Activating a Research Context in Art and Design Practice

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Practice-based research in art and design is the focus of postgraduate programmes at many universities. The term is useful when practice constitutes a critical part of the research methodology resulting in a form of research through practice. This study uses one such postgraduate programme to examine student researchers' understanding of their practice-based research methods, organisation of their studio processes and awareness of learning. A structured interview was used to investigate: 1) how artists and designers use documentation as part of their creative practice; 2) what forms and processes constitute this activity; 3) what the artist's or designer's perception is of the role documentation plays in their practice-based research and 4) the perceived positive or negative impacts resulting from the practice of active documentation of creative work. The context of the work is the wider debate around defining the role of the artefact as part the research process in art and design and the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic components in the articulation of practice-based research. The results reveal some of the ways in which new researchers begin to understand and ultimately take control of their working methods, including the generation of new artefacts, the implementation of acquired knowledge and communication about significant processes. The results add to our understanding of the way in which artists and designers perceive the transition from professional practice to research practice.

Main text

When artistic works or design production is undertaken as part of a research degree, the performances or artefacts themselves, unlike a philosophical dissertation, are not capable of justifying their contribution to the field of knowledge. There is, as yet, no evidence that a designed artefact or artwork can be relied on to communicate the meaning of its existence and the rationale for its significance. Nonetheless, this information is critical to the development of research in the field and the most reliable source of that information is the artist/designer, whose own understanding is a valuable source of contextual information. It is appropriate, therefore, that postgraduate research training should encourage the artist researcher to acquire a comprehensive understanding of their work so that they may better construct and communicate its meaning and significance. For example, analysis of the iterative processes many artists and designers use in the development of ideas can provide valuable information both for making decisions in studio and for explanation and justification of their research. The awareness that comes from information about developmental processes in the studio is a useful basis on which to build future research and creative endeavours.

This paper reports on a study conducted over several years as part of the annual review of coursework requirements on a Master of Art and Design programme[1]. The aim was to collect information on students' understanding of the practice-based research methods they used including the organisation of their studio processes. All participants were engaged in projects where their own creative practice was a critical part of the research methodology. As part of the study, students were also asked to reflect on their individual research methods. While this contributed to further understanding of students' individual artistic/design research practice, it also allowed for similarities and differences to be identified across a range of different projects. For three years, this review was done informally as part of student course evaluations. On the basis of that information and indications of how students were developing understanding, control, analytical and critical capacity, it was decided to formalise the study. In 2005 and 2006, a formal structured interview method was used to investigate: 1) how artists and designers on the programme use documentation as part of their creative practice; 2) what forms and processes constitute this activity; 3) what the artist/designer's perception is of the role documentation plays in their research and creative practice; and 4) the perceived positive or negative impacts resulting from the practice of documentation in relation to creative work. Given the wide range of different student projects from graphic and product design to conceptual and installation art practices, it was appropriate to use a grounded theory approach in the data analysis in order to
draw out and be open to characteristic and individual student perspectives.

The term active documentation refers to a process of knowledge construction appropriate to practice-based research projects in art and design (de Freitas, 2002). This concept is embedded in the programme structure through the timing of

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1 The Master of Art and Design is a two year research degree offered by the School of Art and Design, AUT University, Auckland, New Zealand. It consists of coursework and research in the first year of the programme followed by a full year on an approved studio (practical) research project. The examination submission consists of a practical project accompanied by an exegesis (supporting text) of three to six thousand words. The exegesis is expected to: locate the work in its context; discuss methods and theoretical orientations; reveal problems encountered in the work; describe practical responses to those problems and provide documentary evidence of the development or evolution of the work. As part of the first year taught programme, students are required to use documentation and reflective/critical processes to examine their studio research methods; the aim being to strengthen their methodological orientation to studio practice as a foundation for their final year project. Three assessment events are scheduled over the year, requiring evidence and explanation of documentation and critical/analytical engagement. This study examines student perception of the value of this activity in their creative practice.

specific coursework submissions and seminar presentations. Documentation and the associated reflective practices are promoted within the programme as a way of: 1) identifying the evolution of work in progress; 2) capturing information on accidental discoveries, improvements or problematic blocks; 3) articulating those phases of work that become invisible with progress; and 4) providing the detached record necessary in the abstraction of research issues. The rationale for this pedagogical position comes from an assumption about the role of the artefact in practice-based research. While the artefact may be the focal point of the research, the use of words and language are essential in the articulation of the research purpose, process and outcome.

