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Art and Expression

ART + COMMUNITY

**EDUCATION**



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# PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH IN VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION

*An Approaches To Research Work Book*

*a chapter by*

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## **Implementation of Visual Arts Education**

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Faculty of Education's experience, implementation and understanding of visual arts is based on teaching and learning activities in visual arts education subject within the B.Ed (Hons.) Art and Design Education course. Various programs and activities are conducted through the subject for trainee teachers to learn and to experience the importance of understanding a variety of visual arts as it benefits their future teaching. It is admitted that the ability to understand various visual arts education is not an easy task and may most of the time, test the patience and emotions of teachers. Therefore, training is conducted by the faculty in hoping that the future teachers may become the mediator to impart knowledge entailing visual arts education in Malaysia. Hence, future graduates are also expected not to have only abilities in using good pedagogical techniques in teaching but also to attract students to be actively involved in the process of learning in class.

## **Visual Arts Education and the Implementation of the National Education**

The National Education Philosophy is the main frame in structuring and arranging the national education development. The national curriculum is arranged to meet the aims of national education philosophy in which it also aims to produce individuals with good personality, balance and harmony in terms of intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical development. For Visual Arts Education subject, the curriculum stresses on making the students to be able to recognise the arts via visual arts activities (Kementerian

Pendidikan Malaysia, 2000, 2002; 2002,2003). Aligned with the Art and Design Education Program by the Faculty of Education, UiTM, the trainee teachers are guided to convey their understanding in future teaching. According to Mat Desa Mat Rodzi (2002), there are four aspects in developing and enhancing students' knowledge. The aspects are known as the culture aspect, the quality of life aspect, the cognitive aspect, and the health aspect. Other than the implementation of the Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), the visual arts aspect has also become an attribute that develops students' interest towards the various cultures in every art learnt. The understanding of arts via visual art activities can increase the level of appreciation towards various arts which may affect the thinking style and the artworks style produced by students (Isa, 2008). The exposure regarding the arts also inspire artworks production in which artworks produced tend to be more meaningful and this reflects the effectiveness of learning via visual arts activities.

## **Practice Based Research/Studio based Research**

The researcher who is in the visual arts field is accustomed to Practice Based Research especially in the study of fine art, craft, design and technology. The studio-based research method requires the process of the research to begin from the finding of the research material, sketching, development of idea, basic drawing and the final artwork whether in form of painting, statue, new dimensional craft and printing, or art installation. For this to happen, artwork producers, artists, painters, sculptors, and art educators should prepare their own Research Work Book (RWB)

for the purpose of documentation. Among the examples that can be given related with the RWB based on Practice Based Research are the authors' experience and observations during an educational trip to Melbourne, Australia in 2011. The higher-level institution in Australia offers Masters of Arts by coursework or research in which the usage of RWB is applied. The Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University (RMIT), Monash University and La Trobe University in Melbourne for instance are among universities that apply the technique for any level of education such as diploma, bachelor degree, or masters in visual arts. From the perspective of the Practice Based Research, visual arts education is not exempted in producing the artworks, in which it has to start by the production of RWB.

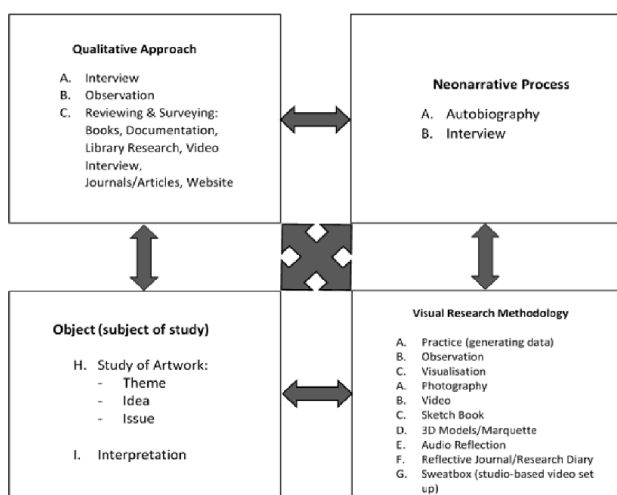


Figure 1: Data Generation Element Practical Studio-Based Research by Mohd Farizal (2021)

According to Mohd Farizal (2021), Figure 1 shows that studio investigation is used as a practical studio-based research method to produce creative works of visual art. Creative process involved in the intellectual phase on aesthetic object is not an easy process. Studio-based research is similar with other research which is to contribute science through the creative work of visual art.

