professional practice of postgraduate students at a university of technology in Sweden (Ratkić, 2009:99). Participants attended the dialogue seminars as (working) doctoral students wanting to use their own research to change and improve practices at their work places. The skill and technology research area is devoted to case studies involving “professional skills, epistemology of practical knowledge, and methods for sharing tacit knowledge within organisations” (Ratkić, 2009:100).

The “dialogue-seminar method” involves reading of texts and the subsequent discussion and “reflection on practice of research” (Ratkić, 2009:99). A written reflection of the texts is produced and members in the group share the reflection by reading it aloud. This produces qualified conversation: “The flow of thought in the dialogue seminars is anything but straight”, which is intentional (Ratkić, 2009:106). The free flow of thought helps students to connect the content dealt with in the seminars with their own experience. Also, the reciprocal nature of the method is favoured by postgraduate students – and especially mature students – who prefer participatory rather than prescriptive educational methods (Ratkić, 2009).

6.1.1 Design research and supervision

Non-prescriptive methods are also favoured by postgraduate design students, but not necessarily participatory, group methods, since the designer/researcher may favour working independently (Young, 2008). In supervising design research, cognisance ought to be taken of the fact that the discipline of design draws from many different fields. Jonas (2000) refers to the possibility of design research as a groundless field. This implies that it has no real foundation and it borrows, possibly opportunistically, from whatever field seems appropriate at the time.

Along the same vein, Nelson (2009:111) writes: “With design, so often associated with the tangible regimes of manufacture, we enter the borderless.” Although it can be a disadvantage, being “borderless” also offers advantages. Consequently, depending on the particular aspect of design which is researched, different disciplines may be drawn upon to enrich that aspect. “The field of design embraces the profession, the discipline, and a shifting and often ambiguous range of related cognate fields and areas of inquiry” (Friedman, 2003:508), rendering design research almost the chameleon coloured by the disciplinary branch it is sitting on. Since Jonas’s (2000:44) groundless field comments, however, when he also referred to design “as its own ground”, design as a discipline has consolidated its foundations to a large degree.

Researchers such as Buchanan (2000), Friedman (2003), Love (2000; 2002), Margolin (2007), Manzini (2009) and Vezzoli (2007) are changing the approach to design, design research and design education. They are active in emerging and specialist areas such as social design, philosophy of design, Design for Development (DfD) and the Design for Sustainability (DfS) fields. Friedman (2003) asserts that design fulfils a general evolutionary role in the environment and that since “designers take on increasingly important tasks, design has greater effects and wider scope than ever before” (Friedman, 2003:508).

Regarding the sustainability agenda, design is an important player and a powerful voice in promoting change. This can be seen in an increasing number of global and local initiatives which are actively promoting change such as the educational (LeNS) – Africa (*Learning Network on Sustainability*) project which aims to target “an audience of lecturers and students from various design disciplines in order to orientate them towards pedagogic and didactic applications of Design for Sustainability and Product-Service Systems” (M’Rithaa cited in Bergevoet et al., 2010:1105). The LeNS-Africa project was launched on 7th September 2009 and

provided an opportunity to embed the sustainability agenda in the DRAW forum from its inception.

Fletcher (2007) challenges designers to take responsibility by adopting and promoting more sustainable practices to ameliorate the damage the profession has inflicted on the planet. This is needed since designers have often contributed to wasteful production and consumption lifestyles the world over (Thackara, 2005; Manzini, 2009; Vezzoli et al., 2009). Furthermore, the challenge extends to focus on the centrality of people in design, and in turn, the role of communities in formulating and mainstreaming more sustainable lifestyles (Manzini, 2009; M’Rithaa, 2009).

Sustainability in design may be defined as the responsible satisfaction of human needs which will least compromise future generations’ ability to satisfy their own needs (Vezzoli, 2007). Guiding postgraduate students to think and act in terms of design solutions and interventions which are the least harmful and the most sustainable in future, is imperative.

6.1.2 Supervision and learning in the DRAW context

In design education, as in business, design thinking has become an indispensable part of innovation (Lee & Breitenberg, 2010). In the DRAW context, we associate it with relevant design theories to help frame our problems and responses to the frequently “wicked” problems that design seeks to ameliorate (Buchanan, 1992:15). Design thinking and the designer’s role in the expanded field of design (Friedman, 2003) are used as tools in the forum to assist in meaning-making as well as to originate products, artefacts or services. These tools are ontologically aligned with various expressions of socially conscious design such as the Design for Sustainability (DfS) and Design for Development (DfD) agendas.

Although DRAW master’s students come from various design disciplines, for instance Surface and Fashion Design, Graphic Design, and Industrial Design, their practice-based research and full theses are frequently of an inter-disciplinary nature. Some student research titles are included (refer to Endnotes) to illustrate the multi-disciplinary yet socially responsive range of topics originated in the workgroup. The contribution of their research projects, however, is not covered in this vignette.

DRAW participants develop their research projects from a personal, situated perspective (Lave & Wenger, 1991), guided by social design and the *Ubuntu* philosophy. Although not a requirement for the postgraduate programme, both social design and *Ubuntu* are embraced as DRAW principles. Most students show a passionate interest in DfS and DfD and in the advancement of the topics. M'Rithaa (cited in Bergevoet *et al.*, 2010:1111) states that DRAW could “champion the creation of a research niche area around DfS that will take advantage of expansive DRAW membership”. The common interest in DfS created an understanding among participants during the initial workgroup sessions, which in turn developed into a collective learning experience.

6.1.3 Format of a DRAW meeting

DRAW participants arrive for the session and set out refreshments. Topics that participants have requested for discussion, that is, research methods or specific design-related theories, are put on the agenda for action. Depending on the activity, the presenter briefs the participants and hands out reading material, proposals or chapters and continues with leading the discussion or doing the presentation. Others in the group are “able to reflect on what can be learnt from the research experiences of their peers, and apply that to their own work” (De Lange *et al.*, 2011:23,24). The floor is then opened for conversation and participants are encouraged to relate the topic under discussion to their own research if suitable. This is done by contextualising their research in terms of the methods, theories or philosophies discussed, frequently in a free-wheeling fashion as described by Ratkić (2009:106), who states that “participants are invited to give free rein to their thoughts”. The open style of debate and conversation is conducive to forming connections between concepts and from this collective sounding board participants will in turn source and share relevant material at the next forum.

6.2 The research approach

The largely subjective nature of research in art and design (Nelson, 2009:98,113), lends itself to a qualitative, descriptive research methodology. Since we (Gum Manak and I, the convenors and supervisors facilitating the collaborative DRAW conversations) were interested in exploring the social and academic support aspects which the DRAW forum offered students and supervisors, a narrative method was decided upon to describe the

workgroup experiences from different perspectives. Here we follow Berger and Luckmann (1966:130) who argue that it is important to have access to and understand participants' separate social framing of reality, and to examine topics deeply through non-prescriptive conversations based on holistic understanding which, in turn, is anchored in lived experience. Narrative enquiry is “grounded in interpretive hermeneutics and phenomenology” and it concentrates on “the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences”, looking to bring perceptivity that matches the intricacy of human existence (Trahar, 2009).

Located within the narrative paradigm, we adopted an interpretivist position. The interpretivist supervisor/researcher is central in making meaning of the world and events in it. We were simultaneously trying to construct meaning as participants in DRAW, and from our position as supervisors in the forum. Living the DRAW experience for two years resulted in tangible data collected (discussed in 6.3, 6.3.1 and 6.3.2) and also intangible nuances observed in the group (atmosphere, body language, mood) which informed and enriched the data. Lived experience reflects the phenomenological position which describes an experience from the participants' point of view and credits experience and the senses to interpret and make sense of things (Leedy *et al.*, 1997:166). Nelson (2009:101) untangles the strands of lived experience and the largely subjective nature of research in art and design by stating that it (subjectivity) is par for the course in that discipline:

Hence the goal of the research ... is rather subjectively determined. But the goal of the research is not the only element which is subjectively determined.

and

Artists do not always know their goals till they work through a project to the end. Art is highly provisional until it is complete. Poetry and music are surely the same. You can imagine some scholars looking upon the whole process as quite unstructured. You do not know what you want until you have finished. Some method that is! (Nelson, 2009:104).

What art and design have in common is a certain grounding in subjectivity, and as Nelson argues (2009:98), creative strivings partner well with ontological notions. In creative endeavours “research is about you as much as the medium” (*ibid.*). Designers think, write, visualise, create and make sense. Design research is a composite of sensory experience, conceptual and theoretical experience, and knowledge. Scholars with a different disciplinary grounding may therefore find design and art research methods unscholarly because of the centrality of the researcher in the project and the weight given to lived experience and the

senses (Nelson, 2009:104). Yet it is precisely these aspects that constitute art, design and creative practices.

6.2.1 Research methods

We explored the influence, value and meaning of the DRAW forum and group supervision practices in a study which was conducted from March 2009 until March 2011. The DRAW forum is run in an informal manner, meaning that sessions are semi-structured to allow for last-minute requests not on the agenda, and postgraduate master's students and supervisors join the sessions they choose. The convenors then, are supervisors in the forum and either one or both are present at the sessions. The sessions are convened every week and each lasts about three hours. The agenda is posted weekly in advance (since February 2011) by the blog administrator who is a postgraduate student belonging to the group. The research methods can be divided in two sections: the recorded sessions and the questionnaires, with narrative enquiry underpinning these two methods.

6.2.2 The recorded sessions

Conversations, themes and narratives that unfolded during the sessions were recorded by me (in my capacity as doctoral student and also as supervisor in the DRAW forum) over this time (March 2009 to March 2011). These recorded sessions were randomly chosen (usually based on attendance) and their structure roughly followed the group supervision models described by Samara (2006) and De Lange *et al.* (2011) in Section 6.1 and the "dialogue-seminar method" described by Ratkić (2009:99) in Section 6.1 and implemented as the consolidated DRAW model in Section 6.4. Reflective journal-writing methods were used as a personal record of the sessions as illustrated in Figure 6.1. They became the basis for the thematic narratives as described in Section 6.3, on which the questionnaire was based (refer to Appendix D for Questionnaire for DRAW members).

Reflective journal writing was chosen since it fulfils many functions. Boud (2001:9) describes it "as a form of reflective practice ... as a device for working with events and experiences in order to extract meaning from them". He asserts that reflective journal writing in its various forms helps us make sense of the world "and how we operate in it" (Boud, 2001:9). It can also

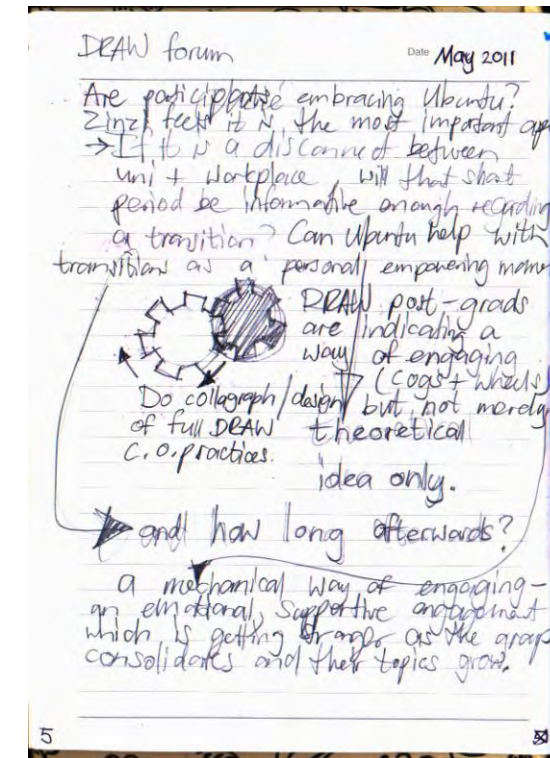


Figure 6.1 Reflective journal-writing entry

be used to record events and experiences with a view to understanding them more comprehensively. The journalised sessions were subsequently discussed by both the authors in conversation during informal meetings and during the DRAW sessions in dialogue with the students.

6.2.3 The questionnaire

In January 2011 all members (numbers fluctuated but at that stage 20 students as well as a guest supervisor) were invited to participate in the study through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire intended to establish the extent of social and academic support that the workgroup provided, and the importance of group supervision for the members. Some of the founding members were preparing for examination submission then, while others had started their research activities in 2011. These two timelines presented a good opportunity to take stock and explore the influence of the forum at respective stages of their research, especially with a view to the students who were nearing completion. A semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire was posted on the DRAW blog for members to respond to in their own time (refer to Appendix D for questionnaire). Twelve members had completed the questionnaire by April 2011, including six local and five international students, and the guest supervisor.

The questionnaire responses were grouped, categorised and coded manually (Huberman & Miles, 2002) and are presented according to the thematic narratives which first emerged in, and were recorded during, the journalised sessions (refer to Appendix E for example of questionnaire coding, May 2010). The questionnaire responses were also discussed by students and supervisors in an exit focus group of three hours. Again the discussion was documented using reflective journal writing by the doctoral student/supervisor. Pseudonyms were used to protect student identities in the text: Batman [founding member 2009], Colette [new member 2011], Comic Sans [existing member 2010], Faizal [founding member 2009], Fatima [founding member 2009], Hendrik [new member 2011], Jasmine [founding member 2009], Jean [new member 2011], Mignon [new member 2011], Rose [new member 2011], Vera [founding member 2009], and Zinzi [guest supervisor since 2010]. Permission was obtained to use the DRAW photograph (Fig. 6.6). In the next section the thematic narratives are qualified and discussed, namely social DRAW, philosophical DRAW and supervisory DRAW.

6.3 Social DRAW: an interdependent home space

DRAW postgraduate participants indicated that the thematic narratives identified in the workgroup formed metaphorical “pillars” of support. The pillars of support were identified as:

- interdependence reinforcing social DRAW
- *Ubuntu* reinforcing philosophical DRAW
- co-creation reinforcing supervisory DRAW

Together the pillars of support provided a focal point for their research activities and created a platform for opportunity.

Interdependence was seen as an important social support pillar in the workgroup and developed for a number of reasons. Strong interpersonal relationships were formed from the start since sharing and listening to peers with similar concerns helped members to “overcome issues of insecurity and isolation, particularly during the first months of study” (Batman, Fatima, Vera & Jasmine, 2011). Regular interaction with each other makes support possible because all DRAW members are “going through the same process” (Vera & Jasmine, 2011).

Participation in the sessions moulded the interaction of members into an interdependent “space”, a conceptual and physical space which Zinzi describes as a “homespace”. The homespace welcomes everyone doing their postgraduate studies into a conducive atmosphere. This atmosphere is characterised by an informal physical space where members are seated around a table, creating a conceptual space of openness and debate. A recent study by De Lange *et al.* (2011:23), focusing on a cohort model of doctoral supervision, touched on the idea of a homespace in their discussion of “a ‘home’ for opportunities and space to talk informally, to present their work, to give and receive critique and also to write”.

Openness emerged as an important factor during interactions in the workgroup *and* away from the workgroup. Being open to others ensures that DRAW is a forum “where people talk very freely” (Zinzi, 2011), that it “remains an egalitarian platform” (Vera, 2011), and that “everyone is equal” (Rose, 2011). Also, seeing “eye-to-eye” softens hierarchy in the group and encourages collegiality. “It is a collegial meeting place in which the lecturer-student dichotomy is broken down” (Zinzi, 2011).

Participants concurred that the DRAW space was a safe space but could also be a challenging space; a private as well as a public space. Mignon responded that she had attended only a couple of meetings, but they *could* be intimidating at first, and Rose stated that the conversations and discussions were of such an intellectual nature that she did not always understand them. When only a small and intimate group was present and the readings and discussions were informal, members agreed, the space felt private; when the group was big and included visiting scholars, paper presentations and mock defences, it becomes a public space. Members had to negotiate their way between the two spaces and with time, enculturation into the discipline and the group eased this negotiation. This is consistent with Samara (2006:115), who asserts that one of the advantages of group supervision is the facilitation of “students’ enculturation into the particular discipline”. Supervisors fulfil a key function in this induction process, as confirmed by De Lange *et al.* (2011:22), since they guide students over time to “become part of the academic community through enculturation”.

From an academic development perspective, acquiring the right academic language to describe research, and encouragement from the group, helped Fatima. When she first joined the DRAW forum, she had a limited command of English and was unable to express herself or explain her research in any coherent fashion. She commented: “I found confidence in this environment because I learnt how to discuss my research, and answer the criticisers!”. Fatima

asserted that DRAW participation had readied her for her first international conference in New Zealand, and her academic development was linked to the value that the DRAW workgroup had added. Before the conference she presented her paper several times to the workgroup, and the discussions which followed helped her to refine the presentation, which in turn built confidence. In harmony with this, De Lange *et al.* (2011:26) contend that a group programme enables the growth of collaborative knowledge in research as a means to grow individual knowledge, which provides “particular kinds of learning opportunities to support the movement of the student from novice to expert”.

Feedback from peers was highlighted as very useful because supervisors may seem to “be pushing students too hard” at times (Zinzi, 2011). Peer feedback had an equalising influence and contributed to the concept of group supervision. Vera maintained that “around-the-table discussions with input from others encouraged deep discussion of each of our research topics”. She also noted that the interdisciplinary, internationalised and multi-cultural group provided feedback from different points of view and different fields of knowledge which inspired and enriched her research. Although founding members agreed, a participant noted that some new students found it difficult to deal with critical feedback from peers precisely because they were peers and not supervisors (Colette, 2011). This is borne out by Samara (2006:119): “... other group members are advised to formulate their comments concretely, cautiously, and to refer to the positive elements in the text, as group supervision can be a sensitive process for some”.

Support and a willingness to contribute to other members’ research were significant to Jasmine. She identified committed participation during sessions and sharing information in whatever form members were able to, as significant contributors to research success. Engaging with others’ research is a valuable tool in developing the individual student’s ability “to express themselves on research matters in an academic environment to develop their own ideas” (De Lange *et al.*, 2011:23). Jasmine also endorsed the fact that “listening only is fine too” and that attentive listening forms an important part of participation. Listening improves a person’s ability to put him or herself in the other’s shoes and thereby building empathy (Jasmine, Vera, Fatima & Rose, 2011).

The value of social activities to induct new members into the group was acknowledged. Particularly the sharing of food and drinks was highlighted as an activity which supported cohesion in the group and strengthened relationships (Vera, Jasmine, Fatima & Batman, 2011).

The impact of friendships and relationships formed in DRAW was explained by Fatima in the following quote:

As an international student, I do not think that I was able to find a space better than DRAW where I found my best friends who supported me during my research journey; as I thought I was alone I had someone to rely on, as I thought I had a question which I was too shy to ask I got the answer there, as I thought I had a big unsolvable problem they support me to find a solution.

The need to express identity and culture in the DRAW group was facilitated by narrative approaches. The wide interpretation of narrative in the group included telling stories, doing PowerPoint™ presentations, participating in focus groups, in-depth interviews and producing art work. All of these methods were research tools which, according to the participants, told stories from a personal perspective. In this way, participants had the opportunity to use their life experience to contribute to discussions, and life stories validated their individual input. Vera advanced that “storytelling made it possible to show my point of view from my specific background and culture in the workgroup discussions”.

Hendrik argued that storytelling “can easily become emotional and has no basis in empirical research; academic arguments and common sense seem better tools in research”. He does however acknowledge that “narrative is an excellent hook to draw people in”. It is more engaging when narrative approaches are used to explain complex concepts and design issues, since the researchers’ topics are contextualised in a personal way. Figure 6.2 provides an overview of the social support pillar.



Figure 6.2 Social support pillar. Chisin, 2011

6.3.1 Philosophical DRAW: *Ubuntu* and the spirit of communalism

Students struggled more to identify philosophical and theoretical underpinnings in the workgroup sessions, compared with the social underpinnings. *Ubuntu* and the spirit of togetherness were nevertheless seen as a very important philosophical pillar in the workgroup. The *Ubuntu* philosophy is closely associated with the way that DRAW is run and is used in this social and collegial space as a tool to help students become sympathetic participants even when they criticise (Zinzi, 2011). Moreover, its spirit of communalism made Batman realise that “discovery of similarities in others’ triumphs and struggles helps us to relate to and empathise with them and deal with those aspects within ourselves”.

Although the principles of *Ubuntu* are associated with African roots and expression, its inclusive ethos is accessible and applicable widely. Venter (2004:150) argues that “the notion of *Ubuntu* and communalism are of great importance in an African educational discourse”. Furthermore, the multi-cultural and internationalised composition of the participants required an understanding of one another on an advanced level in order to benefit from participation in the group. The collaborative principles of *Ubuntu* helped in shaping that understanding: “I participate therefore I am”, or the well-known “I am because we are” (M’Rithaa, 2009). Participation in the group became an anchoring activity as members strove to come to grips with their research.

With regard to other theories and philosophies discussed in the DRAW sessions, and whether they helped students make meaning of their research as a learning event, four members indicated “no response”. These questionnaire responses were in marked contrast to discussions in DRAW when theoretical and conceptual frameworks were used elegantly by students to argue points of view. Design for Sustainability, Design for Development and Participatory Design were regularly singled out in the sessions as important theories and methods. One new participant stated that the underlying principles of research were explained by supervisors and seasoned researchers but that theoretical frameworks, the “why, value of, and reason for”, were lacking in discussions (Hendrik, 2011). The contradictory data in this section point to difficulty at times in reconciling theoretical and conceptual frameworks with the personal learning event, and possibly the fact that the social support structures took precedence.

The difficulty of not linking theory/conceptual frameworks with learning was emphasised in student responses to preferred learning approaches, the interpretation of aspects of reality,

and questions about the “deep/surface” learning metaphor (as posed by Webb, 1997:197,206) and discussed in the workgroup. Four members gave no response to this question. That is, they did not relate the notion of deep or surface learning (or both), or the interpretation of aspects of reality to their research. One participant indicated that she used neither learning approaches because her research was still “a work-in-progress”

Comic Sans (2011) averred that (for her) learning happened retrospectively upon reflection. Vera asserted that she was “mostly searching for in-depth interaction and meanings” in her research. Another participant indicated that he used both approaches because of the nature of his research, which he described as “a topic of knowledge acquisition and learning or education” (Hendrik, 2011). Five members found theories useful to frame their research and Jean stated that “[theories] allowed me to see depth and width of design as a practice more clearly, and to contextualise my research in terms of a broader canvas”.

