Wenig and Materiality

One of many excellent online resources: http://www.english.purdue.edu/

Neil Beyer paper - an interesting model for analysis: http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1135/11171
Writing and Materiality

University College, Falmouth Tremough Campus, Penryn - Cornwall, 12 Jul 2013

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thinking and subject matter
writing support strategies to assist students:

1) the notion of a **working** abstract

2) use of signals and signposts / **in studio** spaces

3) trying out a contested relationship

4) asking questions

5) writing **WITH** peers / groups / collaborations

6) cultivating distance through writing **FOR** peers
1 Locate the work through questions:

- What do you want to say? (Brown’s questions – what did you do? What happened? Why is it noteworthy?)

- Where will you say it? Course assignment / studio report / exegesis or thesis? Know the requirements and expectations and format.

- Who is the target audience? And what might be the best tone of voice to use? Speak directly to this audience - designers/makers, experimenters, business thinkers, environmentalists, social thinkers, government agents . . .)
2 Start students with an abstract:

- a first task can be a hypothetical abstract
- encourage the use of this abstract as a mirror from beginning to end (revise / rewrite)
- it can be changed as necessary to keep pace with how their thinking is re-directed by their writing.
- set strict word limits
3  Play with structures
(or encourage use of a generic structure)
4 Encourage tasks that allow writers to understand their relationship to the field.

Such as a written task to associate or dissociate with a key design work / artefacts / literature / etc.
5 Expect explicit use of language (build confidence):

- This research *shows* why ...

- This essay *explains* how ...

- This work *confirms* that ...

- This research *reveals* ...

- This work is a *contribution* in the sense that ...

- This work is *significant* because of ...
All academic writing includes:
(regardless of length)

- A beginning
  (introduction / contextual placement / rationale)

- A main body
  (of discussion / explanation / argumentation)

- An ending
  (summation / conclusion / final remarks / reflection)

CAN IMAGES ASSIST IN DEMONSTRATING THIS SIMPLE FRAMEWORK?
7 Differentiate between academic and personal writing:

- Emphasize that 'assuming an academic perspective' means stepping sideways from 'the personal'.

- Encourage the use of ‘I’ to observe, comment, analyze, evaluate. BUT make a distinction between diaries and personal logs where descriptions or accounts of feelings about work are prioritized.

- Encourage references to what other artists and designers do/say. Expect inclusion of other people's ideas: other experiments, other designs, other evidence.

- Encourage correct / required conventions of referencing and citation right from the beginning. Link with learning center information literacy courses and workshops.
Signals and signposts can enable writing:

- imagine/forecast the 'whole' (assignment/paper)
- writing an abstract (or conclusion?) is a good way to invent the whole.
- note/acknowledge other people's work.
- situate the important core of the work in a relationship to other design/artistic or philosophical thinking.
Signals and signposts can be embedded as 1) images; 2) key words; 3) titles and subtitles.
Robert Brown’s Eight Questions

These questions can be used as prompts when you are planning a paper. Answer these eight questions and you could be well on the way to sorting out your article for publication.

Working title: (something catchy to start with)
Authors: (in order of appearance)
Anticipated Journal: (where you might publish)

1. Who are the intended readers? (name 3-5)
   Give their names and why they would be interested

2. What did you do? (50 words)
   Briefly outline the methods you used to design/create/gather evidence.

3. Why did you do it? (50)
   Briefly outline the issue/concern/problem you are tackling and why it is important.

4. What happened? (50)
   Briefly outline the key results. Focus on outcomes.

5. What do the results mean in theory? (50)
   Think about how your design/creative work or experimental results and conclusions will change how people see the world or how they might think differently about anything.

6. What do the results mean in practice? (50)
   Better-quality research also has practical consequences. What are the consequences of your work? Think about how your design/creative work or results and conclusions might change what people do, what other designers might do or what users will do differently.

7. What is the key benefit for readers? (25)

8. What remains unresolved? (50)
   This is more for your own benefit, but will provide some guidance for your audience and some of it may be useful in your discussion.

Author: Robert Brown robbrown@mail.ipswich.gil.com.au
Rowena Murray’s Ten Prompts

1. This work needed to be done because . . . (25 words)
2. Those who will benefit from this include . . . (25)
3. What I did was . . . (25)
4. How I did that was by . . . (25)
5. When I did that what happened was . . . (50)
6. I worked out what that meant by . . . (50)
7. I did what I set out to do to the extent that . . . (25)
8. The implications for research are . . . (25)
9. The implications for practice are . . . (25)
10. What still needs to be done is . . . (25)

The de Freitas Provocations:
*a ‘first sketch’ for A+D writing.*

1. This work (project/design/inquiry) began as . . .
   (20 words + 1 image / schema / sketch)
2. It is interesting/significant because . . . (20 + 1)
3. What we did was . . . (20 + 2)
4. This is how we went about it . . . (20 + 3)
5. What evolved/developed/emerged was . . . (40 + 3)
6. Which led us to consider that . . . (40)
7. These things changed our direction
   (or our thinking, or our methods) . . . (20 + 3)
8. In the end, the outcome/effect/result was . . . (20 + 3)
9. On reflection, we thought that . . . (40)
10. Finally, the potential, the questions, the new challenge could be . . .
    (20 + 1)
Concluding, parting, pointing: classic rules to pass on to student writers.

1. Emphasize the importance/significance of the main idea (work/design/thesis statement).

2. Mention the background or context again.

3. Return to key words and terms.

4. Acknowledge any opposition/challenger you discussed earlier.

5. Synthesize the discussion and create a final good impression on the reader.

6. Look forward: point to the future or pose new questions but avoid this if it opens up confusing new horizons.
working with peers
Editing can be a social practice.

It is a process of making the work, work - for the reader, for the other person.

It is best encouraged as a collaborative, social component of the writing process.
Approaches and orientations

Studio / Design PRACTICE
Snack writing & active documentation
Above, Figure 1. *T-Stool*, Folding sequence from a flat ellipse to an ellipsoid that is filled with plaster, Katrin Mueller-Russo 2008. Photos by Rhett Russo.
Figure 11. Platter Project 2011. Top Row: Julia Novak; Bottom Row: Hannah Minnix.
Images will not suddenly materialize to represent the work, declare a strategy or illustrate method.
Advice for going over the full draft: to reinforce structural strengths.

1. An introduction should really include one (brief) paragraph to visualize (say in text or show with images?) what is in each section.

2. Reinforce at several points throughout the paper what the contribution is that the work/design makes. Or state again and differently, the significance of it – not just at the end!

3. The same key words and terms can be used at the beginning and at the end of a research text, report or paper.

4. Strengthen the paper with images, figures, tables, sketches, illustrations, diagrams wherever possible.

Art and design writing should be a model of text/image formatting for communication.
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