The Research Questions

Building on issues identified by Schön (1983), Frayling (1993) and Scrivener (2000), de Freitas (2002) showed the concept of active documentation and its application in research to be a useful approach for artists and designers. It has been incorporated as part of the coursework in postgraduate Art and Design degrees at AUT University, New Zealand and is considered to be successful. It is not yet clear, however, how this learning strategy affects the postgraduate research experience or the quality and value of the work produced. In light of this, the questions arise, which are the focus of the current work.

1. How do artists and designers use documentation in their creative practice and, in particular, what forms and processes are involved?

2. What is the perceived learning role that documentation plays in a candidate's creative practice? Specifically, what are its negative or positive impacts?

Method

The study sample was postgraduate students enrolled in a two year course in Art and Design at AUT University, Auckland. Students who had completed their first year of studies were invited to participate in an appraisal of one of the coursework requirements - documentation of their studio practice - within a compulsory, studio-based course. Students were informed that the appraisal was part of an on-going study of studio documentation as a research method in art and design practice with a focus on individual researcher perceptions of the method. As the coordinator of that course, (one of the taught papers in year one) I had been in the habit of conducting informal group interviews at the end of each year which produced significant anecdotal evidence of student development, prompting the current study. Two formal surveys were conducted in 2005 and 2006. Data were collected using a semi-structured interview survey since this method could function both as an instrument to gather information as well as a means for students to critically reflect on their approach to research in art and design. A majority[2] of the students who participated in the study remarked of their own accord, in one way or another, that the interview itself had been a positive and valuable experience since it offered another opportunity to reflect on their research practices from a different perspective.

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2 80% in the 2005 survey group, 70% in 2006.

The survey size each year was fourteen participants who were interviewed using a pre-determined series of questions to elicit responses and begin discussions. Each interview session lasted approximately one hour. The questionnaire format was designed to guide the interview and provide an opportunity for taking notes. Key points in the responses were summarised in writing by the interviewer allowing the participant to speak without the distraction of writing. As the interview progressed, each set of notes was checked by the participant for accuracy of factual information and general meaning before further questions and discussion. The summary of responses was then analysed for evidence of individual practices, patterns of working process, similarities in researcher attitudes and perceptions and key responses that revealed insights and sensitivities.

Research interviews inevitably intrude on the social setting they would describe. They are also restricted to respondents who are accessible and cooperative. The interview process may create as well as measure attitudes and it can be difficult to detect when participants are responding in an atypical manner for the interview. To minimise possible shortcomings of the method, the interviews were conducted allowing sufficient time for extended dialog, clarification of written notes and repeat questions which offered the opportunity to revisit topics. Using various conversational prompts, participants were encouraged to continue speaking and to rephrase their responses where they felt the need to do so. Notes were altered if necessary minimising any pressure on the student to 'say the right thing'.

As a course lecturer and studio advisor on the programme as well as interviewer, I was therefore an insider in the process. I was involved in my own community as it were and this required vigilance. I had to be conscious that I might overlook the obvious or alternatively, I might bias the direction of the conversations. Glasser (2004, [43]) remarks on this predicament.

> *A researcher requires two essential characteristics for the development of theoretical sensitivity. First, he or she must have the personal and temperamental bent to maintain analytic distance, tolerate confusion and regression while remaining open, trusting to preconscious processing and to conceptual emergence. Second, he/she must have the ability to develop theoretical insight into the area of research combined with the ability to make something of these insights. He/she must have the ability to conceptualize and organize, make abstract connections, visualize and think multivariately. The first step in gaining theoretical sensitivity is to enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible - especially logically deducted a priori hypotheses.*

More importantly, there was a valuable positive aspect to my 'insider' status. Because of the confidence we shared as colleagues[3] and the intimacy we collectively had of both the programme structure and the studio processes, we were able to discuss details and complex issues in depth.

