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Paper Notebooks: From an Industrial Model to a Tool of Expression

This work has been produced in the context of the graduation research of Emma Prato from the Experimental Publishing (XPUB) Master course at the Piet Zwart Institute, Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences.

XPUB is a two year Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design that focuses on the intents, means and consequences of making things public and creating publics in the age of post-digital networks [<https://xpub.nl>].

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Abstract

Paper Notebooks: From an Industrial Model to a Tool of Expression is an ongoing research project that attempts to understand how the structure, shape and functionality of a paper notebook can influence the way we take notes as well as the frequency and efficiency of use. The thesis uses theoretical research and practical methodologies to analyse paper notebooks, to discover how different prompts and activities can change the users' mindset and consciousness, while inviting them to produce personalised DIY notebooks in their personal practice.

The research methods used to feed this thesis are multiple. The first one is my personal notebook process that consists in the creation of different prototypes to analyse and question my use of notebooks and to discover how to modify them to adjust them to my needs. The second method is discussion groups to collect opinions through conversation and questions. The third one involves gathering and analysing the work of other users to understand how they approach the same process. The last method is the Collaborative Explorative Sessions (C.E.S.): the C.E.S. are a collaborative playground to experiment with a collection of exercises together with the workshop participants. I created the C.E.S. through the knowledge acquired in the process and specifically thanks to the first three methods included in the research, as well as inspired by Generative Design Research, which includes the end user in the design process (Sanders and Stappers, 2014). The text charts a historical and contextual overview on notebooks, the development of the project and presents findings that will lead to the creation of a physical outcome. This will take the shape of a guide or kick-starter kit to help others to analyse their own practice and to start questioning it, as well as to encourage a hands-on approach.

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I want to have more,
to be able to play with my
notebook, to know it better.
I started to reason on how,
as we've been creating our
personal tools online, we
could also create our personal
analogue tools. Notebooks
are individual and personal
objects, but they're treated
like everyone has the same
need from a piece of paper.

Someone said (Brendan
Howell): our collective work
is having new ideas to find
better alternatives to th(e
ma)instream ways that shut
down every imagination
chance, they offer the 'best'
way. + "Thus, throughout, I
demonstrate how a certain
thread of experimental poetry
has always been engaged with
questioning the media by which
it is made and through which
it is consumed" [Emerson, L.,
2014] → the medium is the
message [McLuhan, 2013]

19.09.22

1. The objective of research: from an industrial model to a tool of expression

In "Reading Writing Interfaces" (2014), Lori Emerson describes how in recent years, design is getting increasingly more invisible and users are becoming less aware of the processes of the devices they use. Similarly, as with digital interfaces, humans think progressively less about the objects they use, and why and how they use them: "as the power of machines increases, the role of persons more and more decreases to that of mere consumer" (Illich, 1985).

We live in an era in which we can decide to continuously fulfil our desires, without wondering or understanding what we truly need or want. Many people buy a paper notebook because they are attracted by the idea they have of this object, of that nostalgic feeling of hand-writing. Yet, users of paper notebooks, as I discovered through multiple sessions and conversations, frequently tend not to start or complete their notebooks because they are not conscious of the possibilities this medium can offer. In addition, consumerism, capitalism and new technologies "promote efficiency and productivity more than happiness and creativity" (Sanders E. B.-N. and Stappers P. J., 2014). There is no value given to the power and support objects can provide humans with. Therefore, I chose an object or medium which is the emblem of productivity and that participates in consumerist practices. The aim is to convert it from an industrial model to a tool of expression, a self-thought and subversive object.

I have always been fascinated by book-making, since the first time I built a book with my hands. Creating the container for the content was what excited me the most: choosing the paper, printing the content, folding, binding and glueing gave me a feeling I had never experienced before (fig.1,2,3).

Through a book-making practice, I realised how interesting it was to create books from already existing waste and to find innovative strategies to make it work. The start of this research culminated in the moment I completed the last paper notebook and started a plan for the next one (fig.4,5). I started questioning my practice and created a notebook that already had a special feature in itself: it permitted me to play around with the structure of the object and it was fitting my needs. I analysed the positive and negative sides and thought about alternative solutions that could make it work even more for my way of reasoning, writing, and thinking. I already felt I could give more to this object and vice versa, this object was supporting me in a way that has never happened before.

fig 1. inside binding of 'the book of books' (2019)



fig 2. the wrapped one, notebook with an amazon cardboard cover and fabriano4 paper, from 'sketch(totrash) book' series (2020)



fig 3. a5 small zines series, 'small visions of being' (2019)



I am interested in notebooks as a means of creativity, a personal space for thinking, reasoning and learning. Can this personal world be the same for everyone, can it be standardised? My theory is that everyone, in different situations, has different needs when using a paper notebook. How much we use it, how useful it becomes for us, and how we feel free and comfortable with it can change by using different structures. Can I, through theoretical and applied research, discover more about this concept? And with the knowledge I produce, can I create a method or a structure that can help others discover themselves and their needs towards notebooks?

This thesis is a report on my practice: I informed my research using different methods which contributed to developing the body of the text and supporting my questions. Chapter 2 will give a general overview of the history and characteristics of notebooks in all their forms and set the context for the next chapter. Chapter 3 will discuss and analyse the methods used in this thesis. The methods are used to acquire knowledge and gather information from others, as well as to experiment with prompts and

fig 4. paper selection for the first prototype: a4 multiple types (white, cream, coloured, thicker, thinner etc.), a4 wrong prints, amazon cardboard (march 2022)



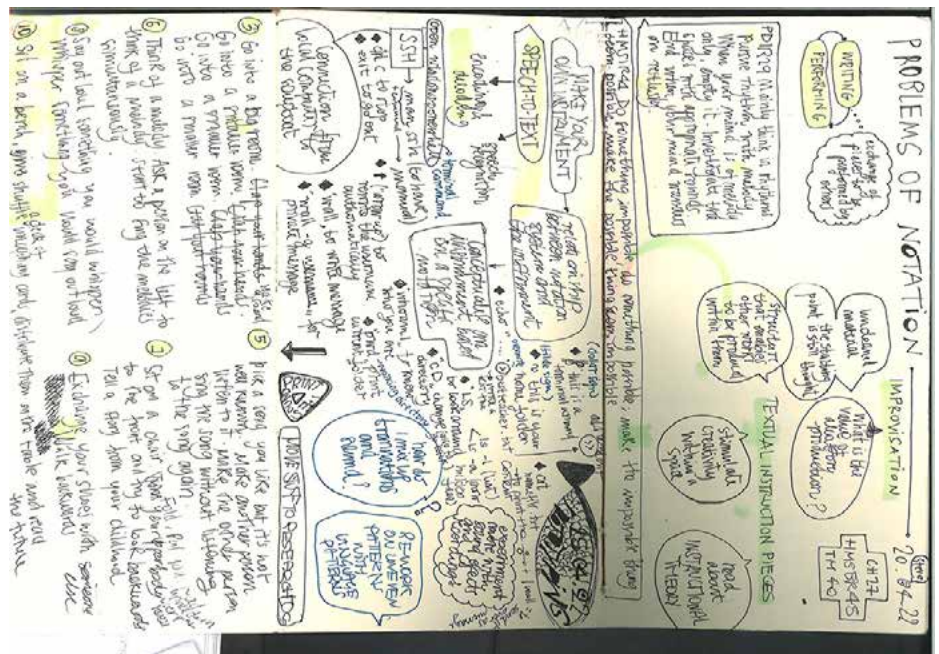
- + it occupies less space but offers bigger pages
- + the additional lateral flaps allow modularity: the user can move the flaps to connect with multiple pages at the same time
- + if the user forgets something the flaps give more space to write
- + the flaps can be used differently by everyone
 - the fact that it's folded means it's thicker and it's difficult to write if it's too big
- + by using it horizontally the above problem is resolved
- + can have patterns/contents that move from the flaps to different pages throughout the notebook [also at later stages if you are still working on the topic]
- + fold page wing to avoid the page to be moved by the wind (!!!)
- + offer different types of paper to people if they want to draw (or whatever) without ruining the binding and of a nice shape//vertical
 - still can't write because it's too big
 - it can get wet --> make it waterproof

20.03.22

activities to invite users to produce their personalised DIY (Do It Yourself) paper notebooks. The overall results will be discussed in the conclusion. Most of the materials gathered through the research can be found in the Appendix: to delve deeper, check it out.

The outcome to make this work public and applicable will be discovered throughout the research and developed after the publication of this thesis. I aim to produce a guide or kick-starter kit that will present, in different shapes, prompts and activities to encourage a critical analysis of the use of paper notebooks and a 'thinking while making' approach in the process of creating DIY personalised paper notebooks. This thesis may be included as part of the outcome.

fig 5. notebook workflow: the inside of the first prototype, with one opened flap (april 2022)



- I am very unorganised. At the moment I am always writing everything that comes very fast, in whatever position in the page. This leads to a big amount of content without a structure/ any entry point. It is not accessible after some time I wrote things down.

- I feel restricted in the moment I have to write on a flat a5 page. I feel like the content is never organised because I can write in every direction and most of the time I use visual note-taking, or note-making, especially the circular method (have starting points in the middle and then move around it), i get lost in the space because I have space with no interruptions or limitations.

- i always forget to write dates because it feels very temporary.

- i hate how the pages turn around the rings because there is not the right amount of pages to turn it properly.

- i do not like the paper I am using right now because it is not flexible or foldable in any way.

FOLDABILITY HELPS ME.

+ my thoughts are never interrupted because it is a very accessible notebook. I do not feel bad in start writing wherever I find it fitting.

+ I can position every sheet where I want, moving them around after use.

18.01.2023

2. History and context: the past and potential of paper notebooks

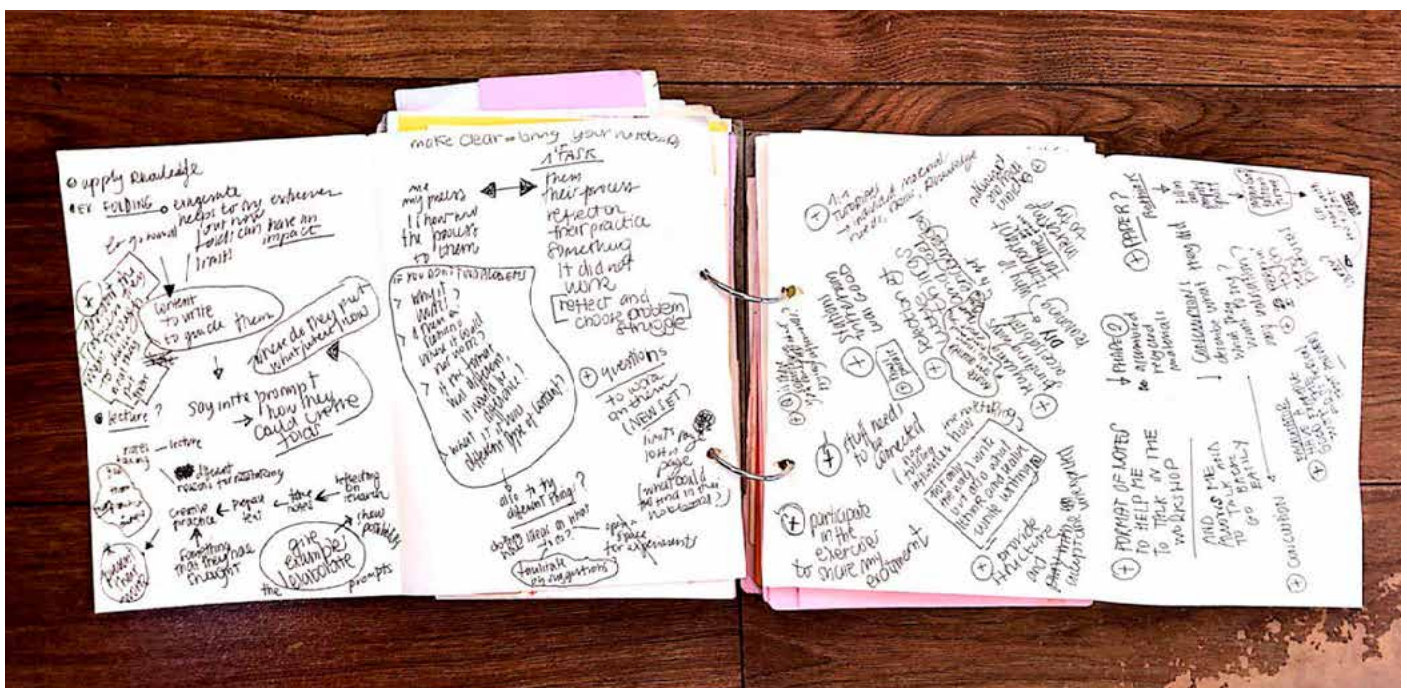
2.1 Paper machines, analogue and digital interfaces: defining writing tools and note-taking techniques

“The notebook as a paper machine consists of the functions noting and storing of notes. ‘To note’ means first and foremost ‘to write down’, from the Latin ‘notare’, or from ‘noscere’, which means ‘to get to know’. (...) writing results in a praxis with paper that requires certain gestures, performed acts, rituals and tools.” (te Heesen, 2005)

To allow an analysis of the use of paper notebooks and note-taking techniques, the characteristics of both have to be identified, even though they work along with each other: one is the surface of the practice of the second. Both note-taking and notebooks, in all their forms, have been evolving together with society and have taken part in different areas of humans living: information and knowledge management, learning and education, personal growth, self-expression, and so on.

Paper notebooks are the interface or technology on which the note-taking techniques are applied. Looking at history, other

fig 6. ring notebook with flaps to make it bigger (january 2023)



‘versions’ of a paper notebook could be a clay tablet, a papyrus roll, a paper codex, index cards, a legal pad, a ring notebook (fig.6), loose paper sheets, post-it notes, a Moleskine notebook, a DIY (Do It Yourself) paper notebook, a tablet, a laptop, a mobile phone.

Ann Blair defines note-taking as “the product of practices of reading and writing taught in school and reinforced by various cultural models” (Blair, 2010, p.5). Note-taking techniques are methods to gather information that can be applied to any interface, platform or technology. Some examples are the commonplace, the summa, the florilegia, the glosses or marginalia (fig.7), the index method, short-hand systems, idea mapping, the Cornell method, sketch noting.

This research focused on one of the technologies, a DIY paper notebook, and analysed how it influences the practice to contribute to the current research on note-taking: literature on note-taking techniques exists, but there is little research on the object or technology that is used to engage with the writing and the result of it.

In the next section, some of these terms will be described in detail. It is important to notice how much and how differently

the two evolved through time. Was the interface adjusting to the note-taking technique or the opposite? Were society’s needs changing the tool or the method?

2.2 The evolution of the paper notebook: from elitist tool to popular commodity

2.2.1 The management of knowledge: information overload before and after the Renaissance

The history of notebooks helps us to move along with the different definitions of note-taking to demonstrate how the use of this object changed over time, following the needs

fig 7. Marginalia from Pliny, the Elder. Naturalis Historia (1491)



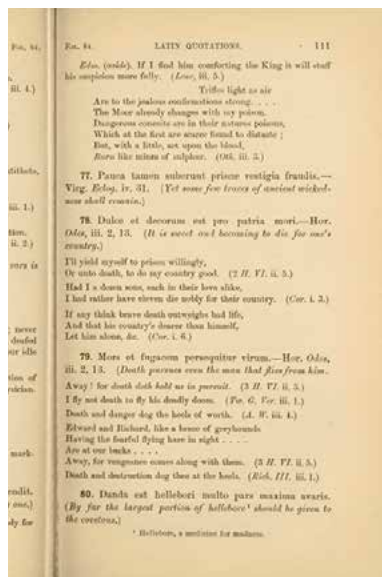
of European society. Even before the arrival of modern printing in Europe (around 1455), the problem of information overload was present and new methods for management had to be arranged.

Note-taking has existed for a long time but there is not much evidence of it before the XV century (Blair, 2010, p.1). Nowadays, notebooks are mostly used for annotating for later use, but in the past, they were used to organise and classify materials (Yeo, 2008). They “were part of daily life for literate, educated individuals, (..) were prompts for material that should be stored in memory” (Yeo, 2008). Paper notebooks consisted of the work of intellectuals on parchment, to transmit oral knowledge.

In the Medieval period, the first codex format for manuscripts was created, replacing the papyrus, and the purpose of use shifted “from a cumbersome mnemonic aid to a readily accessible information storehouse” (Hobart and Schiffman, 2000). Copies of books were created by dictation by scribes and the production of books expanded. They were no longer big and bulky, but small, for personal use, cheap and widely available. A new need arose from the growth of accessibility to books: how to deal with contradictory information. One solution has been the ‘gloss’, which consisted in adding comments in small cursive on the side of a text (fig.7). Another solution that appeared in the XII century was called ‘summa’ or summary, which purpose was to cut “the diverse interpretations to establish a core of truth” (Hobart and Schiffman, 2000): it began with a question, then contrasting opinions were listed and it ended with a conclusion or ‘sententia’. The need was to sum up large quantities of information to help the reader out.

In the classical period, Aristotle tried to solve the discussions between the rhetorical and philosophical approaches to knowledge by using the term “topoi, topics or places containing various approaches to argumentation”: the commonplace book

fig 8. a page from bacon's commonplace book, containing latin quotations (1883)



+it has been helpful to reorganise thoughts in very small sheets of paper. This obliged me to describe a concept in a little amount of words

+it allows me to move around the sheets and then attach them together when I finalised decisions

+it was helpful for this specific purpose of reorganising and connecting thoughts

-it's very fragile and not very usable if not sitting at a desk. It can help to explain concepts and ideas, through the unfolding and opening mechanism, but it is of any use as a portable notebook

09.11.22

fig 9. index cards as part of a notebook kit experiment: an adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation (november 2022)



was born (fig.8). During the XVI century, the commonplace books (the term in English appeared around 1578) became significant in education and pedagogy and were “private notebooks in which students and scholars kept extracts from the major classical texts” (Yeo, 2008). The users of the commonplace books would use headings to organise topics in themes, as virtues, most of the times giving different points of view on the argument. They were similar to a collective memory: a repository of concepts and quotes to be shared and read by others (Yeo, 2008). The commonplace technique was the first attempt at the concept of the index, used to locate the materials afterwards (Cevolini, 2020).

Because of social and political events, such as the spread of printing (XV-XVI centuries), the reformation, and the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy, the way of dealing with information management changed again. The commonplace thought, as conceived until that moment, disappeared by the end of the XVI century and its moral categories, overloaded with the large amount of conflicting material produced by printing, “became arbitrary placeholders” (Hobart and Schiffman, 2000). Commonplace books continued to exist, but to illuminate the self and not to describe common rules or morals that could be uniformly followed.

By the middle of the XVII century, the need to produce new and unexpected knowledge through the creation of connections between content had emerged. One relevant work to mention is by Secondo Lancellotti (1583-1643): he created an index system (fig.9) in which he would insert “associative cross-references and pointers whenever and wherever possible, enabling the reader to surf through” all these annotations, “replacing reading with a type of early modern hypertext” (Cevolini, 2020). The fi-

ling system helped the user to reference themselves in a recursive circular way, transforming the paper notebook, an object used to organise materials, into a “thinking machine” (Cevolini, 2020). Luhmann’s Zettelkasten system (created between 1951-1997 and consisting of more than 90,000 index cards) is a later example of someone researching not only topics but how to create a personal organisation of them to obtain something like a ‘second brain’ (or memory) that would help him to make connections, associations and creation of new concepts (Schmidt, 2018).

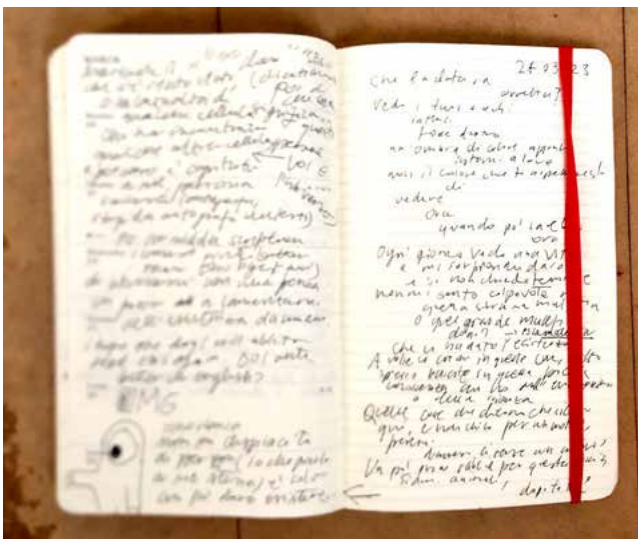
When print did not exist yet, the definition of book coincided with the definition of notebook: an object on which intellectuals used to write or copy texts coming from an oral tradition or written by others, often classical authors. When print spread, the activity of scribes was no longer essential and the two objects moved apart and transformed into something different. Notebooks became part of everyone’s daily life as a personalised support in learning and also, in existing (think about diaries or planners).

2.2.2 The paper notebook in modernity: from a unique artistic medium to hacking as a practice

In the XIX century in Europe, a specific type of notebook spread around: the moleskine. The name means ‘leather’ in English and it has been used to describe a notebook with a black cover of a very strong vinyl-coated material, a little pocket on the back and a rubber band.

The notebook has been used by many famous authors and artists, becoming very well-known in Europe, “until plastic-covered ones gradually replaced them from the 1950s” (te Heesen, 2005). In 1997, Moleskine (fig.10) became a trademark for an Italian company and spread all over the world, evolving and following the trends to stay up to date. The company, in recent years, introduced many digital devices or methods to recon-

fig 10. note-taking on a moleskine - a classic planner 2023 Weekly 12-Month, scarlet red € 23,50 (april 2023)



nect the well-known paper notebook to the digital world. One collaboration has been together with Evernote, “the diary software that allows users to sync, through the ‘cloud’, notes, images and other digital content” (Lehman and Lewis, 2014), combined with a physical paper Moleskine. In addition, one research looked at the behaviours of Moleskine’s consumers on Twitter (Aufschnaiter, 2020), discovering different creative practices in the digital space. Consumers display their private notebooks in the digital realm through images and inspire others to make “use of the Moleskine notebook in digital and physical space” (Aufschnaiter, 2020), as well as trying to express their personalities using this object.