A spirit of communalism helped personal contextualisation in the group which included the iterative process of discovering the self in “the Other” (Webb, 1997:197). Two founding members of DRAW agreed that finding “commonality” in each other despite different backgrounds, cultures and personalities, led to building trust in the group. Building trust and finding commonality take time and require respect for diversity. Jasmine felt that members “rely on each other because we trust each other and recognise commonness”. Comic Sans (2011) noted that an openness and understanding of one another’s research topics, for example, an interest in environmental design and in DfS, resulted in strengthening commonality in the group. Using the group’s varied skills and knowledge for problem-solving and improved understanding transcends scholarship development. De Lange et al. (2011:23) propose that liberty to engage in commentary sustains the identity of the individual since her or his diversity is esteemed and prized for its contribution in that setting.

The value of shaping the research process through an empathetic understanding of strengths and weaknesses was articulated by most members, and Jean explained that “understanding strengths and weaknesses allows students to tailor their practices to their strengths which results in a stronger personal research capacity”. Challenge and contestation in the higher education discourse require “openness to the views of Others” (Webb, 1997:201). It is in the spirit of openness that empathy flourishes. Recognising strengths and weaknesses in the group means drawing on different abilities and an empathetic understanding makes asking for guidance easier (Zinzi, 2011). She observed a more lateral appreciation of each member’s

contribution and also that students appreciated multiple responses to their research questions. Zinzi and Fatima added that students were able to distil feedback, raise concerns and defend their position, which means that ultimately students are able to take responsibility and are in charge of their own projects. Figure 6.3 provides an overview of the philosophical support pillar.



Figure 6.3 Philosophical support pillar. Chisin, 2011

6.3.2 Supervisory DRAW: co-creative supervision practices

Co-creation was seen as an important supervisory support pillar in the workgroup. Group supervision models which encourage a collective learning ethos (Samara, 2006; Ratkić, 2009; De Lange *et al.*, 2011) resonate with the co-creative perspective. Members in the DRAW forum commented on changes in pedagogical contexts, student/lecturer interaction and supervision practices, and identified several factors responsible for the changes. Among these were a growth in university postgraduate education globally, an internationalised postgraduate fraternity, an overall relaxation of formality in the academy, the fact that postgraduate research is characterised by collaboration, and that no right or wrong answers exist in research. These factors are borne out by Tsolidis (2002), Samara (2006), Murphy *et al.* (2007), Ratkić (2009) and De Lange *et al.* (2011).

The concept of an internationalised and multi-cultural student body, and the question of how teaching and learning is accommodated amidst the notion of “global citizenship” is interrogated by Tsolidis (2002) as she explores inclusive pedagogies appropriate for global citizenship in the context of an increasingly internationalised and multi-cultural student cohort. Tsolidis (2002:213) argues that we have to place our students’ best interests at heart and “prepare them for a future where global citizenship is assumed”. To do this, educators

need to “develop ways of teaching to the cultural fluidity which characterises globalization” (Tsolidis, 2002:213). Co-creative supervision and collaboration in the DRAW forum attempt to address cultural fluidity and globalisation.

Co-creation implies that supervisors do not fulfil a dominant or overly authoritative role anymore, according to the DRAW participants. Rather, they function as “discussants” and “understanding guides” (Zinzi & Faizal, 2011). Guiding creates a space for all participants to lead with comments, critique and guidelines. The student/supervisor relationship is dynamic, including their roles. The student becomes more knowledgeable during the development of the research process, and he or she brings that new knowledge into the group as the expert on the topic, as “roles open up and reciprocity happens” (Zinzi, 2011).

This is consistent with Lave and Wenger’s (1991) argument of legitimate peripheral participation which gives way to full participation over time. Learning in this sense is a process of social participation (not so much knowledge acquisition by individuals) and the situation impacts greatly on the process (Lave & Wenger, 1991:29). Reciprocity and the flat power structure in DRAW result in a balanced interaction between supervisors and students which in turn leads to an enhanced learning process because students do not feel intimidated (Jasmine). Members stated that the open, flexible and informal approach to supervision and the fact that supervisors shared their own research activities in DRAW, also enhanced the learning process.

Peer-learning was encouraged actively and was identified by members as a positive aspect in the group. The interaction of local students with international students provided a richer background, expanded content knowledge and lived experience to the advantage of all. Vera indicated that her participatory/co-design approach to research was based on the lessons learned in DRAW: “a mutual learning experience is a strong strategy to make a real change ... in design research, designers arrive at collaborative solutions to design problems”. Peer support also provides psychological comfort which makes the master’s journey less lonely, according to Batman, Vera, Faizal and Fatima. Figure 6.4 provides an overview of the supervisory support pillar.



Figure 6.4 Supervisory support pillar. Chisin, 2011

6.4 Consolidating the DRAW support model

As can be seen from the narrative data presented in the previous sections, aspects other than subject matter expertise during supervision are significant contributors to learning and research advancement. Particularly with postgraduate research, autonomy in owning and managing the research project and taking responsibility is paramount. From the supervisors' perspective — as reflective practitioners — strength and direction were drawn from the collective DRAW experiences. The sessions offered moments of insight, enjoyment and professional growth as we explored group supervision based on collaboration, dialogue and regular interaction. The consensus among participants was that the DRAW forum created an atmosphere in which an empathic understanding of others was realised. Inasmuch as students developed “care” and “authentic openness” (Webb, 1997) over time, so did supervisors. A seamless conflation of supervision and learning activities occurred as supervisors too engaged in collective learning. With regard to the development of empathy and an understanding of the “lifeworld of ‘the Other’”, Webb (1997:197) claims that:

The history of hermeneutical understanding has emphasised the exploration of the role of the researcher within the research situation and the intensely human element contained in the development of empathy. The process is intricate, self-reflective and progressive. It requires time and the development of ... ‘care’ and ‘authentic openness’ to the Other (Webb, 1997:197).

Openness was possible initially because participants perceived themselves to be in the same boat, and an understanding developed around mutual research interests which was consolidated over the two years that members participated in the forum. The DRAW community was “created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise” (Wenger, 1998:45). In this community, care and authentic openness had to be nurtured and maintained.

This was achieved through DRAW members being actively involved in dialogue are conversationalists. It is in the role of conversationalists that Webb (1997:197) argues that understanding grows as each person “discovers and re-discovers him or herself in ‘the Other’”.

In addition, the narrative technique of “listening and holding the space” or “leading from any chair” (KaosPilots, 2011), supports conversationalists in their exploration. It is open, tentative and intuitive, and is used to promote enculturation of members into a community of practice (Samara, 2006:115) and to equalise power differentials in a group. The process reflects a critical pedagogic approach, an approach which aims to break down hierarchical structures that result in power differentials between lecturers and students (Trahar, 2009). Any member of the group can lead activities, and the default position of supervisor/authority as leader is shared. The technique consequently consolidates activities and cohesion within a community of practice, and was introduced to the authors during a leadership workshop facilitated by the KaosPilots presenters in March 2010 and March 2011.

The narrative technique is in keeping with the “dialogue-seminar method” (Ratkić, 2009:99), group supervision practice (Samara, 2006) and the cohort model described by De Lange et al. (2011). Supervision as a collective activity carried out in a community of practice, offers advantages. Apart from facilitating enculturation into a particular discipline or group, De Lange et al. (2011:27) maintain that “alongside the traditional one-to-one supervision relationship [collective supervision] opens up other voices”. It helps the transition from newcomer to experienced member and the “movement of student from novice to expert” (De Lange et al., 2011:26). In DRAW this was done by encouraging participants to lead sessions with narrative and individual subject expertise. In the topic origination phase, biographical significance of the topic and immersion in the research process was emphasised. Pedagogical learning approaches supported various stages of the research. For instance, the “deep approach” to learning which focuses on a holistic perspective and is meaning-making was primarily used, complemented by the “surface approach” which is concerned with attention to detail and the study of new material (Webb, 1997).

Figure 6.5 provides an overview of the consolidated DRAW model. The unnamed circles represent potential to engage with other communities in the university and away from the university. With some DRAW members eventually returning to home countries, these circles may well be populated with alumni and industry fields.



Figure 6.5 Consolidated DRAW support model. Chisin, 2011

6.5 Conclusion: real change happens when there is a strong strategy

The DRAW forum was initiated at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in early 2009. It aimed to provide an academic and social support forum for postgraduate students who often experience isolation in their research, and to improve limited supervision capacity within the design departments. These aims were realised since the DRAW forum increased supervision capacity.

This was achieved by sharing the load between the two supervisors and postgraduate students. All the forum participants negotiated and re-negotiated the format and styles of supervision which developed as open-ended, inclusive, and empathetic activities. Roles were unpacked and exchanged as participants experienced being expert at times and novice at other times, as roles changed from newcomer to established member. The flat power structure of the forum strengthened this reciprocal relationship in this community of practice, since it broke down power differentials.

The social support pillar in the DRAW forum was based on interdependence among the members and gave rise to:

- an empathetic home-space

- openness
- egalitarianism
- collegiality
- academic development
- sharing food and drink
- participation
- narrative conversation

Ubuntu and the spirit of togetherness were seen as an important philosophical support pillar in the forum. The uncompromising foregrounding of socially responsive design models such as DfS and DfD, underpinned by the *Ubuntu* ethos, represented a strategy to promote sustainable design. Change in design to make it more sustainable can only become a reality if the agenda is actively promoted in the academy, in the community and in industry. With the DRAW focus on encouraging holistic learning approaches, sustainability, building commonality and empathy, and taking responsibility, a strategy for social change is advocated via the graduates entering industry or returning to home countries and practising design there. Interrogating these concepts in the university is part of the work of DRAW, since the workgroup embodies design thinking as a practical change agent.

Co-creation emerged as an important supervisory support pillar. As DRAW participants, we concur with Nelson (2009:111) that the designer's vision "meshes with, or grows out of, an apprehension or intuition of how activities might better be served or realized". As a community of practice, we used our intuition actively in the co-creative activity of group supervision to guide candidates to the successful completion of their research degrees.

Five of the seven founding DRAW members were capped with their Master of Design degrees in the September 2011 graduation ceremony. Another graduated in April 2012, and the remaining forum members will be guided to completion through the DRAW support structure. Borrowing from Böhm (1985), we gathered in a circle and talked. We knew what to do because we understood one another well. Each session, and each member, offers scope for healthy introspection. This has resulted in DRAW's remaining an open, empowering and mutually supportive space that continues to contribute towards a tolerant, inclusive and discursive dialogue. And through the spirit of reciprocity and respect that underpins the *Ubuntu* ethos, "we participate, therefore we are..." (refer Fig 6.6)

6.5.1 Future directions

The DRAW forum is continuing in 2012 with its seminars based on conversational and narrative methods to support postgraduate students. Opening the forum up to other disciplines in the Faculty of Informatics and Design, namely Public Relations and Information Technology, will add yet another dimension of inter-disciplinarity, complexity and collaboration to one of the biggest design faculties in South Africa (City Views, 2011). This different context with a wider audience may offer insights from alternative perspectives. In this way, the forum will continue to deepen the personal and professional insight of the participants by “opening up other voices” (De Lange *et al.*, 2011). (Refer Appendix F for student research titles in DRAW, and Appendix G for notes on the origination of this vignette).



Figure 6.6 DRAW members. Photo: Waiter, 2011

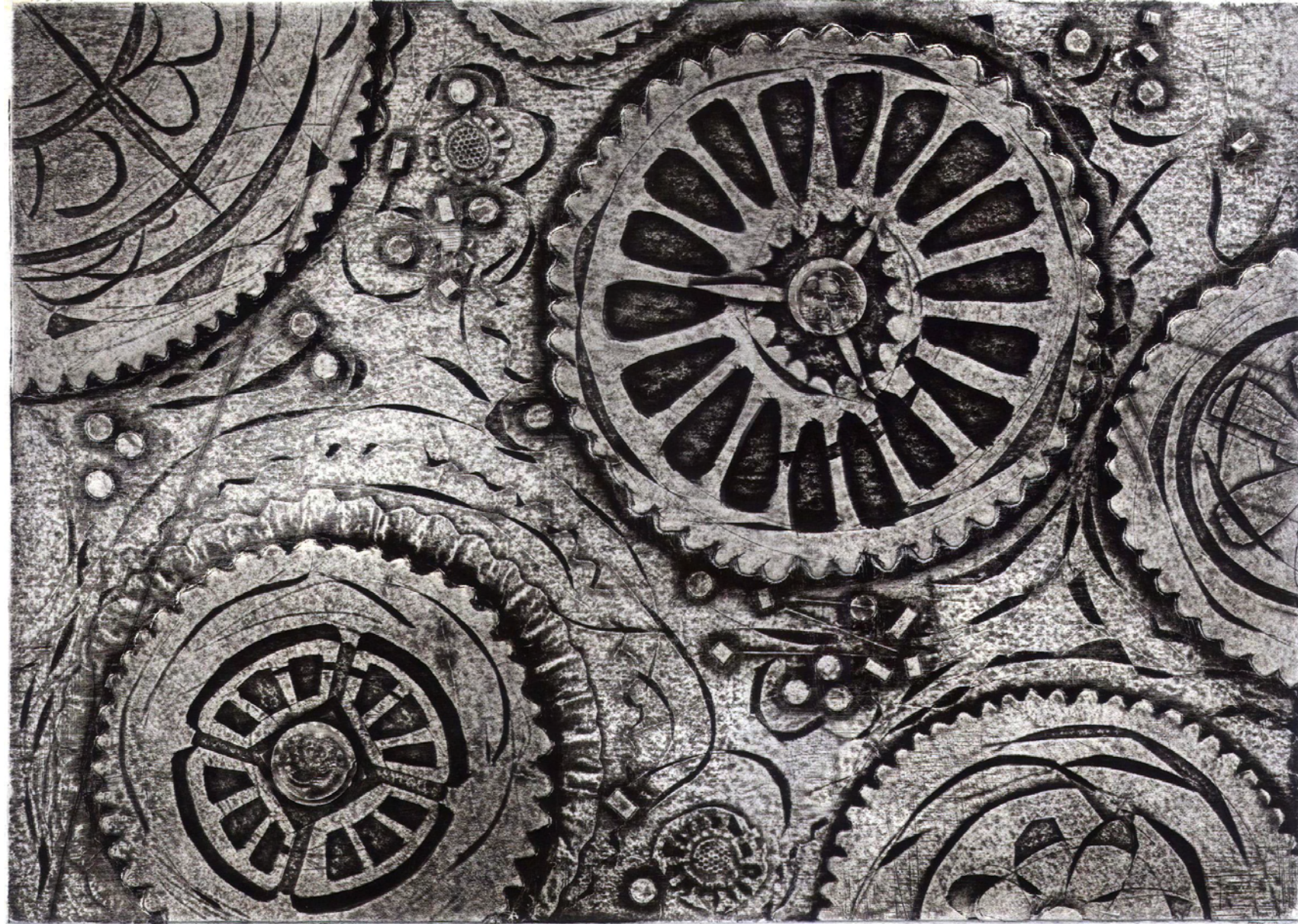
6.6 Retrospection

“Interdependence” was conceptualised after completing the consolidated DRAW model. From a design perspective, I wanted the DRAW figure to reflect a feminine aesthetic reminiscent of the Fifties era in colour and style. The concept for the segments was partly based on the shape of a fan, but joined together it resembled a textile design.

The collagraph print was inspired by the all-over floral patterns popular in some categories of textile design such as chintz or botanical prints. Although the floral circles are not completed, they have the potential to be structured into a repeat design that can be printed on fabric. The circles represent communities of practice and their potential for interaction with one another.

The completed circle stands for the DRAW community of practice. Others close to it stand for role players that contribute to that community and vice versa. The smaller motifs in between the circles represent individuals and in some of them I made use of doilies in constructing the printing plate. The doily has become a particularly South African artefact, although borrowed from Britain. It occupies a prominent position in many traditional homes in the country as a décor and functional item, protecting table surfaces from scratches as it forms a decorative interface between plates, ashtrays, cups and other items.

The circles have serrated edges that depict cogs. When the various communities of practice move closer to one another and cogs engage, potential is realised and abstractions are turned into reality through collaboration.



Stepping in the river flow, bodies souls afloat we go in the country of our mothers, touching down with all the Others (Muse, 2012)

Printmaking and the art of tracing moments, memories and meanings

In this vignette, I am method. What did I learn in the process of becoming a student again? How were my “voice”, my “subject positions, social locations, interpretations, and personal experiences” (Chase, 2005:666) examined, even changed in reversing the student/teacher roles? Why did I need to dive deep to look at these questions? Would my learning experiences be of interest to other educators and students doing research and supervision?

In the previous vignettes, I occupied the role of the researcher. In this vignette, I occupy the roles of the researcher and the researched, or narrator (Chase, 2005:666), and the artist as I use myself as the research instrument (Spratt, 1997:143; Longhurst *et al.*, 2008; Nelson, 2009:98,117). This section of the research reflects a conceptual space which, over time, gave rise to a series of images and texts that developed concurrently with the academic research process. As I immersed myself in the creative practice of printmaking again as a student, the lines between researcher and researched increasingly became blurred (Finley, 2005:682).

7.1 Background

In the course of writing up this narrative documentary, I assumed many roles and subject positions. I came to the realisation that I was not interested in “gathering” knowledge, more information, useless data to fill my head with. Instead, I was interested in threshold moments akin to threshold concepts and a “repositioning of the self” (Meyer & Land, 2005:374). This ambiguous territory does not come with a map. Rather, “transgressing the codex” (Dietrich, 2011:5) meant exploring the territory by resisting being a prisoner of paradigm; not following slavishly an accepted and systematic set of academic laws. Instead, true to living the research project in uncertainty, in the manner of the artist (Nelson, 2009:104), I needed to make space for inchoate ideas to ripen in what seemed at times, a rather desultory way.

In donning the robe of student, and documenting my learning process through life writing (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1,2; Leggo, 2010:47) and autoethnography (Ricci, 2003:591-596), I resumed a creative pursuit last practised two decades ago. I entered an in-between space, a “liminal” space (Meyer & Land, 2005:376) inhabited by memories and remembering. My

intention in the space was mindfulness of process and openness to all that presents (KaosPilots, 2011). Moments, ideas, feelings and attachments collided and the fallout re-patterned, shaking up my consciousness with the unexpectedness of the new pattern. The liminal space gradually became my home space as it opened up more and more, allowing for an exploration of imagination and creativity in unexpected ways. Liminality offers “a place of possibility, openness, ambiguity, heightened awareness, imagination” (Neilsen, 2002:207).

Possibilities can be paralysing, however, both in their ubiquity or non-existence. Meyer and Land (2003:377) refer to liminality as a metaphor to help us understand the “conceptual transformations students undergo, or find difficulty and anxiety in undergoing, particularly in relation to notions of ‘being stuck’”. During the initial phases of the research process I was “stuck”, even paralysed at times. Living in the chaotic moment and not having facts, or at the very least a vague map to navigate by, can be very trying. Since I wanted to live the research and immerse myself in the process, I had to trust that it, whatever “it” meant, would show itself. Instead, self-doubt regarding my research ability, my imaginative ability, my ability, presented. It is in doubtful moments, however, as Kristeva (1989:6) asserts, that “the depressed person is a philosopher”. My doubtful moments provided the possibility for meaning and lack of meaning to be most acutely interrogated in search of “living” knowledge, and not in search of “gathering” knowledge.

Gradually then, an emerging form and pattern appeared: revealing itself and retracting itself, in the interstitial, oscillating interval characteristic of liminal space (Meyer & Land 2005:379; Dietrich, 2011:5). Goethe (cited in Meyer & Land, 2005:376) describes the liminal period, when one’s old identity is renounced, as “the period in which the individual is naked of self – neither fully in one category or another”. In this transitioning, pregnant space, I started documenting what I was living.

The parallel streams of writing up academic work and experiencing the senses inherent in creating art flowed together in the journaling methods that I used to document the global research path. Although enmeshed, the journal documentary entries evolved to describe my “thinking body” (Shilling, 2002:87) or head space, which included my “reflecting body” or analytical space during the writing process. The book of imagination entries evolved to

describe my “experiencing body”, the intuitive, imaginative space enacted physically through creative practice. All of these embodied spaces emanate from placing the “mind in the body, rather than seeing thinking as a supra-corporeal activity” (Shilling, 2002:81), that is, “a phenomenological understanding of the ‘lived body’ ” (Shilling, 2002:92). Also, by placing the mind within the body, appreciation of the “bodily basis of thought and imagination can strengthen our understanding of the limits of thought” (Shilling, 2002:103), an appreciation that intensified as I worked deeply with art-making and design processes.

This detour into the world of imagination then, is an invitation to pull on the phenomenologist’s skin, and accompany me with your senses engaged. Detours are useful because they are not straight. “Straight ahead of him, nobody can go very far...” (De Saint-Exupery, 1974:16). If you dislike detours and prefer not going far, join me again on page 95, section 7.3.

7.2 The Detour

7.2.1 Living knowledge: tracing the thinking body, reflecting body and experiencing body

Journal documentary entry: March 2011 AM

On the ferry to Robben Island: I feel a sense of expectation and excitement. I have not been to Robben Island before. Islands are isolated and often beautiful. The only islands I have been to are Namaenje island on Lake Malawi, Crete, SanTorini, and New Zealand (refer Fig 7.1). Island inhabitants have a culture of closeness which tends to keep outsiders out. One has to make an effort to get to an island. What does Robben Island look like from the air?

