

One of many excellent online resources: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Nell Beyer paper - an interesting model for analysis: <http://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/11138/11171>

# 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

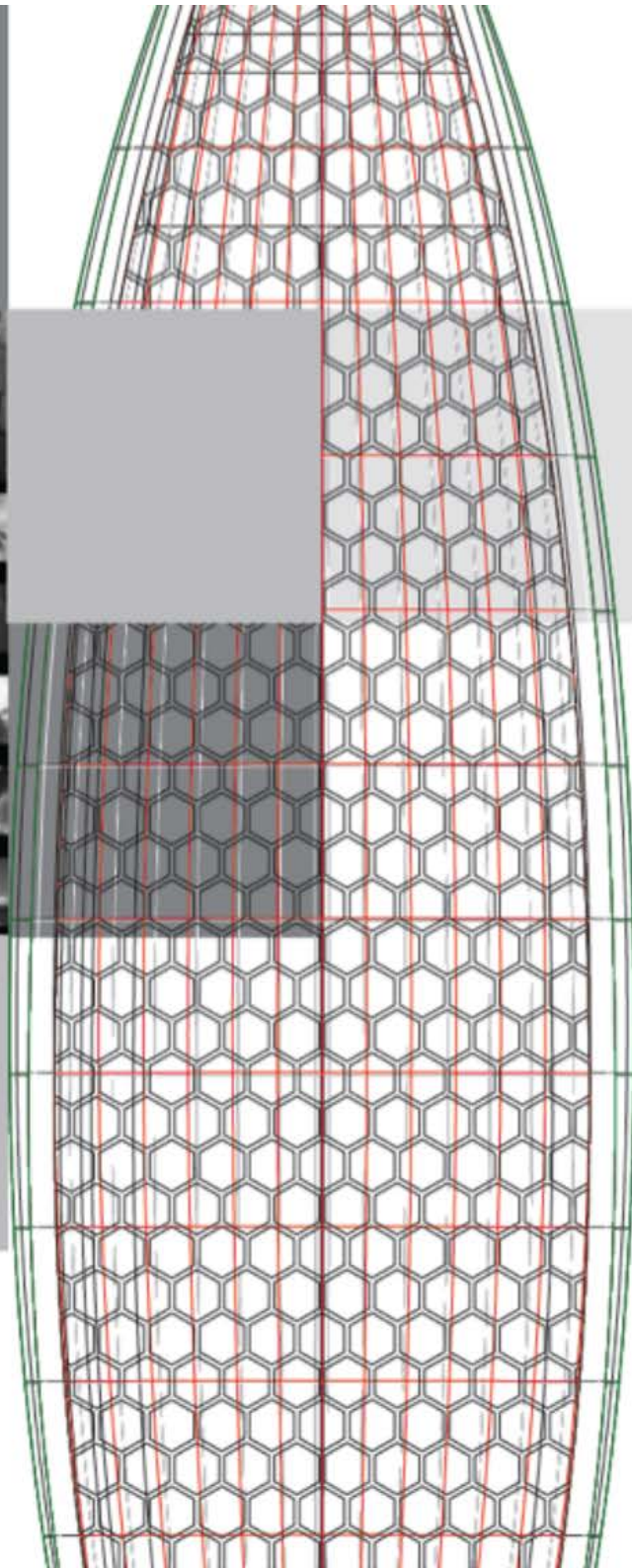
## 1 Locate the work through questions:

- 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 ...)

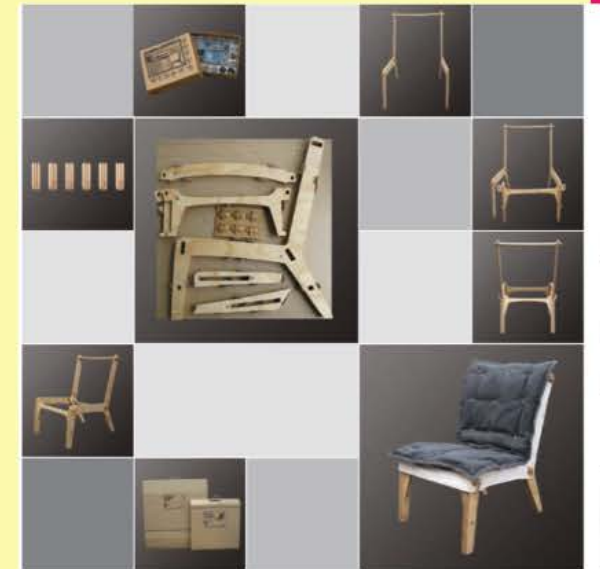
## 2 Start students with an abstract:

- 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





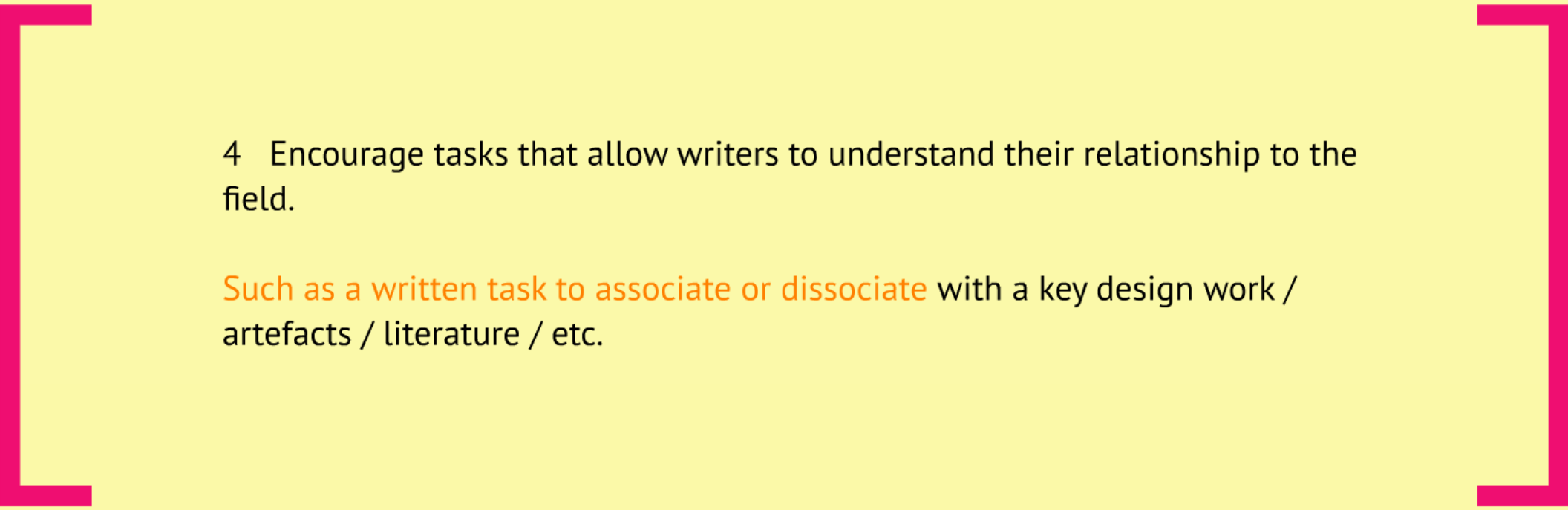
### 3 Play with structures (or encourage use of a generic structure)







 Indigene Chair



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 ...

6 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](mailto: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



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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.