Four of the interview questions addressed the participants' understanding of the programme requirement for documentation, including their adaptation and commitment to it. This part of the interview focused on how the participants were using documentation as part of their creative practice and what forms and processes were involved. Their answers provided valuable information in relation to

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3 A collegial relationship between lecturers and students is encouraged on the postgraduate programmes, with many students engaged as teaching assistants, in technical support and as student mentors on the undergraduate programme.

the course structure and for the continued improvement of coursework requirements.[4] More importantly, those first questions served to begin the conversation about studio research practices setting participants at ease.

Subsequent interview questions approached the topic from a variety of angles (see appendix) offering multiple opportunities for reflection, variation of response or affirmation. These questions were focused on participant perceptions about the role documentation plays in their creative practice and on the identification of positive or negative impact.

In the second survey, some of the duplicate questions were eliminated since it was evident from the first round that they tended to produce duplicate responses rather than opening up new angles for discussion as had been anticipated. This allowed more time to be spent on fewer questions which appeared to be more productive. The choice of words in a couple of questions was also modified for clarity. Analysis and modification of the research design in progress was influenced by Atkinson's (2005) views on the need for qualitative researchers to return to the core principles of ethnographic inquiry that recognise multiple modalities of social action and cultural representation as they operate within specific contexts, requiring appropriate forms of analysis. [5]

Analysis of Results

The response data was collated and reviewed three times. On each occasion, in line with Glasser's (1978, 1992) position on the importance of allowing theory to emerge from the data instead of forcing it into preconceived frameworks, the interview responses were regrouped according to similarities in perception that could be drawn out from the data. The three different sets of qualitative interpretations were then compared and analysed for recognisable concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) and patterns of significance. During this process, a number of contemporary theoretical views were used to assist in the interpretation of the data and five general categories or themes were identified. These thematic groupings will be discussed separately in relation to actual sample responses that show the developments taking place in participants' individual research practices. Individual responses (under bullet points below) were taken from the actual summary notes recorded in the interviews. Each bullet point indicates a different participant point of view and has been selected for inclusion because the comment is representative of the wider conversation which took place at the interview. While no quantitative analysis was carried out, the individual comments selected for inclusion here were also typical of other participants' responses. They offer a 'snapshot' of the much broader conversations which took place around each topic.

1   Breadth, depth and converging contexts

Practice is defined by Wenger (1998) as a form of "doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do" (p 47). Díaz-Kommonen, (2004) makes a case for a study of practice that includes all the "diverse aspects of human agency that are difficult to apprehend such as space, time, discourse, and

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4 A positive impact overall was evident in a variety of comments from all participants, summed up in this example from M, a product designer. "Points of documentation created checkpoints which highlighted the issues of timeframe, completion objectives (project planning)".

5 For further critical analysis on the state of current qualitative inquiry practices, see the essay by Judith Preissle (2006) *Envisioning qualitative inquiry: a view across four decades*. International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Vol. 19, No. 6, p 685 – 695.

history" which she asserts come together in the objects resulting from human activity, the artefacts we make. She argues for the notion of the artefact as a conceptual tool which can draw together the different aspects and elements of practice as they converge in making and use. She describes this notion as a "...lens, or perspective, that allows us to better describe the boundary territory where discourse and community subject and object interact." Understanding and articulation of that broader territory begins effectively when artists and designers initiate cycles of documentation and reflection on the emergent artefacts they are producing. The following selection of comments about active/reflective documentation illustrates growing awareness of converging contexts: [6]

- *While documenting a trial installation I got involved in the architectural and spatial/material characteristics of the site. It gave me the position of the viewer for the first time.*

- *'Owning' the method (X is referring to when the 'penny dropped') as a designer was a distinct shift – maybe it will also have an impact into my teaching.*

- *Reviewing and choosing (from alternative experimental options) at the points of documentation has offered me a 'third party' view, or a design freeze – a stopping/finality – a chance to look at how it will be perceived by the public.*

- *The process brought me to a realisation of the relational potential of the different perspectives and issues - the socio/political situation in which I am taking photographs.*

- *The stopping/gathering/looking over a period of time changed my practice from a series of one-off experiments into a more complex, disciplined/interconnected approach.*

- *It has developed a consciousness about the way that I am living, not just the way that I am making art. It seems to have made me aware of wider implications.*

2 *Construction of meaning/significance*

Creative practice research, like all research, has a basis in the modelling and evaluation of concepts, objects or actions. The invention or application of theories, techniques and knowledge systems is common to all types of research and in artistic or design research, this is also the case.