Journal documentary entry: March 2011 PM

On Robben Island: The island is beautiful; green, bigger than it seems from afar. Many impressive period buildings remain — the women’s asylum, the prison, the governor’s house, the dining hall, the common law prison — all elegant and deserted. It is peaceful and quiet. There are many textures and layers; salty scents, seagulls and solid, aesthetically constructed

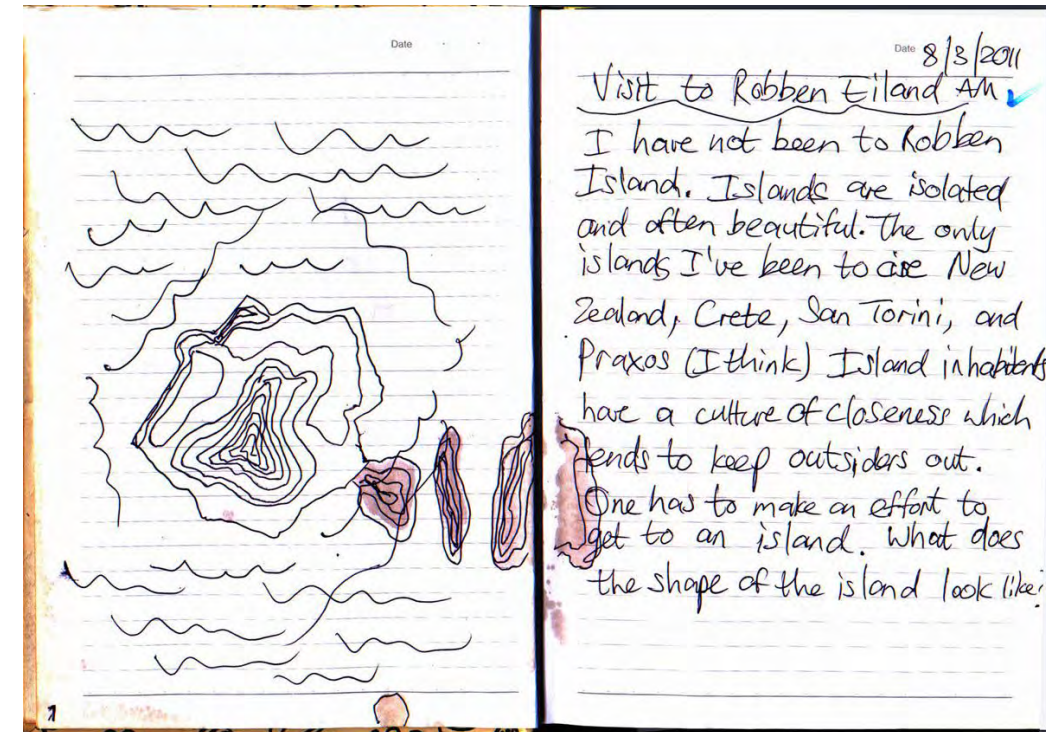


Figure 7.1 Ferry to Robben island journal entry

slate walls. The island has, in a strange way, the feel of a resort island. It has entered a liminal space of its own ... between past and present. I sense only momentarily the gravitas of the site as I enter “the liminal space between history (the facts) and our own imaginations” (Herman, 2005:470). My imagination urges me towards inking up images again.

Journal documentary entry: April 2011

I have not made much progress with my research this year. I became bored with the process because it was not practice-based and did not involve narrative and creative writing. This neglect of creative impulses rendered my writing mechanical and without intention. Also, I was pre-occupied with questions about the rationale for teaching students Surface Design, an ephemeral and evolving discipline. It is conceptual, applied and vocational at times, and stands firmly rooted in the traditions of art and of craft, with the concomitant “higher order thinking” typical of design and its digital processes (Craft and Design Enquiry, 2011). What do students train for in this discipline? What employment will they be able to secure? Should we focus more on producing employers and entrepreneurs? Now that design has matured and offers so much more than product, how do we include aspects of activism in the programme to effect social change? Is this possible? (refer Fig 7.2).

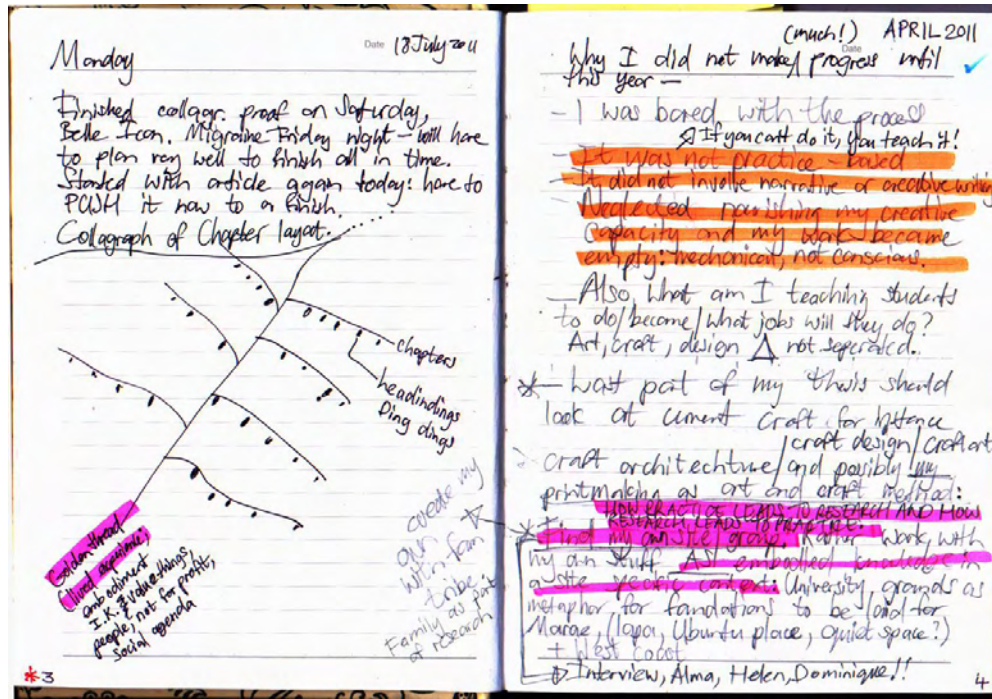


Figure 7.2 Reflection and searching for the golden thread journal entry

These questions living with me are partly responsible for the “circles of stuck places and resistances” (Ellsworth, 1997:71) I found myself in. It seems that logic and order may be the best way to answer them. I cannot, however, trace a linear path with this study: I have no idea beyond a (now outdated) proposal what the outcome will be, apart from the fact that creative practice must feed into written research and vice versa; it has to be lived. Any other way and the outcome may not be *echt*.

I have to incubate, inhabit the interstitial space of pre-writing before I can start writing, words need context or else they lack meaning. The context was provided by the DRAW forum. Our inter-disciplinary DRAW forum had experienced success with a seminar-based, cohort approach to supervising postgraduate students. Gum Manak and I have decided to write up our co-supervision experiences in the collective for a conference. The questions we were asking are the ones that I have been struggling with, added to the fact that the internationalised cohort of students brought a complex background and an altogether different set of expectations to the forum. I pin my hopes on printmaking to kick-start my creative practice like DRAW kick-started my academic writing.

Book of Imagination entry: April 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: so now I have to step into the unsettling moment of “I am not quite sure”. Not quite sure if I remember enough to “read” an etching plate, remember

enough to work with biography in originating the image, remember enough to execute the technicalities required in this layered process. The trees form a canopy above my head and it contains the space (one of those rare spaces in the urban landscape where trees preside and people abide). I step into the studio and put my basket down for the first lesson (refer Fig 7.3).

I think you should start drawing to loosen up the memory in your fingers

This advice from my teacher reminded me of playing the piano, how in an embodied way, even if I had not played for long, the “finger memory” takes over. If I start thinking too much, the brain steps in and musicality suffers. I take my artist’s paraphernalia to work in a quiet space. I start doodling, trying to make light of the moment. Lightness and humour do not find me yet, but the hypnotic action of form drawing and not knowing what I am drawing, is liberating. I spent the rest of the session drawing, free writing and musing. “Artists perceive patterns in new ways, find sensuous openings into new understandings, fresh concepts, wild possibilities. Artists help us subvert the ordinary and see the extraordinary” (Neilsen, 1998: 274).



Figure 7.3 Printmaking studio. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Similar to the start of the research journey is the start of the creative journey. In order to “subvert the ordinary and see the extraordinary” Neilsen (1998: 274), a mind-shift is needed. The creative journey can be activated by a single impulse or a number of impulses, but creative work is always organised around the central theme of imagination (Nelson, 2009:67). Imagination provides the revitalising notion of new creative work, but is also pivotal “to any contextual writing that expands the project” (*ibid.*). Imagination is the ability to perceive associations or concepts, also “in the broader sense of a sensory idea as well as abstract thought” (Nelson, 2009:67). Sensory ideas and abstract thoughts are building blocks in constructing the research project.

Journal documentary entry: May 2011

Drawing the Line conference paper is more of an obstacle than I had anticipated. The questionnaire responses are rich and layered. Conversations and openness anchor the group. There is a growing sentiment that the DRAW forum is becoming a tribe, a family. The responsibility that goes with supervision reminds me of parenting at times, and Gum Manak agrees with me. The questionnaire coding takes weeks as I excavate layer after layer of rich data. Only to be confronted with another dimension after discussions and conversations. And the excavation starts again.

Book of Imagination entry: May 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: I arrived hoping for “sensuous openings” and “wild possibilities” (Neilsen, 1998: 274). Autumn is knocking on the trees, allowing leaves entry into the betwixt and between space of rich, russet colours before they have to give up colour and place altogether.

Printmaking examples and techniques in the studio book might inspire you. There are natural things and man-made things in the shipping container studio you can look at: dried leaves, nuts, flowers, grasses, rope, twine, string, beads, papers, doilies... Play with the textures and feel what is right for you today.

“... humor, playfulness, levity, things that rise, the ephemeral, the elusive: these are considered lightweight, not serious ... [W]e instead adhere to classical sobriety, or gravitas, especially in education, because education — ok this is our worst fear — isn’t a real discipline” (Neilsen, 2002:212). Designers and design educators have debated this very notion for many years, the fact that design lacks its own disciplinary foundations. I think of Jonas’s groundless

field comments (Jonas, 2000:44), and enjoy the moment. We need to know what we do is real. And has meaning.

Out comes the contour drawing of Leo, first image in the House Icon series that I am planning (intuitively) on doing. In drawing members of my personal “tribe”, I try to access a place where I can “perform ... [my] initiation rites” (Herman, 2005:470). Initiation into that place of imagination where the scratching and scarring alchemy of symbolism which is subjected to acid bite to etch an image. A transient place that in turn provides an initiation into the signifying landscape of words. Yet, I don’t feel acid bite and etching “is right for me today”. Instead I start working on an old piece of board and glue down some of the things I find in the collagraph boxes. I cut and scratch the contour of the face. The halo needs something natural, and straw with its delicately raised and indented bast fibres finds me. I muse over the unpredictability of the process as my printmaking fingers warm up.

Journal documentary entry: June 2011

Collected more stories for the *Drawing the Line* conference paper and started writing the second draft. Exploring and examining; a reluctant academic writer perhaps but the analytical component suits my temperament. Chapter Five is progressing slowly as I come back time and again to questions of the relevance of design in vulnerable communities and how blurring disciplinary boundaries can aid change and make a social contribution.

The idea of community design, with and for communities, interests me. Design not as product or system even, but as a way to “inhabit the world in a better way, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution” (Bourriaud, 2002:13). Can design too, then not be linked to Bourriaud’s notion of the role of artworks, not as imagined perfection but to inform life and action anchored in the “existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist” (*ibid.*). Current design thinking embraces action anchored in reality as issues of sustainable development, sustainable production and consumption, socially responsive design and design for social equity and cohesion (Vezzoli, 2007:143) demand attention the world over (Vezzoli, 2007; Tukker et al., 2008:2).

Book of Imagination entry: June 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Book of Imagination entry: I do not hope for “sensuous openings” and “wild possibilities” this time. Drizzling rain is keeping the trees company. The camphor tree in front has the presence of a mountain, and is nearly as old as one.

Printmaking is a contradiction and time-consuming. Although the studio looks messy at times, the printing process itself requires clean surfaces and ought to be executed with utmost care. Prepare everything beforehand. Soak paper and use card holders to touch paper. Registration template on the press, then the plate, the paper and finally a sheet of newsprint. Gently lower the felted blankets. Check the pressure. Slowly crank the handle and stop only at the end of the blanket. Lift blankets gently. Peel away the newsprint. To one side. Slowly lift the print off the plate ...

LEO ICON emerges (refer Fig 7.4). The patterns of drawn lines transferred to board, the cutting, scraping, gluing, gauging depth, and reading texture elevate the ordinary materials of sand, straw, foil, card, beans to the extraordinary: a collagraph print with the luminosity that only the heavy roller of the press can impart. I am flooded with wild possibilities.



Figure 7.4 Leo Icon. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Journal documentary entry: July 2011

Art is a state of encounter (Bourriaud, 2002:18). So too is designing and teaching and supervising. It has no beginning and no end. Research is a state of encounter. A vexing one at the moment. I muse over practice leading to research and research leading to practice. Smith

and Dean (2009:2) affirm that they are not separate processes but “interwoven in an iterative cyclic web”. It brings me back to how different it is to live something rather than think something. Theory is an anaesthetic sometimes, fooling me into thinking that I am doing. But all of this musing brings the realisation that the golden thread in my research and creative work is lived experience, embodiment, and wisdom traditions that value people and expressions of materiality not primarily based on profit. In fact profit seems to embody deficit if I look at depleted ecosystems and the disregard for things that sustain life.

Book of Imagination entry: July 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Book of Imagination entry: I have learned that certain things cannot be hurried. In a system as indirect as printmaking, patience, love of detail and a certain light-heartedness are required as the steps transform into stages, and the stages into not one, but an edition of the image. Sometimes the steps transform into failure. The trees are enjoying the wet winter season.

The beauty of printmaking is the fact that the plate is forgiving. It can be worked and re-worked. The more you connect with the plate, interact with it, draw, mark and aquatint it, the more dimensional it becomes.

Bella is the second in the House Icon series to be printed. The contour drawing comes out. The printmaking sessions have become my “in between the margins” (Herman, 2005:470,471) place, where “outside the bounds of their daily conventions, they participated in rigorous rituals”. This quote referring to people performing initiation rites, del resonates with my re-initiation into a way of being that is transformative; the performance of making art. I decide on the materials to be used in BELLA ICON. Cutting and scarring the face, twine for hair, lace for the bodice. I look up and am disappointed to see the session is over.

Journal documentary entry: August 2011

Chapter Five cannot be hurried. Art, craft and design form a nexus, a contested notion that is continuously advocated for, or against (refer Fig 7.5). Craft producers make beautiful things and ugly things, artists craft beautiful things and ugly things, designers often make superfluous things, but utility remains important amidst the reality that we have too much stuff. I juggle these ideas and search for the meaning of the chapter. I have to be patient as I write and refine draft after draft, none of which excites me. Like the collagraph prints, I will have to re-visit it.

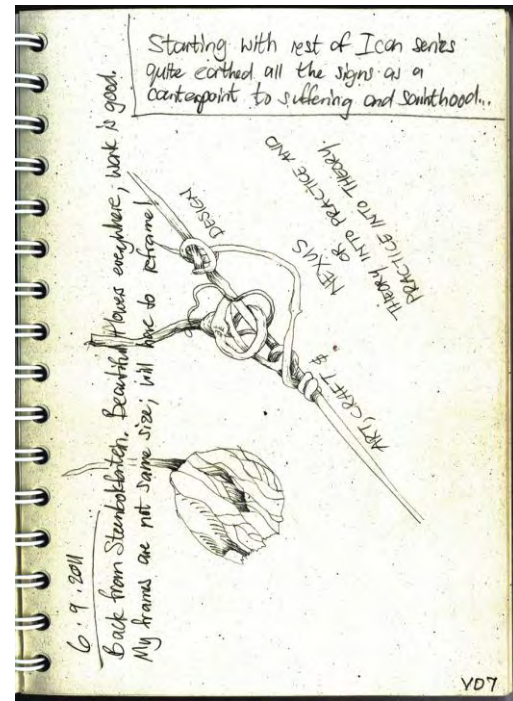


Figure 7.5 Art, craft and design nexus visual journal entry

The link between objects and the value chain needs to be understood against the background of needs and desires, expression of identity and place, and commodity and trade. “Global capitalist economy is fuelled by an excess of produced goods circulated around the world for which there is neither demand nor the ‘power’ to consume” (Benn & Mey, n.d.). On our continent and in our country, it seems that poverty alleviation, fairness, is a chimera invoked when talking change: “... fairness calls for enlarging the rights of the poor to their habitats, ... it calls for cutting back the claims of the rich to resources” (Haas *et al.*, 2002:6). Local communities lose out when their interests and access to resources compete with profit-driven agendas, and the economically empowered ought to “move towards resource-productive patterns of production and consumption” to alleviate resource conflicts (*ibid.*). I reflect on my visit to the GAPA women, and how they live full lives in the collective, apparently without the trappings of sophistication. Sophistication, however, conquers markets, and markets function as the tip for an “excess of produced goods” as well as for goods in demand and the concomitant “power” to consume.

Book of Imagination entry: August 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Book of Imagination entry: Elegance has always inspired me. Elegance can be so many things. It can be a deeply elegant moment when expectation is met. Everything is wet. What a wet winter.

Lift blankets gently. Peel away the newsprint. To one side. Slowly lift the print off the plate...

BELLA ICON emerges (refer Fig 7.6). I have known this image for ever. It is elegant. Out comes the contour drawing of Michele. This is tricky. The gesture, the style, the subliminal layers are all different from the previous icons. Do I work with this contour drawing or re-draw the portrait? No, cannot re-draw, it was an intuitive response to the model’s projection. Start cutting the face, but fewer lines and scratches present themselves. Instead, the halo asks for intricate tonal value and luminescence.

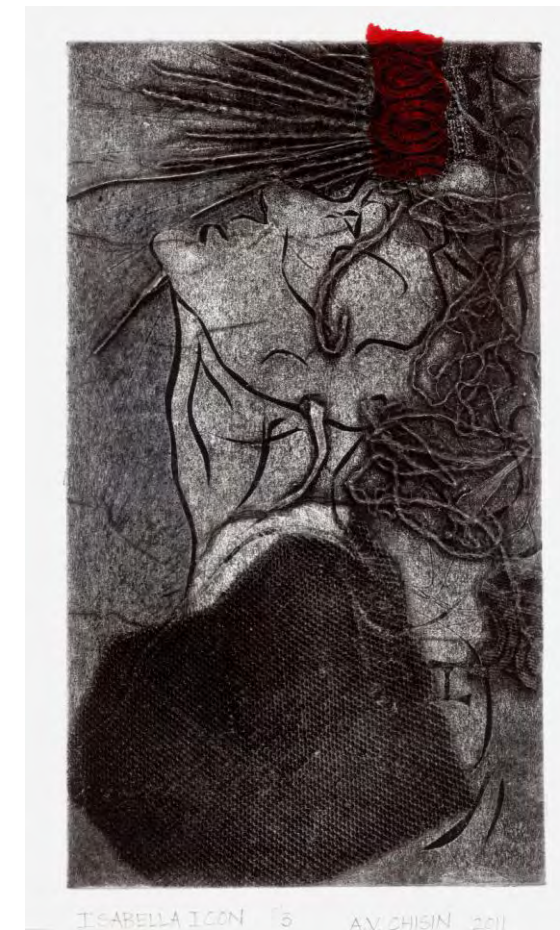


Figure 7.6 Bella Icon. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Journal documentary entry: beginning September 2011

Completed *Drawing the Line* conference paper at last. It was a bit like the Old Man and the Sea, once on my back, it did not want to let go. Started Chapter Two, a bold step into the unknown of combining method and literature because it has become clear over the last months that I am the method. Nelson (2009:42) becomes my ally in his position that the

artist's and designer's subjectivity is the strength of the creative project, albeit a subjectivity, a "me-factor" that is "nuanced ... infused with social pressures and prejudice and a sense of their history". I cannot very well write up research and create artefacts that follow another's lived experience.

Book of Imagination entry: beginning September 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: The process is unfolding. Its fronds reaching for my inner world where self-doubt still lives. But now with company. "In this interior liminal space, consciousness is altered, and we break the normative rules that have limited our perception. In this interior liminal space, we access images that were previously outside our capacities to know them, and we are able to see new patterns in the chaos" (Herman, 2005:471).

Peel away the newsprint. To one side. Slowly lift the print off the plate...

MICHELE ICON emerges. Disappointment. It has a cut-out quality that I misread on the plate for a graphic quality. The plate is over-wiped and the print light and ineffectual, one-dimensional.

This is part of the magic of printmaking, one can go back to it, re-work it, re-invent the plate, compensate by targeted inking and wiping.

I will go back to it. Just not today. The last image in the House Icon series is Madonna of the Barn. There is no drawing yet.

Journal documentary entry: mid September 2011

Chapter Two is challenging. Weaving literature into method should be carefully done. I decided to do it because a phenomenologist invests in sensorial experiences, as does the designer and artist (Nelson, 2009:58). The body as an instrument of research (Longhurst *et al.*, 2008:209) is as an instinctive way to filter the world in order to understand it. The body as an instrument of research marks it as a "thinking body" (Shilling, 2002:87) as well as an experiencing body. Lived experiences and "... 'lived practices'..." are not only present in people's thoughts, "but permeate, shape, and seek to control their sensuous and sensory experiences" (Shilling, 2002:79).

The conference is at the end of September and I need to design the presentation. Gum Manak suggests I present *Drawing the Line* as well. Hopefully both bodies will remain intact when I do

that. "I will be your support in the audience, a friendly face to focus on in the auditorium", he offers. My stomach tightens.

Book of Imagination entry: mid September 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Drawing the self opens up everything for scrutiny. Emotions, intellect, vulnerability, ability, talent, absence of talent, spirituality. With difficulty I completed the drawing. I notice all the lines written on my face, questioning frown lines, frown lines from expressing disapproval and frown lines from squinting in the sun. Laughter lines around my eyes, soft network of wrinkles on a throat that once was smooth. Forgetfulness and a slightly shaky hand ... all reminders that the body is our medium in the world. The board yields under the cutter as I mark and score the contours. There is not a comfortable space in the composition for a halo. Does Madonna need a halo or not? The studio garden is lush.

To one side. Slowly lift the print off the plate...

MADONNA OF THE BARN emerges (refer Fig 7.7). The darkness and melancholia strike me.



Figure 7.7 Madonna of the Barn. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Have I ventured “into the ‘dark side’” of my creativity and did I manage to keep these ventures “in their proper realm of the imagination” (Herman, 2005:469). Kristeva (1989:6) comes to mind again in her treatise *Black Sun* and her assertion that “there is no imagination that is not, overtly or secretly, melancholy”. The concept of counterpoint is taking shape now; a series of etchings symbolising earth signs with which to set contrast to suffering and sainthood, balancing melancholia with sanguinity. Counterpoint relates to in-between spaces, rests in music. Rests define the notes and they have equal value in producing the melody. Counterpoint is another melody which supplements a given melody (*Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 1978). It appears as if the supplemental melody is tracing dark moments to excavate from them traditional wisdom; visually and textually.

Journal documentary entry: October 2011

The chapters are starting to talk back a little more. The texts are opening up; yielding a little bit with each iteration. I appreciate that Chapters Three to Seven have to be re-moulded to give way to vignettes. The chapters act like gate-keepers trying to keep out the narrative vignettes which are shaded in the grey scale of experience. Vignettes do not present a hard and fast reality, but a mediated reality. A reality that is fluid and co-constructed. Like looking from the outside in, they represent openings onto experiences and events which are meaningful because of their gradations, layers and untidiness.

Gunaratnam (2003:104) describes the “messy” nature of narrative enquiry, a distrust of “neatness” and the value of complexity and richness that comes with the mess. Some things simply cannot be neatly categorised. To mine rich descriptions from “betwixt and between” spaces (Meyer & Land, 2005:376) and situations in research asks for tolerance and a willingness to suspend disbelief.

