



HOW TO TAKE

Smart Sketchnotes

WITH OBSIDIAN AND ZETTELKASTEN

v0.13.0 | 30.01.2023 | draft

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SMART SKETCHNOTES

WITH OBSIDIAN AND ZETTELKASTEN

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Sketchnote Book
by Edmund Gröpl

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Cover: Sketchnote inspired by Graham Shaw at TEDx, 2015
https://lnkd.in/eC_7RRjy

To

THIES, JONAS, URS, KATHARINA, ROGER

AND URSEL

Acknowledgements

I am thankful to the following people for their support and encouragement during the research and writing of this book:

- ...

Foreword

This book is a Sketchnotes and Zettelkasten approach to use visual thinking for creativity and productivity supported by Obsidian¹, an amazing note-taking and knowledge management app.

This draft version is just a collection of ideas and drawings from the authors personal learning journey and experiences about basic concepts of visual and networked thinking by using Smart Sketchnotes.

To ensure you have always the latest version available, please check GitHub² for updates.

¹ „Obsidian“, 2022, <https://obsidian.md/>

² „Obsidian-Zettelkasten Starter-Kit - Share & Showcase“, Obsidian Forum, 31. März 2022, <https://forum.obsidian.md/t/obsidian-zettelkasten-starter-kit/51090/1>

London

January 2023

N.N.

Preface

I'm a data scientist and data storyteller. Networked thinking is part of my job since more than 30 years. Working with sketchnotes is a basic need. But why should I start writing a book about Smart Sketchnotes? The answer is easy.

What I've learned in my digital life:

1. Moments are precious.
2. So, I'm taking photos to remember.
3. Too many photos are overwhelming.
4. So, I love to create Photo Books.

But I needed much longer to understand:

1. Ideas are precious.
2. So, I'm taking sketchnotes to remember.

3. Too many sketchnotes are overwhelming.
4. So, I'm just creating my first Sketchnote Book about Digital Sketchnotes.

Do you already have a photo book? And what about having your own Sketchnote Book collecting Digital Sketchnotes?

If you love the idea, here are some great examples:

- A Simple Guide to Sketchnoting, Alessio Bresciani ³
- Essentials of Visual Language, Yuri Malishenko⁴
- The xLontrax Theory of Sketchnote, Mauro Toselli⁵

³ Alessio Bresciani, *A Simple Guide To Sketchnoting: How To Use Visual Thinking in Daily Life to Improve Communication & Problem Solving*, 2016, <https://www.amazon.de/dp/B01LYP6JWZ/>.

⁴ Yuri Malishenko, *Essentials of Visual Language - Workbook* (Leanpub, 2016), <https://leanpub.com/visualthinkingworkbook>.

⁵ Mauro Toselli, *The Xlontrax Theory of Sketchnote*, 2016, <https://www.maurotoselli.com/blog/the-xlontrax-theory-of-sketchnote>.

- Sketchnotes aus Australien, Annelies Schippke⁶
- Collection of 98 Digital Sketchnotes, Chris Spalton⁷

But collecting Digital Sketchnotes is only the first step. In this book about Smart Sketchnotes you will learn how to benefit from networked thinking and visual thinking as well.

Networked thinking and visual thinking are both approaches to organizing and interpreting information that can be used to help you better understand complex ideas and concepts. However, they differ in the way they represent and structure information.

⁶ Annelies Schippke, ‘Sketchnotes aus Australien’, *meisterbar* (blog), 2022, <http://meisterbar.de/australien/>.

⁷ Chris Spalton, ‘Collected Digital Sketchnotes’, Dropbox, 2022, <https://www.dropbox.com/s/cwozl3elf3604pi/Chris%20Spalton%20-%20Collected%20Digital%20Sketchnotes%20.pdf?dl=0>.

Networked thinking⁸ is an approach to organizing information that involves creating connections and relationships between different pieces of information. It often involves creating a network or map of interconnected ideas and concepts, which can be visualized in the form of a diagram or other visual representation. Networked thinking is often used to identify patterns and connections between different pieces of information, and to explore the relationships between different ideas and concepts.

Visual thinking⁹, on the other hand, is an approach to organizing and interpreting information that involves the use of visual elements such as images, diagrams, and graphics to represent and communicate information. Visual thinking can be used to create

⁸ Anne-Laure Le Cunff, 'Networked Thinking: A Quiet Cognitive Revolution', *Ness Labs* (blog), 23 September 2020, <https://nesslabs.com/networked-thinking>.

⁹ Willemien Brand and Pieter Koene, *Visual Thinking - Empowering People and Organizations Through Visual Collaboration* (Bis B.V., Uitgeverij (BIS Publishers), 2017), https://openlibrary.org/books/OL28622690M/Visual_Thinking.

visual summaries of complex ideas, to convey information in a more memorable and engaging way, and to facilitate the process of problem-solving and decision-making.

In summary, networked thinking involves creating connections and relationships between different pieces of information, while visual thinking involves using visual elements to represent and communicate information. Both approaches can be useful tools for organizing and understanding complex ideas and concepts.

We will start taking notes and taking sketchnotes as well. Linked together we can see almost hidden structures. That's the stuff Smart Sketchnotes are made of. Start reading to discover your new world of thinking.

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INTRODUCTION

It was on March 2nd, 2022, when I attended the Eventbrite event "Sketchnoting with Mike Rohde". Therefore, it was an intense pleasure for me to have a live online workshop together with him and more than a hundred participants.

As I listened to his voice and watched his live presentation, I also watched the chat stream powered by some of the most active visitors. Some of these were questions for Mike, some were answers to questions Mike asked the audience. Suddenly I stopped reading: A few keywords with the phrase "Zettelkasten" appeared on the screen.

Carolina NYC an Alle

CN

I highly suggest the book "Taking Smart Notes" by Sonke Ahrens. He explains the concept of the Zettelkasten very well

The infinite canvas of Concepts is a total game changer for me!

Never heard the word "Zettelkasten" in connection with sketchnoting. Long story short, I bought the book the next day and was intrigued from the start. The book opened a door for me to solve my personal problem of organizing my notes and also my sketchnotes.

Yes, that is how the story of Zettelkasten and sketchnotes starts for me. But what are your questions you might have when reading this book about using sketchnotes and Zettelkasten to improve visual and networked thinking with Obsidian? Questions I would be happy to answer in the following chapters:

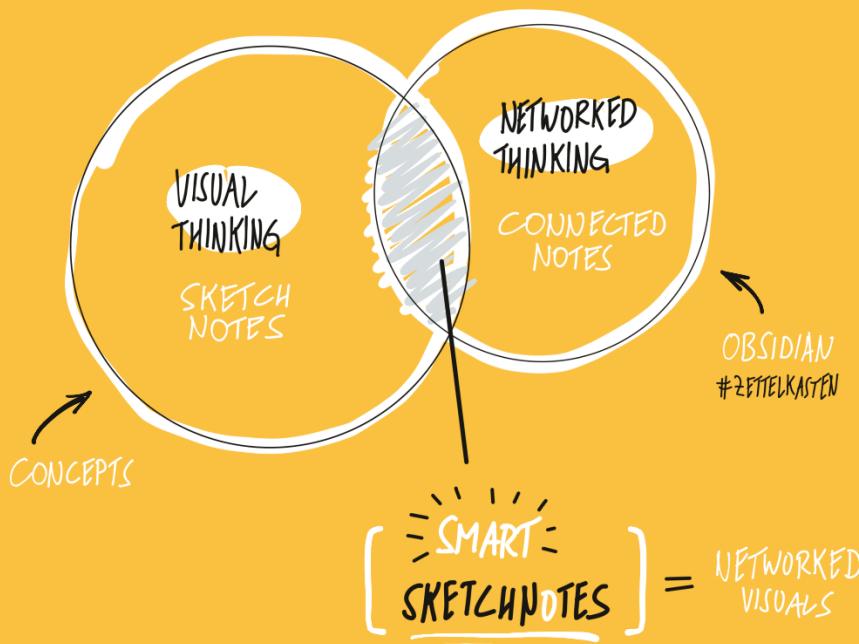
- What are sketchnotes and how can they be used to improve visual thinking?
- What is a Zettelkasten and how does it work?
- How can Obsidian be used to create and organize a Zettelkasten?
- How can the combination of sketchnotes and a Zettelkasten be used to improve networked thinking and knowledge management?

- What are some best practices for using sketchnotes and a Zettelkasten with Obsidian?
- Are there any specific challenges or pitfalls to be aware of when using this approach?
- What are some examples of how others have used sketchnotes and a Zettelkasten with Obsidian to improve their thinking and knowledge management?

Overall, you will learn about the specific techniques and tools involved in using sketchnotes and a Zettelkasten with Obsidian, as well as how to apply these techniques and tools in a practical way to improve your own visual and networked thinking.

