PITCHES AND PROPOSALS: LINKING RESEARCH AND COMMERCIAL STRATEGIES

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Abstract

One of the central obligations of a post-graduate programme at a university is research. Any research project starts with a research proposal. Therefore one of the central tasks in the training of researchers is mastering the strategies of persuading the overseers of research that the task that the researcher is undertaking is feasible, do-able and worthwhile. To do this act of persuasion the researcher has also to demonstrate that he or she is in all likelihood capable of doing research – this demonstration of competency is built into the proposal. The result of research will be a document like a dissertation.

However, when the purpose of doing the research is not to produce a document containing the findings of research, but to develop a product, process or design that is functional, effective and "sellable," then the nature of the proposal appears on the surface to take a different direction. However, in essence, as we shall argue, in the latter case the researcher is attempting not to acquire approval to do the research, but to acquire approval from a set organisation to spend their money on the development of such a product, process or design. Fundamentally, we shall argue, the act of persuasion for acquiring approval (research) and acquiring money (product, process or design development) is extremely similar. Indeed, as we shall demonstrate, the trajectory of the proposal and the trajectory of the "pitch" (the term used to demonstrate competency so that a tender or contract might be awarded) follow very similar research grounded strategies.

We do this to suggest that the central thrust of training researchers at BTech level (4th year level) might point the research project either to the classic research endeavour or to the notion of training candidates to develop effective pitches for contracts – the research strategies are extremely similar.

Key Words: *research, proposals, pitches, practice-as-research, training/education*

Introduction

The history of the process of integrating former Technikons into different forms of university institutions in South Africa is well known. In the case of this article, the authors' experiences are around the transformation from a Technikon to a University of Technology (with the focus on the Design environment), which will form the basis of the argument that will follow.[1] Centrally, this transformation has required somewhat of a paradigm shift in pedagogical outlook, with the concomitant strategic trajectories in teaching and learning. Key to this change has been two fundamental perspectival realignments. Firstly, the shift has been from a skills-based, practice driven, product development approach with the aim of producing technically skilled and versatile students for the labour market to engage in commercial enterprises, to a theoretically underpinned, critically engaged student that must justify decisions made, and be able to locate designs in the industry, in society, in culture, in aesthetics and in the academy.[2] Secondly, in our experience, this trajectory has created an uneasy fit between a teaching approach that used to be embedded in experience, "talent," and the innate "messiness" of the design process, to the seemingly linear, conscious, scaffolded approach which is the hallmark of analysis and critical thinking, and therefore the academy. Succinctly put, the outputs required to demonstrate competency by the student have moved from a design-commerce interface to a design-commerce-academy interface.

[1] The debate around the differences and similarities between "classic" universities and Universities of Technology is ongoing and not yet resolved. For the purposes of this article the two have been somewhat conflated.
[2] The "academy" is seen as the institution that foregrounds "classic university" pursuits, which include research, argumentation, logical disputation and the like, much of which needs to be presented in written format.

A key component of this output shift is to be found in the area of research. There are a plethora of definitions of what constitutes research and almost all include the notions of problem definition, problem solving, data or information gathering, trajectory of argument, conclusions reached that are to a greater or lesser extent justifiable and/or can be generalised[3] and the demand that the research findings be places in the public domain. Where the contentions might occur is the presentation of research findings in the public domain. In the Technikon environment these findings took the form of presentations of design in a commercial setting (real or virtual) and could be argued to take the form of a pitch for a contract. In the University setting the outputs of research need (currently) to take the form of a written document, such as a mini-dissertation or a research report.

In our experience at the Tshwane University of Technology the department annually presents exciting pitches prepared for clients by students in our undergraduate and B Tech programme. These presentations are done with enthusiasm and a clear sense of purpose and direction. The visual and oral presentations and the explanations and explications (and justifications) of the designs are lucid, interactive and persuasive. There are clear interfaces between design and commercial interest and perceived need that fuel the engagement within the community of design and commerce. In our experience this enthusiasm (and competency) is in stark contrast to the anxiety and uncertainty a lecturer has to face from the students when the students have to focus on the world of research at B Tech level, as suggested by the notions of the academy.