Book of Imagination entry: October 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: The discipline of printing editions finds a rhythmical counterpart in the discipline of making meaning through writing. I have a lot of that to do and cannot come to the printmaking studio every week. I have to try though, it nourishes my inner world. The sculptor next door made big wooden insects and fastened them to some of the trees. They look like corbels supporting the massive trunks, and provide sturdy resting spots and footholds for the squirrels barrelling up and down the trunks at speed. I cannot help but question the sustainability of his creative practice. Huge blocks of wood, fresh ones being delivered to the site frequently. My teacher assures me they are cast-offs from landscaping

and floodplain casualties. I think of the adaptability and resilience of floodplains and that they “are vibrant systems that are in dynamic equilibrium with the constant flux of pulsing events occurring at different spatial and temporal scales within them” (Gordon, n.d.). Gordon could as well have been describing the artist or designer.

A Siamese cat has started visiting the studio regularly. He has a deep and smoky voice and talks a lot. He says MIIIAAAAARRRUUUUUUUUU...

Slowly lift the print off the plate...

MICHELE ICON re-emerges (refer Fig 7.8). It has some dimension now. I pack my things away.

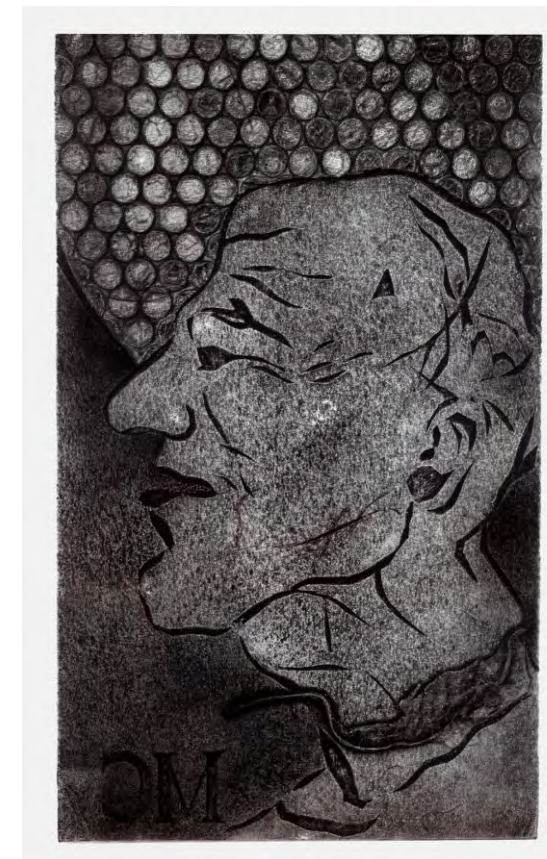


Figure 7.8 Michele Icon. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Journal documentary entry: November 2011

The conference went well, but my presentation of *Drawing the Line* is a blur. Many people attended. Among them two Brazilian colleagues and a British colleague who opened up meaningful discussions after the session. Their openness and modesty struck me. People who are living what they are advocating; *echt*. That was how I visualised living this research

experience, not as a separately constructed event, but as an authentic, open and integral part of my life and professional practice.

Webb (1997:197) references hermeneutical understanding and its emphasis on the role of the researcher in the research situation together with the “intensely human element contained in the development of empathy”. This is a complicated process which develops gradually over time and requires self-reflection in order to cultivate “‘care’ and ‘authentic openness’ to the Other”. Developing, practising authentic openness deepens empathetic educational and social encounters that defy manipulative interactions. I view the development of empathy and authentic openness as part of a personal “phenomenology of practice”, which Van Manen (2007:11) describes as “an ethical corrective of the technical and calculative modalities of contemporary life”. Suspending disbelief has its rewards at times.

Book of Imagination entry: November 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Moments of uneasiness increase as the holiday season looms, and I grasp the need to keep up momentum and not stop writing and print-making. A change of direction in the collagraphs as I start with the visual summary to Vignette 6. Communities of practice, I noticed, are like a textile design. The one community or component is contingent on the other to form a repeat pattern. And the negative spaces define the positive spaces. The trees are still flirting with the idea of green, but are not quite convinced yet ... and the introduction to summer is very mild.

You can come to the studio and work in December, I have workshops planned. Slowly lift the print off the plate...

INTERDEPENDENCE appears and the concept of a visual summary for each chapter takes root (refer Fig 7.9). The image summarises the potential of the collective, and I think of the fact that potential is unlimited. All that is required in order to utilise the potential is a catalyst to release the inherent energy. In this case the catalyst is engagement – one community of practice engaging with the other – activating the collective field.



Figure 7.9 Interdependence. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Journal documentary entry: December 2011

Working over the December holidays. Hard at times, especially for the ones around me. I received editorial changes to the journal article and started working on those while continuing with Vignette 3. It needs some re-thinking and critical eyes. I miss Buhle’s voice and need to check in with her. But how?

Book of Imagination entry: December 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Photography brings mediation to creative process. It is a filter and at times the viewfinder is a third set of eyes. Looking at the world, framed and bounded, freezing potential. I am not planning on doing printmaking this month, despite my teacher’s invitation. The studio is closed except for the workshops.

Journal documentary entry: January 2012

I keep on being challenged by the idea of layering and in-between spaces. The layers reveal the narrative unfolding of my reflections and Buhle’s reflections, one-on-one. Then to the fourth-year students and group interactions with six students, then one-on-one interaction again with Claudia, and finally the master’s group and co-supervision with Gum Manak. The master’s stories form a couplet now, in length and theme: students working with social design, communities and sustainability. “Lady Bountiful” comes to mind, the “white lady teacher” and her need “to know, to feel, and to be in control” in order to be bountiful (Heydon, 2010:131). What are my intentions as a teacher and academic? I need to know, but other things. I need to feel, but sensorial things. I do not have to be in control. Neither of the process nor its unfolding. But I need to be very present.

Book of Imagination entry: January 2012

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Could not wait to resume printmaking. The combination of direct and indirect methods to arrive at an image, which can be re-worked, re-invented is thrilling. "I'd rather we seek the subjective thrill..." (Nelson, 2009:114). I could not agree more, fresh concepts, wild possibilities. Vignette Five next. How do I represent a blurring of disciplinary boundaries? Three sides of the Escher-esque triangle suggest the integration that I propose in this section. The image should not be too static, it needs an organic foil and some diagonal cutting to create movement.

The finest, most delicate lines can be achieved on copper plate. Shall I prepare a copper plate for you to experiment on?

... lift the print off the plate...

BLURRING DISCIPLINARY BOUNDARIES emerges (refer Fig 7.10). Disappointment again. The triangle was not raised enough, and the scarring of the board too tentative. Have to come back to this again. Iteration, cyclical. Part of the character of printmaking. Staying with it.



Figure 7.10 Blurring disciplinary boundaries. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Journal documentary entry: February 2012

Journal article is accepted for publication. Another small elegant moment. Additional data collection done for Vignette Three. The angle of the narrative was not satisfactory since I wanted to include Buhle's voice from the start. I was surprisingly fortunate to have located her and that she was willing, eager to share her story, reflecting on what happened 10 years ago. I felt at the time that our experiences resonated and that we had formed connections;

she affirmed that in her narrative. Connections that remained intact but were not "invented accounts of unity" (Trahar, 2009). Buhle's narrative bristled with resilience, and I admired that.

Book of Imagination entry: February 2011

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: First tentative lines drawn on the smoky black surface. Hairline copper shimmers through; the colour of history and tradition. I am drawn to experimentation but have to bear in mind that this is the Table of Contents illustration and time is running out ... I am not used to etching copper.

Open up the copper. Do not gouge too hard. Acid will do the job without gouging, biting down true into the plate to produce a clean line.

Journal documentary entry: early March 2012

I started with my journal documentation a year ago on the ferry to Robben Island (refer Fig 7.11). My thoughts go back to that sea crossing. Was it a voyage? To me, yes. I had never been to the island before then to experience some of the history that shaped who I am and who we are. I questioned the reasons why I [had] put it off for so long. Did I want to hold on to ideas of freedom and the promise of equality, a shared identity that was palpable when the prisoners were freed? I recall my sense of expectation and excitement. The island felt

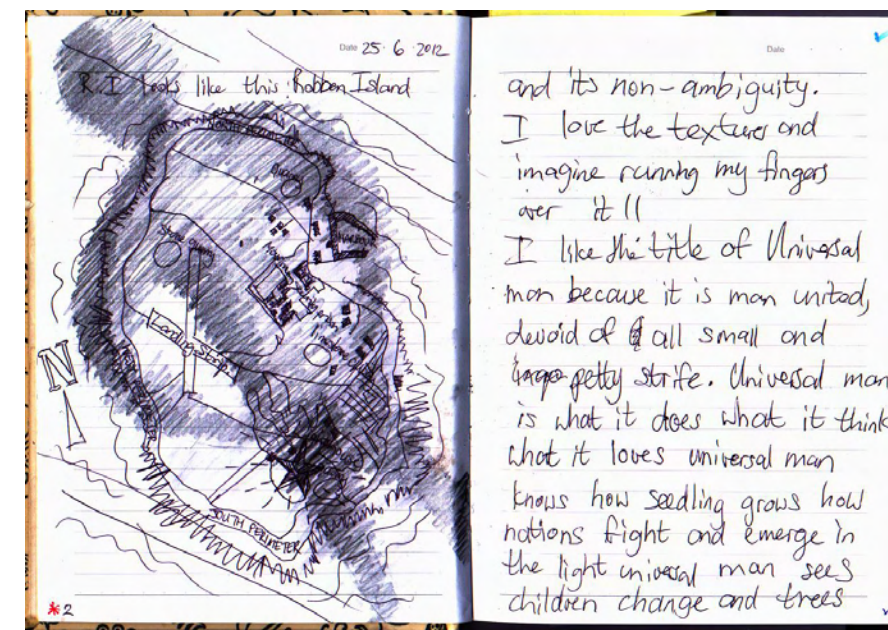


Figure 7.11 Universal man and Robben island journal entry

isolated, inured against the outside and was peaceful. Islanders' culture of closeness which tends to keep outsiders out, has found a foil in the studio's creative culture. The exclusivity of the person making, jealously guarding the subjective delight of imagination and origination (Nelson, 2009:58). Writing and living the research was a birthing process, accompanied by a dying process. Old habits no longer useful, old pre-conceptions unpacked, looked at, even resolved, or at least made peace with.

Book of Imagination entry: early March 2012

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Only one visit this month, on a very breezy day. Limbs were creaking as trees swayed and played in the wind. Some branches were torn down in a storm; like the elderly they give way to fresh and new life. I am back with the copper-plate etching, the delicacy of the line delighting me again. I do not want to use aquatint tones on the plate, but rather pursue the story of lines.

You may want to try stop-etching to achieve tonal variation in the line. It is the method used by old Masters, most notably Rembrandt whose etchings emulate sfumato.

Journal documentary entry: 22 March 2012

For once I am specific about the date. The events today also asked for a fresh page in my journal. Attended the Surface Design Bachelor students' presentations; what insight that brought! Listening to their research topics and appreciating the way they immersed themselves in practice, I became aware of a missing piece in my creative work. That is, the need to do site-specific fieldwork again (refer Fig 7.12).

I need to do photography and land art to illustrate my own practice visually, but from a different perspective. Movement is required. Some evidence of life as it is being lived, in the moment, and almost incidental to the elements and nature that sustain us (Leggo, 2010:53).

Is there a possibility that some members of the "tribe" who participated in an enactment 27 years ago as resource material for my own Bachelor's dissertation will agree yet again to be part of a new enactment? From a life writing and biographical perspective, this will fill in the loop of creative experience. Naturally not a closed loop, because the nature of creativity and experience is such that that transition, growth and decay are part of living processes. The tribe had changed with time too, so new with old.

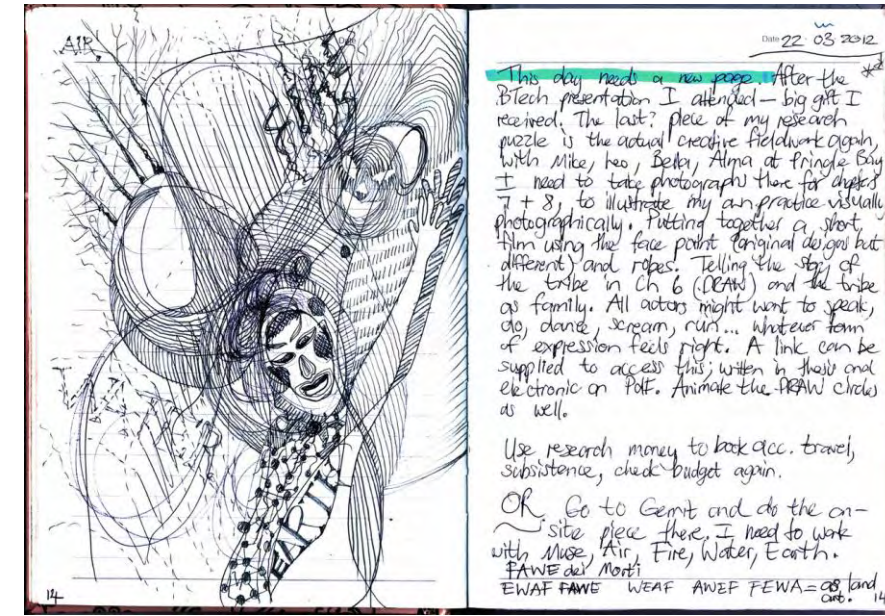


Figure 7.12 The birth of "Elements" journal entry

Journal documentary entry: April 2012

Focusing on finishing the chapters and vignettes now. I remind myself not to gather useless information, and present it as useful, but to stay with living the research. Concurrent with printmaking and the developing of creative liminal space, is the development of analytical liminal space. Right brain and left brain. Top brain and bottom brain. Contained in one brain-body, *Limen* is finding expression in the design of the project. At first I did not know what it was that I wanted to do or say. I arrived at an insight from living the in-between. The discomfort and anxiety of threshold moments found their counterpart in Buhle's difficulties, in the Bachelor students' difficulties, in the grandmothers' challenges and challenges in DRAW, allowing me a deeper empathy and understanding of "the lifeworld of 'the Other'" (Webb, 1997:197), while striving to re-invent myself as a printmaker and designer.

Towards completion of *Limen* did I realise that the journal entries provided a focus for my written research, whereas the book of imagination entries were mirroring my practice-based research process. But of course, the two parts were never separate since research leads to practice and practice leads to research in a continuous iteration (Smith & Dean, 2009). This is where learning, through the body, "intelligence through the body" and "useful learning" (Breen, 2005:162) happens. When one is stripped naked and is neither in this moment nor the next, but transitioning. Autoethnography tells a story, and this narrative documentary is the story of my life during many phases of transition. I did not want to offer merely a "designed" book, or something that is not tangible. The work had to reflect who I am. The

phenomenological fascination with meaning, “being swept up in a spell of wonder ... the reward ... are the moments of seeing-meaning or ‘in-seeing’ into ‘the heart of things’” (Van Manen, 2007:11). The three strands of design, art and craft suggested being plaited into an art book of sorts, and in the provisional space of becoming it took on its own form.

Book of Imagination entry: April 2012

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: Autumn sneaked up on me and the trees again (refer Fig 7.13). The mountainous camphor trees in front are resisting the temptation of chromatic virtuosity. The poplars at the back guarding the printmaking studio, have given in. They are rustling in the wind, gaily waving ripening fall colours as befitting minions, paving the way for royalty. I cannot resist temptation either and take so many photographs that I feel dizzy from looking up into the canopy of colour.

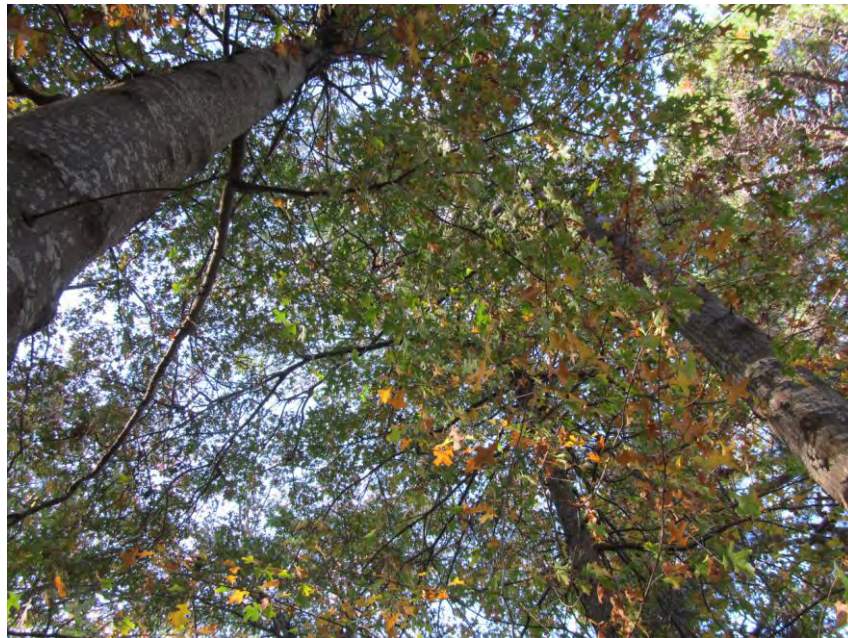


Figure 7.13 Canopy of colour. Photo: Chisin, 2011

The copper plate is small, and I work with the story of lines. Draw some lines, then to the acid bath. Remove plate from bath, draw some more, back to the acid bath. Again and again. The alchemy of copper and acid fuming is fascinating. Delicate bubbles form on the lines, and I need to agitate the acid bath gently to persuade the bubbles not to insulate the line at that specific point or it will not etch. A line consists of many linking points, nowhere clearer to be seen than in the acid bath ... I take the plate out and clean it with turpentine, the smell is rich and warm. The cleaned-up copper plate is an artefact in itself, a moment in “the life of the object” (Nelson, 2009:114) displaying materiality that goes beyond the surface marking.

Emotional attachment to the object “reveals how the object becomes intelligible and meaningful. It is not just as a case of what was designed but what was encountered; and some aspects are co-incidental while others are telling, possibly full of ideology or twisted aspirations, all of which, when recognised, yield a more complete analysis” (Nelson, 2009:114).

Journal documentary entry: 29 March 2012 – 1 April 2012

A week ago I wrote about the possibility of site-specific fieldwork, now we are here. Arriving at Steenbokfontein Nature Conservancy is, as always, a home-coming. Many possibilities everywhere. No script was finalised for the enactment, only history re-awakened by reading the Leggo (2010) article, a history of working with the elements. Elements that shape our inner and outer worlds. I did not want to pre-empt engaging the space, but it is playing out; I feel the discomfort of in-between. No clear concept has materialised either for the element that I wanted to explore and embody: earth. “There has been an increased attention given to the phenomenon of embodiment in human action” (Van Manen, 2007:21). How do I work with earth in a way that is open yet expressive of a year of searching for meaning in my research? A year of re-visiting, re-considering and releasing bit by bit the rigid mould I cast around myself that prevented me from being present in the moment? Embodying earth in human action ... in the moment, by working with concepts of infinity loops (iterations) and spirals (refer Fig 7.14).

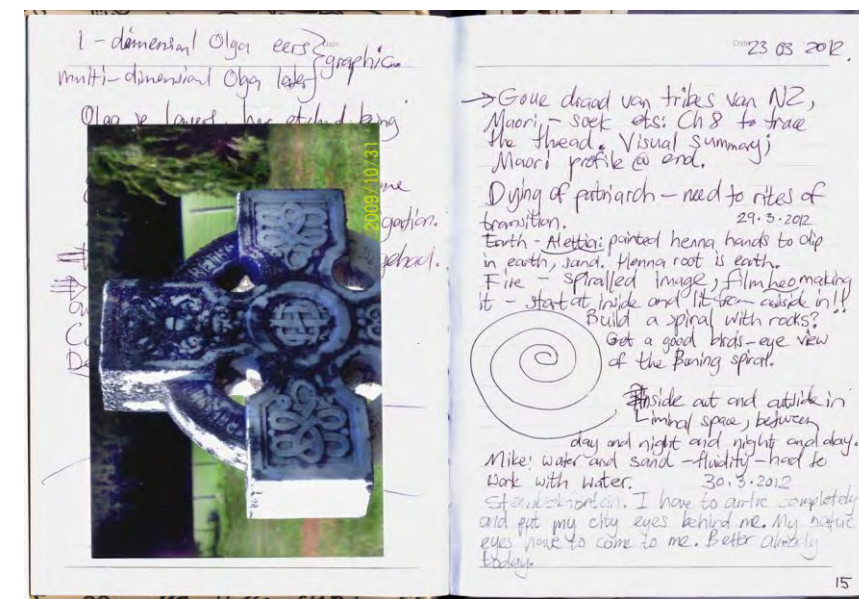


Figure 7.14 Infinity loops, iterations and spiral journal entry

In drawing to a close the reflexive process of writing, doing, being in the world pathically, and intuitively grasping it again (Van Manen, 2007:20), am I able to make sense of what happened

in the research process; the awareness that the strength of the process is the way. Practice of the way is always impermanent since the goal is never finally achieved, but practice eventually supports an attentiveness to how the tiniest of life's details result in major effects (Hasebe-Ludt & Jordan, 2010:1). Being aware of one's own conduct, even the minutiae, is important since the now and what led to it is contingent on yesterday's experiences (*ibid.*). Increasingly I find intellectual reassurance in the writing of others: "When we have emerged from a demanding situation, reflection may be of critical importance" and "To be able to understand and, if necessary, to improve our own practice, we have to start with our lived experience. We have to express it to become aware of its meaning, and often this awareness itself leads to improvements" and "The meaning we reflect on is the meaning we take part in" (Lindseth & Norberg, 2004:148). The whole body itself is pathic, "thus 'the body knows' how to do things" (Van Manen, 2007:21). What did the elements personify during the year that I would like us, the collective, the tribe, to embody in our expressions?

Dusk settles softly with its muffled blanket. I still feel somewhat blind in the space; need to arrive completely and put my city eyes behind me. Nature eyes have to come to me.

Book of Imagination entry: 30 March 2012

Steenbokfontein Nature Conservancy, West Coast: Surf sounds comfortingly close. Non-seeing eyes are already opening up more today. I did not pay much attention to the elements of water and wind in my imagining of the enactment. Guess who is visiting? Rain is lashing down and wind is driving it everywhere. What can we do with so much water and wind? What if it rains the whole weekend and the tableau cannot be enacted? Earth and fire are much more accessible. They are here, they are us. Wind and water are more mutable.