So, let's start.

~~= SMART~~ SKETCHNOTES



Understand Smart Sketchnotes

Smart Sketchnotes are Networked Visuals¹⁰:

- Visual Thinking creates Sketchnotes.
- Networked Thinking creates Connected Notes.

¹⁰ Edmund Gröpl, 'Smart Sketchnotes Are Networked Visuals', 2022,
https://www.linkedin.com/posts/groep_zettelkasten-procreate-procreatesketchnote-activity-6909149379492769794-018A/.

It is like connecting Mike Rohde and Niklas Luhmann. The only tools you need are Concepts app and Obsidian with Luhmann's Zettelkasten.

Try it your own: Start reading the next chapter.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO
THINK
SYSTEMATICALLY
WITHOUT WRITING
~~SKETCHNOTING~~
(LUHMANN 1992, 53).



Sönke Ahrens

How to Take Smart Notes: One Simple Technique to Boost Writing, Learning and Thinking

Take Notes



WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH WHAT WE HAVE WRITTEN DOWN?

CERTAINLY, AT FIRST WE WILL PRODUCE MOSTLY GARBAGE.

BUT WE HAVE BEEN EDUCATED TO EXPECT SOMETHING USEFUL FROM OUR ACTIVITIES AND SOON LOSE CONFIDENCE IF NOTHING USEFUL SEEMS TO RESULT.

WE SHOULD THEREFORE REFLECT ON WHETHER AND HOW WE ARRANGE OUR NOTES SO THAT THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR LATER ACCESS.

– NIKLAS LUHMANN¹¹

¹¹ Manfred Kuehn, ‘Learning How to Read by Niklas Luhmann’, accessed 2 January 2023, <https://luhmann.surge.sh/learning-how-to-read>.

For me reading books is not enough. To find new insights note-taking is essential. Here is one of my personal insights I found when working with my Zettelkasten:



**IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO THINK SYSTEMATICALLY WITHOUT
SKETCHNOTING.¹²**

My connected notes for finding this insight:

- The Sketchnote Handbook - Mike Rohde¹³
- How to take Smart Notes - Dr. Sönke Ahrens¹⁴

¹² Edmund Gröpl, 'It Is Not Possible to Think', 2022,
https://www.linkedin.com/posts/groepel_procreate-lernos-lernossketchnoting-activity-7002979335590576128_ocZ.

¹³ Mike Rohde, *Sketchnote Handbook: The Illustrated Guide to Visual Note Taking* (Milwaukee: Peachpit Press, 2012).

¹⁴ Sönke Ahrens, *How to Take Smart Notes: One Simple Technique to Boost Writing, Learning and Thinking*, 2022.

As I have learned there are several benefits to taking notes:

Improved understanding and retention of information: Taking notes helps you process and understand the material you are learning and makes it easier to review and recall later.

Increased focus and concentration: Taking notes can help you stay engaged and focused during a lecture or meeting, as it requires you to actively listen and pay attention to what is being said.

Better organization and clarity: Notes can help you organize your thoughts and ideas and can serve as a helpful reference when you need to review the material later.

Enhanced problem-solving and critical thinking skills: Note-taking can help you analyse and evaluate information, as you must decide what is most important and relevant to include in your notes.

Preparation for future use: Notes can be a useful resource when preparing for exams, projects, or presentations. They can also serve

as a valuable reference when you need to revisit the material in the future.

#1

Ideas,
not
Art

- MIKE ROHDE



#EDMUND'2021

Take Sketchnotes



SKETCHNOTES ARE RICH VISUAL NOTES CREATED FROM A MIX OF
HANDWRITING, DRAWINGS, HAND-DRAWN TYPOGRAPHY, SHAPES, AND
VISUAL ELEMENTS LIKE ARROWS, BOXES, AND LINES.

– MIKE RHODE (THE SKETCHNOTE HANDBOOK)

Sketchnoting, also known as visual notetaking, is a way of creating visual summaries of information. It involves combining drawings, text, and symbols to capture the essence of a meeting, lecture, or

presentation in a way that is more engaging and memorable than traditional note-taking methods. There are several benefits to sketchnoting:

Improved retention: Studies have shown that people tend to remember information better when it is presented visually.

Sketchnoting allows you to create a visual representation of the information, which can help you remember it more effectively.

Increased engagement: Sketchnoting requires you to actively process and synthesize information as you create your visual summary. This can help you stay more engaged with the material and better understand the key points.

Enhanced communication: Sketchnotes can be shared with others, making them a powerful tool for communication and collaboration. They can be used to summarize meetings, lectures, or presentations, or to explain complex concepts to others in a more accessible way.

Greater creativity: Sketchnoting encourages creativity and allows you to express your understanding of the material in your own unique way. This can make the learning process more enjoyable and rewarding.

Overall, sketchnoting is a powerful tool for learning, retention, engagement, communication, and creativity.

To learn more about sketchnoting I can recommend several books from my reading list that can help you start with:

- The Sketchnote Handbook¹⁵: This book is a comprehensive guide to visual notetaking, with tips and techniques for creating effective sketchnotes.
- ...

Another source of value are the many talented and influential sketchnoters who use social media to share their work and connect

¹⁵ Rohde, *Sketchnote Handbook: The Illustrated Guide to Visual Note Taking*.

with their audiences. Some of the most well-known and influential sketchnoters on social media include I know are:

MIKE ROHDE¹⁶: A designer, illustrator, and author who is known for his work on sketchnotes.

SUNNI BROWN: A designer, author, and speaker who is known for her work on visual thinking and communication.

EVA-LOTTA LAMM¹⁷: A designer, illustrator, and speaker who is known for her work on visual thinking and communication.

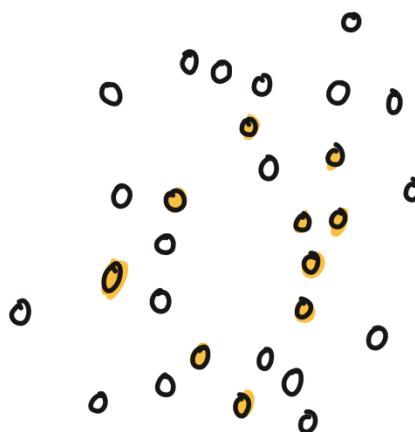
...

You are welcome to use these links for watching their amazing tutorials on YouTube.

¹⁶ Mike Rohde: *Sketchnote Mini Workshop*, 2017,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39Xq4tSQ31A>.

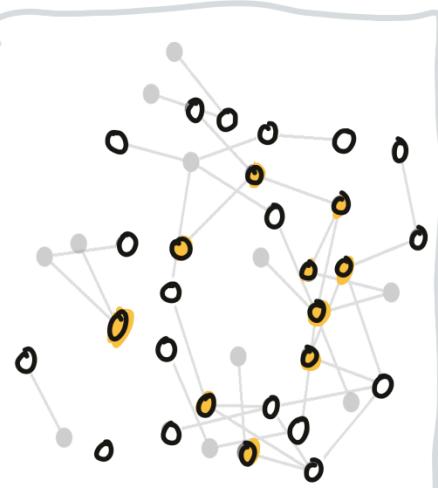
¹⁷ Eva-Lotta Lamm: *5 Steps to Change Your Note-Taking*, 2018,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ql-GNmxw71E>.

SKETCHNOTES



IDEAS

SMART SKETCHNOTES



NETWORKED IDEAS

Create Smart Sketchnotes



NO PICTURE PUZZLES – MARTINA GRIGOLEIT

What is the difference between a sketchnote and a smart sketchnote? It is the same as between ideas and networked idea. Such easy.

START FROM
PROVEN
CONCEPTS

ZETTELKASTEN

FRAMEWORK

↓
START WITH CLEAR GOAL
↑

UNLIMITED
PRACTICES

4 VALUES

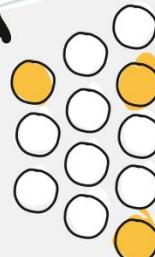
12 PRINCIPLES



MINDSET



CONNECTION
over
COLLECTION



▷ LIKE TO TRY
NEW THINGS

OUTLINE WALL

Understand Zettelkasten

Let me give you an overview: Niklas Luhmann's Zettelkasten is a method of note-taking and organization that he developed over the course of his career as a sociologist and philosopher. The following are some of the basic concepts that are central to the Zettelkasten method:

Interconnectedness: One of the key principles of the Zettelkasten method is the idea of interconnectedness, or the creation of connections and relationships between different pieces of information. Luhmann believed that by linking related ideas together, it was possible to create a deeper understanding of complex concepts and to generate new ideas.

