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Canon Shifting Through Storytelling: Curating Decolonial Texts for Second-Year Graphic Design Curriculum

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Abstract: This article examines how a second-year graphic design studio course and its curated story list operate together as a decolonising intervention in design education. Situated in Naarm/Melbourne on Birrarung-ga, the paper focuses on the first four weeks of Storytelling through Design (GRAP3071), where students undertake close readings of narrative works that sit outside familiar Euro-American classroom canons and then transpose those readings into graphic decisions. In this programme sequence, stories are treated as designed artefacts rather than illustrative content, with rhythm, structure, voice, silence, and relational accountability used as starting points for typography, layout, pacing, hierarchy, and sequencing. Week 1 introduces language sovereignty and relational mapping through constellation exercises that position students within networks of story carriers, communities, and obligations. Week 2 formalises close reading as a design tool through structured annotation and peer exchange. Week 3 moves into collaborative studio making, where groups map story structure and lexicon, decide on a specific community audience, and prototype narrative sequences for peer testing. Week 4 consolidates and refines, with groups editing for clarity, accuracy, and ethical representation before submission. Assessment 1 functions as the opening translation task, requiring groups to produce a 15 to 20-frame clickable narrative sequence and short rationale explaining how a chosen story works through rhythm, structure, voice, and lexicon for a defined community. The curated list spans poetry, theatre, music, film, and documentary, including works by ALOK, Evelyn Araluen, Ngaiire, Nas, and Efua Sutherland, alongside Ghanaian screen storytelling. Drawing on Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation, Fanon's analysis of language and recognition, Indigenous storywork, and liberation pedagogies from anti-apartheid traditions, we argue that story curation is a form of canon-making that can be designed with care, rigour, and accountability. The paper proposes transferable curriculum principles for educators who want to place decolonial narrative artefacts at the centre of graphic learning rather than at its margins.

Keywords: storytelling pedagogy - graphic design education - canon - decolonising curriculum - close reading - annotation - African philosophy - language sovereignty

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Introduction

The works, ideas, and references a discipline repeatedly treats as foundational do more than preserve knowledge. They shape what is remembered, what is legitimised, and what comes to stand for the field itself. In design education, these selections often appear through ‘foundations,’ ‘history,’ or ‘best practice,’ where Euro-American references, publishing infrastructures, and inherited myths of neutrality are repeatedly installed as the default. The problem is that the same references are repeatedly treated as the centre of design. Over time, that repetition shapes what students see as important, legitimate, and worth knowing, while other histories and ways of thinking are pushed to the margins. Every curriculum tells a story about what matters. The reading list that opens a design course, the examples that populate a lecture, the voices that are cited and the voices that are not: these are not passive arrangements. They are designed artefacts that teach students, quietly and persistently, whose knowledge counts as knowledge and whose ways of making count as design.

This paper sits within the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) and uses a specific classroom site to examine that broader problem: a second-year studio course, *Storytelling through Design* (GRAP3071), delivered within RMIT’s design programme in Naarm/Melbourne. The course sits within the Bachelor of Graphic Design, formerly the Bachelor of Design (Communication Design), and is described in the course guide as a core course in the Experience Design major, focused on the strategic use of narrative across design contexts. It is also positioned within Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), which locate the course within the student’s broader learning trajectory. Many of these PLOs and CLOs align with ‘Responsible Practice,’ a framework that has become one institutional way of gauging the university’s response to the Bundjil Statement. This particular course, however, does not carry those specific PLOs or CLOs. That absence makes it a useful SoTL site for examining how normative or neo-colonial design practices may still be reproduced when explicit accountability structures are not built into the course itself. It also raises a pedagogical question central to this paper: how might decolonial or relational approaches to storytelling emerge under those conditions?

This paper presents a deliberately practical argument. Rather than attempting to prove decolonisation through student outcomes, it focuses on how storytelling is organised as pedagogy through curriculum architecture, activity design, and assessment structure across the first four weeks of the semester.

Those four weeks are framed in course materials as a scaffold that begins with ‘other peoples’ stories’ and asks students to attend to voice, timing, narrative structure, and affect as design material, with an explicit claim that there is ‘no neutral ground’ in storytelling. In Assessment 1, students work in groups to select stories from a curated list, analyse them closely, and then create a short designed narrative sequence of fifteen to twenty frames as a response. The phrase ‘canon shifting through storytelling’ is deliberate. A canon is never simply a list of the best works. It is a technology of ranking that produces hierarchies of value, legitimacy, and expertise (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018). When design educators select examples, they are not only illustrating principles; they are signalling to students which voices are worth slowing down for, which methods are worth learning, and which worlds constitute the default address of design practice.

Research on curricula and reading lists repeatedly shows that lists are not just administrative tools. They are signals of value and belonging, and they often reproduce dominance unless deliberately reworked (Schucan Bird & Pitman, 2020). What we add is a design-specific argument: story curation can be treated as a studio method, where narrative artefacts become engines for learning typography, layout, sequence, and pacing, and where accountability to place and community is built into the teaching moves rather than appended as virtue language. We use the term ‘curriculum architecture’ deliberately to signal that what we present is not merely a collection of teaching materials but a structural intervention. Architecture implies intentional design of space and flow, of what is foregrounded and what recedes, of how movement through sequence shapes understanding.

The contribution of this paper extends beyond recommending ‘diverse stories’ for design teaching. It demonstrates how story curation, place-accountable reading, and sequential explanation can operate as a canon-shifting pedagogy in a graphic design studio. Rather than treating narrative as content to be visualised, the course treats narrative artefacts as sources of method, positioning students to derive typographic pacing, hierarchy, and compositional emphasis from rhythm, silence, voice, and lexicon. This paper analyses the opening four-week module and Assessment 1. We see these first four weeks as a site of transposition, where the course opens up the conditions of learning through a careful authorisation of decolonial texts (Ansari et al., 2018). We focus on the first assignment as the point where the conditions of learning are re-set in studio (Schultz et al., 2018) through a carefully structured, place-based close-reading methodology.

Positionality, Place, and Collaboration

We write from and with place, and we take seriously the problem that ‘place acknowledgements’ can become ritualised performance in universities. The Week 1 teaching materials name this risk indirectly by making ‘language sovereignty’ and ‘place’ the first conceptual anchors for the course, and by asking students to consider where stories come from and who they belong to. We treat that as a pedagogical commitment, not a decorative preface. The course materials state this directly: story work here is relational and accountable, and there is no neutral ground. We approach this writing as accountable to place, to histories of dispossession, and to the ongoing assertion of Indigenous sovereignty that shapes what it means to teach storytelling on stolen land.

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living and working in Australia, whose research and teaching focus on decolonial design education, African philosophies of knowledge, and the politics of cultural interface in contemporary design curricula. He contributed as a collaborating educator and co-author, joining the course through an email offer of support and then working with Rebecca to strengthen the course's decolonial framing, story curation decisions, and the translation of storytelling concepts into teachable studio routines.

Positionality matters here for a reason that is not sentimental. Decolonising pedagogy is not only about replacing content. It is about changing how authority is produced in the room, how students are positioned in relation to knowledge, and how educators account for the histories that allow them to teach where they teach. That means naming our different proximities to Indigenous sovereignty and to colonial infrastructures, while also refusing the fantasy that responsibility can be solved by identity alone. The paper therefore operates as a reflective practitioner account rather than an external evaluation. Our aim is not to present ourselves as neutral observers, but to make the curriculum's logic visible, share the practical teaching methods that underpin it, and name the institutional and ethical tensions that accompany canon-making work in a university design context.

