



INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



Teaching Technique 13

Sketch Notes

ACTIVITY TYPE

- Graphic Organizing
- Note Taking
- Learning Assessment

TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED


- Poor Note Taking
- Surface Learning

LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL

- Application: Critical Thinking
- Application: Creative Thinking
- Integration & Synthesis

Sketch Notes

For *Sketch Notes*, students use handwritten words and visual elements such as drawings, boxes, lines, and arrows to illustrate the main concepts from a lecture, as well as their interrelations.

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- 1 Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for *Sketch Notes*
 - 2 Choose the lecture about which students will create *Sketch Notes*
 - 3 Set assignment parameters (such as time allowed, etc.)
 - 4 Develop a plan for learning assessment or grading
 - 5 Communicate assignment instructions to students
 - 6 Proceed to lecture and afterward have students create their *Sketch Notes*
 - 7 Reflect upon the activity and evaluate its effectiveness

Step-By-Step Instructions

In this section we provide you with guidance on each of the seven steps involved as you consider this technique.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Sketch Notes are notes created from a mix of handwriting, drawings, shapes, and visual elements such as boxes, lines, and arrows (Rohde, n.d.). The idea behind *Sketch Notes* is to have students reduce a large amount of information into a visual representation of words and simple symbols.

Sketch Notes requires students to re-conceptualize their notes in a less linear, more visual fashion. The process of creating the *Sketch Notes* helps students think through information in a new and creative way. These notes require students to process the information from the lecture, and this additional processing also improves their learning. Students have to show relations between concepts, and organizing the information in this way can help to cement it in their memories.

Some students will love this technique, and others will instantly decide that it is not for them. It is often good for students to stretch to try new things, but be sure to give students plenty of space for imperfection. Stress that the idea is visual communication, which can be done with text and boxes alone, rather than artistic representation. This technique also helps to provide a visual representation of how students conceptualize the information; thus, it can be a useful assessment technique.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

Students re-conceptualize their lecture notes in a less linear, more visual fashion, reducing the information into a few words and simple symbols.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

- Prior to class, prepare a handout that illustrates what a *Sketch Note* looks like. Create your own notes, or use existing examples online, which you can find through a Google search. A good place to start is the Sketch Note Army's showcase of *Sketch Notes* (<http://sketchnotearmy.com>). We also provide examples in this document's **Support Materials**.
- Determine other parameters such as:
 - › The time allowed for the activity.
 - › Whether students will construct the notes in class or as a homework assignment.
 - › How students should submit their completed *Sketch Notes*, and so forth.

Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)



STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

Choose how you wish to assess or grade the completed *Sketch Notes*. For example, a plus, checkmark, or minus may be sufficient, or you may want to create a rubric to assess different elements.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

Distribute the *Sketch Notes* handout, which should include instructions, assessment criteria, and examples.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

- Announce the activity and distribute your handout to students.
- Proceed with the lecture.
- Provide students with time after the lecture to transform their linear notes and the information they retain in their memories into *Sketch Notes*. Because of the complexity of creating notes, it can be useful to allow students to work on them as a homework assignment.
- Collect the notes and review them for relevance and to determine whether you need to follow up in your next lecture with additional information or insights. Consider also having students display their notes so that they may learn from each other.
- Assess and grade the *Sketch Notes*.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

When reflecting on the activity and how effective it was, consider the following questions:

- Did the technique match the course learning goals and objectives?
- Did it meet my goals for this learning module?
- Was it appropriate for the students?
- Did the technique keep the students engaged?
- Did it promote student learning?
- Did it provide me with information about student understanding?

If you answer yes to all or most of these questions, next consider how you might improve the activity for the next use.

Support Materials



The materials in this section are intended to help you with the process of implementing this technique. For *Sketch Notes*, we provide tips on creating simple instructions and sample sketch notes.

TIPS ON CREATING SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS

- It is helpful to provide students with an idea of what a Sketch Note looks like, so if possible, create your own. Alternatively, use existing examples online, which you can find through a Google search. A good place to start is the Sketch Note Army's showcase of *Sketch Notes* (<http://sketchnotearmy.com>).
- Consider also giving students a few symbols to start. You can do an Internet search for some symbols (try the search term "sketch note symbols") that are particularly relevant to your discipline or field.
- Also provide students with some ideas about what makes a good *Sketch Notes* (see below).
- When preparing instructions, you don't want to be overly directive, but students will appreciate some basic tips. Consider the following suggestions from Berman (2011):
 - › **Text:** Recording the verbal is quick, direct, and clear and is usually your primary sketch noting tool. Capture the meaningful quotes and key points, and avoid trying to summarize everything.
 - › **Containers:** Simply enclosing words in shapes brings emphasis and structure to an otherwise wild page. Some of the more common containers include (but are not limited to): quote bubbles, boxes, circles and thought clouds.
 - › **Connectors:** Connect ideas and pieces of stories with arrows and lines. A basic chain of thoughts can scintillate around the page and still be clear if they are linked with a simple set of connectors.
 - › **Frameworks:** Some presenters will have a very obvious structure to their presentation, but often times the insights may benefit from your own synthesis into an understandable underlying structure or model. Common frameworks include 2x2s, Venn diagrams, and continuums.