As trainee teachers, the introduction of the concept of studio-based research in which the main criteria is the preparation of RWB, is a form of paradigm shift towards the curriculum renewal and the coursework of syllabus for the National Visual Arts Education. Practice Based Research was recognised by Candy (2006) which is important in the production of the RWB.

Apart from that, artists should also put local or international artist references into consideration. The purpose is to ensure that the trainee teachers have their own style examples and certain streams to inspire them in creating new artworks. In producing new artworks, trainee teachers must also make art criticism towards the artist in which they have made inference to either their Research Work Book or in the craft artworks.

From the view of practical studio research, visual is a form of documentation of the art pieces through RWB and this soul is a value of intuition and emotions of the artist that is related to the inner issues that is raised by the artwork. According to Linda Candy (2006) in her essay Practice Based Research: A Guide, she stated that research that took the nature of practice as its central focus was called 'practice-based' research. This particular research was carried out by practitioners, such as artists, designers, curators, writers, musicians, teachers and others, often, but not necessarily, within doctoral research programmes.

### Research Work Book (RWB) approach in Visual Arts Education

The implementation of the visual arts research which is employed by the Art and Design Education Program in the Faculty of Education UiTM refers to Research Work Book (RWB) to prepare students with idea exploration and visual research. For that purpose, a guideline is introduced to ease research. Amongst the important aspects which are considered in producing the RWB are aesthetic values, national culture, sociological aspects, individuality, solutions to problems on creativity, and critical and innovative thinking skills. Trainee teachers will have to produce the RWB for all practical studio and computer related subjects. This RWB will become an important document in supporting the production of studio or computer related tasks especially to produce final art projects.

In short, RWB is a form of documentation on the processes of visual arts research that will contain information in the forms of visual sketches and writing. This document is a record of expression of ideas which is

supported through readings and observations as well as analysis on photographic images, sketches, drawings, video recordings, websites etc. Grauer, Kit and Anami Naths (1998) define RWB as:

*“The Research Workbook is similar to, yet different from a sketchbook. It is kept as a type of journal, the content showing visual thinking, narration, reflection, goal setting in a variety of forms: drawing, sketches, collages, photographs, graphics, and personally meaningful symbols. Words invariably become an important part of the RWB, as describe (narrate) and support depictions, becomes graphic devices, aids reflection on personal theme and metaphor”*

(Grauer, Kit & Anami Naths 1998, p. 14)

There is a number of structures available in producing RWB. The structure and format of RWB in the Art and Design Education Program at the Faculty of Education, UiTM are as follow:

#### **a. Critical Reflection**

Designers/Artists do reflection and consideration pertaining the sketches.

#### **b. Art Criticism**

Designers/visual artists critique sketches to see the accuracy and the application of art and design elements.

#### **c. Comment Writing**

Communication in the form of comments or writings detailing important details.

#### **d. Dialogue**

A form of interaction between the designer and the sketch to see the impact of the sketch.

#### **e. Experimentation**

A form of research to see the ability and effects of experimentation on certain methods, techniques and items used on sketches or products.

#### **f. Idea Exploration**

Inspiration of sketches from early ideas either in borrowed form, what is already available or something that is being innovated.

#### **g. Growth of Idea**

The growth of idea is in the form of progressed sketches from Idea Exploration (sketches, pre-sketches, comprehensive, pre-comprehensive, thumbnails, drawing, final drawing). Research either in the form of new creations or modification of sketch. It is usually used in graphic design subjects and development of animation and multimedia.