The potential reasons for these uncertainties and anxieties are manifold. In the first instance (and perhaps influencing the other instances), many of these students have gone through three years of Diploma training, where the emphasis has been on the design creation and not on the justification (written or otherwise) per se, and this "appears" to change radically when confronted by a supposed monolith called "research." Secondly, drawing on Herrmann's (1995) notion of whole-brain learning and preferences (where the brain is metaphorically divided into areas that allocate preference to Fact, From, Feeling and Fantasy[4]), one could argue that a designer's preference in a work of design is, creatively, in the Feeling and Fantasy domain, with some movement toward Form. In this model, Fact and Form are predominantly the domain of language, linear analysis, rhetoric, argument, statistics and the like. Designers enter the programme because of their preferences for the Feeling and Fantasy approach. A third possible reason might lie in Howard Gardner's theories around Multiple Intelligences (1993), postulating that a designer's chief intelligence is located in the Visual Intelligence mode, and not in the Logico-mathematical or verbal/linguistic mode – the domain of the academy. Candidates who enter the programme are adjudicated because of their perceived potential in Visual Intelligence. Fourthly one could theorise that the dread at the prospect of research might be positioned in the nature of the reflective practice in a style of education that is central to Design education (see Schon, 1983). In this mode of education, the nature of the reflective practice is often visual and draws on the master-novice/acolyte mode of teaching, thus potentially excluding, in "imitation and extrapolation[5]," the verbal descriptions and guidance that might go on in other domains. In some senses this leads to a shortfall in verbal methods of description, where teaching takes place through demonstration. This is the pedagogy that they are used to. Finally, one might speculate on the evaluation of ability in this field that might, to a large extent, lie in visual output, and not in verbal output. During the Diploma years this has been the predominant mode of evaluation and the candidates are used to this. In all of these instances (and given the potential profile of students as suggested) the thrust of teaching and learning leads towards design output that is visual in nature, and where the oral and written are used to augment the design, not critique it, necessarily, as in other output forms.

[3] The notion of "generalisability" is a contentious one and has split the research community along the lines of quantitative and qualitative research methods. In the former case, the generaliseability lies in the statistically significant "proving" of the conclusions, whereas in the latter case the generalisability lies in the recognition by the reader of the similarities of circumstance and therefore the similarity of conclusions. This explains the necessity for detailed descriptions of context, but it also points to the appropriateness of qualitative methods in design, where recognition and appropriateness decisions are made by the viewer, for example.

[4] These are the more easily accessible terms, in our view.

[5] The notion of "imitation and extrapolation" speaks to the beginning phases of learning in the apprenticeship mode, where the novice learned by replicating the master artist, and this progressed, as the skills were mastered, to an extrapolation of the work as the novice creatively extended the work and extrapolated on the guidance provided by the master.

Nevertheless, it is the nature of university training that verbal (written) and overt analytical dexterity in tertiary education are demanded at higher levels. The ultimate act of demonstrating competency in this logical and verbal dexterity is the act of research. Yet at the same time, access to industry demands the demonstration of a visual and conceptual "dexterity" – it is the design that counts, not the argument specifically. The question therefore arises: what innovative methods can be devised to assist in bridging this seeming gap between the visual and the analytical output, or between the conceptual and the logical thinking strategies? The purpose of this article is to posit a potential way of framing the debate that might assist in crossing this divide, with concomitant strategies that might be used in the process.

It must be noted that this potential disjunction between the artistic creative process in design, and the demands from academia for written demonstration of competence is not unique to the South African tertiary education landscape. Whereas the preponderance of design work in the United States asks only for a limited amount of "written work," many of the design schools or departments embedded in "traditional" universities both in Britain and in Australia have needed to bridge the gap. Much work has been done in this area in these countries and it finds its results in Practice-led research, Practice-based research, Arts-led research and related areas. Gray and Malins have written comprehensively in this area (2004) outlining the history, demands and strategies, particularly in Design, that have been worked through in Britain, Leavy (2009) does the same for some of the burgeoning thinking in this area in the United States (although her work is predominantly arts driven, the parallels are clear) and some definitive work coming out of Australia is documented in the collection edited by Barrett and Bolt (2007). This last collection also provides some provocative guidelines as to how to interweave the practice/design and the research components, particularly in setting up the proposal (but also in the research report writing process).

