THE SANKOFA HIP HOP CONNECTION

Karen L. Brinkley
Cook-Wissahickon Elementary School

Abstract

In the Twi language from Ghana the word sankofa describes a looking back to past traditions to evaluate the present and shape future actions. Based on this idea, the sankofa concept is paramount to my curriculum unit, which will focus on the importance of music in students’ lives with an examination of hip-hop’s historical and contemporary perspective. The unit, intended for 7th and 8th grade students, will incorporate rap music as a curriculum tool to expand student critical thinking skills, improve reading comprehension and written expression. The resources to accomplish my goal will include books, music, primary source documents, movies, and technology such as PowerPoint presentations. Students’ final projects will incorporate a comparative analysis of rap musical lyrics. In addition, they will complete a research project to analyze and critique how hip-hop can be a vehicle to promote cultural pride and a literary project to enhance written expression and application of figurative language concepts.