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EDUCATION IN A HIP-HOP NATION: OUR IDENTITY, POLITICS & PEDAGOGY

A Dissertation Presented

by

MARCELLA RUNELL HALL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2011

Social Justice Education

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EDUCATION IN A HIP-HOP NATION: OUR IDENTITY, POLITICS & PEDAGOGY

A Dissertation Presented

by

MARCELLA RUNELL HALL

Approved as to style and content by:

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DEDICATION

To the family I lost along the way, thank you for your support on this journey and for your inspiration and personal contributions to social justice education: Anne Waldron (my oldest sister friend), Julius Ford (my C.S. brother), Glynnis Green (my "God" mother) and Mary Kelley (my grandmother) R.I.P.

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I started this journey moving to Amherst as a single woman from NYC, and am closing this chapter as a happily married mama (back in NYC)! Thank you to Dave and Aaliyah for giving me so much love and support; you have made this journey complete and I am in awe every day that I get to share my life with both of you. To Eden: You are our angel; beautiful inside and out. Thank you for loving Aaliyah and taking such good care of her so that I could concentrate on writing.

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ABSTRACT

EDUCATION IN A HIP-HOP NATION:
OUR IDENTITY, POLITICS & PEDAGOGY

MAY 2011

MARCELLA RUNELL HALL, B.S.W., RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

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Contemporary Hip-Hop scholarship has revealed that Hip-Hop is a racially diverse, youth-driven culture, and is intimately connected to prior and on-going social justice movements (Chang, 2004; Kitwana, 2002). This study explores its Afro-Diasporic and activist origins, as well as the theoretical impact of Hip-Hop culture on the identity and pedagogy of educators belonging to the Hip-Hop generation(s). This qualitative study also examines how Hip-Hop culture impacts educators' identity, politics and personal pedagogy, while seeking to create a new model of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. This study was produced through twenty-three in-depth interviews with influential Hip-Hop educators (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002) from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations.

There are currently limited theoretical and conceptual frameworks in the literature supporting the use of Hip-Hop as Social Justice Pedagogy, yet is currently being used in K-16 educational contexts throughout the United States and abroad (Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). The results of this study reveal the foundational basis consisting of four primary core functions and seven practical tenets, necessary to negotiate and implement a new and innovative model for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

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CHAPTER 1

HIP-HOP & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Introduction

Birthed in the early 1970s on the heels of the Black Power Movement by young Black and Latino youth in New York City (Ogbar, 2008; Parmar & Bain, 2007), Hip-Hop has become the voice of youth culture worldwide with enormous, albeit often untapped, potential for social and political change (Abe, 2006; Cepeda, 2004). Hip-Hop often perpetuates damaging stereotypes as well (Rose, 2008). Though Hip-Hop music and culture can provide a counter-narrative to mainstream cultural values and media influences (Hendershott, 2004), Hip-Hop culture can be both liberatory and oppressive. Hip-Hop music is not only a form of entertainment. It is part of a youth identified culture that is intimately connected to variations of identity expression and values. Currently, there is limited theoretical or conceptual foundation in the literature supporting the use of Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy (Akom, 2009; Hill, 2009). Nevertheless, it is currently being used in K-16 educational contexts throughout the United States and abroad (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). This study is concerned with the absence of a conceptually and theoretically grounded model that illustrates how to successfully adopt and negotiate a critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

The Hip-Hop Center for Research and Teaching at New York University estimates that there are over three hundred classes on Hip-Hop currently being offered at colleges and universities throughout the United States and abroad (http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/hiphopeducaiton). There are Hip-Hop archives at Harvard, Stanford and Cornell Universities (Morgan, 2009; Abe, 2006). In 1991, Howard

University became the first university to bring Hip-Hop to the Academy through a student-run conference on the music business of Hip-Hop. In 1999 the University of California, Los Angeles, hosted the first academic Hip-Hop conference for faculty, staff, students, artists and activists entitled "Power Moves." In my literature review I will continue to build upon this list in order to emphasize the important markers of how Hip-Hop has moved into the academy.