Book of Imagination entry: 31 March 2012

Steenbokfontein Nature Conservancy, West Coast: The weather cleared up. I still have no idea how to embody earth. I will stay with ornament and do *mehnde* painting (Refer fig 7.15). A bit tricky to paint the right hand with the left. Get into the limen of *mehnde*. Positive spaces defined by negative spaces. Traditionally the honeymoon period is characterised by painted hands; it is the in-between period before the couple have to face the world with all its demands, a period of belonging not to the previous world nor the next, when reality is suspended (Meyer & Land, 2003:376). The liminality of life cycles (Meyer & Land, 2003:375) echoes my research cycle in the sabbatical period with its suspension of the everyday, of reality as I know it. The work at hand became all-consuming and I think of Trahar (2009) who

asserts that ownership of the journey lies in its preparation, once embarked on the journey, it owns you.



Figure 7.15 Mehnde painted hands. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Book of Imagination entry: 1 April 2012

Steenbokfontein Nature Conservancy, West Coast: Went to the beach today with no muse yet. Started digging up the sea sand, embedding gritty bits of shell under my nails as I unearthed pastel-coloured shells. Giro started moulding the sand into shapes, a spiral close to the water's edge. The ebb and flow erase some of the shape and soften it. The beach is littered with kelp. I arrange a few sea bamboo trees into a pattern. They start resembling a textile design. Giu and Li help untangle and drag the metres-long bamboo trees so I can arrange them in a bigger area on the dunes. *Ecklonia maxima*. A befitting name for such imposing bodies of the sea. It takes hours and I find a rhythmic and quiet space in "drawing" with the bamboo limbs and bodies (refer Fig 7.16).

Looking out over the sea, a brown canopy of kelp forest is swaying with the tide like the green canopy of poplar and camphor trees at the printmaking studio. The day went by unhurriedly. Pace in nature is pace unhurried. Tonight we are lighting the twig spiral that Giu and Li constructed this afternoon. I look forward to seeing it lit. Fire was the element that proved to be the most accessible to work with, to embody because it forms part of our place, our continent. Burning fires signify lives being lived. Whoooooosh! The warm, oily scent of paraffin coaxing the damp twigs to flame fills the crisp night air and the tribe starts telling stories...



Figure 7.16 Drawing with *Ecklonia Maxima*. Photo: Chisin, 2011

Journal documentary entry: May 2012

Back in the city. I have to bring my research to the point where I can let it go. As soon as I complete an iteration, another presents itself. There will be no conclusion, merely a moment's pause, an unravelling, before stepping into the next moment, continuing the journey. The archetypal journey. It has taken me through new phases. I am reminded of how many mythical journeys are recorded; telling the same underlying story of transformation. Innocence lost, complexity and chaos, heroic quests, sages and partnerships, ordeals, hardships and initiation followed by insight and transformation are the journey's landmarks (Brown & Moffett, 1999). They are cemented in lived experience, giving it meaning. "Lived experience is simply experience as-we-live-through-it in our actions, relations and situations" (Van Manen, 2007:16).

Book of Imagination entry: early May 2012

Printmaking Studio Cape Town: My compass has been printmaking. Heading to the studio, breathing in the rich mountain air, fragrant with camphor, putting down my basket, engaging materiality and form. All the components of using the body as research instrument (Longhurst et al., 2008). Printmaking combines parts in a harmonious whole, a *diapason*.

Peel away the newsprint. To one side. Slowly lift the print off the plate...

CHAPTERS ETCHING emerges with an almost Victorian quality that resulted from the stop-etch timing (refer Fig 7.17). The effect is one of achieving grey scale delicately with line. Rembrandt's memory floats in to remind me of timeless techniques. The printmaking phase has come to an end for now. Plaiting together physicality, knowing and intuition however — during threshold moments — has given form to the transformative potential intrinsic to limbic phases.

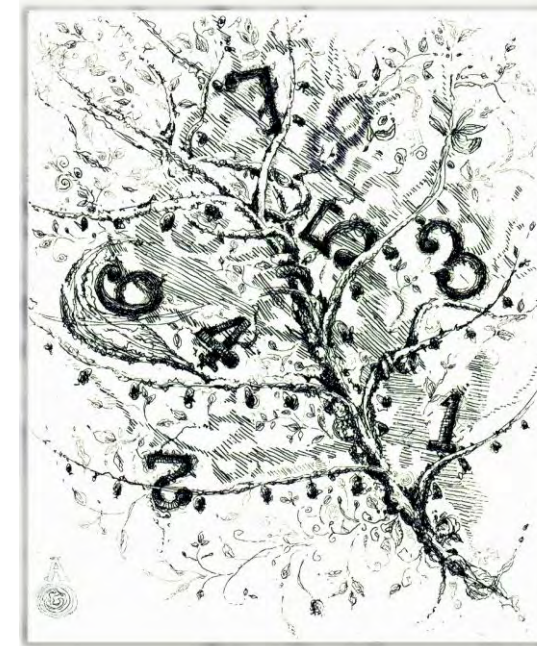


Figure 7.17 Chapters etching: the story of line. Chisin, 2011

7.3 Threshold concepts and limbic phases

My hope was that you would go on the detour with me, where I shared an encounter with the world of imagination, "up close and personal" (Richardson, 2005:966). Working in the liminal space of imagination, I identified four limbic phases.

The phases correlate with the various roles that I occupied during the research process and relate to the difficult spaces described in the vignettes. These are the spaces where learning happens that alters the person profoundly in that temporal zone. The phases are of equal importance since they are interconnected but impermanent, each giving way to the other in looping iterations.

Meyer and Land (2005:374) describe “threshold concepts” — akin to the liminal space of limbic phases — as signalling new conceptual spaces. These spaces are accessed through learning to “see” or “read” things differently, which requires the suspension of habits and preconceptions to a greater or lesser degree. The acquisition of threshold concepts extends students’ use of language (natural, formal or symbolic language) in relation to the concept and is marked by “a shift in the learner’s subjectivity, a repositioning of the self” (Meyer and Land, 2005:374). It is during the opening up of new conceptual spaces in acquiring threshold concepts or during a limbic phase that meaningful experiences and learning occur. The phases and contingent roles I explored in my professional and personal life in the research process are those of:

- teacher/lecturer/supervisor/mentor
- designer/artist/maker
- researcher
- student (refer Fig 7.18)

Limbic phases are similar to certain practices and rites that mark transition, and are of indeterminate length. One can revert to pre-limbic moments but can never completely occupy a pre-limbic phase again (Meyer & Land, 2005:376). Qualities of the phases I went through are that:

- they are spaces where the usual behaviours and habits are suspended
- they are spaces that one grows into and starts inhabiting progressively
- they are spaces of intense scrutiny of the self
- they are unmapped spaces
- they are shifting and impermanent spaces
- they are uncomfortable spaces
- they are demanding spaces
- they are solitary spaces
- they are spaces without limits
- they are spaces that resist judgement
- they are spaces that require pliability
- they are spaces where the unexpected happens

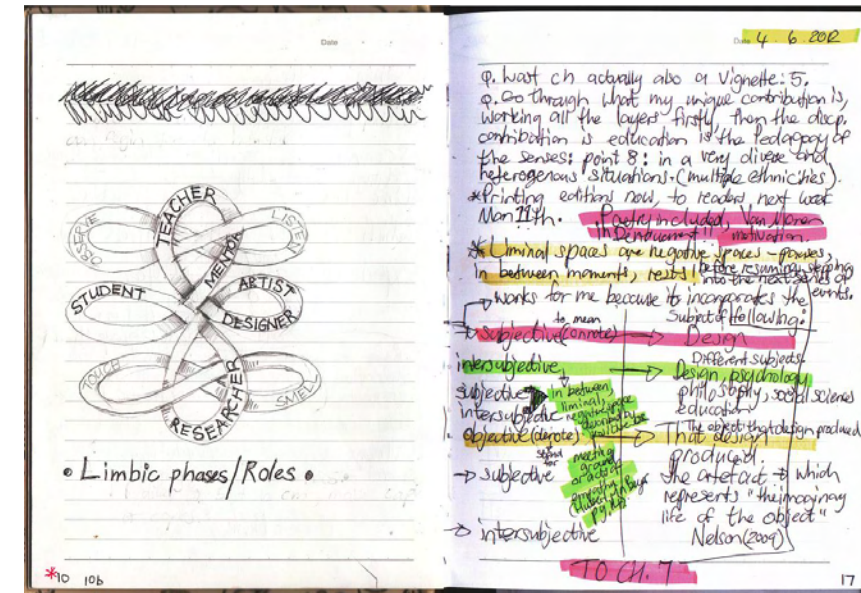


Figure 7.18 Exploration of limbic phases/roles and liminal spaces journal entry

7.3.1 The limbic phase of creating: making and designing

Printmaking and its many tactile strata provided the generative impulse to get the creative aspect of the research off the ground. Starting out with no material form, only the foundation of imagination, memories and reflection, required trust in the process and demanded pliability in thinking and doing. A counterpoint to academic language was found in the languaging of images (Nelson, 2009:94). Tangible processes and the reassurance of seeing a concrete result buoyed up abstraction.

Once the etching or collagraph plate is inked up, it is placed on the press bed and covered with select etching paper, a sheet of newsprint and the felt blanket. The press setting is tightened to accommodate the thickness of the plate. The pressure has to be tight enough or else the impression is vague and ineffectual. No definite setting here, only experience. The plate is cranked through the press to the other side, subjecting paper and plate to their own, intimate limbic moment where the image still sits on the plate and the paper in readiness steps up to the depth of the object.

A supreme liminal moment occurs just before the inked surface gives up its liquid to the paper substrate. All this happens in the unseen, limitless and dark space where transition occurs. Once the press bed has travelled its distance and stops on the far side of the cast iron roller, the pressure is released. The blanket is lifted up, followed by newsprint and then the etching

paper is peeled away from the plate. The moment your eyes rest on an image never seen before, is a moment when the transformative nature of working in the creative limbic phase is most strongly experienced.

The tightening and loosening of the etching press's roller to release an image personified the loosening of my "stuck places" (Ellsworth, 1997:71) and the tightening up of loose ends in research through immersing myself in the strength of the global research process, and significantly, in the process of becoming a student again. In reversing the student/teacher roles, a measure of understanding, of empathy with my students living *their* research was achieved in real terms. Grappling with critique, insecurity, refinements and change are made real when the master becomes the apprentice. Being the student crystallised notions of how teachers, wittingly or not, impose their frameworks on students and the teaching situation. The power differential inherent in such a situation ought to be acknowledged and managed very carefully. A significant part of that process is changing one's subject position by giving up the control and status of teacher/master through role reversal.

Designing the research and designing the style of the art folio both happened in an emergent manner (Breen, 2003; Trahar, 2009), as opposed to a pre-determined manner. This is congruent with the position that realities are accessed through numerous and subtle mental formations that are socially and experientially based (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

7.3.2 The limbic phase of teaching

As a teacher, I started the research with a desire to embark on a meaningful exploration so I could "re-connect" with my passion for teaching (Breen, 2005:162) and creative expression. A re-connection in the sense of deepening my awareness and understanding of what it means to be involved in the complexities of people's lives and creative strivings. In the maelstrom of the everyday, habits, "instant judgement" (De Bono, 1995:12) and cemented belief systems may come in the way of such a meaningful exploration. The demands of teaching and research may leave no moment or inclination to contact passion or creative expression, while adhering to "a jealous timetable" (Nelson, 2009:141). Being removed from the ordinary, and working in an deleted unpredictable and "close to the edge" (Breen 2005:162) space, provided the landmarks for such an exploration and reflection.

Professional reflection, a well-established discourse (Schön, 1983; Meyer & Land, 2005:375), offers many advantages and has many forms. In this instance it was a retrospective, iterative process of examining my own teaching and supervision practice. Schön (1983) refers to the educational setting as a domain of reflective practice, which is intended for the acquisition of professional practice". The setting can be anywhere. What qualifies the setting is the concept of people learning by doing and learning from one another. In studio-based education, that setting is fluid and activity- or event-bound (Duggan, 2004:72). In this setting particularly, the teacher/lecturer has to be on guard not to let personal preference override the voice of the student. Personal preference and positionality (Nelson, 2009:26) is so strongly interwoven with imagination and creative practices, that a number of actions may be considered in order to keep judgemental bias and power play in check. Professional reflection is one of them.

Part of reflection in limbic teaching is drawing on theory and the writing of others to provide an interface against which to check one's own judgements and personal position. The sagacity that accompanies the role of teacher and supervisor, hard earned through analytical thought, can become a formula which is isolating in interactions with others. Tested and tried responses carve deep markings into the consciousness. The "dominance of technological and calculative thought" (Van Manen, 2007:19) is well entrenched and it may even alienate us from an empathetic understanding of the world and others.

An improved understanding of personal bias circumvents assumptions and pre-conceived ideas of how students ought to learn, ought to research and ought to behave. It guides the teacher consistently to question her own practice and gauge where on the internal map the action is located. Where are our "stuck places" (Ellsworth, 1997:71) and our fluid places and what do they look like in a particular teaching situation? Theories and writing supply us with an external compass to find an alternative route to well-trodden internal paths, as it were, to enable us to put ourselves in the shoes of the other (Van Manen, 2007:20) guided by empathy and authentic openness (Webb, 1998:197). Phenomenology of practice, as part of "a practical and reflective method", can also be used to bring insight and a certain sensitivity to everyday life events (Van Manen, 2007:23), particularly in the teaching context.

7.3.3 The limbic phase of researching

An autobiographically slanted narrative linked to the research riddle (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:40) commenced at the start of the research. Once I started writing down impressions,

moments presented that were strung together and they eventually evolved into a documentation of memories and reflections that afforded some meaning. This narrative documentary portrays lived experience and a substantial part of it involves educational practice, but it also involves “dreams, daydreams and reflections” (Trahar, 2009). I don’t know everything but I know something (*ibid.*). The something that I came to know, was profoundly entwined with the stories of the participants in the study. Yet, the generative impulses of printmaking and life writing were needed to unlock my story so that it could find a complement in the stories of the collective. Worth and interest reside in the quality of reflection in creative practice, and the way in which it is enacted to provide meaning and make a culturally significant contribution (Nelson, 2009:38).

In support of the centrality of the researcher in the creative project, Nelson (2009:58) emphasises the “i-ness of the person representing”; a unique contribution of the researcher working all the layers. Research from an ontological perspective is all-consuming, like living art or being the method. I explored the nature of reality experientially, and epistemologically my relationship with what can be known fluctuated in the various encounters and interactions as described in the vignettes. My research journal as constant companion kept me in a limbic phase of enquiry with the senses heightened to work with data in a different way. This included incorporating into my dream world parts of the research in need of clarification, and responding to “moments of seeing-meaning or ‘in-seeing’ into the ‘heart of things’” (Van Manen, 2007:11) upon waking up.

The research process drew on many skills and techniques: thinking, writing, musing, drawing, designing, etching, collagraphing, photographing and filming. The limbic phase of researching challenged me and kept me alert, and I experienced learning that has value. In part, the value it held for me was a deepened understanding of my subject position, my personal bias, entry points, and cultural ways. Similar to Trahar (2009) who grasped opportunities for increased understanding in the construction of a dialogical experience by interrogating her “whiteness” and culture as a British woman, as a white South African woman, research brought to light long-held beliefs in all areas of my professional life and marked a profound transition in my personal life.

The collective domain explored during the research process became increasingly significant as partnerships were formed and negotiated within the academic community of practice. Collaboration with colleagues and fellow candidates opened up new ways of approaching

academic writing. Encounters with colleagues enriched my thinking and frequently gave it direction. These encounters and the collaborations that stemmed from them were at times the result of being receptive to the moment and to impressions: “The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique” (Schön, 1983:68). Allowing myself to experience surprise and confusion worked with the quality of the liminal moment which resists limitation and judgement. The network of colleagues, supervisors, university support services, and fellow candidates provided a home space that supported my research.

7.3.4 The limbic phase of learning

Being a student again brought a different set of eyes. It was a reminder that what we come to expect from our students as a matter of course, is very challenging. Creating new form and thinking, being original and innovative and satisfying many criteria are all aspects that demand a substantial measure of sophistication, dedication to the task and resources. A different set of eyes also meant grasping the world pathically (Van Manen, 2007:20) which encouraged curiosity, and in turn, led to experimentation with creative form, research methods and writing. Living through the body and the senses and shedding the coat of sage freed my inner and outer worlds to become re-awakened to impressions. Originating meaning “right here in our actions and in the tactile things of the world that we inhabit” (Van Manen, 2007:19) was foregrounded in this learning phase that included being receptive to critique and open to the unexpected in the moment.

The staunchness accompanying the roles of mentor and supervisor can limit new ways of interacting with others in the unpredictability of the moment. Authentic openness (Webb, 1997:197) and a precluding of judgement in this limbic phase led to a renewal in relationships. Body knowledge, which a phenomenological perspective acknowledges, also inheres in “the things of our world, in the situation(s) in which we find ourselves, and in the very relations that we maintain with others and the things around us” (Van Manen, 2007:21). What I came to know through body-knowledge and interaction with others in the research process, I translated into a pedagogy of the senses (PoS) that proposes an integrated approach to sensory design education.

7.4 A pedagogy of the senses: reinforcement for social design education

In order to contact embodied knowledge located in sensory experience, polarities need to be questioned, and where appropriate, reconciled, even if only for a span. The tension between polarities supports a rich and nuanced terrain. Working from the experiencing body to the thinking body traverses subjectivity and objectivity. Imagination with its infinite loops is tamed by analysis. Musing may remain just that if not reined in by academic discipline. To make the work of design and creativity manifest, inductive and implicit notions need to be linked to deductive and explicit ones. The in-between of tension can be negotiated in many ways. What has value is the insight and transformation that occurs when that tension is seized and actively worked with. These concepts were interrogated in an attempt to start crystallising a Pedagogy of the Senses (refer Fig 7.19).

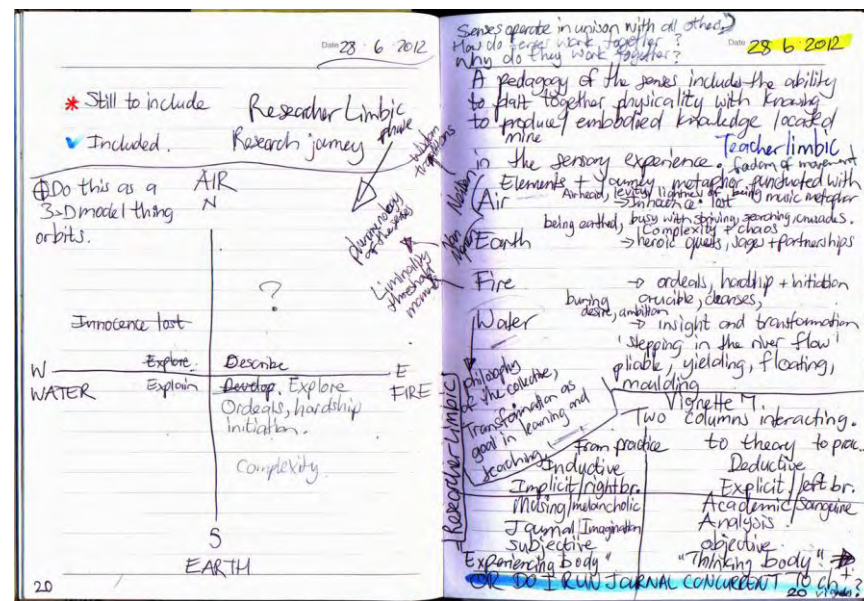


Figure 7.19 Crystallising a Pedagogy of the Senses journal entry

“How can the poetic and the scientific, how can curiosity and rationality, imagination and analysis, theory and application become better re/integrated through innovative pedagogies, through issue-based and thematically oriented learning at tertiary level and in continuous professional development? Is it not high time to ... integrate social relations into the science agenda through sensory design education?” (Benn & Mey, n.d.). Questions such as these posed by Benn and Mey also point to the possibility of a pedagogy of the senses, a social design education, residing in the opening up of new conceptual spaces which are facilitated via body-knowledge and through the senses. A body-knowledge that is rooted in the social and recognises us as socialised beings, and that learning is social practice.

A pedagogy of the senses is open to the specific, the individual, the idiosyncratic but with an appreciation of many answers and many ways. It involves limbic phases — impermanence — and places us there similar to the space we inhabit when reading fiction, “in worlds neither here nor there, worlds of the imagination, the heart and the spirit” (Neilsen, 2002:210). In attempting to define a pedagogy of the senses, I had to be mindful of the fact that definitions play in the arena of “The” as in “The Answer” and “The Way” and do not happily accommodate an answer and a way (Neilsen, 2002:210). “A shift from trying to find The Answer and The Way to being open to and hearing many answers, many ways, all in context, all subject to life cycles like everything else on the planet” (ibid.).

A pedagogy of the senses resisted a final visual representation. In exploring graphic concepts to illustrate possible representations, I attempted to speak to the value of personal creative practice in researching design, in lecturing and in postgraduate supervision to contact the social. Personal creative practice is as important if not more important than content knowledge in design education, since it helps the researcher to experience the world pathically and relate first-hand to students and their research projects because the lecturer/supervisor is the student. Power inherent in the lecturer/supervisor roles is given up in the limbic process of transitioning, and thereby empathetic openness is cultivated which in turn allows for sensitive interchanges in the complexity of responding to multiple ethnicities and the cultural embeddedness of knowledge.

