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Rap Music: A Creative and Cultural Approach to Learning
by Dr. Gloria Kirkland Holmes

Children can have a delightful time learning from rap music. They are very eager to participate in creative movement, rhythmic beats, songs, poems and rhymes that challenge their creative and artistic thinking processes.

Rap music can be used to build self-esteem and pride. Raps with children’s names encourage them to feel more comfortable in participating while building self-concepts.

Teachers, educators, parents and children need not worry about the actual beat to rap music because children will automatically “flow with the beat”, after having the rap introduced. Most raps have a strong and regular beat, usually four heavy beats to a line. Some children and teachers prefer to focus on syllables for the down beats.

Some wonder what are some of the advantages to children learning through rap music:

1. Children learn best through rhyme, repetition, and movement while focusing on many of the cognitive areas such as reading, writing and math.

2. Many children who failed to learn effectively or easily with other approaches, excelled when exposed to rap music as a learning tool.

3. Many of the modern day positive rappers have influenced the lives of children and youth through positive messages. The messages in a rap form seem to capture their attention.

4. Rap music encourages creative thinking and presents many challenges for children in reading and creative writing. Authors are beginning to write children’s books in a rap form.

5. Rap music can serve as a motivator to help children become more interested in many learning challenges.

6. Rap music has become very popular today and is found in almost every area of life. It is now being used as a part of secular music, worship services, in schools, in plays, in videotapes and movies.

7. Rap music is great for providing numerous opportunities to create meaning, such as understanding a new word or experience.

8. Rap music is vital to understanding and appreciating a variety of cultures and lifestyles.

9. Literature integrated with rap music and/or books with elements of art, dance, drama, and music can provide children with many extended experiences in the performing arts.

10. Children can use their imaginations as they create their own raps.

Now if you would like to get started on your own rap, just think back to when you were a baby and rap!!! Have fun!!!

When I was a baby
When I was a baby, Could’t talk,
Mama says I slept all night Just cried,
and half of the night. Couldn’t eat,
Half of the night, Just drank,
up she was kept, Couldn’t walk,
by the beautiful Just wondered
sound of a newborn who brought me into
this great, big, wide world.
baby boy. G.K.H.
Daddy says I was a real pain and a joy.

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steps, responsibilities of key individuals, anticipated timeline, resources required, and indicators of success.

Nadene Davidson will again be directing the Family and Consumer Science Professional Development Program which has been set for June 26-29, 1995, at Collins Plaza in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The FCS Program Management Committee met on November 9, 1994, to assist in establishing priorities for the summer program and continued staff development.

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Fifth Grade Literary Survey

by Maribelle Betterton

As I continue to refine my integrated language arts classroom, I continually seek effective methods by which I may better become acquainted with my students’ perceptions of the reading act, their view of effective strategies to employ while reading, and the characteristics of readers. Likewise, I always try to seek their input with regard to their personal needs and goals for their grade five language arts experience. It has been my experience that working intensely with each student during the first few weeks of school via individual interviews builds a sense of trust between students and the teacher. At the same time such grand conversations increase my knowledge base of each unique reader. Thus, after the first six weeks of school I administer a six-item survey requesting information on their reading perceptions.

The following is just a smattering of the wonderful responses I received from this year’s group of students. Just as I had hoped the students are demonstrating good problem solving skills as they increase their sight vocabularies, word attack and decoding strategies. Additionally, they are becoming those reflective thinkers we teachers so enjoy as they articulate their growth and goals.

1. **If someone asked you to define reading, what would you say? What happens when people read? What is your definition of reading?**
   - Reading is when someone looks at words, then makes sense out of them, and then, once they can read, they can learn almost anything.
   - Reading is something we use a lot in life. When people read they usually are having fun.

2. **When you are reading and come to a word or phrase you don’t know, what do you do? What strategies do you use?**
   - I sound it out, ask someone who knows how to say it, look it up in a dictionary.
   - I read on and come back to the word, find words that are inside the word, or if I can’t, I ask for help.

3. **Name someone in grade five whom you believe is a good reader. What makes you think this classmate is a good reader?**
   - Myself because over the summer I think that I improved in my reading by reading over 20 books.
   - I think _____ is a good reader is because I see here with a book a lot. She enjoys reading because she almost always wants to read.

4. **How and when did you learn to read? What do you remember about your early experiences?**
   - I learned how to read in kindergarten because our teacher read to us. I remember my mom read to me.
   - When I was 4 I had learned to read by looking at the alphabet and sounding letters out. When I learned to read I always had a book.

5. **What would you like to do better as a reader?**
   - I would like to read more than I do now.
   - I would like to become more expressive in my reading out loud.

6. **You will be reading several novels this year. There will be skill lessons, lots of opportunities to write responses and many group discussions. Describe any specific ways in which I could help you become a better reader.**
   - One thing I need help on is how to choose good books.
   - I’d like to be a faster reader and be able to sound out words better.

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