Carleton College in Minnesota, Howard University in D.C. and University of California, Berkley now offer Hip-Hop studies as a minor (Hamanci, 2007). For the first time in its 30-plus year history, the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame partnered with the Hip-Hop Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Hip-Hop culture, to host a 2006 Summer Teacher Institute for K-12 teachers, entitled: "Elevate! Using Hip-Hop to Educate" (*Electrifying the Classroom,* 2006). Hip-Hop's influence on the academy is no surprise; it represents growing numbers of Hip-Hop "heads" turned Hip-Hop scholars (Forman, 2004). This is especially significant because it represents the subculture of Hip-Hop entering mainstream culture in various institutions, such as schools, museums and universities.

Purpose

In this study, I provide a review and analysis of the literature on the history and significance of Hip-Hop culture. I also explain how it has developed as a cultural phenomenon with a powerful impact on multiple generations (Asante, 2008; Spady, Meghelli & Alim, 2006; Kitwana, 2002). Additionally I chronicle the process through which a Hip-Hop pedagogy, founded on the tenets of Social Justice Education, is evolving by interviewing Hip-Hop education *elites* (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). *Elites*

are considered to be members of communities who hold special knowledge or leadership about the communities. They are often influential purveyors or pioneers of knowledge.

I provide an analysis of the literature which highlights the social justice origins of Hip-Hop culture, its development as a cultural phenomenon with distinct Afro-Diasporic roots, its' influence on various generations of educators and students (Asante, 2008; Spady, Meghelli &Alim, 2006; Kitwana, 2002), and how it has evolved and influenced the identity politics of the Hip-Hop generation(s). I will provide the theoretical grounding for Hip-Hop as pedagogy and present a new framework for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

In addition, I will review the literature examining the process through which Hip-Hop culture is being used as pedagogy for many educators. Drawing on the literature examining the tenets of critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, critical race theory, critical multicultural education and feminist pedagogy, I will demonstrate how Hip-Hop culture has influenced Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Many of the *elites* point to the origins of Hip-Hop being connected to larger social justice movements, that include the Civil Rights movement, so a Hip-Hop Pedagogy should theoretically and inherently also be a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. However, because Hip-Hop culture (rap culture specifically) has become commodified in the larger consumer culture, for the purposes of this study, I am seeking to create a new and specific model for explaining the tenets and functions of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Hip-Hop music and culture have become a site of academic inquiry because Hip-Hop has provided a public pedagogy for many educators as well as students by producing counter hegemonic commentary on racist and classist societal conditions (Hendershott,

2004). Public Pedagogy is when the popular media, in this case Hip-Hop music and culture, is credited with conveying information that "teach" ideas, values and political positioning (Sandlin, Schultz & Burdick, 2009; Giroux & Simon, 1989). Therefore it is logical that Hip-Hop would fit into a model of critical pedagogy as set forth by Paulo Freire (1970) and other critical pedagogy scholars. Wink (2005) defines critical pedagogy as being able to name, to reflect critically, and to act. But Wink stresses, "I doubt I can teach someone how to do critical pedagogy. We do not do critical pedagogy; we live it. Critical pedagogy is not a method; it is a way of life" (p. 120). Freire (2002) envisioned that critical pedagogy would be in resistance to the concept of "banking education," noting that a truly liberatory education "is not another deposit to be made in men" (p.60) but instead the creation of mutually constructed knowledge. A critical pedagogy is able to transform how people make sense of their place in the world; by allowing for a social justice analysis of their respective communities (Steinberg, 2007; Shor, 1992).

