Designing the Prototype of a Self-Help Toolkit: A Visual Journaling Workbook and the Drawing Tools

Elis Mokhtar
Phd in Fine Art (LU, UK)
Department of Art and Design
Sultan Idris Education
University, Perak
+605-450 5921

elis.mokhtar@fskik.upsi.edu.my

Harleny Abd Arif
PhD in Art Edu. (UPSI)
Department of Art and Design
Sultan Idris Education
University, Perak
+605-450 5339

harleny@fskik.upsi.edu.my

Nor Syazwani Mat Salleh
PhD in IT Education (UKM)
Department of Art and Design
Sultan Idris Education
University, Perak
+605-450 5560

syazwani.ms@fskik.upsi.edu.my

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the design process in designing the prototype of a self-help toolkit; a workbook with a series of visual journaling exercises and a set of drawing tools. The study adopted a qualitative inquiry highlighted on a systematic review of 40 reference books and recent published workbooks related to visual journaling. The review focused on the structure and the content, the drawing exercises/activities, the suitable drawing tools, and the graphic features. The major task comprised a comparative analysis on the structure of the workbook, picking a language style for the text/instructions, selecting the drawing tools and conducting visual research for the graphic features for the exterior and the interior e.g., the layout arrangement and typographic design, arranging the illustrations for the supplementary information on the drawing elements and tools for the workbook. The study has developed a methodical process to design an interactive and user-friendly workbook that contributes significantly to the field of workbook design as a basic guideline for the future researchers and those who are interested in designing their own self-help workbook.

KEYWORDS: Self-help toolkit; visual journaling; workbook design; drawing and tools.

1. INTRODUCTION

Visual journaling, is one of the current self-help approaches using images, and occasionally, words to communicate personal emotions by 'doodling' or 'scribbling' for self-expression, self-discovery and self-reflection without any artistic talent or previous art experience. It is comparable to a diary; it is an intimate place to communicate with own self: for example, to recapture and retrieve significant memories and dreams, comfort the grieving heart, and to mourn and weep as part of their everyday routine [1] [2] [3]. In 1977, Dr Lucia Capacchione introduced 'creative journaling'; the journaling technique of 'dialogue with own self' through drawing and reflective writing. Capacchione themed her journaling style as *"past experiences in addition to future aspiration"* to guide the users to unblock their inner conflicts; overcoming self-hatred, confronting the negative attitudes positively and enrich their self-compassion [1]. Two decades later, Ganim and Fox (1999), both of whom are artists and art therapists, adopted a similar journaling technique to help their patients/users to expose their 'long-buried emotions' by confronting their previous experiences in three stages; "to access, release and transform" the 'unhealed emotional wounds' for healing. Alike Capacchione, both were influenced by

Carl Jung and emphasised on the use of images and express them into simple drawings such as stick figures, undefined gestures, and scribbles as a means of inner communication, instead of words [2]. Using a similar journaling technique, Hieb (2005), an art therapist, developed 'art journaling' strictly emphasising the elements and principles of design as a meditation and revisiting users' "inner landscapes of despair" specifically for people who are experiencing a period of bereavement. This technique will help the users to understand their loss, feelings of longing and pain, and will strengthen their resilience to move on their lives [3].

To date, visual journaling has become popular among those wishing to express themselves through art, particularly, to express feelings and thoughts. For example, Capacchione's creative journaling techniques have expanded and been exemplified in Doh's (2012) book by collecting various journaling artists and showcasing their signature techniques, tips, and creativity boosters for the readers [4]. In a recent publication, Nugent (2016) restructured Ganim and Fox's idea to inspire users to stay calm and focused [5]. Hieb's art-journaling exercises were renewed in Ramey's (2013) art journaling technique. Instead of stressing on art techniques, Ramey provides 101+ prompt ideas for beginners to expand their skills by taking baby-steps to work with the subject matter [6]. These examples, among other books, were published to offer a variety of ideas and journaling techniques, and have similar intentions for self-expression, self-discovery and self-reflection.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative inquiry and aimed to design the prototype of the self-help toolkit: a visual journaling workbook with a series of visual journaling exercises and a set of drawing tools. A systematic review was conducted to the 40 reference books and the recent workbooks related to visual journaling. The review comprised a comparative analysis to identify and categorise the essential data to be adopted into the workbook. Further with a visual research to observe and analyse the formal composition of the workbook for the graphic features on the exterior and interior design. These methods were chosen to catalogue and synthesize the collected data in order to grasp the research finding [7] [8] [9]. To begin, all the books and workbooks were sorted into three groups: *Group 1* the main reference books; *Group 2* the reference books at an advanced level for those with art experience; and, *Group 3* the workbooks for beginners with no art experience.

