

Black Parenting

Resources for Families and Communities

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Conquering Science and Math

Grand Hank Drops Science on the Youth

Have you ever wondered how your kids can learn every word of DMX's latest rap after only listening it twice, yet can't seem to grasp the chemistry lesson that they've been going over in class for the past two weeks? Well, so did Tyraine Ragsdale, a.k.a., "Grand Hank" of Grand Hank Productions, Inc. Ragsdale realized that Hip-Hop was linked to the tradition of African griots who used music to transmit concepts and cultural information to the community. As Grand Hank, Ragsdale utilizes rap lyrics and Hip-Hop rhythms to deliver workshops for teachers and students developed around the National Standards for Science Education.

Since forming Grand Hank Productions, Inc. in 1989, Ragsdale, as "Grand Hank, the Scientist and Educational Rapper," has reached over two million students, parents and teachers across the United States with his multimedia presentation and live science demonstrations. He's been successful at getting audiences pumped up about science and how it relates to everyday life.

So, how do you, without Hip-Hop or a chemistry degree, help your child increase his or her understanding and improve in science? Here are 12 tips from the Grand Hank himself:

1. Carefully read all material and background information your child has that's related to the subject.
2. Build your own science vocabulary to help increase your understanding of the subject. Look up terms that you're not familiar with.
3. Determine what you already know about the subject; use prior knowledge.
4. Have your child isolate the things he or she doesn't understand and write them down on paper.

5. Encourage your child to ask questions, of you and the teacher, and get help immediately. Don't let him or her fall behind.

6. Have your child use 3x5 cards to help him or her to learn and memorize equations and definitions. You be the coach.

7. Suggest your child create a rap song or poem of the subject to help learn and remember difficult concepts.

8. Allow a minimum of 45 minutes to an hour daily. Use the first 15 minutes to review and 30 minutes to work on new material.

9. Support your child in developing a study group with peers that meets at least once a week.

10. Visit science museums like the Franklin Institute and Academy of Natural Sciences. Learn about the contributions to science made by African-American scientists and inventors.

11. Try to relate what you're learning to everyday life. Make the real world connection!

12. Here's the most important thing! Encourage your child to excel in areas that he or she is not good at or doesn't have a strong interest in. It's challenging, but it can be done. Reward success in these areas.

"The Science Lab of Grand Hank" television show is utilized by the Philadelphia School District as a "cable in the classroom" program, and broadcast over local cable networks. Contact Tyraine Ragsdale at GrandHank@aol.com.