Paper notebooks evolved through time, changing the needs they were made for, changing the relationship the user had with the object, until becoming a global trend. Still, even if Moleskine’s consumers choose this object in the first place because of the history of legendary artists, on which they project their ambitions, it is very common the concept of hack (fig.11): “a user-designed customizations of objects” (Alexis, 2017). The company does also allow its consumers to personalise their notebooks (at a certain expense), but hacking comes directly from the users and permits them to modify a pre-defined medium, transforming it into a personal object. What is surprising is that

“hacking and cutting up Moleskines appears to contradict a dominant thread in the discourse around this object, which is that due to their cost, aesthetics, and cultural resonance, they have a ‘sacred’ status that prevents them, at times, from being used” (Alexis, 2017)

The discourse returns to the problems analysed in other sections of this research: the cost of the object and the pre-made personalisation, the aesthetics and the status such object can have that prevent

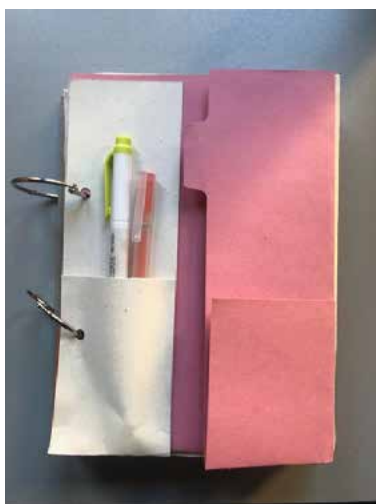
fig 11. moleskine hack - Michael Mordant came up with a cool way to turn a moleskine into a case for your ipod or other items you want to keep incognito (2018)



I made some modifications to the metal ring notebook:
added color separation for sections equipped with a small pocket; is it going to work?
the sections are:
notes on texts, thesis to do lists, project brainstorming, archipelago, personal stuff.
a pen holder
a4 sheets folded in half that allow a more structured note-taking; they are thinner than the old ones

09.02.23

fig 12. a pen holder to keep pens attached, coloured section separator, a file holder to save important paper (february 2023)



the user from consuming what they have bought. What a DIY paper notebook can add to this will be discussed in the next section.

2.3 DIY paper notebooks and standard industrial paper notebooks: individual needs and commodity knowledge

In this chapter, I will distinguish and compare the production of DIY notebooks and industrial notebooks, using a study by Tsamrotul Fuadah and Prasetio (2019), that researched the VOC (Voice Of the Customer) as part of a new product development process. Generally, product research is conducted to create objects that can satisfy the characteristics and needs of the customer: this becomes essential for increased sales.

My research included the user both in the section in which the VOC would be analysed and discovered, as well as in the entire design and production process.

The results of the research by Tsamrotul Fuadah and Prasetio (2019) are analysed through calculations, that define the features most of the participants prefer. Some examples are: “strap to make the paper-notebook locked; always divide the paper-notebook into several sections; pen holder to keep the pen attached; multi-function; file holder to keep important paper” (Tsamrotul Fuadah and Prasetio, 2019). But what most of them prefer is not what everyone, singularly, chose during the interviews. Instead, the final design will be based on the number of possible buyers. To elude this issue, in the creation of the final design, “the researcher recommends a paper notebook to have several additional features to be able to have a uniqueness and difference from any other product in the market” (Tsamrotul Fuadah and Prasetio, 2019). My interpretation is that the only feature that matters here is to have something special, unique, and different from others that at the same time satisfies all the needs and desires of the consumer.

One of the positive sides of making DIY paper notebooks is

that essential features such as cover design, paper, size and price, can be decided by the creators (fig.12). The downside is that hand-made notebooks can look more fragile, depending on the materials used and the abilities of the creator; they might lose that 'industrial' and simple but fancy look that customers are used to and find attractive.

A downside of a market-made paper notebook is the cost of production: especially when a company provides the chance to pick different characteristics to create a personalised and unique object, the cost grows inevitably. Not all notebook users are willing to spend much money on this object. This also applies to expensive and innovative digital devices that mimic the long-hand writing activity.

Someone might think that inviting people to make personalised paper notebooks contributes to paper waste and does not participate in recycling values. Instead, if done properly, DIY can be the best solution to avoid waste and save money simultaneously. Not everyone needs to be active in the same way, but everyone can build up a certain consciousness when personally deciding which 'ingredients' to use, also from a monetary point of view.

Buying a product, for example, a cake, from a shop or, instead, baking a homemade one, produces a different impact on consumers (that become active makers). In the first case, it is easier to avoid thinking about what the cake is made of. Instead, making it yourself comes together with a major consciousness at every decision. This is the same for notebooks: if the maker has to choose the paper, they have the opportunity to pick recycled, second-hand (cheap) or certified paper (harvested responsibly), pondering every choice carefully. In addition, if the notebook is made by the user for themselves with consciousness, the possibility that it will be amassed in a box and never used is lower than the case of a fancy, clean and untouchable industrial notebook.

2.4 The effects of note-taking and the importance of the physical space: what is involved in the process of note-taking

This research will not change the contemporary state of note-taking learning, but, from a different perspective, it could help to interact with notebooks differently, as support in learning as well as in the learning of learning. Discussing, analysing, and experimenting with the object helps to reflect on an activity that is part of everyone's daily life but is normally not widely taken into consideration. In this chapter, I will discuss what is involved in the process of note-taking. Digital notes, used as a comparison in this chapter, even if not part of this research, are considered as one of the possible options for specific needs a note-taker could have.

There are two ways in which the act of note-taking can affect learning: "The encoding hypothesis suggests that the processing that occurs during the act of note-taking improves learning and retention. The external storage hypothesis touts the benefits of the ability to review material" (Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014). Kiewra (1989) gives an account of the research done on the two functions: the author underlines how research suggests that both recording notes and reviewing notes are facilitative. In addition, the author affirms that research has been done to understand the processes happening during note-taking, but not a lot has been done to help note-takers to improve their abilities and strategies.

The main mistake in the case of laptop note-taking is 'verbatim', the overlap of words, like a dictation, that undermines the possibility of a thoughtful learning habit (Mueller and Oppenheimer, 2014; Umejima et al., 2021; Morehead et al., 2019; Dynarski, 2017; Appendix C; fig.13,14,15). When writing by hand, note-takers have to reformulate the concepts to be able to follow another person talking. Writing on a laptop is useful to have more information written down, but it creates the risk of an overload of

the first thing to consider and keep in mind while looking at these notes, is that steve and I are different people, with a different need (I annotate mostly what I need to go on with the work, steve tries to get a big overview of the conversation, focusing on the main points - he finds useful) and we have a different note taking methodology.

the second thing I notice is that steve is annotating everything in a Q&A structure, copying down every word, like a dictation, that came out from our mouths while discussing. Sometimes he shorten some concepts.

I think that most of the time I personally always re-write the sentence given from who is talking with my own words. It is a good exercise to learn rephrasing, as well as it helps not to forget the sentence while writing it down.

to conclude, I see that a lot of main words are matching in the two versions of notes we produced during the session. The notebook I am using does not really allow to create different structures or directions, everything is aligned as it is on steve's laptop.

09.02.23

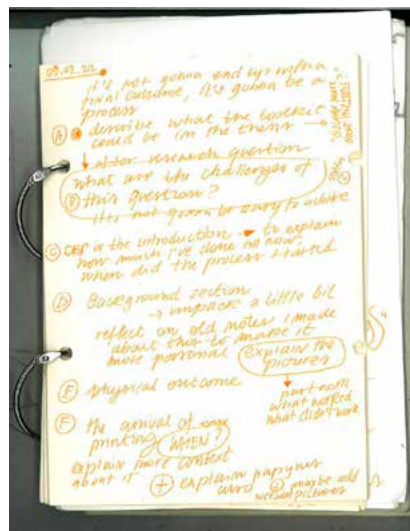
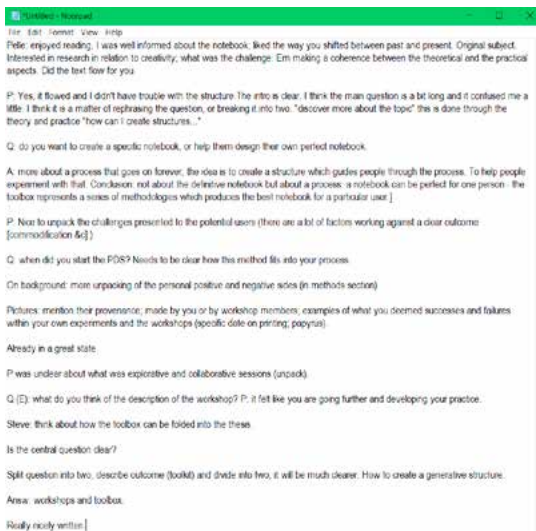
information more than a selection of notes that will help study. By hand, note-takers risk losing track of a larger amount of content. Nevertheless, if they do it properly, it will be much easier to review that information. It is important to review materials to make the best use of the notes in both cases (Kiewra, 1987; 1989). Kiewra (1989) describes how the encoding function occurs “because note-taking activities encourage increased attention, more elaborative processing of specific ideas, and/or greater organisation of lecture material” (Einstein et al., 1985, in Kiewra, 1989). The use of a conscious medium for annotating could be a way to approach this issue through the creativity of note-takers. When starting to question their note-taking activity, note-takers could improve the way they do it, the tools they use and their annotation techniques, producing a better organisation of content and major processing of ideas.

Both digital and analogue fill different functions. The aim is to give note-takers the tools to understand or ask themselves what is the best option for them. It is difficult from standardised experiments to discover what is better for who, and in which situation. I hope that my research will partly contribute to filling this gap.

Equally important, Peper and Mayer (1978) describe note-taking as a generative technique: the note-taker tries

fig 13,14,15. confronting digital and hand-written notes on the same conversation (february 2023)

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“to see the interconnections in what he or she is learning and trying to see how it all relates to some underlying system. The non-note taker, on the other hand, is simply trying to catch the main points and is particularly interested in learning the fragments of the technical symbols and examples that will allow acceptable performance on a later test”.

Notebooks should also provide space for interpretation and reasoning, not only for recording. The theory carried along in this thesis is that generative processes are more easily activated when the medium used is better aligned with the way of reasoning and reviewing of the note-takers. When feeling comfortable with an object, we are more confident in its use and therefore can take the best out of it.

Moreover, a process takes place when we take notes and the type of interface we use to do it makes a difference: “The hippocampus is crucially involved not only in memory encoding and retrieval processes but also in spatial memory itself” (Umejima et al., 2021). Does it make a difference to write on a physical medium? Throughout my research, I discovered how much it is important, for recovery and reviewing reasons, where I specifically write words or sentences. Recently, while using an unfitting notebook I made, I found myself scared of forgetting because the pages did not allow a proper instinctive positioning of the content while taking notes. Afterwards, it became extremely hard to retrieve what I was looking for because of how I positioned the text without a convenient structure (Appendix A; fig.16-17).

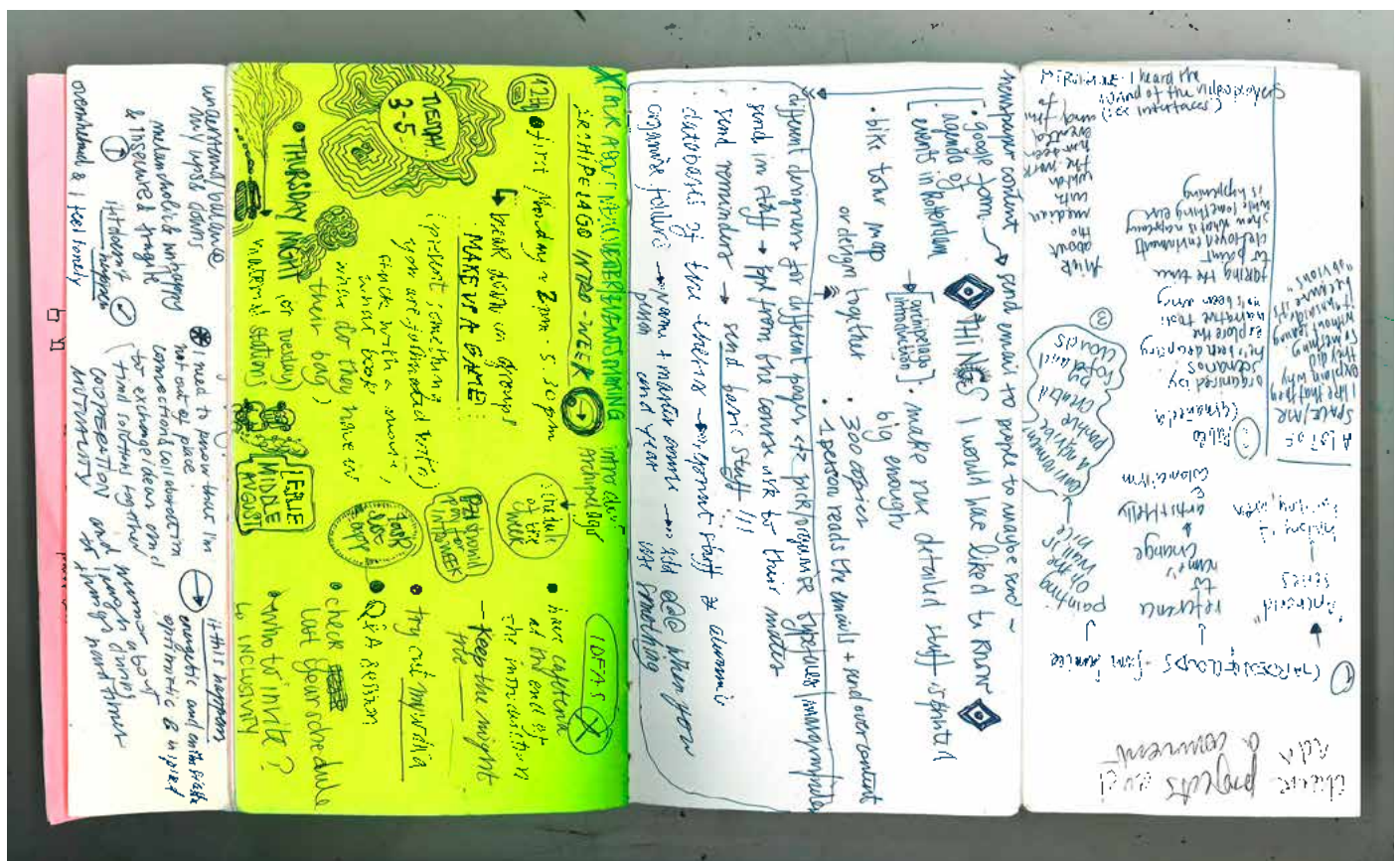
The concept is that the shape and the structure of the object, the paper notebook, can influence the content and the result of the act of writing, thinking and learning. Bonnie Mak affirms that

“from a young age, we are trained to believe that the boundaries for the interface are always identical to the edges of

I noticed how much I work with numbered lists when I have a flat sheet of paper. I think it's pretty evident, looking at my old notebook and this new flat one, how much the shape changed the content. It is very hard right now to use this notebook for brainstorming. I am only writing lines of text and cannot connect with others at all.

14.02.23

fig 16,17. confronting my notes on a rectangular a5 ring notebook vs a notebook made with openable flaps, with narrow pages (April 2022-february 2023)



the material platform of the page - namely, that the cognitive space and physical dimensions of the page are necessarily conterminous." (Mak, 2014)

The page is not just a rectangle on which we write only because we have been taught to do so; in this way, the medium loses many of its possibilities, weakened by the dominance of the content. Instead, "the page is more than a single vehicle or container for the transmission of ideas; it is part of those ideas, entangled in the story itself" (Mak, 2014). How the text is organised in the space, how the user interacts with the paper, the folding or unfolding, the size of the paper, and the thickness of it. Everything participates in the act of note-taking and hugely contributes to transmitting and receiving content in different ways.

during the first semester at xpub I have been using an iperborea notebook, measurements: 10x20 I find it amazing but the fact that it involves cutting paper out, I didn't want to create a new notebook out of that idea without finding a solution that would not waste anything

I thought about folding instead of cutting and I actually came up with a nice solution:

folding both sides

I thought it was nice to add additional notes on the side of the main sheets.

this option later suggested an additional possible feature: folding just on one side to create a bigger paper sheet, by opening it.

the idea is to create a notebook that permits the user to play it around and adapt it to their own needs

see modularity: "the degree to which a system's components may be separated and recombined, often with the benefit of flexibility and variety in use" (Ampatzidou et al., 2020)

30.03.22

3. Methods and Case Studies: gathering experience to share knowledge

This research evolved through time, while understanding what the objectives were, how to achieve them and what was relevant to be analysed and discussed, as well as experimented and explored. The methods used have been multiple: the observation and analysis of my personal work and the work of others in the context of making notebooks; discussion groups to delve into the topic and discover the point of view of others; practical sessions (Collaborative Explorative Sessions or C.E.S.) where to apply the knowledge obtained since the beginning of the research. The results will be analysed in the following sections, leading to the conclusion.

3.1 My personal notebook process: how everything started

This research project is directly connected to my practice and it started while I was experimenting with a new notebook for my studies (fig.18). I have been experimenting with myself and my needs in the use of notebooks and I felt that I was going through a 'personal notebook process': the ever-changing process a person can go through, by analysing and questioning their note-taking activity and their use of paper notebooks, to understand themselves and their needs to be able to create alternatives to support them better. Since March 2022, I experimented with different prototypes, modifications, add-ons, and transformed second-hand paper into playable objects. I annotated my thoughts to understand what my needs were from this object and how I could build a new notebook that could satisfy them better. I documented every step on my personal Wiki (visit <https://pzwiki.wdka.nl/mediadesign/User:FLEM/Notebook>) in the form of an illustrated diary. The diary starts in March 2022 and will continue until graduation or later; the one included in the thesis ends

fig 18. iperborea notebook 10x20 from a special collection (september-december 2021)



when the M&Ms sessions have been described someone had to propose something for next week 26.09.22 and I have a strong need to start sharing my ideas about notebooks and see how other human beings react to it.. I need this especially if i want to organise workshops, so in the next week I will work on how this session could function in a way that it's helpful both for participants and for me and my research development.

19.09.22

in April when the text has been delivered (Appendix A). I used this material to experiment with different activities to invite others to go through the same process during the C.E.S.: the results will be transformed into prompts to be included in a guide or kick-starter kit.

3.2 The preparatory sessions: first steps into the world of paper notebooks

The preparatory sessions are discussion groups I organised during what we call ‘Public Moments’ within the Experimental Publishing course (XPUB): events where we, students, invite others to help us to shape our raw project ideas. In addition, one of the sessions took place online, with only one participant and in Italian.

The main aim was to analyse questions and discover if they would or would not trigger a reaction in the participants. I had to establish two main things: Are notebooks part of their lives? Can I use this specific object to incite certain thoughts and associations to promote self-expression and creativity?

3.2.1 Public Moment 1.0: the relevance of analysing the personal use of notebooks

[M&Ms; 26-09-2022; XPUB classmates]

M&Ms are classes organised between classmates in XPUB. I aimed to analyse, understand and improve notebook systems to create personalised methodologies and tools.

I told participants to bring their notebooks and thoughts or issues they might have with them. I printed questions (fig.19; Appendix B.1) for them to use as guidelines for a conversation. I explained my reasons and experience and showed them my prototypes. Then, I asked them to pick a piece of paper from a selection and use it to start reasoning on its spatiality: I already considered that feeling the touch of paper and using hands was an essential feature for my sessions to work, but I was not ready

fig 19. inspirational questions for participants. these cards have been used to start different conversations on the use of notebooks during the first preparatory session (september 2022)



fig 20. on notebooks and annotation systems. These are the notes I took on my notebook while having a discussion with the participants (september 2022)



yet to attempt it.

I encouraged the participants to reflect on their personal experience with paper notebooks. I noticed how much what a person said would influence what the next one added to the conversation. Triggering personal memories and associations is a concept I kept in mind for future sessions. After a few minutes of talking, the participants answered and produced new questions: they were already underlining the decisions they took when choosing a notebook, even only when buying one (fig.20; Appendix B.1). I understood that making their notebook based on what they discussed about during this session was possible. I was still not sure how to trigger the construction of a notebook different from a basic A5 rectangular-shaped notebook.

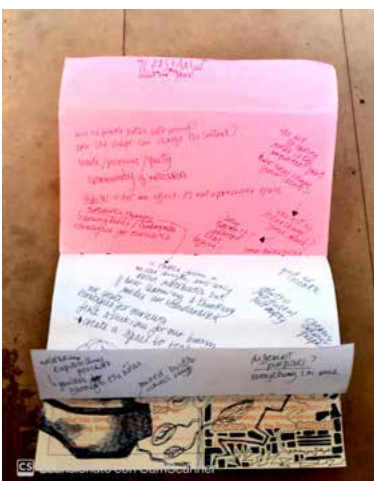
fig 21. discussion on the use of notebooks at leeszaal by michael murtaugh (november 2022)



fig 22. notes to organise the leeszaal session (november 2022)



fig 23. notes I took during the leeszaal session (november 2022)



3.2.2 Public moment 2.0: towards a hand-on approach

[Leeszaal; 17-11-2022; XPUB environment]

The concept of this event was that the participants would help us, the students, in shaping our raw ideas (fig.21). In the preparation, many doubts arose: I struggled to transform the questions and the answers into actual results. For this session, I planned to have an annotating exercise using a sheet of paper and a pen of their choice to start experimenting practically (fig.22). Unfortunately, because the event was a collective work, my exercise could not take place as planned and the session reverted to its old shape. Consequently, the general outcome has been similar to the first session, even though new questions and concepts arose and I became more conscious that there was enough curiosity for me to delve into the topic (fig.23; Appendix B.1).

