

Rapping Up the Story

At the beginning of the year, when Brad taught his World Literature class, he had the students complete an interest inventory. He found that many of his students had an interest in hip-hop, or rap. As a result, when students were finished studying *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, Brad decided to have the students write, develop, and perform raps about the epic tale as a form of assessment of learning.

By summarizing canonical literature in a rap or poem, students can communicate their own understanding of the tale in musical performance art that they are comfortable with. Rap can be used as a form of auditory learning that challenge students to communicate the epic tales in their own words. Exhibit 4.11 presents lesson plan for Rapping Up the Story Project, and Exhibit 4.12 gives a rubric for the project.

The Epic of Gilgamesh Project

For this assignment, write a poem, song, or rap about *The Epic of Gilgamesh* or a scene from *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Your song must have at least four verses and draw specific correlation to story. Your poem, song, or rap must be displayed on a poster.

The Epic of Gilgamesh Rap

written by Angel Delfi

Verse 1

Y'all can't mess with the Gilgamesh/
If you ain't productive enough you far from diligent//
Going toad to toad with this man you need some adrenaline/
With a side of pestilence, cause you can't mess with the kid//
Dude a one man army you better tuck in your skin/
Catch you like fish, he's gripping your fin/
And in the end, it's like France it's close to the fin/
You could ask Humbaba cause he ain't taking the win//
Couldn't go lucky if he all seven/
And he couldn't go 24 hours like 7/11//
Made the world feel threatening and the God's second/
But figure if he could conquer again the second time a blessing//
The half man, half amazing, to be half God is crazy/
People thought it's shady, to be killing on the daily//
Wishing everything was an improb like Wayne Brady/
Dude like Gilgamesh is less likely to be tired and lazy//

Verse 2

Let's postpone, Mesh and let's get to the flood/
Only way you surviving if you on a boat, or you a dove//
Cause everyone and they mama gone, so long/
This flood ain't ending till the fat lady finishes the song//
Gods shout out of wrath, whip out more than a half//

From Katherine S. McKnight and Bradley Berlage, *Teaching the Literature Classics in the Inclusive Classroom: Reader Response Activities to Engage All Learners*. Copyright © 2007 by Jossey-Bass. Reprinted by permission of Jossey-Bass.

Death count? The Gods did their math//
 Chances of surviving were like free throws from Shaq/
 Gods' chances of underestimating was like Bush and Iraq//
 Survival was unsuspected, then the Gods regret it/
 Look back at their perspective, too late to be reflected//
 The flood exculpated, it's too hectic/
 Those who survive were consider mystic//
 God's fatality, million casualties, choice of tragedy/
 Even Gods had to face the reality//

Exhibit 4.11 Rapping Up the Story Lesson Plan

After-Reading Rapping Up the Story Lesson Plan Activity

| | |
|------------|---|
| Objectives | To represent thematic understanding of text through auditory representation |
| Materials | Paper, pens, poster paper |
| Time | A class period or independent work |

Procedure

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Step 1 | The students can work in pairs or independently for this lesson. The students will create a rap or auditory representation of what they think the text means. |
| Step 2 | Once the students have completed their rap, ask them to write it down on poster paper, then write on the back what they learned and why it is important. |
| Step 3 | Put the students in groups of 4–5 students to share and discuss their raps. Students may perform their raps in front of the class. |
-

Exhibit 4.11 (continued)

| After-Reading Activity | Rapping Up the Story Lesson Plan |
|------------------------|--|
| IRA/NCTE Standards | <p>3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).</p> <p>5. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with different audiences for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.</p> <p>9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.</p> |

Exhibit 4.12 Rapping Up the Story Rubric

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------|---|
| 16–20 | Exceeds standards | <p>This project: Demonstrates a strong understanding of the epic Contains a number of correlations to events and characters in the story Demonstrates a high level of creativity, research, and time invested on the project</p> |
| 10–15 | Meets standards | <p>This project: Demonstrates an understanding of the epic Contains correlations to events and characters in the story Demonstrates creativity, research, and time invested on the project</p> |
| 0–9 | Does not meet standards | <p>This project: Does <i>not</i> demonstrate an understanding of the epic Contains <i>few</i> correlations to events and characters in the story Does <i>not</i> demonstrate creativity, research, or an adequate amount of time invested on the project</p> |

From Katherine S. McKnight and Bradley Berlage, *Teaching the Literature Classics in the Inclusive Classroom: Reader Response Activities to Engage All Learners*. Copyright © 2007 by Jossey-Bass. Reprinted by permission of Jossey-Bass.