Cross-referencing: The Zettelkasten method involves the use of cross-references, or connections between different notes or slips, to create a network of interconnected ideas. Cross-references are used to link related ideas together and to facilitate the development of new connections and relationships between different pieces of information.

Modularity: The Zettelkasten method is based on the idea of modularity, or the organization of information into smaller, more manageable units. By breaking ideas down into smaller, more manageable chunks, it is easier to identify patterns and connections between different pieces of information, and to rearrange and reorder them as needed.

Hierarchy: The Zettelkasten method involves the creation of a hierarchy of ideas, with more general concepts at the top and more specific concepts below. This hierarchical structure helps to create a clear and organized overview of the information and allows for the easy identification of relationships between different ideas.

Flexibility: The Zettelkasten method is designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing users to rearrange and reorder their notes as needed to reflect new insights and connections. This flexibility helps to facilitate the ongoing process of learning and idea development.

To understand the concept of Zettelkasten in detail the framework shown in the sketchnote above will give us some orientation:

- Mindset
- 4 Values
- 12 Principles
- Unlimited Practices

So let us start from top level and begin with our mindset in the next chapter.

Be Aware of Your Networked Mindset

Let me assume you are a networked thinker. Then you will have a mindset characterized by the following traits:

- Open-mindedness
- Collaboration
- Connectedness

- Flexibility
- Continuous learning
- Systems thinking
- Embracing diversity and multiple perspectives.

You approach problem-solving by seeking diverse perspectives and drawing connections between seemingly disparate ideas. You view knowledge as decentralized and strive to build relationships and networks to access information and resources.

ZETTELKASTEN

VALUES

VALUES

- CONNECTION OVER COLLECTION
- FLEXIBILITY OVER STRUCTURE
- TAGS OVER FOLDERS
- WRITING OVER COPYING

Appreciate Zettelkasten Values

When starting to understand Zettelkasten I asked Google to find a “Zettelkasten Manifesto” for me. As I learned from agile projects, you always need a “Manifesto”¹⁸ before to start working.

¹⁸ Ken Schwaber et al., ‘Manifesto for Agile Software Development’, n.d., <https://agilemanifesto.org/>.

After more than 15 minutes of unsuccessful search I remembered an old saying: “If you can’t find it, create it.” So, here is my first draft of a “Zettelkasten Manifesto”:

- ZETTELKASTEN MANIFESTO -

We are uncovering better ways of notetaking by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- Connecting over Collecting
- Flexibility over Structure
- Tags over Folders
- Writing over Copying

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

ZETTELKASTEN

PRINCIPLES



12 PRINCIPLES

- 1 START WITH CLEAR GOALS
- 2 USE TEMPLATES
- 3 MAKE CONNECTIONS
- 4 USE TAGS
- 5 USE FOR CREATIVE THINKING
- 6 REVIEW AND REVISE
- 7 KEEP UP TO DATE
- 8 INSPECT AND ADAPT
- 9 USE FOR LEARNING
- 10 ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION
- 11 SUPPORT YOUR WORK
- 12 HAVE FUN

Know Zettelkasten Principles

There are 12 basic principles for working with a Zettelkasten:

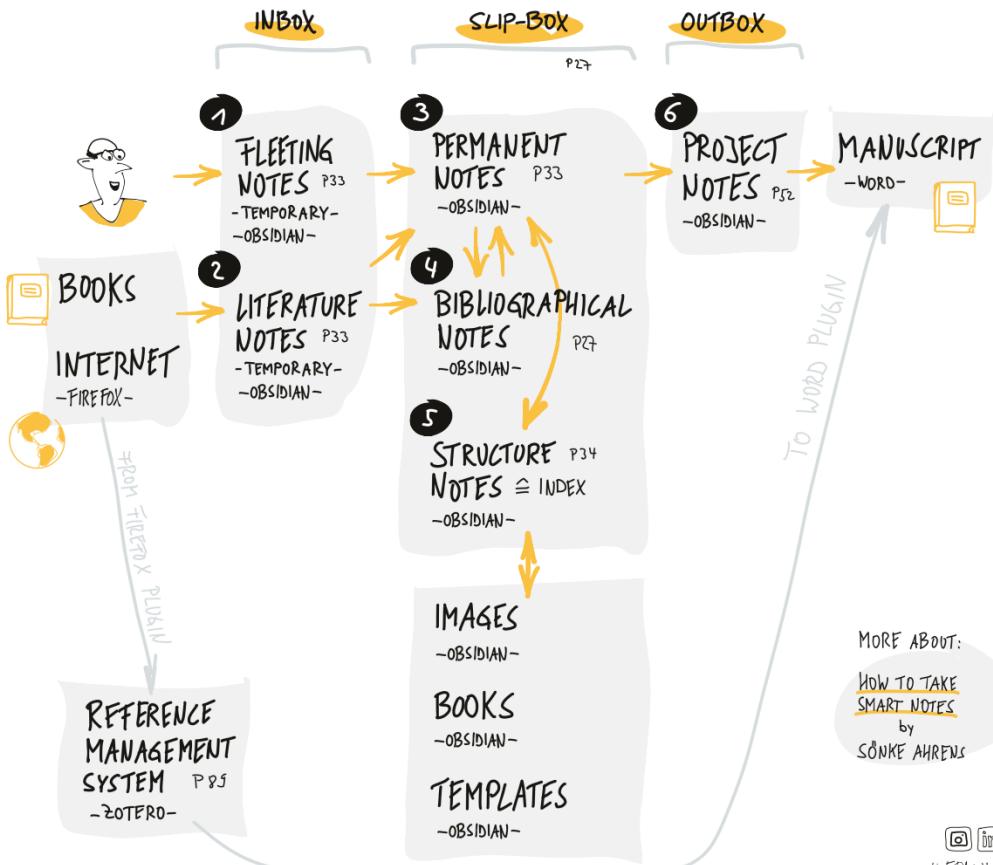
1. Start with a clear goal. Determine what you want to achieve with your Zettelkasten and use this to guide your note-taking and organization.
2. Use templates. Consistently use a consistent format for your notes to make them easy to read and navigate.

3. Make connections. Link related notes together to create a web of interconnected ideas.
4. Use tags. Use tags to categorize and organize your notes and make it easier to find related information.
5. Use for creative thinking. Allow the connections between your notes to spark new ideas and facilitate creative thinking.
6. Review and revise. Regularly review and revise your notes to ensure they are up to date and accurate.
7. Keep up to date. Consistently add new notes and make connections between them to keep your Zettelkasten current and valuable.
8. Inspect and adapt. Continually evaluate and refine the organization and use of your Zettelkasten to maximize its effectiveness and efficiency.
9. Use for learning. Use your Zettelkasten to capture and organize new information as you learn, and to facilitate lifelong learning.
10. Encourage collaboration. Invite others to contribute to and review your Zettelkasten to facilitate collaboration and shared learning.

11. Support your work. Use your Zettelkasten as a tool to support and enhance your work, whether that's writing, research, or something else.
12. Have fun. Enjoy the process of building and using your Zettelkasten!

HOW
TO
USE

ZETTELKASTEN IN OBSIDIAN



Use Zettelkasten Practices

Just finished reading the amazing book “How to take Smart Notes” from Sönke Ahrens¹⁹. As a visual thinker and sketchnoter my first idea was to use this method to combine visual thinking with networked thinking. Taking smart notes is great but taking smart sketchnotes would be even greater.

¹⁹ Ahrens, *How to Take Smart Notes*.

To summarize the content of a book like this within one sketchnote is not that easy. So, I started to summarize one main aspect which is important for a reader of Ahrens' book to work with the Zettelkasten method²⁰.

It is the major workflow starting with filling the inbox till using the content of the growing slip-box to produce an output of higher value. Added the tools I'm using in this process and also the page numbers from the book as a reference for further reading and understanding the underlying method.

²⁰ Edmund Gröpl, 'How to Use Zettelkasten in Obsidian - Forum Obsidian', *Obsidian Forum*, 31 March 2022, <https://forum.obsidian.md/t/how-to-use-zettelkasten-in-obsidian/35008>.

You see, there are several types of notes that are relevant for a Zettelkasten system. This are the types of notes that you might use in your Zettelkasten:

1. Fleeting Notes
2. Literature notes
3. Permanent notes
4. Bibliographical notes
5. Structure Notes
6. Project Notes

ZETTELKASTEN PRACTICES



1. Fleeting Notes are brief notes that we can use to capture ideas or information that may not be relevant in the long term but need to be recorded quickly. They can be thought of as temporary placeholder notes that can be reviewed and either incorporated into the Zettelkasten or discarded later.

The purpose of Fleeting Notes is to allow you to quickly capture and record ideas or information as they occur to you, without the need to spend a lot of time organizing or categorizing them. This can be especially useful when you are working on a project or engaged in creative thinking, as it allows you to quickly capture and save ideas without interrupting your workflow.

