



Mike Ellison Lesson Plan

1. Has your image of “making it in the industry” changed after hearing Mike Ellison’s experience? How?
2. Many artists are siloed into a particular style and genre of music (self imposed or by labels.)
 - a. List a few examples.
 - b. Can you think of artists that have changed genre mid-career?
 - i. Did they keep their label support through that change?
 - ii. Did their audience stick with them?
 - iii. Discuss the courage it takes to do this as an artist.
3. Do labels favor artists that fit into traditional genres? What is the monetary model that continues to promote this practice?
 - a. If this model is outlined and easier for labels to continue, and artists know what is expected of them and therefore fall in line with those expectations, what will be the catalyst needed to create change in the industry?
 - b. Where is this already happening?
4. Define Gangster Rap as a genre.
 - a. Trace this genre historically.
 - b. What events and movements in history have led to this genre of music?
 - c. Why is this genre of music and artists rewarded and encouraged to sing about murder, mysogyny, brutality?
 - d. Have labels promoted this music in its current form?
 - e. What proof can you find that labels have actively blocked or not signed “music with a conscience”?
5. Mike discusses his experience in a poverty stricken, water-starved village, of feeling like a priveleged American.
 - a. Have you had an experience that has spurred similar feelings?
 - b. Did it drive you to act upon it?
 - c. What are various ways artists translate feelings of inequity in their art. Please list some examples (including yourself).