

RAPlets®

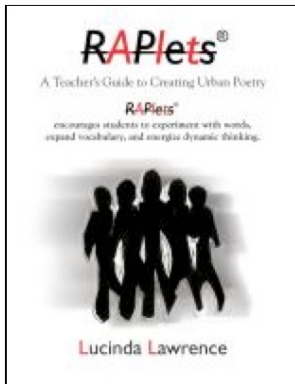
A Teacher's Guide to Creating Urban Poetry

RAPlets®

encourages students to experiment with words,
expand vocabulary, and energize dynamic thinking.



Lucinda Lawrence



Low national test scores prove that student understanding and retention of content need reinforcement. Students combine rhyme and rap meter with couplet form to compose urban poetry with a purpose. Its foundation of writing, re-writing, and oral recitation support the goal of remembering content. RAPlets® works well in any classroom, and blends into any discipline. It has been a successful teaching tool, advancing the literacy of the author's students, as well as increasing their critical thinking skills.

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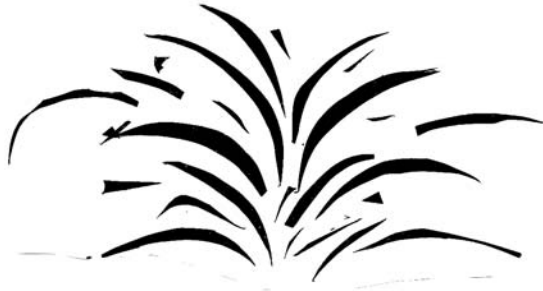
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First Edition



“Method is much, technique is much,
but inspiration is even more .”

Benjamin Cardoza

***RAPlets*® Prompts**

***RAPlets*®** started out as a means to achieve a goal. I was looking for a way for my students to become more at ease with the written word, their own word choices as well as others. I knew they liked music, and rap is a favorite for most. I had heard them spontaneously create rap outside the classroom. However, I also realized that while one or more students were rapping, one or two kids were providing a rhythmic pulse. The sounds were both simple and complex. (For example, knocking knuckles against a hard surface or utilizing vocal replication of electronic sounds.) If I could connect this overall experience with the written word, I could simultaneously energize their writing and the classroom atmosphere.

The first time I experimented with ***RAPlets*®** in my classroom, I received immediate attention from my students. I had no idea where I was trying to go with this theory. I wrote my own verses on the whiteboard, and recited them in a rhythmic way. I repeated the procedure with two boys who provided a rhythmic beat for me. I then asked them to brainstorm themes that they could use to further experiment with ***RAPlets*®**. These responses varied in creativity. I was truly in awe of their acceptance of ***RAPlets*®**.

Food and clothing were well accepted motivators. Friendships, feelings, sports, and other everyday topics were mentioned. Did some students make mistakes? Yes! Did some misunderstand my directions for composing ***RAPlets*®**? For sure! Did they miss my definition of meter? Of course! Did they object to some of the topics? Definitely, even though they chose them. But did they write? Yes! Did they want to recite? Yes! Some produced superior work the first time. Some performed them for the class in an almost professional manner the very first time. These responses helped me to refine my vision of ***RAPlets*®**.

The next time around, we clarified directions together and participated in physical movements of how rhythmic “feet” work, walking them out. I assigned the topics again. I passed out practice grids, and let them work cooperatively, helping each other find ‘just the right’ rhyming words.

The third attempt at **RAPlets®** in my classes proved to be rewarding. The students created first class work. I became more aware of my students as learners and true individuals. I discovered what made them happy or sad, read quips about their families, learned about relationships with peers, and was given insight to their hopes and fears. I was especially excited when I received feedback about my classes through **RAPlets®**. The best part? I often receive requests from the students to write more **RAPlets®**.

Referring again to the NEA article about Brain Based Learning, the article states that the brain will automatically search for meaning. “The brain resists having meaninglessness imposed on it.” Much of the student apathy we teachers observe comes from the fact that students do not believe there is true worth in what they are asked to learn. They often don’t get the why of it, so it might not matter to them.

The article goes deeper into the learning process by connecting our emotions to patterning. “What we learn is influenced and organized by emotions and mindsets involving expectancy, self-esteem, prejudices and biases, and especially social interaction.....emotions and thought literally shape each other and cannot be separated.” What better way to sort through one’s emotions than with writing poetry?

Writing **RAPlets®** is a tremendous outlet for emotional creativity. The 21st century is a landmine of emotion. Students can experience positive emotions from their friends, families, music, physical movement, and successful educational forays. The not so positive influences of gangs, terrorism, war, drug and alcohol use, unemployment, child and spousal abuse, and the excesses and temptations of entertainment and professional sports are a different story. The ravages of the world are exposed to our children constantly. **RAPlets®** provide them with an outlet to speak on their daily life and what really affects them. It is our responsibility to help them make solid connections with all that life gives. **RAPlets®** work perfectly.

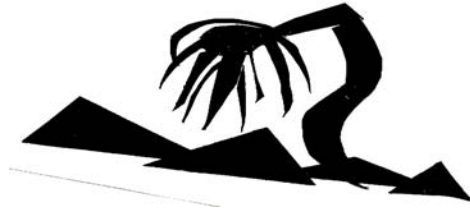
I CAN PUT THIS TOGETHER!

Combinations

Examples

RAPlets® Lite

Pretty flowers Now fright
No water Hot light



RAPlets®

These flowers were so pretty but now they're a fright
I think not enough water and way too much hot light

Been thinking about a full moon

How it lights up the whole lagoon

Too many carbs gave my uncle diabetes

Now he can't do any more sugar sprees

A thrill seeking boy jumped in the deep end

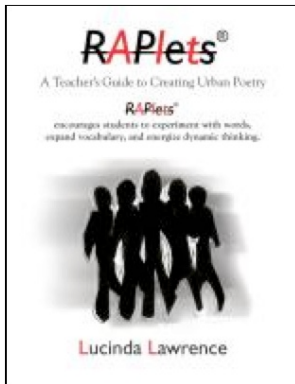
Couldn't swim had to call the E.M.S. men

Alita and Gomez have natural rhythm

Math and dance can provide algorithm

Wormholes and fusion Things not yet proven

Why NOT experiment With spatial protrusion?



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