

Curricular Engagement

Sketch to Stretch *Sketch Me a Story* Interwoven Texts Song Maps

Introduction

These engagements help language users realize that we can create meaning in many sign systems. By taking what we know in one sign system and recasting it in terms of another system—language, art, movement, mathematics, music, and so forth—new signs and new forms of expression are created, and new knowledge generated. This process of recasting is called "transmediation," and is a fundamental process of what it means to be literate.

These engagements encourage students to go beyond a literal understanding of what they have experienced. By becoming involved in this strategy, students who are reluctant to take risks or who have dysfunctional notions of language see that not everyone has the same response to a selection. Although much of the meaning is shared, variations in interpretation add new meanings and new insights.

Often, as students sketch, they generate new insights of their own. They are faced with a problem because the meanings they had constructed for the selection through language cannot be transferred into a sketch. As they deal with this problem, they usually come to under

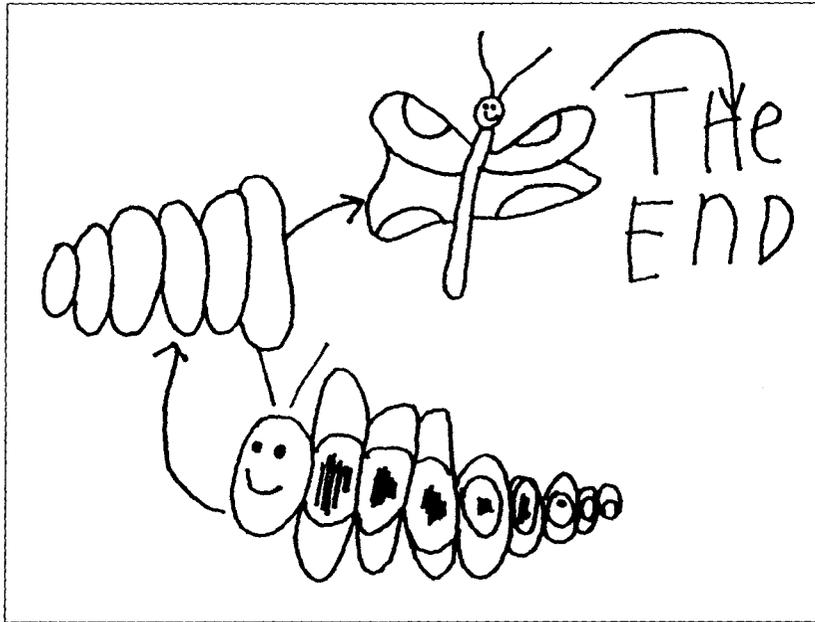


FIGURE CE17.1
A Sketch for **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** (Carle, 1969); Alissa, Age 10 (Siegel, 1984)

stand the selection at a different level than when they first read the book. Sometimes students discuss and explore aspects of meaning they may have captured in art that they were not aware of having understood verbally or musically.

Materials/Procedures for Sketch to Stretch

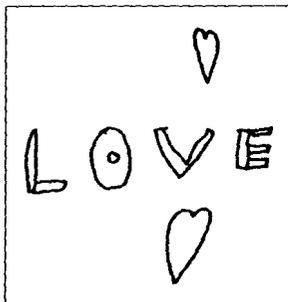
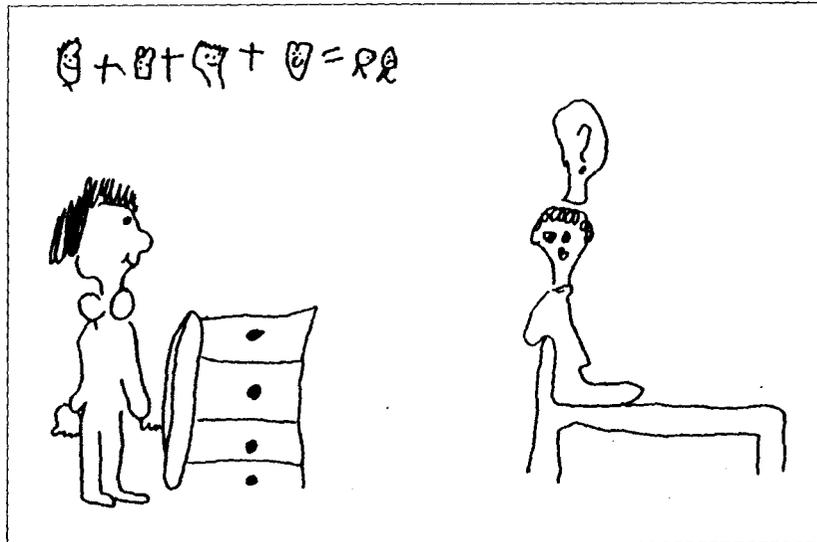
- 1 Multiple copies of a reading selection
- Pencil, paper, and crayons or colored markers