By creating Fleeting Notes, you can ensure that you don't forget important ideas or information, and you can also use them as a starting point for more in-depth analysis or research later. Ultimately, Fleeting Notes are an important tool for helping you to stay organized and focused and can be an integral part of your successful Zettelkasten system.

2. Literature notes are a type of note used in the Zettelkasten method of note-taking and organization. In a Zettelkasten, notes are organized into a network of interconnected ideas, with each note representing a single thought or concept. Literature notes are used to capture information from external sources, such as books, articles, or lectures, and to integrate it into your own thinking and work.

The purpose of literature notes is to help you to extract and summarize the key points and ideas from external sources, and to relate them to your own thinking and work. By creating literature notes, you can more easily incorporate new information into your Zettelkasten and use it to build upon or challenge your existing ideas. Literature notes can also help you to access and retrieve information from external sources, as they provide a structured way to capture and organize the relevant information more easily.

Using literature notes in a Zettelkasten can be especially helpful for you to keep track of a large volume of information from various

sources. It can also be useful to more effectively incorporate new information into your thinking and work.

3. Permanent notes, also known as atomic notes, are the central type of note used in the Zettelkasten. They are organized into a network of interconnected ideas, with each note representing a single thought or concept. Permanent notes are the central ideas that form the backbone of this network and are used to connect and relate other notes to each other.

The purpose of permanent notes is to provide a stable foundation for the rest of the notes in the Zettelkasten. They are meant to be long-lasting and not subject to frequent change, in contrast to temporary or working notes (Fleeting notes and Literature notes), which are more focused on capturing and organizing information in the short term. Permanent notes are typically used to represent key concepts, ideas, or themes that are central to your thinking and work.

Using permanent notes in a Zettelkasten can help you to better structure and organize your thoughts and ideas, as well as to

identify connections and relationships between different pieces of information.

4. Bibliographical notes, also known as reference notes, are a additional type of note used in the Zettelkasten. They are used to capture and store information about external sources, such as books, articles, or lectures, that are relevant to your thinking and work.

The purpose of bibliographical notes is to provide a central location for storing and organizing information about external sources that you have used or want to use in your work. By creating bibliographical notes, you can more easily keep track of the sources you have consulted and quickly retrieve them when needed. Bibliographical notes can also help you to cite your sources more easily in your own work, as they provide a structured way to capture and store the necessary information.

Using bibliographical notes in a Zettelkasten can be especially helpful for you if you need to keep track of a large volume of information from various sources.

5. Structure Notes are notes that are used to organize and structure the other notes in the system. They are typically used to create relationships between different notes and to establish the overall structure of the Zettelkasten.

There are several different types of Structure Notes that you might use in your Zettelkasten, including:

- Maps of Content (MoC): These notes provide a high-level overview of a particular topic or idea and can help to give context to the other notes in the system.
- Summary Notes: These notes summarize the main points or key takeaways from a particular note or group of notes.
- Index Notes: These notes are used to create an index or table of contents for the Zettelkasten and can help you to quickly find and access specific notes.

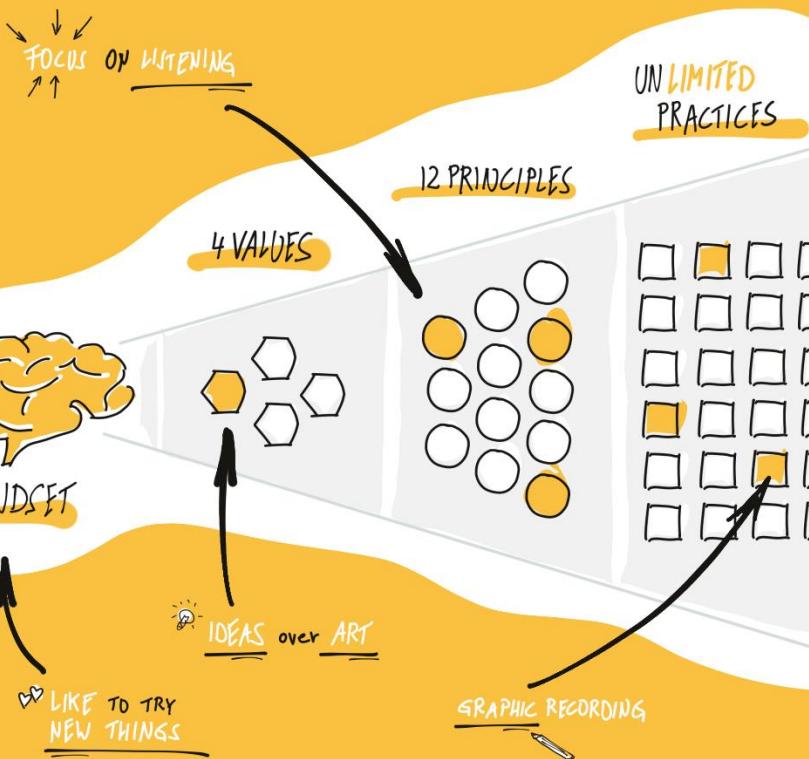
- **Linking Notes:** These notes are used to create connections between different notes in the Zettelkasten and can help to establish relationships between different ideas or concepts.

By using Structure Notes, you can create a logical and coherent structure for your Zettelkasten and make it easier to find and access the information that you need. This can be especially useful when working on a complex project or when trying to make connections between different pieces of information. Ultimately, Structure Notes are an important tool for helping you to stay organized and focused and can be an integral part of your successful Zettelkasten system.

6. Project Notes are notes that are related to a specific project or task. The purpose of Project Notes is to help you stay organized and on track while working on a specific project. By creating Project Notes, you can keep all the relevant information for a particular project in one place, and easily reference it as needed. This can help you to stay focused and avoid becoming overwhelmed by the details of the project.

Overall, Project Notes are a valuable tool for helping you to stay organized and focused.

SKETCHNOTE FRAMEWORK



Understand Sketchnotes

Sketchnoting, also known as visual note-taking, is a way of creating visual summaries of information. It involves combining drawings, text, and symbols to capture the essence of a meeting, lecture, or presentation in a way that is more engaging and memorable than traditional note-taking methods. There are several benefits to sketchnoting:

Improved retention: Studies have shown that people tend to remember information better when it is presented visually.

Sketchnoting allows you to create a visual representation of the information, which can help you remember it more effectively.

Increased engagement: Sketchnoting requires you to actively process and synthesize information as you create your visual summary. This can help you stay more engaged with the material and better understand the key points.

Enhanced communication: Sketchnotes can be shared with others, making them a powerful tool for communication and collaboration. They can be used to summarize meetings, lectures, or presentations, or to explain complex concepts to others in a more accessible way.

Greater creativity: Sketchnoting encourages creativity and allows you to express your understanding of the material in your own unique way. This can make the learning process more enjoyable and rewarding.

Overall, sketchnoting can be a powerful tool for learning, retention, engagement, communication, and creativity.

Learn more about by watching:

Learn more about by reading:

Be Aware of Your Visual Mindset

SKETCHNOTE

VALUES

VALUES

- IDEAS OVER ART
- GRACEFUL ENOUGH OVER PERFECT
- LISTENING OVER THINKING
- LEARNING OVER KNOWING

Appreciate Sketchnote Values

Today I asked Google to find a “Sketchnote Manifesto”. As I learned from agile projects, you always need a “Manifesto”²¹ before to start working.

After 15 minutes of unsuccessful search, I remembered an old saying: “If you can’t find it, create it.” So, here’s my first draft:

²¹ Schwaber et al., ‘Manifesto for Agile Software Development’.

SKETCHNOTE VALUES

We are uncovering better ways of visual notetaking by doing it and helping others do it. Through this work we have come to value:

- **Ideas over Art**
- **Graceful enough over Perfect**
- **Listening over Thinking**
- **Learning over Knowing**

That is, while there is value in the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

Defining values in the “Sketchnote Manifesto” helps to describe the philosophy behind an evolving body of knowledge. For me it has more a supporting function than a guide on how to do something.

You would like to give some comments on sketchnote values? Feel free to join the open discussion on Twitter²² to share your ideas and insights also with Mike Rohde, Anja Groß, Mauro Toselli and Nadine Roßa.

²² Stefan Wolfrum, 'Sketchnote Manifesto - Discussion on Twitter', *Tweet, Twitter*, 29 January 2022, <https://twitter.com/metawops/status/1487483099692867592>.