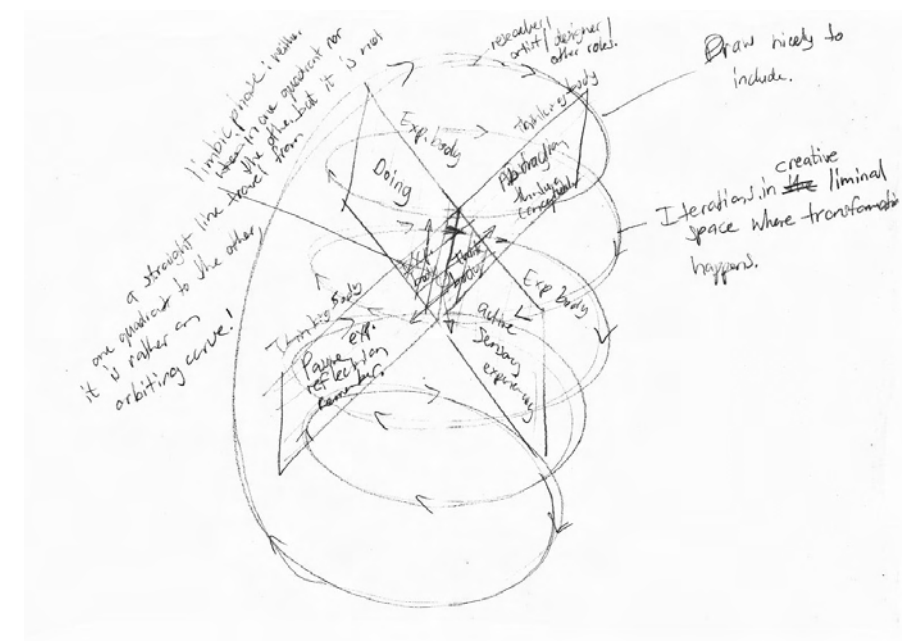


Figure 7.20 Trajectories around a Pedagogy of the Senses journal entry

Pedagogy of the Senses is an experiential model; it is well-suited to design education which valorises the importance of the senses in creative origination, and the transient nature of the creative moment. The researcher/designer/teacher/artist does not trace a linear path. Her trajectory changes with the start of each iteration, the nature of her limbic exploration changing with each “orbit”: it intersects at different angles and results in either more or less time spent in each “quadrant” (refer Fig 7.20). For instance, the exploring body could be more favoured or the thinking body could be more favoured, whatever is called for in that orbit. The limbic phase indicated by the central diamonds in Figures 7.20 and 7.21 is in none of the four quadrants, but rather represents a transitioning according to different intersections. The line drawing in the top left corner of Figure 7.21 is a more accurate schemata of a pedagogy of the senses since it indicates a three-dimensional quality.

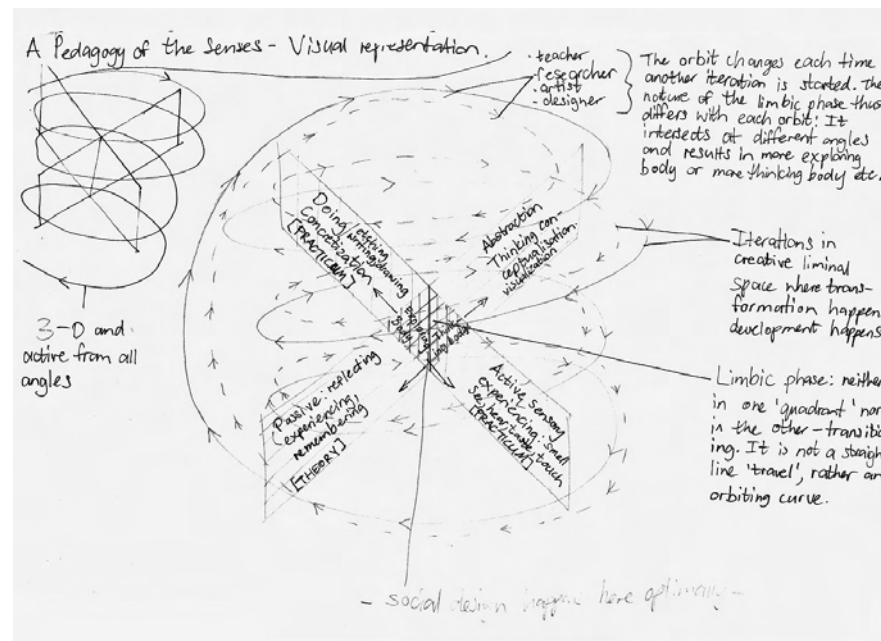


Figure 7.21 Exploration of a visual representation of a Pedagogy of the Senses journal entry

Thinking as first how PoS can work from an inductive to a deductive position and vice versa, brought about the concept of it not conforming to a diagrammatic representation, but rather a three-dimensional one. The various activities in Figures 7.20-7.22 were inspired by the Burrell and Morgan model (1979) to a degree, since it (Burrell & Morgan model) revealed a different aspect to be engaged with each time the researcher entered a new iteration.

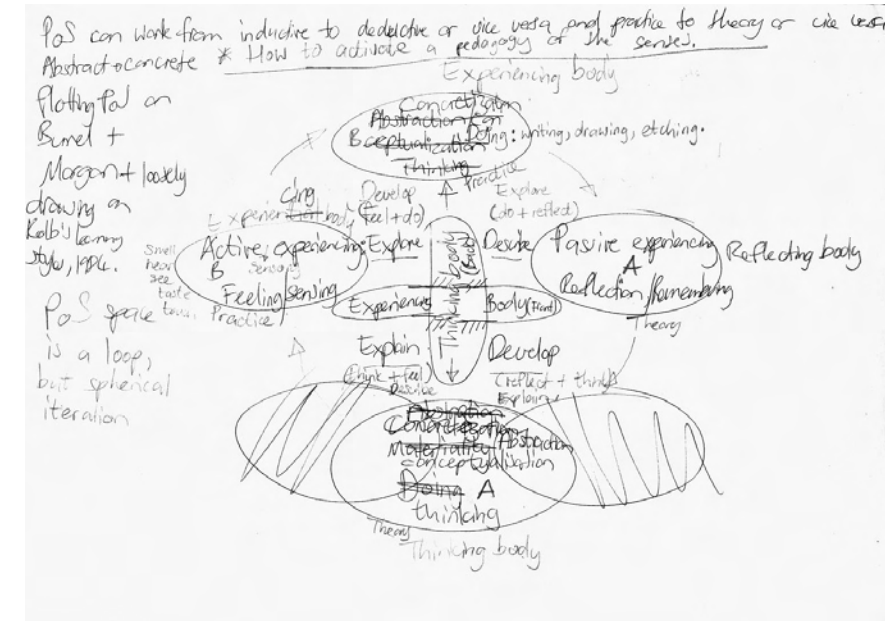


Figure 7.22 Exploration of the activation of a Pedagogy of the Senses journal entry

A pedagogy of the senses is active and enacted in real time in order to “expand our perceptual repertoires and synaesthetic sensitivity” (Benn & Mey, n.d.), important abilities in originating design and art (refer Fig 7.22). It requires time to allow each individual participant to develop her or his unique positionality, and to be able to fuse inner world and imagination with outer world and sociality. The research map represented my visualisation of such a pedagogy, and the fact that it is a landscape of experience, not a generalisable model, easily transported to another context. It needs a personal lived context to animate and activate it.

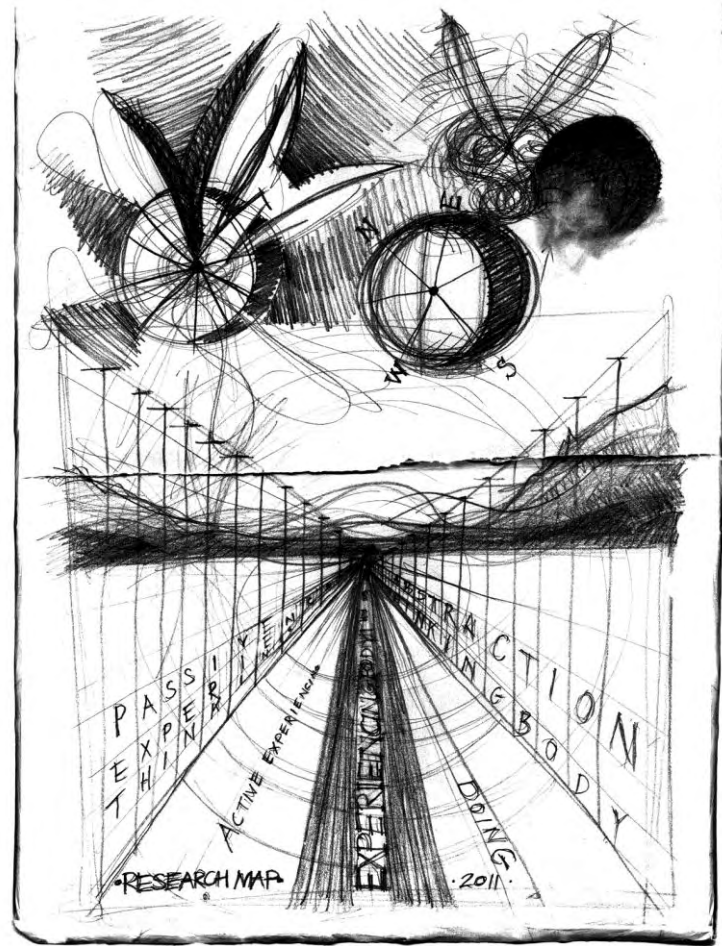


Figure 7.23 Research landscape of a Pedagogy of the Senses

The most appropriate portrayal ended up being my illustrated landscape of a Pedagogy of the Senses (refer Fig 7.23). As the experiencing body, I am travelling/swirling towards a point unseen, in a landscape punctuated by activities. The landscape is rather chaotic, and attempts to box the experiential activities are useless. The PoS landscape resists triangulation and invites crystallisation, a “postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation” and the notion that “CAP text recognises that there are far more than ‘three sides’ by which to approach the world” (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005:963). A Pedagogy of the Senses approach embraces crystallisation, not triangulation. Drawing on artistic and literary genres in the research allowed an opportunity to crystallise the research question themes from alternative perspectives.

7.5 Retrospection

Members of the tribe knew all along that language would be used in the exploration; what kind of language remained to be seen. Exploring the research landscape through the language of images was a truer compass. Logic, justification, constructing an argument and other perfectly respectable academic devices proved rather useless in this language. “Madonna of the Barn” is a portraiture summary of the researcher. She is looking down, in contrast to the start of the research when her eyes were fixed on the horizon, animated by the cloak of anticipation. King and Queen have gone home. Jack, still speechless but now also hidden, is mirroring her deliberation of doing by trudging across the expanse. She has found bearing by internalising the dark mass where, surprisingly, wonder and curiosity visit from time to time. Joker’s reminder to have some fun along the way has been deferred to the next moment. Madonna has located meaning, for now ...



We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time
(T.S. Eliot, 1888 - 1965)

8 DÉNOUEMENT

It is impossible to teach or write from a vacuum. One needs a life lived keenly from which to draw inspiration. The vignettes represented milestones in my lecturing and supervision experiences, as I explored the social nature of design education in evolving contexts. Punctuated with episodes of growth and stagnation in my creative life, the intersection of roles provided me with ample opportunity for scrutiny and reflection to inform future action.

Reconnecting with my passion for teaching demanded reconnecting with my passion for doing art and design. The body as research instrument acted as a compass. Whenever I felt unsure of which direction to take, my internal eyes scoured the research landscape. A bit more artist, a bit less teacher. A bit more facilitator, a bit less designer. A bit more researcher, a bit less artist. Working in the realm of meaning-making, the inference that meaning is contingent and co-constructed in the same way knowledge is, brought a measure of constancy in writing up the research. Meaning is not static. It is relational and tied to time, place, and space. Meaning is continually negotiated and re-negotiated, especially with the self. What has been consistent in the research project then, despite many inconsistencies, is the pre-occupation with making meaning and sharing meaning on a personal, inter-personal and professional level.

The first vignette provided space for reflection and reconnection with a past student. I considered the influence that cultural diversity exerted in a specific higher education context during one-on-one encounters. My teaching practice was interrogated from an interpersonal and culturally specific position in order to appraise beliefs and experiences. At a time when multi-cultural education at the university was still in its infancy, I felt obliged to explore the value of a different world view to strengthen my understanding of it.

The potential for reciprocal learning and development came to light in Buhle's story as I confronted much more in the process of reflection than merely looking back at a failed learning event with a detached eye. Buhle's narrative spoke of being peripheral, of inhabiting in-between and transitional spaces. She described feelings of being the outsider at a traditional white university. Apart from other academic difficulties and dealing with a number of English language challenges, being a practising Rastafari added yet another set of complications. The conflict of being her teacher *and* confidante challenged me to unravel her story by looking at it from her perspective and to defer personal judgement. Emerging from

this encounter was the awareness that sensitivity to inter-cultural experiences and support of the student's cultural background and preference in learning situations cannot be underestimated, nor the impact of an authentic and open point of view in education.

Vignette Two took the theme further by investigating the group learning experiences of culturally diverse students in a design studio context. Embodied knowledge and cultural ways of knowing played an important part in the adoption of learning preferences and approaches.

Accessing embodied knowledge and using it as a form of thinking and knowledge production which employed all the senses during the experiential moment of making was important, but proved to be tricky in certain situations. Embodied knowledge as meaning-making method was successful in conflating set divisions, for instance, between theory and practice, learning preferences and discourse approaches. Some students were unable to achieve the required level of academic competence, pointing to a gap between mining research topics from lived experience and actively working with that knowledge to drive their design projects.

Materialising from this encounter yet again, was the importance of using students' culture as a medium for learning; underscored by an identification of overall learning orientation to improve educational strategies and ultimately advance students' academic success.

Vignette Three examined the relationship between craft and design with reference to a fibre-arts design project which was developed with, and set in a local community. Craft design was discussed as a change agent in that setting. The project promoted strategies of knowledge and skill creation to influence the well-being of the group of elderly women and the post-graduate student positively, promoting notions of cultural stewardship. The current interdisciplinary interface between art, craft and design was reflected in the products designed and crafted in this collaboration since it provided a moderated expression of the debate concerning the conceptual nature of art, the utility of craft, and the strategic thinking of design.

In the university context, an inter-connected approach between researchers and community ensures that research projects remain responsive to changing situations and needs. Collaborative measures help develop community engagement as research focus areas in the design disciplines. The lived experience and latent resources present in that community

therefore play a role in social change and add value through the enabling role of craft and design.

What came to light in this vignette was the initial difficulty of transposing learning from a formal site to an informal site of learning, became a strength as the process unfolded. The women were able to dictate the pace of the project and were comfortable in their home space to experiment, take risks with techniques, co-develop the product range and participate in knowledge creation. The student developed an awareness and sensitivity to inter-cultural communication and experiences which would not have been possible in the regular university setting.

From a supervision point of view, the commitment from all the participants to ensure the project's legacy and sustainability, on whatever scale possible, was an affirmation of the urgent need to include Traditional Knowledge Systems and community engagement in the post graduate design programmes as research focus areas. Ultimately the vignette spoke to notions of transcendence on many levels, and how design, through rescinding the prime label of commodity, ought to expand its ambit to include services, systems or products that can be used for the common good.

The fourth vignette elaborated on the theme of supervision. It interrogated changing pedagogical contexts that require a responsive attitude with regard to design research supervision. It expanded on experiences and lessons learned through a co-creative approach to postgraduate supervision which draws on an empathetic understanding of members in a learning space. This was needed since limited supervision capacity within the design departments had to be resolved. The value of a co-creative supervision approach lies in taking collective responsibility. Breaking down power differentials reduced possibilities for conflict since both supervisor and student learning experiences were enhanced in a specific community of practice.

The DRAW forum evolved into such a community of practice where *Ubuntu* and a spirit of togetherness formed a receptive cradle for socially responsive design models such as DfS and DfD. What transpired in this vignette was that by encouraging holistic learning approaches and sustainability, by building commonality and empathy through focusing on shared topics rooted in collective responsibility, a strategy for social change is facilitated since graduates entering industry here or abroad will carry on with the advocacy of social design.

Vignette Five changed the theme as I used the internal landscape and the experiencing body as the research instrument. I became a student again. Through creative practice, I tackled my perceptions, beliefs and personal experiences in search of artistic inspiration. I was interested in exploring threshold moments, and had to be true to living the research project in uncertainty until the last unfolding moment. *Limen* described transitional spaces: from lecturer to student, from knowing to not knowing to knowing something again, and in due course, from the weariness of over-thinking to the catharsis of doing. This part of the research offered a personal conceptual space which allowed me to work in the manner of the artist; not pre-empting the moment but remaining receptive to it. I viewed it as a culmination of the imaginative and reflective processes I had traced thus far. In writing my story biographically, I had to live all aspects of the research and filter them through the senses, thereby adding depth and density to this sequence of events.

The sequence of events pointed to a pedagogy of the senses. Observing, listening, talking, touching, smelling and at times being present quietly all form part of a dialectic with Other and self in doing design and teaching it. This part of the research affirmed that the apparent oxymoron of thinking and doing or head and hand, can be combined in a unified whole through the cyclical iterations of working from theory into practice and from practice back into theory, until the iterations reach saturation. This is the point where a comprehensive research project becomes discernible.

Hence, practising art and doing design are just as important if not more important than content knowledge in design education; the teacher “becomes” the Other through engaging the collective dimension of creative work.

Through creative and analytical enquiry, autoethnographic processes open up new spaces to explore if these processes centre around narratives cemented in lived experience. Lived experience discloses stories from the heart of the writer, finding there at times, a heart of wisdom. My intention in using the narrative enquiry notion of the researcher's story being essential to the study, was activated by deep and manifest reflection and questioning of a personal position, values and cultural background, as described by Trahar (2009).

How best to harness lived experience for meaningful engagement with design research tasks? This question brought to light that since lived experience informs all we do, each educational event ought to be appraised and responded to in a contextually sensitive way. Design education is social practice. Student, teacher and setting interact in a series of moments to

construct a “knowledge meaning” mined from positionality and sociality. Just as Richardson and St. Pierre (2005:963) propose the “creative analytical processes ethnographies” or “CAP ethnographies” allow researchers scope to draw from different genres, be they artistic, literary or scientific, and in the process frequently splintering their limits, so the participants in this study were allowed to draw from and display their lived experience to bring to the creative and academic projects unique cultural perspectives and innovative collaborations. They generated social capital.

After everything else, I attempted yet another visual answer to the question of harnessing lived experience by using moving image and sound in the film clip “Elements”. It seemed to me that, not unlike the elements, we are at times burning with questions, drowning in a sea of responsibility, blowing in the wind of possibility, planting seeds of life in our young. We nourish students socially during educational experiences as they nourish us, and help them bring their life tasks to fruition, as they help us. We tell, like the elements, all the same stories lived from the beginning of time. Interconnected, we hold infinite potential in our collective being, sustained by an ecology of ancient elements.

This narrative account crystallised the imperative of being true to one’s vital principle. Working from and with lived experience in design education, immersed in corporeal sense-based enquiry through heart-mind application, provides a path in our search for wisdom today. Tomorrow’s wisdom is a distant beacon. Poised to resume the exploration, it is imperative we go there as co-learners in search of being in the world in a better way or ... in search of knowledge-meaning to inhabit the future world in a better way.

~



View film clip “Elements” in URL <https://sites.google.com/site/alettiaresearch/>

REFERENCES

- Allen, J.C. 2007. Morphing rural community development models: the nexus between the past and the future. *Community Investments*, 19(1):16-20, 29-30, Spring.
- Andrade, A.D. 2009. Interpretive research aiming at theory building: adopting and adapting the case study design. *The Qualitative Report*, 14:42-60, March 1.
- Anon. 2011. Lived experience. *Artweek.LA*, (46), October 10. <http://artweek.la/issue/october-10-2011/article/lived-experience> [1 April 2012].
- Applebee, A.N. 1996. *Curriculum as conversation: transforming traditions of teaching and learning*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Arctic Paper. 2012. *Sustainability: Certifications*. <http://www.arcticpaper.com/en/Environment/Certifications/> [25 July 2012].
- Ashton, P. 2000. The social aspects of design learning: assessing the value of the studio in undergraduate design education. In Swann, C. & Young, E. (eds). *Re-inventing Design Education in the University: Proceedings of the Perth Conference, International Conference, Perth, 11 – 13 December 2000*. Perth: School of Design, Curtin University of Technology: 69-78.
- Au, K.H. & Jordan, C. 1981. Teaching reading to Hawaiian children: finding a culturally appropriate solution. In Trueba, H.T., Guthrie, G.P. & Au, K-H. (eds). *Culture in the bilingual classroom: studies in classroom ethnography*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House: 69-86.
- Badsha, N. & Cloete, N. 2011. *Higher Education: contributing for the NPC's National Development Plan*. Wynberg: Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). <http://chet.org.za> [23 July 2012].
- Baker, S. & Wormald, P. 2000. Sthira, Sukha: introducing industrial design undergraduates to softer design issues. In Swann, C. & Young, E. (eds). *Re-inventing Design Education in the University: Proceedings of the Perth Conference, International Conference, Perth, 11 – 13 December 2000*. Perth: School of Design, Curtin University of Technology: 94-103.
- Balintulo, M. 2004. Interview with the author in January 2004, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Barreto Martins, S. & Vascounto, V. 2007. Challenges to present fashion consuming society and market possibilities of organic cotton: a sustainable proposition. *Proceedings of the 2007 1st International Symposium on Sustainable Design, Curitiba, Paran , Brazil, 4 – 6 September 2007*: 1-16. www.design.ufpr.br/issd [20 September 2011].
- Batman, Colette, Comic Sans, Fatima, Faizal, Hendrik, Jasmine, Jean, Mignon, Rose, Vera, Zinzi, 2011. Respondents to semi-structured questionnaire on DRAW blog in the Faculty of Informatics and Design, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, April 2011, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Beattie, V., Collins, B. & McInnes, B. 1997. Deep and surface learning: a simple or simplistic dichotomy? *Accounting Education*. 6(1):1-12.
- Benn, S. & Mey, K. n.d. *A pedagogy of curiosity*. <http://www.pedagogyofcuriosity.org/poc/> [15 August 2012].
- Berger, P.L. & Luckmann, T. 1966. *The social construction of reality: a treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Bergevoet, Y., Maina, M.W., Kankondi, A., M'Rithaa, M.K., & Chisin, A.V. 2010. Pedagogic support through learning-by-sharing: the case of an inter-disciplinary workgroup (DRAW) for postgraduate design students in South Africa. In Ceschin, F., Vezzoli, C & Zhang, J. (eds). *Proceedings of the LeNS Conference: Sustainability in Design: Now!, Bangalore, India, 29 September – 1 October 2010, Vol. II*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing: 1105-1113.
- Beyer, C. 2011. Edmund Husserl. In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2011 edition, edited by N.Z. Edward. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2011/entries/husserl/> [12 September 2012].
- Bhengu, M.J. 1996. *Ubuntu: the essence of democracy*. Cape Town: Novalis Press.
- Biggs, J.B. 2003. Constructing learning by aligning teaching: constructive alignment. In Biggs, J.B. (ed). *Teaching for quality learning at university*. 2nd ed. Buckingham: Open University Press: 11-33.
- B hm, D. 1985. Epilogue. In B hm, D. *Unfolding meaning: a weekend of dialogue with David B hm*. New York: Doubleday.
- Boud, D. 2001. Using journal writing to enhance reflective practice. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, (90):9-18, Summer. [Special issue: Promoting Journal Writing in Adult Education.]
- Bourdieu, P. 1967. Systems of education and systems of thought. *International Social Science Journal*, 19:338-358.
- Bourriaud, N. 2002. *Relational aesthetics*, translated by S. Pleasance and F. Woods, with the assistance of M. Copeland. Dijon: Les Presses du R el.
- Brabazon, T. & Dagli, Z. 2010. Putting the doctorate into practice, and the practice into doctorates: creating a new space for quality scholarship through creativity. *Nebula*, 7(7):23-43, Summer.
- Brah, A. 1996. *Cartographies of diaspora: contesting identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Brah, A & Deem, R. 1986. Towards anti-sexist and anti-racist schooling. *Critical Social Policy*, 6:66-79, July.

