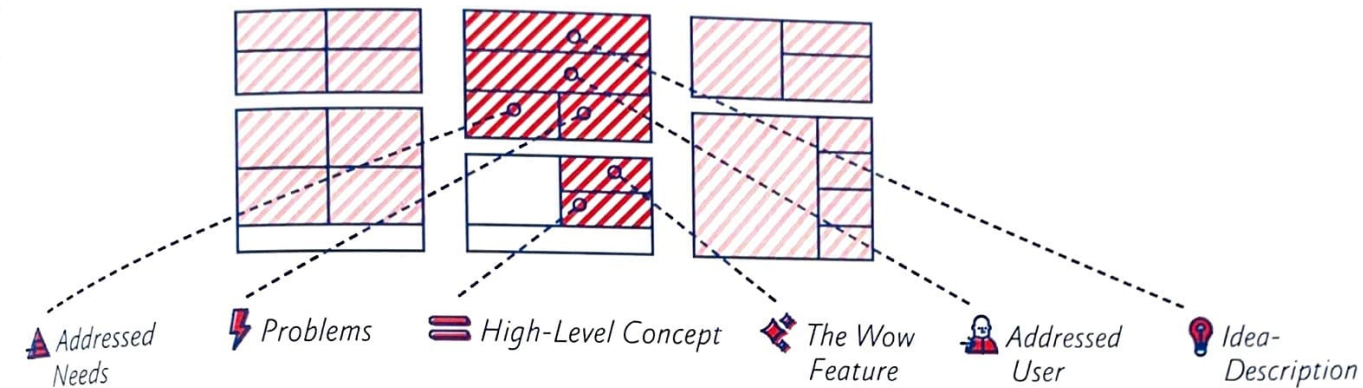


4 Collective Notebook



WHAT AND WHY?

The Collective Notebook creativity technique belongs to the brainwriting methods. As the name implies, it is basically a notebook where we collect our ideas, either individually or collectively as a project team.

While this is a method from the CREATE module, the collective notebook can also be used in the other innovation development modules to gather thoughts, insights and ideas continually. We use it as an additional instrument for developing ideas. It does not work as the sole method for this purpose. At least we need traditional brainstorming (method 1).

The collective notebook allows us to hone our ideas irrespective of time and place. It is a suitable receptacle for creativity surge, and it also enables us to share our thoughts

subsequently in a much faster and more organized way. There is nothing worse than having a flash of inspiration slipping through our fingers just because there is nothing at hand to write it down.

Our recommendations concerning the type and size of a collective notebook are simple: Everyone selects what he or she can best use. The notebook must be of a reasonable size, i.e. not too large and not too small, since handling the notebook should not be cumbersome. During the project phase, the notebook is our best friend and confidant. When we approach the method with this attitude, it can give us valuable support. If you want, you can use the suggested areas in template 7.3.2.