The importance of artistic study through the production of RWB requires higher order thinking skills because it involves intellectual force and sometimes inspiration through feel and emotions. Individuals who communicate visually in classrooms or outside of classrooms will not be complete if they do not relate their studies in the context of culture and society. Besides that, style exploration through art materials as well as experimentation of techniques is a compulsory content in RWB. The aim of the RWB is to encourage the research atmosphere in individual findings which act as proof of documented items.

#### **Basic Characteristics of RWB**

- a. Usually A3 in size (297 x 420 mm)
- b. Minimum of 40 pages (bounded in landscape format)
- c. Is almost similar to sketch book and scrapbook or portfolio but it is more structured and needs to have specific content, format and chronological order.
- d. Creative writing and art criticism

- e. Characterised by the growth of ideas
- f. Experimentation on media and materials
- g. Elements exploration and artistic principles.

### Research Workbook and Future Learning

Image development is a constant challenge for artist and teacher alike. The type of record keeping encouraged by the RWB is not only used by artists but also for students and teachers. History shows that great thinkers have been recording, documenting, and reflecting their ideas using a variety of visual forms such as Edison's light bulb sketches, Da Vinci's flying machine, and recently Stephen Hawking's space-time diagram. This record of image making is a record of thinking and step towards reflection and metacognition. Thinking about how we think moves us out of the world of reflex and allows us to look beyond the immediate situation. This is essential in a world that is in continuous change. As an art educator, the routine and unprompted use of RWB is what they should attempt to inculcate and expect of their students. The lecturer's job, in the studio, is to guide their explorations by providing a variety of tools, methods, media, and the necessary time.

Examples of artist employing Research Workbook/Sketchbook are Pablo Picasso, John Singer, David Smith, and George Back (watercolors). Besides that, well-known Malaysian contemporary artists such as Amron Omar, Ramlan Abdullah, and Yusof Ghani used RWB before producing their art work. Other than that, the late Datuk Syed Ahmad Jamal and Prof Dr. Abdul Shukur Hashim, both artists who are also educators and graduated from Maktab Ilmu Khas Cheras (MIKC), stressed on the RWB concept in producing their art work and included this in the teaching and learning of art subjects in their teaching institution. As a visual arts educator, the use of RWB is something that should be included in the everyday teaching and learning situations. Lecturers in studios should guide their students to explore and provide them the necessary and appropriate tools, media, and techniques.

### Program Expectations

Trainee teachers will get to:

- a. Produce artwork in their RWB that demonstrate clearly in visual and written terms how personal research has led to an understanding of the topics (ideas) being investigated
- b. Produce artwork in the use of creative thinking models to show how ideas are developed, and conduct experimentation to find solutions to visual and technical problems
- c. Produce artwork that show critical analysis about meaning and visual qualities of an art using an informed vocabulary
- d. Show awareness of cultural, historical, social aspects of themes from more than one perspective
- e. Produce artwork on the reflections of performance and processes of completed artworks within the context or art

### Content of RWB

Research Work Book should contain the following:

- a. 1st page containing your personal data and course
- b. Personal reports of visits to museum, artist studio, atelier, and galleries.
- c. Photographs, photocopies and cut-outs are acceptable if they are accompanied by explanation and critical comments.
- d. Evidence of lecturer / students' dialogue.
- e. Information/research recorded by writing, drawing, painting, collages and etc. Sources should always be acknowledged.
- f. Workbooks are like visual journal, which should reflect a personal approach or style; they are neither a sketchbook nor a scrapbook. Workbook entries should be dated and kept in chronological order; they must not be constructed artificially after the work has been completed. Your workbook should not be edited (for example by discarding weaker beginnings or false start), because this prevents the lecturer and the examiner from assessing your personal progress during the entire semester.