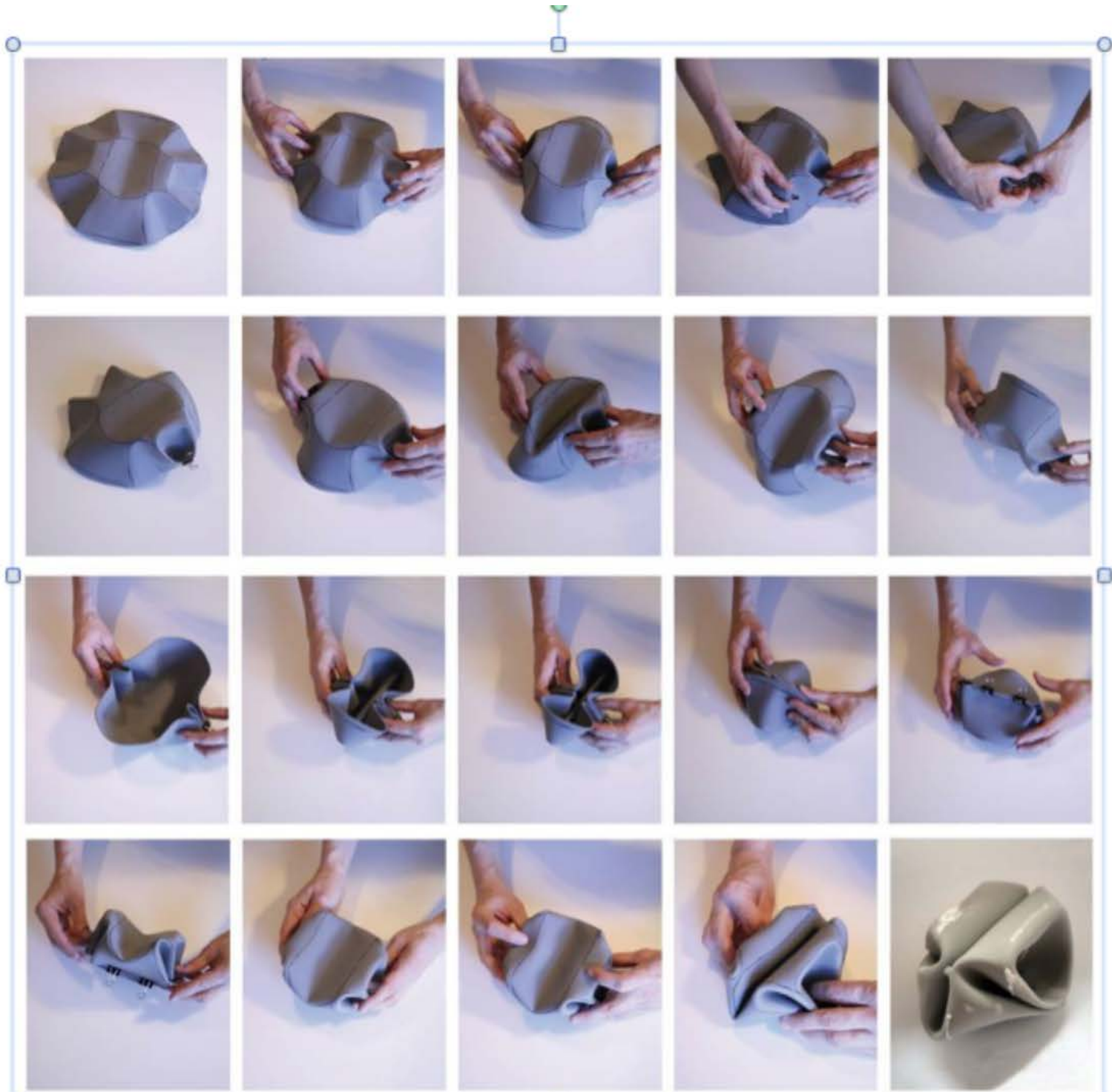
**Approaches and  
orientations**



**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.





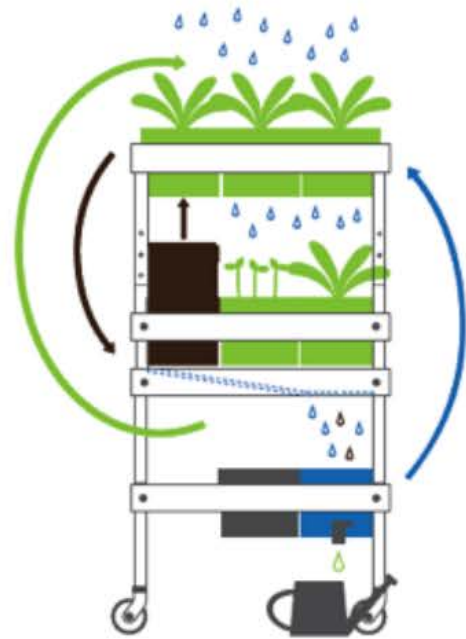
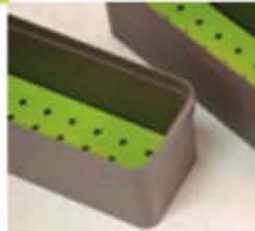
Images will not suddenly materialize to represent the work, declare a strategy or illustrate method.



Tools



Worms



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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