

Title of Session: Rap Is Poetry

Moderator: BJ Berquist

Title of File: rapispoetry

Date: July 25, 2007

Room: On Tap Café

BJB2: Welcome to the Rap is Poetry discussion.

MichaelM: Hi BJB. For those who do not have a wiki account and would like to submit a podcast for the contest, the podcast submission login is Teacher1 mypass (case sensitive) at <http://snipurl.com/TIFestivalWiki>

MichaelM: I have to take off for work at 3:30

BJB2 nods to Michael. Thanks for all your help this morning

MichaelM: You're quite welcome!

BJB2: before we continue, you've shared where you are located...how about some comments on using rap in the classroom

BJB2: do any of you do this in some form?

DeidraM: Used it to teach concept of metaphors.

DeidraM: from NJ

MichaelM: Chesapeake, VA provide teacher wikis with podcasting links and attachments. Can't rap very well though.

RitaSo: A little for poetry -- but on the fly. the kids are the experts here

BJB2 nods to Rita

KimFl: AZ - used for creative writing - making their own raps

BJB2: Rap has received such a bad 'rap' because of the language in gangsta rap, that I think it's turned off many educators and adults

CelesteR: Use Rhythme and Poetry all of the time...just had a Pimp My Class Contest for my students, where they use Fergie's song to show how well they learned the Language Arts in my class.

SusanneN: the Danish Broadcast State radio had a rap contest last year, featuring

old folk songs as rap poetry

KimFl: lol - great idea Celeste :)

BJB2: cool, Sus! Thanks, Celeste. I'm of the old school and really find the word pimp offensive

ElissaR: hi there I am a music teacher on Long Island (NY) k - 5. I do not teach rap, although many of my students create RAPs, we use them when learning about form, rhythms, even syllables, etc

DavidWek smiles

BJB2 . o O (I guess I'm going to have to get over it)

DavidWek: it IS offensive, BJ

BJB2 nods to David.

SusanneN: can I ask what DOES *pimp* refer to?

DeidraM: prostitution

SusanneN: oh I see.

CelesteR: Can you tell me why? I don't see as such...pimp is to brush it up, make is look suave and fresh

DavidWek: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pimp>

VickiLM: that's the NEW meaning

DeidraM: Like a pimp

BJB2: Thanks for the new definition.

SusanneN: In Danish language it would be an old word for heavy drinking

ElissaR: primp is to spruce up (old vocabulary)...

DavidWek . o O (shrimp means a small...)

ElissaR: now, now, now

BJB2: As you may have noticed....

ElissaR: smiles

DeidraM: scrimp means to save

DavidWek laughs

BJB2 . o O (we have to work very hard to keep David on task ;-)

DavidWek sits in the corner with his rhyming dictionary

MichaelM: We have a new defs every few days at wikipedia and the new WWW

VickiLM: I think we've progressed to the stress management

BJB2: the featured speaker for this discussion is currently in London and he has not logged in yet...

RitaSo: Is rap associated with specific content (getting the message out) or a stand alone form for any topic

ElissaR: sorry, I keep hitting enter when I am reaching for my quotation marks.....not a good idea to type with long nails LOL

BJB2: however, I think among us we can share some excellent ideas for using Rap in the classroom...

ElissaR: thank you for the emery board.....

BJB2: I'd like to show you Baba Brinkman's home page

ElissaR: k

BJB2: and then perhaps we can discuss how he has taken rap to a literary level

BJB2: <http://babasword.com/>

BJB2: hold down the ctrl key on your keyboard or turn off pop up blockers

BJB2: to access that webpage

BJB2: two things Baba is that I am not is young and handsome ;-)

BJB2: and he certainly has inspired me with his Chaucer rap

ElissaR: rap can be used for so many topics...can be tied into historic content, also can be used to teach language rhythms and vocabulary, can also be used to research community standings, societies, pop culture, art, fashion, etc.

SusanneN: I love this Math rap

<http://educ.queensu.ca/connectme/sharedresources/thearts/MathRap.pdf>

DorethiaM: you might check teachertube.com also

BJB2 agrees with Elissa

BJB2: thanks, Sus

DeidraM: I googled "rap in education" just for the heck of it and found:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4503026>

SusanneN: yes, Mrs. Burk did some wonderful raps on Teacher tube

BJB2: a good resource for vocabulary and Shakespeare is <http://www.flocabulary.com/>

RitaSo: Ok

DorethiaM: Flocabulary is great. One of the teachers I work with used it.

BJB2: Hi, Susan. Our featured speaker hasn't logged in so we're all being featured speakers and sharing our individual resources

ElissaR: there are a few cds of Nursery Rhyme Raps....I've used one or two of them (the nursery rhymes) with my elementary kids....they love them...good for movement, illustrations, etc.