1. Students work in small groups of four or five. They first read the selection, individually or as a group.
2. After reading the selection, students think about what they read and draw a sketch of "what this story means to you." Encourage students not to draw an illustration of the story, but to think about the meaning of the story and see if they can find a way to visually sketch that meaning. It also helps to ask students to draw their own connections to this story.

Teachers can help students understand these directions by sharing several examples of Sketch to Stretch with them before they are asked to create their own. Either examples from previous students or the ones included in this engagement can be used.

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FIGURE CE17.2
A Sketch for Ira Sleeps Over
 (Waber, 1972); Matt, Age 10
 (Siegel, 1984)



A Sketch for **Nana Upstairs,
 Nana Downstairs** (de Paola,
 1973); Lisa, Age 10 (Siegel,
 1984)

3. Students should be told there are many ways of representing the meaning of an experience and they are free to experiment with their interpretation. Students should not be rushed but given ample time to read and draw.

4. When the sketches are complete, each person in the group shows his or her sketch to the others in that group. The group participants study the sketch and say what they think the artist is attempting to say.

5. Once everyone has been given the opportunity to hypothesize an interpretation, the artist, of course, gets the last word.

6. Sharing continues in this fashion until all group members have shared their sketches. Each group can then identify one sketch in the group to be shared with the entire class. This sketch- is put on an acetate sheet for the overhead projector.

Materials/Procedures for Interwoven Texts

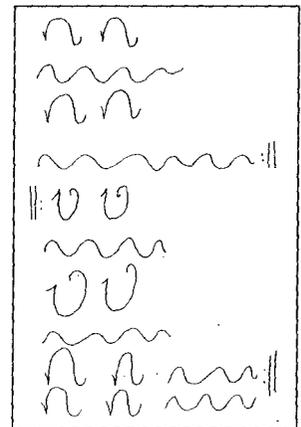
- I A Text Set of three books related by theme (see Appendix A)
- I A box of art materials-pipe cleaners, clay, string, ribbons, balloons, paper plates, and the like-and art supplies-construction paper, glue, scissors, and so forth

1. As a class, read and discuss each of the three books separately over several days.
2. The teacher divides each book into eight sections.
3. Before reading, the class is invited to listen for the meanings that cut across all three books. Encourage them to attend to the messages of each book and to the tone and feel of the books individually and together.
4. To read, invite three people to read the books in an interwoven fashion. Person 1 reads the first portion of his or her book, Person 2 reads the first portion of his or her book, Person 3 reads the first portion of his or her book, Person 1 then reads the second portion of his or her book, Person 2 reads the second portion of his or her book, and so on until all books are complete.
5. After reading, students are asked to individually jot down what they see as the messages or meanings cutting across all three books.
6. Working in small groups of five or six, students share their interpretations of the stories. They then decide as a group on one interpretation that they think is interesting and decide how they might symbolically represent that meaning in an artistic form.
7. Each group shares their art pieces with the rest of the class by using the strategy Save the Last Word for the Artist.

