



REFLECTIVE SKETCHBOOK METHOD (Paradigm-stretching methods)

The purpose of the reflective sketchbook method is to observe the health and care work environment from an environmental perspective and record observations, environmental issues, effective practices, and ideas. The sketchbook is a tool for discovering and opening new perspectives. It is a free-form means to deepen and develop one's environmental thinking. Visual elements such as drawings, images, diagrams and mind maps are combined with written reflections, enabling a versatile reflection process.

What is required:

- Openness and willingness to observe and reflect on one's thoughts: one way is to carry the reflective sketchbook in your pocket and record observations throughout the day.
- Space and time to delve into and review observations, and to seek additional information on the topic.
- Possibility to use visual and verbal means of expression in parallel
- Agreement on how to share sketches of ideas with others and further develop potential ideas.

Level of difficulty: 1 – Suitable for participants of all levels, no prior skills required.

Time required: From 10 minutes to several days – can be used as a tool for short reflections or as a longer process.

Materials:

- A sketchbook or notebook
- Drawing and writing tools (pens, markers, coloured pencils)

Participants: Individual method during the sketching phase. The sketches (i.e., ideas, problem definitions, solutions) are processed and further developed in workgroups (of any size), for example, to support collective brainstorming.

How to use:

1. **Start:** Decide on a period during which you will take sketching as part of your daily activities. Set a time and place and give yourself permission to observe your familiar environment. Pay attention to details and record your observations in the sketchbook. Start by drawing or writing ideas freely without restrictions.
2. **Agreement:** Agree with a few colleagues that each of you will take sketching as part of your work.
3. **Sketching:** Use visual and written elements (drawings, diagrams, mind maps, words) as tools for observation and thinking.
4. **Deepening:** Add details, connections and possible development paths.



5. Reflection: Review your output and consider what new insights you have gained. Agree with colleagues on when to collectively review the observations, ideas and problems recorded in the sketchbook.
6. Ongoing process: You can return to the sketchbook later to expand and refine your thoughts.

When to use:

- At the beginning – To initiate idea generation and thinking
- During the process – To structure thoughts and ideas
- At the end – To compile reflections and insights

Why to use:

- Supports diverse thinking and self-expression.
- Enables and combines intuitive creative work and critical thinking.
- Improves reflection skills and helps to discover new perspectives.
- Suitable for personal and collective reflection to support critical thinking.

How to document:

- Self-produced sketches, notes and visual ideas serve as documentation
- Can be photographed and shared in digital form if group work is desired

The roots of the method can be found here: The reflective sketchbook method is based on the pedagogical practices of professors emeritus Clive Holtham and Allan Owens (developed in 2007-2025). It resonates with Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory and serves as a reflective tool for Communities of Practice aiming for critical thinking (Critical Action Learning).

The method also connects to Donald Schön's (1983) theory of reflective practice, where professionals' ways of thinking and learning occur while working, in action. Additionally, it draws from research on visual thinking and note-taking techniques (Arnheim, 1969).

Further information:

Holtham, C., Owens, A., & Bogdanov, M. (2008). The use of reflective sketchbooks in professional contexts and at M Level. *Saïd Business School, University of Oxford*.