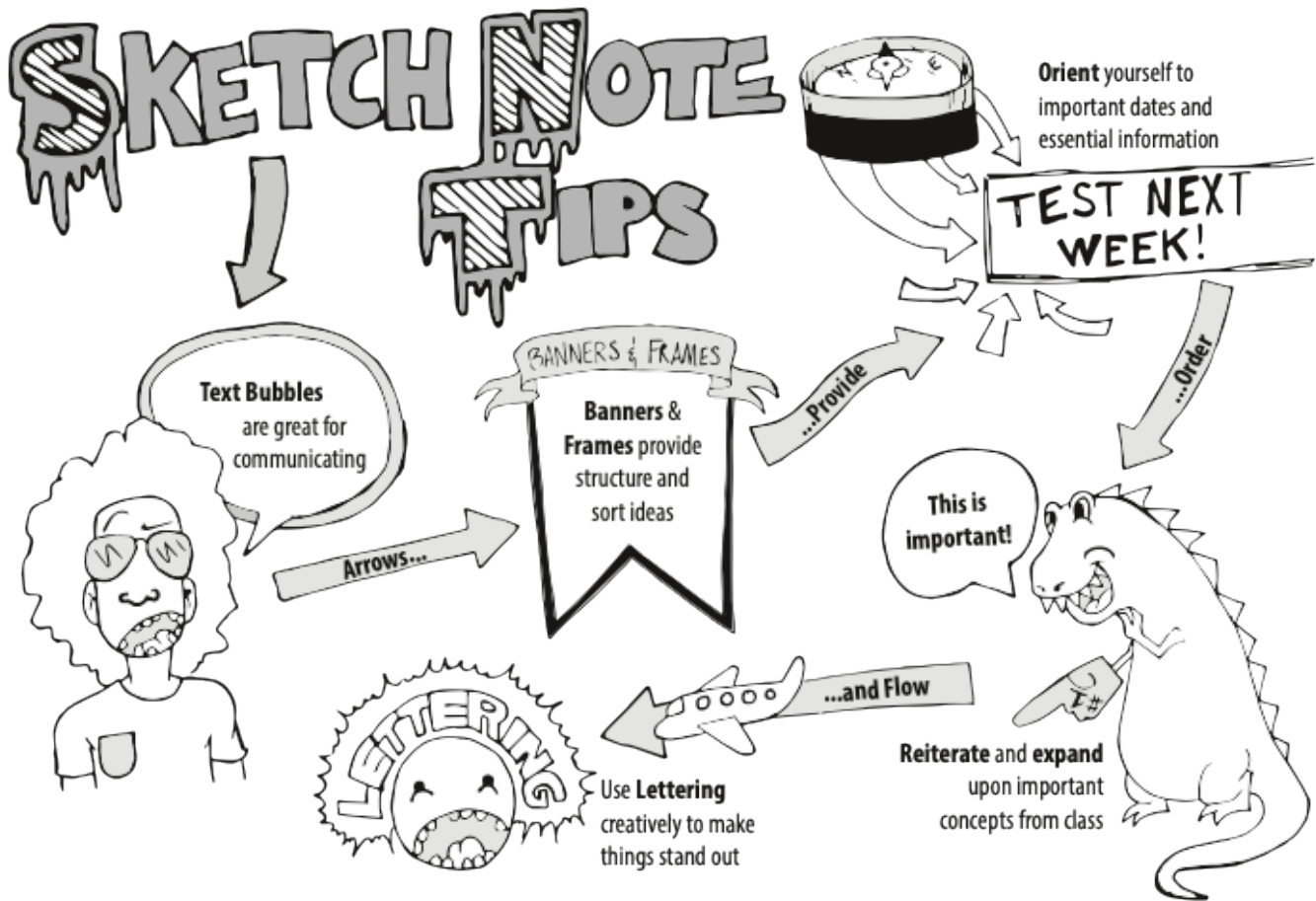
SAMPLE SKETCH NOTE—"A GOOD SKETCH NOTE"

Below is a Sketch Note suggestion of what constitutes an effective Sketch Note. Redrawing by Josh Wever of Tanmay Norva's "what makes a good sketch note," <https://twitter.com/tnvora> and used with permission.



SAMPLE SKETCH NOTE—"SKETCH NOTE TIPS"

Below is a Sketch Note of Tips also by Josh Wever and used with permission.



**TEMPLATE FOR BEGINNING
SKETCH NOTES**

	SKETCH	MAIN IDEA
1		
2		
3		

Technique Template

Following are two templates to assist you as you think through how you might implement this technique in your own class. The first is a completed template, providing an example of how Elizabeth Barkley adapted *Sketch Notes* in her course, *World Music*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.