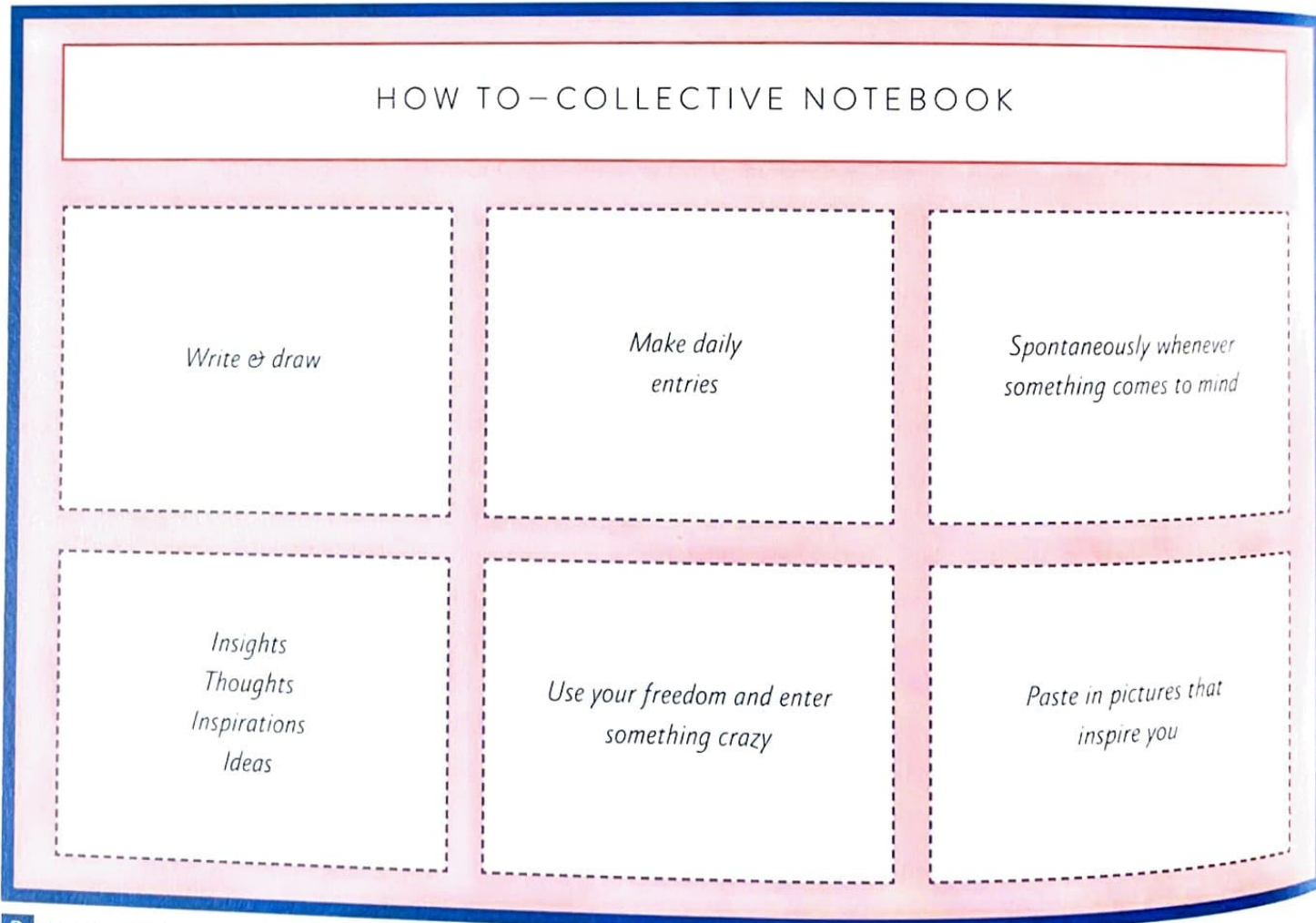
MODUS OPERANDI

1__ We take notes

The collective notebook is our personal space for creative experiments. Here, we can enjoy complete freedom. We put in everything that frees us, inspires us or triggers a change of perspective, even crazy and stupid things since we never know whether they might spark a light-bulb moment later on. We note down thoughts and insights that we deem relevant and that our environment washes into our conscious mind. However, we do not only write. This method works best when we use it visually, i.e. when we sketch and draw and paste in pictures and collages.

2__ We discipline ourselves to use the collective notebook daily

Ideally we enter something into the notebook every day. Sometimes we only have five minutes for this, but that is okay. The important thing is that we occupy ourselves with our thoughts. In the beginning, it may be helpful to schedule a set time for the daily entries. In the course of time we will catch ourselves pulling out the notebook every now and then. This will eventually become second nature like the coffee in the morning or the cigarette break at the windows (or other less harmful rituals).



Template 7.3.2: digital-innovation-playbook.com/templates/create

3— We compare notes

There is no such thing as *the* proper time to share the insights and ideas that we wrote down. Of course we tell others in the team immediately when we have an important insight. Sometimes it can be valuable to show each other our notebooks regularly as a source of inspiration. However, this works only based on mutual trust. Our notes can also stimulate

brainstorming sessions (method 1), but only if we do not stand in front of the group, wielding our notebook and process our ideas in a bureaucratic way.

To prevent that anything gets lost, we can schedule a last session at the end of the CREATE module where all team members once again comb through their notebooks to add final ideas.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

As mentioned at the beginning of the description of this method, the collective notebook can basically be used in all innovation development modules.*¹ In the EXPLORE module, we can use it to collect and condense insights. We can also set up a »parking lot for ideas« where we store would-be groundbreaking solution ideas. The expression »would-be groundbreaking« is deliberately provocative because in our experience, these ideas can be trumped easily later on in the solution mode of the CREATE module when we work collectively on innovative solutions.

In the CREATE module, we can use the notebook to relax and extend our creative thoughts over a longer period, like some sort of long-term individual brainstorming. If we are shy about sharing crazy ideas in open brainstorming (method 1), we can test them on our own in the notebook. But do not overdo this! Innovation development is teamwork. Solo solutions, as convincing as they may seem on paper, usually turn out to be a flop in the real world. In the EVALUATE module, the notebook is useful to note down further thoughts and ideas like in the EXPLORE module.

¹ Especially for longer projects, we recommend to use the collective notebook as a basic tool like the sticky notes, the clock and the team space.

GOOD TO KNOW

Authors use a similar tool to the collective notebook, namely the writing diary. Virtually all authors use it to note down thoughts, ideas for stories, observations of people and parts of

conversations overheard. For this reason, every creative writing seminar begins with the suggestion to start a writing diary.