The principles of Social Justice Education originate from "multiple pedagogical traditions and epistemologies" (Adams & Bell, 1997, p. 30) and pay equal attention to institutional, cultural and individual elements of oppression such as racism, classism and sexism, and how these levels and types influence teachers, students, curriculum and pedagogy (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Adams, Bell and Griffin (1997) define social justice as both a process and a goal, "the goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (p. 3). This study as well as a review of the literature demonstrates that the foundation of Hip-Hop culture is based on similar tenets of Social

Justice Education, and therefore the use of Hip-Hop as Social Justice Pedagogy is a logical manifestation of Hip-Hop culture.

Statement of the Problem

At present, educators who want to use a Hip-Hop pedagogy that honors the social justice roots of Hip-Hop culture, across disciplines and in multiple contexts, do not have a researched, sustainable model. A newly developed researched model for Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy will be based on the tenets of Social Justice Education with an acknowledgement and understanding of Hip-Hop as a culture, which has distinct social justice roots.

Significance of the Study

In the absence of a current model that illustrates how to successfully adopt and negotiate a Hip-Hop pedagogy, a study of Hip-Hop pedagogy is necessary at this time for the following seven reasons. The first reason being that educators are already using Hip-Hop to engage youth (Dimitriadis, 2001), regardless of whether or not there is research, models, or language to support their efforts. The second reason is that this current generation of students has never lived in a world without Hip-Hop (since its inception in1973), and Hip-Hop culture is a profoundly influential aspect of youth popular culture.

The third reason is that it is likely the use of Hip-Hop Pedagogy will continue to grow because Hip-Hop culture organically includes multi-modalities and embraces multiple learning styles as evidenced through the five elements (djing, dance/b-boying, emceeing, graffiti art and knowledge of self). The fourth reason is that it is likely that Hip-Hop culture will continue to grow; morph and reinvent itself as each new Hip-Hop ‘generation’ adds their own aesthetic - this includes both teachers and students as

members of the Hip-Hop generation(s). The fifth reason is that the current teaching force is disproportionately unrepresentative of the students they serve in terms of race, class and gender (Jordan-Irvine, 2003). These teachers are often disproportionately unaware and non-conversant with the most profound influences in the lives of the students they aim to serve. The sixth reason is that while Hip-Hop has multiracial appeal, the narratives in Hip-Hop are still predominantly those by people of color about their lives. The opportunity for counter-narratives to dominant narratives in the often-hegemonic public school curriculum is especially important in giving voice to all students in the classroom. This representation in the curriculum and pedagogy may also become a significant factor in helping to close the opportunity (achievement) gap between white students and Black and Latino students by creating a more engaging learning environment as evidenced in the research of Ladson-Billings (1995) and Nieto (1999). The final reason is that educators who wish to use Hip-Hop in the classroom will benefit from a well-researched model that is based on the tenets of Social Justice Education, so that they do not replicate oppressive dynamics and outcomes in their respective educational contexts. I will expand upon each of these points throughout the literature reviews in Chapters 2 and 3.

Given this background, it is clear that Hip-Hop has entered the educational domain and deserves to be studied by academics. But the question remains, how can Hip-Hop be brought into the academy or any formal educational context without reproducing the oppressive dynamics that Hip-Hop often seeks to critique? How can a Hip-Hop Pedagogy be utilized to frame the various debates within and regarding Hip-Hop including but not limited to: glorification of violence and commercialism, homophobia, acceptance of misogyny, and stereotypical and/or damaging depictions of people of

color?

The interrogation of Hip-Hop as pedagogy for educating youth and for preparing educators to increase their capacity to develop effective educational programs is long overdue. Because of its cultural history as an empowering and critical source of information to its various constituencies (George, 1998), it is useful to explore how Hip-Hop culture is moving from being a public pedagogy (Hendershott, 2004) to Social Justice Pedagogy and how it has impacted formal and informal educational settings.

