Connecting the Dots to Form a New Constellation

Supporting Studio Learning Environments for Graduate Students through Instruction, Threshold Concepts, and Qualitative Assessment

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Coordinator of Graduate Library Instruction
Fleet Library, Rhode Island School of Design

ARLIS/NA + VRA Conference
Thursday March 10, 2016
1st year graduate students

Exploratory research

2nd+ year (thesis year) students

Focused research
Psychology of Researching

Graduate-level Research Orientation

Information Management Tools & Techniques

Identify Your Artistic Influences

Artists' Writings

1st year graduate students

Exploratory research

Embodied Knowledge: Perception & the Senses

2nd+ year (thesis year) students

Focused research
Psychology of Researching: Structure of Research

An awareness of the psychological aspects of doing research can improve our understanding and experience of the process.

### The Structure of Research

#### Two Levels of Research

**First Level: Searching for Meaning & Understanding**
- Topic formation process
- Tolerance for uncertainty (how well we cope with not knowing)

**Second Level: Searching for Information**
- Mechanics of searching
- Comfort level of doing research
- Navigating new or unfamiliar interfaces and systems

### Seven Types of Uncertainty

*How do you know you're doing research well? Are you uncertain?*

Van Rysbergen defined seven types of uncertainty in the information seeking process (Kuhlthau 8). Uncertainty can cause feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence which may influence one’s research process.

- ignorance
- imprecision
- incompleteness
- undecidability
- complexity
- randomness
- vagueness

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**Kuhlthau, Carol Collier.** *Seeking Meaning: A Process Approach to Library and Information Services.*

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A research plan is a framework that shows how you intend to approach your topic. The plan can take many forms: a written outline, a narrative, a visual/concept map or timeline. It's a document that will change and develop as you conduct your research.

Components of a research plan:
1. Research conceptualization - introduces your research question
2. Research methodology - describes your approach to the research question
3. Literature review - critical evaluation and synthesis - systematic approach to locating, reviewing and evaluating the work (texts, exhibitions, critiques, etc.) relating to your topic
4. Communication - geared toward an intended audience, shows evidence of your inquiry

Research conceptualization refers to the ability to identify specific research questions, problems or opportunities that are worthy of inquiry. Research conceptualization also includes the skills and discipline that go beyond the initial moment of conception, and which enable the researcher to formulate and develop an idea into something researchable (Newbury 373).

Research methodology refers to the knowledge and skills required to select and apply appropriate methods to carry through the research project (Newbury 314). Method describes a single mode of proceeding; methodology describes the overall process.

Method - a way of doing anything especially according to a defined and regular plan; a mode of procedure in any activity
Methodology - the study of the direction and implications of empirical research, or the sustainability of techniques employed in it, a method or body of methods used in a particular field of study or activity

Literature Review, critical evaluation & synthesis
A literature review is a systematic approach to locating, reviewing, and evaluating the published work and work in progress of scholars, researchers, and practitioners on a given topic.

Critical evaluation and synthesis is the ability to handle (or process) existing sources. It includes knowledge of the sources of literature and contextual research field within which the person is working (Newbury 370).

Literature reviews are done for many reasons and situations. Here's a short list:
- to learn about a field of study
- to understand current knowledge on a subject
- to formulate questions and identify a research problem
- to focus the purpose of one's research
- to contribute new knowledge to a field
- personal knowledge
- intellectual curiosity

Sources to consult while conducting a literature review:
- Online catalogs of local, regional, national, and special libraries
- Meta-catalogs such as WorldCat, OCLC, and LibGuides
- Subject-specific online article databases (such as the Avery Index, JSTOR, Project Muse)
- Works cited in scholarly books and articles
- Print bibliographies
- The Internet locate major nonprofit, research institutes, museum, university, and government websites
- Search Google Scholar to locate gray literature & referenced citations
- Trade and scholarly publishers
- Fellow scholars and peers

Communication
Communication refers to the ability to
- structure a coherent line of inquiry
- communicate your findings to your intended audience
- make skilled use of visual material to express ideas for presentations, writing, and the creation of exhibitions (Newbury 374)

Practices: Book titles A - L

Come together: the rise of cooperative art and design

Come Together is a global investigation of the recent generation of art collectives, hidden behind trade and code names. It's about forty groups that have emerged since the end of the 1990s, active all over the world.

Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work

Introduction -- Theories of creativity and its contexts -- Theorizing a creative subjectivity -- Aspirants -- The shape of a creative career -- Mature views -- Attractions, exclusions and self-repair -- Contemporary identities of creativity and creative work.

Design for a complex world: challenges in practice and education

This is a book conceived in the ever-widening realm of design practice and education. It is premised on the belief that the forces of globalization—that have affected design practice for decades—have, in recent years, manifest themselves in design education as well. Consequently, it brings authors, practitioners, and educators together from 10 countries across six continents. Each offers an overview of the socio-cultural and economic factors that affect the built environment in their particular region of the world. They discuss how the practices of architecture, interior design, planning, and landscape architecture interact with those forces but, equally as importantly, they discuss how design education does the same.

The hand and the soul: aesthetics and ethics in architecture and art

Includes essays that explore the question of how ethical ideas guiding the design process - a concern for the environment or for social justice - relate to the beauty of our buildings, cities, and artworks. This book presents a range of viewpoints and does not ignore the perils of an easy association of ethics and aesthetics.

Inclusive arts practice and research: a critical manifesto


A lived practice (part of the Chicago Social Practice History series)

A Lived Practice examines the reciprocal relationship of art and life. Artist-practitioners are shaped by their experiences, and they in turn create and enhance the experience of others. Based on a symposium held at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014, this volume is intended to spur new thinking in the field of socially engaged art practice.
Threshold Concepts

- Psychology of Researching
- Embodied Knowledge: Perception & the Senses
- Art & Design Research
- Create a Research Plan
- Literature Review
- Research Ethics
- Cite an Image
- Information has value

1st year graduate students

Graduate-level Research Orientation

Identify Your Artistic Influences

Information Management Tools & Techniques

Artists' Writings

Ethics in Art & Design

Authority is constructed and contextual

Exploratory research

Authority is constructed and contextual

Focused research

2nd+ year (thesis year) students

Master's Thesis Guide

Authority is constructed and contextual
Threshold Concepts
Qualitative Assessment
Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy

Mouse-over the colored blocks to see examples of learning objectives that generally match each of the various combinations of the cognitive process and knowledge dimensions.

NOTE: These are learning objectives—not learning activities. It may be useful to think of preceding each objective with something like, "students will be able to . . ."
Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy

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Model created by: Rex Heer
Iowa State University
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
March, 2009
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Threshold Concepts

The usual description of threshold concepts lists these five characteristics:

1. integrative
2. transformative
3. irreversible
4. bounded (by discipline)
5. troublesome