Table 1. List of the Reference Books and the Recent Published Workbooks

Group 1 *The main reference books*	*Group 2* *The advance level*	*Group 3* *For the beginner*
Capacchione (1977, 2015) Ganim & Fox (1999) Hieb (2005)	Eldon (1997), Perrella (2004), Woods & Dinino (2007), Scott & Modler (2010; 2012), Doh (2012), Sosbee (2014), Maclagan (2014), Clayton (2014), Nugent (2016), Ferris (2016), Deaton (2016)	Ramey (2013), Reiter (2010), Norton (2012), F+W Media (2013), Sokol (2013; 2015), Taylor (2014; 2015), Lewis (2016), Congdon (2016), Fernihough (2016), Sinden & Catlow (2016), Kempster & Leder (2016), Gray and Gold (2016), Patel (2016), Spicer (2017), Scobie (2017), Tristram (2017), Sharpe (2017), MIND (2017), Hersey (2017), Culhane (2017), Hutchison (2018), Vernon (2018)

To survey the therapeutic techniques and the benefits of practising visual journaling, a comparative analysis was conducted to the *Group 1*. The review focused on their basic requirements (i.e., aims, concepts, objectives) and the therapeutic techniques to be adopted into the workbook. To obtain more productive information, the review was systematically conducted to all the books and set into four key categories. *Category 1* – focused on the structure and the content of the workbook: i) the design concept, objectives, the approach, and outcomes; ii) the exercises/program (theme and approach, the exercises, place to draw to find out whether the drawing activities are included in the book); and, iii) the language style used in the introduction pages (the examples of the texts for headlines, the explanation on the tasks, instructions, and the exercises). *Category 2* – focused on the drawing exercises/activities and the contents for the exercise sheets (titles and task descriptions). *Category 3* – focused on the suitable drawing tools to undertake the exercises. Finally, *Category 4* – a visual research focused on the graphic features for i) the workbook's interior (i.e., list of contents, fonts, illustrations), and ii) the workbook's exterior e.g., the physical appearance and finish (front cover, format, type of paper for the interior, type of printing, size and style of binding).

Table 2. The Four Key Categories to Systematically Review the Reference Books and the Recent Published Workbooks to Design a Self-help Toolkit

Category 1	The structure and the content of the workbook
Category 2	The drawing exercises/activities and the exercise sheets
Category 3	The drawing tools
Category 4	The graphic features for the interior and the outer workbook

This review was important to obtain an understanding of the necessary structures of the workbook – to adopt an informative, interactive but less complicated workbook that was easy to use by the users. The collected data was used to design the to design the prototype of the toolkit.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The review found *Group 1* introduced to the simple drawing techniques to the users. They were guided through the topics which were the key therapeutic features with the scientific descriptions based on the previous therapy programs and workshops. The users were encouraged to practice the drawing activities separately in their journal and inventing personal exercises by their own on regular basis [1] [2] [3].

| Image 1 | Image 2 | Image 3 |

Figure 1: Examples of clients' drawings in the therapy program/workshop
Source: Image 1 Capacchione (1977, 2015); Image 2 Ganim & Fox (1999);
Image 3 Hieb (2005)

Group 2 highlighted on the development of ideas and experiments on media and medium for art students, educators and future artists, and as a self-study for the artists [10] [11]. For examples, to create personal page in journal [12], a travel log [13], to document on any simple occurrence in the course of daily life [14], or the special events [15].

| Image 1 | Image 2 | Image 3 | Image 4 |

Figure 2: Examples of the advanced activities level for those with art experience
Source: Image 1 Perrella (2004); Image 2 Eldon (1997); Image 3 Nugent (2016);
Image 4 Woods & Dinino (2007)

