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Sketchnoting as a new approach of effective notetaking: experience report

Sketchnoting como uma nova abordagem de anotação eficaz: relato de experiência

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Abstract: The objective of this study is to report an experience about a new approach of effective notetaking. This study explains the sketchnoting approach in teaching and learning, also shows practical aspects of using it. Sketchnoting is a unique form of better understanding and actively remembering fresh material. By learning this interesting technique, effectiveness of understanding and memorisation of a new material can be achieved much easier. Some elements and examples of drawings could be used during sketchnoting. Moreover some examples of works are shown with their characteristics and explanation.

Keywords: Sketchnoting. Memorization. Mental representations.

Resumo: O objetivo deste estudo é relatar uma experiência sobre uma nova abordagem de efetiva anotação. Este estudo explica a abordagem de sketchnoting no ensino e aprendizagem, também mostra aspectos práticos de usá-lo. Sketchnoting é uma forma única de melhor compreensão e lembrança ativa de material novo. Ao aprender esta técnica interessante, a eficácia da compreensão e memorização de um novo material pode ser alcançada muito mais facilmente. Alguns elementos e exemplos de desenhos podem ser usados durante o sketchnoting. Além disso, alguns exemplos de trabalhos são mostrados com suas características e explicação.

Palavras-chave: Sketchnoting. Memorização. Representações mentais.

Introduction

Sketchnoting is a group of the best and available methods of visual note taking. Combining those two words “sketch” and “noting” leads us to using simple icons and words planned on the paper sheet instead of writing sentences line by line. Using words and pictures helps us see connections between pieces of information. Students who use sketchnoting get a better idea of what is the essence of the lecture. It also helps to remember what should be learned later on (AINSWORTH; PRAIN; TYTLER, 2011).

When a person remembers a lesson, a shopping list or a kind of appliance it depends on how thoroughly the information is processed by one’s brain. In other

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words, if we engage ourselves in note taking, we remember the content better. Such visual notes include words and sketches or icons. Drawing the icon itself already makes it easier to build connotations and combining them with the text to form a comprehensible content (GILBERT, 2005).

Sketchnoting is like reference to double coding concept, when a person hear the content and match it to its referent, like a picture of a house, the brain creates new, strong neural connection that provides an easy access to this information, even after a long time (PAIVIO, 1990).

On visual note taking, it is worth highlighting the fact that it refers to a positive impact on in-class engagement, better performance with workbooks use, and stronger results than in the previous studies using comparable methods (AINSWORTH; PRAIN; TYTLER, 2011).

Other benefits of *sketchnoting* are improving mindfulness and ability to focus, learning to be selective and to make choices regarding the most important content, developing imagination and ability to predict (JAKUSZKO, 2017).

Objective

The objective of this study is to report an experience as a new approach of effective notetaking.

Method

It is an experience report on a new approach of effective notetaking. This study explains the sketchnoting approach in teaching and learning, also shows practical aspects of using it.

Results

The visual thinking remembers information by visualizations, graphs, and mind mapping, what is simply named sketchnoting. Did you know there is a way of supporting your students in learning faster? Taking notes line by line is not the optimal solution. There is much easier way of sharing knowledge in visually attractive and effective way. See some examples in Figures 1 and 2.

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Sketchnoting looks similar to Buzan's Mind Mapping method (BUZAN, 2002), but it is less restrictive, and therefore more accessible for wider range of listeners. Pictures maybe are not the best way for it. Icons are quicker to draw.

Sketchnoting is enable to engage and remember the content by means of a few simple lines. During the workshops for educators, the useful knowledge of how to make lessons more attractive and pleasant is provided, and that results in increasing their effectiveness.

Figure 1 - Some styles of sketchnoting from image A until D.



