

Minnesota Writing Project

--- Demonstration Lesson ---

Title: Hip Hop, Slam, and Spoken Word in the classroom

Grade appropriate: Approximate Length of time to complete lesson/unit:

All grades. Could be used as part of a unit or integrated throughout the year.

Learning objectives and significance of lesson:

To introduce teachers to a new genres of writing.

To respond to student interests.

To engage or "hook" students into literacy.

Brief summary/outline:

(Is this lesson an intro? middle? end? All or part of a unit? Does it scaffold a certain learning?)

*****The Power Point presentation to accompany this demo can be found here:

http://docs.google.com/Presentation?id=ddm6trws_133qwp53f3s

I. What can Hip Hop, Slam, and Spoken Word add to your classroom?

- Student engagement, Wordplay and Poetic devices, Political writing and activism, Listening and Speaking Skills, Excitement!, And more....

II. What is it?

- *Spoken Word (From Wikipedia):* **Spoken word** is a form of [literary art](#) or artistic performance in which [lyrics](#), [poetry](#), or stories are spoken rather than sung. Spoken-word is often done with a [musical](#) background, but emphasis is kept on the speaker.

III. Where did it come from?

A. Musical Influence- Blues and Jazz in the 1920s-70s

B. Political History

- Langston Hughes, "Let America be America Again"
- Gil Scott Heron, "The Revolution will not be televised"
- Public Enemy, "Fight the Power"
- Kanye West, "Never Let me Down"

IV. Slam and Performance Poetry in Practice

Slam poetry is poetry with a strong performance element. Slam poems are fast, long, have vivid imagery and metaphor and are performed with a sense of rhythm and urgency. Poetry Slams are competitions with rules and judges. You can use elements of slam poetry in your classroom by having students practice how they perform a poem. Read it in an angry way, a soft way, a loud way, a sweet way, a super fast way- see what works best. How does it effect the tone of the poem?

Related Resources:

[The Minnesota Spoken Word Association](#)

Contact these people-- they will come to your school and do incredibly cool things that you cannot pull off yourself.

[Poetry Slam Inc.](#)

The official national poetry slam website. Find out about competitions, rules, and upcoming slams.

[The Spoken Word Revolution \[& Redux\]](#) Edited by mark Eleveld

Two great anthologies of spoken word poetry with audio CDs and helpful essays and explanations of what it all is.

[Hip-Hop Poetry and the Classics](#)

Written by a teacher in CA, this book includes poetry lesson plans using hip hop lyrics with classic poems to teach various poetic devices and analysis. Alliteration seems a whole lot cooler when Tupac does it...

The best resource: Ask Your Students!!

What are they listening to and why? Let them teach you!

Possible extensions or adaptations for different purposes/student needs:

Using hip hop, slam or spoken word can be adapted into any kind of lesson with any kind of students, from research projects to persuasive writing to presentation skills.

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