Group 3, on the other hand, was designed to catered specifically for those with no artistic talent or experience. The workbooks tailored specifically for the beginner were devised as a set of exercises where the place/space to draw was included on the same page. They were simplified and structured according to the abovementioned four key categories. The results found;

3.1 The structure and the content of the workbook

The contents were sectioned in three parts; the introduction pages, the exercise pages, and the closing pages providing a space for self-reflection. The introduction pages contained the interior book titles, preface, dedication page, and a clear introduction on the use of the book. For examples Sokol (2013; 2015) and Kempster & Leder (2016) included the contents and both provided the introduction how to use the workbook [16] [17] [18]. Vary from Sinden & Catlow (2016), they started the introduction pages with the exercises [19]. In communicating with the users, most of the workbooks used the author's word choice. They avoided expert-words by using informal or colloquial language to communicate with the users e.g., *"Why did you…"* and *"Now, let's turn to…".* This language style was used commonly by the authors to make easier for users to understand the given tasks and follow the instruction in the worksheets. In typographic design, a mixture of formal and handwritten fonts was a popular selection e.g., Kempster & Leder (2016) ideally used two different fonts to highlight the titles with handwritten-like fonts and formal fonts to create a contrast between the texts for instruction and task descriptions. This also can be seen in both Sokol's workbooks (2013; 2015) used her own handwriting for the titles and a formal font for the text.
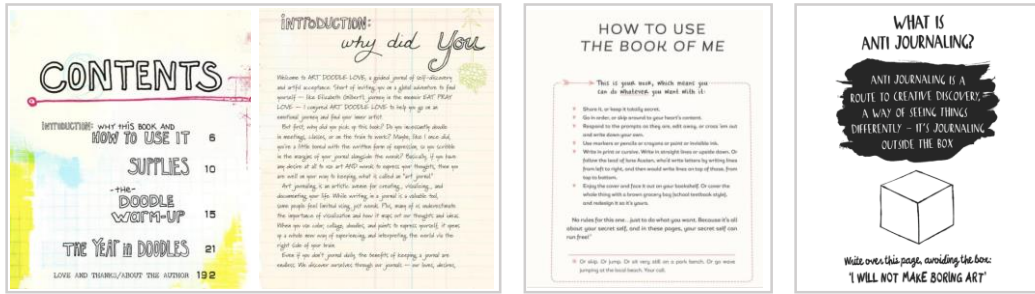
Image 1   Image 2   Image 3

Figure 3: Examples of the introduction pages and type of fonts used
Source: Image 1 Sokol (2013); Image 2 Kempster & Leder (2016);
Image 3 Sinden & Catlow (2016)

3.2 The drawing exercises/activities and the exercise sheets

The drawing exercises/activities focused on the journaling exercises which emphasise on the basic skills to draw into more interactive with step-by-step approach to gain users' confidence to draw. The introduction/warm-up exercises to introduce users to the basic drawing techniques and tools. The exercises were arranged progressively from easy to more complex levels using a step-by-step approach. It began by asking users to draw simple lines, or shapes, or applying colours before they could go to the next levels for the intermediate and advance exercises serially. Each exercise sheets featured titles, task descriptions, instructions, especially a place/space to draw on the same page. For example, in tutoring people to draw, Spicer (2017) arranged the exercises through a step-by-step demonstration, starting with drawing simple objects (still life) before moving to human figures, and finishing with perspective drawings [20].

