Sketchnotes Guide

Overview

One doesn’t need to identify as an artist for sketchnotes and visualization to be an integral part of one’s learning toolbox. Taking pen to paper makes learning tangible and personal. Visualization, in particular, helps synthesize complex information or illuminate unexpected connections impossible by text alone. Like any skill, however, sketchnotes require a little experimentation, patience, and practice. Over time, learners can develop unique visual “vocabularies” for communicating ideas across communities, across identities, and across disciplines. The Global Health Education and Learning Incubator at Harvard University (GHELI) has curated free articles and videos to get started with exploration, as well as some recommended books for a deeper dive.

GETTING STARTED

SKETCHNOTES 101: VISUAL THINKING


Sketchnotes leverage visual thinking and the mind’s natural desire to make sense of information through pictures. This article walks through the “circular” process of sketchnoting, which requires the notetaker to listen, synthesize, and visualize in real-time.

SKETCHNOTES 101: THE BASICS OF VISUAL NOTE-TAKING


This article covers the basics of transforming ideas into visual communication, specifically structuring thoughts and concepts. It covers useful tools, how to set up a page prior to notetaking, visual elements to organize notes, and some reminders to beginning notetakers.
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SKETCHING: THE VISUAL THINKING POWER TOOL


This article demystifies the process of sketchnoting, emphasizing that it is a tool for all who are interested in visual thinking—not just artists. It highlights three benefits of sketching: generating ideas quickly, exploring alternatives, and fostering better discussions. The article culminates with helpful tools to start a sketchnoting practice.

TUTORIALS: SKETCHNOTE SCHOOL


Sketchnote School is a playlist of over 100 short videos that tackle different dimensions of sketchnoting. The videos tackle everything from warm-up exercises to ideas for developing one’s visual language to best practices for sketchnoting live.

TUTORIALS: SKETCHO FRENZY


Sketcho Frenzy is a series of animated sketchnote tutorials to support individuals in their notetaking journal. Videos range from 1-3 minutes long and delve into a handful of visualization types. Videos include:

- The Basics of Visual Note-taking
- Venn Diagram
- Pie Chart
- Mind Map
- Typography

SKETCH50 HOW-TOS


This site rounds up some tutorials on how to draw common sketchnoting elements, such as banners, arrows, typography, figures, and more. The webpage is accompanied by a comprehensive Google Drive folder of additional sketchnoting tutorials.

THE SKETCHNOTE PODCAST


These videos from Mike Rohde, one of the pioneers of sketchnoting, dives into bite-sized tutorials on sketching different concepts and typography. It also features special “Sketchnote Critique” episodes featuring other illustrators, and some recommended techniques for sketching during meetings and workshops.
If you're seeking a deeper dive beyond the open access resources listed above, we recommend the following books:

**THE DOODLE REVOLUTION: UNLOCK THE POWER TO THINK DIFFERENTLY**


**THE SKETCHNOTE HANDBOOK: THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO VISUAL NOTETAKING**


**THE BACK OF THE NAPKIN: SOLVING PROBLEMS AND SELLING IDEAS**


**VISUAL NOTE-TAKING FOR EDUCATORS: A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO STUDENT CREATIVITY**

[https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393708455](https://wwnorton.com/books/9780393708455).