SKETCHNOTE MANIFESTO



PRINCIPLES

- 1 FOCUS ON LISTENING
- 2 START WITH HANDWRITING
- 3 OPEN FOR EXPERIMENTS
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 TELL STORIES
- 8 CREATE VALUE
- 9 KEEP LEARNING
- 10 SHARE YOUR WORK
- 11
- 12 ENJOY SIMPLICITY



v0.2

#EDMUND 2022

Know Sketchnote Principles

VALUES in the “Sketchnote Manifesto” may also be detailed in some important PRINCIPLES in this field. Here my basic ideas also formulated as a rough draft. Having 4 VALUES and 12 PRINCIPLES is not a must. It’s a best practice also used in the Agile Manifesto²³. 3 or 10 are also good numbers. But limitation is mandatory to create a clear focus.

Here are 12 basic principles that you can follow when working with sketchnotes:

²³ Schwaber et al., ‘Manifesto for Agile Software Development’.

SKETCHNOTE PRINCIPLES

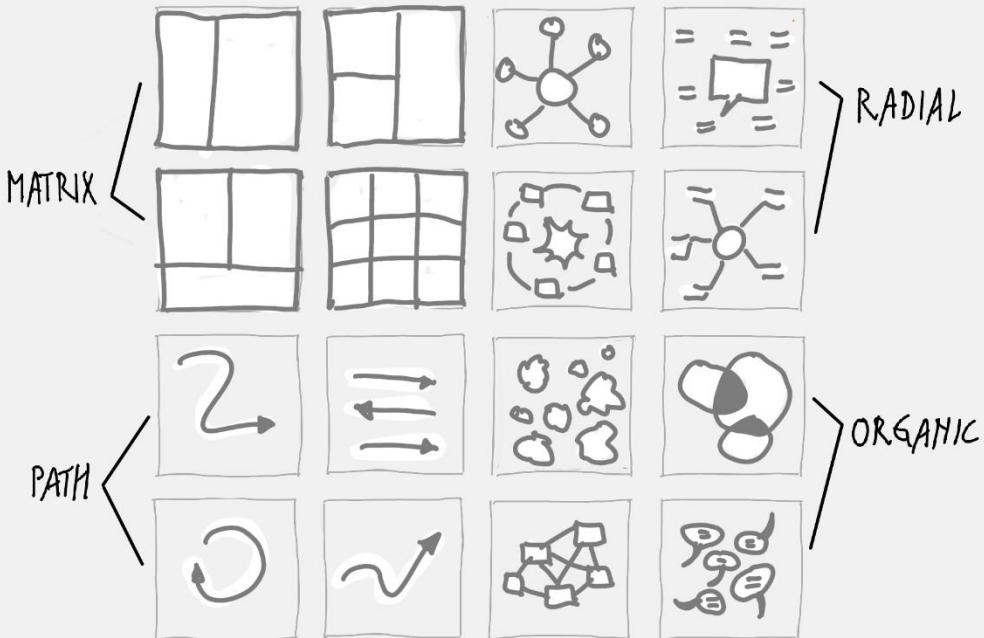
- 1. Start with a structure.** Divide the page into sections to help you organize your content.
- 2. Keep it simple.** Use simple drawings and stick to one or two colors.
- 3. Use visual hierarchies.** Use size, position, and color to emphasize important information.
- 4. Leave white space.** Don't try to fill every inch of the page with content.
- 5. Use typography.** Use different font sizes, styles, and weights to differentiate between different types of information.
- 6. Use metaphors and icons.** Use visual metaphors and icons to represent abstract concepts.
- 7. Use arrows and connectors.** Use arrows and connectors to show relationships and connections between different pieces of information.

8. **Keep it legible.** Make sure your notes are easy to read and understand.
9. **Review and revise.** Take the time to review and revise your notes to ensure that they are clear and accurate.
10. **Practice regularly.** The more you practice, the better you'll get.
11. **Experiment with different styles.** Try out different drawing styles to find what works best for you.
12. **Have fun.** Enjoy the process of creating your sketchnotes and let your personality shine through in your work.

There's always room for improvement. Any idea for a statement to add or to change?

lernOS[®] SKETCHNOTES

KATA 13 - WEEK 5



BASIC LAYOUT

STRUCTURES

Use Sketchnote Practices

- Mind Maps
- Concept Maps

Use Mind Maps

FOCUS ON SOMETHING YOU WANT TO LEARN AND FOCUS ON IT - MARC GUTMAN

KEEP A BAD DRAWING UNTIL BY STUDY YOU HAVE FOUND OUT WHY IT IS BAD - ROBERT HENRI

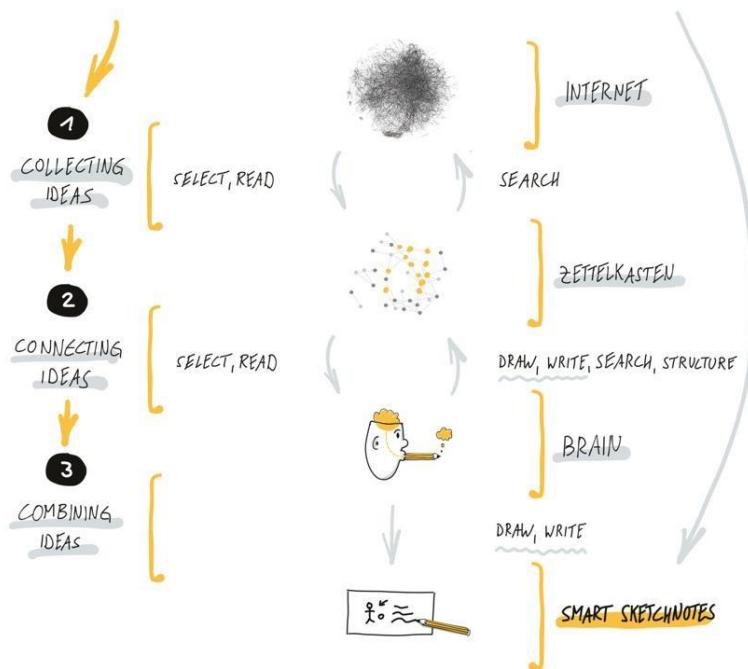
WE LEARN BY COPYING. WE ADVANCE THROUGH INTEGRATION. WE MASTER BY TAPPING INTO OUR OWN SOURCE. - KELVY BIRD²⁴

²⁴ [1]

Use Concept Maps

BUILD UP YOUR
WORKFLOW

WORKFLOW for SMART SKETCHNOTES



#EDWARD 2022

Start with Three Steps



YOU CANNOT THINK WITHOUT SKETCHNOTING.

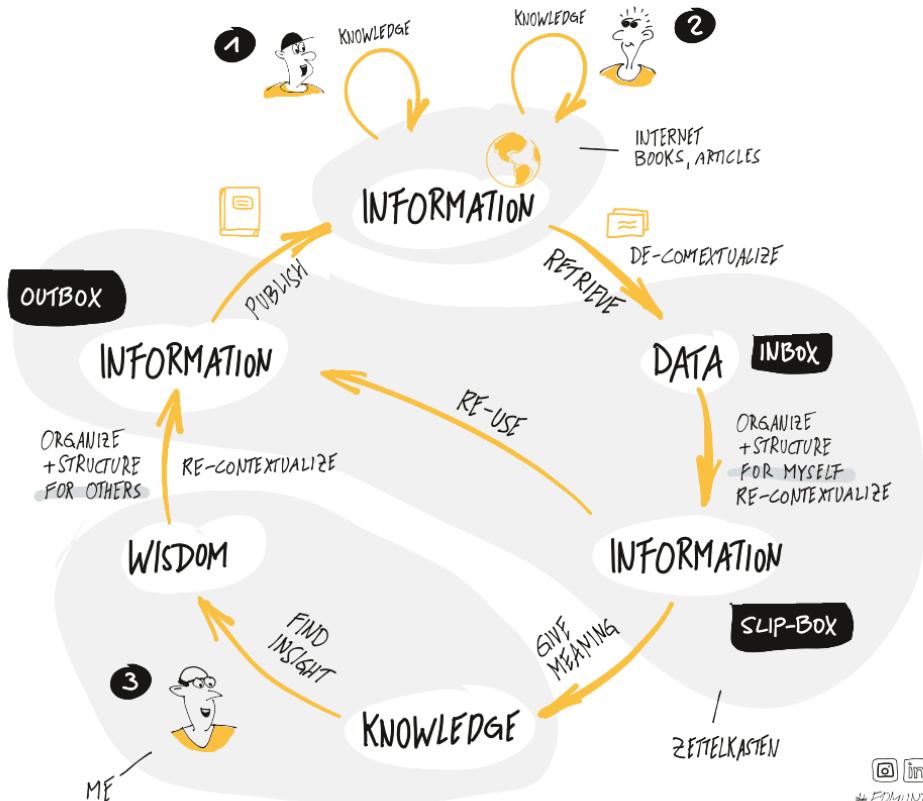
To create Smart Sketchnotes you will need three steps for:

1. collecting ideas,
2. connecting ideas and
3. combining ideas.