The central tenet of this Practice-led approach is that the data to be gathered, and the trajectory of the argument to be made, can only be found in the actual practice itself. Without the design there is not a research output, for example. In this instance, therefore, the development of a clearer understanding of contexts, needs, methods and the like inform the practice, and the practice informs the context, needs, methods and, consequently, the conclusions that are reached. However, in Practice-led research both the design and the written report are necessary. This approach is still burgeoning in South Africa, and requires refining, adaptation and adoption, and recognition before it can become a fully fledged tertiary education pursuit, and the discourse that goes with this approach needs to be developed

Given, therefore, the pedagogical shift from design for commercial output to research integrated into the design programme and process, and the problems that this gives rise to, this article posits a trajectory to the arguing for a particular solution to the problem of leading the students from one frame of mind to the other. A framework for understanding the design act as a creative act and process will be determined, so that a bridge between design and research can be initiated – it will be posited that this bridge can be found in the notion of the *act of persuasion*. Following this the research act will be addressed, and more particularly the research proposal or protocol as a demonstration of this as potential act of persuasion. This will be followed by an exposition of the nature and strategies of the pitch, and the article will conclude by pointing to the differences and similarities in the two processes, as a way of demonstrating how close the strategies are, and thereby arguing that either the pitch can be used as the *alternative* to classic research methods as captured in a proposal, or the pitch can be used as a way of *demystifying*[6] the process to demonstrate research competency, as presented in the writing of a research proposal.

Because the nature of the "pitch" is so pervasive in the industry it is difficult to find an authoritative definition for the term. For the purposes of this article (and acknowledging that the definition might be constructed to "assist" in the argument to be made) the following definition might be posited: "A pitch can be defined as an *act of persuasion* (using any and all media) by a designer to a client, where the designer is attempting to persuade a client to engage the designer in further work. This act of persuasion (pitch) will need to demonstrate validity, innovation, fit-for-purpose, strategy and competence." This definition situates the potential (commercial) product, the designer and the consumer in a relationship and suggests that the communication that ensues is purposeful in that it

[6] It is assumed from experience that the research process is a "mystery" and therefore this paper will argue that the students need to be guided to solve the mystery.

attempts to present the merits of the product to the client in such a way that the client is convinced of the acceptability and value/innovative characteristics of the product for the client's purposes. Taken this way, the trajectory is from creative act to persuasive act.

Attempts to understand the creative act have proliferated over the past number of years. A comprehensive presentation of these trends has been made by R Keith Sawyer in his book *Explaining Creativity: the Science of Human Innovation* (2006). Because of the wide-ranging nature of the summary of the current thinking on creativity contained there, the argument presented here draws extensively on his thinking.[7] Supported by theories of leading researchers in the creativity domain Sawyer starts off by identifying creativity as the emergence of something novel and appropriate, from a person, a group, or a society. (See also Hallam and Ingold, [2008] for this argument, and an explanation of the difference between creativity and innovation). This sociocultural approach to explaining creativity and innovation has three interwoven dynamics at work, namely, the roles of the individual, the domain and the field.

The *individual* might be seen as the starting point of innovation – at least the individual is responsible for the work that is taking place. The individual begins the innovation process by developing a created product and is subject to the idiosyncrasies, strengths, talents and proclivities of the *individual at the time of creation.* For research this conjures up the image of the intrepid solo explorer, and for the designer the notion of the creative and inspired genius at work. Traditionally the individual, imbued with talent, would be seen as the sole source of the innovation, but Sawyer argues that the individual's approach is radically tempered by (if not completely reliant on) two other dynamics in the process.

The *domain* contains all those processes that are present in the area in which the individual is working. These include techniques, systems and processes relevant and accepted as practice in the medium, the systems of training that have become standard, the context in which the creative act will take place, the standard theories at work, and so on. The domain is discipline and expectation driven. The theories, practices, systems and techniques are allowed to enter the domain and are cemented there as "best practice" because the field has done this. Within the research "domain" these practices are also evident – methods and methodologies, trajectories of argument development, strategies for analysis, systems of verification and reliability, justifications through literature surveys, and the like. These are contained in any research methods course, for example.