SusanLC nods

BJB2: perhaps someone can explain exactly what makes a rap?

CelesteR: BJ, I went to the forum for that site a few months ago...I was not happy with what I saw, so many stealth and sloppy words...and vulgar. I wrote to the owner, whom I met at the NCTE...he apologized, but I don't know if it was fixed. I had to remove it from my site.

RitaSo: Does rap have older roots than the popular culture

BJB2: forum for what site, Celeste?

ElissaR: Wouldn't it be neat if some of the older students (maybe middle schoolers) could create one or two raps about a primary (k, - 3) subject, something universal like the

first day of school, or the water cycle, or butterfly lifecycle or something....I see more podcasts in my future

DeidraM: Rap emerged from the mixing of Reggae deejays with R&B/Soul music.

RitaSo: thanks

DeidraM: Deejay Kool Herc - originally from Jamaica - is credited with being the first emcee (master of ceremony) or rapper in American Hip Hop.

CelesteR: BJ, sorry, floccabulary

BJB2: The Tapped In Festival offered the opportunity for people (teachers, students) to submit a rap on the theme of Playing to Learn

ElissaR: Could even expand the topic a bit to include someone from the music industry to discuss the origins of rap.....I know a few older jazz artists who love to talk about rap, where it's from, where its going, etc

DeidraM: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kool_Herc

SusanneN: BBC has a brief history of rap @ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/r2music/documentaries/rap.shtml>

BJB2: Michael has provided the festival with a wiki where you can upload podcasts of your submission

MichaelM: Thanks BJB. The link is <http://snipurl.com/TIFestivalWiki>

BJB2 smiles. Thanks, Michael

BJB2: we've put a sample lyric on the page...

BJB2: but you are welcome to come up with your own lyrics on that theme

DeidraM: Rap existed before the Sugar Hill Gang's '79 hit. As a child, I had plenty of cassette tapes of the genre. The Sugar Hill Gang was the first to produce an album.

SusanneN: Michael, when is deadline for rap submissions?

BJB2: we've not had any submissions at this point, so I think we'll extend the opportunity for a while...maybe until schools start back

DavidWek remembers Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

MichaelM: I don't think we have set the deadline

DorethiaM: Before the Sugar Hill gang, there were the Last Poets

ElissaR: I thought the project looked interesting... but sadly, is not something I am very good at, no submission from me.....sorry

SusanneN: ok

BJB2: if we did set the deadline, it's being extended ;-)

ElissaR: me too.

DeidraM: Before the Last Poets... James Brown, specifically a b-side track called King Heroin.

MichaelM: I think a week or two after school starts would be a good idea

BJB2 would prefer staying away from drug related lyrics and titles

SusanneN: Knowing how much you take care of speaking nicely, would there be any concerns about rough street lingo spoken in rap tradition?

RitaSo: So I was busy reading a brief history and as surprised to find out that Eminem is a big rap star.

SusanneN: This could be problematic even in Danish schools as our rappers are quite rough

SusanLC: You didn't see 8 MILE?

ElissaR: I remember when rap started to emerge.....I was playing so many jazz clubs at the time. musicians had interesting responses

DorethiaM: So was Vanilla Ice. If you haven't picked up TUPACV's book of poetry, do so

DorethiaM: Look into what Christian Rappers are doing

DeidraM: King Heroin is an anti-drug rap that James Brown did in spoken word to explain the devastation of addiction: <http://www.sing365.com/music/lyric.nsf/King-Heroin-lyrics-James-Brown/77F307B2BA1719F5482570E6000F504E>

ElissaR: perhaps we need to create our own, rather than rely on what has been produced and sold

CelesteR: I am reading A Long Way Gone, on the bestseller's list ...about the children soldiers in Sudan...RAP helped this young man survive.

DorethiaM: Rap simply means Rhythm in poetry and as I tell my students Shakespeare was one of the first Rappers

BJB2: I think the focus of educators should be to teach our students that we can communicate with words and that the words can be constructive and positive

DorethiaM: yes right on

DeidraM: To rap is to talk.

BJB2: not that they have to be fairy tales, but use vocabulary as a descriptive tool

SusanLC: I too reference Shakespeare for the length of his lime and regular rhythm and use of in group slang

BJB2: have any of you listened to Baba's Chaucer Raps?

CelesteR: And in the event of a catastrophe, the Spoken Word is what will help us send information, like the troubadours used to do.

VickiLM: so many students find it much easier to memorize the details that are set to music or a rhythm

BJB2 . o O (they can be downloaded on iTunes)

BJB2: right, Vicki

SusanLC: But in my poetry lessons, it is students who rap and bring in cd's and write out lyrics, not me!