3.2.3 Individual online session: an unconscious creative response to personal needs

[Online; 11-11-2022; Clara]

Clara studied with me at an art academy. She is very creative and it could be perceived throughout the session. This is a

fig 24. detail of one of clara's 'creative solutions' by clara rosso (november 2022)



fig 25. the backpack and sketch of the first notebook kit (september 2022)

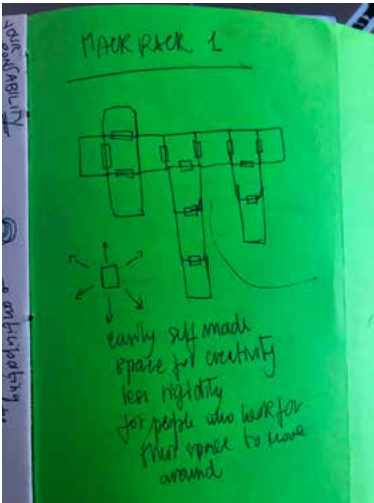
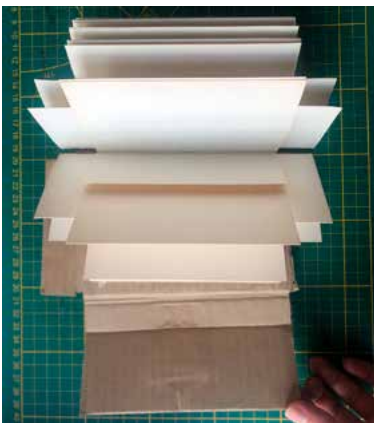


fig 26. the first notebook kit for supi (september 2022)



fig 27. a multicolumned notebook: could we fold it more? (september 2022)



concept I must think about for the structure of my sessions: am I working with people who have an investment in this, or are my participants completely new to the environment and the way of thinking?

Clara presented me with a selection of her (industrial) notebooks, underlining what she likes, what she does not and what she did to overcome that set of problems she discovered on the way (fig.24 and Appendix B.1). During this session, I asked myself what my research could bring into Clara's practice, as she was already reacting and reasoning about the way she is interacting with notebooks. Clara still has not bound a notebook by herself, therefore I wonder if a practical session could make a difference for a person like her.

The need for a practical moment became suddenly not an option, but a mandatory action to take.

3.3 Analysis of the work of other note-takers: how others approach their personal notebook process

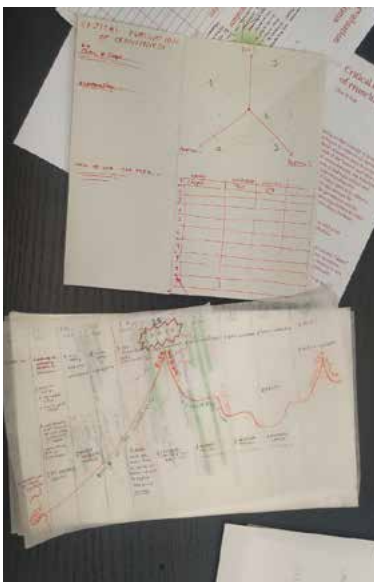
On the 20th of September 2022, I delivered a 'Notebook kit: An adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation' (fig.26) to Supi, one of my classmates at XPUB. This type of notebook allows the user to build it up easily as their needs generate and to adjust and edit it while using it (fig.25). Some days later I gave another classmate, Chae, a vertical-columned notebook (fig.27). At that point of the research, I was trying different approaches on the issue I got interested in: I imagined experimenting to create different notebooks and delivering them to others to see their reaction. It did not take long to understand that I did not know other people's needs and therefore they had to do it by themselves. This section became extremely important to prove the point of this research. Both Supi and Erica participated in my first preparatory session (M&Ms) and since then, they have been experimenting with their note-

books. I met with them every few months to follow their work in progress: I asked questions and they showed me their new ideas, which sometimes I also incorporated into my designs. Working collectively widely helps to inspire each other and make more radical choices. It is exciting when participants actively react to the prompts and these works show the type of reaction and activity I am expecting to generate with this research. I will try to share a part of their process in this text.

3.3.1 Erica: a situated paper notebook

Erica has worked on different prototypes in the last months, as she has a strong practice of note-taking and produces a lot of material to be organised. I decided, though, to present here a specific notebook she created for a residency she participated in during the summer because I believe that the applied needs become evident in this work (fig.28,29,30). It is inserted in a standard table I created for my process: I took the interview with her and organised the content to present the results. To know more, see Appendix B.2.

Fig 28,29,30.
personalised notebook roll
with transparent sheets by
erica gargaglione in sardinia
(october 2022)



My personal notebook process	
Concept	A roll of loose transparent paper sheets
What is the starting need that brought to the creation and use of it?	Erica participated in a residency and needed a notebook that could be part of the workflow. It needed to be portable and accessible, more open to others and collectivity, giving writing a role of performativity.
What are the positive sides? Does it work within the starting purpose?	During the residency, she would hang the single pages, as an explicit invitation for others to access the notes. It was easy to put in a small bag and be transported everywhere.
What are the negative sides? What could be a different approach to solve the issue?	It worked very well for everything but the accessibility for others, because of ownership as she was the main user of it. In addition, the paper kept closing on itself.

27

3.3.2 Supi: personalised methodology for a conscious nesting of notes

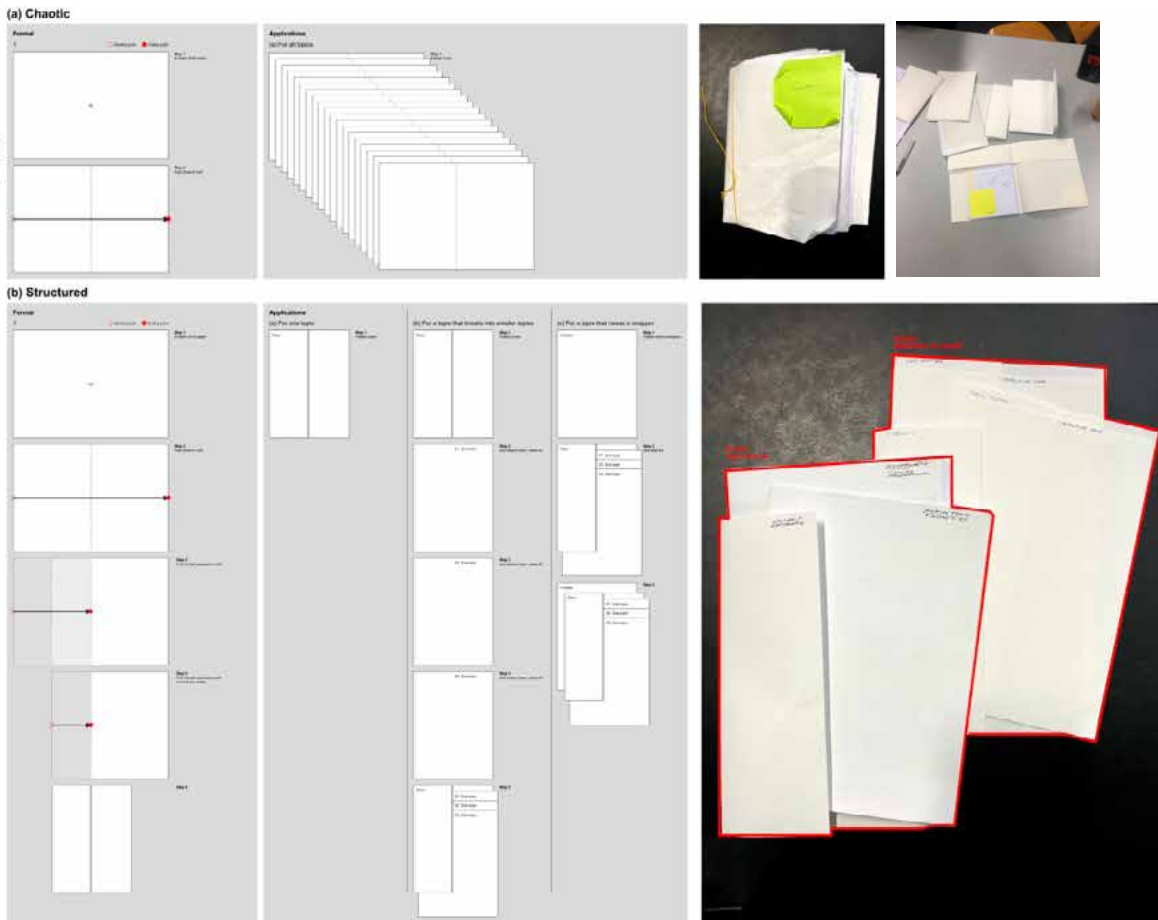
Supi tried, in different ways, to provide herself with an organised structure as she produces a wide amount of notes that can become very chaotic. Below (fig.31), you can find the way Supi

fig 31. a personalised methodology for a conscious nesting of notes by supisara burapachaisri (november 2022)

Ways to notebook:
I have two modes of notebooking:
(a) chaotic and (b) structured.

(a) is the main repository. It is a growing stack of a4 paper that is held together by an elastic rubber tie. Nothing gets stored here and is not meant to be.

(b) are ways to navigate around the chaos through methods of folding, wrapping, and nesting. This is where topics from the main repository get separated and broken down into smaller topics.



used to explain her notebook process, which helps to understand the needs she had and the solutions she found to overcome them.

During a conversation in April 2023, Supi explained to me how this structure became restrictive for her. She is now working with a collection of loose sheets kept together with a rubber band. She added some freedom and left space for her creativity and mess to become part of a system that works only for her (Appendix B.2).

3.4 The Collaborative Explorative Sessions (C.E.S.): a playground for discoveries and experimentation

Collaborative Explorative Sessions (C.E.S.) is a term I coined in September 2022 to explain an important characteristic of my work: a moment of experimentation and discovery where knowledge and experience are shared between participants and researcher (Appendix B.3).

COLLABORATIVE As a researcher, I am part of this exploration; I and the participants condition the mental associations of

supi noticed how much a different tool/pen has a different result on her way of working/drawing/thinking, how much it makes a difference in the act of playing with the use of the pen. in this case, paper has a substantial impact on the results, so that often pen and paper goes together. supi has started with a common (basical structure) notebook, then moved to other prototypes. one that she made herself (and to which i contributed with a simple rubber band to avoid the paper from breaking), in which she's using photocopies paper (more simple it is, the least guilty the user will feel while using it) and a 0.38 Muji pen. This type of notebook is giving Supi more space for organisation (or mess) but especially, it's creating new and unexpected connection between the content of the pages.

29.09.22

others, bringing up different memories and emotions that trigger others' thoughts, which influences their notebooks' imaginary and their production.

EXPLORATIVE Through the exercises, the participants and I make decisions, bring our ideas and craft them towards an unpredictable direction. For me, it is a space for exploration as much as for the participants.

SESSIONS The C.E.S. are created to produce a change of mindset in the participants. They not only learn how to make a notebook from scratch; they learn how to reason and approach the creation of this object in a new way.

In the process of writing and analysing my workshops, while the general structure stayed similar, the reasons for every decision I took in preparing and hosting the sessions changed. Concentrating more on my research aims, it became more useful to put the effort into what I could gain from the sessions together with the participants to help my research and be able to produce a guide or kick-starter kit to be used by note-takers and notebook makers after the end of this project.

3.4.1 Make Your Own Tools 1.0: the process of creation as an act of subversion

[fourth floor PZI; 22-11-2022; PZI and WDKA students.]

The first C.E.S. I organised aimed to explore the concepts I wanted to focus on in the research. The chapter will discuss the theoretical concepts I used to organise the session. The second part will give an overview of the session and possible improvements.

I aspired to learn how to engage with people's creativity levels and to work with mental associations, using generative tools. Therefore, to understand the concept of generative design research, I used the book "Convivial Toolbox" (Sanders E. B.-N. and Stappers P. J., 2014). Generative research includes end-users in

the creation of a design object. There are many moments in which the users can participate, in the pre-design, in the design phase or after it (Sanders E. B.-N. and Stappers P. J., 2014). In my research, I aimed for users to take part in every section of the design process as well as the practical creation of the object, to explore the endless spaces of a notebook and the memories and knowledge hidden inside of it. Participants had the time to discover themselves and their needs through the use of 'generative tools' or exercises and then they received instructions on how to practically build their design idea. My work as a researcher and designer was to provide them with the means and the support to be able to do the work by themselves, for themselves.

As Gibson (2019) argues, making, and learning through making, provide "us with the opportunity to control the narrative of ourselves in a way that off the shelf consumption does not (..): it is an act of subversion". What we produce with our hands suddenly becomes part of the representation of the world around us, and it includes our vision and our active participation in it. In "The Pleasure and Meaning of Making", Dissanayake (1995) explains that we have always been embellishing and producing objects throughout human history. Within the act of making, the object not only exists in the world, but it consists in both the process of creation, that "embodies evolving ideas and beliefs" (Korn, 2015) of the creator, and the "metaphor for the care and control one wished to exercise in using it and the value one imbued it with" (Dissanayake, 1995). This can only happen when the person is concurrently the maker and the end-user of the object.

Sanders and Stappers (2014) affirm that everyone can be creative and the work of generative design tools is to bring it to the surface. The most basic level of creativity is doing, which requires a minimum amount of interest. This is what happens when we use a notebook already made in the industry and bought

from a shelf. The second level is adapting. This action is made to personalise and change an object you already have. If participants come to the session with a notebook they already own, they could try to change it by making little additions to it, like a back pocket, a taped new sheet, or post-its to create more space. The third level is making. This happens when we build a notebook from scratch but we follow predetermined patterns. This action needs more time and energy. The last level is creating. Creating is making something that does not yet exist. It relies on the use of raw materials and the absence of pre-existing rules.

In the C.E.S., everyone is free to engage with their notebook at whatever level they feel like, and my job is facilitating it.

As in the first practice session, the aim was to experiment with different activities to help participants to imagine the iterative process to arrive at a notebook. It was important to transform my questions into practice (fig.32,33,34).

The three proposed exercises worked well to introduce the participants to a new mindset: there was the freedom to just act, without the fear of failing. Throughout the session, I understood how important it is to choose the questions very carefully, defining what I want to obtain from the participants. Activating the hands in practical exercises also turned out to be an essential feature: the participants made something that they did not expect and making helped them to visualise a different approach to the practice of creating paper notebooks. The discussion round was essential to uncover and analyse the different thoughts and visions they discovered through making.

Moving from the first section to the act of creating a notebook from scratch has been more complex than I imagined. It helped to ask them to choose a size or a shape they would have liked to begin with.

A more attentive look at binding methods could be done as it

fig 32. the leaflet introduced the participants to the session, as well as provided them with some theoretical research from this thesis (november 2022)



fig 33. participants during a writing exercise by al nik (november 2022)



fig 34. a participant binding during the folding exercise by al nik (november 2022)



fig 35,36,37. the notebooks of participants at the end of the session by al nik (november 2022)



can be used as an ample tool to experiment with. Nevertheless, I enjoyed that this absence provoked an interesting result: everyone tried their best to be independent and found experimental ways to solve their problems, while sometimes asking for help when they did not know how to do it on their own (fig.35,36,37). To conclude, it could be interesting to organise a second session to focus on types of binding that could help participants to have a bigger overview of the possibilities, and it should be organised after a period of incubation. See Appendix B.3 for more information.

3.4.2 Make Your Own Tools 1.1 for note-taking: restrictions to open up to possibilities

[fourth floor PZI; 08-03-2022; PZI and WDKA students.]

In the preparation for this session, the main issue I had was discovering how to move from the exercises to making a notebook from scratch. I reacted by bringing two tables (Appendix B.3) I used myself to document different prototypes. I did not realise that it was excessive to ask my participants to reason, do the activities and take notes at the same time. Facilitating more and giving more restrictions is instead the way I would like to approach this problem in the future. First, I noticed how much showing, not only examples of notebooks, but the mentality I had through the process of reasoning, helped to inspire the participants from the beginning. Some of them took one idea I tested and made a version in their way. Working together, and exchanging discoveries, is part of this process: while discussing ideas with my case studies, Erica and Supi, I noticed I picked some ideas they were experimenting with and vice versa. Everyone then re-elaborates the idea to make it fit in their vision.

Another important discovery was the realisation of having left apart discussion moments with the participants, that I had during the preparatory session instead. In the future, I would like to alternate more discussing and making, always remembering

fig 38. cutting station in use by one of the participants (march 2023)



fig 39. participants during the writing exercise (march 2023)



fig 40. little prototype from one of the participants, using pins to bind a notebook (march 2023)



fig 41. the participant chose a selection of multiple materials to discover their possibilities. what happens if you bind a fabric book? (march 2023)



that without reasoning, it is very hard to produce well-thought-out material.

During the session, I walked around and asked questions about the choices they were taking while producing. This also helps them to analyse the reasons why they make certain choices.

The importance of recycling and the visit to the Trushbunker (student-led reduce-reuse-recycle station) helped them to get inspired and understand that everything could become a (paper? fabric? wood?) notebook. This activity added a lot of limitations. I understood how hard it is to make situated notebooks during such a short amount of time (and without a specific context or need). Restrictions act as a support to produce something that it is not the perfect outcome or the most original one but helps to understand the concept underneath my research and the objectives of the C.E.S..

I do not need them to produce a notebook they can necessarily use, but instead, something that helps them to understand the process of making notebooks, for example, a series of prototypes. These sessions need to be concentrated more on my purposes, rather than on entertaining the participants.

The feedback moment also revealed itself to be one of the most important moments for them to discuss and analyse the choices they made and leave the session with a more conscious mind and behaviour. See fig. 38,39,40,41.

Find the plan of the session in Appendix B.3.

3.4.3 The future of the C.E.S. and the kick-starter kit: thinking, making, facilitating

In this last section of the C.E.S., I would like to give an overview of what the future C.E.S. could look like and what my intentions are for this project for the next months.

The C.E.S. are a playground to experiment with different approaches to arrive at a collection of exercises that could take part

in the possible outcome, a guide, or kick-starter kit I will produce in the next months. The sessions and the kit are starting points or initialisers for notebooks users/makers to test out scenarios to discover what works better for them. The C.E.S., in the upcoming future, could become a space for discussions and analysis of notebooks, to guide the participants towards the making of several outcomes that could lead to a realisation or inspiration on how to approach their personal notebook process.

I, for sure, need to work on a new set of questions to lead them towards the process. In addition, I must help them through facilitation, suggestions, examples. Seeing options helps to visualise possibilities. I must recalibrate what it is important for me while making notebooks: for example, how folding influences note-taking; not only the way I write but also what I think and discover while writing.

Recycling and reusing are important in my practice. It concerns not only materials but also the purpose of making notebooks' creation accessible: Do I have time? How can I make things faster and easier? What if someone is not skilled or has no time? Has no materials? Where can makers gather second-hand materials for cheap/free?

A possible new structure would include an alternation of me presenting my view and them presenting their view; analysis of notebooks; stations (folding, cutting, glueing) and tools; a folding exercise, that will include thoughtful writing/note-taking activity; a shorter exercise to try different papers, for example; a time to make DIY prototypes, to experiment with different things; 1:1 moments to discuss choices together; feedback moments (Appendix B.3).

To conclude, the C.E.S. will continue and will be documented at https://pzwiki.wdka.nl/mediadesign/User:FLEM/Analysis_of_sessions. The final kick-starter kit will possibly include

how to make a notebook
that helps not to forget the
notebook? need to remember to
remember

how to make a notebook
to experience the world?

how to make a notebook
to protect yourself from the
outside? need for personal
space

how to make a notebook
that exaggerate the scattered
and the chaos? need for new
inputs out of the mess

how to make a notebook
that is easy to navigate?

how to make a notebook
to collect scattered notes?

how to make a notebook
as an act of rebellion?

how to make a
notebook that can travel?

notebookcrossing(?)

12.10.22

different exercises experimented within the C.E.S., as well as prompts to analyse and question the notebook practice. It could take the shape of a guide as well, and include a Lexicon of Practice, where the main terms will be expounded on.

4. Conclusion: make paper notebooks to explore, question and implement a practice of note-taking

This research began with a paper notebook and ends with a multitude of paper notebooks. The research encompasses my personal work, the work of those around me and the material produced during the Collaborative Explorative Sessions (C.E.S.). I discovered the many modifications which improve the use of a paper notebook. Playing with notebooks and with the concept of C.E.S., I learned something new every day - about myself, about making notebooks and about facilitation.

The main challenge I had to overcome during this research has been to be able to categorise and value the results; one of the main issues I discuss is the importance of self-expression and personality, which does not allow standardisation. The sessions and the personal research do offer content but it is often personal anecdotes and reactions, which are hard to classify scientifically. Therefore, the criteria used in the overall research has been two-fold. Firstly: Is it evident that the form impacts the writing? Secondly: Can I use notebooks to explore, question and implement the practice of note-taking? I aimed to create consciousness to enable people to go further in the process of making paper notebooks. This can be evaluated from the reactions of participants, the results of the sessions, and their activity through time (more extensive research could be followed over a longer time, but due to time restrictions, it is constrained at this point).

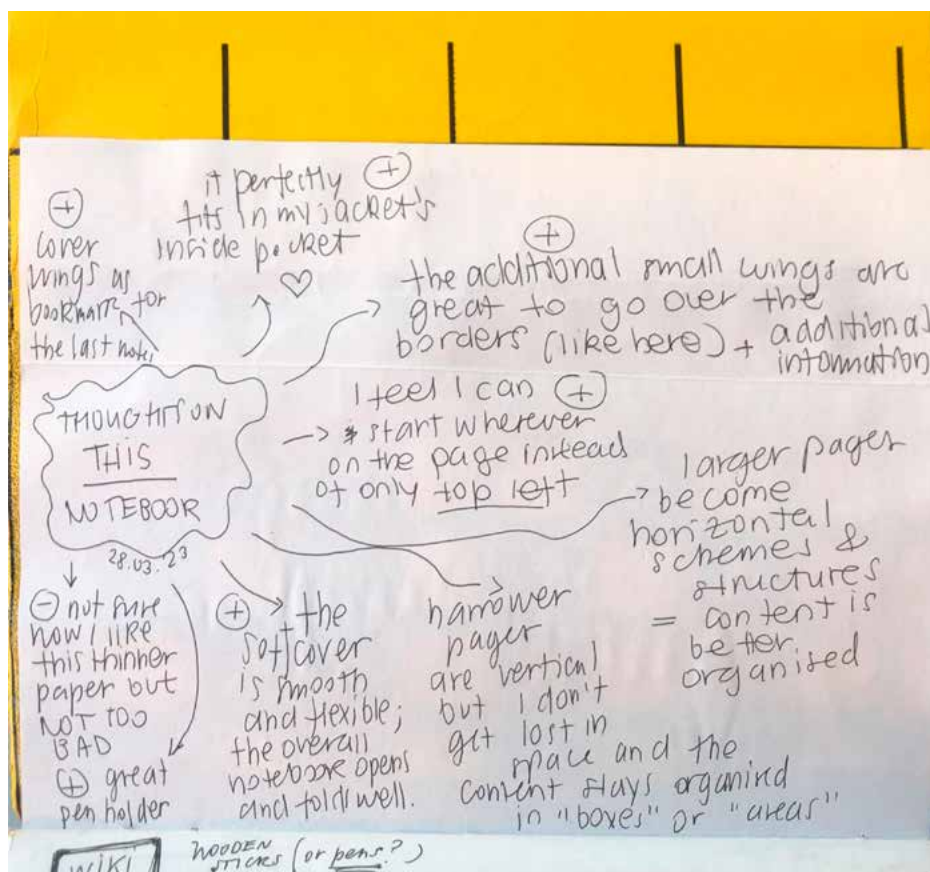
It is very clear to me, and from my work, that the shape of my notebook makes a difference in the frequency of use and the ways in which the notebook is used (Appendix A and C). I improved my note-taking practice extensively over the last year and I will be ending this research with an implemented notebook and the knowledge of what works for me. This ever-changing process

will continue after the end of this period of research. The knowledge I gained makes it easier to edit, adapt and create what is necessary for me.