Technique Template

Sample Sketch Notes Completed Technique Template:

Content from Elizabeth Barkley

World Music

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

My course is an online, lower division General Education course. It is a survey of world music styles that traces various non-Western music genres from their roots in the ethnic traditions of a specific culture through their evolution into new forms that retain relevance in contemporary society. It enrolls about 50 students. Students have a wide range of academic skills and levels of motivation to learn.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

I am looking for an activity that will help students identify the core concepts in the online lectures, and also offer them a different kind of assignment that they might find more engaging than the typical text-based activities. My hope is that all students will benefit from this technique, but I am thinking non-Native English speakers may particularly enjoy this activity.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?

Students will take an online lecture and create a Sketch Note in which they re-conceptualize the lecture in what is essentially a mind map (or word map), using a few words, drawings, and simple symbols.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?

This assignment will be done individually. I will permit students to choose the online lecture they wish to represent in Sketch Notes, and they will submit it online directly into the Assignment pane of the course's LMS.

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?

I will use a simple plus, check, or minus based on accuracy, number of nodes and connections, and so forth. I will inform students that I will add in bonus points for students who clearly invested a considerable amount of time and effort into the project.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?

I will include instructions in the Syllabus under "Learning Activities and Assessments" and then I will post the Sketch Notes instructions in the course's LMS.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

Students will be allowed 2 weeks to create and submit their Sketch Note of an online lecture of their choice. The logistical challenge may be having them create a jpeg of their notes. I will suggest that they simply use their cell phone to take a photo of their completed Sketch Note and submit that directly online in our LMS.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.

Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?

I found that most students really liked this opportunity to do something creative and different. The Sketch Notes ranged in visual appeal, and also some students invested lots of effort on the project. This showed me that they found it engaging, and I was glad I had built in extra credit points. I also had a student share that at first he had resisted because he didn't have artistic skills, but that once he completed it, he was pleased with how the Sketch Note helped him organize the main concepts he wanted to remember about the topic. I will use this technique again.

Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement **Sketch Notes** in your class. Fill in the blanks below, and use the information provided elsewhere in the Instructor’s Guide to assist you in your thinking.

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?



STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?



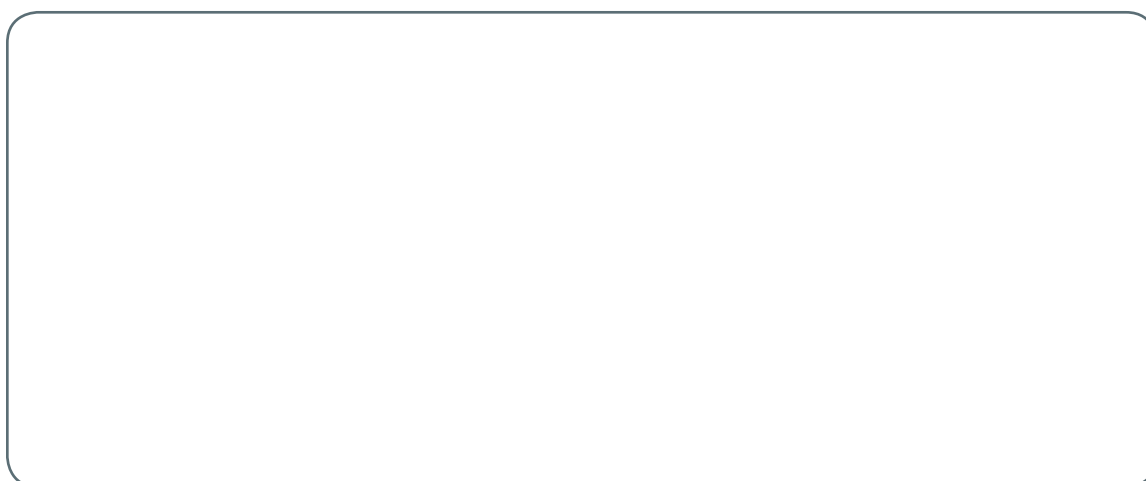
STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?



STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?



STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?



STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.

Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?



References and Resources

PRIMARY SOURCE

Content for this download was drawn primarily from “Interactive Lecture Technique 17: Sketch Notes.” Barkley, E. F. and Major, C. H. (2018). *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 278–287. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in online and on campus courses, see the primary source:

Barkley, E. F. and Major, C. H. (2018). *Interactive Lecturing: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Berman, C. (2011). *Sketchnotes 101: The Basics of Visual Note-taking*. Retrieved from <http://www.core77.com/posts/19678/sketchnotes-101-the-basics-of-visual-note-taking-19678>
- Rohde, M. (n.d.). *The sketchnote handbook*. Retrieved from <http://rohdesign.com/book/>

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