In producing RWB for visual art subject, trainee teachers will need to do research on all topics available in the syllabus. The structure necessary for the production of RWB is as follows:

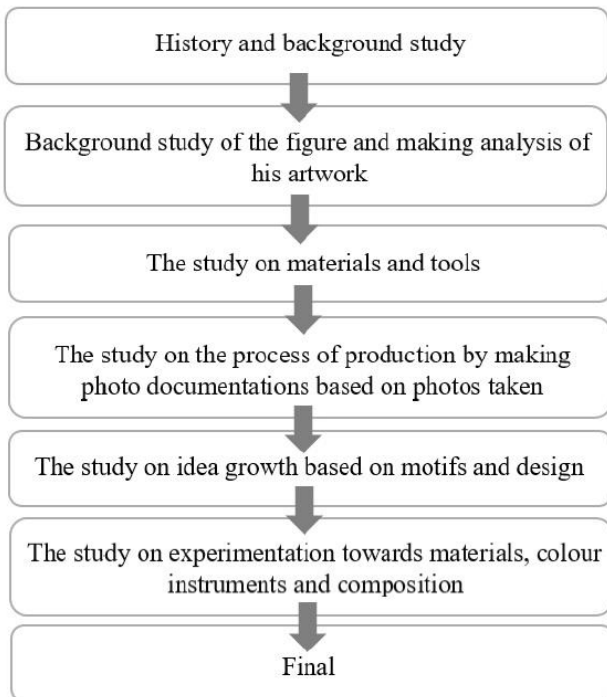


Chart 1: Structure of Research Work Book (RWB)

**Examples of Structures in Research Work Book (RWB) for Subjects Graphic Design and New Media, Illustrated by Raiha Shahanaz Redzuan.**

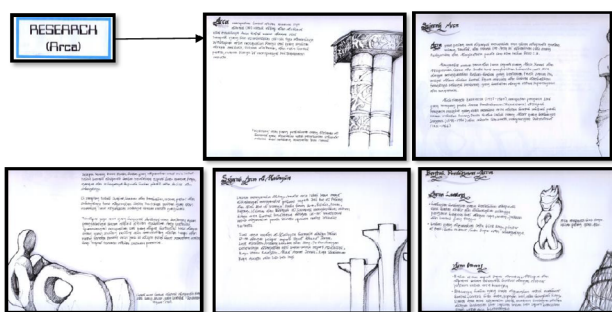


Figure 2: Research Work Book –Research

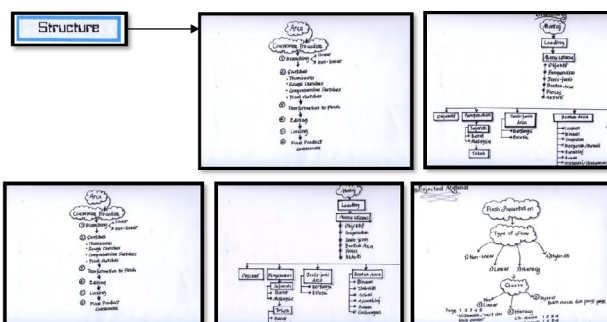


Figure 3: Research Work Book – Structure.



Figure 4: Research Work Book – Sketches/Layout.

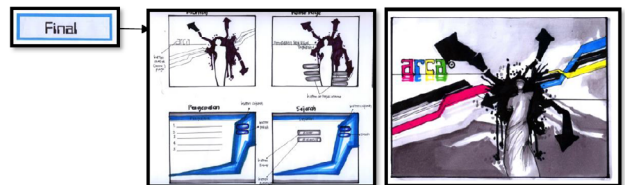


Figure 5: Research Work Book – Final

**Conclusion**

Early research through RWB is implemented in Visual Art Education subject at the Faculty of Education, UiTM so that the research will be more structured and organized in the implementation of Practice Based Research in Art and Design Education. Besides that, the RWB approach will provide clearer exposure to the students and others.

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Tarikh : 20 Januari 2023

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Sekian, terima kasih.

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**SITI BASRIYAH SHAIK BAHARUDIN**  
Timbalan Ketua Pustakawan

*nar*

*Setuju.*

*27.1.2023*

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