Related Work: Storytelling, Reading Lists, and Design Pedagogy

Universities often treat reading lists as logistics, but scholarship has shown that lists operate as cultural technology. They decide which voices become 'basic', which texts become 'advanced', and which forms of expression count as knowledge. Schucan Bird and Pitman's (2020) study of UK university reading lists found strong evidence that curricula remain dominated by white, male, Eurocentric authors, and that reading lists often fail to reflect diverse student communities. More recent work frames reading list diversification not as a simple representational fix, but as a site where canon, self, and institutional power intra-act, shaping what decolonisation can look like in practice (Bradley, 2023). Shahjahan et al. (2022) provide a comparative review of decolonising curriculum and pedagogy across disciplines, demonstrating that most interventions focus on interrupting canons and integrating alternatives to Eurocentric paradigms, often through reading list revision or the inclusion of non-Western content.

Storytelling is widely acknowledged as fundamental to design practice, shaping how designers communicate ideas, frame user experiences, and build narratives around products, services, and identities. Much of this literature frames story as a technique to improve clarity, empathy, and engagement, often assuming a stable canon of texts and a largely neutral interpretive stance. Digital storytelling has received particular attention as a pedagogical method for developing multimodal literacy and communication skills (Otto, 2021; Schmier, 2021), with recent work emphasising its potential for fostering belonging and equitable participation in higher education (Thomas & Manalil, 2025). In architecture and design studios, storytelling has been positioned as a tool for developing creative thinking and spatial imagination (Lee et al., 2023). However, much of this literature treats story primarily as content to be communicated or as a technique for user engagement,

rather than as an epistemic structure through which design knowledge itself is organised. The issue is pedagogy. Recent design education work notes a gap between recognising storytelling's importance and articulating how it can be systematically taught as a design capability. Parkinson's (2025) conference paper explicitly frames the need for a 'storytelling pedagogy for design' and argues that storytelling is often assumed rather than taught. This paper differs by treating story selection and story reading as epistemic design work. Instead of using narrative as content to communicate an already-formed design concept, the course analysed here treats narrative artefacts as primary sites of graphic knowledge, where rhythm, structure, voice, omission, and lexicon become the starting constraints for typographic hierarchy, pacing, composition, and ethical address. In this sense, story curation becomes a pedagogical site of canon-making, and studio teaching becomes a method for making that canon visible, contestable, and remakeable.

Theoretical Framework: Conceptual Decolonisation, Language, and Epistemic Interruption

A decolonising approach to design education cannot be achieved by adding a week on 'diverse voices' or by sprinkling a reading list with non-Western references while leaving the epistemic centre untouched. Decolonising, in its substantive sense, challenges the foundational assumption that Western knowledge systems are universal, neutral, and naturally central (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Smith, 2012). It requires educators to examine how design institutions reproduce colonial relations through what they teach, how they teach it, and how they determine what counts as legitimate knowledge and practice (Schultz et al., 2018; Abdulla et al., 2019). We draw on three intertwined strands of theory to understand what this curriculum is doing.

Wiredu and Conceptual Decolonisation

Kwasi Wiredu's project of conceptual decolonisation, developed across several decades of work (Wiredu, 1980, 1995, 1996, 1998), offers a framework for understanding what is at stake when a curriculum claims to decolonise. Wiredu argues that colonisation works at the level of concepts, not only institutions, and that decolonisation requires interrogating the conceptual frameworks through which knowledge is interpreted and translated. For Wiredu, decolonisation in its substantive sense means divesting African philosophical thinking of all undue influences emanating from our colonial past (Wiredu, 1995, p. 22). Crucially, Wiredu's analysis operates at the level of concepts rather than content. The problem is not simply that African thinkers have been excluded from syllabi; it is that the conceptual vocabularies through which thought is organised often carry colonial assumptions that remain invisible precisely because they appear universal. Categories such as the spiritual versus the physical, the supernatural versus the natural, and the religious versus the secular are treated as neutral descriptors of reality when they are in

fact culturally specific frameworks that may distort or obscure African modes of thought. This analysis has direct implications for design pedagogy. Terms such as ‘audience’, ‘user’, ‘clarity’, ‘hierarchy’, and ‘universal’ circulate in design education as if they were neutral technical descriptors. Wiredu’s framework suggests that these concepts may themselves require interrogation. What counts as ‘clear’ communication? Clear to whom? What hierarchy of attention does a layout assume, and whose reading practices does it naturalise? This matters for design education because design often borrows concepts across cultures in a way that can slide into aesthetic extraction. Wiredu’s approach forces a harder question: when we invoke concepts like community, relationality, or even ‘story’, whose conceptual world are we borrowing from, and what gets lost or distorted in translation? Rather than ‘splashing’ concepts like Ubuntu or Sankofa onto activities as decorative ethics, we ask how conceptual decolonisation can function as a curricular discipline: a way of checking translation, naming power, and resisting extractive appropriation.

Fanon on Language, Recognition, and Intelligibility

Frantz Fanon’s analysis in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952/2008) provides a complementary framework for understanding how language and intelligibility operate as sites of power. Fanon argues that ‘a man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language’ (Fanon, 2008, p. 9). For colonised subjects, mastery of the coloniser’s language becomes both a condition of recognition and a site of alienation. The colonised subject who speaks ‘correct’ French is positioned closer to whiteness, yet this linguistic assimilation cannot overcome the racialised gaze that continues to mark the Black body as other. Fanon’s analysis reveals that intelligibility is not a neutral technical achievement. It is a political condition that determines who is heard, whose knowledge counts, and whose ways of speaking are treated as legitimate.

This analysis is directly relevant to graphic design education, where ‘legibility’ and ‘readability’ are often treated as universal benchmarks. Fanon’s framework prompts the question: legible to whom? Readable according to whose conventions? When a design student is trained to create ‘clear’ typographic hierarchy, they are being trained to reproduce particular norms of reading that may themselves carry assumptions about which audiences are default and which are exceptional. Fanon also describes the colonial production of subjectivity, language, and desire, and insists that decolonisation is not a gentle metaphor but a reorganisation of the world. We take seriously Tuck and Yang’s (2012) warning that ‘decolonisation’ is frequently domesticated into inclusion work, emptied of its material demands. In a classroom, this means we need to resist treating decolonial storytelling as a feel-good content swap. Instead, we treat it as a methodological question: what teaching moves interrupt inherited canons, and what new responsibilities do they create?

People's Education and Liberation Pedagogy

The curriculum architecture we present also draws on the legacy of People's Education, the pedagogical movement that emerged in South Africa during the anti-apartheid struggle of the 1980s. People's Education was defined as 'an educational movement, a vehicle for political mobilisation, an alternative philosophy, or a combination of all three' (Motala & Vally, 2002, p. 174). It drew heavily on Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which was banned by the apartheid state but circulated clandestinely among Black Consciousness activists (Vally, 2020). The movement insisted that education could not be separated from politics and that curriculum was a site of struggle. Historical work on 'people's education for people's power' shows how curriculum became a political project aimed at replacing education for exploitation with education for liberation (Mathebula, 2013).