- Breen, C. 2003. Mathematics teachers as researchers: living on the edge? In Bishop, A.J., Clements, M.A., Keitel, C., Kilpatrick, J. & Leung, F.K.S. (eds). *Second international handbook of mathematics education*. Dordrecht : Kluwer Academic Press: 521-542.
- Breen, C. 2005. Navigating a complex supervisory path through the complicated waters of academia. *Proceedings of the 2005 Complexity Science and Educational Research Conference, Loranger, Louisiana, 20 – 22 November 2005*: 162-176. www.complexityandeducation.ca [28 September 2012].
- Breier, M. (ed.). 2001. *Curriculum restructuring in higher education in post-apartheid South Africa: a critical reflection*. Bellville: Education Policy Unit, University of the Western Cape.
- Brenna, L., Lupo, E., Seassarò, A. & Trocchianesi, R. 2009. The Italian design research and practice in cultural heritage exploitation. In *Cumulus 38° South Hemispheric Shift Across Learning, Teaching and Research Conference Proceedings, Melbourne, Australia, 12 – 14 November 2009*. Melbourne: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology: Swinburne University: 1-22.
- Brown, J.L. & Moffett, C.A. 1999. *The hero's journey: how educators can transform schools and improve learning*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Brown University. 2012. *Culturally responsive teaching*. Providence, RI: The Education Alliance, Brown University. <http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tcl/tl/-strategies/crt-principles.html> [18 January 2012].
- Buchanan, R. 1992. Wicked problems in design thinking. *Design Issues*, 8(2):5-21, Spring.
- Buchanan, R. 2000. Design and the organisation of learning. In Swann, C. & Young, E. (eds). *Re-inventing Design Education in the University: Proceedings of the Perth Conference, International Conference, Perth, 11 – 13 December 2000*. Perth: School of Design, Curtin University of Technology. [Title listed in table of contents of *Proceedings* but not published.]
- Buhle. 2012. Electronic questionnaire correspondence with the author in January 2012, Cape Town. [Questionnaire responses in possession of author.]
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological Paradigms and organisational analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Cazden, C. & Legget, E. 1981. Culturally responsive education: recommendations for achieving Lau remedies II. In Trueba, H.T., Guthrie, G.P. & Au, K-H. (eds). *Culture in the bilingual classroom: studies in classroom ethnography*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House: 69-86.
- CCSL see Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles.
- Chase, S.E. 2005. Narrative inquiry: multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd rev. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 651-679.
- Chisholm, L. 2004. Introduction. In Chisholm, L. (ed.). *Changing class: education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa*: 1-28. www.hsrapress.ac.za [23 July 2012].
- Chisin, A.V. 2003. Sociocultural approaches to curriculum development within an outcomes-based education and training system in South Africa. Unpublished MEd thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.
- Cipolla, C. 2009. Relational services and conviviality. In Miettinen, S. & Koivisto, M. (eds). *Designing services with innovative methods*. Helsinki: Kuopio Academy of Design: 232-245.
- City Views. 2011. Innovation inspired by nature – and applied to The Fringe. *City Views*: 10, November 2011.
- Clandinin, D.J. & Connelly, F.M. 2000. *Narrative inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Coleridge, S.T. 1854. Biographia literaria. In Shedd, W.G.T. (ed.). *The complete works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: with an introductory essay upon his philosophical and theological opinions (Vol. 3)*. New York: Harper & Brother. [Originally published in 1817.]
- Craft and Design Enquiry. 2011. *Relational craft and design*. Issue #4, call for papers. <http://craftaustralia.org.au/cde/index.php/cde/about/submissions> [6 June 2011].
- Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles (CCSL). 2009. Africa cases initial collection. Cape Town: Cape Peninsula University of Technology. [Unpublished Powerpoint presentation notes at international seminar.]
- Creative Communities for Sustainable Lifestyles (CCSL). 2010. About CCSL. <http://www.sustainable-everyday.net/ccsl> [29 October 2012].
- Cronjé, J.C. 2011. The ABC (Aim, Belief, Concern) instant research question generator. In *Proceedings of the Fourth Advanced International Colloquium on Building the Scientific Mind (BrSM2011): Leading for Sustainable Futures, Stellenbosch, 7 – 11 March 2011*. http://www.learndev.org/dl/BtSM2011/Cronjé-The_ABC_Instant_research_question_generator.pdf:1-11 [1 May 2012].
- Dahlman, Y. 2007. Towards a theory that links experience in the arts with the acquisition of knowledge. *International Journal of Art & Design Education (JADE)*, 26(3):274-284.
- De Bono, E. 1995. Serious creativity. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 18(5):12-18.
- De Lange, N., Pillay, G. & Chikoko, V. 2011. Doctoral learning: a case for a cohort model of supervision and support. *South African Journal of Education*, 31:15-30.
- De Saint-Exupéry, A. 1974. *The little prince*, translated by K. Woods. London: Pan Books.

- Design Indaba. 2012. Humanitarian design. http://www.designindaba.com/sites/default/files/publications/files/p4748_Design_Humanitarian%20Design.pdf [18 September 2012].
- Diamond, R.M. 1998. *Designing and assessing courses and curricula: a practical guide*. 2nd ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Dietrich, K.H. 2011. Intersections, boundaries and passages: transgressing the codex. Inaugural lecture presented on 4 October 2011, Stellenbosch University.
- Duggan, F. 2004. The changing nature of the studio as an educational setting. *CEBE Transactions*, 1(2):70-76, December.
- Ehn, P. 2007. *The semantic turn: a new foundation for design*, by Klaus Krippendorff. Reviewed in: *Artifact*, 1(1):59-63.
- Ehn, P. 2008. Seminar series based on the book *Making Design Take Place*. Cape Town: Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 11 March 2008. [Unpublished seminar notes.]
- Elk, E. 2011. Interview with author on 22 June, CCDI Offices, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. 2000. Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: researcher as subject. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd rev. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 733-768.
- Ellsworth, E.A. 1997. *Teaching positions: difference pedagogy and the power of address*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Erickson, F. & Mohatt, C. 1982. Cultural organization and participation structures in two classrooms of Indian students. In Spindler, G.D. (ed.). *Doing the ethnography of schooling: educational anthropology in action*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston: 131-174.
- Fassler, M. 2012. Culture and clothing. Electronic mail questionnaire response sent to author on 12 March 2012. [Questionnaire response in possession of the author.]
- Finley, S. 2005. Narrative inquiry: multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd rev. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 681-694.
- Fletcher, K. 2007. Clothes that connect. In Chapman, J. & Gant, N. (eds). *Designers, visionaries and other stories: an anthology of sustainable design essays*. London: Earthscan: 120-135.
- Friedman, K. 2000. Design education in the university: professional studies for the knowledge economy. In Swann, C. & Young, E. (eds). *Re-inventing Design Education in the University: Proceedings of the Perth Conference, International Conference, Perth, 11 – 13 December 2000*. Perth: School of Design, Curtin University of Technology: 13-27.
- Friedman, K. 2003. Theory construction in design research: criteria, approaches, and methods. *Design Studies*, 24(6):507-522.
- Fuad-Luke, A. 2012. Pause, reflect, impact: co-designing consensus and dissensus for positive societal impacts. Paper presented at the International Conference, Open Design Shared Creativity: From Chain Production to Chain Reaction, Barcelona, Spain, 2 – 3 July 2012. <http://fad.cat/congres/en/?p=26> [2 November 2012].
- GAPA (Grandmothers Against Poverty and Aids). 2012. Programmes. <http://www.gapa.org.za/programmes/> [23 August 2012].
- Gay, G. 2002. Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 53(2):106-116, March/April.
- Gee, J., Hull, G. & Lankshear, C. 1996. *Sociocultural literacy, discourses, and the new work order: behind the language of the new capitalism*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Giroux, H.A. 1981. Hegemony, resistance, and the paradox of educational reform. *Interchange*, 12(2/3):3-26.
- Goethe, R. 2003. Ritual and liminality (NCSS theme: culture) – purpose, background, and context. www.uiowa.edu/social/lessons/ritual.html [August, 2004: unable to access website in 2012].
- Goldberg, D.T. 1994. Introduction. In Goldberg, D.T. (ed.). *Multi-culturalism: a critical reader*. Oxford: Blackwell: 1-45.
- Gordon, C. n.d. Floodplains of Africa: misunderstood, undervalued and endangered. [Abstract available online.] www.icef.eawag.ch/abstract/gordon.pdf [5 September 2012].
- Gough, D. 2000. Discourse and students' experience of higher education. In Leibowitz, B. & Mohamed, Y. (eds). *Routes to writing in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Silk Road Publishers: 43-58.
- Gough, D. & Bock, Z. 2001. Alternative perspectives on orality, literacy and education: a view from South Africa. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 22(2):95-111.
- Guardian, The. 2012. Luxury brands group PPR announces a five year sustainability plan. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sustainable-business/blog/ppr-group-sustainability-plan-environmental-targets>. [4 October 2012].
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 105-117.

- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2005. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd rev. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 191-215.
- Guille, J. 2011. Interview with the author in September 2011, in Bellville, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Guille, J. 2012. Interview with the author in February 2012, in Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Gunaratnam, Y. 2003. *Researching "race" and ethnicity: methods, knowledge and power*. London: Sage.
- Haas, J., Hoppe, R., Jünemann, E., Kippenhan, K. & Maenell, A. 2002. The Jo'burg memo. Fairness in a fragile world. In Sachs, W. (ed.). *Memorandum for the World Foundation Summit on Sustainable Development*. 2nd rev. ed. Berlin: Heinrich Böhl Foundation. <http://www.joburgmemo.org> [28 September 2012].
- Hagen, M. 2011. Interview with author on 23 June 2011, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Hahnemühle Fine Art. n.d. Environmental declaration. <http://www.hahnemuehle.com/site/en/193/environment.html> [26 July 2012].
- Hall, S. 1997. Introduction. In Hall, S. (ed.). *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage: 1-11.
- Hamid, A. 2002. *The ganja complex: Rastafari and marijuana*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Hasebe-Ludt, E. & Jordan, N. 2010. "May We Get Us a Heart of Wisdom": life writing across knowledge traditions. *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry: The Journal of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies*. 7(2):1-4.
- Heidegger, M. 1975. *Poetry, language, thought*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Herman, L. 2005. Researching the images of evil events: an arts-based methodology in liminal space. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(3):468-480.
- Heydon, R. 2010. Knitting teacher: a narrative inquiry of a researcher who has been researched. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(2):130-139.
- Hockey, J. & Allen-Collinson, J. 2000. The supervision of practice-based research degrees in art and design. *International Journal of Art & Design Education (JADE)*, 19(3):345-355, October.
- Huberman, A.M. & Miles, M.B. (eds). 2002. *The qualitative researcher's companion*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Husserl, E. 1964. *The phenomenology of internal time consciousness*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Husserl, E. 1969. Universal teleology. *Teleos*, 4:176-180, Fall.
- Impumelelo Social Innovations Centre. The Impumelelo Innovations Award, 2009. <http://www.Impumelelo.org.za> [30 September 2009].
- Ippolito, K. 2007. Promoting intercultural learning in a multicultural university: ideals and realities. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12(5-6):749-763.
- Jacobsen, M. 1982. Looking for literary space: the willing suspension of disbelief re-visited. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 16(1):21-38.
- Jégou, F. 2008. *Social innovation and design of promising solutions towards sustainability*. In Tukker, A., Charter, M., Vezzoli, C., Stø, E. & Andersen, M.M. (eds). *System innovation for sustainability: perspectives on radical changes to sustainable consumption and production*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing: 179-196.
- Jonas, W. 2000. The paradox endeavour to design a foundation for a groundless field. In Swann, C. & Young, E. (eds). *Re-inventing Design Education in the University: Proceedings of the Perth Conference, International Conference, Perth, 11 – 13 December 2000*. Perth: School of Design, Curtin University of Technology: 44-50.
- KaosPilots. 2011. Leadership seminar, 22 – 24 March, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Konica Minolta. 2012. *The essentials of imaging*. <http://www.konicaminoltacentral.co.za/office-systems/colour-multifunction-devices/bizhub-c552> [26 July 2012].
- Kristeva, J. 1989. *Black sun: depression and melancholia*, translated by L.S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ladson-Billings, G. 1995. But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Theory into Practice*, 34(3):159-165, Summer.
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. 1991. *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, H-K. & Breitenberg, M. 2010. Education in the new millennium: the case for design-based learning. *International Journal of Art & Design Education (JADE)*, 29(1):54-60.
- Leedy, P.D., Newby, T.J. & Ertmer, P.A. 1997. *Practical research: planning and design*. 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Leggo, C. 2010. Writing a life: representation in language and image. *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry*, 7(2):47-61.
- Leong, C.H. 2008. Is radical systemic shift toward sustainability possible in China? In Tukker, A., Charter, M., Vezzoli, C., Stø, E. & Andersen, M.M. (eds). *System innovation for sustainability: perspectives on radical changes to sustainable consumption and production*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing: 214-230.

- Lindseth, A. & Norberg, A. 2004. A phenomenological hermeneutical method for researching lived experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*, 18(2):145-153.
- Longhurst, R., Ho, E. & Johnston, L. 2008. Using 'the body' as an 'instrument of research': Kimch'i and Pavlova. *Area*, 40(2):208-217.
- Love, T. 1998. Social, environmental and ethical factors in engineering design theory: a post-positivist approach. Unpublished PhD (Mechanical Engineering) thesis, University of Western Australia, Perth.
- Love, T. 2000. Educating those involved in changing human futures: a more coherent programme for design education. In Swann, C. & Young, E. (eds). *Re-inventing Design Education in the University: Proceedings of the Perth Conference, International Conference, Perth, 11 – 13 December 2000*. Perth: School of Design, Curtin University of Technology: 242-248.
- Love, T. 2002. Constructing a coherent cross-disciplinary body of theory about designing and designs: some philosophical issues. *Design Studies*, 23:345-361.
- Luckett, K. 2001. A proposal for an epistemically diverse curriculum for South African higher education in the 21st century. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 15(2):49-61.
- Lupo, E. 2010. Beyond craft culture: designing a new contemporary "authentic". http://designview.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/paperdesigncraft_lupo.pdf [4 October 2012].
- Mac an Ghail, M. 1996. Sociology of education, state schooling and social class: beyond critiques of the New Right hegemony. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 17(2):163-176, June.
- Macklin, A. 2006. Making-as-thinking: developing the embodied imaginary in architectural design education. In Davies, A. (ed.). *Proceedings: Enhancing Curricula: Contributing to the Future, Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century in the Disciplines of Art, Design and Communication, Lisbon, 6 – 7 April 2006*. London: Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design (CLTAD): 549-559.
- Manzini, E. 2007. Changing the change: design in and for the transition. Keynote address at the Design Educators Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA) Conference, Cape Town, 3 – 5 October 2007.
- Manzini, E. 2008. *New design knowledge: introduction to the conference Changing the Change*. <http://www.dis.polimi.it/manzini-papers/08.07.10-A-new-design-knowledge.doc> [20 February 2009].
- Manzini, E. 2009. Service design in the age of networks and sustainability. In Miettinen, S. & Koivisto, M. (eds). *Designing services with innovative methods*. Helsinki: Kuopio Academy of Design: 44-57.
- Manzini, E., Jègou, F. & Penin, L. 2008. Creating communities for sustainable lifestyles: promising cases of social innovation for sustainable ways of living in Brazil, India, China and Europe. *Proceedings of the 2008 2nd Conference of the Sustainable Consumption Research Exchange (Score!) Network, Brussels, 10 – 11 March 2008*. In Ken, T.G., Tukker, A., Vezzoli, C., & Ceschin, F. (eds). *Sustainable consumption and production: framework for action*. [4 October 2012].
- Margolin, V. (victormargolin@UIC.EDU). 2002. Design for social responsibility. E-mail to A. Chisin (chisin@cput.ac.za) [20 September 2002].
- Margolin, V. 2007. Design for development: towards a history. *Design Studies*, 28:111-115.
- Margolin, V. 2010. Doctoral education in design: problems and prospects. *Design Issues*, 26(3):70-78, Summer.
- Margolin, V. & Margolin, S. 2002. A 'social model' of design: issues of practice and research. *Design Issues*, 18 (4):24-30.
- Margolin, V. & Margolin, S. 2005. Social design: prospects for a new paradigm. Open lecture in University of Art and Design, Media Centre Lume, Sampo Hall, University of Art and Design, Helsinki, Finland, 28 April 2005. http://www.finnishdesign.fi/files/fide/trppi/Margolin_press_release.pdf [7 March 2008].
- McKenna, S. 2003. Paradigms of curriculum design: implications for South African educators. *Journal for Language Teaching/Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 37(2):215-223.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. 2005. *Phenomenology of perception*, translated by C. Smith. London: Taylor & Francis e-library.
- Meyer, J.H.F. & Land, R. 2003. Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: linkages to ways of thinking and practising within the disciplines. *Occasional Report 4*. May 2003. Edinburgh: School of Education, University of Edinburgh. [ETL Project]. <http://www.ed.ac.uk/etl> [18 September 2012].
- Meyer, J.H.F. & Land, R. 2005. Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge (2): epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 49:373-388.
- M'Rithaa, M.K. 2009. Embracing sustainability: revisiting the authenticity of 'event' time ... *Proceedings of the 2nd International Symposium on Sustainable Design (ISSD), São Paolo, Brazil, 5 – 6 November 2009*. 8pp [electronic].
- M'Rithaa, M.K. 2012. Interview with the author on 28 May 2012, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Murphy, N., Bain, J.D. & Conrad, L. 2007. Orientations to research higher degree supervision. *Higher Education: the International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 53(2):209-234.

- Nelson, R. 2009. *The jealousy of ideas: research methods in the creative arts*. Fitzroy, Victoria: Ellikon.
- Neilson, L. 1998. *Knowing her place: research literacies and feminist occasions*. San Francisco: CA, Caddo Gap Press.
- Neilson, L. 2002. Learning from the liminal: fiction as knowledge. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XLVIII(3):206-214, Fall.
- Odora Hoppers, C.A. 2002a. Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems. In Odora Hoppers, C.A. (ed.). *Indigenous knowledge and the integration of knowledge systems: towards a philosophy of articulation*. Claremont [Cape Town]: New Africa Books: 2-23.
- Odora Hoppers, C.A. 2002b. Linking traditional and scientific knowledge for sustainable development: recognizing, protecting and integrating IKS into the mainstream: critical concerns and challenges at policy and institutional levels in South Africa. Presentation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 29 August 2002, Ubuntu Village, Johannesburg.
- Odora Hoppers, C.A. 2008. Life long learning in Africa: lessons, experiences and opportunities from cultural and cognitive justice. Speech at the Occasion of the Session of the 21st Century Talks on the Theme: "Lifelong learning for all: how long to get there". New York: UNESCO. FOR/2008/SP/2 – original: Anglais.
- Pocket Oxford dictionary of current English*, 6th ed., edited by J.B. Sykes. 1978. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ratkić, A. 2009. Dialogue seminars as a tool in postgraduate education. *AI & Society*, 23(1):99-109.
- Ricci, R.J. 2003. Autoethnographic verse: Nicky's Boy: a life in two worlds. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4):591-596, December.
- Richardson, L. & St. Pierre, E., A. 2005. Writing: a method of inquiry. In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. 3rd rev. ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 959-978.
- Roberts, D. 2006. Governance in higher education in South Africa: a transformation and development perspective. Paper presented at the Fourth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning (PCF4), Ocho Rios, Jamaica, 30 October – 4 September 2006. <http://pcf4.dec.uwi.edu/viewabstract.php?id=74> [29 July 2012].
- Roodt, M. 2011. Model C is the model to emulate. South African Institute of Race Relations <http://www.sairr.org.za/sairr-today-1/research-and-policy-brief-model-c-is-the-model-to-emulate>. [1 February 2012].
- Rytel, K.B. 2007. The influence of advertising in the print media on the self-perception of South African and Polish women: a comparative study. Unpublished MTech: Design thesis, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town.
- Samara, A. 2006. Group supervision in graduate education: a process of supervision skill development and text improvement. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 25(2): 115-129, May.
- SAQA see South African Qualifications Authority.
- Scardamalia, M. & Bereiter, C. 1994. The CSILE project: trying to bring the classroom into world 3. In McGilly, K. (ed.). *Classroom lessons: integrating cognitive theory and classroom practice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press/Bradford Books.
- Schön, D.A. 1983. *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. New York: Basil Books.
- Sehoole, M.T.C. 2010. *Democratizing higher education policy: constraints of reform in post-apartheid South Africa*. New York: Routledge.
- Shields, D. 2002. *Enough about you: adventures in autobiography*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Shilling, C. 2002. The body and difference. In Woodward, K. (ed.). *Identity and difference*. London: Sage in association with The Open University: 65-103.
- Sinner, A., Leggo, C., Rita, L.I., Gouzouasis, P. & Grauer, K. 2006. Arts-based educational research dissertations: reviewing the practices of new scholars. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 29(4):1223-1270.
- Smith, H. & Dean, R.T. 2009. Introduction: practice-led research, research-led practice – towards the iterative cyclic web. In Smith, H. & Dean, R.T. (eds). *Practice-led research, research-led practice in the creative arts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press:1-41.
- Smith, M.K. 2003. Communities of practice. *Encyclopedia of informal education*. www.infed.org/biblio/communities_of_practice.htm. [17 September 2012].
- South Africa. 1994. White Paper on Reconstruction and Development. *Government Gazette*, 353(16085), 23 November 1994: 6.
- South Africa. Department of Education. 2001. *Higher Education White Paper*. [http://www.pwv.gov.za/Legislation/White Papers/HE_whitepaper.htm](http://www.pwv.gov.za/Legislation/White%20Papers/HE_whitepaper.htm). [29 July 2006].
- South African Qualifications Authority. n.d. Curriculum development. <http://www.saqqa.org.za/> [1 December 2003].
- Spratt, P. 1997. Methods of social research. In Jureidini, R., Kenny, S. & Poole, M. (eds). *Sociology: Australian connections*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin: 139-162.