Likewise, Lewis (2016) included a place/space to practice on the same page by drawing a simple line or shape, or by applying colours as a warm-up before proceeding to the main exercises section [21]. A similar approach was adopted by most of the workbooks. For examples, Fernihough (2016) and Scobie (2017), both used a step-by-step approach for the whole book, beginning by introducing the drawing techniques, tools, exploring patterns and media experimentation [22] [23]. Similar to Tristram (2017), the exercise descriptions were enhanced by supplying more information, drawing demonstrations, instruction to draw, drawing examples for references, quotes, and tips/reminders [24]. This approach applied to Sharpe (2017), the drawing examples and illustrations were widely provided to demonstrate the task descriptions: particularly, in the demonstration of the use of drawing technique and the tools [25]. Additionally, they added some useful tips to remind the users what to do now and next. This supplementary information was not only to assist users to give a clear view of the given tasks but also as useful sources to aid and inspire users to undertake the exercises.
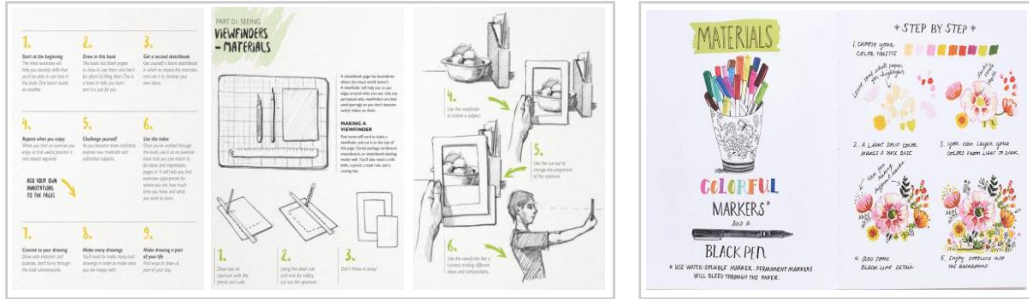
Image   Image

Figure 4: Examples of drawing exercises/activities with step-by-step instructions
Source: Image 1 Spicer (2017); Image 2 Lewis (2016)

Imag   Imag   Imag
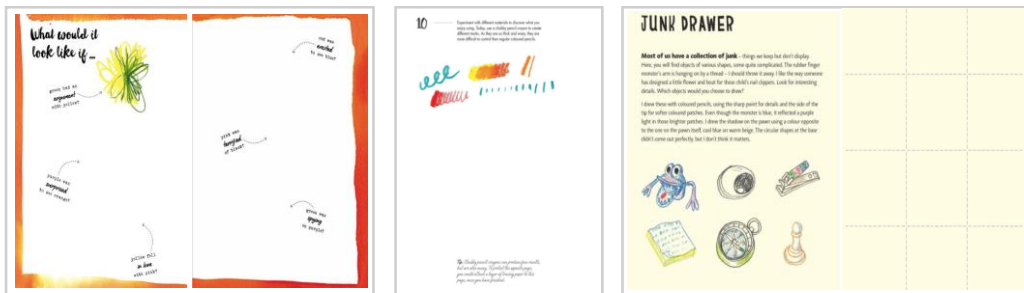
Figure 5: Examples of drawing exercises/activities and the exercise sheets
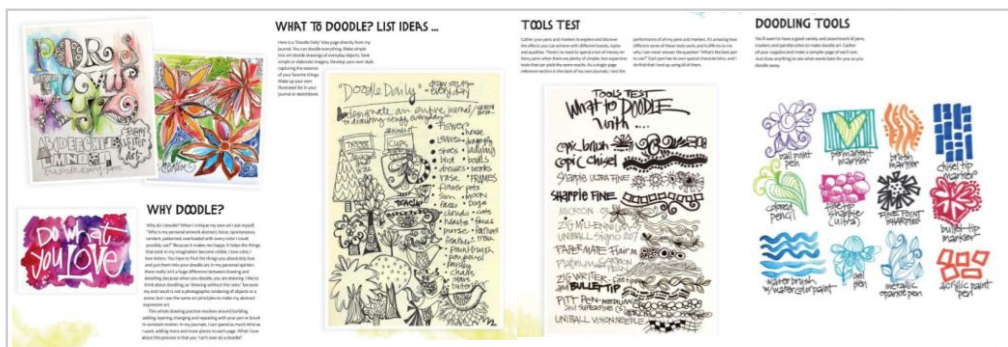*Source: Image 1 Fernihough (2016); Image 2 Scobie (2017); Image 3 Tristram (2017)*

**Figure 6: Examples of the illustrations for the supplementary information
of the drawing elements and tools,**
Source: Sharpe (2017)