Research Questions

My dissertation study examines the necessary elements of a conceptual framework for creating Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. This study was conducted using the expertise and wisdom of select educators and scholars who are well known in field of Hip-Hop education. To further explore the necessary aspects of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, the experts or *elites* were interviewed based on the following four research questions:

1. How do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe the core assumptions, beliefs, guiding philosophies and/or theories, which inform their Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?
2. What do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as the core tenets or non-negotiable aspects of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?
    a.) What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as necessary in the creation of a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?
3. What theories inform the Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy of the *elites*?

a) How do Hip-Hop education *elites* use Hip-Hop culture to serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

4. What methodologies do Hip-Hop education *elites* believe to be the necessary for teaching about and/or implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

a) What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* identify as necessary for teaching about Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

Limitations of the Study

There are four limitations of the study. The first is its specific focus on self-identified members of the Hip-Hop generation. It does not take into account educators who may be using Hip-Hop as pedagogy but identify as being outside of the culture. Second, it also does not take into account educators who teach in elementary school contexts. Third, it does not include those who have a casual relationship to Hip-Hop education. And lastly, the sample size is also limited in that there are a disproportionate number of men interviewed; however, this is reflective of the field of Hip-Hop education and Hip-Hop culture in general (Rose, 2008). I attempted to provide as much biographical information, based on what participants shared. For example some participants did not specify their sexual orientation or religious identity, while others did, and cited this as being connected to or relevant to their connection to Social Justice and Hip-Hop culture. Wherever identifying language was specified I included it, otherwise I left it blank so as not reinforce stereotypical binaries (i.e. assuming heterosexuality as a default) (Adams, Bell & Griffin, 2007).

Organization of the Study

In the following six chapters there are two comprehensive literature reviews. In the Review of the Literature in Chapter 2, there is an overview of the socio-political history and significance of Hip-Hop culture as it relates to cultural membership and identity politics and formation. I examine Hip-Hop music and the process by which it moved from being seen as only an art form and subculture to a critical cultural movement with global and national significance (Asante, 2008; Spady et. al., 2006). In addition, I provide an account of the conditions that gave birth to Hip-Hop music and culture. I explore how historical and contemporary issues frame the significance of the social justice roots of Hip-Hop culture and how it becomes the basis for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. I also address some of the major claims made on behalf of Hip-Hop culture as a tool for social change and the impact of Hip-Hop on social identity and how that can contribute to a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy. I define Hip-Hop culture by illuminating the difference between Hip-Hop as art, and Hip-Hop as political activism. Hip-Hop culture originated through an activist organization, the Zulu Nation. And many other activist organizations continue the tradition of setting political agendas and activating Hip-Hop generation(s) through their various means. However, the multiple art forms of Hip-Hop culture especially "rap" music, which has been highly appropriated, is not in and of itself a political organizer.

Chapter 3 delves deeply into the process through which Hip-Hop culture has become Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy for many educators. I reviewed critical theories such as: critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1997), Critical Multicultural Education (Nieto, 1999), Critical Race Theory

(Love, 2004), Engaged Pedagogy (hooks, 1994) and Social Justice Education (Adams et. al., 1997). This chapter also includes a review of the literature that chronicles the blossoming Hip-Hop education movement (Hill, 2009) and cites authors who are currently utilizing Hip-Hop based education which supports the use of Hip-Hop as pedagogy (Baszile, 2009).

In Chapter 4, the methodology and explanation for how the in-depth qualitative research study was conducted are detailed. This includes how the participants were selected, the sample size and diversity of interviewees. There is also biographical data included introducing the participants and what qualifies them as influential in the field of Hip-Hop education. The methods for data collection, included the creation of the explanatory schema are also highlighted.

In Chapter 5, I will provide answers to the following research questions: How do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe the core assumptions, beliefs, guiding philosophies and/or theories, which inform their Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy? What do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as the core tenets or non-negotiable aspects of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy? What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as necessary in the creation of a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy This will be explained through the four main functions of how Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy transforms a counter hegemonic set of social codes. Additionally, I will also explain what the seven tenets of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy works are and how they inform the practice of SJHHP.