The field contains the trend-setters, the theorists, the educators and curriculum developers (who assess excellence, for example, and foreground priorities) and are the gatekeepers of the domain. It can be argued that nothing is confirmed in the domain unless the field has sanctioned it. In the field the interweave among power positions, the setting of norms and standards, the recognition of insight and innovation in its own right also play out. The field contains the leaders in the domain.[8] The field also plays another role in industry, namely that of sanctioning and approving or rejecting pitches, and thereby setting standards of sorts, or at least parameters for general or specific projects. (One of these parameters, for example, could be financial in nature.) In the research domain the field includes the gatekeepers to journals, the assessors of dissertations and theses, but it also includes the innovators in methods, the metascientists and the funders of research projects.

Thus it can be argued that the individual designer is not an autonomous, self-generating artist, but is bound into the practices of the domain (technologies and practices) that are sanctioned by the field (commercial and industrial demands). The designer has to master the "approved" domain, and have his or her design "accepted" by the field. To do this the designer has to work within the parameters set by the field, and the demands of the field/domain. They internalize the conventions of the domain which includes criteria for judgement, thereby being reliant on, and eventually engaging with the field. For researchers the stringent demands of the domain (the academy) and the field necessitate (seemingly) the learning of another set of complex, interwoven, strategies, and their demonstration.

[7] Sawyer's approach has a strong socio-cultural delimitation. It can be argued that this fits effectively into the design as creative act mode, although Sawyer in his book does not make this connection. The "socio-cultural" approach embeds creativity in the interactions of society and its culture, and its systems of generating, promoting, and evaluating innovative artefacts.

[8] The central role that "peer review" plays in much assessment and evaluation has it roots in this concept of the "field."

Given the above and the still unsettled nature of the University of Technology setting one might argue that there are not one but two domains that are in operation (each with its own field), namely the creative and the "academic" domains, and the undergraduate has to oscillate between these two domains. In practice-rich education (skills development, commercialisation and industry focused training – the Technikon and perhaps the University of Technology training) one domain is accentuated, whereas in theory-driven education (understanding and critical engagement work) another is emphasised. Yet ultimately, to fulfil the academy and the vocational mandate both have to do both, so to speak, in some form or another and the balance is the key concern. Nevertheless, "practice on the university ground" notes the demand for both, and the similarities between proposal and pitch offer a way to address this potential dichotomy and bridge the output divide.

Central to the section that follows is the conceptual frame that presenting research results is in essence an *act of persuasion*. This implies somewhat of a paradigm shift in understanding. Traditionally the research report (the dissertation and the thesis, for example) was conceived of as a presentation of findings, and this has not changed dramatically. What needs to be added, however, is that the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings have to be demonstrated as well. Furthermore, the presentation of the report demands an acceptable or accepted system of presentation. And finally, the logical interpretation of the findings needs to be done in such a way that the reader (for example) can accept that conclusions.

Conceptually embedded in this notion, therefore is that the research report has to persuade or convince the reader (who, in the case of research, forms part of the field) as to its accuracy, effectiveness and therefore acceptability. For this to occur it would mean that the writer of the report writes with the reader/assessor in mind, structuring the report (and the research that goes with it) in a way that is acceptable to the reader. Effectively the writer/researcher uses the strategic demands of the domain – that is to say, the shared, accepted ways of doing and writing research – to present the research and findings. But *the reader/gatekeeper/assessor* is the one that has to be persuaded, and so the writer uses the reader's language, methods, strategies, and so on, attempting to intercept the potential arguments against the findings. (It might be argued that this parallels Bakhtin's [1982] notion of the *dialogic*). Presenting research findings in what appears to be an objective, transparent and "clinical" manner is as much an act of persuasion of "scholarliness" as the linguistic turn of using the domain demands effectively to achieve a result, so long as an ethical bent is observed. Indeed, the difference between "demonstrated scholarliness" and "persuasive scholarliness" is a matter of sophistry only.