3.3 The drawing tools

The survey found pencils, pens and markers were the most basic tools recommended for drawing activities. Pencils, for example, were easy to use for those who could not draw. They came in variety of shades from H and B to 6B for darkest tones. Pencils stimulated a person's confidence and it was

erasable when mistakes were made. Pens were a common tool for writing, featuring black, blue or red ink that left a permanent impression in two kind of tips; ball and felt-tip, and a variety of sizes from 0.1 to 1 point. Markers were also permanent but with bigger tips, at least 1 to 4 points. In applying colours, markers made a bold impression to highlight, draw outlines, and to cover large areas. For colouring activities, coloured pencils, coloured pens and markers in various inks, such as water-based, permanent or metallic, were also available. In the recent workbooks, Culhane (2017) and Lewis (2016) provided the introduction and demonstrations of drawing tools and drawing technique [26] (Lewis, 2016).

Image 1   Image 2

Figure 7: Examples of the demonstration on the impressions of the drawing tools
Source: Image 1 Culhane (2017); Image 2 Lewis (2016)

3.4 The graphic features for the interior and the outer workbook

The survey revealed most of the workbooks were filled with illustrations starting from the first interior page, list of contents, the exercise sheets to the closing pages. Drawing examples and colourful illustrations were used intensely to demonstrate the task descriptions to give users a clear view on the given instructions in the exercises. They were also used as useful sources to aid users to draw and inspire them with ideas to undertake the exercises. For examples, the drawing examples and illustrations were attached with some quotes. The purpose of these quotes was to inspire the users to continue with their journaling exercises; e.g., *"Be Yourself. Everyone else is already taken"*, *"Fears are paper tigers"*, and *"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be"* [27], and many more. On the outer exterior, most of the workbooks were paperback cover imprinted with the title and author's drawing. Meanwhile, for the interior 120gsm matte paper and coloured printing were popularly chosen. The sizes of the workbook were between A5 to A4 with perfect bound.
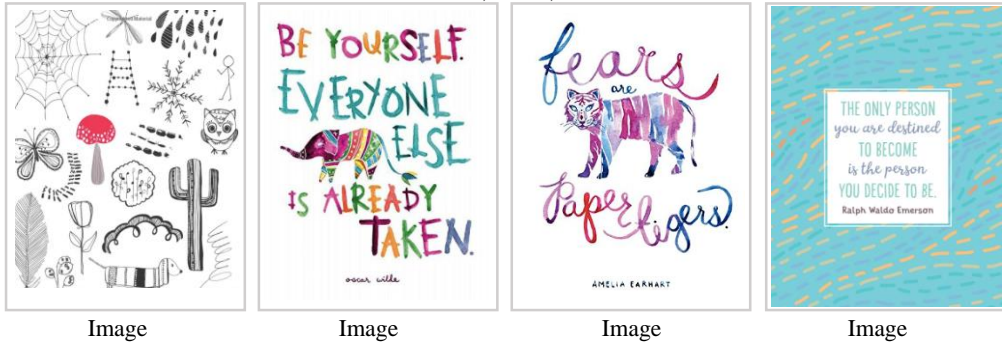
Figure 8: Examples of the illustrations with inspirational quote for the interior of the workbooks
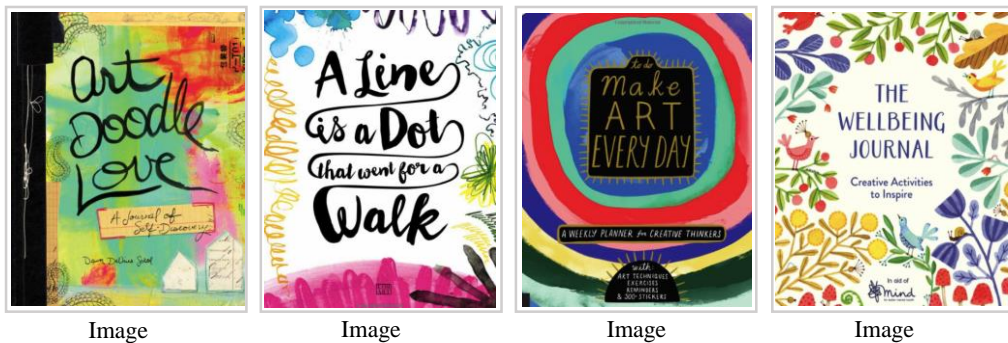*Source: Image 1 Taylor (2014); Image 2-4 Patel (2016)*