We do not claim equivalence between that historical context and a contemporary Australian university design studio. We do claim that its insistence on education as contested terrain helps determine what matters when we redesign a canon. The pedagogical sequence we describe, which moves from language sovereignty through relational mapping to close reading and sequential translation, can be understood as a contemporary instance of what Freire (1970/2005) called problem-posing education. Rather than treating design knowledge as a deposit to be transferred from expert to novice, the curriculum positions students to generate design understanding through active engagement with stories that demand relational accountability. The story list functions not as a bank of examples to be passively absorbed but as a set of provocations that require students to position themselves within networks of power and obligation.

Indigenous Storywork and Relational Accountability

A further strand is Indigenous storytelling scholarship and storywork. Archibald's (2008) work frames storywork as an ethical and pedagogical practice grounded in relationships, responsibilities, and holistic understandings of learning. This helps clarify why 'story' is not merely content, but a living site of relational obligations. This emphasis on obligation can also be read through relationality scholarship that positions knowledge as kin-based and place-based, carrying responsibilities that extend across human and multi-species relations (Tynan, 2021). Read this way, the storying agency of place is bound up with relational accountability: stories are not only told about place, they are held with place, and answered to through ongoing relations. Lee and Tran's (2016) discussion of family structures and institutional authority offers a further locus here, foregrounding how community decision-making and authority are enacted through kinship relations, rather than abstracted institutional forms. In the context of storytelling pedagogy, this helps frame 'community' as a living structure for story, including who can tell, hear, carry, and respond.

It also supports the course's early insistence on place and language sovereignty as foundations for how stories are read and responded to. When the course positions stories as belonging to places and communities rather than as freely available content, it draws on Indigenous understandings of knowledge as relational and accountable. This orientation

aligns with pluriversal approaches to design and world-making (Escobar, 2018) and with Escobar, Osterweil, and Sharma's more recent elaboration of relationality as an organising condition for designing and living otherwise (Escobar, Osterweil, & Sharma, 2024).

Method and Materials

This is a reflective practitioner paper grounded in curriculum document analysis. As educators who designed and delivered the curriculum, we treat the course documents as designed artefacts that encode pedagogical values, assumptions about students, and claims about what counts as knowledge. Our primary materials are internal teaching documents from GRAP3071 Storytelling through Design: the Course Guide Part A, which articulates the course description, learning outcomes, and assessment structure; the module overview for Weeks 1 to 4; standalone teaching guides for Week 1 and Week 2; the Assessment 1 brief, which specifies deliverables, criteria, staging across weeks, and ethical framing; and the curated stories list presented as a tutor guide. We describe these documents and draw on their language throughout the paper, writing as practitioner-authors who designed this material and can speak to its intentions directly.



Figure 1: Teaching materials provided as a 'class kit' as illustrated in staff briefing slides. Materials include a class running sheet, close reading cards with story introductions, physical versions of stories and workshopping materials.

We do not report student work, student reflections, or evaluation outcomes in this paper. The goal is not to measure impact, but to make the teaching architecture legible so that other educators can adapt, critique, and improve it. This choice is also ethical. Decolonial pedagogy requires caution about extracting student narratives or cultural engagements as research data without well-defined consent and context. This approach has limitations that must be named directly. The claims we make are about curricular intentions, assessment requirements, and pedagogical structures, not about verified student learning. When we state that the curriculum positions students to develop particular understandings, we are describing what the sequence scaffolds and what the assessment requires, not what students demonstrably achieve. A subsequent study could extend this work through classroom observation, student interviews, and analysis of student outputs.

Course Context

GRAP3071 Storytelling through Design is situated within the Bachelor of Graphic Design at RMIT University, a programme that prepares students for professional practice across branding, experience design, and visual communication. The course runs in second year as a required component of the Experience Design major and an elective in the Branding major. It carries 12 credit points and meets weekly in two and a half hour studio sessions across a standard twelve week semester.

The course uses a non-numerically graded structure (PX/NN), which means that all assessment criteria must be satisfactory for a student to pass. This grading model carries pedagogical significance, shifting the focus from competitive ranking to meeting a shared standard of responsibility, clarity, and effort. Students who do not meet criteria in their initial submission are offered a feedback conference and the opportunity to resubmit, which positions assessment as a formative dialogue rather than a terminal judgment.

Within this structure, the course approaches storytelling as a mode of design inquiry through which meaning is shaped in relation. Students are asked to attend to the ways narrative participates in the making of perspective, the circulation of power, and the conditions through which belonging is felt, negotiated, or denied across visual, spatial, and participatory forms. Early teaching materials establish story as a relational site of analysis, where design mediates how people, places, histories, and publics come into contact and are made in relation with one another. This pedagogical orientation is carried through the course's guiding question: How can narrative design reveal power, perspective and belonging?. (Figure 2).

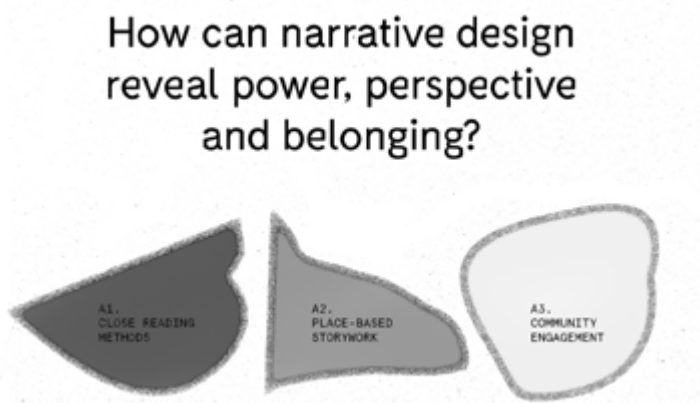


Figure 2: The Week 1 slides introduce students to the course's guiding question and the methods that organise the twelve-week curriculum. Focus is placed on the first assignment, which helps students learn how stories work before making their own.

The Four-Week Arc: Module 1 Design

The opening module is structured as a four-week arc that moves students from initial encounter with unfamiliar stories through to a designed output that communicates their analysis to a specific community. The module overview opens with a framing statement: 'In this first module, you'll begin with other people's stories. You won't be telling your own just yet. Instead, you'll be slowing down to notice how other storytellers have done it.' This orientation is significant. It refuses the assumption that storytelling pedagogy should begin with personal narrative. Instead, it positions students as readers and analysts first, learning to see how stories work before attempting to make them.

The overview also includes a quotation from Édouard Glissant, 'I build my language with rocks,' signalling a commitment to language as something made in relation, shaped by contact, constraint, and the material histories of place. Glissant's poetics treats language as sedimented and archipelagic, formed through encounters rather than purified origins, and his insistence on opacity offers a useful ethic for this module's stance toward unfamiliar stories. In this framing, the quote operates as a studio instruction. Build slowly, attend to what resists easy translation, and let the materials of story, including place, rhythm, protocol, and lexicon, set the conditions of what can be made. Here we also demonstrate that we do not seek to avoid Euro-American storytellers altogether. The point is to unsettle default authority, so that when a Euro-American reference appears, it does so as a situated choice within a wider relational field, not as the baseline that quietly governs everything else.

