

Introduction

After my tutor watched my visual essay, they understood that my research theme focuses on autism. I based it on a book in which a child with autism explains why he often jumps. I used animation to present his psychological process. In our tutorial, the dialogue focused on my uncertainty about the project direction. My research mainly studies the autism community, using animation to visualize emotion. When writing my written response, I felt that the connections between my references and my work were not strong enough. Through the dialogue, my tutor helped me to see more clearly how theory, visual methods, and research interests can be combined.

Key Problems and Tutor's Advice

The tutorial developed around my own questions and challenges. First, I admitted that my references and my work felt “far apart.” They looked connected at first, but in the final presentation the link stayed shallow. I was summarising authors’ ideas rather than analysing how they influenced my practice. When we discussed one quotation, my tutor reminded me to explain its relationship to my own experiments (shapes, animation, emotion). This advice showed me how to combine writing and practice instead of using references only as decoration.

Writing is a challenge for me, because I often summarise rather than analyse. The tutor gave me practical support, suggesting that I can go to academic support for more writing guidance (Tutor, MA Graphic Communication Design Programme, 2025). Another issue is that if I cannot directly talk to people with autism, my research may lack authenticity. The tutor said I should still try to reach them, but if it is not possible, I could change the topic. I was also advised to spend more time collecting literature and studying how animation connects with emotion, by observing how different designers work.

I mentioned that I spend a lot of time producing animations, but the effect is not always good. My tutor said that a work should not only “look good,” but also communicate or create an emotional experience. To improve efficiency, I can simplify animations by lowering frame rates, using templates, or animating only part of the image. This would save time and make expression more direct.

Reflection

From this dialogue I developed some reflections. I now understand that visual form is not decoration but actively shapes meaning. As Drucker argues, “visual things create meaning” (Drucker, 2014). I can translate this into practice by designing an animation where the sudden stop of a bouncing ball produces tension, while a slow continuous wave suggests calmness. This turns an abstract sentence into a rule that shapes my prototypes. I also started to see “whether to continue with autism” as a negotiation between research scope and method: even if the theme stays, the method must be more testable. For instance, I would need to show a short animation to autistic participants and ask how they interpret the movement, to check whether my intention matches their perception.

I plan to collect more literature and cases about animation and emotional visualization. I will try to start prototypes, making quick animation samples and recording viewers’ emotional feedback. I may not limit myself only to the autism community; I may return to emotion

visualization more broadly, with a focus on “emotion—motion.” I will keep accessibility and empathy as perspectives, to stay connected with my earlier research.

Conclusion

The dialogue advanced my enquiry by turning reading into operational guidance and turning animation into a measured experiment rather than a time sink. Going forward, I will frame both my writing and visuals to show this chain—quote → interpretation → design decision → observed effect—so that the form of the work makes the argument visible.

References

Drucker, J. (2014) *Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tutor, MA Graphic Communication Design Programme (2025) Tutorial with author, 17 June. [Unpublished personal communication].