Compared with the well known process of sketchnoting there is one element in between: It is the “magic” Zettelkasten, something like a

second brain, where you can store and most important connect your selected ideas of value.

FLOW of KNOWLEDGE



Understand Your Flow of Knowledge

My first idea was to visualize the “Flow of Notes” within Zettelkasten. Based on a discussion with Sascha Fast on Zettelkasten.de²⁵ I changed the perspective. Now the “Flow of

²⁵ ‘What’s Your Preferred Workflow for Using Zettelkasten?’, Zettelkasten Forum, accessed 3 January 2023, <https://forum.zettelkasten.de/discussion/2217/what-s-your-preferred-workflow-for-using-zettelkasten>.

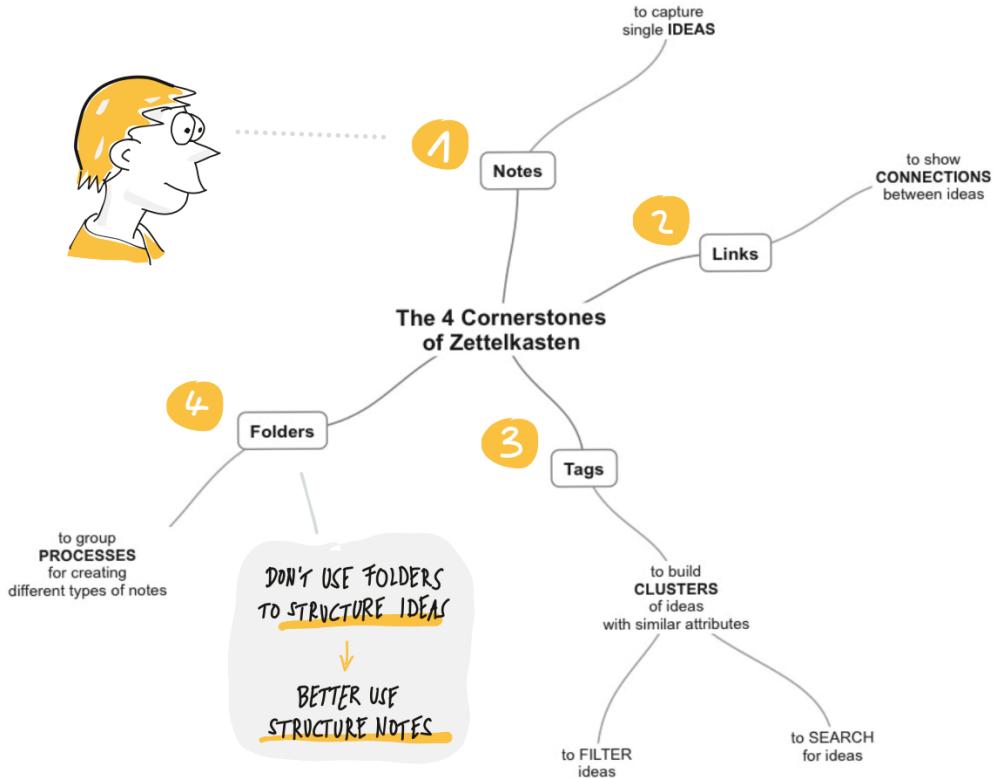
Knowledge” is in focus. It shows the four areas of knowledge management:

- Data,
- Information,
- Knowledge and
- Wisdom

A great benefit is the step inside a Zettelkasten where information is prepared for re-use.

THE 4 CORNERSTONES

OF
ZETTELKASTEN



Build it up on 4
Cornerstones

Focus on Creating Output

Here are my personal strategies for you to focus on creating output:

Set specific goals²⁶: Identify what you want to accomplish and create specific, measurable goals to help guide your efforts. This will help you stay focused and motivated.

²⁶ Doerr John, *Measure What Matters : OKRs - The Simple Idea That Drives 10x Growth* (Portfolio Penguin, 2018), https://openlibrary.org/books/OL27371716M/Measure_What_Matters_OKRs.

Eliminate distractions: Remove any unnecessary distractions from your work environment. This could include turning off notifications on your phone or computer or finding a quiet place to work.

Use time-blocking: Schedule specific times for working on specific tasks or projects. This can help you stay on track and avoid getting side-tracked.

Take breaks: It is important to take breaks to rest and recharge. Set aside time for breaks and use them to refocus your energy and get back to work with renewed focus.

Use tools to help you stay on track: There are many tools and techniques that can help you stay focused and on track. For example, you might use a timer to break your work into manageable chunks, or you might use a productivity app to help you prioritize tasks and stay organized.

Get feedback: Seek feedback from others on your work to help you stay motivated and focused. This can help you identify areas where you can improve and stay engaged in your work.

Overall, the key to focusing on creating output is to set clear goals, eliminate distractions, use time-blocking and other productivity techniques, and seek feedback from others to stay motivated and on track.

Inspect and
Adapt

Make it a Habit

USE DIGITAL
TOOLS TO
SUPPORT YOUR
WORKFLOW



GET A NEW PEN - MARC GUTMAN

**THE PAINTER DRAWS WITH HIS EYES, NOT WITH HIS HANDS - MAURICE
GROSSER**

YOU ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT TOOL - MARTINA GRIGOLEIT

I started digital sketchnoting with Paper53®, Adobe Sketch® and Procreate®. But now I surprisingly prefer vector-based tools like PowerPoint®, OneNote®, Miro® and Concepts®. It's also great fun to use a mind mapping tool like SimpleMind®²⁷ to create structured mind maps like this one.

²⁷ [11]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i79VqhShVww>

Collect Ideas

Obsidian

Reference Ideas

Obsidian

Zotero

Visualize Ideas

Concepts

Paper 53

PowerBI

Procreate

SimpleMind

Obsidian Canvas

Ebenen



Präzision

● Gitter ▶ Punktraster

○ Einrasten ▶ Optionen

○ Messen ▶ 1:1 mm

○ Hilfslinie ▶ Bogen

MISTER MAIKEL

SKECHNOTE

WORKSHOP

STRICHSTÄRKE:

| 0,2mm | 0,3mm | 0,5mm | 0,6mm

SONNE



EINFAMILIENHAUS



LASTLAGER



SMARTPHONE



DIAMOND



GLOHBRÜNE



HOCHHAUS



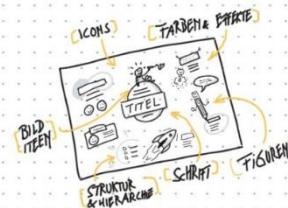
KAFFE



APP

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WA



PERSÖNLICHE
HIGHLIGHS:
ERSTE WOCHE

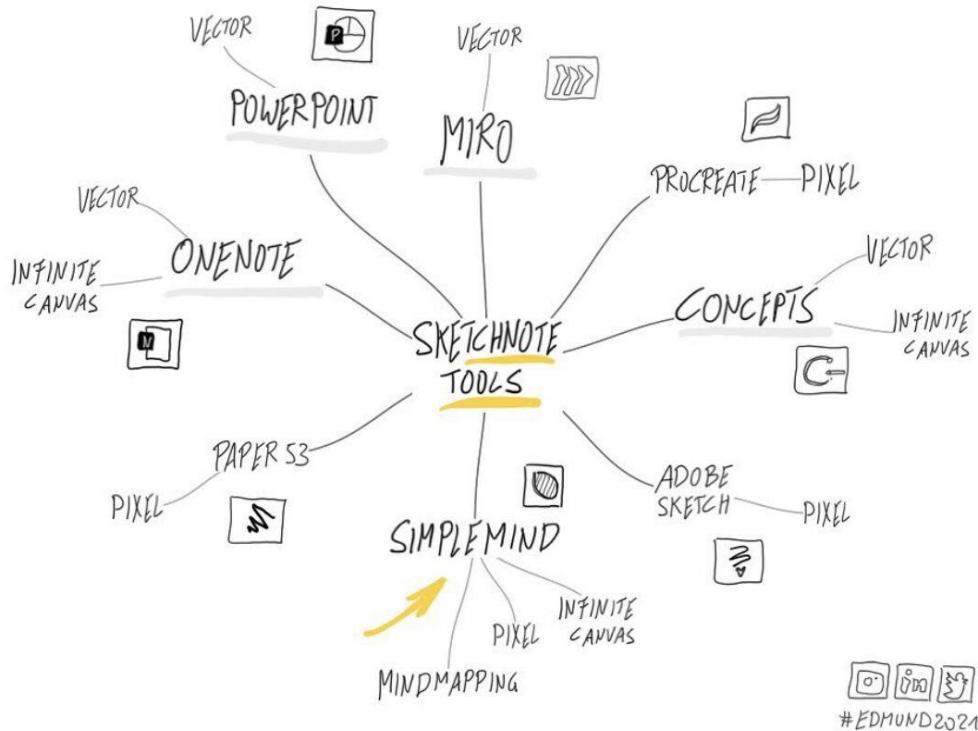


Connect Ideas

Obsidian

Combine Ideas

Obsidian Canvas



Communicate Ideas

Social Media

Miro

Outline Ideas

Word

Social Media

Publish Ideas

Obsidian

BENEFIT FROM
BEST
PRACTICES

5

MISTAKES TO AVOID WHEN STARTING YOUR ZETTELKASTEN



USING OBSIDIAN WITHOUT

- TEMPLATES
- RULES FOR TAGGING
- FRONTMATTER
- TIMESTAMPS IN MD
- DATAVIEW FOR GARDENING

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Avoid Pitfalls

When I started to write my first notes with Obsidian, I followed the rule “Start early and learn by experiment.”

