

NAILING THE CREATIVE CONCEPT STATEMENT

Presented by: Darla Green, Dr. Diana Allison

<https://www.idec.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageID=4533>

Concept Statements are crucial for interior design students to understand. A concept is the over-arching idea that drives a project **creating an explanation for each design decision**

There are many types of **concept statements from thematic to functional**. Sometimes the functional project statements are called concept statements. **However, the strongest concept statements are creative, relate to the context, evoke emotion, and are used to guide the project. There are several established methods to help the student understand how to create concept statements.**

The three components of the concept statement that we're looking for are described as:

- finding something inspirational,
- determining the tools (found within the principles and elements of design),
- and determining what feelings and emotions were to be evoked from the design.

Employ similes, metaphors, and analogies in communicating your vision as expressed in a strong concept statement.

References:

- Ankerson, K., & Pable, J. (2008). Interior Design: Practical Strategies for teaching and learning. New York: Fairchild Publishing.
- Eakins, P. (2005). Writing for Interior Design. New York: Fairchild Publishing.
- Wlodkowski, R.(2008). Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn, 3rd Edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass a Wiley Imprint.

DESIGN NARRATIVE: CONCEPT STATEMENT

The Role of the Concept Statement - (Eakins, P, 2005; Writing for Interior Design)

A concept statement is a key tool of the interior design process and is critical to a designer's communication with clients, with other designers, and with the public.

A concept statement presents the "big picture," the overall course of action that emerges in response to the issues presented by the client and the client's project.

Conceptual writing has three functions:

1. To state and understand a design problem
2. To explore and hypothesize a design solution
3. To present and define a design mission

THE IDEA GENERATOR

The designer's key analogy, the seed concept, is sometimes known as the **idea generator**. **It may connect the design to the program, to the client, to a building site, or to an institution mission.** For instance, the example given at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University "Writing Guidelines" website shows **how the site (a beach front property) will generate a concept. In this example sand dunes are the idea generator for the design.**

Sand dunes are the inspiration for my design.

A statement like this may be true, but it does not really demonstrate how the sand dunes generated the design. It is not yet an effective concept statement.

THE FORM-GIVERS

To effectively communicate a concept, the concept statement must study the idea generator more closely, to discover its form-givers:

The undulating rhythms of the sand dunes found along the Outer Banks of North Carolina are used to reinforce the essential character of the space.

Note the following three things:

- The sand dunes are made **specific** in this statement: they are not just any sand dunes, but the ones **along the Outer Banks**.
- The writing designer now tells us precisely **which attribute of the sand dunes generated the design idea-not their height, not their sandiness, not the vegetation growing on them, but their "undulating rhythms."**
- Note finally that the mushiness of "inspired my design" has been replaced with a **precise design function, "reinforce the essential character of the space," which is, after all, a beach house.**

At every step of the way, then, **the writing designer describes the inspiration process "in terms of" the elements and principles of design that give form to an interior design.** In addition to undulating rhythms, other form-givers might be the play of light and shadows, the movement of dune forms across space, or the relationships of textures from trees, to grass, to sand, to water. Thus, the sand dunes are not the central premise here, but rather, the design qualities *inherent* to the sand dunes.

When the designing writer introduces **multiple form-givers** into a concept statement, it gains even more power to explain a complex design process:

The sand dunes found along the Outer Banks of North Carolina reveal several design relationships that are used to guide the design of the space. Focusing on the undulating rhythms of the dunes to reinforce the essential character of the space, the architectural and interior elements eloquently express the play of light and shadow that compliment the horizontal movement of form through space.