# Communication design

# Linking: reference chains

Akama must establish a definition of communication design in its historical context in order to introduce her theoretical framework. The writer uses the metaphor of **mapping out the route** that the discipline is taking.

### Activity

Identify **six (6)** **reference chains** in the extract that allow the reader to follow Akama’s main idea. The first one has been done for you. Look for repetitions and synonyms.

#### Text

A human-centred design framework is therefore crucial in exploring questions of values, as it focuses on empowering people to have input in the design process. The small yet increasing number of designers and academics that are seeking to explore designing for, and with, other people have prompted Bennet to state that graphic design is at a **crossroads**:

Looking back, one sees designers engaged in a process where intuition informs the development of visual rhetoric intended to evoke a response from a target audience. Looking ahead, one sees them engaged in a process where research is integrated into the design of objects and experiences for and with the audiences (2006, p.14).

Bennet points to the conceptual and methodological shifts that are manifesting in graphic design. These have occurred because many designers and design academics have begun to question the role of design and designers in the larger context of their social and cultural environment. Frascara (2002) reflects this shift by exposing values of inequality that are implicit in design practice. Rather than assuming the designer’s role is to tell things to people, he argues that designers should seek partnership with people in the process of change: ‘unidirectional communication is unethical and inefficient, and it promotes a passivity that in the long run will weaken our civilization’ (ibid, p.34). Human-centred design at its most practical and literal level can begin to facilitate this shift.

The shift is also prompted by many who question the limitations imposed by the term ‘graphic’ design that obscures and misrepresents the practice **…**

Source: Akama, Yoko 2008 The tao of communication design practice: manifesting implicit values through human-centred design. PhD by project, Communication, RMIT University, p.21

### Answer Key

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#### NOTICE

Akama builds on Bennet’s **metaphor of a journey** to explain the historical trajectory of graphic design.

Note how the repetition of the key idea of **shift** keeps the reader ‘on track’ as the idea is developed.