

Sketch to Stretch

Sketch-to-Stretch is an instructional strategy developed by Harste, Short, & Burke, (1988). Students draw quick sketches to stretch their thinking and understanding of concepts. Sketch to Stretch can accomplish many things for the reader:

- It chunks the text so that students are concentrating on one short passage at a time rather than trying to digest an entire text.
- It forces students to stop and think about the text periodically, ensuring that meaning-making is happening throughout reading.
- It allows students to apply the theory of nonlinguistic representation of text in a fun, natural way.

To begin a discussion, ask students to do a quick sketch of an issue in the reading that interests them. Use the sketches to begin the discussion. To help students appreciate the strengths of sketch to stretch, you may wish them to consider ways in which their sketches helped them see or understand things in a text that they might not have noticed before, or if they changed their plan for a sketch during the process of sketching and why.

Variations:

1. As a pre-reading activity, Sketch-to-Stretch is a strategy that helps students connect with prior knowledge. Students sketch ideas that show what they know about a topic featured in an upcoming selection.
2. Invite students to write captions (words, phrases, or sentences) for sketches.
3. When students work in small groups, Sketch-to-Stretch can be used to illustrate a series of events. For example, each person in a group sketches a different phase in the life cycle of a monarch butterfly.

Short, K. G., & Harste, J. C. (1996). *Creating classrooms for authors and inquirers* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

