

Stage Three

# Practice & Research Project Plan

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**What are you going to do for your practical or creative project(s)?**  
Check that these fit within your assessment outcomes in the unit introduction.  
Describe the project's aims and outcomes.

### **Project 1**

My aim is to illustrate a book (Children's) that I have previously written. I intend to illustrate full spreads, 1/2 spreads, spots and cameos. It will be a children's picture

book for ages 3-5.

I am looking to find out how many words per page is correct or suitable.

Work more on my composition skills, using unique and exciting designs.

Practise my words to visuals techniques and become more experimental in this and develop my skills.

Practise adding in my surface pattern designs to add that twist and uniqueness.

Learn the steps an illustrator has to illustrate a book.

Better In Design skills to put the final outcome together, although this is not needed

as an illustrator, as the book designer will do this for the publisher, it's good to know

what to expect and what things they will be looking for. Plus it will give me a final example of how the book could look.

### **Project 2**

After the first project was completed I started to write out the book I had written a good few years ago, it didn't quite work as I intended, the end needed changing as

We have more subjects we have to be careful about writing about these days.

Plus

the story was a bit flat, it didn't have a moral to the story and would need changing

quite a bit. I was already having second thoughts as it didn't sit quite well with my theme of environmental issues.

So I decided to change the book from this point, luckily I had an idea I was percolating for a few years now, and this fitted well into the theme. I started to jot down the bullet points for the story, to get started.

The next step was to research word counts on pages, which I found out a lot about,

and have a really good idea now of what I need to come up with to complete this project.

Then I researched 'Learn steps an illustrator has when illustrating a children's book'. Now I couldn't find the exact info, but found out more about certain areas and can condense all the info I have down into what I need.

I then went on to complete a Domestika course on 'Illustration techniques for children's books' this was a really good short course, it wasn't what I thought it was

going to be, but I picked up some really good information and ways of working, for both composition and techniques to add mixed media into your work.

I then researched book plans and set out a rough guide to get me started.

I then went on to do some prep work to get ideas, key words, mood boards and some more research into picture books. All this info can be found on my blog.

### **Project 3**

After finishing project 2 I needed to start writing the new book straight away, so I could get started on the work I was mainly hoping to complete for this unit: the illustrating.

I managed to finish the book in about two weeks. I had to make a few changes, as the book needed to be condensed more and the story needed to be more to the

point. My mum helped with some editing but luckily after the first few amendments I did myself there was minimal for her to do.

As I am part of Emma Blocks Patreon I took this advantage to ask her a few questions, we had to 'ask her anything day' on Patreon, so I was lucky to get a few questions in to her to answer on a video.

Emma answered one of my questions, but was fair to all of us and answered one I found the question and answer session really interesting, she gave us all a lot of good things to think about, and it was nice she felt some of the same emotions as us when dealing with comparison.

My question was about how she got her first break in illustrating. She helped by giving us advice on websites and portfolios and creating what you love as that's where the passion shines through.

I did quite a lot of research on the books I had bought and on composition for this project. I found the answers I got from these well worth looking into more and working with these ideas for my book. I found Jane Masseys article really interesting as it gave an insight into the steps she takes once she's got a book illustration deal from a publisher. Having that insight is really beneficial to my work going forward and the areas I need to work more on, like colour samples, giving feedback on book mockups, thinking more about your characters (have a backstory so you know them), and checking for continuity in the artwork background and character design.

Starting on the book plan and really rough thumbnails helped to put the book in an orderly fashion in my mind, this helped me to break down each page and think about the steps I need to take to complete this next step.

I do think I may need extra time to complete the illustrations, as I want to get the compositions right, and want to annotate them fully so I know I have got the best possible artwork for that page.

I have re-looked at the time frame and think I can use some extra time in the critical review months to double check and annotate the illustrations. If needs be I still have a few extra months at the end of August before it goes to assessment to do this extra bit of work.

**For project 4** my main aim was to get the roughs for pages 1-19 completed. I did this and also some character designs for most of the characters in the book. There are just a few animals and birds left to do. I spent a lot of time thinking about the compositions, and how to keep the scenery the same throughout as this was something that I picked up in the research, that the background needed to be consistent. But saying that it was also hard to put new backgrounds in to make it have variety!

I spent some time researching surface patterns and how to incorporate this into my illustrations to give that step apart and difference to make my style different to other peoples.

I did some digital brush research as suggested by my tutor, and also some colour tests on the human characters, this helped me a lot to think in my mind the colour palette of the book, and how it might look at the end. It was also a lot to think about, all the finer details of painting and choosing colours and would these work with other colours, would they clash with the other characters?

I started working on the first set of annotations for pages 1-19, I added in some text boxes as this was suggested in the research I had done, I put some text where they said it was always good to get the reader's eye to move from left to right, so

the continuation is to turn the page.