Week 1: Stories, Place, and Language Sovereignty

Week 1 establishes the course's epistemic stance: stories are treated as living artefacts that belong to places and communities, and students are asked to notice how words carry Country, culture, and power. The studio begins by introducing language sovereignty as a design problem rather than a purely linguistic concern, then moves immediately into a relational mapping exercise. Students select a story from the curated list, identify lexicon tied to place and power, and build a constellation that maps story carriers, communities, institutions, non-human elements, and themselves, while explicitly attending to where power sits and who is missing or silenced. This first move disrupts the default studio beginning. Instead of beginning with tools, templates, or formal principles, it begins with location and accountability. That is a decolonial move because it refuses the fantasy that design happens from nowhere.



Figure 3: The first prompt for engaging with the stories is intentionally light. Students are asked to offer the general gist of three story cards they have selected.

To keep this opening movement workable, the mapping process is introduced as a sequence rather than a demand for total comprehension at once. Students begin with a foundational close-reading question: what is the gist of the story? This first step asks them to stay with the story's central movement, tension, or offering before moving outward into relational analysis. Pedagogically, it creates a gentle entry point, allowing students to gather confidence in reading before tracing the wider constellations of place, power, and accountability that the course asks them to notice.

Pedagogically, this reorders the usual entry point into graphic design. Instead of beginning from formal devices as if they were neutral, the course begins from relation

and accountability, scaffolding the understanding that interpretation and form-making are inseparable from the ethics of address. The constellation method functions as an early refusal of extractive reading, because it requires students to account for who holds the story, what obligations attach to it, and how the designer is positioned within a wider field of relations. The mapping also becomes a rehearsal for thinking about hierarchy, adjacency, rhythm, and emphasis. A story is already a composition. It already has pacing. It already has negative space. Students are asked to notice that before they ‘design’ anything. This approach can be read through Wiredu’s call for conceptual decolonisation, which requires not only adding alternative materials but also interrogating the conceptual vocabularies that organise what counts as knowledge. In practice, the Week 1 focus on lexicon and language sovereignty prompts students to question inherited design terms such as ‘audience’, ‘neutral’, and ‘universal’, and to recognise that naming and categorisation are themselves sites of power. When a design studio begins by asking ‘what does it mean to read on unceded land?’ and ‘what does it mean to read stories that belong to specific communities?’, it is asking students to interrogate the conceptual assumptions that usually structure reading and design. This is not teaching Ubuntu as a slogan. It is teaching a discipline of relational interpretation.

Week 2: Close Reading as Design Practice

Week 2 formalises close reading as a repeatable design method. Students are explicitly instructed not to jump into layout but to slow down with words, pauses, and tone, practising reflective witnessing in small groups. The teaching guide names a provocative idea directly: close reading can be a design practice. It focuses on the kinds of reading that designers often avoid because they feel slow, literary, or ‘not visual’. Instead, it positions close reading as a way to develop design judgement. Students are prompted to pay attention to story structure, point of view, pacing, repetition, metaphor, and silence, and to treat these as cues for designing typographic emphasis, layout rhythm, and narrative sequencing. (Figure 4).

The studio uses a structured routine that moves from gist, to annotation, to language and structure, and finally to the student’s own reading experience. Students then externalise their interpretations through quick A4 close reading posters, share them across the room, and are guided to notice differences in reading as evidence that interpretation is positional rather than universal. Research on social annotation suggests that collaborative annotation can support comprehension and critical thinking, and that it can make reading a visible, dialogic process rather than a private test of intelligence (Morales, 2022; Kalir & Garcia, 2021). We treat annotation not as a generic literacy skill, but as a design method: a way of noticing rhythm, pacing, voice, and silence, then translating those qualities into typographic and compositional decisions.

Fanon’s analysis of how language mediates recognition and power sharpens what is at stake in this method. Close reading here is not simply comprehension. It is training in how forms of intelligibility are produced, policed, and made to feel natural, including in design

education (Fanon, 1963). By requiring students to notice their own reading position, the curriculum interrupts the fantasy of the neutral interpreter and frames legibility as a political and relational condition rather than a universal benchmark. This matters for graphic design because hierarchy, pacing, and typographic ‘clarity’ are not innocent. They often reproduce the norms of the audiences designers are trained to imagine as default.

Week 2 also clarifies the ethical constraints of the course. Students are asked to work with ‘other people’s stories,’ but the point is not to mimic them or steal from them. The aim is to develop a respectful response that recognises what the story is doing and what obligations it carries.

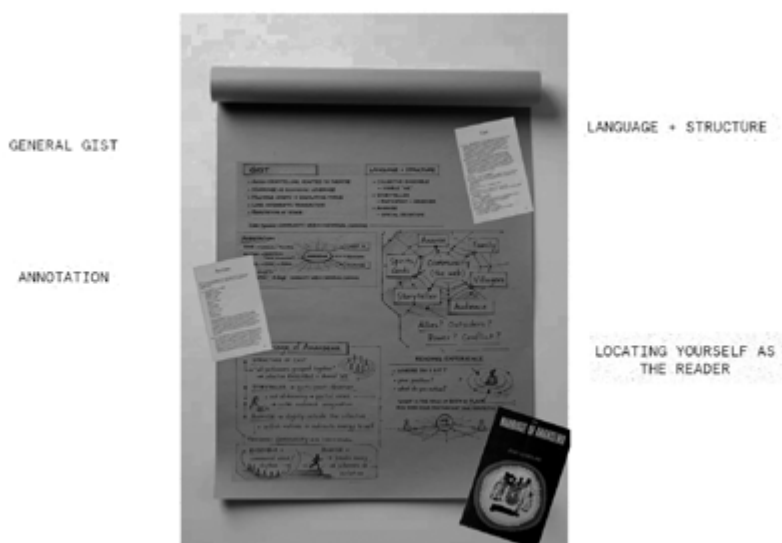


Figure 4: In Week 2, students are offered an example of a close reading poster and given time to move through each step from general gist, to annotation, language and structure and then locating their reading.

Reflective Witnessing as Pedagogical Practice

The curriculum’s use of the phrase ‘reflective witnessing’ deserves elaboration because it points to a specific pedagogical orientation that differs from standard peer review or critique practices. Witnessing, in Indigenous scholarship and trauma-informed practice, is not the same as observing. To witness is to be present to another’s experience in a way that creates ethical obligation (Archibald, 2008). It is not passive. It carries responsibility. Barkaskas and Gladwin (2021) describe reflective witnessing as a relational practice that

asks participants to hold space for another's perspectives, even when those perspectives differ from their own, and then to reflect on the feelings and thoughts that arise through that exchange. This orientation also aligns with Indigenous and violence informed accounts of witnessing as methodology, which emphasise responsibility to what is shared, including an attentiveness to the conditions that shape perception and interpretation (Hunt, 2018; Clark, 2016).



Figure 5: In Week 2, upon completion of the close reading posters, students are introduced to the practice of reflective witnessing.

When students share their close reading posters and notice how readings differ, they are practising a form of witnessing that takes multiplicity seriously without rushing to resolve difference into consensus. This matters for decolonial pedagogy because one of the ways colonial epistemology operates is by insisting on a single correct interpretation that transcends particular positions. When students observe that their readings differ and that those differences are shaped by positionality, they are being positioned to understand that meaning is produced through the encounter between text, reader, and the contexts each brings.