The participation of Supi and Erica was essential to prove the point of this thesis. They represent how my intentions are applied to the real world, as they were the only participants I could follow for longer than a few months. By documenting their progress, they exemplified a personal notebook process. All the materials they produced demonstrate that it is possible to engage more with such a tool and that everyone can do it. Erica and Supi did not have any specific skill in bookbinding and they did not necessarily need to learn it because they have been using various ways that do not include a codex as in its original form. They created rolls, folders and nestings, they used metal rings, loose sheets, rubber bands. What is essential to notice though, is how they improved their notebooks through time, while questioning their practice.

The Collaborative Explorative Sessions have been an essen-

fig 42,43. the last notebook I made for myself and the thoughts I had on it. i hope it will follow me until graduation (march 2023)



Yesterday I discovered I hate writing on vertical large notebooks. I always start making lists and it's never visual and I hate it because I get lost and also in conversation/brainstorming notes there is no structure at all and I feel uncomfortable because I am not sure I can trust my own notes. In addition, metal rings don't work for me. I am too messy, I have texts everywhere, I cannot track the last thing I wrote, I need to go in order. That said, I will take the last vertical notebook I made in december and rip it apart and 1) change the cover, it was too hard and felt very difficult to open and use. 2) still add the pockets because I am using them in the metal ring one and they are very useful. This also allows me to have flaps on the cover that are also useful to easily find where is the last writing 3) I got rid of one of the signatures I had to make it a bit smaller. 4) I also noticed that I made some of the folded sheets a bit wider than the 20x30 that I used before and some less and I want to see if that cm more I have will influence how I feel. As with the wide sheets I am having problems, how much do I have to reduce it to make it the perfect width? I will keep you updated.

15.03.23

tial tool to understand the focus of this work. I am conscious that I did not arrive at a 'perfect' finalised structure at this point of the research. Instead, the process I went through and the sessions I had with the participants, helped me to shape my intentions. I will organise new Collaborative Explorative Sessions and try the new structure I proposed in the last chapter, giving more value to the analysis of the practice and discovering how it is possible to include focused practical making.

The future of this work will be represented by a kick-starter kit or a guide. This will help users to research and question their use of paper notebooks, inviting a hands-on approach. I believe that this guide will include a series of questions, a lexicon and an example of the process. In addition, I plan to insert some exercises coming from the Collaborative Explorative Sessions, as well as prompts and ideas on how to find recycled materials and make the practice of making paper notebooks more accessible.

5. Images

All the images used inside this document without the name of the author belong to my personal digital archive.

fig 1. inside binding of 'the book of books' (2019)

fig 2. the wrapped one, with an amazon cardboard cover and fabiano 4 paper, from the 'sketch(totrash)book' series (2020)

fig 3. a5 small zines series, 'small visions of being' (2019)

fig 4. paper selection for the first prototype: a4 multiple types (white, cream, coloured, thicker, thinner etc..), a4 wrong prints, amazon cardboard (march 2022)

fig 5. notebook workflow: the inside of the first prototype, with one opened flap (april 2022)

fig 6. ring notebook with flaps to make it bigger (january 2023)

fig 7. Pliny, the Elder. *Naturalis Historia*. 1491. Digitized by Smithsonian Libraries. <http://s.si.edu/2Ep11Lf>. Accessed 3rd April 2023 at <https://blog.biodiversitylibrary.org/2018/02/when-writing-in-15th-century-rare-book.html>

fig 8. A page from Bacon's commonplace book, containing Latin quotations, 1883. Accessed 3rd April 2023 at <https://fortelabs.com/blog/commonplace-books-creative-note-taking-through-history/>

fig 9. index cards as part of a notebook kit experiment: an adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation (november 2022)

fig 10. note-taking on a moleskine - a classic planner 2023 Weekly 12-Month, scarlet red € 23,50 (april 2023)

fig 11. moleskine hack - Michael Mordant came up with a cool way to turn a moleskine into a case for your ipod or other items you want to keep incognito (2018) Accessed on 3rd April 2023 at <https://www.treehugger.com/awesome-moleskine-hacks-4856367>

fig 12. a pen holder to keep pens attached, coloured section separator, a file holder to save important paper (february 2023)

fig 13,14,15. confronting digital and hand-written notes on the same conversation (february 2023)

fig 16,17. confronting my notes on a rectangular a5 ring notebook vs a notebook made with openable flaps, with narrow pages (april 2022 - february 2023)

fig 18. iperborea notebook 10x20 from a special collection (september-december 2021)

fig 19. inspirational questions for participants. these cards have been used to start different conversations on the use of notebooks during the first preparatory session (september 2022)

fig 20. on notebooks and annotation systems. These are the notes I took on my notebook while having a discussion with the participants (september 2022)

fig 21. Michael Murtaugh, 2022. Discussion on the use of notebooks at Leeszaal.

fig 22. notes to organise the leeszaal session (november 2022)

fig 23. notes I took during the leeszaal session (november 2022)

fig 24. Clara Rosso, 2022. One of clara's 'creative solutions.

fig 25. the backpack and sketch of the first notebook kit (september 2022)

fig 26. the first notebook kit for supi (september 2022)

fig 27. a multicolumned notebook: could we fold it more? for chae (september 2022)

Fig 28,29,30. Erica Gargaglione, 2022. Personalised notebook roll with transparent sheets.

fig 31. Supisara Burapachaisri, 2022. Personalised methodology for a conscious nesting of notes.

fig 32. Al Nik (Alexandra Nikolova), 2022. The leaflet introduced the participants to the session, as well as provided them with some theoretical research from this thesis.

fig 33. Al Nik (Alexandra Nikolova), 2022. Participants during a writing exercise.

fig 34. Al Nik (Alexandra Nikolova), 2022. A participant binding during exercise 2.

fig 35,36,37. Al Nik (Alexandra Nikolova), 2022. The notebooks of participants at the end of the session.

fig 38. cutting station in use by one of the participants (march 2023)

fig 39. participants during the writing exercise (march 2023)

fig 40. little prototype from one of the participants, using pins to bind a notebook (march 2023)

fig 41. the participant chose a selection of multiple materials to discover their possibilities. what happens if you bind a fabric book? (march 2023)

fig 42,43. the last notebook I made for myself and the thoughts I had on it. I hope it will follow me until graduation (march 2023)

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8. Appendix

they will be added at the end of the thesis as pdfs of my wiki.

Appendix A: My personal notebook process

Appendix B: Analysis of sessions

- 1. Preparatory sessions**
- 2. The work of other note-takers**
- 3. The Collaborative Explorative Sessions (C.E.S.)**

Appendix C: Notes on the project

User:FLEM/Notebook

< [User:FLEM](#)

A research log for the non-perfect-no-waste-notebook

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[.TRASHBOOKSatelier concept](#)

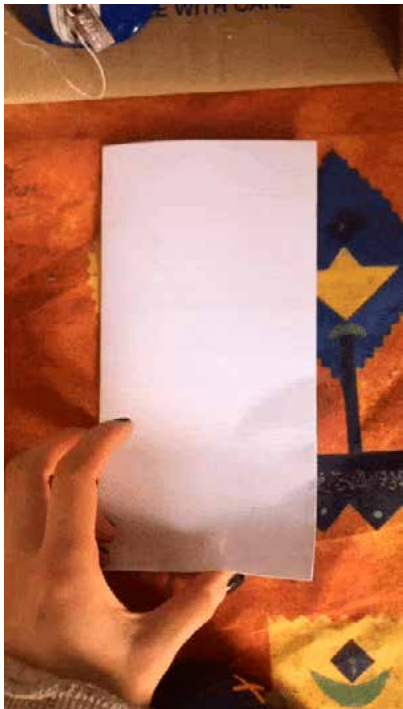
The main concept of TRASHBOOKSatelier was born while I was making a book as a Christmas gift for a friend: it was late and I could not go and buy anything so I used every type of paper I had in the house. Different papers, with different weights, different colours, everything kept inside an Amazon box's cardboard. I realized how interesting was to create books from waste and finding ways to make it work.

I worked for a while on a series called *Sketch(totrash)books, no waste editable sketchbooks*, consisting of books made of waste. These sketchbooks are meant for artists to paint on the cover and make every single book unique and personal, helping the planet! At present, many of the sketch(totrash)books are made from waste offered by Boothsprint, a printing house in Penryn, UK. Most of their covers are made with delivery cardboard packages.

.research & starting point

during the first semester at xpub I have been using an iperborea notebook, measurements: 10x20 that I find amazing but the fact that it involves cutting paper out, I didn't want to create a new notebook out of that idea without finding a solution that would not waste anything

I thought about folding instead of cutting and I actually came up with a nice solution:



folding both sides

I thought it was nice to add additional notes on the side of the main sheets.

this option later suggested an additional possible feature: folding just on one side to create a bigger paper sheet, by opening it.

the idea is to create a notebook that permits the user to play it around and adapt it to their own needs.

at the moment, the current notebook has already shown a series of pros and cons:

- + it occupies less space but offers bigger pages
- + the additional lateral wings allow *modularity*: the user can move the wings to connect with multiple pages at the same time
- + if the user forgets something the wings give more space to write
- + the wings can be used differently by everyone
- the fact that it's folded means it's thicker and it's difficult to write if it's too big
- + by using it horizontally the above problem is resolved
- + can have patterns/contents that move from the wings to different pages throughout the notebook [also at later stages if you are still working on the topic]
- + fold page wing to avoid the page to be moved by the wind (!!!)
- + offer different types of paper to people if they want to draw (or whatever) without ruining the binding and of a nice shape//vertical
- still can't write because it's too big
- it can get wet --> **make it waterproof**

(see below for results)

see *modularity*: "the degree to which a system's components may be separated and recombined, often with the benefit of flexibility and variety in use" (urgent publishing book)

50

idea: triangle book

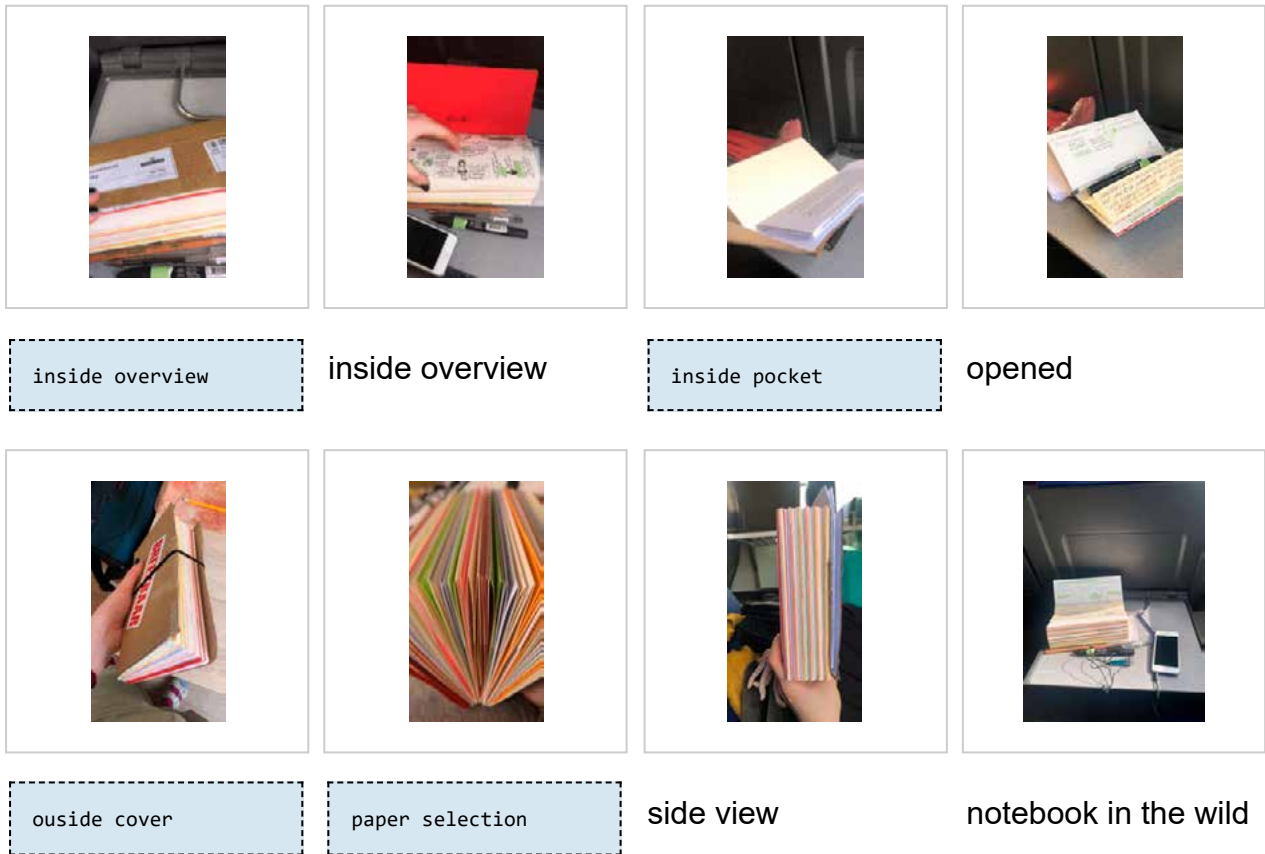
.materials

- a4 multiple types of papers (white, cream, coloured, thicker, thinner etc..)
- a4 wrong prints
- amazon cardboard

.prototypes' updates and analysis

March 2022

first prototype.. where the idea came from (see "research & starting point" paragraph)



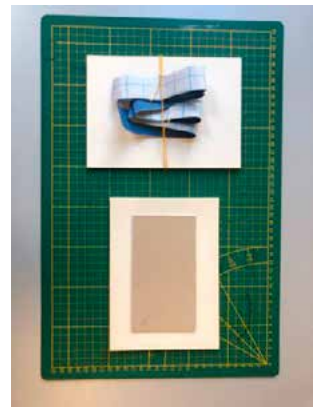
fill in the table (inserted in feb 2023)

my personal notebook process	folded vertical notebook
What is the starting need that brought to the creation and use of it?	this question helps to highlight the starting point and main reason for the creation of a new notebook (or modification applied). it can be described in a few words.
What are the positive sides? Does it work within the starting purpose?	this is to understand if the solutions that have been found and applied to the new notebook are valid and working. this is important mostly not to lose track of the reasons underneath the concept and to evaluate how much the modifications worked.
What are the negative sides? What could be a different approach to solve the issue?	if what has been analysed above did not work, why didn't it work? analysing what worked and what did not help to reason on new ways to solve the issue that was not solved.
To try out:	a space to throw some ideas about practical solutions to apply to a possible new notebook or that can be applied directly to the version that is under monitoring.

20.09.22

I delivered to Supi the first *notebook kit: An adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation*

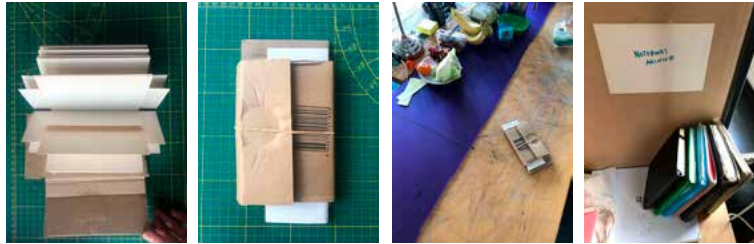
The idea is that this type of notebooks allows the user to build it up easily as their needs come over and adjusting and editing while using it and not being forced to stay in a standardised area for standardised notebook users.



21.09.22

Made a prototype for chae (*a multicolumned notebook: could we fold it more?*)

Officially opened the *notebooks (temporary) archive*



30.09.22

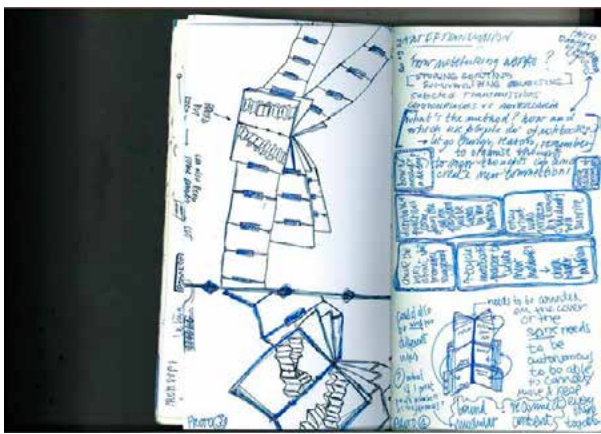
some new ideas on how to play with the structure of the notebook..

[left page] Thought about the fact that the limit of binding is that there's no space for easy customisation or add-ons after it's closed at the beginning. so instead of the prototype of the [notebook kit: An adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation], where i felt there was too little rigid structure and the user could feel too lost, i imagined to use the same technique starting from a bound one [name: the infinite notebook]. At the same time, this opens an option for loose sheets that through the use of glued tape can be attached as plain paper to the loose ones. It is bound, but free to move: the user is also able to cut out pages, re-position but also keep some they care about.

[bottom right page] the second idea instead works more on the concept of modularity: reconnect content between the three sections, making possible to have an overview of content even when the space on the column is finished. By choosing a specific method (that could be colours, page number, or even a personal one created on the go) it should become intuitive to move in the space of the triad notebook. The notebook could also be shared for multiple uses, maybe using every row differently. The question is if i am obliged to use a spiral ring or a copta could also work? need to try out

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! Recycle notebooks paper to create new notebooks: check paper making--> if i destroy the paper sheets of a notebook in water, then i make a new notebook out of it, then i melt it again, and again, it should become smaller and smaller? DOCUMENT



09.11.22

I tried the concept I had for the notebook kit I made for supi on myself.

It has been helpful to reorganise thoughts in very small sheets of paper. This obliged me to describe a concept in a little amount of words.

The second characteristic is that it allows me to move around the sheets and then attach them together when I finalised decisions.

It was helpful for this specific purpose, but the overall idea I have about this prototype is that it's very fragile and not very usable if not sitting at a desk. It can help to explain concepts and ideas, through the unfolding and opening mechanism, but it is of any use as a portable notebook.

What is the starting need that brought to the creation and use of it?

Fragmenting ideas and sum up concepts in little amounts of words as I tend to occupy a lot of space in the page if the sheet is too big

What are the positive sides? Does it work within the starting purpose?

It works for the purpose but in the moment it becomes more and more filled with content then it starts to get messy again

It allows the movement of concepts so that I can reposition them to understand where I want them to fit

What another version of this need should be like to satisfy it?

Splitting up concepts even more,

It's important to use the notebook as the starting idea was about: opening sections one at the time not to get confused with all the rest of the content

To try out:

[] reposition, delete and merge content to reduce the amount of repetition or wrong positioning that happens after the taping happened

How does the content of the notebook is received while reading again? Is it helping me to visualise?

---> it was useful to organise my thoughts and put them in order but not so much to go through it again



fill in the table (inserted in feb 2023)

my personal notebook process	<i>notebook kit: An adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation</i>
What is the starting need that brought to the creation and use of it?	Fragmenting ideas and sum up concepts in little amounts of words as I tend to occupy a lot of space in the page if the sheet is too big.
What are the positive sides? Does it work within the starting purpose?	It works for the purpose but when it becomes more and more filled with content, then it starts to get messy again. It allows the movement of concepts so that I can reposition them to understand where I want them to fit.
What are the negative sides? What could be a different approach to solve the issue?	Splitting up concepts even more. It's essential to use the notebook as the starting idea was about: opening sections one at a time not to get confused with all the rest of the content. it was helpful to organise my thoughts and put them in order but not so much to go through them again after I finished creating it.
To try out:	[] reposition, delete and merge content to reduce the amount of repetition or wrong positioning that happens after the taping happened

12.11.22

New idea for books' annotations

Concept:

write on separate sheets and then put them together with strings or rings.

Pros:

Different paper sheets so I can write separately and then decide how to organise the notes

Cons:

I am annoyed that I cannot add things to the text if the space is finished

New:

I need a notebook for ideas sketching and development = where to write down a sudden idea fast and easy and then have the space to develop it in the future = organised but free space to express maybe with sum-up window/space

I always feel like when I write on my paper notebooks is never definitive, i feel it like a work in progress that then is completed when I move the notes on my laptop. If I move them on my laptop not organised I feel stressed because it doesn't allow me to think/reason/process but it doesn't even allow my brain to relax because things are in order.

fill in the table (inserted in feb 2023)

new ideas for notebooks	
Need	being able to move the pages so that every space is a free space
Concept	write on separate sheets and then put them together with strings or rings
Pros	Different paper sheets so I can write separately and then decide how to organise the notes
Cons	It is annoying that I cannot add things to the text if the space is finished (absence of folded columns)

December 2022

I made a new version of the notebook I had till the beginning of this semester. I found some problems in this new version I made.

it's very inflexible. I cannot turn it around, I cannot open the pages completely and I cannot use the two pages as a whole because the curve is too big.

it's too thick and bulky. I cannot transport it easily, there are too many pages to start from.

I tried this time to have different sections, to see if it was possible to have the content that touches specific topics in the same area. The problem is I am not able, every time I take notes, to visualise in which area the content I want to write should go into, so then it ends up that I don't use it because I do not know where to start --> **GENERAL RULE: it is important to have entry points to access the notebook. This means having a structure that does not slow you down or interrupt the moment in which you want to write something down.**

For me this interruption is that I do not know where to position the sudden ideas or thoughts I have. From this statement, I understand that what I need from the next notebook is to have the possibility to immediately write down what I have in mind, wherever I position it, without feeling any guilt regarding the appearance of the pages of my notebook. It is also important that it does not look too perfect, so that I feel okay in using what I have however I want.

if it happens, most of the time the risk is that the person with the idea in mind does not want to write it down anymore, or easily runs towards a simpler and more accessible sheet of paper, that in most cases is a flat industrial notebook.