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Threshold Concept</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Images / Media / Materials</th>
<th>Art &amp; Design Precedents</th>
<th>Larger Context</th>
<th>Depth of Development / Conceptual Core / Insight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of workshop content comprehension (Accessing and evaluating information)</td>
<td>Searching library sources yields different results than open web searches - I use both</td>
<td>The source is evident - partial citation, ebsco branding, screenshot</td>
<td>Acknowledges the image is from an external source-demonstrates “everyday” credit as a habit of mind</td>
<td>Describes the search technique which lead to finding the information -may include autobiographical information</td>
<td>Searches with a contextual awareness; may be interdisciplinary, successfully distinguishes historic from current sources; shows knowledge of publication types, peer review, open source; recognizes publishers within his/her discipline</td>
<td>Formulates a research question Creates a research plan Uses remote or specialized sources Seeks primary sources Uses other libraries Uses interlibrary loan Cites from relevant bibliographies Meets with a librarian to receive individual research guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ACRL Frame: Information has value</strong></td>
<td><strong>Bloom: remembering, understanding, applying</strong></td>
<td>applying</td>
<td>applying</td>
<td>applying</td>
<td>understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating</td>
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<td><strong>ACRL Frame: Authority Is Constructed and Contextual</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of the origin of the information (Attribution / Citing Sources)</td>
<td>I use information ethically as part of a scholarly community of practice</td>
<td>Cites texts using a recognized citation format</td>
<td>Cites images, films, media using a recognized caption format -references materials from the MRC</td>
<td>Cites sources for precedents</td>
<td>Articulates the distinctions between categories and types of information</td>
<td>Creates a working, annotated bibliography Recognizes the body of scholarship related to one’s discipline</td>
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<td><strong>ACRL Frame: Scholarship as conversation</strong></td>
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<td>Evidence of research influencing the design process</td>
<td>Research can be integrated into a studio project to enhance its success. Research is integral to my design process.</td>
<td>Readings contributed to the final work</td>
<td>Images used in critique include a combination of original artwork and others’ work</td>
<td>Cites an artist’s working methods, techniques, etc as influences in the project</td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of the historical/contemporary socio-political/ cultural context</td>
<td>Acknowledges a stage where research/information changed the direction of the project Transfer of knowledge takes place Uses information to scale problem/solution Explores research on concurrent topics + alternate scenarios Meets with a librarian to receive individual research guidance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How would the artwork have been different without the information found?</strong></td>
<td><strong>ACRL Frames: Research as Inquiry Information Creation as a Process Searching as Strategic Exploration</strong></td>
<td>applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating</td>
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<td>Visual Presentation (Communication)</td>
<td>My visual presentation fully articulates my ideas and completed project to the intended audience</td>
<td>Presents textual information in an organized way; fonts are readable, visual consistency, hierarchy of text is established and followed</td>
<td>AV sources are high quality. May include multiple views of the same object; Uses novel combinations of media elements to communicate ideas</td>
<td>Shows influences or inspiration from other visual sources - books, films, video, web</td>
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<td>Oral Presentation (Communication)</td>
<td>I am able to speak about my work in context, discuss precedents, and my research methods</td>
<td>Uses text to complement spoken word</td>
<td>Uses technology/media/images to complement spoken word</td>
<td>Situates own work in relation to others</td>
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Thank you to Marc Calhoun, RISD Reference/Cataloging Librarian, Alice Whiteside, RISD Reference & Instruction Librarian, and Jennifer Liese, Director of the RISD Writing Center for their contributions to this document.
Post Research Workshop Assessment Criteria

Depth of Development / Conceptual Core / Insight] Includes any of the following: Formulates a research question; Creates a research plan; Uses remote or specialized sources; Seeks primary sources; Uses other libraries; Uses interlibrary loan; Cites from relevant bibliographies; Meets with a librarian to receive individual research guidance.

- not evident
- satisfactory
- exemplary

[Depth of Development / Conceptual Core / Insight] Creates a working, annotated bibliography. Recognizes the body of scholarship related to one's discipline

- not evident
- satisfactory
- exemplary

[Depth of Development / Conceptual Core / Insight] Student acknowledges a stage where research/information changed the direction of the project; Transfer of knowledge takes place; Uses information to scale problem/solution; Explores research on concurrent topics + alternate scenarios; Meets with a librarian to receive individual research guidance

- not evident
- satisfactory
- exemplary

[Depth of Development / Conceptual Core / Insight] The student visually represents alternate scenarios and investigates multiple approaches to the same object / concept; Meets with a librarian to receive individual image source / searching guidance

- not evident
- satisfactory
- exemplary

[Depth of Development / Conceptual Core / Insight] As part of an oral presentation, the student describes any setbacks or pivotal moments where information found changed the direction of the work

- not evident
- satisfactory
- exemplary
Graduate specific constellation of topics with corresponding research guides + qualitative assessment schema

risd.libguides.com/grstudies

Questions? Ellen Petraits epetrait@risd.edu