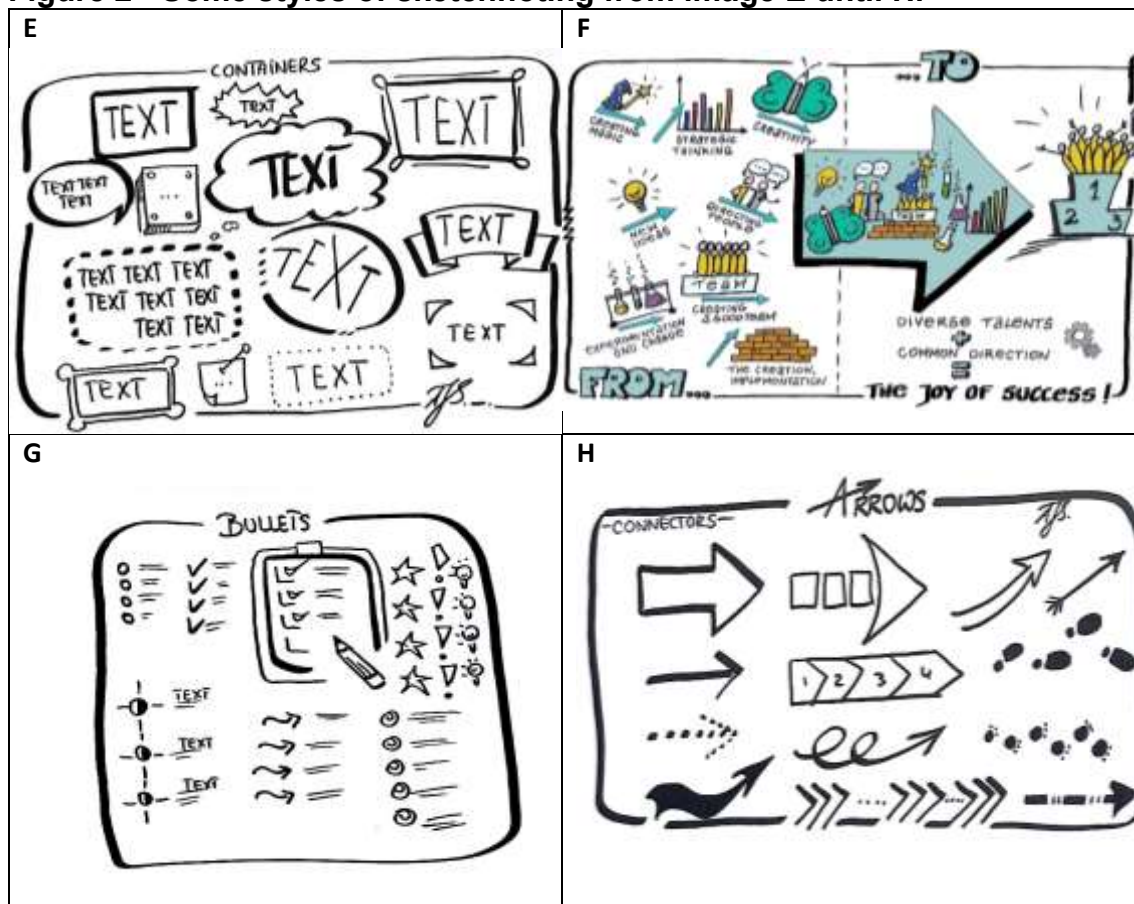
Source: The author, 2018.

When people realize that their thoughts are drawn in cartoon style they feel supported and more engaged in work. It is called graphic facilitation for popular formats, schoolboards, flipcharts or handouts as a lesson summary. The way it is done is less important, what matters is the comfort of the use. It works only when

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it is applied in practice. Taking visual notes helps one remembers things better. Other benefits of sketchnoting are as follows. Learning to analyze and conclude the essence of what is said. Engaging at a more profound level of thinking-matching, understanding, remembering. Developing imagination and ability to predict. Building a new network of associations to enable different processes, such as generating new ideas.

Figure 2 - Some styles of sketchnoting from image E until H.



Source: The author, 2018.

This is the art of relaxing for the majority of workshops participants, creating personal visual memory aid they can use again for later studying, making the whole story visible, establishing the level of self-esteem according to students.

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From the youngsters point of view, the most important is the reduction of time spending on learning by repeating. Not to mention the fact that drawing while listening can be also perceived as really experience. But the question is how can anyone learn how to make sketchnotes?

Sketchnoting is popular in education area, like in schools, on courses during conferences or business presentations explaining complicated processes and business facilitation. But those are not the only areas of practise. The groups that work with sketchnotes are most commonly teachers on class subject with their students, entrepreneurs who present complicated business content, coaches who explain the meetings' subjects to their clients, parents who suport their children's multilevel development, students of different ages who want to absorb knowledge from books, lectures or meetings effectively, educators conducting their lessons and meetings. This method does not require special talent.

There are many patterns of how to organize the drawing space for its users. Some useful layouts are ideal for lessons. Most of all, it is worth to begin draw the first line. The note will never be perfect. Deal with it. Don't expect to be perfect at drawings, fine lines and sophisticated icons.

It must be yours and effective, not beautiful. Try not to put down everything you hear. Select the most important statements, keywords and conclusions. Then put them in invisible bowes, so that everything fits in one page. Infinitives and keywords will do the job too. Try to experiment.

Vertical layout will be much more demanding than a horizontal one, that is more natural and convenient. Capital letters will also be more visible than handwriting. Adjust the note to your own needs. Use containers, shapes that separate parts of the content. There is a wide range to choose. It is worth using arrows for processes and transformations. There are different kinds of arrows too.

Some tips are use bullets, possibly adjusting their shape to the subjects. It is advisable to highlight titles and subtitles by using bigger bold fonts. Use colors, however do not overuse the variety of them. It is advisable to use a combination of black, grey and two other colors the most. Do not complicate your drawing. It

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is not an art competition. Your note is there to serve a different purpose and facilitate remembering, engagement, generating new ideas, you name it.

A person is just a circle on a stick crossed in two places, that's all. Your animals may be rough and buildings far from proportions. It is not important at all. When you are trying to draw something simple, use simple lines to refer to something much more complicated in your brain. It is enough that it's meaningful to you. Add a frame. A few lines may finish off the note both symbolically and literally, by giving it a shape.

Final considerations

Sketchnoting as a new approach of effective notetaking has growing attention. The demand for this service is increasing. It is how difficult things explain in a simple way. More and more teachers want to be able to effectively share knowledge. Then, they reach out for publications and other resources on that subject. Visual thinking-related websites have thousands of viewers in a day. Finally, children are willingly starting to prepare for school. It is well worth the effort.

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