My answer to this, after writing on that notebook around 4-5 pages, has been a totally different approach than the first one: I do not use it anymore. The easiest solution is to cut it in half.

(follows in march 2023)



does not open well hard back cover :(

18.01.2023

I made the new notebook with metal rings and started to use it.

CONCEPT.

it feels better to have metal rings and the chance to position every sheet where I want and this is an addition that really helps me.

CONS.

I am very unorganised. At the moment I am always writing everything that comes very fast, in whatever position in the page. This leads to a big amount of content without a structure/any entry point. It is not accessible after some time I wrote things down.

I feel restricted in the moment I have to write on a flat a5 page. I feel like the content is never organised because I can write in every direction and most of the time I use visual note-taking, or note-making, especially the circular method (have starting points in the middle and then move around it), i get lost in the space because I have space with no interruptions or limitations.

i always forget to write dates because it feels very temporary.

i hate how the pages turn around the rings because there is not the right amount of pages to turn it properly.

i do not like the paper I am using right now because it is not flexible or foldable in any way.

FOLDABILITY HELPS ME.

PROS.

my thoughts are never interrupted because it is a very accessible notebook. I do not feel bad in start writing wherever I find it fitting.

I can position every sheet where I want, moving them around after use.

FUTURE. I would like to edit the one I am already using to fix the problems I am having at the moment.

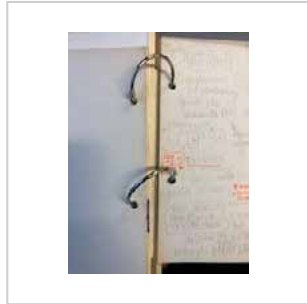
change paper

add more paper

fold paper

pay more attention when i re-organise materials

GALLERY



09.02.23

I made some modifications to the metal ring notebook:

added color separation for sections equipped with a small pocket; is it going to work?

the sections are: notes on texts, thesis to do lists, project brainstorming, archipelago, personal stuff.

a pen holder

a4 sheets folded in half that allow a more structured note-taking; they are thinner than the old ones

10.02.23

I worked on all the necessary updates.. trying it out



pen holder & folded sheets
coloured cardboard
separation

14.02.23

I noticed how much i work with numbered lists when i have a flat sheet of paper. I think it's pretty evident, looking at my old notebook and this new flat one, how much the shape changed the content. It is very hard right now to use this laptop for brainstorming. I am only writing lines of text and cannot connect with others at all.



vertical lists



circular note-taking



note-making

I generally also work a lot with arrows but i have not found a way to help this side of my note-taking practice yet. I feel maybe columns can help but i still need to try.

I also love the new additions i made a few days ago, especially the folded sheets as i can finally reconnect contents between different parts of the notebook.

15.03.23

Yesterday I discovered I hate writing on vertical large notebooks. I always start making lists (see above) and it's never visual and I hate it because I get super lost and also in conversation/brainstorming notes there is no structure at all and I feel uncomfortable because I am not sure I can trust my own notes. In addition, metal rings don't work for me. I am too messy, I have texts everywhere, I cannot track the last thing I wrote, I need to go in order. That said, I will take the last vertical notebook I made december and rip it apart and 1) change the cover, it was too hard and felt very difficult to open and use. 2) still add the pockets because I am using them in the metal ring one and they are very useful. This also allows me to have flaps on the cover that are also useful to easily find where is the last writing 3) I got rid of one of the signatures I had to make it a bit smaller. 4) I also noticed that I made some of the folded sheets a bit wider than the 20x30 that I used before and some less and I want to see if that cm more I have will influence how I feel. As with the wide sheets I am having problems, how much do I have to reduce it to make it the perfect width? I will keep you updated.

58 CRAZY: reconnect to last chapter on paper and clues of paper and if the text is not organised in a visual way on the paper but scattered around I forget where specific things I wrote are positioned and it is much harder to track back. I cannot find anything anymore.

+ I also do not like too thin paper but not too thick. It needs to fold a bit but it cannot be something like copy or office paper so between 120gsm and 200gsm. I am not also a giant fan of coloured paper to write on but I love colors so I don't really know how to solve it. I made the cover super yellow though, so maybe that calm myself down!

What I want to say it is not necessarily that this process will make your way of writing on paper better or different, but just that it will make the person feeling more comfortable with the object, use it more, make more useful notes that can be reread and used. (unfinished thought) !!!! do you think there is something you could change that will make you use the notebook more and that help you more during the work project process of creation?

20.03.23

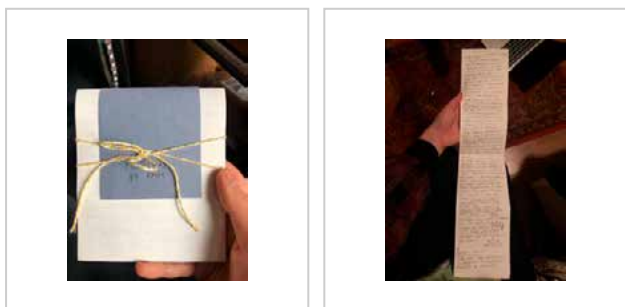
I produced a special notebook to deliver a starter for a conversation around our projects to Kim and Chae (XPUB classmates).

The gift was requested by the midwives, our tutor for the collective publication and graduation show. The concept was to give each other something in form of a letter or gift, or anything we could think of, and deliver it to the others in our group. After delivering, we were supposed to meet and chat about our impressions and questions.

I made this little notebook, one for each of them. From the first CES, I had this recurrent idea in my head: one of the participants made this very very long strip-notebook, underlining how much the narrowness of the paper would help them to free their mind and free write. Therefore, I bound the notebook, with a little string to close them so that they would resemble a gift and folded, so that the length would be discovered just after opening.

I free wrote both letters: they came out quite different from each other.

Comments from receivers: discussion on how the container/shape of the gift gave some idea on how to use it, it is playful as it's long. Focus on the content, automatic (free) writing, thinking in written form, a notebook is not something you share because it is difficult to understand for others as it's not finalised content. The shape set the vibe for the rest of the pages, inviting the receiver to answer to the questions in the same way, just underneath. Nice format to write a letter.

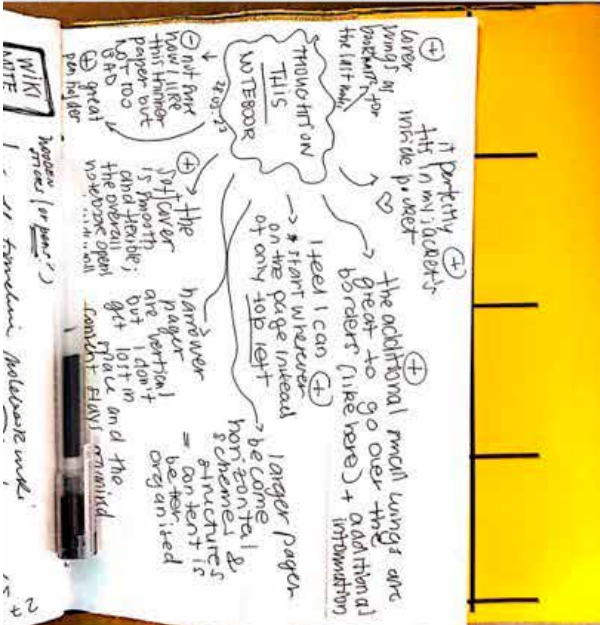


28.03.23

the last notebook I made for myself and the thoughts I had on it. I hope it will follow me until graduation, as an answer to my thoughts on the 15.03.23.

See my opinion on this notebook on the bottom picture.

Overall, I am super happy with it. The fact that it fits in the inside pocket of my jacket is just one of the amazing features this notebook is offering. I am already noticing, as mentioned earlier in the diary, that the different width of the pages is making a difference. I need a bit more time to understand what is it exactly.



User:FLEM/Analysis of sessions

< User:FLEM

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03.02.23

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C.E.S.

Make your own tool 1.0 - 22.11.22

Organisation of the session

Introduction (10 minutes)

PART 1 - 3 get-into-practice exercises

Reflection round

PART 2 - Make a notebook section (40 minutes)

After the session. (10 minutes)

Analysis of session

Introduction

PART 1 - 3 get-into-practice exercises

Reflection round

PART 2 - Make a notebook section

After the session

General overview

"Make Your Own Tools 1.1" for notetaking

Script for the session

Introduction - Concepts & Theory

list of materials

to buy:

exercises

Analysis of the session

gallery

New concept for following session

Sessions content

1. Organise sessions with people of different ages, backgrounds, bubbles, experience..
2. Work with associations to produce ideas and provoke creativity.

Type of sessions:

- Collective sessions (5 to 8 people)
- Individual sessions (1:1)
- Follow-up sessions (both individual or collective)
- Couples's sessions (two people working together)

General overview (where am I at the moment)

The first three sessions I organised were “talking” sessions and it was a really good start in the sense that in that point of the research it was me deepen into this new topic trying to understand if people could start thinking about this type of things, if they use notebooks, how they interact with them, and seeing their interest sparkling was really nice. But obviously everything we talked about was still really abstract but I think it was a big it demonstrated me that having the making part as part of the learning, compulsory in my sessions, realised how much the practice and making is important to be included in this sessions. I have been writing a lot about how much it's important to bring together making with thinking reasoning and learning but actually doing it and seeing it in practise that what I imagined is true it is even more revelling and strong, it gives even much more power to the project, to how much making can help discover things.

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Analysis of sessions

Preparatory sessions

Session 1. M&Ms XPUB

Environment: XPUB bubble; people that know my work and had the same influences in the last year.

Organisation of the session:

What will I say and how the session is structured

Helloooo everyone and welcome to this first M&Ms session. What I prepared for you is not what could be called a workshop, but more like an collaborative exploration session. I mostly have only questions and not so many answers or solutions, that is why I need you all.

This exploration sessions will serve my research about notebooks, annotation systems and dynamics: what I am trying to achieve is analysing, understanding and improving notebook systems to create personalised methodologies and tools. This sessions are meant for everyone who takes notes or draw, that uses paper or not, in every way. I would like participants to produce their personal notebook because we are all different and with diverse needs, so an object like a notebook, that we use everyday, cannot be standardised. And what is there more personal than something that you can make with your hands, at your own pleasure?

On the table you can see some pink questions: I would like you to temporary choose one of them and keep it in front of you. In addition, I made a little selection of sheets of paper for you: again, I would like you to pick the one you feel like satisfies you the most and keep it with you during the session. You can do whatever you want with it, fold it, write on it, or just keep it in your hands during the session and start reasoning on it and its spaciality while we talk. I asked you to bring your notebook because I would like to start questioning, all together, the limits of this device. By using as starting points the printed questions, I would like to go through an analysis of the notebooks, what are the characteristics, the limits, questioning what you notice in your way of writing, annotating, how you use it, why you use it, or why you cannot use it so much. While discussing together, the idea is to come out of this session with an idea for the construction of the “(un)perfect” notebook, that you will start working on in another session, later, or in the studio. I am always available for consultation.

Inspirational questions for participants...

- 1.How do you take notes/draw/doodle/think? What kind of interface do you use?
- 2.What is kept/lost in the process of annotation?
- 3.Do you use lines or plain paper? pen or pencil?
- 4.Do you have different notebooks for different purposes? Which ones?
- 5.What do you do when a notebook is finished?
- 6.Do you think your notebook could still say something/be useful for some reason?
- 7.How much taking notes is involved in the process of learning for you?
- 8.Are there problems you might have while using your notebook? It can be limitation of the means, structure of it..etc
- 9.Have you ever thought about using a notebook that could fit better your needs?
- 10.Do you ever think like I would like to continue on this notebook but it's finished? I would like to keep these pages also in the next notebook?
- 11.Do you think you might like to use the notebooks by sections and not by order of the pages? With separations or maybe color differentiation to start writing also in the middle of it? So you don't have to start from a big blank first page but from a random or not so random point inside the notebook where everything will be gathered together? Do you feel like needing categories and sections? What if one section finishes then?

Results

"on notebooks and annotation systems"

to think about for next sessions

- answering all the questions everyone
- give/take some time to think
- explain my thoughts and ideas before the start so they know what we are talking about and get some context
- underline that every answer is useful, using notebooks to understand humans' brains

new ideas

- Collective notetaking on paper
- memory extension
- notebooks show what you experienced in that period of time (subjective experience)
- community memory = social function
- policy of craft, notebooks making as craft
- craftsmanship: you think about the surroundings, the skills you need, the tools you use the time of creation etc..
- how to make your personal archive of memory? → the memory castle

new questions

- Has anyone ever intentionally thrown away a notebook?
- What to do if you don't finish all the sheets in a notebook?
- Do you take notes to keep or to let go things?
- What is the difference in use between apps/notebooks? What do you write on them?
- Why to have a record that is contradictory to the actual experience?
- Why do we use notebooks?

from participants

[]

- Soft-cover
- anxiety from messy notebooks, don't wanna play with the notebook
- NEED line-paper, calendar and space for notes
- nice soft paper + perfect pen
- page with sticky notes to use for no-set things
- needs to be big enough
- must stay flat
- NO stream of consciousness
- YES anchor points
- what get lost when organising/moving thoughts from brain to written material?

[]

- smoothest paper to prevent myself from hesitating because of no friction
- don't like to have already made cover
- notebooks from teenage years: I would neglect and let it sink

- need for personal space, use notebooks to create a personal space

[]

- I forget things so it's helpful to remember, to centralise thoughts and let space for more things
- plain sheets
- hard cover not to break them
- separate notebooks for different needs
- to let go stuff and stop thinking

[]

- pocket size notebook to bring it everywhere
- used to describe an entire experience
- sticky notes for temporary thoughts
- flexible, has dots for concepts and reflexions

[]

start motivated then forget about the notebook

[]

I keep them but I don't look back

Notebooks to experience the world, not to keep track

Notebooks as defence, to feel protected

to participate in a different world

to let things out

[]

- lot of layers
- start multiple notebooks at the same time
- when it's new, the content is selected
- sticky notes for temporary thoughts
- other archives/papers, content is distributed everywhere
- scattered around
- use them to visualise, it's about what it's happening right now
- not attached to one tool
- site-specific notebook
- time-based notebook

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Roland Brothers around notula and nota

Gallery



Session 2. Leeszaal

Environment: XPUB bubble, that has similar interests and research questions, as well as research methods, but a bit more open as they are not all studying with me.

The session took place at Leeszaal, Rotterdam West, on the 17th of October 2022. The audience was composed by an XPUB type of environment: people that work or study in a similar environment as me and my classmates. The concept of the night was that the participants would help us in shaping our raw ideas.

In the preparation for this session a lot of questions came to me. I could not think about a better way to transform the questions and the relative answers into actual results. For this session I planned to have an annotating exercise through the use of a sheet of paper and a pen of their choice to start experimenting with more interesting feelings and thoughts. Unfortunately, due to the typology of the event, my exercise did not function as planned and the session got back to its original shape.

Consequently, the general outcomes have been very similar to ones of the first session, even though I had a few new questions to propose. The good thing is that, as I keep underlining, we are all different, therefore different concepts appeared from the new participants: "using notebooks as a lens into human brains and learning types", "how to make notes with sound?", "how does the shape change the content?", "digital space is not an object, therefore is not considered as a precious space as much as a notebook", "notebooks therapy to discover strategies and solutions for ourselves", "cultural structures in notebooks", "paper is slow writing: how does it impact the way you produce text?", "notebook as memory extension".

All these conversations helped me to shape the concepts and reasons I have to work on this research and to see where and how participants would need help or a push from my side.

Session 3. Individual session with Clara

Environment: a person that studied with me in the past but we went through different directions. Still in the artistic bubble though that can definitely be perceived throughout the session.

Different notebooks for different purposes: C gives names and date of birth and death to her different notebooks.

Important thoughts and sketches

C: I use it less than before

E: Do you know why?

C: What if i draw something and it's not nice? After I have drawn it then I have to keep it there, inside my notebook and the notebook is ruined with bad drawings.

C: I compare the pages to see if they are all beautiful.

CREATIVE SOLUTION: Making collages to fill in the spaces that I left while moving on in the notebook.

Self-structured bullet journal

It's a blank notebook on which C creates the different sections, drawing them and organising them as she feels like

C: I like to browse through it like a notebook therapy

C: started many journals for example to make it more funny to take medications, where I make cute drawings and doodles that refer to my "obligation

Weekly planner to remember things

entire week in one page

pages with lines

CREATIVE SOLUTION: taping on the pages paper inserts so I can use blank paper and write how I want, as the lines create limitations in my thinking

67

C: I have a notebook for a podcast I am working on

I use lines only when I have to write everything aligned and organised

I skim the ideas in my head first, or talking, and then I write down when I have a precise idea or keywords I am sure about.

Sudden ideas: on her phone

Problems/hates:

Anxiety of blank pages

[] What to do with the back side of paper I have written on? Waste of paper.

[] Ripped pages.

CREATIVE SOLUTION: glue one page on the top of the other

[] Squared format

personal notebook research from others

Erica

03.02.23

roll, to take apart the pages and hang them, meant to be part of the workflow and the work of the residency

a surface could gather information, something semipublic

portability and accessiility

more open to others and collectivity

performativity of writing

how is it accessible for others?

maybe it was not, because of ownership

we would hang the single pages, as an explicit invitation to access it, changing the format helped

the paper kept closing on itself

rings

out of frustration: rings just gathering materials fast and cheap as possible

i do have a calendar section now

i tend to spread notes everywhere: i had flyingpaper everywhere

the rings allow to collect things together that previously detached

you can also put together

i don't wanna write on my notebook, not to write wrong things, in the end it became a dump for all materials

it also allows to choose what to put or not, more editorial approach to choose what to have or not

sections of topics

beautiful cover

first section with the map of things im busy with (a weird index) homework and satanic reminders, some cute pages to devise

that started to collect random things, an a4 folded to a5 to fit the overall size

at the end, other section to keep track of body needs

additional thoughts:

it's not digitalllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll (joke)

still using flyng paper to explore and experiments

for journalng ideas instead of brainstorming

spread sheet notebooks

tryouts get lost because they are flying

bigger space on bigger sheets: explicit intentions to mock the spreadsheet style

empty space for annotation, but empty spreadsheet, you can play with the rules of spaces

for what you can write,

one is more literally used as a spreadsheet

the other just has the aesthetics, used as a normal sheet

trying out a table

my personal notebook process	the ever-changing process a person can go through, by analysing and keeping attention to their individual note-taking activity and their use of paper notebooks to understand themselves and their needs.
Concept	A roll of loose transparent paper sheets
What is the starting need that brought to the creation and use of it?	Erica participated in a residency and needed a notebook that could be part of the workflow. It needed to be portable and accessible, more open to others and collectivity, giving writing a role of performativity.
What are the positive sides? Does it work within the starting purpose?	During the residency, she would hang the single pages, as an explicit invitation for others to access the notes. It was easy to put in a small bag and be transported everywhere.
What are the negative sides? What could be a different approach to solve the issue?	It worked very well for everything but the accessibility for others, because of ownership and the fact that she was the main user of it. In addition, the paper kept closing on itself.
To try out:	

Supi

29.09.22

conversations on notebooks...

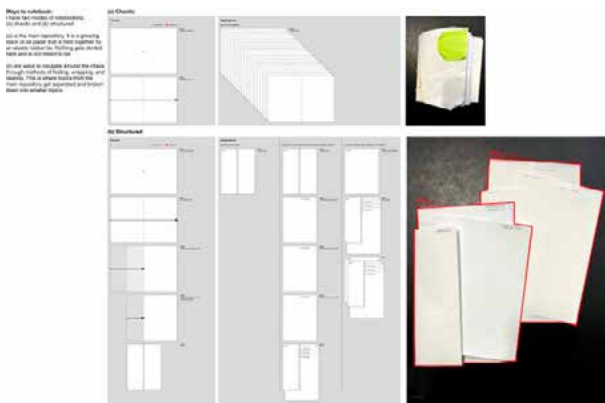
supi presented me some updates on the use of notebooks she's doing. First of all Supi noticed how much a different tool/pen has a different result on her way of working/drawing/thinking, how much it makes a difference in the act of playing with the use of the pen (the way you

interact with the pen, an object that teaches her through the act of drawing - **notebooks as discovery space**). In this case, paper has a substantial impact on the results, so that often pen and paper goes together. Supi has started with a common (basical structure) notebook, then moving to other prototypes. One that she made herself (and to which i contributed with a simple rubber band to avoid the paper from breaking), in which she's using photocopies paper (more simple it is, the least guilty the user will feel while using it) and a 0.38 Muji pen. This type of notebook is giving Supi more space for organisation (or mess) but especially, it's creating new and unexpected connection between the content of the pages. At the same time, a few weeks ago I delivered supi the notebook kit: seems like it's going on but needs more time to try out the structure.

what do I do with the rest? What do I do with all this content? Where do I put it? In supi's notebook the central question is: how many sheets can it contain? When to stop? When to start moving pages somewhere else? What to keep and what to leave in the process?

Followed conversation with supi about “if I get rid of some of these pages of the notebook, how do I choose?” What is to be kept and what is to be left out? In some way, as in translation you pick one word or another because you want to give that or this meaning, also with notebooks could be the same: How will the notebook appear after the translation?

22.11.22



Supi's picture - notebook's plan



Supi's picture - notebook

28.01.23



Supi's picture - cable-bound

04.04.23

Supi and I had a discussion on the use of the notebook she worked with since december. She understood that it could not work with her as she imagined. Sometimes too much organisation can become restrictive in the use of notebooks: the categories, having to choose where to write what every time. She's now experimenting with little scrap sheets to draw on; a new notebook with a rubber band or even without binding at all (binding are not for her); she is gathering papers from her notes, articles or other already printed materials, all together in a big collection. See pictures for more details.

(audio recording available)



C.E.S.

Make your own tool 1.0 - 22.11.22

Organisation of the session

Introduction (10 minutes)

Hello

I'm working on a research about paper notebooks, or more widely note taking devices, and on how we use them for our thinking and learning process.

This is an ongoing research, therefore, I do not have all the answers that also makes all of this really exciting and I hope these sessions, that I hope will continue, are a space for both you and me to explore and discover new things.