The research proposal, or protocol, provides an excellent vehicle to introduce and hone the rhetoric of research. Such rhetoric includes the located and justified problem to be investigated, the appropriate methods to be applied, the analytical systems to be used, the trajectory of the argument to be followed, and the way of synthesising the results. In essence, the potential researcher in the academic environment uses the proposal to convince the supervisor that the research that is proposed is valid and can be done, and requests permission from the gatekeepers to proceed, should the reader/assessor be convinced. The researcher has to persuade the assessor, who is the *gatekeeper from the field* that the researcher can *operate effectively in the domain,* and that the product to be developed – the research report – will deliver what it promised to deliver. As such the proposal, at BTech level, might be seen as providing a vehicle that will demonstrate enough evidence that the candidate knows enough about the domain to manoeuvre within it, and enough about the systems of field discernment to persuade.

Most universities demand adherence to proposal frameworks. The frameworks are systems that the scholarly or research field has set up so that the researcher can follow an effective trajectory of persuasion. Generic to most frameworks and therefore central to the trajectory of the act of persuasion are the following strategies. They are offered here in an unsophisticated way, so as to illustrate the argument.[9]

Most frameworks begin with an act of *contextualisation* (or "background and motivation"). In this section the researcher locates the area in which the research is to take place and draws the reader into the project. The contextualisation "sets the scene" (a rather appropriate metaphor for the

[9] There are a plethora of manuals for guiding research that present the generic aspects in their full complexities, and the reader is encouraged to consult them to broaden the argument presented here.

designer), very often in way that persuades the reader of the interest that he or she will find in this area. The contextualisation leads to an interrogation of what others are doing in the selected aspect of the domain – the next section – and begins to focus the research problem.

The section that usually follows is known as the *survey of scholarship* or *Literature review.* In this section the researcher surveys the extant and specific domain and what has been done in the area in and around the concepts that he or she will be working in. Here the research needs to demonstrate to or persuade the relevant gatekeepers that he or she has done enough[10] survey of scholarship -- survey of domain -- to justify the research project and to delineate the potential novelty of the findings. (The act of persuasion around novelty or innovation means that the assessor would be able to sanction new findings through the field so as to "allow" these findings to enter the domain). Put another way, the Literature Review seems to lead persuasively to the necessity of the problem that is to be interrogated, or question that is to be answered. This is the area of innovation or contribution to the domain that the research might make.

Having identified the lacuna in the domain, the *problem* can next be stated. In this section the researcher is compelled to pose the problem or question as succinctly as possible, to persuade the assessor/gatekeeper of the coherence (and relevance) of the problem, or the necessity for seeking the answer. Following this the potential *answer/aim/hypothesis* is posed. In this section the researcher draws on his or her survey of scholarship in the domain to pose a *potential* answer to that problem or question.

Having posed the problem and the potential answer the research posits a strategy for the research. This section in essence contains two subsections. In the first subsection the researcher demonstrates the methods, theories, models and strategies that he or she will be using to solve the problem or argue that the answer that has been posed is true or effective. Here the researcher has to draw on (from the domain) the methods, theories, models and strategies that the assessor/gatekeeper accepts as valid in the act of persuasion of the efficacy of the strategy. The second subsection has to do with the design of the project, in that the process needs a step-by-step development plan, persuading the assessor as to how the methods and strategies will unfold.

Some frameworks require time and budget frames indicating time and cost implications and roll-out strategies, all of which has to persuade the assessor/gatekeeper as to the possibilities of completion.

Crassly described, the researcher has to sell the project to the gatekeeper/assessor by using the rhetorical devices[11] at his or her disposal.