Week 3: Transposition as Studio Method

Week 3 transitions from individual close reading to collaborative studio making. This is where the course makes its most explicit bridge from reading to design. Here, 'transposition' names a deliberate shift in stance: students move between positions (reader, interpreter, co-maker, addresser of a chosen community audience), and they learn that these positions

are produced through relation rather than held as fixed identity. In a relational pedagogy, transposition becomes a method for noticing how one's 'where I speak from' changes across tasks, peers, story protocols, and imagined audiences. Transposition also offers a way to treat positionality as an ongoing studio practice, rather than a one-time declaration. Gani and Khan (2024) caution that positionality statements can operate as performative speech acts that reify hierarchy and re-centre authority, even when framed as reflexive care. Alcott (1991) similarly emphasises that 'location' has epistemic effects while remaining complex, multiple, and mobile. In Week 3, transposition is enacted through repeated re-situations, so that students must notice what shifts in their interpretive authority and account for how that shift shapes what they make and claim.

The assessment brief structures this week around group story breakdowns, where students work together to map story structure and lexicon, decide on a specific community audience, and begin prototyping their 15 to 20-frame narrative sequences. The shift from individual to group work is pedagogically significant. It requires students to negotiate interpretations, defend their readings, and arrive at shared decisions about what to foreground and what to leave out. This negotiation process itself teaches something about storytelling: that every telling involves selection, emphasis, and address, and that these choices carry ethical weight.

The assessment staging specifies that groups should test their sequence clarity with peers in class during Weeks 2 and 3. This peer testing is not optional polish. It is built into the assessment structure as a required step. Students present draft sequences to classmates who are not working on the same story, and they gather feedback on whether the sequence successfully teaches how the story works. This creates a feedback loop that prioritises explanation over aesthetic display. If peers cannot follow the sequence's logic, if the visual choices do not communicate the story devices being analysed, then the work is not yet ready for submission regardless of how visually polished it might be. (Figure 6).

In Week 3 workshops, the key teaching move is to insist that the digital sequence must be driven by a reading decision. The sequence is not judged primarily by aesthetic polish, but by the coherence of the translation from narrative features into design choices. From a pedagogical perspective, Week 3 can be read through Shulman's (2005) notion of signature pedagogy. Studio teaching often transmits values through critique and making, but those values are only visible if the course makes its criteria explicit. If the signature form in design becomes 'make a slick artefact quickly', then students learn speed and polish as primary values. Week 3 deliberately shifts the signature by making interpretation and accountability central.



Figure 6: In Week 3, students start thinking about graphic language and how they might transpose their stories for a defined community.

Week 4: Consolidation, Submission, and Feedback

Week 4 is structured as a consolidation week. Groups review and edit their sequences for clarity, correct ordering, and accurate representation of story devices. The assessment brief specifies that students should ensure all slides are coherent and correctly ordered and that the sequence explains the story's devices visibly. This language of 'accurate representation' is significant. It positions the assessment not as a creative expression task where students can freely interpret, but as an explanatory task where fidelity to the source story matters. Students are being asked to teach others how the story works, which requires them to get the story right before they can translate it effectively.

The submission requirements are deliberately minimal: a single Figma file or clickable PDF containing the 15 to 20-frame sequence plus a short rationale. This constraint prevents scope creep and keeps focus on the core learning objective. The PX/NN structure means that groups either demonstrate satisfactory understanding across all criteria or they do not. If a submission is assessed as not yet satisfactory, the feedback conference requirement activates. Students meet with their tutor to discuss what needs to be strengthened and are given the opportunity to resubmit. This conference structure positions assessment as formative dialogue, and creates space for students who are struggling with unfamiliar material to receive targeted support rather than simply failing.

A significant part of the Week 4 teaching work is feedback as pedagogy. In decolonial pedagogy, assessment can easily reproduce colonial discipline through punitive norms.

PX/NN is not automatically decolonial, but it can reduce competitive sorting and allow more attention to process and reflection. Week 4 also intensifies a critical question: what does a ‘respectful response’ look like in graphic design, especially when working with Indigenous, Black, queer, or diasporic narratives? This is where Wiredu’s conceptual decolonisation becomes a practical tool. It encourages us to ask students not only ‘what is this story about?’ but ‘what conceptual world does this story operate within, and what happens when you translate it into your own design language?’ That question does not require students to become experts in someone else’s culture. It requires them to become disciplined about what they assume.

Assessment 1: Transposing Story Devices into Designed Sequence

Assessment 1 operates as the course’s opening transposition task. The brief states that the goal is to help students notice and work with the places that stories live within, rather than treating stories as placeless content. Groups produce a 15 to 20-frame clickable digital narrative sequence that explains how a chosen story works for a defined community audience through specific storytelling devices, including metaphor, repetition, rhythm, humour, and silence, and through lexicon elements that carry meaning, place, and relation. A short rationale then requires students to articulate why particular narrative principles are appropriate for their audience community, reinforcing that story reading and story framing are acts of address rather than placeless interpretation.

The brief also makes ethics operational by requiring attention to cultural protocols and to the difference between appropriation and respectful response. This is critical. It positions respect not as personal intention but as a design constraint. By demanding that students teach a story’s structure to others, the assessment shifts storytelling away from aesthetic sampling toward accountable communication. The sequential format forces time-based thinking, making pacing and hierarchy consequences of narrative structure rather than purely stylistic choices. The requirement to acknowledge Country within the submission further insists that storytelling happens in place, not in abstraction.

The assessment’s use of PA/XX grading rather than numerical marks also carries pedagogical significance. In a PA/XX system, the focus can shift from competitive ranking to meeting a shared standard of responsibility, clarity, and effort. This changes how risk functions for students. A canon-shifting curriculum often asks students to engage unfamiliar material and to confront their own positionality in ways that can feel uncomfortable. If grading is highly competitive or punitive, students may retreat into safe formalism, producing work that demonstrates technical competence while avoiding the difficult relational work the curriculum invites. A PA/XX model can create conditions for process-oriented learning, though it does not automatically guarantee it.

The Curated Story List as Local Canon

A central claim of this paper is that the story list is not supplementary. It is curriculum infrastructure. It shapes what students learn to notice, what they learn to value, and what they learn to translate into design form. The curated list is provided as a teaching guide for educators prior to semester. It supports teaching staff to become familiar with the works, signals which texts are optional, and explicitly invites learning alongside students. In other words, teachers are not positioned as experts.

