

Reflective Report

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Reflection on My Performance (ARTD6115)

DESCRIBE

Throughout this module, I explored various aspects of design practice. I spent my time researching and responding to briefs, experimenting through workshops and iterative creation, developing digital outputs, and documenting my process in a portfolio. A key focus for me this semester was learning to transform ideas into testable artifacts more intentionally, rather than just sticking with comfortable aesthetics and "nice outcomes."

I dedicated a lot of effort to projects that blended narrative, interaction, and visual communication. This involved creating coherent concepts, prototyping experiences with interactive and digital behaviors, and refining outcomes based on feedback. I also focused on presenting my portfolio effectively. I structured pages, crafting concise project summaries, and ensuring my design choices were clear to first-time viewers. Throughout this journey, I grappled with challenges like time management, controlling project scope, and dealing with technical issues, especially when tools limited my editing capabilities or when troubleshooting builds proved difficult.

This reflection uses the DIEP approach as required by the brief, focusing on my performance and practice instead of just describing the module content.

INTERPRET

The most noticeable pattern for me this semester was realizing that I learn best by diving in early, even if my first attempts are a bit rough around the edges. Starting with something tangible like sketches, simple prototypes, or quick drafts helped my ideas evolve much faster. Making things early on forced me to clarify key aspects: What is the user actually doing? How does the sequence flow? What's the "hook"? What's critical information versus just decoration?

I also found that my confidence grew when my work had a strong storyline or concept. When I could give an idea a persona, like imagining a “character” for an experience, product, or interaction, my design choices became clearer and felt more intentional. This approach helped me tie together typography, imagery, writing style, and interaction design. It also made feedback sessions more useful, as the critiques focused on the overall concept and experience rather than nitpicking individual visuals.

On the downside, I often felt stressed because of two main issues. First, I tended to set overly ambitious goals early on, turning my process into a frantic race to meet my own expectations. Second, when I faced technical challenges, I’d sometimes lose steam, viewing these hurdles as personal failures instead of just a normal part of working in digital spaces.

This reflection is important because the course requires us to think through our processes and decision-making, showing how we adapt, not just what we create. I found that documenting all my small decisions and iterations, including the failures, made my portfolio much more coherent.

EVALUATE

What I Did Well-

Conceptual Clarity and Tone: My strength lies in creating a unique “world” around my ideas. I’m skilled at crafting an intentional vibe through visual language, microcopy, and consistent styling. This approach has made my projects memorable and given me confidence when presenting them.

Iterative Development: Throughout the semester, I got better at revising instead of restarting. Rather than discarding a direction, I learned to pinpoint what wasn’t working, like layout hierarchy, navigation clarity, or level of detail, and adjust those specific elements.

Reflective Documentation: I've become more open to showcasing my process, including workshop outcomes, drafts, tests, and notes, rather than just the final renders. This change has made my learning visible and aligns better with what a portfolio for this type of module should demonstrate.

What Limited My Performance-

Scope Creep: I often found myself adding "just one more feature," like more interactions or pages, when I should have focused on solidifying the core experience. This sometimes resulted in a lack of depth in crucial areas.

Time Planning Underestimation: I frequently miscalculated how long technical tasks would take, such as implementing interactions or troubleshooting CMS issues, which led to last-minute pressure and less time for refinement.

Over-Focusing on Aesthetics Too Early: At times, I polished visuals before testing usability or logic. When structural changes occurred, it felt like wasted effort.

Confidence Dips During Technical Friction: When tools prevented editing or something "broke," I sometimes spiraled into frustration, slowing my progress. I realized this wasn't about my ability but about needing a calmer troubleshooting workflow: document the issue, isolate variables, test the smallest fix, and then move forward.

How Critique and Feedback Affected Me-

Feedback was most useful when I brought specific questions, like "Is the interaction readable?" or "Does this narrative make sense without explanation?"

When I sought general validation, critiques felt heavier and less actionable. Over the semester, I learned to turn feedback into a to-do list rather than taking it personally. This shift is part of my professional growth: critique isn't about me, it's about ensuring the work meets its purpose.

PLAN

Next time, I want to protect my creative energy by crafting a process that cuts down on panic and boosts clarity. To achieve this, I'm going to commit to defining the core experience much earlier. Before I dive into polishing visuals, I'll write a brief "experience statement" that clearly outlines what the user should do and feel, the basic sequence of actions, and what the minimum viable version of the idea looks like. Once I have a clear understanding of the core, I'll prototype the simplest version first and add extra features only after it's functional and understandable.

I also want to be more consistent with my progress instead of relying on last-minute productivity bursts. I'll set weekly checkpoints where I have to produce something testable or shareable by the end of each week, like a draft portfolio page, a clickable prototype, a printed mock-up, or documented workshop outcomes. This approach will keep my projects moving forward in visible steps and help me avoid getting stuck in planning mode for too long.

Another change I want to make is how I handle technical issues. When something breaks, or a tool limits my editing, I want to see it as part of the digital design process rather than a personal setback. I'll adopt a calmer troubleshooting routine: taking a screenshot and noting what changed, duplicating the file or page before experimenting, testing fixes in small steps, and keeping a brief log of what worked. Over time, this should turn repeated frustrations into a growing set of solutions I can reuse with confidence.

Reflection needs to be part of my workflow throughout the semester, not just something I write up at the end. Instead of leaving it for deadlines, I'll jot down short DIEP notes after major milestones, brief paragraphs that describe what I did, interpret what it means, evaluate what worked and didn't, and plan the next steps. This will make my final report easier to write and improve my decision-making while I'm still in the midst of designing.

Lastly, I want to strengthen my ability to justify my decisions critically. Instead of just saying "it looks good," I'll connect design choices to intention and context: how users might behave, whether the narrative and interaction are coherent, whether information is readable, and what constraints shaped the outcome. This will help me communicate my thinking more clearly during critiques and make my portfolio writing more persuasive and professional.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Overall, I'm pleased with my progress this semester because my practice became more intentional. I didn't just focus on outcomes; I learned how my process works, where it falters under pressure, and what conditions help me do my best work. My strengths are concept-building, visual consistency, and learning through making. My weaknesses include controlling scope, estimating time, and dealing with emotional friction when tools don't cooperate. This module has been valuable because it highlighted these patterns, and that visibility gives me more control.

If I stick to my plan, locking in the core experience early, scheduling weekly progress checks, and treating troubleshooting as a normal design skill, I believe my future projects will be stronger, more composed, and more critically grounded, while still maintaining the unique style and narrative energy that drive my work.