Having established the trajectory of the proposal, the argument needs now to interrogate the trajectory of the "pitch," to demonstrate the parallels. Conceptually the *researcher* becomes the *designer*. The nature of the gatekeepers, as has been demonstrated in the research area, is cardinal -- If one cannot persuade them, then the project or pitch will not proceed. It can be argued that there are two gatekeepers involved in the pitch, the one embedded in the other. The pitch for a contract will be made to the client, so the client – the people who control the money – is the first line of gate-keeping. For the sake of clarity these shall be referred to as "the company." The gate-keeping profile in this instance would be economic, strategic and aesthetic, embedded in experience and design "know-how". The second line, embedded in the client company, is the category of clients that the company sells to – the customers. In essence the company's task is to persuade the customer to buy its product, and the task of the designer is to persuade the company to buy his or her product. For the triangle to be effective, the central task is the act of persuasion.

It is perhaps the nature of the designer to "illustrate" an argument, which is the strategy of explication this article now follows. The exemplar posits an upmarket automobile manufacturer – Company XYZ – who decides that in the next step in their marketing strategy they would call for pitches for a concept for a design of a Lifestyle centre for their clients. A designer decides to pitch for this contract.

[10] Two points are worth bearing in mind here. Firstly "enough" would be different from research level to research level in the research training process, and secondly "enough" is measured against the notion that this section in the proposal will in all likelihood be made more extensive in the relevant chapter in the research report.

[11] A scan of a number of dictionaries on the use of the word "rhetoric" indicate that this refers to strategies of persuasion. They also warn against the potential pejorative meaning indicating unethical persuasive tactics. In no way is the latter intended here. The discipline of Rhetoric is a time-honoured one.

Inevitably the designer has three dynamics that have to enter his or her decision-making process – in essence there are three domains that he has to interrogate. In the first instance the designer has to gather data on the profile of the XYZ potential buyer. This speaks both to the actual profile, and to the vision of the profile as conceived by the company, should these differ. Secondly the designer has to gather data on the demands of a Lifestyle centre in general. Here one refers to Lifestyle centres generically, and ones that are more specific to other motor manufacturers, should they have such centres. Finally, the designer has to translate these profiles and the demands into an aesthetically pleasing yet functional design that speaks most effectively to that customer profile and that client demand. In this sense the designer is drawing on the creative domain of his training, and the individual insight that he employs. (The fourth dynamic follows: "How can I best present my ideas so that the client will be persuaded to accept my concept?")

Framed in this manner, the use of a proposal format or trajectory now becomes clearer. Using the subdivisions in the proposal framework, the following might be effective (and one must bear in mind that the designer/pitcher will need to gather the relevant information and then shape his presentation according to the demands – domain and field requirements for a pitch format -- of the client). In the *contextualisation* of the pitch, perhaps seen as an "introduction," the pitch will outline the central concerns of the pitch, painting a picture of what the situation looks like. In the next section (the s*urvey of scholarship/literature review*) the designer would need to do three things. Firstly the designer would have to demonstrate that he or she has a clear idea of what the profile of the XYZ market is. To do this the designer would have to gather data on what this profile might be, foregrounding specific characteristics that make the XYZ customer unique or at least different from other automobile users. Secondly the designer would have to isolate the extant XYZ design and branding principles. To do this the designer would have to interrogate the literature emanating from the XYZ marketing and design departments to isolate central design elements that need to be incorporated into the eventual design concept. Thirdly, the designer would have to demonstrate clearly that he or she has a clear idea of the functions and dynamics of a generic lifestyle centre. To do this the designer would have to investigate the general principles of a lifestyle centre, drawing on extant models. It would be more efficient to label this section rather as the "key concept constraints." All of the data gathered here would be from the review of literature – a standard research skill. These constraints would then lead to the potential design problem.

In the pitch the designer can now pose the d*esign problem*. Although the question appears somewhat rhetorical it useful to pose it, as it gathers the diverse strands that need to be considered, together. The central question would then be stated: "What design concept can translate the profile and the demands of the XYZ brand and customer into an aesthetically pleasing yet functional design of a Lifestyle centre that speaks most effectively to that customer profile and that client demand?" Having posed the question the designer now offers the central *potential design concept,* which would address the core design concept, the central thrust of the design, and the overriding unifying aspect of the design. This might be presented in the form of a demonstration or a description. Fulfilling the central concept would be the core aim of the project.