But I also learned: Experiments took a lot of my precious time. Here are my top mistakes to avoid²⁸. when starting your first Zettelkasten:

Starting without templates - so that it was hard to build up a consistent note structure I needed later for effective searching.

²⁸ Edmund Gröpl, ‘5 Mistakes to Avoid When Starting Your First Zettelkasten’, *LinkedIn* (blog), 2023, https://www.linkedin.com/posts/groep_l_procreate-lernos-lernossketchnoting-activity-7008062279384465408-85vF/.

Using tags without rules for tagging - so that building clusters for searching was not highly effective.

No use of frontmatter - so that meta data and content of notes became inconsistent and confusing.

No use of time stamps like “created” and “modified” within frontmatter - so that using backups and changing cloud spaces caused a loss of time information connected with my notes.

No use of Dataview plugin as a tool for gardening - so that inconsistencies in my Zettelkasten were growing and growing.

All these mistakes lead to intensive re-work of my notes later.

Inspect with Dataview

Re-visit lost
ideas

Discover with Graph View

Re-structure with Canvas

Use a Bullet
Journal

Use a Kanban
Board

CONNECT WITH
LEARNING
COMMUNITIES

Working Out Loud Circles

LernOS Circles

BE OPEN FOR
EXPERIMENT

S

Draw Ideas

Play with Quotes

Create Multiple Posts

Share Templates

Share Starter Kit

Re-use Posts for Newsletters

Create
Storylines with
Canvas

Use AI

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Concepts

Why not starting from scratch? Also, you have some experience in sketchnoting there is always the chance to learn and improve. Idea is to restart with the new book²⁹ from Michael Geiß-Hein (a.k.a. as Mister Maikel) and with the drawing tool Concepts app . As Maikel proposes: It will need no longer than 6 weeks. So, let us start.

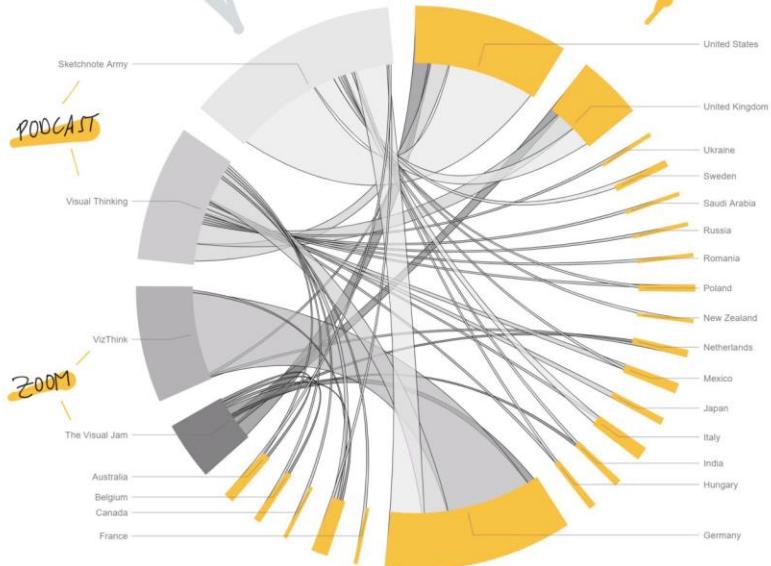
²⁹ Michael Geiß-Hein, *Sketchnotes - Dein Workshop mit Mister Maikel - In 6 Wochen Sketchnotes lernen*, 2021,
https://books.google.com/books/about/Sketchnotes_Dein_Workshop_mit_Mister_Mai.html?hl=&id=VQluzgEACAAJ.



4 PLACES TO MEET

GREAT VISUAL THINKERS

FROM MORE THAN
25 COUNTRIES



Obsidian

Obsidian³⁰ is a notetaking and knowledge management app on top of a local folder of plain text markdown files. It lets you turn a collection of plain text files into a rich network of linked thought.

Pros

- Incredible graph view. Not only is it super-fast, but you can apply filters, create groups, and even change the look and functionality of the graph itself.
- Cross-platform app available for iOS (iPhone, iPad), MacOS, Windows, Linux
- No account or sign up required.
- Community support
- No need for an active internet connection.

³⁰ ‘Obsidian’.

- Obsidian is a fast-growing platform with new tools added regularly.
- Pricing: 100% free for personal use

Cons

- iOS version works only with iCloud

Miro

Microsoft Excel

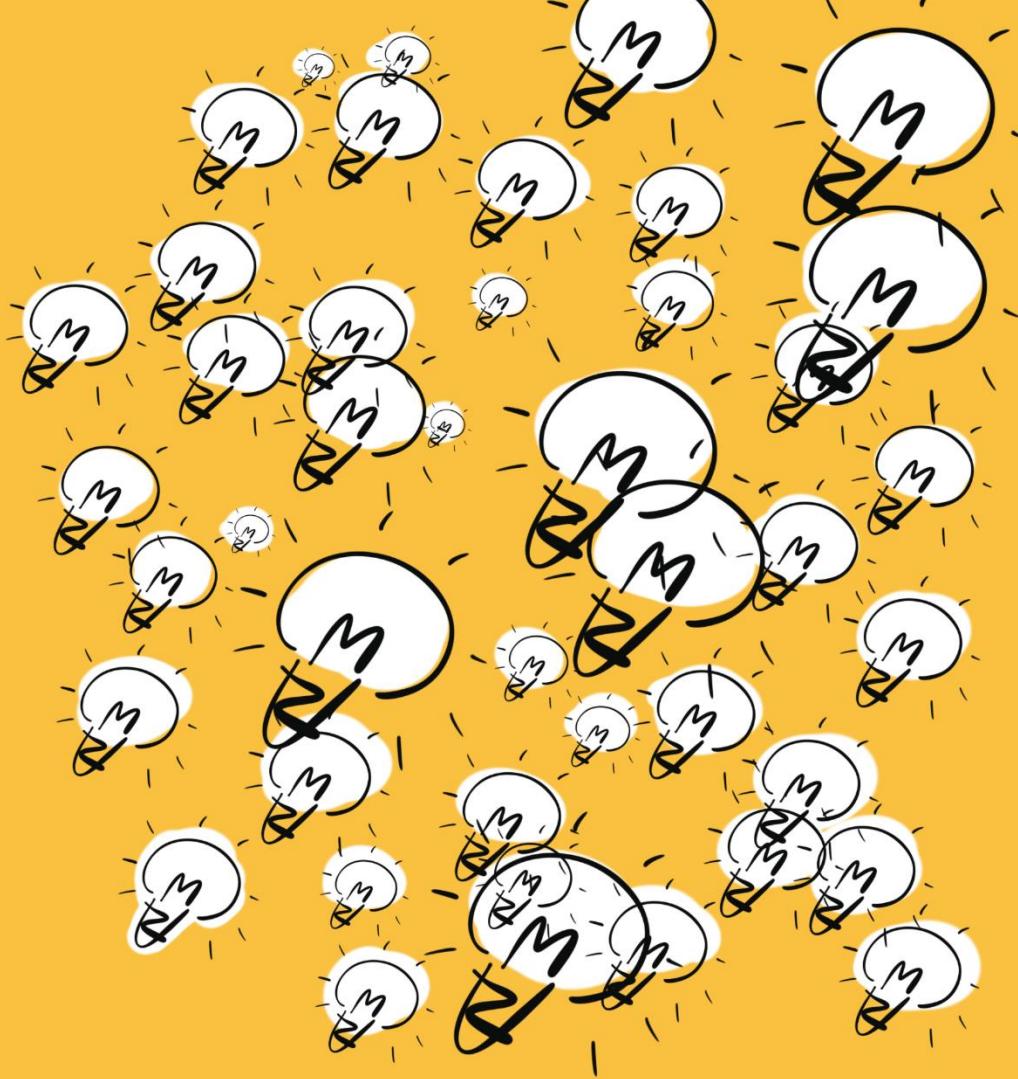
Microsoft PowerBI

Microsoft PowerPoint

Did you ever use PowerPoint for sketchnoting? Here my first example using sketchnotes first. My old way to design a presentation was quite easy: collecting ideas, giving them a structure, and finally building up my PowerPoint slides.