Artists and designers in professional practice are seldom required to justify their methods and decisions or explain the background to their creative solutions. However, when they are engaged in creative practice as part of a postgraduate research project (practice-based research), their theoretical arguments, methods and critical analysis come under scrutiny. In the creative arts and many design fields, the difference between these practice modes is only clear when the artist or designer is able to demonstrate or communicate the ways in which the artefacts or processes are the result of a research process. This supporting communication is most valuable when it identifies significance in the work and the methodological processes.

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6 Bullet points are verbatim responses. Text in brackets has been added for clarity of context.

Significance places the work and its making in context. It refers to those attributes of the work that question, challenge, reinterpret or extend existing bodies of knowledge. This could include technical issues, understandings, conventions, new ways of achieving experience. Methodology as in other research paradigms is based on the evaluation and validation of the work according to some criteria. However in practice led research an important aspect is the relationship between the experience of the work and its explanation. This is because knowledge is experienced through the work and it is the various relationships between the explanation of the work and the work itself via some type of methodology that makes it research.[7]

Artists and designers who are engaged on studio projects as part of a postgraduate programme face a number of specific difficulties arising when research and professional practice are intertwined in the academic environment. The central issues relate to the way in which tacit knowledge of materials is acquired and used in practice, particularly in relation to aesthetic and emotive judgements. The experience, knowledge and skill acquired, expressed and applied through material means is notoriously difficult to communicate although it is inevitably embodied in the material artefacts. It is just as important in the research context as the knowledge which can be communicated through the use of language. Active documentation at appropriate points in the research process can assist both the learning process and the articulation of this knowledge. Participants' comments reveal an increased sensitivity to significant aspects evolving in their work.

- *Making regular time for active/reflective documentation resulted in my valuing of sketches and doodles, developmental/preliminary work, things that might have otherwise seemed less significant and rough.*

- *Going back to earlier tests/trials I saw something interesting that I was able to bring in to my current work – something that had been discarded but now has relevance.*

- *Because I work with pouring paint and mixing/blending right on the canvas, I have to be very quick and careful. The later process of documentation often reveals qualities in the work that were obscured when I was making them – when my focus was on the making.*

- *For the end of year exhibition and documentation assessment, I had to make a slide show on DVD – this changed my idea about how the project could live and be distributed – delivery media/cost issues/private access on DVD etc – it opened up wider issues that could feed back into the project design.*

- *When photographing the setting up and assembly of the early prototype designs, I encountered a different, more poetic outlook rather than an exclusively pragmatic/functional one.*

- *I used the documentation as a spin off value for advertising/promoting the research project – profile raising,*

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7 Excerpt from a response to four questions posed by the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at the April 2005 SPIN Conference, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane. The responses were prepared on behalf of delegates and posted on the web site: by Dr Nike Bourke, Associate Professor Brad Haseman, Professor Richard Vella and Daniel Mafe. http://www.speculation2005.qut.edu.au/CHASS.html

networking etc (circulating material for peer comment) and the resulting feedback from international colleagues gave me new insights and a changed perspective on the work.

• *(Reviewing my documentation files) allowed me to identify some experiments that did not really fit with my vision/objectives or research focus, (that) were not significant.*

• *In the case of one work, 'The Chair', the fact that I had regularly saved digital compositions and variations was instrumental in allowing some productive reflection - rather than reaching a creative dead-end.*

• *Looking back on a period of work, you recognise early attempts to articulate aspects that you can now do better – you recognise the discoveries you have made and see where they came from and how they came about.*

3   Revealing vs. superimposing method

Artists and designers operate in a creative environment which requires a constant conceptual shifting between the past, present and future; a process that is generally imperceptible as they negotiate between what is known, what they imagine and what is at hand. They adjust to these phases of thinking and making in their own imaginative and reflective ways (their habitual way of working) without necessarily thinking about how they do it or what they have learnt. The creative process is characterised by the various ways in which they project the hypothetical while adjusting their actions to the material, social or aesthetic requirements of the emerging artefacts/situations in the studio. At times, they may be more engaged with historical or empirical matters. At times they may be directed toward what is possible or yet to emerge. At times they need to be intimately engaged with the evaluation of what is at hand. These intersecting facets of the developing process can offer insights in relation to the meaning and significance of the work. The switch between temporalities requires intuition, criticality and reflexivity in order to effectively mediate the action unfolding in the studio environment. While the trajectory of these processes can be a valuable component of the research report or exegesis, it is difficult to be involved in the work and self mindful of the reaction at the same time. The following summary comments illustrate how participants in the study used documentation and reflection for this purpose and the recognition of learning that occurs.