Where the researcher would now move to the *methodology and research design*, the designer moves to a demonstration of the playing out of the core concept in particular, integrated and design strategic areas. What follows, (speculatively, and drawing on the example posed) is an attempt to outline the process. The designer would present a possible d*esigned physical structure,* which would demonstrate how his or her core concept would resonate conceptually in the physical structure, capturing XYZ brand, customer and lifestyle demands. Following this the designer would demonstrate conceptually how the functioning subdivisions would resonate with the core concept and the purpose of the centre, bearing in mind XYZ branding and customer demands. Following this the designer might present central c*olour/interior design.* Here the designer would demonstrate the resonance of the core concept in the design of the interior. The procedure would iterate as required. Besides the design skills required, the skill of building a justification from data of the design choices made needs to be demonstrated.

As with the researcher, the designer might need, at this moment and where necessary, to posit possible time lines, budgets and the like to demonstrate this capability.

Given the above, one might now demonstrate potential parallels between the two systems.

RESEARCH	DESIGN
Contextualisation	Contextualisation/Introduction
Literature Review	Key Concept explanations/constraints
Problem Identification	Design Problem Statement/Question
Aims or Hypothesis	Core Concept
Strategy for Research: • Methodology and justification; • Research Design and justification.	Specific Design: • Design element one with justification; • Design element two with justification; • Design element three with justification; Etc.
Budget, time lines etc	Budget, time lines, etc.

What are the implications of this approach or this argument? Firstly it is clear that should the research proposal be successful it would lead to a research project and a research report, whereas should the pitch be successful, it would lead to a complete design and a product. (As an extension to this, it means that the different outcomes target different aspects of the research chain, moving closer to product development and commercialisation). Secondly it is also clear that many of the research strategies that are used to build a research proposal parallel the same strategies required to make a successful design pitch. If this is accepted, then it means that designing a research methods training course at fourth year, for example, might include the pitch as an effective, University of Technology driven outcome, in line with Research and Innovation strategies.

In the third instance, the skills and strategies are similar in both cases for the garnering of information; the act of persuasion has been demonstrated to be similar, and so it becomes a matter of acquiring the requisite language or discourse for the particular task at hand Fourthly, this approach clears the way for, on the one hand, meeting the demands of a university to teach research strategies, but at the same time, on the other, allowing students to focus on their preferences in the learning experiences. Furthermore, it offers a way for advanced, industry driven, skills development. Finally, it points a way towards developing contract research, innovation and design as part of an Incubator programme at masters' level and beyond and the skills that are required to operate in such an environment.

In this article the argument has been made that the trajectories of "doing research" and "pitching for a contract" are similar. The reason for making this argument is so that practice-driven, experiential type training that is the central thrust of Diploma qualifications in design might more easily and less traumatically translate into the scholarly pursuits of research that are the bailiwick of the academy. The pitch can become the bridge in skills development between design as an activity and research as a different yet related academic activity. What has not been argued in this article are the possible differences and similarities in the gathering of the relevant data, the making of the logical sequencing of the data, the gathering of effective and trustworthy data, the manipulating of that data ethically and logically, and so on. These are strategies of persuasion on the micro-level that any tertiary education programme should be fostering, anyway. However, the dimension that has been suggested here is in the engaging with the act of persuasion for specific purpose and product – the leap into the professional world of both design and traditional scholarship that is required of B Tech students.

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Short Biography

Herman Botes is currently employed at the Tshwane University of Technology as Academic Section Head in the Department of Visual Communication, Faculty of the Arts. He is qualified as a Graphic Designer at Technikon Pretoria. He started his career in design at the then FRD, now NRF. He subsequently received two national awards for Annual Report Design in local government and tertiary education.

Allan Munro is a Research Professor in the Faculty of the Arts, Tshwane University of Technology. He has a PhD in theatre from the Ohio State University. He has published papers across the Arts spectrum and delivered papers at conferences both nationally and internationally. He has supervised Masters and Doctoral candidates in such fields as Music, Graphic Design, Photography, Fashion, Film and Theatre. His current interests are in Practice-Led research and their methods in the arts. He has lectured on Research Methods in the Arts at a number of universities, and is completing a book on this, and on creative writing for theatre. He has written a number of plays that have been produced both nationally and internationally.

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