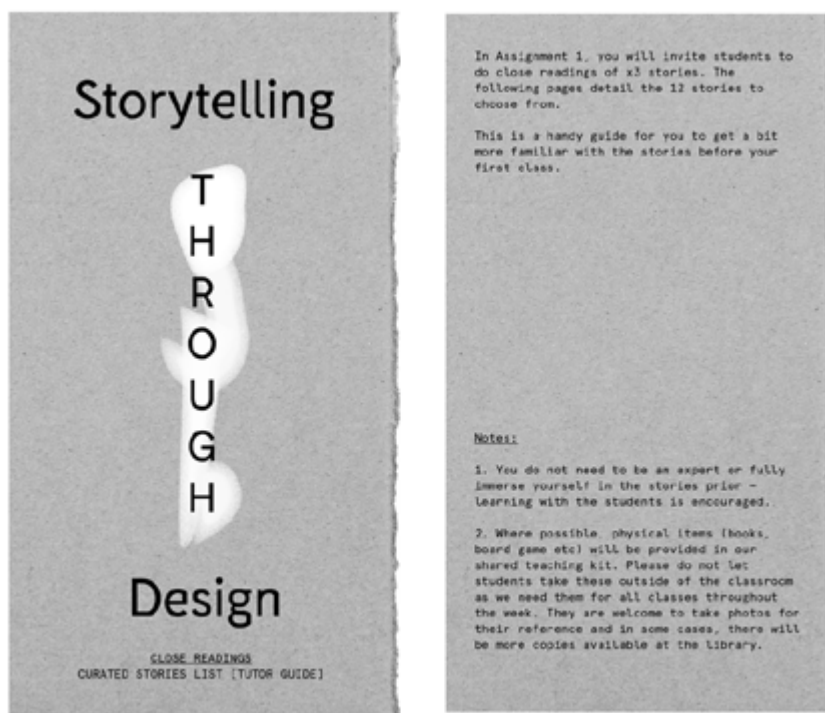


Figure 7: Cover pages of Curated Stories List Tutor Guide.

The guide also grounds curation in relation. Connections can be traced between the teaching team and the chosen works, making visible who is teaching, from where, and why particular selections carry the thematic and methodological threads the studio returns to across the semester. That phrasing is not incidental. It shifts the teaching posture from mastery to

co-reading, which matters when teaching across cultural and epistemic difference. It also foregrounds curation as labour and as responsibility. When tutors acknowledge that they are not experts in every storyworld represented, it creates space for students to bring their own cultural knowledge while also learning to engage respectfully with stories that are not theirs. The list also refuses a narrow definition of 'text'. It includes a strategy and puzzle board game about ancient human migration across sea Country that explicitly engages colonisation logics; a 2021 album exploring kinship, love, migration, and Papua New Guinean heritage through layered songwriting; twin bilingual poetry volumes designed as a single publication, situated between conceptual art, memes, and diary fragments; a 2011 song that speaks in the first person and insists that life cannot be bought, framed as an anti-commodification anthem about land, memory, and resilience; a comic play that reimagine Ananse in a modern Ghanaian setting, drawing on Akan storytelling, song, and audience participation; an award-winning 2021 poetry collection that unsettles colonial myths and reframes them through Aboriginal sovereignty and lived experience; a Ghanaian-German romantic comedy that uses humour and everyday scenes to explore funeral traditions, work, class, and changing expectations; a stand-up special that uses humour and improvisation to discuss gender, grief, bodies, science, and trans life as a live conversation with the audience; a documentary tracing First Nations activism and art through interviews, archive footage, and performance; a 1994 rap track described as a landmark in spatial storytelling; and a 2019 cookbook tracing generations through recipes, photographs, and stories, framed as migration narrative through domestic ritual. Even this brief catalogue demonstrates what is being shifted. The list does not simply add marginal voices to a dominant canon. It uses narrative artefacts that are already grappling with colonisation, migration, sovereignty, gender, class, and place, and it positions them as legitimate sources of design method. This is why our central claim is not merely that 'diversity matters'. The claim is methodological: these stories function as design laboratories where students are positioned to develop graphic principles through engagement with materials that demand relational accountability. The list is not anti-Western as a simple inversion. It is pluriversal (Escobar, 2018). It places Indigenous sovereignty, queer narrative, diasporic memory, African and Pacific storyworlds, and domestic migration narratives in the same pedagogical space, not as 'special topics' or 'diverse additions' but as the core material through which design concepts are intended to be developed.

What Each Artefact Teaches

Each story on the curated list offers students something specific to analyse and translate. From a relational perspective, however, we do not claim to know in advance what each artefact will teach in the room; rather, we identify a set of key learnings that the curation is intended to make possible, while remaining open to what emerges through encounter, interpretation, and exchange. The board game teaches systems thinking and how rules themselves can be narrative devices that encode worldviews. The album teaches layering

and how multiple sonic and lyrical elements can build cumulative meaning across tracks. The bilingual poetry volumes teach code-switching and how visual design can hold multiple languages and registers in productive tension. The anti-commodification song teaches refrain and how repetition builds rhetorical force over time. The Ananse play teaches audience participation and how oral storytelling traditions structure collective meaning-making. The poetry collection teaches reframing and how existing narratives can be occupied and redirected. The romantic comedy teaches pacing and how humour creates rhythm in longer narrative forms. The stand-up special teaches improvisation and how direct address to an audience creates intimacy and immediacy. The documentary teaches archive and how found footage can be woven into contemporary argument. The rap track teaches spatial sequencing and how movement through place can organise narrative. The cookbook teaches domestic ritual and how everyday practice can carry intergenerational memory. This curation is intentional: each story is chosen for the kinds of learning moments it may offer in the studio setting. At the same time, the studio does not deliver a single lesson per text. Multiple learning moments open as students and tutors encounter the stories from different positions, negotiate interpretation together, and make design decisions in response to class dialogue and audience address. In that sense, the list stages conditions for learning, but the pedagogy emerges through the relations that gather around each story.

That said, a decolonial story list carries a risk: it can become a new canon that is consumed as content, leaving underlying power relations untouched. Bradley's (2023) work on reading lists and canon reminds us that diversifying lists can still reproduce institutional authority unless we attend to how canonicity is produced and who gets to decide. This is why the course materials emphasise curation and co-learning rather than claiming completeness. The list is a designed invitation, not a final authority.

Teaching Storytelling as Graphic Design

The phrase 'storytelling through design' can easily become a vague slogan. The opening module avoids that vagueness by tying storytelling to concrete graphic practices. A common critique of decolonising claims in curriculum is that they remain rhetorical, gestural, or confined to land acknowledgements that precede business as usual (Tuck & Yang, 2012). The curriculum architecture we present offers something more operational. It provides a classroom sequence that is replicable by other educators seeking to teach storytelling as both graphic method and ethical practice. The sequence can be understood as three linked translations: from story to relation, from relation to close reading, and from close reading to visual explanation.

From Story to Relation

Week 1 begins with stories as belonging to place and community, and it introduces language sovereignty as a design question. The constellation mapping activity requires students to

externalise relation by mapping who and what is connected to the story. The key move is that the student is included in the map. This matters because it breaks the student's ability to pretend they are a neutral interpreter standing outside the story's network of relations. If you are on the map, you are implicated. Your reading is not disinterested analysis; it is a positioned act that has consequences for how you subsequently engage with the story.

From Relation to Close Reading

Week 2 formalises close reading as a design tool and instructs students to slow down with tone, pauses, and rhythm rather than moving directly to layout. The method is scaffolded and specific, moving from gist to annotation to structure to reading experience. The A4 posters function as bridge artefacts. They are low-stakes, quickly produced outputs that make thinking visible without the pressure of high-stakes assessment. They also create a shared classroom archive of interpretations, which enables the reflective witnessing practice.