(theory) Last year I started questioning my notebook's practice and tried to build a new paper device that would satisfy better the needs of my brain in that moment. To get there I asked myself what were the problems in the device I was using and how changing something small could already improve my use of the notebook. I then wondered: "Why are we all using a device with the same structure? And what impact does it have on our learning, thinking and living, as well as on the imaginary of self? And how creating our personal tools would help users to understand better themselves and their needs?".

I am interested in notebooks as a means of creativity, a space for thinking and reasoning, a personal world inside this messy world we live in. I like the idea of getting lost in our own space, how writing and doodling and drawing become part of our living. And, I wonder, can this personal world be the same for everyone, can it be standardised? My theory is that everyone, in different situations, has different needs while using a notebook and that the efficiency (in the sense of: how much we use it, how useful it becomes for us, how we feel free and comfortable with it) can change using different structures.

(practice) This is what gave me the idea (show my notebooks' evolution): a normal notebook of which I just folded the sheets to create this multiple columns paper item. In my case I built it from scratch, but there are also options to work on the ones you already have, if you'd like so. At some point I needed to reorganise thoughts and I made this little prototype (show grad proj little notebook).

Creativity levels: (from the book Convivial toolbox)

The most basic level of creativity is doing, that requires a minimum amount of interest. This is what happens when we use our already made from the industry notebook.

The second level is adapting. This action is made to personalise and change in a little way an object you already have. If you brought your personal notebook today, you could try to improve it but making little additions to it, like a back pocket, a taped new paper, post-its to create more space.

The third level is making. This happens when we build a notebook from scratch but following predetermined patterns or rules. This action needs more time and energy.

The last level is creating. Creating is making something that doesn't exist yet. It relies on the use of raw materials and the absence of predetermined patterns.

Everyone can decide at what level they feel like engaging with their own notebook. The purpose of this sessions is to engage with further levels of creativity and explore how to make the notebook fit better your needs.

(ask about notebooks making knowledge - do you do it? if you do it, how? if not, why?)

I don't know if you already use notebooks frequently or if you'd like to do so, and I hope that we'll be able to discover this here together during this session.

The idea is going through a few little exercises to get into the process of ideas and see how it goes. Later, we will make a notebook ourselves.

I'm here to guide you so whatever you're level of bookmaking is, you will be able to create something today.

Do not overthink, it's not right or wrong, just do what comes to your mind.

We are going to do three short exercises to explore possibilities. You don't need to read what you write, you're invited to share but you're not obliged. Just free your mind. This is experimental. Whatever you'll make is good.

PART 1 - 3 get-into-practice exercises

EXERCISE 1. (5 minutes)

Questions in layers

- 1) Do you use notebooks?
- 2) List a few situations in which you use notebooks.
- 3) Describe what do you like or dislike about your notebook.

EXERCISE 2. (5 minutes)

prepare 3 sheets of paper of same size and give them in different rounds of 5 minutes

- 1) Fold the first paper. Give it to the person next to you.
- 2) Fold a second paper. Give it to the person next to you.
- 3) Fold a third paper. Give it to the person next to you.
- 4) Put these sheets together, where the binding in these foldings could be positioned?

EXERCISE 3. (5 minutes)

prepare 3 different sizes of paper and give them in different rounds of 5 minutes

- 1) From answer 2, pick one situation in which you use a notebook.
- 2) Write something about what needs you have in that situation on this paper. You are allowed to fold the paper to make it more comfortable for you.
- 3) Write again something (or the same thing) about what needs you have in that situation on this paper. You are allowed to fold the paper to make it more comfortable for you.
- 4) Write again something (or the same thing) about what needs you have in that situation on this paper. You are allowed to fold the paper to make it more comfortable for you.

Reflection round

Share if they have interesting observation.

How was it different to write to a different shape? Do you wanna share what you wrote?

Let's do a round.

[break of 10 minutes]

PART 2 - Make a notebook section (40 minutes)

Maybe you can now think about a notebook for a specific scenario and think about a format that could fit. Pick what you need and build a prototype. This can be just the prototype to test a scenario, but if you end up liking it you can try to use it. Think about it a few minutes. If you have some ideas or problems you'd like to talk about, I'm here to guide you so whatever you're level of bookmaking is, you will be able to create something today.

Exercise>>Make a notebook from a cardboard.

Importance of recycling materials: an important part of my practice is making notebooks by starting from already used materials. I brought today a few "book covers". I'd like you to start thinking about a prototype you could fit into one of these shapes/structures.

This will also help triggering our imagination. It can be as easy and simple as you can imagine, and you could also think if there's a way to make it more adapt to you, helping yourself with the results of the exercises we just did.

Let's start!

After the session. (10 minutes)

Ask 3 questions:/ conv/ let's do a round/ first time, feedbacks are welcome / if they have any thoughts in the next weeks or months or start making something invite them to share.

- 1) Did you like the session?
- 2) What would you change/What did you like?
what impact this workshop can have on this?
- 3) Would you participate in a follow-up session?

If so, leave your email address here:

Analysis of session

Introduction

We have been talking, I introduced the research, showed my notebook example and said that my work is on going, so I don-t have all the answers and I am also there to learn together with them. I said we would spend the session experimenting and learning from each other.

I forgot to present each other and what are we doing there, so remember next time to do a presentation round, asking about their bookbinding experience, and a super small overview of their use of notebooks.

PART 1 - 3 get-into-practice exercises

Then we did three exercises where I freed them from any fear of failing, accepting everything they would create (just be careful when I am in doubt if a modification on the exercise they might propose doesn't disrupt the reason why the exercise exist, as with number 2).

1. In the first writing exercise I proposed I need to be more precise with the questions and find better ways to invite people to answer because they were a bit too straightforward, not giving a lot of space for interpretation and people were a bit confused. Another question to solve is how much time to give between the questions, should I wait that everyone finishes? just say 5 minutes and it's done?
2. The second exercise was really nice, because participants put their hands on things and they could actually perceive the different approach they had in what they were doing. They came up with a result that they did not expect and it was really exciting. They asked me if they could use glue and I said no because the purpose is that they had to find a way to make whatever paper they found themselves with in the form of a notebook, with a binding in whatever part they would decide. Here, remember not to rotate always in the same direction as I don't want only one person's foldings to mix together. Maybe one you keep, one right side, one left side.
3. The third exercise, I had to modify it on the go, while doing it because it got a bit boring because there were too many repetitions without new discoveries. Find different questions, could also use the foldings they made in exercise 2 to have the same feeling they had with the weird narrow paper. The solution I found made the exercise interesting because it created a reaction in them and in the way they were thinking about how they would normally approach pieces of paper when writing, because the paper they used was of an unusual shape.

Reflection round

Then we had a discussion when they could explain what were their thoughts and I could already see that they were already looking at things differently, especially thanks to exercise number 2.

[]

- Notebooks are always too big or too small
- like long lines

[] has different notes in different places, also digital

[]

- needs to be at 90 degrees
- the weird folds inspiring for drawings, not for notes because too messy
- like envelopes and foldings

[]

- crave for the format of a book
- need to be compact and stable
- if narrows help writing, so like columns and foldings

[]

- like to play around
- how to combine together? rip off bad pages to recombination them
- paper didn't allow flexibility

[]

- questions to the point
- write differently on the shape they made
- the shape changes the way I write
- vertical words in lines give me the urgency to let things out --> let's bind together the urgent notes

[] narrow paper for stream of consciousness and play like notebooks with columns

I still have problems in understanding how to document these impressions. I think they are visible in some way or another in their final notebooks but still, annotate on my notebook like this is enough?

PART 2 - Make a notebook section

In this section I asked them to make a notebook based on whatever came up to their minds while doing the exercises. It could be a basic standard notebooks, adding a small modification, doing experimental weird things, everything accepted.

The moment when we passed from the first section to the second was a bit too direct and not smooth so it would be nice to find a way to get into that section more smoothly. Or step by step. In this case we solved by asking them what size or shape they wanted the notebook could have. But it also means that every time it could be different, so for example if one time we focus more on paper then we could choose which type of paper we want to start with.

It was really nice to see that everyone reacted in their own way and if you look at the results they produced during the session you can really notice that they were not only making basic notebooks but they already played a little bit with the ideas that came out through the three exercises in the first part and it was much better then only talking that stays a bit in the abstract side of things.

After the session

At the end people finishes at different pace, depending on what they work on and it's difficult to find a moment back together to discuss because they are all into their work and do not really feel like talking. This time I did not manage to do more than a fast general question on how they felt and if they would come to follow/up sessions.

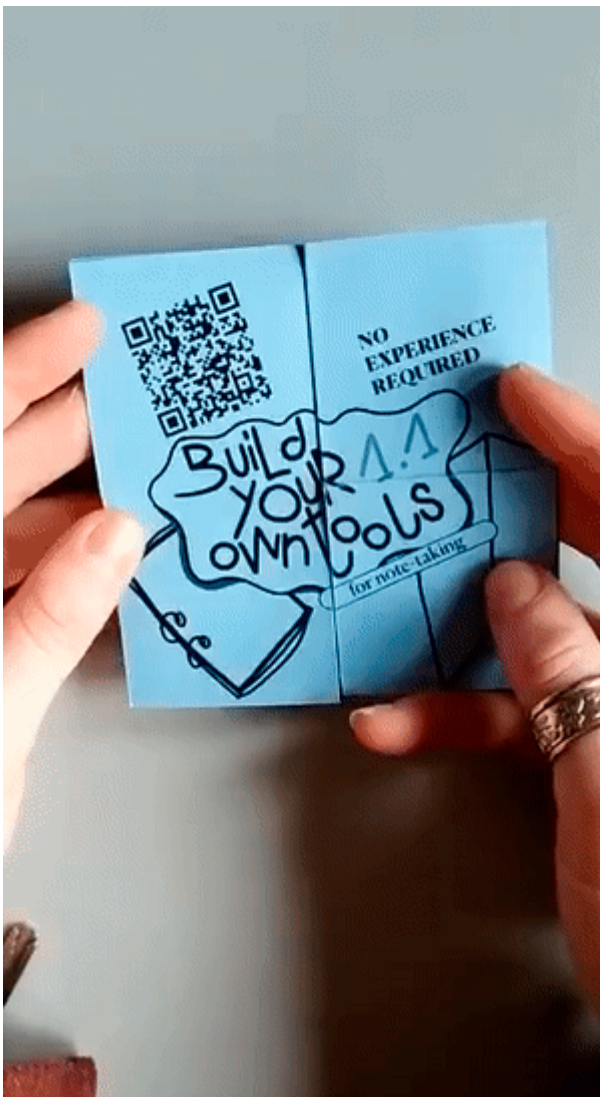
After the session I sent an email with pictures, some further information and a form with a few questions about the session. This is risky because not everyone then go and fill in the form.

General overview

- I need to prepare three or 4 different bookbinding methods so whatever shape or structure they propose I can help them properly. Also prepare different papers so they can also play with that part, maybe having an exercise specifically on this.

- It was interesting to see that I managed to make this session not on bookbinding, but it would be nice to organise another session where people can focus on type of binding they can use to have a bigger overview of the possibilities. Maybe prepare a presentation on this. Second session to be organised after a period of incubation where they can feel the thoughts directly in their living.
- It was extremely nice to see them doing the exercises and get excited when they saw things happening. It is really good that they could create their own things with their hands.
- I really enjoyed the time together and I think that they also had a lot of fun, and this is also really important for me.
- I want to try out different exercises that can lead to similar concepts, to start thinking about this topics I am talking about. Starting from my questions and develop exercises directly from them.
- I need a bit more time, so maybe 2.5h or even 3h, but it is also tiring so I need to think about it a little bit.
- 8 people was a good number, but in the second part it was even a bit too many to be able to follow all of them properly. On the other side, this provoked an interesting result that was that everyone tried their best to be independent and found experimental ways to solve their problems, while sometimes asking for help when they did not know how to do it or could not go on with what they had in mind.
- Write for an exercise that helps them reasoning but that I can also keep with me after the session so it would be nice to ask questions that are related to the things I am looking for researching about.
- It was nice the part of the creativity creation stuff I introduced, it would be nice to have a super small theoretical concept to share with them while I go on with reading and researching.
- The exercises are not only made to get into the process or in the mindset I am looking for, but it really helps to get through the writing, in the same way I asked to answer my questions by talking with people, giving a context to it by doing it on paper and using that to create other exercises works really well.
- Possible structure of exercises:
 1. Writing exercise where they answer something about the topic and at the same time start interacting with paper
 2. Exercise for the folding
 3. Exercise for the paper

"Make Your Own Tools 1.1" for notetaking



Leaflet for event

Script for the session

Introduction - Concepts & Theory

definition of personal notebook process and research project

show a few examples

learning through making

At the beginning, before starting the exercises, everyone will receive a table to fill in different features to make a notebook: binding (what, if there is something, keeps connected the sheets), paper choice, shape, cover, add-ons. This paper will stay with them till the end of the session and help during the feedback moment.

In addition, I prepared other two tables that I would like you to keep into consideration while we move on into the session. They are experimental so I hope you will also help me to shape it in the best way, so if you have any consideration please share it with me.

Phase 1 - Exercises

1. PAPER CHOICE: 4 different papers in a pile + 1 on top to take notes on. The features to analyse are: thickness, smell, folding capability, feeling with pens, possible use and do i like it?

2. FOLDING: folding exercise + rings options; rotational: everyone starts with 3 sheets, everyone has to fold it once and give it to the left, to their right and one they have to keep. Then with the resulting 3 sheets they are going to do a round of making holes wherever they want; the last thing is to put it together however someone can think of, using metal rings, threads (try out 1-2 bindings), or nothing (if reasoned).
3. SHAPE: writing exercise on the result of exercise 2 --> what do I ask? --> what do you use a notebook for? (situation, need..)

Phase 2 - Make your own paper notebook

Importance of recycling materials: Explain practice of recycling and reusing paper, as well as try to work with constraints coming from the materials we use. an important part of my practice is making notebooks by starting from already used materials. I brought today a few "book covers" and we are going downstairs to the Trashbunker to get some materials. I'd like you to start thinking about a prototype you could fit into one of these shapes/structures. This will also help triggering our imagination. It can be as easy and simple as you can imagine, and you could also think if there's a way to make it more adapt to you, helping yourself with the results of the exercises we just did.

Following the table we have been compiling during Phase 1, make a notebook and when it's done, compile the table.

Conclusion - Feedback moment

Discuss everyone's choices and feelings.

Give out something to fill in.

list of materials

prepare a bag with them all inside

-wooden sticks

-metal rings TO BUY

-selection of papers

-awl

-hole maker

-bone folder

-cutting mat

-choice of threads

-scissors

-needles

to buy:

- 30 sheets for exercise 1

- metal rings

exercises

A)))

5 carte diverse

Appoggiate sotto a un ulteriore foglio

L'esercizio consiste in prendere una carta ad occhi chiusi, toccarla annusarla e rispondere a qualche domanda

Spessore

Possibile utilizzo

Odore

Abilità di piegatura

Poi bisogna scrivere le risposte sul foglio al di sopra del mucchio

B))) the personal process of notebooks making

using the table at [User:FLEM/notebook](#), have the participants to start filling in the "new idea" notebook and then at the end of the session, to fill in the "notebooks process" table where to see what went good at what did not.

new ideas for notebooks	
Need	being able to move the pages so that every space is a free space
Concept	write on separate sheets and then put them together with strings or rings
Pros	Different paper sheets so I can write separately and then decide how to organise the notes
Cons	It is annoying that I cannot add things to the text if the space is finished (absence of folded columns)

my personal notebook process	the ever-changing process a person can go through, by analysing and keeping attention to their individual note-taking activity and their use of paper notebooks to understand themselves and their needs.
Concept	describe what the notebook consist of.
What is the starting need that brought to the creation and use of it?	this question helps to highlight the starting point and main reason for the creation of a new notebook (or modification applied). it can be described in a few words.
What are the positive sides? Does it work within the starting purpose?	this is to understand if the solutions that have been found and applied to the new notebook are valid and working. this is important mostly not to lose track of the reasons underneath the concept and to evaluate how much the modifications worked.
What are the negative sides? What could be a different approach to solve the issue?	if what has been analysed above did not work, why didn't it work? analysing what worked and what did not help to reason on new ways to solve the issue that was not solved.
To try out:	a space to throw some ideas about practical solutions to apply to a possible new notebook or that can be applied directly to the version that is under monitoring.

Analysis of the session

Intro & general overview

I started this session with presentation rounds: this conversation becomes very important to be able to understand who I have in front of me. I had 4 participants this time, half of the time before: this opened a lot of reasoning on the amount of people I truly need or want to have, and how much the collaboration becomes essential, to stimulate each other. I had the feeling that a smaller amount of people creates less exchange between one another.

What I realised it could be important to ask at the beginning is if they are at the workshop to experiment or to understand their way of working. Both options fit into the idea of the C.E.S.: experimenting helps to try out different options and give the participant an overview of what is their purpose during the session. This knowledge avoids a lot of the "lost" feeling the person might feel in the moment of making decisions. I understood I have to facilitate much more what happens and guide them through different steps to arrive to a possible plan for the second section of the C.E.S..

I presented myself and my research: I had on the table different examples of the paper notebooks I experimented with in the last months. Showing not only examples of notebooks, but the mentality I had through the process of reasoning, helps to inspire people at the beginning. Some of them took one idea I tested and made a version in their own way. Working together, exchanging discoveries is part of this process: while exchanging ideas with my study cases, Erica and Supi, I noticed I picked some ideas they were experimenting with and the opposite. Everyone then re-elaborate the idea to make it fit in their concept.

I described the creativity levels again, but I feel like theory in such a context does not help so I will not do it again. If I want to deliver specific information, I should provide printed material to share and make available for later reading. Also after the session it could be more interesting and understandable to read about the topic, after having experienced the materials.

For this session, I wanted to provide a help to move from the first part of the session to the "making a notebook" one: I experimented with different tables for my own work and decided to try it out with them to see if it is something usable. The result is that I still think that in a longer period of time it could be interesting to document the process, but it is not essential for the discovery itself. In addition, it was a lot to ask to my participants to take notes while reasoning while making and folding and experimenting. What I discovered though, is that I can use that

tables to describe, by observation, what I noticed in their work and as an aftermath, analysed what they did and why. During the session, I always walked around, asked questions on what they were working on and about the choices they were taking while producing. This also is meant to help them to analyse the reason why they make certain choices. Why not including this concept in the overall C.E.S.? This will be discussed in a later section.

Phase 1: The exercises

1) The first exercise had a good concept underneath: experience materials with all the senses and understand what works or does not work for you. What I erred has been the choice of paper I made, because they did not like any of them for a possible notebook. On the other hand, this mistake arose an awareness in something I have been thinking about since a while but never really pushed properly. I imagined these exercises to be a way to experience materials and bring out their creativity and imagination, to be able to deal with the second part more consciously and with a little bit of knowledge about their needs. Instead, these exercises should exist to lead them towards a possible notebook while helping them to understand better what they do and afterwards what they need. Something I have to keep into consideration is the fact that participants have not necessarily analysed already their use of notebooks, so at the beginning it would be useful to create awareness on it, before starting to question it. Maybe the C.E.S. should be a way to guide them through a discovery of their note-taking practice that leads to the creation of something that could satisfy certain requirements (discovered during the guided series of exercises). Practically, how to rethink this exercise: try-out pen on paper after having tried the other features, give a long sheet to write on and, most important, choose papers they'll have to pick from to make a notebook afterwards. How to make it shorter so they can try different types and be sure they will find at least one they like?

In this exercise also the choice of the shape of the notebook could participate: a sheet is not only texture but also shape. How to make a choice on what kind of shape does differently then another? How to challenge the relation between shape and content?

2) This exercise worked well when I had 8 people, but with 4 did not produce the result I was expecting. It needs to be faster, it needs to work also for a smaller amount of people and it needs to help with the production of the final "outcome". For example: what if i ask them to fold different sheets by themselves in ways that connect with the use of a notebook and then analyse what does it mean (for example, an annoying fold, an unusual fold and a funny fold).

<<<<<<<<<I am questioning just now: do i want them to experiment or to conduct them towards something I imagined? is this becoming too much structured for what I imagined? I did not want to tell people what to do because I thought it was intruding but it feels like it is necessary and also will definitely help to have a better structure in the toolbox. Am i losing track of my values or am I improving the workshops? >>>>>>>

3) The questions need to be leading towards something, they should help to reason on their practice. And also, most people do not reason while writing. I have to separate "taking notes exercises on weird papers" and "learning about your practice". To reason they have to talk but how to help them in that? Also, this maybe should happen at the beginning. Connected to what I said about the questioning their practice after discovering about their practice. (Study your own note taking practice)

On the exercises' phase: The exercises should become part of the guide towards a possible "outcome" (do not like the word outcome=find synonym): the guide is composed by exercises and questions that help to analyse and question the practice of note-taking and the use of notebooks while providing the participant with a "list" of choices on the use of all the components of a paper notebook. The idea would be that while doing the exercises the participants accumulate both materials and choices that they will put aside and bring them back at the moment of making a notebook. In this way, they will have all the decisions taken when

starting section 2 and will not feel overwhelmed by the block of the notebook maker (lol). They will also have produced a certain amount of materials that can be used in the making: this will also help with the problem of time. They should also be faster.

Importance of recycling: this part was extremely helpful to turn the session upside down. It really helped them to get inspired and understand that everything could possibly become a (paper? fabric? wooden?) notebook. I had the idea of collaborating (how? i don't know yet but i texted them in the meanwhile) with Trashbunker (entrance of Blaak) and have a session in which they can only make notebooks out of the materials that that day are present in the Trashbunker. This adds a lot of limitations and I felt, in every session, that I needed more restrictions for my participants to be able not to get lost and create something that it is not totally random. It is hard to make **situated notebooks** during such a short amount of time and limitations can help to produce something that it is not the perfect outcome or the most original but does help to understand the concept. This process could go on forever and it is quite hard to come up with a useful idea from scratch that is not only experimental but also functional towards a need someone could have daily (but maybe did not think about - how to help them to think about it?). What is a situated notebook // a non-situated notebook?

Maybe I do not need them to produce a notebook they can necessarily use, but also something that helps them to understand the process of making notebooks.

Phase 2 - Make a notebook

This phase went good because the trashbunker's limitations helped them to make decisions. Before going there, I felt they were a bit lost on what to do. Not making notebooks every day makes it difficult to take these decisions from scratch. I discussed above how this could be solved and how the two sections have to merge together and one needs to feed into the other.