Doing the annotations also helped me to see that a lot of the compositions are similar, but I have left out page 11, as I want to do a birds eye view or unusual viewpoint in this one. Also I still have pages 20-26 to do, so want to experiment with viewpoints in these.

I am going to stick the annotations together to create a booklet to see how the book comes together, and whether the text boxes need changing or not. This will be a

**Project 5** was mainly about finishing off initial ideas, rough's and colour tests, also researching a few last things, getting everything I needed together and solidifying where I was at, so I could move onto the next phase, which would be coming up with proper illustrations for each page, basic painting of the pages, consolidating the compositions, working on the characters ETC. I started and completed my first draft of my critical review and also put together a Pecha Kucha presentation. Out of the two, I found the Pecha Kucha presentation the hardest. Not because it was a presentation as I have done many of these before in different formats, but more the fact of a starting point! I decided to use my usual process for illustration work and ideas for this, so completed a spider diagram.

My diagram helped me to compartmentalise my thoughts and also helped me to come up with a starting point and what things I needed to include in the presentation and what things I needed to pull together and find in my work for visuals to use. I found the Pecha Kucha website helpful and it also includes a website where you can create your presentation with voice over too, so this was invaluable. I think getting all these bits into line will help me in the next few projects, building the base components with help with the building blocks on top. My Critical review went ok, I still need to work on a few areas and do a lot more research into the subject, but again as a draft copy and initial thoughts and a starting point, I think it is ok, it will be good to get some feedback from my tutor on this project especially, and see what other bits she can help or point me in the right direction with.

**Project plan 6** was about getting started painting the final backgrounds, and identifying more illustrations I might need. I wanted to research more about pattern in books and also to learn more about how to correct the compositions and proportions of my young characters. I have made a plan going forward which will include moving house, I will be able to catch up a lot after I move, and will also have more time for my degree after in general. I am going to get the spots and half pages completed of the background painting. Also start some small illustrations for flowers, trees, insects, and animals, to layer the illustrations with when I am ready to pull everything together in the mock up stage. Getting the bulk of the small illustrations done first will help whilst the house is up in the air, then I can focus on the full page spreads in the new house. I have had to adapt and change a lot of small sections within this project, but I am glad they have come up now as I feel better going forward, and know where I am when I can get stuck back in, in a few weeks. I am excited and optimistic that everything will come together well, I am looking forward to layering the final illustrations and building these up for the mock up in a few projects time. I have made big changes to the characters and their proportions, added in an extra character: Grace, and also really focused on the limited colour palette of the rough garden,

looking back over the spots and pages I am really pleased how well they work together.

## **Project 7**

I got most of what I wanted to achieve done in project 7, some bits I didn't do, but did extra bits that were due next project to fill the gap. This project was just mainly about getting the full page spreads started and to keep the momentum going with the painting side of the plans. I reviewed the critical review and made the changes my tutor suggested, I really think the review and the project as a whole works really well together and I am happy with how the project is going so far.

Completing a few of the extra illustrations that will make up a lot of the layering pieces in the illustrations, was something that I could whilst waiting for the house move to happen, it kept the momentum going, even though I couldn't complete the last spread that I intended too.

So far this project went according to plan, I am intending to stop for a week, as we are due to exchange any day now, but if there is a delay I will continue with the smaller extra illustrations for the next project, but if we do exchange and complete then, I will wait a few weeks and get fully stuck into project 8 when I'm in the new house, I'll have at least 4 days a week to get this completed and done with focus.

## **Project 8**

I had to re-arrange a few bits within project 8, and I focused on the written research that my tutor had suggested completing in the last few feedback points she had made. Although I have a lot to get done, I feel my plan is achievable, its not quite as good as I had hoped and having to rush a lot of the process does not help, but it will be the best I can do under the circumstances.

Again this project was more about getting things in order, looking at research, finding out information, so the last two projects will mainly be the practical part of pulling the book together with the illustrations, text and making the mock up of the book. I have the last few spreads to draw and paint this week and early next week, I finished up some of the bits I was waiting to decide upon in this project, so the colour of the houses etc. I also made a plan for the front and back cover which I must admit I did forget about, but I have again made another plan for this.

So although this project has not gone to plan at all, I have thought about what I need to do to finish and made some written instructions, and changed things so I can still achieve my goal, it was about being flexible, working out problems, and finding ways to just get it done!

## **Project 9**

So project 9 turned out a bit better than I had anticipated, but there was still a few false starts. This two projects 9 & 10 are where all the illustration came together with the surface pattern and digital brushes and art work, to build up the pages in layers to really pull the book together.

After my tutors feedback I decided to not mock up the book in InDesign in these last two projects, this would give me more time to spend on just the pages and really hone these to get them to the standard I want them to be.

I will still mock up the book in InDesign, but will use the time before sending to assessment to get this ready and done, I fill this is a better use of my time.