Materials/Procedures for Song Maps

- I Several pieces of classical music like Beethoven's Fifth, and a Bach Concerto.
- I Blank sheets of paper and crayons
- I Overhead transparencies and markers

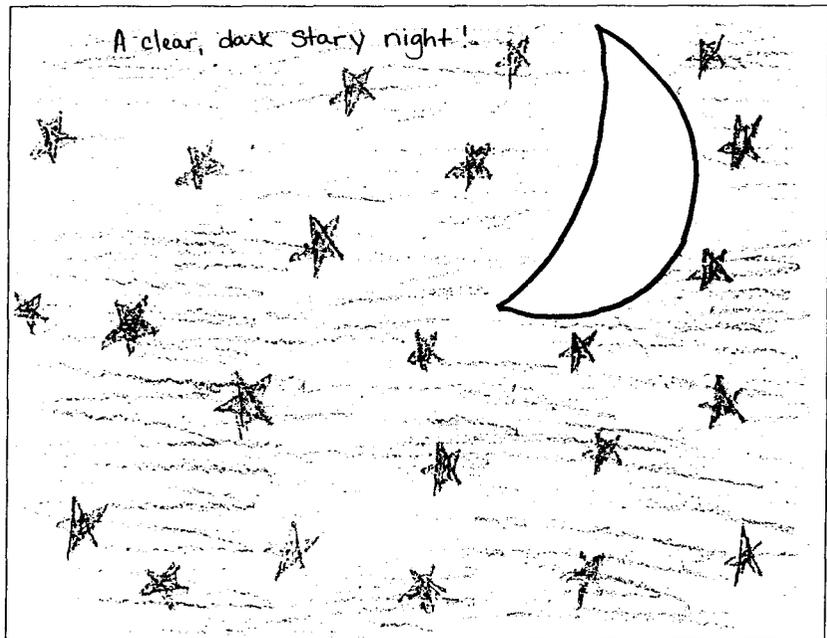
1. Play a piece of music inviting participants to listen for recurring patterns in the music.
2. Share a song map for the piece of music that was created by previous students or use the song map included in this engagement. A song map is an artistic and mathematical representation using line and pattern to show the deep structure or musical meaning of a song.



Songmap to **Gavotte** by
J. S. Bach

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FIGURE CE17.3
Sketch to Stretch; Picture
created while listening to
Mozart's *Serenade #10 in B
flat*; Laura, Masters Student
(compliments of Virginia
Woodward)



3. Invite students to follow along on the song map as they relisten to the musical selection. Talk together about the difference between capturing the surface structure of the musical notes and the deep structure of "musical waves" in the song.
4. Play and replay another musical selection asking participants to create song maps for that selection. They can work alone or in small groups.
5. Ask students to share their song maps of the deep structure for that musical piece by sketching their maps on overheads for sharing and discussion.

Establishing the Learning Context

Teachers may need to help students focus on interpretation rather than on their artistic talents. Teachers should do their own Sketch to Stretch and share it with the group of students they are working with at an appropriate time. Students often initially have difficulty understanding the directions to "draw what the story means to you," and will draw their favorite scene. Don't give up on the engagement. The

