

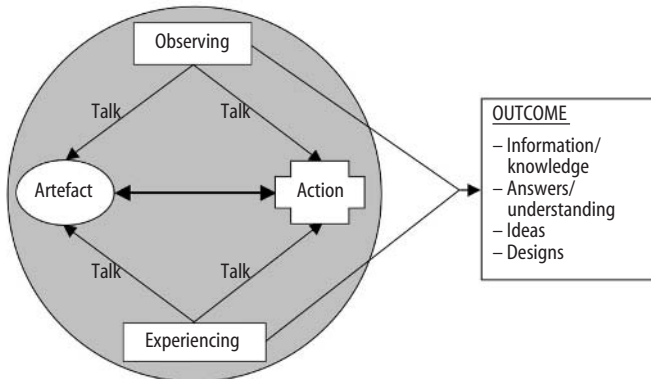
## A notion of observing and experiencing artefact and action

For seating clinic participants artefacts performed the “compounding roles” suggested by Dix (1994) – that is, rather than have an isolated impact on conversation, artefacts can have an accumulating effect, adding layers of meaning. Artefacts were used by individuals, shared among team members, and the individual and shared use was available to be observed by other participants, both engaged and non-engaged in that work at the moment. In use artefacts provided feedback to users, and provided “feedthrough” for observers as they viewed the effects of action by the users. Participants were able to achieve mutual understanding from their various artefact interactions, which Dix called “soft artefact.” Participants were able to communicate through interacting with artefacts and by referring to artefacts – hence, artefacts engendered a spirit of cooperation between participants.

The resolving of “how?, what?, where?, why?” issues in designing customized seating is assisted by participants of the design process observing artefacts (objects), observing actions, observing actions with artefacts, and experiencing actions on artefacts. Participants are usually performing actions with artefacts or watching another person or other people performing these actions. Figure 6.5 illustrates a model of a talk and action event that can produce an outcome of the “how?, what?, where?, why?” enquiry such as information/knowledge, answers/understanding, ideas, designs. The outcome is derived from observing or experiencing an artefact or an action involving an artefact, and is promulgated by talk or talk and action. The artefact and an action are both the tools for achieving the outcome and aiding communication of the outcome to other participants.

## A Model of Talk, Artefacts, Action in Time

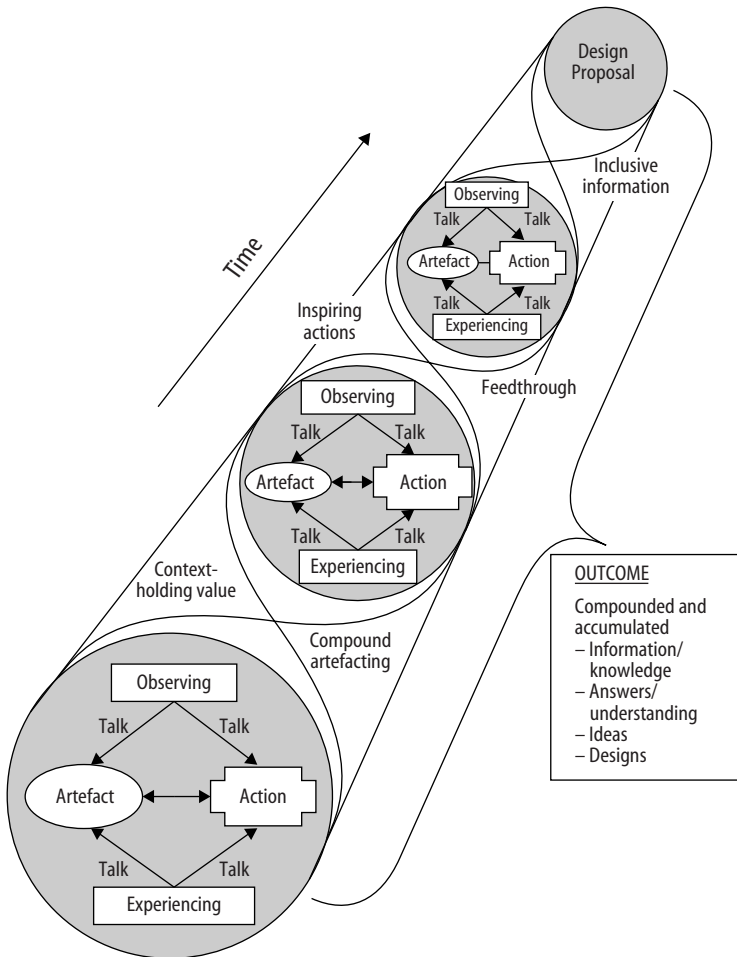
The model illustrated in Figure 6.5 was developed to relate the role of talk, artefacts, and actions to generate and communicate an outcome through the observing and experiencing of the artefact and associated actions. Essentially, this model works at an event level. Usually a design evolves over many events



**Figure 6.5** A model of the role of talk, artefacts, and actions to generate and communicate an outcome through the observing and experiencing of the artefact and associated actions.

in which participants observe artefacts under action. They talk and develop their ideas, which leads to further talk, action, and artefact generation. Over time, experience and understanding increase as the “observing, experiencing, talking, acting with artefacts” cycle continues. When sufficient experience and understanding have been gained, an acceptable design concept is struck and designing moves on to a new issue. Figure 6.6 illustrates the evolution of this model through experience and time towards design.

Similarity exists between this model and the concepts put forward by Bailetti and Litva (1995) concerning the transformation of customer (client) requirements from informal constraints expressed in natural language into formal statements expressed in design languages. In this model the talk, artefacts and action aid the transformation of informal statements into formal statements. The end of designing in this model is similar to Bailetti and Litva’s design process ending, which occurred when the designer produced a formal system model with all the detailed information to realize the required product.



**Figure 6.6** Model of the observing, experiencing, talking, acting cycle, through which participants gain experience and understanding to generate a design.