

Visual Thinking for Researchers

Objective

This workshop introduces sketch noting and visual thinking as practical tools for academic work and research documentation. Participants learn how simple drawings, symbols, and visual structures can support the understanding, organization, and communication of complex information. Particular emphasis is placed on developing an individual visual language connected to the participants' own research topics and disciplinary contexts.

Description

When we aim to observe, capture, and document information, we often rely primarily on written language. However, documentation can also take other forms of expression.

Sketch noting represents one such approach. Concepts, relationships, and key ideas can often be communicated more efficiently through simple visual symbols and sketches. In this sense, drawings can function as a form of visual language that complements written notes.

This seminar explores how such a symbolic visual language can be used to document and structure knowledge. Whether taking notes during a lecture, creating field notes, or presenting one's own research at a conference, sketch noting can offer a clear and intuitive way to organize and communicate complex information.

Methodology

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Approach drawing as a practical tool for thinking and note-taking, overcoming common reservations about drawing visually
- Structure and simplify complex ideas and information
- Develop a personal visual vocabulary for representing academic concepts
- Create a visual map that represents the key elements of their own research

Throughout the workshop, the notebook (provided during the session) is gradually filled with sketches, visual structures, and self-developed symbols tailored to the participants' own research topics.

The notebook serves several purposes:

- Participants quickly overcome the fear of the blank page
- Completing an entire notebook creates a strong sense of achievement and can motivate participants to continue using sketch noting beyond the workshop
- It's a self-created record of the workshop that participants can revisit later

Conditions

No prior drawing experience required

Trainer



Adrian Pourviseh
Author & Illustrator, Berlin

Adrian Pourviseh is a graphic novel author and illustrator. He studied Middle Eastern Studies in Marburg and Rabat and Development Economics at Lund University. From 2019 onward, he worked as a translator and photographer on board the Sea-Watch 3.

His graphic novel "Das Schimmern der See" tells the story of a sea rescue mission in the Mediterranean and has been published, among others, by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb).

Since 2021, he has been working as an illustrator and creating graphic recordings at events and conferences. Drawing on his own experiences during his studies and field research in Namibia and Pakistan, he developed a visual symbolic language whose foundations he shares in this workshop format.

Organizational Information

Language / Format	English / On campus
Target group	Doctoral Candidates at all stages and Postdocs (R2/R3) from all faculties
Date	Monday, 16 November 2026, 9:00 – 17:00
Registration	For registration click here