In Chapter 6, I will answer the following research questions: What theories inform the Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy of the *elites*? How do Hip-Hop education

elites use Hip-Hop culture to serve as a bridge between students and teachers? What methodologies do Hip-Hop education *elites* believe to be the necessary? What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* identify as necessary for teaching about Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy? The importance of Hip-Hop culture as a theoretical framework for SJHHP will be explained. Additionally the methodology and practice of SJHHP will be described.

Lastly, in Chapter 7, I discuss the implications of the research and the conclusions of this study. This includes the ways in which this research can be used in formal and informal educational contexts, as well as in teacher education programs. Additionally, the ways in which this research can be further expanded upon are also suggested for future consideration. A new model for SJHHP will also be explained, which is a result of this research study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: HIP-HOP CULTURE

Introduction

> "Hip-hop never asked to change the world. But in its own noisy and stylish way it has done just that." (Watkins, 2005, p.6)

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of the literature which highlights the origins of Hip-Hop culture, its development as a cultural phenomenon with distinct Afro-Diasporic roots, its' influence on various generations of educators and students (Asante, 2008; Spady, Meghelli & Alim, 2006; Kitwana, 2002), and how it has evolved and influenced the identity politics of the Hip-Hop generation(s). I also provide an analysis of the literature which highlights the South Bronx origins of Hip-Hop culture, its development as a cultural phenomenon with distinct Afro-Diasporic roots, its' influence on various generations of educators and students (Asante, 2008; Spady et. al.,, 2006; Kitwana, 2002), and how it has evolved and influenced the identity politics of the Hip-Hop generation(s).

Scope of Literature Review

There has been much written about the origins, formation and complexities of Hip-Hop culture over the last thirty years. I will briefly review the work of notable Hip-Hop historian scholars including David Toop (1984), Tricia Rose (1994), Nelson George (1998), Murray Forman & Mark Anthony Neal (2004), Craig Watkins (2005) and Jeff Chang (2005). I will review and analyze this literature to establish how and why Hip-Hop culture lends itself to the creation of a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy based on the tenets of Social Justice Education. It is important to make the distinction that rap is

generally accepted as the music style, which is one element of the culture; and the element which was the most easily commodified by corporate entities. I suggest that the term Hip-Hop represents the overall culture. I will generally refer to Hip-Hop as a culture, and for consistency's sake, unless it is a direct quote, will use Hip-Hop as opposed to hip hop or other spellings, to denote its' cultural significance.

For this literature review, I seek to consider Hip-Hop Pedagogy in the broadest sense, ranging from K-12, college, and in/formal educational contexts. Because of the limited, albeit growing, amount of formal research on Hip-Hop and education specifically, I have drawn on multiple sources, including but not limited to popular media such as: films, magazines, blogs, interviews with educators, artists, activists and students, presentations given at conferences and institutes and scholarly books, articles, and dissertations.

Background

Hip-Hop culture originated in the early 1970s (Chang, 2005; Perry, 2004; Rose, 1994) in the Bronx, New York as a response to dire social conditions. These conditions were the result of racist and classist social and economic public policies that left the Bronx in disrepair and in despair (Chang, 2005). In the late 1970s the area known as the South Bronx garnered the title of "America's Worst Slum" (Price, 2006, p. 4).

Historians note at least four reasons why the Bronx was in such despair. The first was the physical division caused by the creation of the Cross Bronx Expressway in 1972 (Rose, 1994; George, 1998; Chang, 2005). Robert Moses, a city construction coordinator, lobbied for a 7-mile long, six-lane highway that catered to suburban commuter residents by providing access to Manhattan and New Jersey. This new highway destroyed existing

communities by plowing right through more than a hundred streets, "pummeling" as many as 60,000 thousand homes (Price, 2006). Caro (1975), a Robert Moses biographer, alleged that Moses intentionally directed the expressway through this neighborhood, even though there was a more viable option only one block south. While his intention may not have been to explicitly derail the neighborhood and the community, his blatant disregard for the people who lived there was clearly indicative of his own racial and class privilege. Incidentally, many of the neighborhoods affected by the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway are still poor, primarily due to the lowered property value caused by the highway (Chang, 2005).