So I have managed to complete 8 pages in this project, also getting all the bits prepared for layering. I have completed pages 1,2,4,6,7,11 and the front and back covers of the book. These are still open to changes, as the text and font is still not right, and I also want to add in a few more bits, I am going to annoy this pages to see what I want to change, but on the whole I am happy with them so far, and they have been a good start.

Doing the research for the children's book 'The Ocean Gardener' was invaluable and really helped me to work on a way forward as I was a bit lost of where to start at the beginning.

For project 10 I will of course have completed the rest of the pages, and finalised the annotations, and done any last bits on the pages to complete the illustrations for the whole book.

### **Are you doing a Critical Review or Dissertation?**

Check that these fit within your assessment outcomes in the unit introduction.

I am doing a critical review.

### **What does your research explore, and what is your research question?**

Does having more environmental books at an early age help to teach children more about the environment, and does it have an impact or not?

Why have you chosen these practice and research projects?

Think about the connections between your practice and research

I have chosen this practice project as the aim all along for this degree was for me to be able to illustrate books, especially for children, and also illustrate editorial work.

This connects to the research project by researching children's picture books and environmental issues and its place in the family life and how young children can be the generation to change the world

### **How will you schedule your project within the unit structure?**

Set out the start and end dates of your projects. Identify whether you are doing more than one practical project. Add suggested submission dates. For example:

My start date was 17th Oct '23 My end date will be 31st Aug '24 Project 1 submit plan Dec '23 start on project 2 (Word counts on pages, words into visuals, Learn steps a illustrator has illustrated a book, set out a book plan.)

Project 2 submitted 19th Jan '24. start on project 3 (Composition, thumbnails, ideas for spots, cameos, full pages & 1/2 pages.)

Project 3 submit Feb '24 start on project 4 (Practise adding surface pattern design, adapt and annotate.)

Project 4 submit March '24 Start on project 5 (First draft of critical review, Pecha Kucha presentation, roughs for pages 20-27, research classic books, research Molly Bang) up book.)

Project 5 submit May '24 Start on project 6 (Drawing out final illustrations and painting the basic colours, work on character development of children, complete a course on drawing children)

Project 6 submit June '24 Start on Project 7 ( **This has been delayed as I had been working extra and getting ready to move house.**)

Project 7 submitted Aug '24. Start on project 8 (Start on final book on In Design)

Project 8 submit Sept' 24 Start on (final draft of critical review, double check illustrations add more annotations if needed.)

Project 9 submit End of Sept '24. Start on final project (finalise book and write up the outcomes)

Project 10 submit final project and finished book End of Oct '24

I will now go to assessment in Jan'25

### **Who else will be involved in your project?**

List any collaborators, audiences, clients, or others you will be working with?

If you are working with others, how can the project be accessible to others?

Hopefully Emma Block will give me some pointers or answer a list of questions to help with some early preparation. My family will be involved slightly on feedback etc, also some fellow friends that are illustrators, that can give constructive feedback.

My mum will be involved in editing the book down, I can get carried away when writing, and as this is a children's picture book, it needs to be kept slim and to the point. My mum is a retired nursery nurse and nursery manager, so is well qualified on good books for children.

I do not know Emma Block personally, but have joined her Patreon, and we get to ask her questions every so often, so I am hoping to take my chance then. Or I will message her and ask her if she has the time to answer a few questions.

Emma has answered a few of our questions, I'm hoping to get some more answered over the coming months.

I am going to speak to a few friends' children to see if they like my book, would they give any feedback, and also what would they like to see in the pictures after I have read the book to them

I gave the text of the book to family and close friends to read to their children for some

#### **Is the project safe and ethical?**

Please see the appropriate OCA policies: [www.oca.ac.uk/about-us/our-policies/](http://www.oca.ac.uk/about-us/our-policies/)

*Are there any health and safety risks to you or others? How will you mitigate against these issues?*

*Are there any ethical issues you need to take into consideration? How will you mitigate against these issues.*

*I have carried out appropriate Health and Safety checks and have a copy of the relevant documentation. (please tick)*

*I have the necessary insurance to carry out my project. (please tick)*

*I have familiarised myself with the OCA safeguarding policy, and checked my project meets the criteria. (please tick)*

Yes there is nothing unsafe about my project and it's ethical as I wrote the book when I was young so there are no copyright issues.

#### **Resources and budget**

What do you need to make the project a success?

Watercolour paint, watercolour paper, watercolour pencils, brushes, acrylic ink, gouache paint, sketch books, computer and print, iPad and Procreate App, In design software, pencils, pens and a ruler. (which I already have)

If I get the book made into a physical copy an expense would be needed here, roughly between £30 and £50.

I had one of my poem books made in my Book design unit, so I research about different print on demand companies, and found the best one that suited the project, so I will do the same for this project if I decide to get it made.

I am hoping to submit my book to a competition next April 2025, so I might not get the book made straight away, I'll see how I get on in the competition first.