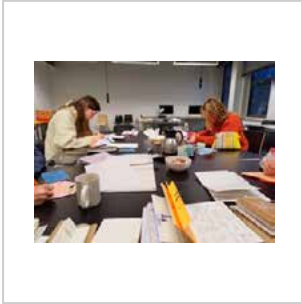
Anyway, they produced 4 amazing results that I will try to analyse using the sheet I wanted them to use (see Appendix?). All of them made choices, but were not able to identify them properly. I would like to bring that up to light also to their eyes.

Conclusion - feedback moment

This should be the most important moment. Not because I need feedback on me, but because it is the time to come all together and discuss the choices they made. If they cannot have that space and time to do this, the session does not make sense. In addition, I could take notes on what they are doing while they are doing it, interpret their actions and then give them to the participants to see what they might have done unconsciously (?). They cannot really articulate what they are doing and this is the thing i have to focus on a lot.

Also my feedback questionnaire was useless. byebye dead dead xxoxo

gallery



writing exercise



prototype of participants, using pins to bind a notebook



of smelling exercise

New concept for following session

**from brainstorming session 14-03-23*

The research project is described and analysed in the thesis, through the use of theoretical research (history and context) and practical research (methods and case studies).

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The CES are a playground to experiment with different approaches to arrive to a collection of exercises that could take part of the outcome --> test, try-out, experiment.

- make clear = bring your notebook
- apply knowledge
- The session and the final toolkit are starting points/initialiser for them to test scenarios to see what works better (the CES are for me, the toolkit is for the people, made by me as a researcher together with the participants) --> it is different if I organise the sessions for my research's purposes
- One option could be that the aim of the session is several outcomes that leads to a realisation and some inspiration on how to do it --> test different ideas, examples, small prototypes
- QUESTIONS: work on them, create a NEW SET of questions to lead them towards the process --> limits of page, lost in the page, what could they find in their notebooks?
- do they have an idea of what to do? Help them by facilitating with suggestions and options
- provide structure and accept the unexpected
- stuff needs to be connected --> how folding influences the note-taking: not only the way I write but also what I think and realise while writing
- create a format of notes that helps me to talk in the workshop and allows me to talk and go back easily
- FACILITATOR: have a good example with the first person that answers to questions
- the importance of RECYCLING: it is also about accessibility, this is important into my practice and to me, the purpose of making something accessible: do I have time and effort? how can I make things faster and easier? what if someone is not skilled/does not have time? does not have materials? where can they gather second-hand materials?

NEW STRUCTURE PROPOSAL:

1. **INTRO EXCHANGE:** i present, they present, i present they present *explain the stations and the tools at the beginning (folding, cutting, glueing)
2. **FOLDING EXERCISE:** (adjust to save time eg fold pass fold pass fold pass then write about personal practice)
3. **PLACE HOLDER** (eg try out papers but shorter)
4. **MAKE DIY PROTOTYPES** (experimenting/making different little things more than one big thing, say that they can be try-outs) --> keep the 1:1 moments/tutorials where I walk around and discuss decisions together (encourage and suggest, talk about individual materials, needs, skills, knowledge)
5. **CONCLUSION**

INTRO EXCHANGE

- intro? Explain the process more in detail, (also in context and content), "the aim of this session is that you will start to think about this process yourself" underline that this is a process they could do
- 1st TASK (INTRODUCTION)

me my process/show how the process to them

them their process / reflection on their practice something that did not work (reflect and choose problem struggle)

! what if they do not find a problem? then ask other questions: why does it work? Can you imagine a possible scenario where it could not work? If the format was different, would it make a difference? what if it was a different type of content? Would you like to experiment with something different?

- do an analysis of their notebooks
- background + experience

EXERCISES

1. **FOLDING EXERCISE:** exaggerate helps to try extremes/limits out how folds can have an impact + at the end of the exercise present the process they went through to choose what they put there and for what reason + say in the prompts how they could use the folds

--> reflecting on research, take notes, prepare text, talk about your creative practice, present their work (something they have already thought about in their life), give examples, show possibilities.

--> participate in the exercises to share my excitement (maybe doing it a bit more extreme of what i would normally do to show how it could be)

2. **PLACE HOLDER** (eg try out papers but shorter)

rethink it thinking about what kind of choices i make when i am making a notebook, what are important factors for me?

3. **MAKE DIY PROTOTYPES** (experimenting/making different little things more than one big thing, say that they can be try-outs) --> keep the 1:1 moments/tutorials where I walk around and discuss decisions together (encourage and suggest, talk about individual materials, needs, skills, knowledge)

- assemble recycled/second hand materials
- make a selection of little things and feel encouraged

CONCLUSION

Describe what they did, what they would like to try in the future, did they have any realisation?
+ keep in touch, send pictures and updates, send thoughts and questions

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User:FLEM/2.0

< [User:FLEM](#)(Redirected from [2.0](#))

.my notebook is the place where everything is // i like to annotate in there what get stuck into my brain for one reason or another (//not all the thoughts are my exclusive property)

stuff that comes a bit from my thoughts and some from my paper notebook, but in a timeline order to keep everything organised.., my real researchlog is somewhere else.....

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19.09.22

I am starting a new page on my wiki to start the new year being sure everything i'm doing will be documented and not forgotten.. my brain is like a broken sponge sometimes

We had a first prototyping class today, started to organise our thoughts around what we think we could possibly focus on for the next 10 months, this is what I summed up [from <https://pad.xpub.nl/p/XPUB2-Mondays-1>]

KEYWORDS: text, translation, playfulness, the sociality of text, books, libraries, distributive practice, collectivity, text, share, tools, annotation methods, modularity, anti-standardisation, reading, writing.

What is kept/lost in the process of translation/of annotation/

Create a temporal community for temporal archives and temporal (learning-together) workshops for temporal research:

The archive dil(emma): what happens to notebooks when they're full? [see diaries archives]
Create a temporal archive by collecting notes that are not being used anymore, to be seen
Can this open a new life for forgotten notes?

Collection of sample notebook prototypes + Hybrid/digital prototypes: online tools to create layouts, print instructions, but also to play with forgotten texts

I want to have more, to be able to play with my notebook, to know it better. I started to reason on how, as we've been creating our personal tools online, we could also create our personal analogue tools. Notebooks are individual and personal objects, but they're treated like everyone has the same need from a piece of paper.

Someone said (Brendan Howell): our collective work is having new ideas to find better alternatives to th(e ma)instream ways that shut down every imagination chance, they offer the "best" way. Do it in a different way. + "Thus, throughout, I demonstrate how a certain thread of experimental poetry has always been engaged with questioning the media by which it is made and through which it is consumed" [Lori emerson - interfaces] -> the medium is the message (mcluhan)

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what did we come up with

this is what came out as a common ground between all our thoughts:

< workshops / audience participation

< prototyping platforms

< research on unknown stuff

< how to intrude commercial practices and BREAK THEM

< publishing practices

< studying the intentions of a design format

< questioning standards

M&Ms sessions - ideas

When the M&Ms sessions have been described someone has to propose something for next week 26.09.22 and I have a strong need to start sharing my ideas about notebooks and see how other human beings react to it.. I need this especially if i want to organise workshops, so in the next week I will work on how this session could function in a way that it's helpful both for participants and for me and my research development.

Here some ideas I got yesterday:

Two by two in pairs, the notebook is mutually analyzed

The participants discuss and write down the results of the conversation on individual sheets - >> write questions (at least three) and try to answer them on a piece of paper

Notebook with tape where I attach all the single sheets together of all the workshops that I will do and in the end I will have a nice folder

Experimenting is sometimes hyperbole and exacerbating a concept so it also means being able to create a notebook that is no longer functional but concretely describes the meaning of the desire or need

The result of the workshop is the analysis of what the participants want, the comparison with each other, exchange information, think imagine experimenting with the limit of paper. How can this limit be disrupted? --> kim talked about disrupting standard formats!

Thesis/Grad project - ideas

Create a temporal archive: what happens if I put everything (notebooks) together for a while? And then what to do with them?

Create an xpub notebook archive for consultation

Interpretation and comparison of annotation on the same content

20.09.22

Talked with Michael about next year and looked at old publications..

I liked: the work by Loredana Bontempi on Ddump, recycling in the digital context because it talks about what can come out from what has been erased on laptops and made me think how can I research why some notes become useless? can they be recycled? I also thought about recycled translations at some point last year

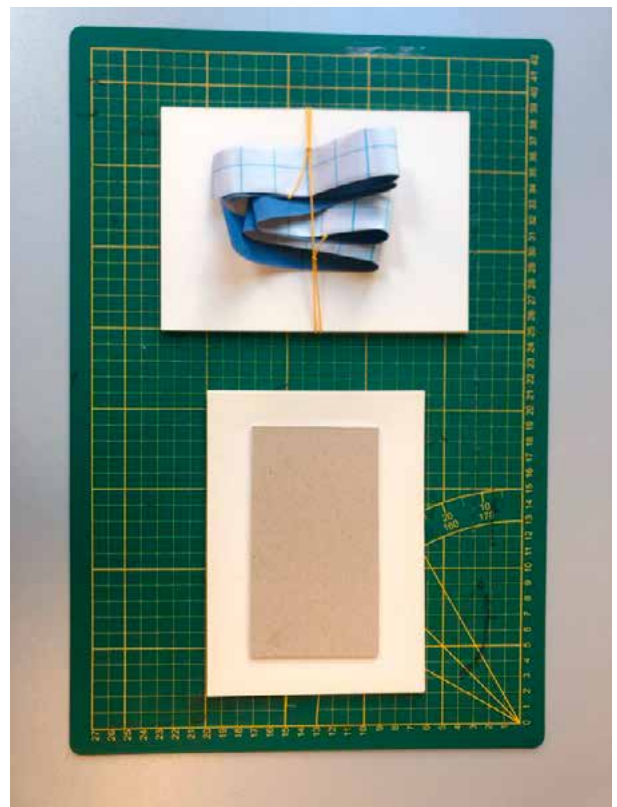
Plus, today I delivered to Supi the first *notebook kit: An adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation*

The idea is that this type of notebooks allows the user to build it up easily as their needs come over and adjusting and editing while using it and not being forced to stay in a standardised area for standardised notebook users.

M&Ms sessions - ideas

Write an example list of needs that I have, so participants can understand better what is this about: a notebook where to write my thoughts (need to be small and available at all times), a notebook with a drawing section, for uni&research notetaking, plus additional random topics like ideas or bills counts..etc --> how do i include all of this in one notebook?

Present Supi's case (ask if she's up for it)



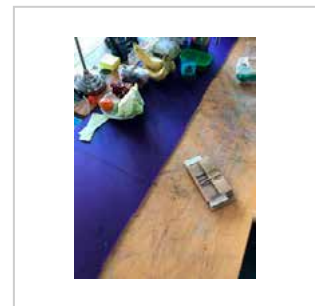
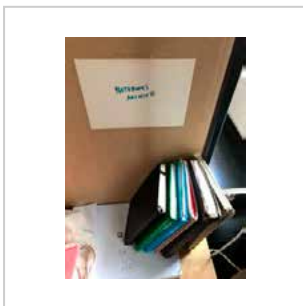
Thesis/Grad project - ideas

The thesis will be a modular notebook where the reader can move inside [or that the reader can build by themselves] from place to place, reconnecting content.

21.09.22

Made a prototype for chae (*a multicolumned notebook: could we fold it more?*)

Officially opened the *notebooks (temporary) archive*



M&Ms sessions - ideas

Trying to figure out M&Ms session..

As it's an explorative session, it's mostly going to be me asking them to react to my questions

I want them to start reasoning.. can we also fold paper?

ask to fold a piece of paper, or to keep it in their hands during the session and start reasoning on it

print questions on little cards?

talk in couples? or all together?

last question is about "what to do with what's left" that will lead to chae's session

to do:

<print questions on cards to be spread on the table

<selection of paper to be spread on the table to be picked at the beginning

plan:

[throw both cards and papers on the table]

Hello, this is me

.idea workshop described

.pick a piece of paper, ask to fold, or to keep it in their hands during the session and start reasoning on it, on its spaciality

.ask to pick some questions from the table and start discussing together, everyone can say their opinion on one or more questions

.last question is about "what to do with what's left" that will lead to chae's session

22.09.22

graduate seminarrrr

we're presenting each other's works

result of interview 01

#2 (20min-)

Interviewee EMMA

Interviewer GERSANDE

Note-taking LUCA

G: can you maybe summarise for us again what is your interest in diaries sketchbooks and notes

E: first actually the first reason why I started to think about that is because I felt a bit compassionate about stuff that's not taken into consideration, started to reason how notebooks and diaries are a different think, notebooks most of the ime are this temporal space where people write things on and use them to learn things in the moment and throw it away, whereas diaries are more so a description of yourself and your thoughts. They already started to make diaries archives, but never heard what to do with old unused notebooks. The way we take notes comes from characteristic of out person, cultural, social.

The reason why I am interested in notebooks is because of culture studies swell as from a practical point of view, finds it weird that every person writes in the same way with the same device and it doesn't make sense because we are all different and need different methods to

engage with a piece of paper, annotate things, remember things, learn things. Not every is one fit.

G: are you interested in prototyping new mediums ... or studying old ones

E; the first step I would like to take is to create explorative sessions for people to start on what media they are using, they really go along together because I really want to make new prototypes, have already been making them. To be able to teach people to make them themselves, put them in a situation of resigning and creating for yourself.

G: how would you go around

E: explorative sessions, could be called workshops, don't know about answers just have a lot of questions, sessions as a moment for people to answer my own questions to understand their individual needs to start to create a new way of notebook for them.

G: what will you hope this will achieve

E: I think I already achieved something, already talked with some people about it, quite niche takes with people about it who had thoughts but were still using standardised notebooks but through questions and talking looked at other possibilities of creating or prototyping new ways. Creating a reaction in people by talking about it. Could also go really bad because nobody gives a shit about it and everybody could be happy with their basic A5

G: for you it is also about making it exciting right ?>

E: I am passionate about this and people like to talk about themselves and their needs, anyways if this doesn't really work, as a project idea, the other part of this interest is what to do with what is left. So I thought about an archive research/project maybe using the workshops as methodologies to gather information and meet and talk with people about these topics. Putting them in an already started archive but not knowing what will happen afterwards as this collection of notebooks may as well not fit together. What are ways for notebooks like this to survive , there has to be something to be done.

With cultural analysis it could be you and me in a room and both of us are taking notes of the same lecture its gonna be two different points of view on the same thing and this could open up on other ideas.

G: you already had the already existing notebooks and what they mean / making notebooks up to peoples ends / case study of comparing notes in a certain context/ can you talk about this comparing notes ? You could possibly build up an archive of notes that are taken by different people at the same time/ lectures

E: starting point of notes from different people on pub lectures

G: we where talking about the overproduction of media the other day, if you think about it 20 people in the same class take notes on the same shit and have 20 notebooks filled with the same stuff. Weird. We take a giant amount of photographs of the same things over and over, just something interesting. I kind of made me think about subjectivities and point of view onto things actually the same thing is gonna be different for everyone because of the expression of myself and my way of looking at t things .

G: do you wanna share your vision of this to others

E: no I don't know I don't wanna put myself anywhere, want to be a mediator, archivist, analyst

Would like to have people reacting to this to not have myself be the subject of this research

G: are you always researching along of people eor is there also individual research

E: deifntily also individual research for example for the thesis because gonna need all the information to have grounds for a project with meaning and sense.

G: how do relate this to what has been your practice so far?

E: actually started to make recycled notebooks during my bachelor already, in that cause it was mostly about recycling materials and reusing materials to make notebooks and I really like to use like trash to make notebooks and then the idea of I mean I've seen so many super cute like notebooks that can be trashy that I am tired of them and also heard a lot of people feeling guilty in using nice notebooks and trashy notebooks are therefore better for people because they get used.

Always been interested in the materials of objects and their touch and on modularity and how to build up things together and again its really a lot related with subjectiviciy the fact that even a publication you can make yours in a way that every person that uses it can react in their own ways, so I I think its a lot about finding a place for everything and disrupt known formats and ideas

G: not interest in other forms of note taking ie phone

E: taken into consideration, why do they prefer it, how is memory a part of note taking, that's all really like a personally thing, and I think that the digital part is interesting and I thought about a notebook that can move like a nomadic pupblicitn and can move through different mediums and transform and morph through other mediums. Moving from one media to the other and then because of obviously the digital thing can offer you something I dot want to, the discussion about the paper is dead and all is always the same it all goes along together, if its gonna come Its gonna come.

G: d you have like a physical outcome in mind, physical can be digital or material or is it about proposing methodologies ? What's the end goal

E: artist in exhibition: adopting your research to a human size, so that she just puts the book there and looks at people interaction, observing.

I though for example with an archive It would be nice to see what people can actually do with it how people react to it instead of me deciding or showing it, I thought about an exhibition about archives but obviously the way I am gonna show this archive is gonna be importatnbt not just gonna be there and stuff. Its about understanding what people can do with these things .

G: do you want to add anything

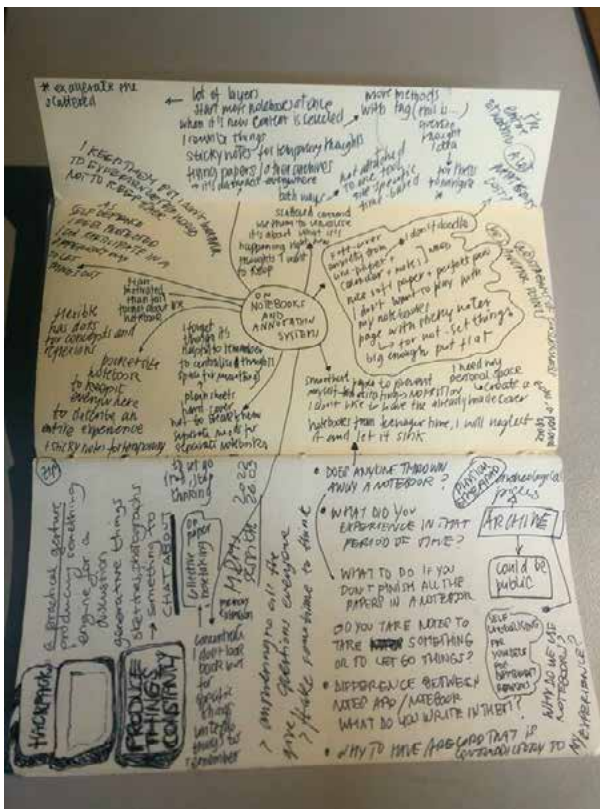
E: I mean I think its gonna either an exhibition or a participative exhibition/workshops leading to a distributive practice- pushing to people to think and react.

--->talk also with people that don't take notes

26.09.22

M&Ms session and results ...

<https://pad.xpub.nl/p/XPUB2-Mondays-2>



references

https://pzwiki.wdka.nl/mediadesign/Politics_of_Craft

<https://www.artistsandhackers.org/Community-Memory>

<https://computerhistory.org/blog/community-memory-precedents-in-social-media-and-movements/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zettelkasten>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palimpsest>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talmud>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bottom's_Dream

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folio>

94 <http://georgemaciunas.com/essays-2/improving-education-in-the-world-based-on-maciunas-knowledge-management-and-learning-machine-system-by-astrit-schmidt-burkhardt/>

Roland Brothers around notula and nota

prototyping

focus group session on servers: <https://pad.xpub.nl/p/hosting-and-serving>

Thesis/Grad project - ideas

notebook making as craft // craftsmanship is made out of everything it is surrounded by: the abilities you need to create, the tools you use, the time of creation...

how to make your personal archive of memory? self-categorisation, for different reasons//archeological pieces

collective notetaking on paper//physical etherpad

memory extension

to do list

make a shell notebook

think about a modular notebook --> where i can find everything in categories (create categories) to start from every point color [separation & classification]

read references

study notes: a collector for who take scattered notes

think about collective notebook for this year

29.09.22

today we're working on the project proposal

draft done, presented backpack, to be done: backpack, annotated bibliography, send by email the proposal

backpack presentation notes

notebook

prototype

play with pages to have more space and connections

modularity, structure vs playfulness, mess and inspiration

analyzing and researching other peoples notebook / needs / limits

modular notebook kit

test cases, different needs

everyone is different, many things / ideas thoughts on the notebook and note taking

more confusing for the practical project, the thesis part is a bit more clear

instructions, conceptual art, sol lewitt, unknown outcomes

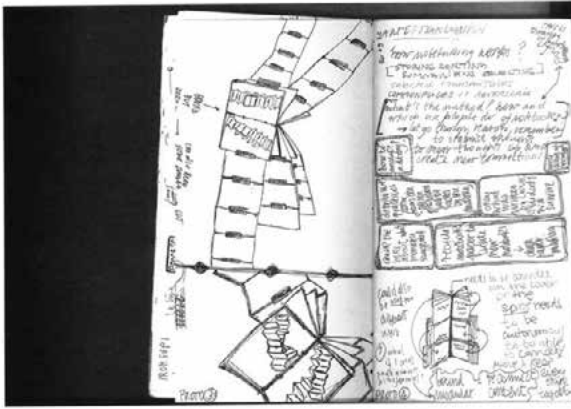
distributive work

conversations on notebooks...

supi presented me some updates on the use of notebooks she's doing. First of all Supi noticed how much a different tool/pen has a different result on her way of working/drawing/thinking, how much it makes a difference in the act of playing with the use of the pen (the way you interact with the pen, an object that teaches her through the act of drawing - **notebooks as discovery space**). In this case, paper has a substantial impact on the results, so that often pen and paper goes together. Supi has started with a common (basical structure) notebook, then moving to other prototypes. One that she made herself (and to which i contributed with a simple rubber band to avoid the paper from breaking), in which she's using photocopies paper (more simple it is, the least guilty the user will feel while using it) and a 0.38 Muji pen. This type of notebook is giving Supi more space for organisation (or mess) but especially, it's creating new and unexpected connection between the content of the pages. At the same time, a few weeks ago I delivered supi the notebook kit: seems like it's going on but needs more time to try out the structure.

30.09.22

prototype ideas



some new ideas on how to play with the structure of the notebook..

[left page] Thought about the fact that the limit of binding is that there's no space for easy customisation or add-ons after it's closed at the beginning. so instead of the prototype of the [notebook kit: An adjustable and editable notebook with included tape and papers for continuation], where i felt there was too little rigid structure and the user could feel too lost, i imagined to use the

same technique starting from a bound one [name: *the infinite notebook*]. At the same time, this opens an option for loose sheets that through the use of glued tape can be attached as plain paper to the loose ones. It is bound, but free to move: the user is also able to cut out pages, reposition but also keep some they care about.