- Stewart, S.C. & Lorber-Kasunic, J. 2006. Akrasia and the ethical design curriculum. In Davies, A. (ed.). *Proceedings: Enhancing Curricula: Contributing to the Future, Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century in the Disciplines of Art, Design and Communication, Lisbon, 6 – 7 April 2006*. London: Centre for Learning and Teaching in Art and Design (CLTAD): 346-364.
- Stipp, C. 2009. Development of a fibre-arts design project with the elderly in the Western Cape. Unpublished MTech: Design thesis, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town.
- Stipp, C. 2010. Interview with the author on 29 June 2010, CPU, Cape Town. [Interview notes in possession of the author.]
- Sullivan, G. 2010. *Art practice as research: inquiry in visual arts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sullivan, L.H. 1896. The tall office building artistically considered. *Lippincott's Magazine*: 403-409, March.
- Thackara, J. 2005. *In the bubble: designing in a complex world*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Thompson, I. 1998. *Outsider and insider traditions of qualitative interpretation*. <http://www.coe.uga.edu/quig/thompson.html> [18 August 2010].
- Tischner, U. 2008. *Design for social sustainability and radical change*. In Tukker, A., Charter, M., Vezzoli, C., Stø, E. & Andersen, M.M. (eds). *System innovation for sustainability: perspectives on radical changes to sustainable consumption and production*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing: 159-177.
- Trahar, S. 2009. Beyond the story itself: narrative inquiry and autoethnography in intercultural research in higher education. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 10(1), Art. 30, January. <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0901308> [30 May 2012].
- Tsolidis, G. 2002. How do we teach and learn in times when 'global citizenship' sounds like a cliché? *Journal of Research in International Education*, (1)2:213-226, December.
- Tukker, A., Vezzoli, C., Geerken, T., Emmert, S., Stø, E., Tischner, U., Charter, M., Andersen, M.M. & Lahlou, S. 2008. Introduction. In Tukker, A., Charter, M., Vezzoli, C., Stø, E. & Andersen, M.M. (eds). *System innovation for sustainability: perspectives on radical changes to sustainable consumption and production*. Sheffield: Greenleaf Publishing: 2-13.
- University of Otago. 2012. An introduction to your research journey at Otago. Student Learning Centre, Higher Education Development Centre, University of Otago, New Zealand. Version 2.3. www.otago.nz/slc [18 July 2012]
- Van Manen, M. 1989. Pedagogical text as method: phenomenological research as writing. *Sunnybrook Review*, 7(2):23-45.
- Van Manen, M. 2007. Phenomenology of practice. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 1(1):11-30.
- Van Niekerk, J. & M'Rithaa, M.K. 2009. The ethical dilemma of a rapidly receding watering hole: implications for design education. In Breytenbach, A. & Munro, A.J. (eds). *Proceedings of Design Education Forum of Southern Africa Conference: Opening Gates, Between and Beyond Disciplines, Graaff Reinet, 4 – 5 November 2009*. Design Education Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA): 148-157.
- Venter, E. 2004. The notion of ubuntu and communalism in African educational discourse. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 23(2-3):149-160.
- Vezzoli, C. 2007. *System design for sustainability: theory, methods and tools for a sustainable 'satisfaction-system' design*. 2nd ed. Rimini: Maggioli Editore.
- Vezzoli, C., Ceschin, F. & M'Rithaa, M.K. 2009. LeNS-AFRICA: An African learning network on sustainability, for the development and diffusion of teaching materials and tools on design for sustainability in an open-source and copy left ethos. Paper presented at the 4th International Life Cycle Management Conference, Cape Town, 6 – 9 September 2009.
- Vezzoli, C. & Manzini, E. 2008. *Design for environmental sustainability*. London: Springer.
- Vygotsky, L.S. 1978. *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Webb, G. 1997. Deconstructing deep and surface: towards a critique of phenomenography. *Higher Education*, 33(2):195-212.
- Wenger, E. 1998. *Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wenger, E. 2010. Communities of practice and social learning systems: the career of a concept. In Blackmore, C. (ed.). *Social learning systems and communities of practice*. London: Springer in association with The Open University: 179-198.
- Young, M.F.D. 2008. *Bringing knowledge back in: from social constructivism to social realism in the sociology of education*. London: Routledge.
- Xerox. 2012. Xerox paper and supplies sustainability. <http://www.xerox.com/sustainability/enus.html> [14 August 2012].

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig i	“Chapters: the story of line” etching	vii	Fig 7.4	Leo Icon	86
Fig 1.1	How to read the research	7	Fig 7.5	Art, craft and design nexus visual journal entry	87
Fig 1.2	“Tribe” etching	9	Fig 7.6	Bella Icon	87
Fig 2.1	Iterative phenomenology journal entry	13	Fig 7.7	Madonna of the Barn	88
Fig 2.2	Paths to the question journal entry	20	Fig 7.8	Michele Icon	89
Fig 2.3	“Method or madness?” etching	24	Fig 7.9	Interdependence	90
Fig 3.1	Buhle’s world journal entry	28	Fig 7.10	Blurring disciplinary boundaries	91
Fig 3.2	Reaching out journal entry	28	Fig 7.11	Universal man and Robben island journal entry	91
Fig 3.3	Teacher’s reflection journal entry	29	Fig 7.12	The birth of “Elements” journal entry	92
Fig 3.4	Buhle with her storage container	31	Fig 7.13	Canopy of colour	93
Fig 3.4	“Yield!” etching	38	Fig 7.14	Infinity loops, iterations and spiral journal entry	93
Fig 4.1	BTech study guide	43	Fig 7.15	Mehnde painted hands	94
Fig 4.2	Rose	45	Fig 7.16	Drawing with <i>Ecklonia Maxima</i>	95
Fig 4.3	Zeke	46	Fig 7.17	Chapters etching: the story of line	95
Fig 4.4	Elizabeth	46	Fig 7.18	Exploration of limbic phases/roles and liminal spaces	96
Fig 4.5	Jane	47	Fig 7.19	Crystallising a Pedagogy of the Senses	99
Fig 4.6	Olan	47	Fig 7.20	Trajectories around a Pedagogy of the Senses	99
Fig 4.7	Sipho	48	Fig 7.21	Exploration of a visual representation of a Pedagogy of the Senses	100
Fig 4.8	“To be or not to be” etching	53	Fig 7.22	Exploration of the activation of a Pedagogy of the Senses	100
Fig 5.1	Concept sketch for “Blurring disciplinary boundaries” collagraph journal entry	57	Fig 7.23	Research landscape of a Pedagogy of the Senses	101
Fig 5.2	Triangular alliance of art, craft and design journal entry	57	Fig 7.28	“Madonna of the Barn” collagraph	102
Fig 5.3	Traditional needs-based versus alternative asset-based community development model (Allen, 2007:16)	58			
Fig 5.4	Felting handbags	58			
Fig 5.5	Knitting complex stitches	58			
Fig 5.6	Crocheting handbags	59			
Fig 5.7	GAPA group and Stipp, Skeleton coast summer wedding shawl	59			
Fig 5.8	GAPA group and Stipp, Minstrel carnival knitted tie scarf	59			
Fig 5.9	GAPA group and Stipp, Kalahari bucket bag	59			
Fig 5.10	Blurring disciplinary boundaries	62			
Fig 5.11	GAPA site visit journal entry	63			
Fig 5.12a	Traditional hierarchic approach	64			
Fig 5.12b	Iterative, inter-connected approach	64			
Fig 5.13	“Blurring disciplinary boundaries” collagraph	67			
Fig 6.1	Reflective journal-writing entry	72			
Fig 6.2	Social support pillar	75			
Fig 6.3	Philosophical support pillar	76			
Fig 6.4	Supervisory support pillar	77			
Fig 6.5	Consolidated DRAW support model	78			
Fig 6.6	DRAW members	79			
Fig 6.7	“Interdependence” collagraph	80			
Fig 7.1	Ferry to Robben island journal entry	83			
Fig 7.2	Reflection and searching for the golden thread journal entry	84			
Fig 7.3	Printmaking studio	84			

Appendices

Appendix A Ethics approval

Faculty of Informatics and Design

Research Ethics Review Checklist

All post-graduate students and researchers are required to complete this form before commencing with research. Post-graduate students are requested to please submit this form together with HDC 1.2 (proposal submission) to the Faculty Research Committee (FRC).
(Where applicable mark relevant boxes with an X)

Project Title:		
Social Design: Lived experience as catalyst in community projects and curriculum. Changed to:		
Moments, memories, meanings: a narrative documentary of lived experience in social design education.		

Applicant / Researcher:	Ms Aleitia Vorster Chisin	Under-graduate	Post-graduate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Staff <input type="checkbox"/>
021 4691036	0735092033	chisina@cput.ac.za		

Supervisor (if applicable):	Prof J. C. Cronjé
Office Telephone:	Cell
021 4691018	0825585311
eMail: cronje@cput.ac.za	

Research Checklist:	Yes	No
1. Does the study involve participants who are unable to give informed consent? Examples include children, people with learning disabilities, or your own students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? Examples include students at school, members of self-help groups, residents of nursing homes — anyone who is under the legal care of another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time — for example covert observation of people in non-public places?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Will the study with the research subject involve discussion of sensitive topics? Examples would include questions on sexual activity or drug use.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. Will the study involve invasive, intrusive, or potentially harmful procedures of any kind (e.g. drugs, placebos or other substances to be administered to the study participants)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing on sentient subjects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
7. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8. Does your research involve environmental studies which could be contentious or will your outcome use materials or processes that could damage the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered 'No' to all questions, submit the completed and signed form to the FRC together with the research proposal.

ii

If you have answered 'Yes'...

If you have answered 'Yes' to one or more questions, kindly attach a report describing more fully how you plan to deal with the ethical issues raised by your research. It does not mean that you **cannot do the research, only that your proposal will need to be approved by the Research Ethics Committee**. You will need to submit your plans for addressing the ethical issues raised by your proposal to the FID Research Ethics Committee.

Declaration
As Researcher / Applicant I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to:

- Follow the CPUT Code of Practice on Ethical Standards (which is currently being drafted) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of my study; and
- That this includes providing appropriate information sheets and consent forms and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.
- Furthermore that any significant change in the questions, design, or conduct over the course of the research must be notified to my supervisor who must inform the Research Ethics Committee if new approval is needed.

By my signature below I declare that I am not aware of any potential conflicts of interest, other than those declared on THIS form, which may influence the ethical conduct of this study.

Signatures:

 Researcher: A.V. Chisin Date: February 2009	 Supervisor: Prof. J. C. Cronjé Date: February 2009
---	--

FID Research Ethics Committee comments:

NONE			
Approved	Referred back	Chairperson: Prof Pathe	Date: February 2009

FIDethics@cput.ac.za

Appendix B

Electronic questionnaire – Buhle

Hi Alettia,

Sorry for late response, yep got your mail, am working on it as we speak, give me the whole of today, should send it back by tomorrow.

Tx

B.

From: Alettia Chisin [<mailto:ChisinA@cput.ac.za>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2012 3:45 PM
To: b@vodamail.co.za
Subject: Re-connection!

Dear B,

What a wonderful surprise to speak to you! You sound optimistic and full of fun! I am very happy to have located you, as I would have felt a bit indebted to use your story in my research without having the courtesy to inform you about it. Like I explained, I will use a pseudonym so that your identity is protected. The thesis is only used in the educational context and I hope that other teachers/lecturers who may read it can gain some insight into their own practices. Once I have a draft of the final chapter, I will let you have it to read and see what I am on about.

My interest/ concern in the academic and creative environment is that we should be culturally responsive teachers/designers who 'recognize the importance of including students' cultural references in all aspects of learning' as said by Ladson-Billings in 1994. This is necessary to provide equitable access to education for students from all cultures. In our diverse society this is especially critical. I believe we are not responding to these challenges as inclusively as we can. So...

Please recall what you can about your first year in Textile Design and Technology. The subject had a theoretical component and also a practical, studio component. The theory focussed on fibres and fabrics, ways of textile construction, cotton, linen, wool etc. This is the subject you failed in 1st year that I taught and you passed it subsequently. The practical was an introduction to studio work, repeat work, colourways etc. This was your strength, designing from a practical perspective. The areas that I am interested in from a cultural and identity point of view include:

1. Did your cultural background play a significant role in your practice as a designer? How did you apply particular/personal influences in the design process, if at all?
2. How would you have described your cultural background and identity then? Did it change significantly over the years?
3. How did your peers respond to you and your cultural position? Who were the peers and how many "Black" students were in your group? I use Black in the cultural sense, so hopefully it will not offend. I dislike the stereotypical ethnic categories, since we are so much more (and so much more complex) than Black and White and Other.
3. Which language issues did you struggle with if at all? Are you an English first-language speaker (then and now) and which other languages do you speak?

4. Do you remember challenges with lecturers with regards to Rastafarianism, its belief systems, its status (or not) as a Black cultural expression and therefore its sanctioned use of cannabis?

5. Which of the learning experiences in your first year stand out for you as a growth curve? What do you feel (with hindsight!) could have helped or improved your education in any way?

6. How did the workplace (subsequently) mould your position, identity, language?

And finally, please add anything that may paint a fuller picture of your studies at the time. Describe the Mr Price project and what your inspiration was. If you do not want to answer any/some of the questions, clearly that is your choice.

Thank you very much for the chat and for taking time to share your reflections with me.

All the very best and maybe we will meet in CT in December!!

Warmest regards

Alettia

Alettia Chisin

Co-ordinator

BTech/MTech Fashion & Surface Design

Tel (021) 469 1036

Disclaimer

This e-mail transmission contains confidential information, which is the property of the sender. The information in this e-mail or attachments thereto is intended for the attention and use only of the addressee. Should you have received this email in error, please delete and destroy it and any attachments thereto immediately. Under no circumstances will the Cape Peninsula University of Technology or the sender of this email be liable to any party for any direct, indirect, special or other consequential damages for any use of this e-mail. For the detailed e-mail disclaimer please refer to <http://www.cput.ac.za/email.php> or call +27 (0)21 460 3911

Appendix C

First conference paper

The vignette, “Rose, Zeke, Elizabeth, Jane, Olan, Sipho” was developed from a paper co-authored by Ms Suskin as second author, entitled “Pedagogical approaches to learning and curriculum development in design for inclusion and self-realisation of learners”, and originally presented at the 5th Defsa International Conference at CPUT, Cape Town (3-5 October 2007).

Appendix D

Questionnaire for DRAW members



Questionnaire for DRAW members Return Date 15 April 2011

Drawing the line: when students design learning and supervisors eat cookies.

Questionnaire for DRAW members, data of which is to be used in the above paper written for the CPUT DDR conference we are hosting in September. Yes, supervisors too need to reflect on their practice and write about it.

So dear students, please take time to think about your responses and know that now the shoe is on the other foot! Depending on your answers, you will be busy for about 30 minutes. Please sign after completion on the form for consent.

As designers we use terms such as “design thinking” and “design” to describe what we do when we make meaning of the world through our practice or when we produce artifacts, products and services. When we extend that space to include design research, we also make meaning of our world in a different way. Now we may concentrate more on underlying concepts and theories to help us frame our problems and responses. One of these spaces in our case is the DRAW space, where we share common goals and vision.

1. Social DRAW

- What do you like about the DRAW space?
- What do you not like about the DRAW space?
- Which of the social activities in the group supported you during your research and which of the social activities hindered your progress?
- How would you describe the social DRAW space in terms of the friendships and relationships that members form?
- If inter-dependence is one of the social DRAW pillars, what would you say are the other pillars?

2. Philosophical DRAW

- The terms 'deep learning and surface learning' refer to different learning styles. Webb (1997) states that students fond of a deep learning approach try to understand and make meaning from a learning event (as opposed to memorizing information without contextualization). Have the theories and philosophies discussed in DRAW sessions helped you to make meaning of your research as a learning event? If so, in which way, and which theories in particular?
- The 'surface' learning approach also has its place, Webb argues. This is more concerned with the obvious (and mechanical) as opposed to underlying concepts and holistic understanding. Were you aware of using these two different approaches in your research and if so, explain how and why you made use of them.
- In the DRAW context, do you think that an empathetic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of members in the group shaped the research process of the candidates in a particular way?
- Empathetic understanding hinges on a person's ability to put him or herself in the other person's shoes. Cochran-Smith (1997) links this in turn with story-telling and making one's voice heard. Were you able to use story-telling to make your voice heard in DRAW, and did you use narrative in your research as a tool? Can you recall a specific example?
- What role did story-telling play in the DRAW sessions?

3. Supervisory DRAW

- In a changing world supervision (and the way students and supervisors interact) cannot remain unchanged. In your opinion, which factors are responsible for changes in student/lecturer interaction and supervision?
- Do you find that supervisory practices are different in the DRAW/CPUT context to supervision in other countries where you did research?
- The DRAW sessions aimed to create a space where conversations and collective learning were deployed as a research method. Did this method add value to your personal research strategy and if so, how did it help? In turn, did you add value to others' research strategy and if so, how did you?
- What was the supervisors' role during the DRAW sessions?
- What would you like to have seen more of from the supervisors during DRAW?

- What aspects of supervision did you like during the DRAW sessions?
- Webb (1997) argues that an empathetic understanding of others requires time and the development of care and authentic openness to the 'Other'. This in turn leads to discovery of him- or herself in the 'Other' How do you understand this concept and do you think that DRAW succeeded in achieving this or not? Why?
- As post-graduate students, did you feel at times that you were experts in the group and that the role of expert and novice rotated? How did it happen?
- Any additional comments that you would like to make to offer insights into the DRAW research experience?

Thank you very much for taking the trouble to complete the questions!!
Biographical details will be kept confidential and identities will be protected.
Names do not have to be supplied if you wish not to. Alettia and Mugendi

Student name

Country of origin

Level of study

Duration of contact with DRAW

Activities participated in/events organized while in DRAW

Appendix E

Example of questionnaire coding

Since Jan 2009 organized by N.R.	Since Jan 2009 organized by N.R.	2009-2011 9 months	2009-2011 9 months	2009-2011 9 months	2009-2011 9 months
Interaction in DR is diff. from pr. interaction with leaders. More in- formal due to relaxed structure of group more comfortable to interact with super. Main supervisors have gone thru rel. journey & give them better understanding of what we need.	In Europe supervision was diff. student led, rela- tionship was strictly formal & less relaxed. I did not feel supervisor focused on achieving highest results not on helping us with personal learning exp. presence of authority did not show certain ex- periences because of lack of empathy fr. supervisor "I do think the humaniza- tion approach of DR is sig- nificant for good superv. practices"	No res. in other countries. ADD Comm Great experience don't know how I would cope without "Take for me about research also enlight- ened about various cultures & many perso- nalities people don't always get but its ok	No res. in other countries	Yes diff. DR is a more relaxed space "at least more to express them- selves and learn better from each other." Top-down approach can be very intimidat- ing remaining in either over-reliance or complete independence not good for res. process.	Don't know Super V. student a dynamic relationship where role of student is to transfer of knowledge This can still take an a- dult relation- ship
Yes different in DR but not CPU. In home country students under a supervisor may know each other but do not know each other's ability. Little chance to learn from peers. ADD Comm DR has given me support during this complicated sometimes lonely res. jour- ney very grateful to be part of DR.	Yes, definitely did add value My participatory approach in research is because I learned during DR sessions that a mutual learning exp. is a strong strategy to make a real change. In design rel. designers come to a co- operative solution for the problem. I added value by sharing methods & strategies with DR members. To facilitate the meeting we're not being too pre- scriptive.	Yes, it did. Colleague learning highlighted the value of participatory design by allowing student freedom to discuss any matter at hand super- visors guide DR sessions. Value to others through sharing of information.	N.A.?	Yes because it is a discussions forum each member supports or helps the others help in strategy formulation of the research ADD Comm: Collective sup- port reception of information, not lecture of sessions.	Yes "Conversations of a's are encour- aged by DR as a social facilitator the format allows a mesh- topology of ideas and feedback com- ing from the noise but into the core quality of ideas These ideas mature on a platform in various directions makes collective learning very powerful!" Recurrence
N.R.	N.R.	N.A.	N.A.	Yes "As discussion"	Yes "As discussion"
Some level of affect students to listen and to critique. His "less is diff. in DR than in indiv. meeting. A friendly atmosphere is created and super- visors also seem past to learn. Super. has a broader view than others & can therefore lead the session.	Satisfied but more super- visors diff. depts. to ex- pound own knowledge.	Nothing. Their level of participation & inter- action with group is great.	N.A.	Yes "For other materials core of topic "General framework method glasses, can central framework concepts are useful as points or points to discussion."	Stronger guid- ance more involved & focused. A level of guidance in shifting non- sense input into sense.
N.R.	The open, flexible & in- formal appr. of super- visors. They entered all had choice to speak Liked that they shared research experiences in the sessions	That all was given choice to talk, share & crit. Superv. are flexible with their time.	N.A.	Yes "As discussion"	Inter-intra peer change is possible more contact is needed, or for attendance, will take time.
N.R.	We see commonness in each other even tho from diff. backgrounds & personalities. It takes time to build core of DR members who spend much time together. We respect & understand each other no matter our diff.	We've rely on each other because we trust each other and recog- nize similarities. On some occasions and understand each other & the res. process	Yes, Open & understanding may show similarities i.e. green design although members belong to diff. de- pts. fields	Yes In discussion one is able to grasp like an idea even if not directly related to one's own topic.	Yes, even for shared some things members
N.R.	Yes, roles were rotated several times depending on the topic.	Yes, always was in an researcher that one is ex- p. in their criteria. gaps.	No, everyone are level then they have to open up and reciprocity	Yes Roles are apparent at DR a	Yes, even for shared some things members

Appendix F

Student research titles in DRAW

- Delen, A. 2011. Service design challenges in home-based health care in the Western Cape: a case study
- De Flamingh, F. 2011. The role of textiles in sustainable South African residential architecture
- Foudazi, F. 2011. Eco-friendly air-conditioning systems for different climates in South Africa
- Kankondi, A. 2011. An exploration of opportunities for design interventions to reduce crime: a case study situated in Bridgetown, South Africa
- Maina, M. 2011. Human experiences affecting governance in energy-efficient buildings in Cape Town's central business district

Appendix G

Second conference paper

The vignette, "I participate, therefore I learn" was developed from a paper co-authored by Prof M'Rithaa as second author entitled "Drawing the line: when students design learning and supervisors eat cookies", and originally presented at the Design, Development and Research inaugural conference at CPU, Bellville (24 - 26 September 2011). It was subsequently refined and submitted to the South African journal *Image and Text* and accepted for publication in 2012.