Figure 9: Examples of the illustrations for the exterior of the workbooks
Source: Image 1 Sokol (2013); Image 2 Fernihough (2016);
Image 3 Vernon (2018); Image 4 MIND (2017)

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper underlined the design process in designing the prototype of a self-help toolkit; a workbook with a series of visual journaling exercises and a set of drawing tools. The study highlighted on a systematic review to design an interactive and user-friendly workbook with the suitable drawing tools. To provide a clear vision for readers, the findings obtained from this study is summarized into five key features that are essential to designing a workbook;

i)   The workbook's content has three main sections: first, to introduce the use of the book, secondly, the section where the exercises are wisely arranged from easy to more complex levels with step-by-step instructions, and thirdly, the closing pages contain a final page for self-reflection.
ii)   The use of informal or colloquial language that avoids the expert-words to communicate with the users, particularly for instructions and task descriptions.
iii) The essential component of drawing examples and illustrations to reflect and inspire users in processing the idea: for example, to demonstrate the drawing elements and tools with some useful tips or use positive quotes from famous artists or people that relate to the exercises.

iv) The graphic features must provide an exciting presentation for the interior and outer design: for example, a clear format and typographic design to highlight the texts for titles, instructions, task descriptions and other supplementary information.

v) The physical appearance and finishing: for example, the type of paper used for the interior and cover, type of printing, size and style of binding.

These five key features may be used as a basic guideline for the future researchers and those who are interested in designing their own self-help workbook.

5. FUTURE RESEARCH

For future research, the findings obtained from this study are anticipated to produce the prototype of a self-help toolkit and test it to groups of volunteers from the members of the public, whether the toolkit could provide a therapeutic environment to users; to gain confidence in drawing for self-expression, self-discovery and self-reflection.

6. REFERENCES

[1]   L. Capacchione, The Creative Journal - The Art of Finding Yourself 35th Anniversary Edition, 35th ed., Athens: Ohio University Press / Swallow Press, 1977, 2015.

[2]   B. Ganim and S. Fox, Visual Journaling - Going Deeper than Words, First Quest Edition ed., Wheaton, Illinois: Theosophical Publishing House, 1999.

[3]   M. Hieb, Inner Journeying Through Art-Journaling: Learning to See and Record your Life as a Work of Art, London : Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2005.

[4]   J. Doh, Journal it!: Perspectives in creative journaling, NY: Sterling Publishing, 2012.

[5]   K. R. Nugent, Journal Starters. Sampler Volume 1: photographs, prompts and gallery to jump-start your journaling, Atascadero, CA: Createspace, 2016.

[6]   R. Ramey, Art Journaling for Beginners: 100+ Prompts to Teach You What and How to Journal, CPSIA, 2013.

[7]   U. Flick, An Introduction to Qualitative Research, City Road (London): SAGE, 2019.

[8]   J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches, Thousand Oaks (CA): SAGE, 2018.

[9]   M. Q. Patton, Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice, Thousand Oaks (CA): SAGE, 2015.

[10]   K. Eldon, Journey is the Destination: the Journals of Dan Eldon, San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 1997.

[11]   L. Perrella, Artists' Journals and Sketchbooks: Exploring and Creating Personal Pages, Beverly, MA: Quayside Publishing Group, 2004.

[12]   L. Woods and K. Dinino, Journal Revolution: RISE UP AND CREATE! Art Journal, Personal Manisfestos and other Artistic Insurrections, Georgetown, Ontario: FW Publications, Inc., 2007.

[13]   E. M. Scott and D. R. Modler, Journal Fodder 365: Daily Doses of Inspiration for the Art Addict, Blue Ash, Ohio: F+W Media, Inc., 2012.

[14]   E. M. Scott and D. R. Modler, The Journal Junkies Workshop: Visual Ammunition for the Art Addict, Ohio: North Light Books, 2010.

[15]   H. Sosbee, Across the Ocean - Brooke's Photo Journal: A visual companion to Across the Ocean, WA: Amazon Kindle Edition, 2014.