RitaSo: I don't particularly enjoy the rap music that comes across my ears -- a little goes a long way for me. But I do think kids will make use of it for their writing. Or I just need to find a rap artist I enjoy

CelesteR: I use Shrinklit to show how well a piece of literature was understood, same as RAP

DeidraM: I would consider the troubadour tradition an early rap as well. What is old is new again.

MichaelM: Once we begin receiving submissions, The wiki submissions will be protected among an editing group of judges that can vote and publish to the wiki with winners (Free Tshirt)

BJB2: What I'm trying to do here, Susan is use the popular sounds of this generation as a tool to help them construct knowledge

ElissaR: as a music teacher, I have sometimes asked my students to take a simple poem (either one they wrote or one they've "borrowed" and first create a rap, then create a melody....

BJB2: cool idea, Elissa

ElissaR: rap is a bit more percussive than the troubadours and Shakespeare... I think

SusanLC: Yes, of course. But do you always choose the songs?

CelesteR ooh Elissa, that sounds super...get the musicians to stick out Garageband and their instruments

BJB2: although Celeste mentioned that flocabulary is a little raw, their Shakespeare raps are pretty good

MichaelM: I apologize that I must bow out now. I must return to work. Thank you everyone and I look forward to hearing your rap submissions!! :)

DavidWek waves to Michael

ElissaR: the rap artists that I know seem to always start with the rhythms...the percussion tracks and sounds first...then, they create (or find) their lyrics and/or subjects

BJB2: I've listened to their vocabulary CD and had my students listen and they liked it

MichaelM left the room (signed off).

SusanneN: but what about gangsta rap romantics? Would that be offensive in the classroom?

DeidraM: Troubadour is spoken word as is rap. rap can be separated from the music (hip hop).

ElissaR: yes, Susanne, I believe it would be offensive

BJB2: yes, gangsta rap is offensive

DorethiaM: I would suggest previewing the lyrics first. You don't want a parent to sue you.

BJB2: that's the point though, Sus...especially if you're teaching language...use appropriate language to communicate

SusanneN: So you would have to teach kids to understand the difference

BJB2 nods to Sus

BJB2: yes, you would have to be careful about broadcasting or making a rap public if it contains offensive language

CelesteR: There is a big movement in my school district. We have huge contests, and the kids are going to San Francisco and New York for competitions. We do use Poetry Def Jam, and the moderators are celebrated RAP artists.

DorethiaM: Would you as a parent want your child exposed to some of the rap heard on radio or TV. Education should expose our students to the correct use to the English Language. Text messaging is also eroding our language efforts.

ElissaR: Appropriate language to communicate.....that sounds like a great way to start your unit.....would certainly address many learning standards

DorethiaM: have to remember those standards

JoyJ: Most students do not even realize the inappropriate use of language in the rap music they like

DeidraM: You must choose an appropriate artist. If you want rap lyrics that are message related rather than vulgar... use more old school groups like ... Run DMC (which can be tied to Run's House on MTV)...

BJB2: I think that as educators we also have the responsibility not to 'protect' our students from ever seeing or hearing something inappropriate....

BJB2: but in learning how to distinguish between what is good and what is not...

DeidraM: De La Soul, Grand Master Flash and the Furious Five (specifically "The Message")...

BJB2: it's the same thing as the argument about filtering

CelesteR: We begin with words, feelings, emotions and then add the rest. But we don't want to cancel out on the expression. Students need to express what they feel first, the standards are there but personal expression is essential.

SusanneN agrees strongly with BJ, they do live in real life after all whether we like it or not

ElissaR: I think that we are in the midst of a paradigm shift.....yes, texting and iming are changing our written language....but I think that these changes are occurring because of the advances of technology.....I think of the "tech lingo" and written slang...and while I don't encourage its use, I certainly understand its usefulness (need for speed, etc.)

DorethiaM: they do and for some students that is the norm for language in their homes. I don't allow street language in my classroom because they have time outside of class to speak that way. ELL students especially need to learn to communicate in proper English.

SusanneN: for example in chat sessions :-)

SusanLC: did you not just use "etc"

BJB2 chuckles

SusanLC: It's always a question of whose English

BJB2: part of this whole discussion is who among us are digital natives and who are digital immigrants?

DorethiaM: When students have to take state writing tests, I see examples of rap, text messaging and what I call speed writing. Spelling is being thrown out the door and it is too bad.

RitaSo: I'm an immigrant

ElissaR: yup...I did use etc...see? I practice what I preach....I think the "tech talk" (iming language) is useful.... I was defending it

DeidraM: Queen Latifah, Whodini (specifically "Friends"), Afrika Bambaataa & James Brown ("Unity"), Kurtis Blow...

SusanLC: A good writing exercise--like the music teacher's words to rap--is to write the same thing as if writing to friends, a boss, a mom, etcdon't know if there would be a reason to put it on line, but it is about being multi lingual

BJB2 is getting an education on the current crop of pop rappers!

