

PINPOINT

We can use the simplicity and immediacy of pictures to discover and clarify our own ideas, and use those same pictures to clarify our ideas for other people.

Dan Roam

What is napkin sketching?

It's a quick method of displaying your thoughts about situations. It's a way of summarising — a sort of visual précis. But it is not art. Drawing is used as a way of communicating ideas not to produce art.

Why is it so useful?

- depict humans in action
- condense a lot of information
- by-pass complicated text
- simplify down to essentials
- are merely *work-in-progress*
- are collaborative
- generate dialogue
- are concrete and practical
- are easily understood
- are memorable.

What would you use it for?

If you've ever been stuck when analysing, deciding, creating or planning then napkin sketching will help. Instead of working everything out in the privacy of your head in order to come up with a perfectly formed answer...go public with your thinking. Extend your mind out onto paper or whiteboard. Engage others and move from *My Way to Our Way*.

Is it just a fad?

Not at all. It goes back to cave drawings. Creative people have consistently used sketches to develop and communicate their ideas. Take Edison's light bulb sketches. Or Darwin's visual notes. Napkin sketching is here to stay and become a core skill for working with knowledge.

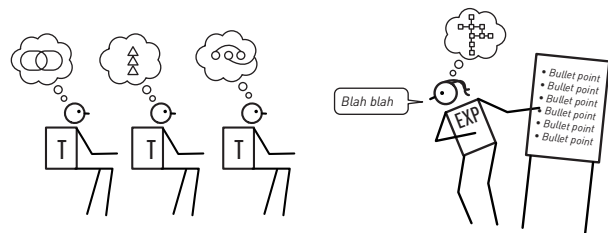


Confident explanations start with napkin sketches.

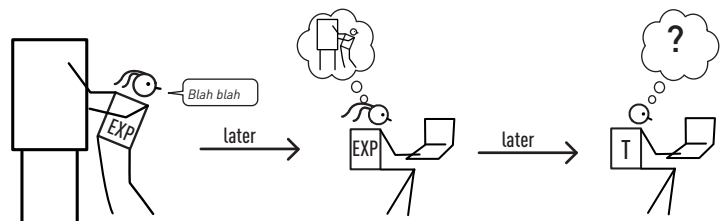
Don Moyer

The understanding gap

In teaching you make constant decisions about what actions to take. You're choosing which behaviours to execute in what sequence. And to help you make those decisions, you refer to experts through reading their books or attending their courses. The trouble is, there's an enormous understanding gap between what the expert says or writes and what you understand.



Why the understanding gap happens



The expert is famous for understanding what expert teaching looks like. She writes up descriptions of it, translating these images into text.

Later, when a teacher reads the expert's book, he has to envision what these verbal descriptions look like in reality. Unless he does this, he can't hope to reproduce the expert's strategies. Small wonder little of practical value is imparted through text alone.

Closing the understanding gap

Napkin sketches are the solution to this problem. With this visual form of notation, the expert has to pinpoint exactly who does what and in what order. Grand adjectives and abstract concepts are redundant. Objectionable even. A simple focus on the **actors**, their **attributes** and **actions** is all that's needed to communicate the essentials of a teaching strategy. It's like getting the expert to make her knowledge visibly transparent.



Pictures make the words matter —and vice versa.

Dan Roam

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