[bottom right page] the second idea instead works more on the concept of modularity: reconnect content between the three sections, making possible to have an overview of content even when the space on the column is finished. By choosing a specific method (that could be colours, page number, or even a personal one created on the go) it should become intuitive to move in the space of *the triad notebook*. The notebook could also be shared for multiple uses, maybe using every row differently. The question is if i am obliged to use a spiral ring or a copta could also work? need to try out

Recycle notebooks paper to create new notebooks: check paper making

03.10.22

M&Ms by kamo and supi: *learning through annotation*..

ideas

time-specific writing [erica said]= writing that makes sense only in the moment you wrote it --
question: **who do you write for?**

Leezsaal public moment

(a) put an archive and observe people: how do I document it? [ask for permission from notebooks' donators]

(b) active play time with paper (but i feel like i'm not very ready now for this)

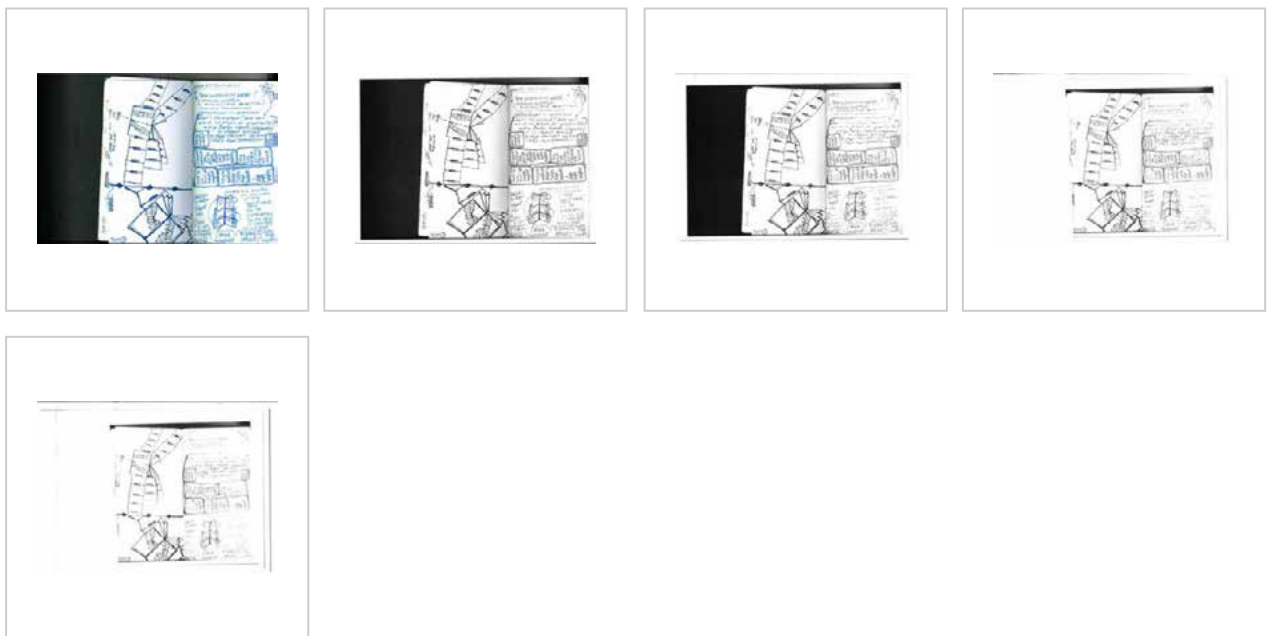
Digital prototype

use digital tools to transcribe (even uncorrectely) and re-interpretate texts, create new texts, find a new space for forgotten notes.

(a) to play around with forgotten texts: upload the picture of a notebook, get a transcription/scan of both texts and images and be able to mix it, or idk what

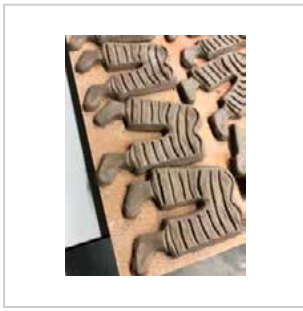
(b) work on a translation tool = what is lost and what is kept when scanning documents [little experiment below]

scan as translation tool --> scanprintscanprintscanprintscanprintscanprint



04.10.22

ceramic station mould making



05.10.22

workshop at RATS with BB from Amsterdam

10.10.22

Invitation to Leeszaal event on 17th October

11.10.22

ceramics station glazing

proposal

User: FLEM/Graduationprojectproposal draft:

made a instructions kit for notebooks idea -----
----->

talk with manetta

slowing down the world is a need I have. Can you make a notebook that slows you down? --> from M&Ms "smoothest paper to prevent myself from hesitating because of no friction" = friction slows down

draft:



Try to make notebooks for other things

If i don't want to standardise I should'n do it with what i propose to people, having more options doesn't mean i am not categorising

--->another need I have is not to categorise people, not to put people into boxes, remember we are all different

what are the limits on things? how can they be different?

start formulating questions

I don't want to tell people what to do/how to annotate

make notebooks for other needs

little kits --> not for specific people, but for specific needs

speak to myself through the question i have

questions in relation to objects

what are the needs?

memory device --> new questions could come out

how to make notes applied to external situations?

START WITH THE QUESTION: how to make a notebook for? the notebook should think along with the question i want to ask

start with the question first, then create

Memory Practices in the Sciences - Geoffrey C. Bowker

Vannevar Bush - As We May Think

12.10.22

Proposal for a collective-care notebook.

Analysis of the first notebook kit from needs point of view: this notebook was made out of the need of space and freedom, no restrictions but an open and accessible interface that allows the user to build the notebook based on the momentary need that comes out while using it. This notebook answered the question of: *How to make a notebook that can give the user the possibility to to build the notebook based on the momentary need that comes out while using it?*

research on standardisation and categorisation?

how to avoid categorisation of individuals through notebooks? notebooks as a lens into humans' brains, why someone needs to visualise, to organise, to reason, to focus, to extract themselves?
WE ARE DIFFERENT

ideas

how to make a notebook that helps not to forget the notebook? need to remember to remember

how to make a notebook to experience the world?

how to make a notebook to protect yourself from the outside? need for personal space

how to make a notebook that exaggerate the scattered and the chaos? need for new inputs out of the mess

how to make a notebook that is easy to navigate?

how to make a notebook to collect scattered notes?

how to make a notebook as an act of rebellion?

how to make a notebook that can travel? notebookcrossing (?)

13.10.22

31.10.22

it's been a few complex weeks and I had no chance to write anything here: some discoveries on the project have been done, today Jian's explored together with us the meaning of ghost files

18.01.22

i moved to [User:FLEM/2.0.0](#)

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- Disclaimers

User:FLEM/2.0.0

< [User:FLEM](#)

start of XPUB 5th semester documentation period in January 2023.

i decided to start again from here as the past documentation has been submitted already + I need a fresh start as I have not been able to do it in the last 2 months.

The notebooks' analysis is here: [User:FLEM/Notebook](#)

For the sessions go to: [User:FLEM/Analysis of sessions](#)

For older notes this year: [User:FLEM/2.0](#)

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09.11.22 jump backwards

My Graduation Project Proposal (helped by the use of a special notebook made for this occasion.. see [User:FLEM/Notebook](#))

(A) Design

* Theory of design is based on people needs

* The purpose is providing users with hints of accessible designs and examples of easy adds-on to apply to basic notebooks

* What if the structure of the interface could fit better our needs?

(B) Making

* Bookmaking to create personalised space/tool

* Making as an act of subversion: we create our own narrative, creating a memory device in which the process of creation is inscribed

* What is the feeling of being the creator of your own tool?

* The spiritual power resides in the object itself, not in its ownership

(C) Learning

* Notebooks are an individual space for learning

* How knowing our thinking processes helps our learning

* Creation experience as part of the process of learning

* Development of self and social relations through the act of making physical things (Marx)

(D) Outcomes:

1. Observations of the CES.

2. Discovery process from other people.

3. My personal discovery process.

4. Final instructional piece.

! Remember to give more value to the process of arriving at the notebook more than the final outcome. The final outcome becomes a new beginning.

(E) Questions

1. How do you learn?

2. How do you work with your ideas? Can you describe in a few words how to you think your brain works like?

3. How do you write? (directions, space in the nb..

4. Notebooks as ecology of thought: what do you keep and what do you let go in the writing process? (e.g. who uses it to organise, who to think, so what happens when they write it down?)

5. What is your use of notebooks?

6. What is a notebook?

18.01.23

It is hard to document the work here at the moment. I do not know how to come back to it. I have been writing in all other platforms.

Today I contacted the locations for possible C.E.S. in the next 2 months. (see pdf)

The plan is to finish by the end of March with 4 sessions, to be able to add the materials from the sessions in the thesis. to see old session's documentation go to: [User:FLEM/Analysis of sessions](#)

I am writing the thesis: i am currently working on the context section, that gives an overview of the concept of paper notebook and the relations with the world.

AT the same time, I am planning new exercises for the sessions. I hate that I cannot do the batch upload here so it is a bit hard to document without pictures.

31.01.23

Feedback (things to keep into consideration) & possible answers:

How might the work sessions be evaluated beyond asking whether the participants enjoyed them? What's at stake for you? When does a notebook "work"? When not?

I do not have a way to evaluate objectively if a notebook works or does not work: the purpose of this research is to create a method that can help others to discover it by themselves. Does their notebook work? Can it be better? How can it be different from what it is?

The criteria, in the overall research, is: does it become evident, or obvious, that the form impacts the writing? If yes, this is what I want to achieve and I want to get out of my practical activity. My aim is to create consciousness to enable people to go further in the process. This can be evaluated mostly from their reactions, the results of the sessions, their activity through time (in a longer research this could be followed for a longer time, but due to time restrictions, this is constraining right now). What is important is that t's not only me experimenting, but also others.

--> use cases that prove my point from my personal use of notebooks and also from others (Erica & Supi) --> including as case studies

How can you more precisely articulate your own values and concerns in this work?

a) I am concerned that people do not use notebooks with consciousness and do not see the impact this medium can have on their lives

b) with my research, i can work with the knowledge I am creating, through research and sessions, and make it accessible to more people

c) I do not only want to rely on my own opinions therefore I decided to invite other perspectives on this topic by organising the CES and open discussions on the topic with different people

What is the form of publishing that you're working toward?

go to 02.02.23

What are your assumptions around standardization?

nice question. will be discussed in the thesis. It's true though that standards sometimes are necessary: this research is trying to give value to personalisation and personal creativity, not to demonise standards.

The translation of materiality to web publishing could be worked on further.

this is not doable in such a short time.

Who can help me?

Talk with Michael on feedbacks -->

Talk with Steve: <https://pad.xpub.nl/p/NextStepEm>

see joanna drucker performability of materials

make templates for sessions?

create a structure to follow what is the process, outcome, theme, materials, questions, inspirations, learning, reflective thoughts..

also for other people's stories.

02.02.23

I had a bit of a hard time in understanding what to do with the materials i am gathering with thesis and CES, how to frame and publish this in a form that can be accessible to a public. I am going to insert here the options that were part of my project proposal since the beginning and that got left aside while going on:

A) For the project to continue after the end of the series of explorative sessions, I plan to create an instructional piece/text that users could use to go through the analysis of self and the creation of their own tools, in this case notebooks.

B) Create a collection of essays on the outcomes of the sessions and the discoveries of the participants (see thesis outline).

C) Build a hybrid/digital prototype: an online tool to create and print layouts and customised instructions [the magic modular notebooks kits]. This digital tool will be gathered together with research results and documentation on an online interface.

I understood that the workshops are just one of the methods that I am using to gather information that feeds my thesis questions: **How can I, through research and explorative sessions, discover more about the topic and create a generative structure that can help others discover themselves and their needs, in their own way, to promote creativity and self-expression?**

The **methods** and formats I will be using for this purpose are:

- **CES:** Collaborative Explorative Sessions, in which the participants act in different exercises as prompts to activate their imagination and creativity towards the act of making DIY paper notebooks.
- **Personal research:** in the past months, I have been going through this process myself: it's true that we are all different, but through my experience and knowledge on this topic I am able to provide prompts and ideas to create a "generative structure" that would help others, even outside the CES, to think consciously at their note-taking practice and their use of paper notebooks.
- **Research done by others:** I have been discussing in the last months with Erica and Supi about their personal research into the use of notebooks and they have been actively

producing and analysing options. This interest and their contributions are essential to provide an helpful structure.

Therefore, the final outcome **will be a toolkit that will present, in different shapes, how to go through the analysis of self and the creation of personalised paper notebooks.**

The Toolkit will be a box, probably, and will include a series of objects and materials:

- the thesis, printed on different papers, different sizes, every chapter, or paragraph will be different.

This version of the thesis will include a selection of photographs of the materials obtained in the last months, my notebooks, other people's notebooks, the CES, the experiments, the notes...

- different type of papers will be included, a cardboard to hold everything together, and other materials to help in the playground (metal rings, threads etc..)

- a "10 steps to make your own notebook", an instructional piece to go through different experiments.

it will include simple and accessible adds-on that users can use to start implementing their already-existing notebooks (like pockets, folding, additional papers..)

- a set of cards with questions to trigger the imagination

- a selection of short fictional stories based on the notebooks participants made during the sessions and influenced by the stories they told me.

These materials can be tried before the publications by participants or individuals that took part into my research.

06.02.23

check-in day between us lalalala

I. The ability to select appropriate topics for advanced research.

Emmas research start from a theoretical point of view that she combines with a practical view.

paper notebooks

Regarding "values", Emma connects to personal experiences around notebooks and would like to make space to share these with others.

II. The ability to develop and undertake a suitable strategy for research.

The methods are collaborative explorative sessions (practical, through making)

personal research with own notebooks

others experimenting with their own notebooks

III. The ability to critically reflect upon, analyse and evaluate work already undertaken and to use the knowledge gained to (re)define the aims and direction of future practice.

IV. The ability to describe and motivate objectives, topics and methods in a written proposal.

V. The proposed project is realistic in scale and ambition, considering the limited time frame for the graduation project.

Already researching in workshops and sessions in groups

Goal - to create a toolkit that contains - (for of the) thesis (theoretical starting point) + printed structure that ppl can play with (playfulness) + selection of games and prompts, stories, cards to trigger imagination

VI: General Feedback

Paper notebooks, use in daily life

Research starts from theory point of view, also what thesis is about

practical project include methods

how can through research/discussion find out more about note-books and help others make them explore/understand better how they use their notebooks

collaborative and explorative research, in the form of workshops

engage with the topic in a practical way

understand by making

personal research: experimenting with notebooks since last year

research done by others: classmates thinking about this topic, producing different notebooks using during the last months

at the end of all this: will be able to create a toolkit that will contain the thesis (form of it, more playful, printed in a way people can play with it) + different games + instructional piece + starter-kit for binding

how much personal connection can help understand what is happening

value about this: started because of concern people not paying attention to use of their notebook, help people find ways to relate make use of them

bring awareness to the impact that notebooks have on our note-taking process

toolkit as outcome

- *- thesis - context (because theoretical research is the starting point)*
- *- to make it also playful, printed as for people to play around*
- *- selection of materials (instruction guide, stories, cards to trigger imagination, prompts)*

for people to pay attention on the way they use their notebooks, and the impact that has on their lives

on to open the impact on other people

relation between notebook and note-taking

Questions

Could you reflect a bit on previous sessions: what did go well, and what did not go well? What would you like to change in the upcoming sessions?

elaborate on the Theoretical aspect?

define what I am talking about, analysis what a notebook is, what forms of note taking are, discuss evolution of notebooks, how society and environment around us change the use and need we have of them, changing now also with digital side (examples: printing arrives, digital side)

In the research a lot statements given base on they given and thinking about, maybe someone wonder about digital note-taking and they can find the answers in my research

insight in methods of note-taking best fitting to contexts (ex: students and digital note-taking)

diy notebooks and industrial notebooks for/against

What role does the documentation of those sessions play in your research and how did you do it so far?

-problem: a lot of materials, list of options and needs - need to find a way to present it - to transform it into practical activities and exercises;

-visual documentation

-talking about something material - propose toolkit to transform theory in something practical

What are some impacts of not being conscious on what notebook you use?

Easiest way to respond is to speak from her own experience: for me when a sheet of paper is folded: an example of the different ways you write : the materiality and the design of the notebook influence the writing, and the free writing and whatever

what is the role of documentation in your research so far?

sessions done this now: analysed in written form. a lot of material stories. need a way to present it.

visual documentation on the wiki

connection between the purpose of taking notes and how this is materialised?

Do you want to make this connection? Is this at the core of your project?

Feedback

strong focus on notebook but still the note taking aspect emerging. maybe that could be stressed a bit!

what is the role of note-taking?

to explain - how you take notes influences how you learn

she puts a lot of time on the making of notebooks - maybe she can invest more time in the note-taking aspect

Giving more examples of moments when the format of a notebook influences the note taking would be good, it really helps to understand her point.

Breaking down the process could be a helpful thing?

- moment of creating a notebook

- moment of making notes

What type of feedback could she ask the participants of the sessions?

what could be the questions to ask the participants? and will help on forming her research

In the context of book making there is a lot of attention on guiding a reader through content, how you can do that. You can stress this part a little more in your practice and theory.

As the content of your notebooks are in the making, it's interesting to dive deeper in.

For example: you can make two notebooks and ask someone to make notes in both notebooks, to see how format shapes the content.

notetaking is a way to see on how the user feels and uses the structure which is the notebook

What happens when you read notes years later? All the cells of your body has changed and you are a different person already, what does it mean? Can you think of ways that support reading notes back years later?

How can you implement the feedback of others into your research?

Can you reflect on these feedbacks? What are things that did not go well, what do you want to change?

03.02.23

Afterthoughts on the feedback session.

! make one section about recycling in the toolbox. see link [1] (<https://www.qualitylogoproducts.com/blog/how-to-reuse-recycle-your-old-notebooks/>) as an example.

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09.02.23

notes on thesis by LB student Pelle



these are the notes that Steve and I have taken simultaneously during this session, me on my metal ring notebook and Steve on his laptop, specifically on the wiki at NotesEm

The first thing to consider and keep in mind while looking at these notes, is that Steve and I are different people, with a different need (I annotate mostly what I need to go on with the work, Steve tries to get a big overview of the conversation, focusing on the main points - he finds useful) and we have a different note taking methodology.

These differences do not always allow a scientific comparison between two different interfaces (paper notebook vs laptop), as we do not know how I would have written on my laptop or how Steve would have done it on paper. In addition, note-taking can be influenced by the topic of discussion, the moment of the day/week of the note-taker, their mood and status. This is one of the reasons why I prefer not to make scientific assumptions or give compared results as an already structured answer. I prefer to work with individual opinions and feelings.

The second thing I notice is that Steve is annotating everything in a Q&A structure, copying down every word, like a dictation, that came out from our mouths while discussing. Sometimes he shorten some concepts.

I think that most of the time I always re-write the sentence given from who is talking with my own words. It is a good exercise to learn rephrasing, as well as it helps not to forget the sentence while writing it down.

To conclude, I see that a lot of main words are matching in the two versions of notes we produced during the session. The notebook I am using does not really allow to create different structures or directions, everything is aligned as it is on Steve's laptop.

13.02.23

stuff for toolbox

https://www.amazon.com/Bookbinding-Kit-OurHands-Instructions-Notebook/dp/B0BC1LJRWF/ref=d_pd_sbs_vft_none_sccl_2_21/143-3031299-0456503?pd_rd_w=LLYl9&content-id=amzn1.sym.3676f086-9496-4fd7-8490-77cf7f43f846&pf_rd_p=3676f086-9496-4fd7-8490-77cf7f43f846&pf_rd_r=1AVPT4STS1KT58KB021P&pd_rd_wg=U6rHq&pd_rd_r=71f6727e-e19b-44a3-a692-7bb7a846d645&pd_rd_i=B0BC1LJRWF&psc=1

I tried to make an unconventional leaflet for the workshop but i am not sure is doable and functional.. i will see

the session i am planning will take place on the 8th of March.

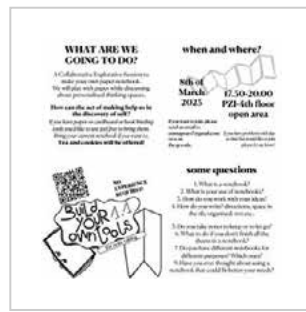
I started a wiki page for the "noteboox", the tool box for notebooks: [User:FLEM/noteboox](#)

15.02.23

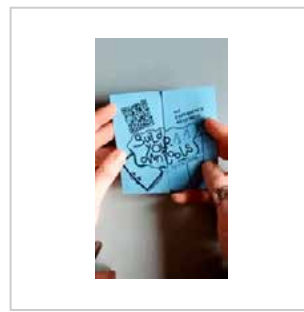
i made the leaflet for the next session in two versions: an interactive one and a flat a5 one



flat version



interactive version



Interactive flyer

21.02.23

I distributed the flyers

this week finalised structure CES and choose exercises, as well as organise one bag with all the materials i need.

03.03.23

I have been very sick and it is hard to concentrate.

The workshop is next week, everything under control.

The thesis needs a lot of edit and cuts!

13.03.23

meeting with manetta --> focus on how to explain a concept and connect the two parts of the ces

04.04.23

Manetta and I finished the script to download the wiki and insert it with all the pictures in an html to fit into the pagedjs webtoprint design. Let's see what will happen. Find the code here: <https://git.xpub.nl/flem/wikitoprint>

05.04.23

Tutorial with Clara: with the main question we discussed about, when something is printed, does it stop to be a notebook? Can something printed still be a notebook?

We discussed about the limits of the pages, how basic paper books do not allow annotation because of the little space in the margins.

We also tried to define what is a notebook for us. I said that for me it is something that accompanying you in certain situations and offer a support. Clara said they are periodicals. They are positioned in a specific location, and during a certain period of time, where and when the user goes back recurrently. What we discussed is also how many times, the uncomfortable of notebooks can come from certain anxieties we have in life and how we can transform those

anxieties into notebooks features (e.g. how can I make a notebook public without thinking that what I write is stupid? can I use this anxiety to find a practical solution or feature that would help me?)

Task: we decided that I will start to scan all my notebooks.

Suggestions: "the godfather notebooks" by Coppola

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