From Close Reading to Visual Explanation

Weeks 3 and 4 move into collaborative making and consolidation. Assessment 1 requires students to design a digital narrative sequence that explains how the story works for a specific community audience. This is where storytelling becomes graphic design in the most literal sense. Students must decide what to foreground, what to sequence, how to pace, and how to translate devices such as repetition and silence into visual form. The requirement for 15 to 20 frames is pedagogically deliberate. It forces temporal thinking. It prevents students from collapsing story analysis into a single poster or infographic. It also mirrors how many contemporary design narratives unfold: in screens, scrolls, slides, and interactive sequences. Canon shifting in this curriculum does not happen by proclaiming that certain voices are 'important' or that 'diversity' is a value. It happens by requiring students to practise design explanation through engagement with these voices.

A Note on the Term 'Stakeholders'

One of the conceptual tensions in the materials is the use of 'stakeholders'. Week 1 invites students to map stakeholders, including multi-species relations. In design industry contexts, 'stakeholders' often signals managerial power and extractive project logic. In decolonial contexts, it can flatten relational obligations into a corporate diagram. We chose to keep the term 'stakeholders' as a deliberate site for capacity-building in design practice. The term circulates widely in industry and carries a managerial political rationality, shaping who is legible as an 'affected party' and how participation is organised (Abraham, 2022). Changing the wording through Program and Course Learning Outcome negotiations can also sanitise the pedagogical scene, reducing students' opportunity to practise critique and meaning-making with the very language they will encounter in professional settings.

In this sense, the studio holds the term open for interrogation, using guided discomfort as part of learning (Boler, 1999; Arao & Clemens, 2013). We keep this visible because it does useful work, enabling us to critique the language together. Wiredu's conceptual decolonisation is relevant here: concepts are not neutral containers. They carry histories. A stronger decolonial revision would shift the language toward relations, obligations, story-carriers, or kin, depending on the context and the storyworld. That is not a semantic preference. It changes how students imagine their responsibility. A stakeholder can be managed. Kin cannot be managed without violence. Kin must be related with. This is the kind of curricular refinement that decolonial teaching demands: not only content change, but conceptual discipline.

Practical Moves for Transfer

Because this paper is intended to be useful beyond our classroom, it is worth stating plainly what is transferable and what is not. The transferable part is not the exact list of stories. The transferable part is the method: curate stories as designed artefacts, teach close reading as design practice, embed place and language sovereignty in the opening moves, require translation into form through a structured transposition task, and make accountability visible through assessment criteria and reflective writing. The non-transferable part is the specific place, the specific Indigenous sovereignties, and the specific institutional context. Educators cannot copy 'Birrarung-ga' into their own course and call it decolonial. They must begin from where they are teaching, whose land they are on, and what their students need.

- **Move 1: Decolonial curriculum begins with situated reading rather than universal theory.** Week 1 begins with place and language sovereignty, not as add-ons but as foundations. That makes students practise accountability before they practise style.
- **Move 2: Close reading can be taught as design judgement.** Week 2 explicitly frames close reading as design practice, connecting narrative devices to typographic and compositional decisions. This turns reading into a studio method rather than a humanities detour.
- **Move 3: Translation must be assessed, not assumed.** The digital sequence task forces students to show how story becomes form. This is where storytelling stops being atmosphere and becomes design.
- **Move 4: Curation is canon-making, and canon-making is a responsibility.** Reading list scholarship makes visible that lists shape belonging and knowledge authority. Treating lists as designed artefacts makes that power visible and therefore contestable.
- **Move 5: Conceptual decolonisation is a teaching discipline, not a theoretical decoration.** Wiredu's work reminds us to interrogate the concepts we borrow and the translations we make. In curriculum design, that means checking our own language, our own assessment frames, and our own assumptions about what design is.

- **Move 6: Name appropriation and protocol explicitly.** The assessment's discussion of cultural protocols and the distinction between appropriation and respectful response is not optional or supplementary. It is part of what it means to teach storytelling responsibly within a decolonial frame.
- **Move 7: Build bridges between interpretation and making.** The A4 posters in Week 2 function as bridge artefacts. They prevent students from treating interpretation as separate from design. They also support collaborative learning by making individual readings visible and discussable.
- **Move 8: Transposition as relational practice.** Week 3 frames transposition as a shift that happens through relation: with peers, with story protocols, with tutors' questions, and with the chosen audience and community address. Students move between positions (reader, interpreter, co-maker, addresser), and practise noticing how stance changes as those relations change. Positionality becomes something they return to across decisions, explanations, and revisions, carried as an ongoing accountability within the studio.

Discussion: Possibilities and Risks

The curriculum architecture presented here makes a substantive contribution to decolonising design education because it shifts more than content. It shifts the order of operations. Students begin with stories that sit outside a familiar Euro-American canon, and those stories are positioned as primary sources of method. The classroom sequence structures storytelling as a design practice grounded in relational accountability. The assessment requires students to translate narrative craft into visual explanation for a community audience, with explicit attention to protocol and the distinction between appropriation and respectful response.

This design creates several possibilities. It gives educators a way to teach typography and layout through rhythm and voice rather than through modernist formalism alone. It gives students structured practice in accountability, because the assessment requires them to consider story carriers, community audiences, and protocols. It offers a model of shared inquiry, where educators do not have to perform expertise over every story and where learning with the students is encouraged. For institutions seeking to move beyond rhetorical commitments to diversity toward substantive curriculum change, this model offers a starting point.

At the same time, the curriculum carries risks that we must name directly. One risk is tokenism through curation. A pluriversal list can be treated as a showcase of difference rather than as a set of methods. If students engage the stories superficially, looking for 'cultural elements' to incorporate into their designs, the curriculum risks reproducing the extractive logics it seeks to interrupt. This is why the assessment's emphasis on lexicon, relation, and protocol is crucial. Without that emphasis, the stories could be consumed as cultural novelty.

A second risk is that ‘accountability to place’ becomes a ritual phrase rather than an instructional practice. The documents attempt to counter this by asking students to anchor notes to place and by integrating constellation mapping that includes the self. But curriculum documents are not sufficient on their own. Educators must hold the line in classroom facilitation. A prompt on a page is not enough if teaching practice does not support it. This points to the importance of tutor training and ongoing professional development for educators who teach within decolonising frameworks.

A third risk is conceptual overload. Asking students to engage with sovereignty, protocol, and decolonial critique while also learning design craft can feel overwhelming, particularly for students who are encountering these frameworks for the first time. Yet the curriculum addresses this risk through its emphasis on concrete craft, the specificity of the close reading method, and the translation of analysis into a structured visual output. Students are not asked to resolve coloniality in four weeks. They are asked to analyse how story works and to practise respectful response to one story, carefully chosen from a curated list. Finally, there is the broader institutional risk. Even the strongest classroom interventions sit within programmes that may reproduce canon hierarchies elsewhere. A student might complete this course with sophisticated understanding of relational storytelling and then encounter a typography studio that treats Helvetica as neutral and universal. This is why treating curation as canon making matters beyond individual courses. It gives educators language to argue for curriculum change at programme level, and it helps make visible the epistemic politics that shape what students encounter across their entire design education.

Conclusion

Canon shifting in design education is not only about what texts are included. It is about how knowledge is staged, how students are invited into responsibility, and how reading becomes a design method rather than a prerequisite. The opening module of Storytelling through Design offers a practical example of how a curated story list and a carefully structured assessment can reposition narrative artefacts as central sites of graphic learning. The course begins by insisting that stories are situated in place and language sovereignty, then teaches close reading as a design practice of attention, then demands translation through a designed narrative sequence. This is a curriculum that treats storytelling as non-neutral, and it uses that non-neutrality to build design judgement rather than moral performance.