• *From the start of the programme I understood the system requirements (coursework), but only recently (end of year) did I understand how I could use it as a developmental and research method. As I got used to it, I realised more rigour was needed to avoid gaps and also to see where I had made good moves.*

• *Later on in the year (after sorting out the technical and structural problems) I adapted ideas from early recorded sketches for an installation. Ideas that would otherwise have been lost.*

• *I became conscious of the processes going on in my head, in advance of the practical work experiments. (The respondent is referring to how the reflective documentation phases brought to light an identifiable methodological orientation.)*

- *On reflection, with the whole 'picture' in the documentation, I am able to identify key 'catalyst' works that show me the form of my evolving project. The project is now completely different as a result.*

- *As the works (paintings) are overlaid with new surface variations or completely repainted, it (having full digital documentation files) allows me to review those earlier iterations.*

- *As a result (of the active/reflective documentation of trial representations), I have moved away from a strict classification model into a more comparative tool that opens up more ways for interpreting the content..*

Stan Allen (2000) argues against a view of theory and practice as competing abstractions, one more important than the other. He points out:

> *More significantly, practice is not a static construct, but is defined precisely by its movements and trajectories.* There is no theory, there is no practice. *There are only* practices, *which consist in action and agency. They unfold in time, and their repetitions are never identical.* (p. XVII)

Allen distinguishes between practices concerned with interpretation and analysis, which he calls "hermeneutic practices" and those that transform reality through the production of new objects or applications, which he calls "material practices". He suggests that "The vector of analysis in hermeneutic practices always points towards the past, whereas material practices analyse the present in order to project transformations into the future." (p. XVIII)

Noting the difference between 'criteria' and 'symptoms' of research, Biggs (2002) argued for a more precise positioning of text and artefact in practice-based research, and calls for a better understanding of the different merits and capabilities of text and material artefact in presenting research outcomes. The tensions that researchers in art and design face between the material/making phases of their work and the contextualising and reflective phases can be problematic. Yet the interrelationship of the different intellectual registers is precisely where the recognition of artistic significance and the articulation of certain research methods will occur. Scrivener and Chapman (2004) recognise the necessity of engaging with the material processes.

> *The intellectual strategy for "discovery" in the creative arts appears to be one in which material is brought forward for analysis, discussion and reflection, through making, rather than through observation or reason.*

The time of engagement with material processes is the locus for reporting, reflecting and discovering coherence and it is the reason for advocating active documentation as a research method in practice-based projects.

4   Dialogue: towards a new position

David Bohm (1996), commenting on the creative process in his broad ranging analysis of dialogue, recognised that something very like communication is involved even in relationships with inanimate objects. Reacting to the idea that an artist expresses himself by bringing forth the artwork that is inside him, he had this to say about the communication occurring between the artist and the material work:

> *Rather, what usually happens is that the first thing the artist does is only similar in certain ways to what he may have in mind. As in a conversation between two people, he sees the similarity and the difference, and from this perception something further emerges in his next action. Thus something new is continually created that is common to the artist and the material on which he is working* (p3).

The following examples are typical of a category of interview comments that suggest how participants were responding to new learning and insights gained from reflective engagement with their work at the time of formal documentation. Their comments suggest that they are aware of a sort of dialogue taking place as they reflect on their work in its various developmental phases.

