

## The Basic Strategies of Saturation From “Drawing on the Artist Within” by Betty Edwards

To saturate your mind with information about a problem, I suggest that the following heuristics will help you see whether it fits within the boundaries of the problem, how it fits, where it fits, and why it is important (or unimportant). To achieve that perspective, you will have to be able to:

1. ***Perceive the edges of a problem.*** Where does one thing end and another begin? Where are the boundaries of the problem (the edges that separate the problem from what surrounds it)?
2. ***Perceive the negative spaces of a problem.*** What is in the space (or spaces) around or behind the objects (or objectives) of the problem? Since the edges of the spaces are shared with the objects, can the spaces help define the objects?
3. ***Perceive the relationships and proportions of a problem.*** Relative to your point of view, what is the state of the problem in relation to the constraints of the situation – things that don’t change (or can’t be changed)? What are the relationships of the parts to each other and to the whole?
4. ***Perceive the lights and shadows of a problem.*** What is visible – in the light – and what is in shadow? What parts can’t be “seen into” at this moment?
5. ***And finally, perceive the Gestalt of the problem.*** What is the unique set of qualities, the “thinginess of the thing” - the quidditas of Aquinas – that makes the problem what it is and none other?

Paradoxically, these verbal questions can be best answered not by means of language, but by skillful *seeing*.

The questions form a strategy, or more properly, a set of strategies, five in number, for looking at the available information “differently.” And to use these strategies – the heuristics of seeing – requires that you understand, in a real sense, the meaning of the terms: for example, the term “negative space.” I believe that the most efficient way to attain that understanding is to learn to see by learning to draw, just as the most efficient way to learn to do library research on a subject is first to know how to read.