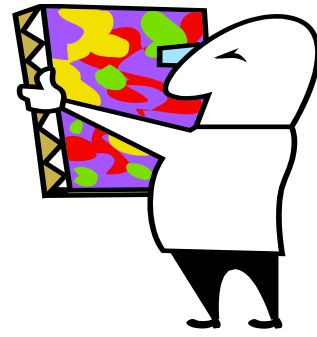









SKETCH TO STRETCH



Sketch to Stretch (Harste and Burke 1988) provides a postreading strategy which prompts close reading and abstract thinking.

STEP 1: Have students read a selection (chapter in a novel, the entire novel, a short story, poem, chapter in a content area text book, etc.).

STEP 2: Students are encouraged to think about what the passage or entire selection means to them and draw symbolic representations of their interpretations of the text. Instead of encouraging students to illustrate a scene which would reflect literal information, the teacher must ask them to draw symbolically, which will “stretch” their thinking to a more abstract level. As students decide what to draw, they will:

-  recognize cause and effect relationships
-  make inferences
-  draw conclusions
-  construct generalizations
-  summarize
-  reflect the main idea
-  identify the theme

STEP 3: When students have completed their sketches (emphasize that these are not works of art, but they are sketches as some of your students may not feel confident about their ability to draw), students will write an explanation of why they drew what they did on the back of their sketch. They should include quoted text as evidence of their reasoning. This support of their opinions is one way to prepare these students for an open-ended question on a test.

STEP 4: Sharing their sketches should begin with the other students responding to the sketch before the student who created the sketch explains it. A response to a sketch often sparks a deeper discussion of the selection they have read. This process is how they “stretch” in their thinking and their understanding.

VARIATIONS: Though this is usually a postreading strategy, students may create sketches as they are reading. If a teacher had saved sketches from past years, the sketches could be used as prereading predictions.

CHALLENGES: To encourage students who have difficulty moving from the concrete to the abstract in their drawing and thinking, continue modeling and discussing so the students will have opportunities to make the shift.