- *The act of taking a photo requires attention to creating a 'good' photo – changes of context and location, isolation of the object into more abstract settings etc all contribute to my changing perception of the artefact.*

- *I see some of the documentation process actually becoming a new work.*

- *The transfer from 3D to 2D medium has value for me in exploring the visual capacity of the object/artefact to create appeal and desirability. (The respondent is referring to the use of photo shoots to both document work and explore installation possibilities).*

- *The periodic suspension of work in order to document and reflect led me to challenge the hierarchy of the painting over the sketches.*

- *During documentation, I took time to get good product images and it enabled me to see the artefacts in a different light – to 'abstract' the object was a second round of creativity – enabling me to observe underlying elements. It gave me pleasure to recognise certain features – it was a good experience.*

- *Reflecting/documenting can change the very nature or form of your work – E.g. the documentation of my static model became an animation piece in its own right (model for teaching the history of typography).*

5 Building self-belief: a precursor to articulation and communication

It is not possible to claim that all of the perceived advantages and motivations encountered by participants are the result of engaging in active/reflective documentation. Artists, designers and researchers mature and progress through all activities and practices with which they engage. However, it is clear that the use of active documentation by participants has disturbed their habitual practice and encouraged attentive, reflective processes. It is also evident from the frequent use of personal qualifications and positive descriptions, that there was growing confidence and excitement generated by the process.

- *The documentation has drawn me closer to the works and all the elements I use.*

- *I see it as a way of releasing ideas and not losing good ideas, even in the professional context where the work may be driven by rigid issues, budgets etc.*
- *I value my work more.*
- *The documentation makes a difference from me as Annie (not real name) 'playing' to me as Annie, a reflective artist. It gives me a feeling of validation, it gives me confidence.*
- *Also allowed me to take small steps and recognise them as significant.*
- *I invested more of myself.*
- *Value my own perspective more – greater confidence.*
- *It is valuable because it is self propelling - it is encouraging.*
- *It gave me pleasure to recognise certain features – it was a good experience.*
- *The documentation process set up a safe framework for me to work.*
- *Also my mental connection with the work was changed – I felt I could see more.*

Concluding Comments

Overall, the response data conveys the depth of insight demonstrated by research students in the study group. Their interpretation of course work requirements and their reflective comments on the way these requirements led to modifications in their habitual studio practices, reveals a prevalent struggle between their need to protect the integrity of their individual practices and their desire to elucidate a robust and convincing theoretical context. While professional artists and designers rarely need to be self-consciously aware of the experiential knowledge that informs their practice, the demands of an academic degree may require effective communication of relevant details. The results suggest that one particularly valuable aspect of active documentation is the way in which implicit and tacit details are extracted from studio processes. Active documentation appears to improve learning and to assist in the construction of meaning for the working artist/designer. Furthermore, the results show how a growing awareness of the personal learning taking place through this research method leads to growing confidence for the decision-making process. In turn, I believe this should lead to better understanding and more clarity in the communication of relevant information. However, the efficiency of words and language to provide clarity and detail about certain aspects of practice-based research does not suggest that language is more important than the artefact or art work. On the contrary, the results of this study appear to strengthen an argument for the primacy of the creative work in the research process by validating the insight and learning gained when artists and designers examine both the creative process and the materiality of their work. In this context, the current study has significance since it adds to our understanding of the way in which artists and designers perceive the transition from professional practice to research practice. Further work in this area, to examine individual and collaborative working practices in more depth, with a focus on periods of difficulty, could provide valuable information on specific ways in which creative research and practice is steered through critical phases of development. The perceptions artists and designers might articulate about problematic stages are likely to reveal important insights into the material thinking processes that characterise practice-based research.

This study expands our understanding of the way in which the relationship between research, learning and practice is perceived and articulated by students on a

practice-based research programme. In a broader sense, it reveals some of the ways in which all novice researchers can better understand and take control of their learning and their working methods through critical reflection using methods such as active documentation. This is an important issue, not just for artists and designers, but for teachers and researchers across a wide range of academic fields. It has implications for the development and improvement of learning and teaching strategies associated with many types of research practice.

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Appendix

Sample questions from the structured interview

1. The MA programme requires you to submit documentation of work. What is your understanding of documentation?

2. What do you understand active documentation to be?

3. Describe a particularly good example of active documentation in your recent practice.

4. What strategies or systems have you set up to record/reflect/critique your studio processes and methods?

5. How do you know when you are reflecting on your practice as opposed to making decisions about the work at hand?

6. Do you see any continued use in your practice for the active documentation method, that is, beyond an academic programme?

7. Can you identify any conceptual breakthroughs or changes to your creative, working practice as a result of your reflection/documentation practices?

8. How did the process of documenting/reflecting on your work affect its evolution?

9. Has the process of documentation affected the way in which you interpret or understand your work? How does this happen?

Word count: 4936