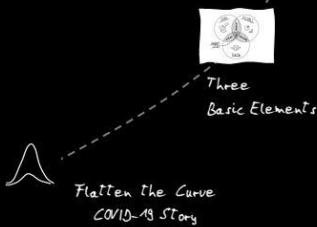
Why not starting with a sketchnote first? It shows all major ideas and the overall structure on one page, just from the beginning.

Microsoft Word

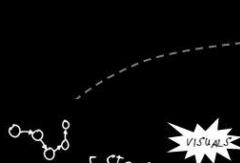


Procreate

Hidden Concepts of Data Storytelling



- 1 Chart Types
- 2 Visual Variables
- 3 Design Principles
- 4 Avoid Pitfalls
- 5 Attention



- The 22 Rules
- Three Act Structure

The diagram illustrates the Three Act Structure of a story. It features a bell-shaped curve representing the progression of time. The first act, labeled 'SETUP', shows a rise from a low point. The second act, labeled 'CONFRONTATION', reaches a peak. The third act, labeled 'RESOLUTION', shows a fall back to a baseline. The entire process is labeled 'STORY'.
- Business Storylines
- Storytelling Canvas

Why not telling
your own
Data Story

SimpleMind

SimpleMind is a cross-platform Mind Mapping tool with more than ten million users worldwide. It is my preferred tool to create structure notes for my Zettelkasten.

It now offers an integrated drawing editor. Combining mind mapping and sketchnoting is a great idea for brainstorming.

Learn more about this feature by watching SimpleMind³¹ on YouTube.

Here are my pros and cons from this use case.

Pros

- HTML export as an input for structure notes in Zettelkasten
- PNG export

³¹ 'Add Apple Pencil Drawings on IPad', 2021,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i79VqhShVww>.

- Cross-platform app available for iOS (iPhone, iPad), MacOS, Windows, Android
- Infinite canvas
- Use of Apple pencil to add drawings as images

Cons

- Drawings with pencil are pixel based, no vector drawing

Videos

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Version History

v0.13.0 | 30.01.2023

What 's New:

- New chapter "Introduction"
- New chapter "Understand Zettelkasten"
- New chapter "Be Aware of Your Networked Mindset"
- New chapter "Appreciate Zettelkasten Values"
- New chapter "Know Zettelkasten Principles"
- New chapter "Appreciate Sketchnote Values"
- New chapter "Know Sketchnote Principles"
- Updated "APPENDIX"

Bug Fixes:

- Improved citations

v0.12.0 | 05.01.2023

What 's New:

- Updated chapter “Use Sketchnotes”
- New chapter “Know what to value”
- New chapter “Know the Principles”
- Updated "APPENDIX"

Bug Fixes:

- Improved references

v0.11.0 | 03.01.2023

What 's New:

- New chapter “Understand Your Flow of Knowledge”
- New ideas for chapter “BENEFIT FROM BEST PRACTICES”
- New ideas for chapter “BE OPEN FOR EXPERIMENTS”

- New lists in "APPENDIX"

Bug Fixes:

- Link checking

v0.10.0 | 02.01.2023

What 's New:

- Updated "Foreword"
- Draft text for chapter "Understand the Value of Smart Sketchnotes"
- Draft text for chapter "Take Notes"
- Draft text for chapter "Take Sketchnotes"
- Draft text for chapter "Use Zettelkasten Method"

Bug Fixes:

- Spell checking

v0.9.0 | 29.12.2022

- Improved citation with active links in footnotes
- Fresh table of content
- Reworked chapter “Preface”
- Draft text for chapter “Focus on Creating Output”
- Draft text for chapter “SimpleMind”

v0.8.0 | 25.04.2022

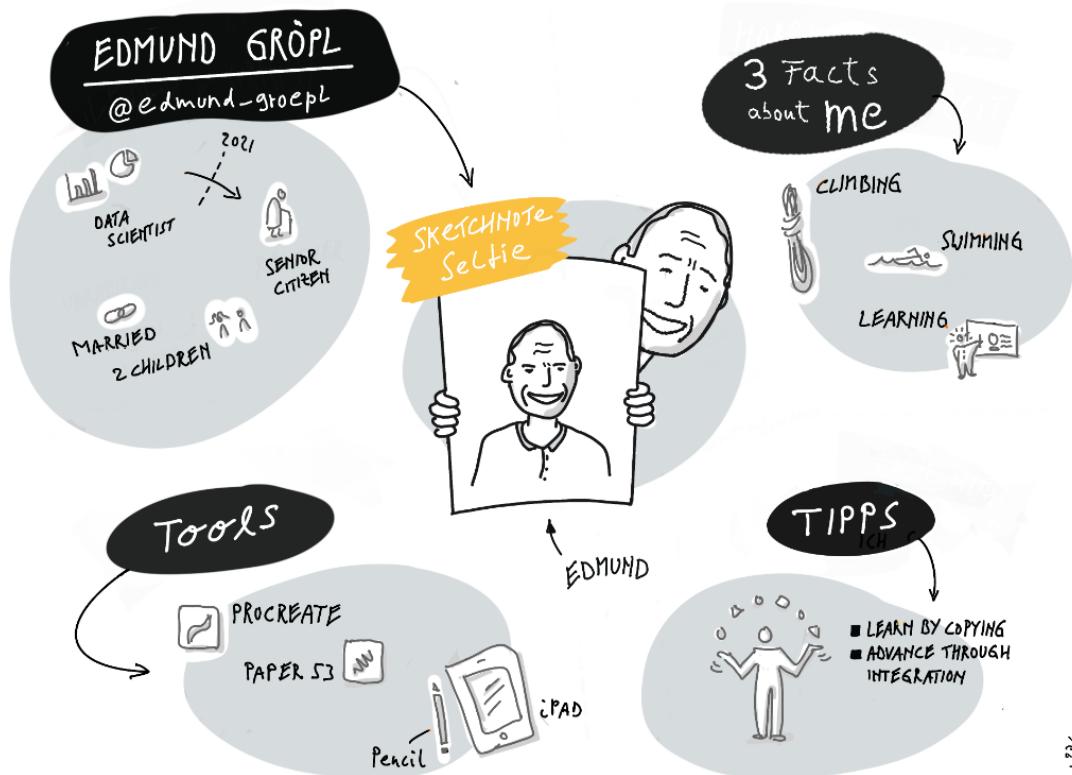
- First published at LinkedIn: LinkedIn - Smart Sketchnotes v008

To ensure you have the latest version available, please check GitHub³² for updates.

³² Edmund Gröpl, ‘Obsidian-Zettelkasten-Starter-Kit’, 28 December 2022, <https://github.com/groep1/Obsidian-Zettelkasten-Starter-Kit>.

lernOS® Sketchnotes

WEEK 6 - KATA 15: SKETCHNOTE-SELFIE



The Author

First things first I am a huge fan of data analysis and data discover. It is more than an interest for me to make relations between numbers and produce meaningful results. I have a passion for helping teams to become more data-driven and embracing the power of data storytelling.

I have experience more than 7 years on data analysis, reporting, dashboards and more than 20 years on software development, project management and corporate strategy on biggest companies including research, automation and telecommunications industries in Germany.

In my free time you can find me at the climbing gym, swimming long distances and spending quality time with my wife and my family.

So now I combine these experiences with my math and engineering background in here and I am looking forward to sharing my passion and knowledge with you.

Finally, I love Visual Thinking and Digital Sketchnoting³³!

³³ Edmund Gröpl, ‘Rework of My Sketchnote Selfie’, 2021,
https://www.linkedin.com/posts/groep_lernos-sketchnotes-sketchnote-activity-6826153340188016640-Kuh0.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

How to take SMART SKETCHNOTES is a book full of insights for sketchnoters of all proficiency levels. It covers a large scale of concepts useful for sketchnoting on digital devices.

We are learning from great visual thinkers and practitioners about their almost hidden secrets. Understanding the overall context helps to navigate in this field of learning. Going in detail will be the next step. The book provides numerous links to valuable resources you need to keep growing.

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EDMUND GRÖPL is an enthusiast of digital sketchnoting. He is an engineer working as a data scientist and storyteller. Visual thinking is part of his job. Working with sketchnotes and learning from experts is an intense pleasure for him.