DavidWek smiles

BJB2: very interesting idea, Susan!

SusanLC: And about cultural orders and translations, and native and tourists

ElissaR: when I taught in Hell's Kitchen...(lots of years), I would allow my kids to use street language AFTER they gave me the message in what I called "employable language" Would you be able to get a job speaking that way? Then, if the answer is YES, you can continue, otherwise.....rethink and re-state!

SusanLC: As in, not I'm a lurker, but I'm a tourist here

SusanLC: Right Elissa, cool

BJB2: I like "rethink and re-state"

ElissaR: but I was careful to consider the context of the conversation.....everything in context

BJB2: this is the prologue to editing...something that I also feel we need to teach our students how to do

SusanLC: So to write a paper, don't you have to translate from blogese into some other language?

ElissaR: never thought of that prologue to editing

SusanLC grins

ElissaR: hmmmmm

SusanLC: So, with Shakespeare, students translate passages into their own languages. Can this also work with RAP?

SusanLC: With the Shakespeare exercise we learn why he said it the way he did, that also could parallel rap.

BJB2 agrees.

CelesteR: Exactly!

JoyJ: They could translate it into "employable" language.

ElissaR: the rhythms and sounds of rap also parallel the communities that rap originated in

SusanLC: As you said Bj, reasons some Rap is offensive is so that it won't be used! Co-opted

BJB2: Baba's Chaucer Raps also do the same thing...tell the exact same tale in a different way

RitaSo: So at my level, find the author's (artist's) purpose

CelesteR The Power of Language

ElissaR: could be an interesting look into various communities, politics, finances, urban planning, etc....something for older students to look into

CelesteR: Use puns, alliteration, metaphors, similes...

SusanLC: Yet even with all these exercises, NCLB discovers students don't score well on author's style and purpose for their choices!

SusanLC: Analysis may just not transfer.

ElissaR: might need to be taught a bit differently

DeidraM: agreed

DeidraM: taught differently

BJB2: at a recent conference I attended I was in a workshop provided by the Alabama Writing Project, a division of the NWP...

SusanLC: Except, I've had some success with image analysis since all writing attempts to achieve images.

SusanLC: (go on BJ!)

BJB2: www.writersforum.org

DeidraM: go on...

ElissaR: maybe can compare visual art textures and styles with literature (poetry, rap, ballad, etc.) that attempts to convey similar meanings in different styles. Ex might be unrequited love, in art, Shakespeare, rap, country etc

BJB2: <http://www.writersforum.org/programs/writing/>

ElissaR: would that help with analyzing author's purpose?

BJB2: that was the program that was presented

BJB2: Elissa, I think it's almost like the different cultures in games [Cultural Diversity in Gaming] earlier...

BJB2: there are only so many basic themes...

CelesteR smiles

SusanLC: missed that one, share a bit?

BJB2: unrequited love, mystery, history, etc

DeidraM: additionally, it is worthwhile to get the freedom writers' diary

DeidraM: <http://www.amazon.com/Freedom-Writers-Diary-Teacher-Themselves/dp/038549422X>

ElissaR: sorry, my son and hubby just got home from camp....I need to go, are these discussions archived so I can check back later?

DeidraM: currently reading... as always better than the movie

BJB2: but each telling of the tale or theme involves different textures or melodies

BJB2: all the events during the festival will eventually be archived at www.tappedin.org/transcripts in the festival 2007 folder

DorethiaM: That is also an excellent video to add to your collection.

ElissaR: thank you, to all....have a wonderful day

SusanLC: I like the texture/melody language. In my PhD theatre program a professor hypothesized that all drama fits into three themes: sex, death, and money

DorethiaM: there is another video-Finding forester that is excellent.

RitaSo: From the table of contents of the Curriculum guide, it looks like a great range of opportunities for students to write, find their voice

RitaSo: Bye for now Thank you

DeidraM: But, you should remember that "rap" only refers to the lyrics not the music. That's not me but one of the originators of hip hop.... Afrika Bambataa ... who said that. It is not the music that makes rap it is the lyrics.

BJB2: so...some closing remarks, if you don't mind....

BJB2: many of you are new participants to Tapped In events...

BJB2: what you have just done is become members of the Tapped In community by contributing to the discussion

BJB2: as you saw...you all have a lot of expertise and much to contribute!

BJB2: so I hope to see you all at future Tapped In discussions

VickiLM: Here's the GarageBand in the classroom Lesson Plans page http://www.apple.com/education/garageband/lesson_plans/middle_school.html . There are plans for all grade levels and many have a sample MP3 of what was created with the lesson.

BJB2: Thank you all for participating

DavidWek: We hope Baba can join us another time

SusanLC: Thanks all. Bye!