The theoretical contribution of this paper is to bring African conceptual decolonisation into dialogue with decolonial design pedagogy and Indigenous storywork, not as a brand of ethics but as a discipline of translation and accountability. We have grounded this analysis in African philosophical traditions that deepen what decolonisation might mean in practice. Wiredu’s project of conceptual decolonisation reminds us that the task is not simply to add alternative content but to interrogate the conceptual vocabularies that organise what counts as knowledge in design education. Fanon’s analysis of language

and recognition sharpens our attention to how intelligibility and legibility are themselves structured by power, with implications for how we teach typography, hierarchy, and ‘clarity’. The legacy of People’s Education in the anti-apartheid struggle reminds us that curriculum has always been a site of political contestation and that alternatives emerge through concrete engagement in social struggles rather than through abstract declarations. Future research should extend this analysis in several directions. A study of student outputs could examine how students translate close reading into visual explanation and where the translation succeeds or fails. Classroom observation could document how educators navigate the tensions between craft instruction and ethical framing. Comparative analysis could examine how similar curricula function in different institutional and cultural contexts. A longitudinal study could trace whether students who complete storytelling courses designed on these principles carry relational orientations into subsequent coursework and professional practice.

Written from within the curriculum it analyses, this paper has demonstrated how storytelling can be structured in a graphic design classroom as a decolonial practice of relation. It offers a curriculum architecture for educators who want to shift the canon by redesigning the acts of reading, interpreting, and making. And it argues that the design of curriculum is itself a form of design work that requires the same relational accountability we ask of our students. There is no neutral ground. The canon we teach is the world we help to make.

Note

1. *Naarm* is the traditional name in the Woiwurrung language for the territory currently known as Melbourne, and *Birrarung-ga* refers to the Birrarung (Yarra) River, located on the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. This reference acknowledges the Indigenous lands and knowledge systems from which this work was produced.

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Resumen: Este artículo examina cómo un curso de taller de diseño gráfico de segundo año y su lista curada de relatos operan conjuntamente como una intervención decolonizadora en la educación en diseño. Situado en Naarm/Melbourne, en Birrarung-ga¹, el trabajo se centra en las primeras cuatro semanas de *Storytelling through Design* (GRAP3071), donde los estudiantes realizan lecturas atentas de obras narrativas que se sitúan fuera de los cánones euroamericanos habituales en el aula y luego traducen esas lecturas en decisiones gráficas. En esta secuencia programática, los relatos son tratados como artefactos diseñados más que como contenidos ilustrativos, utilizando el ritmo, la estructura, la voz, el silencio y la responsabilidad relacional como puntos de partida para la tipografía, la composición, el ritmo visual, la jerarquía y la secuenciación.

La semana 1 introduce la soberanía lingüística y el mapeo relacional mediante ejercicios de constelación que posicionan a los estudiantes dentro de redes de portadores de relatos, comunidades y obligaciones. La semana 2 formaliza la lectura atenta como herramienta de diseño a través de la anotación estructurada y el intercambio entre pares. La semana 3 avanza hacia la producción colaborativa en taller, donde los grupos mapean la estructura y el léxico del relato, definen una comunidad destinataria específica y prototipan secuencias narrativas para su testeo entre pares. La semana 4 consolida y refina, con los grupos editando en función de la claridad, la precisión y la representación ética antes de la entrega. La Evaluación 1 funciona como la primera tarea de traducción, requiriendo que los grupos produzcan una secuencia narrativa interactiva de 15 a 20 cuadros y una breve fundamentación que explique cómo el relato seleccionado opera a través del ritmo, la estructura, la voz y el léxico para una comunidad definida. La lista curada abarca poesía, teatro, música, cine y documental, incluyendo obras de ALOK, Evelyn Araluen, Ngaiire, Nas y Efua Sutherland, junto con narrativas audiovisuales ghanesas.

Basándonos en la decolonización conceptual de Wiredu, el análisis de Fanon sobre lenguaje y reconocimiento, el *storywork* indígena y las pedagogías de liberación provenientes de tradiciones antiapartheid, sostenemos que la curaduría de relatos constituye una forma de construcción de canon que puede diseñarse con cuidado, rigor y responsabilidad. El artículo propone principios curriculares transferibles para educadores que deseen situar los artefactos narrativos decoloniales en el centro del aprendizaje gráfico, en lugar de relegarlos a sus márgenes.

Palabras clave: pedagogía del relato - educación en diseño gráfico - canon - currículo decolonizador - lectura atenta - anotación - filosofía africana - soberanía lingüística

Resumo: Este artigo examina como um curso de ateliê de design gráfico do segundo ano e sua lista curada de narrativas operam conjuntamente como uma intervenção descolonizadora na educação em design. Situado em Naarm/Melbourne, em Birrarung-ga, o texto foca nas primeiras quatro semanas de *Storytelling through Design* (GRAP3071), nas quais os estudantes realizam leituras atentas de obras narrativas que se situam fora dos cânones euro-americanos habituais em sala de aula e, em seguida, transponem essas leituras em decisões gráficas. Nessa sequência programática, as narrativas são tratadas

como artefatos projetados, e não como conteúdos ilustrativos, utilizando ritmo, estrutura, voz, silêncio e responsabilidade relacional como pontos de partida para tipografia, layout, ritmo visual, hierarquia e sequenciação.

A semana 1 introduz a soberania linguística e o mapeamento relacional por meio de exercícios de constelação que posicionam os estudantes dentro de redes de portadores de narrativas, comunidades e obrigações. A semana 2 formaliza a leitura atenta como ferramenta de design, por meio de anotação estruturada e troca entre pares. A semana 3 avança para a produção colaborativa em ateliê, na qual os grupos mapeiam a estrutura e o léxico da narrativa, definem uma comunidade destinatária específica e prototipam sequências narrativas para teste entre pares. A semana 4 consolida e refina, com os grupos editando em função da clareza, precisão e representação ética antes da entrega.

A Avaliação 1 funciona como a primeira tarefa de tradução, exigindo que os grupos produzam uma sequência narrativa interativa de 15 a 20 quadros e uma breve justificativa que explique como a narrativa escolhida opera por meio de ritmo, estrutura, voz e léxico para uma comunidade definida. A lista curada abrange poesia, teatro, música, cinema e documentário, incluindo obras de ALOK, Evelyn Araluen, Ngaiire, Nas e Efua Sutherland, além de narrativas audiovisuais ganesas.

Com base na descolonização conceitual de Wiredu, na análise de Fanon sobre linguagem e reconhecimento, no storywork indígena e nas pedagogias de libertação oriundas de tradições antiapartheid, argumentamos que a curadoria de narrativas constitui uma forma de construção de cânone que pode ser projetada com cuidado, rigor e responsabilidade. O artigo propõe princípios curriculares transferíveis para educadores que desejam situar artefatos narrativos descoloniais no centro da aprendizagem em design gráfico, em vez de relegá-los às suas margens.

Palavras-chave: pedagogia do storytelling - educação em design gráfico - cânone - currículo descolonizador - leitura atenta - anotação - filosofia africana - soberania linguística.

[The translations of the abstracts were reviewed by the author of each article.]

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