[16]   D. Maclagan, Line let loose scribbling, doodling and automatic drawing, London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2014.

[17]   E. Clayton, Making Marks: Discover the art of Intuitive Drawing, NY: Atria Paperback, Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2014.

[18]   W. Ferris, The South in Color: A Visual Journal (H. Eugene and Lillian Youngs Lehman Series), Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016.

[19]   M. S. Deaton, Visual Journaling: Making Visible your Thinking, Feeling, and Knowing through Drawing and Writing, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016.

[20]   L. Reiter, Beginner's Guide to Abstract Art, London: Batsford, 2010.

[21]   K. Norton, 101+ Creative Journaling Prompts: Inspiration for Journaling and an Introduction to Art Journaling, Peddler Arts Publishing & Design, 2012.

[22]   F+W Media, Start Journaling: An art journaling workbook tips, techniques and prompts, Blue Ash: North Light Books and F+W Media Inc., 2013.

[23]   S. Corfee, Creative... and Beyond: Inspiring tips, techniques, and ideas for transforming doodled designs into whimsical artistic illustrations and mixed-media projects, CA: Walter Foster Publishing, 2013.

[24]   D. D. Sokol, Art Doodle Love: A Journal of Self-Discovery, NY: Steward, Tabori & Chang, 2013.

[25]   D. D. Sokol, Year of the Doodle: 365 Drawing, Collaging, and Mark-Making Adventures, New York: Abrams The Art of Books, 2015.

[26]   R. Taylor, 20 Ways to Draw a Doodle and 44 Other Zigzags, Hearts, Spirals, and Teardrops: A Sketchbook for Artists, Designers, and Doodlers, Beverly: Quarry Books, 2014.

[27]   R. Taylor, Draw 500 Dazzling Doodles, CA: Quarry Books, 2015.

[28]   J. O. Lewis, Draw Every Day, Draw Every Way (Guided Sketchbook): Sketch, Paint, and Doodle Through One Creative Year, NY: Abrams The Art of Books, 2016.

[29]   L. Congdon, 20 Ways to Draw Everything: With 135 Nature Themes from Cats and Tigers to Tulips and Trees, MA: Quarry Books, 2016.

[30]   J. Fernihough, A Line is a Dot That Went for a Walk, L. Farnsworth, Ed., London: Michael O'Mara Books, 2016.

[31]   D. Sinden and N. Catlow, Anti Journal: create outrageously, London: Macmillan, 2016.

[32]   R. Kempster and M. Leder, The Book of Me, Naperville, Illinois: Sourcebook Fire, Inc., 2016.

[33]   Gray and Gold, Calligraphy & Hand Lettering Notepad: Practice Makes Perfect Series, London: Gray and Gold Publishing, 2016.

[34]   M. L. Patel, Start Where You Are – a journal for self-exploration, London: Penguin Random House UK, 2016.

[35]   J. Spicer, You Will be Able to Draw by the End of This Book, London: Octopus Publishing Group Ltd, 2017.

[36]   L. Scobie, 365 Days of Art: A Creative Exercise for Every Day of the Year, London: Hardie Grant Books (UK), 2017.

[37]   M. Tristram, My Year in Small Drawings: Notice, Draw, Appreciate, London: Leaping Hare Press, 2017.

[38]   J. Sharpe, Doodle Art and Lettering with Joanne Sharpe: Inspiration and Techniques for Personal Expression, Blue Ash, Ohio: North Light Books, 2017.

[39]   MIND, The Wellbeing Journal: Creative Activities to Inspire, London: Michael O'Mara, 2017.

[40]   M. Hersey, Life by Design –52 Lists, Questions, and Inspirations for finding your happiness, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2017.

[41]   D. Culhane, If you can DOODLE you can PAINT: Transforming Simple Drawings into Works of Art, Beverly: Quatro Publishing Group USA Inc., 2017.

[42]   C. Hutchison, The Simple Guide to Visual Journaling: (even if you aren't an artist), CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2018.

[43]   K. Vernon, Make Art Every Day: A Weekly Planner for Creative Thinkers - With Art Techniques, Exercises, Reminders, and 500+ Stickers (To Do), Beverly, MA: Quarry Books, 2018.