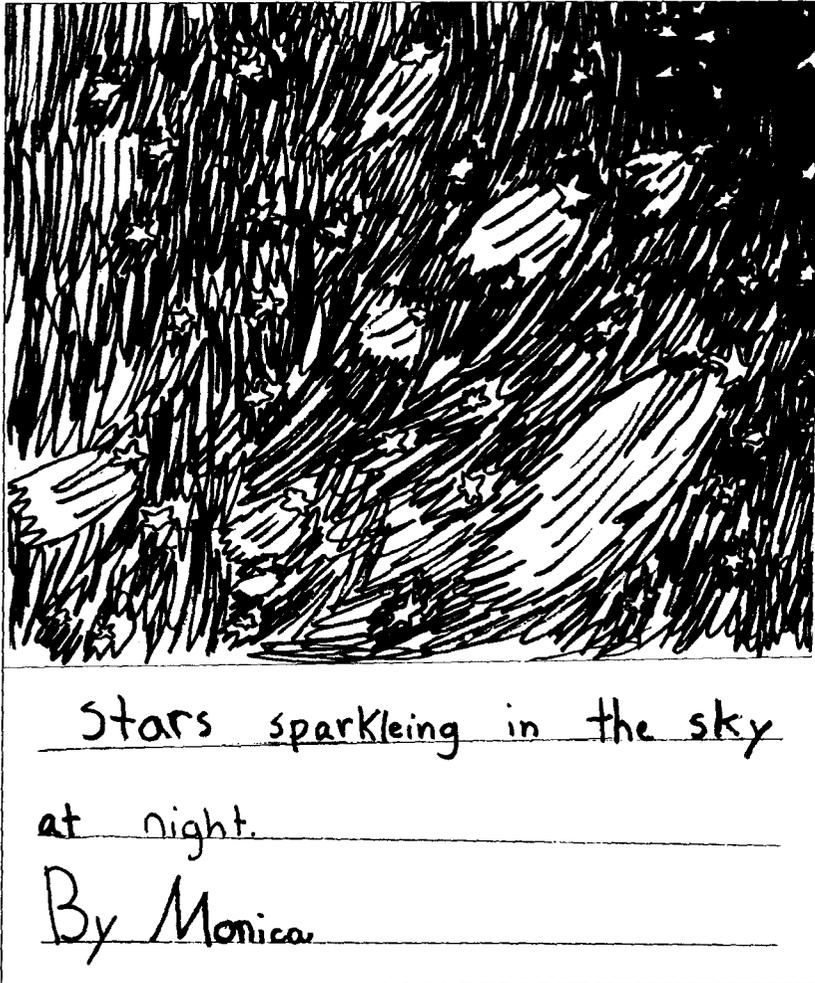


FIGURE CE17.4
Sketch to Stretch: Picture
created while listening to
Mozart's *Serenade #10 in B*
flat; Monica, Age 9
(compliments of Virginia
Woodward)

students will need several opportunities to try this engagement before they begin to play with the meanings they are creating through sketching and to get beyond their initial limited interpretations of what a sketch should be.

After using the engagement several times, the students should discuss: 1. why various readers have different interpretations; 2. why there is no correct reading or sketch but rather that what each reader focused on depended on the reader's interest and background; and 3. how and under what conditions Sketch to Stretch might be a particularly useful strategy for readers to use with time line

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selections or stories, floor plans in mysteries, complex descriptions of cell reproduction, etc.

Variations

1. Sketches can be compiled and published in a class book (see Bookmaking). In addition, a Message Board could be developed for students to share sketches they make from self-selected books they are reading. These sketches can serve as advertisements for particular books.
2. Students can read different selections that are related in some way (see Text Sets) and make sketches. As they discuss their sketches, they can make hypotheses about how their different selections are related.
3. Once students have written a first draft or have experienced a writer's block, they can be asked to shift to another sign system. Students can be asked how else they might represent their meaning. Their choice of pantomime, drama, math, music, art, or other system should be honored. Students return to writing once they have expressed their meaning in an alternate system. Often they will find that they have gained new insights into the topic at hand.
4. This procedure for Sketch to Stretch highlights written language. Art is secondary and seen as supportive of written language growth. However, this relationship can be reversed by having students move from math to writing or art to reading and then back to art or math. To this end, students should be helped to see that shifts in sign systems help learners gain new perspectives and insights. Such shifting is one of several strategies that they and other successful language learners might employ in a variety of learning situations.
5. Students can create story maps. A story map pictures the events that took place within the story in one large mural.
6. Students can sketch what they think the author looks like after reading a number of books by a particular author, and then compare their sketches.

7. *Sketch Me a Story*-Students can be given sheets of paper and asked to sketch scenes they "see" as the teacher reads aloud a book. On a second reading they can be asked to post their scenes in sequential order. After discussion, students can be invited to fill in missing scenes on a third reading. Pictures can be assembled in the form of a class composed book and can be used by even young children to recreate the story from memory. This variation provides access to the reading process for very young readers. It also provides a functional context for the reading and rereading of a complex story.

References

Interwoven Texts and Sketch Me a Story were developed by Mary Lynn Woods and Carol Hall. Sketch to Stretch was originally developed by Jerome Harste, Carolyn Burke, Marjorie Siegel, and Karen Feathers. It was the focus of a research study by Marjorie Siegel (1984).

Carle, E. 1969. *The very hungry caterpillar*. New York: Philomel.

de Paola, T. 1973. *Nana upstairs and nana downstairs*. New York: Putnam's.

Siegel, M. G. 1984. "Reading as signification." Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.

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See Sketch Journals for a bibliography of children's books where children use sketches.

Upitis, R. 1990. *This too is music*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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Appendix A: Text Sets for Interwoven Text Strategy

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Berger, B. 1984. *Grandfather Twilight*. New York: Philomel.

Willard, N. 1983. *The nightgown of the sullen moon. Ill. D. McPhail*. New York: Harcourt.

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