The second reason the Bronx was beginning to struggle was because fragile working-class neighborhoods were damaged and destroyed by federal and local housing policies, which were racist applications of both New Deal programs and the GI Bill. GIs returning home to the United States after WWII were offered low interest and no interest mortgages to secure housing and, through the GI Bill, free access to college education (Smith, 2003). Redlining, a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) directed policy, resulted in housing assistance for returning white soldiers. The United States government denied these same FHA loans and GI benefits to returning Black GIs (Smith, 2003; Rose, 1994). White families were encouraged to leave the cities while Black families were denied the resources to join them in the suburbs. In addition, white families who wished to stay in inner city areas were denied mortgage assistance (Chang, 2005; Smith, 2003). Most white families fled the cities in pursuit of low interest mortgages and the "American dream" while Black families, denied similar benefits, stayed in urban areas such as the South Bronx. It is important to note that the housing policies of the United Sates

government helped to build economically thriving suburban communities by subsidizing white families to get mortgages in many areas throughout the United States during the Post-World War II era (Smith, 2003; Rose, 1994). Thereby the U.S. government literally sponsored the accumulation of wealth for white families through economic policies. And because of failed urban renewal policies, these policies simultaneously divested wealth for Black and Latino families (Smith, 2003). Many families of color were left in the inner cities without similar assistance or comparable resources. This impacted the entire foundation and structure of many neighborhoods and communities well beyond the original bill in the 1940s (Asante, 2008).

The third important factor in charting the roots of the development of Hip-Hop culture was the housing and urban renewal plans proposed and executed by the New York City Housing Authority, also authorized by Robert Moses in the early 1970s. In support of and in addition to the creation of the Cross Bronx Expressway, Moses recommended demolishing many of the single-family homes and replacing them with high-rise low-income apartments (Chang, 2005). This pattern of subsidized housing also gave birth to the 1968 opening of Co-op City, which offered 15,000 apartments in massive stacked towers in the northeast area of the Bronx. For many white families, this vertical housing solution could not compete with the opportunity to own individual family homes in places outside of the Bronx (Asante, 2008; Smith, 2003). Homes in Levittown, Long Island and New Jersey were available with very affordable conditions- for white families only, because of the government policy of redlining. This new, more attractive suburban life encouraged additional white flight from the South Bronx (Price, 2006). The federal government continued to offer white families federally subsidized

suburban home ownership, while Black and Latino families were offered subsidized housing projects. Ironically, these housing projects later became a major indicator of 'authentic' Hip-Hop culture (Daniels, 2007; Ogbar, 2007). The high-rise subsidized housing option most accessible to central and lower South Bronx dwellers, created an environment where many working-class and poor families of color (especially African American, Latino, and immigrant from the Caribbean) found themselves in crowded communities with few resources. They were forced to respond to the conditions created by Moses' racist and classist urban renewal policies (Chang, 2005; Price, 2006).

Simultaneously, as poor families were being displaced due to "urban renewal" from Manhattan and other locations, other single parent families and/or beneficiaries of social welfare programs, were sent to live in what remained of the South Bronx real estate (Chang, 2005). This further compounded the eroding tax base in the South Bronx. This became the fourth factor resulting in the extreme "despair" of the Bronx. This urban "decay" and decreased tax base was accompanied by plummeting property values. Many "slumlords" began the practice of committing arson to get rid of their buildings in order to collect insurance money so that they could get out of the fledgling South Bronx real estate market (Asante, 2008; Price, 2006). From 1973 to 1977 more than 12,000 fires were reported every year with over 5,000 apartment buildings burned down and housing including more than 100,000 units destroyed in a few short years. This is the direct result of how institutional racism and classism created a cultural environment that left many youth feeling frustrated and overwhelmed with the status quo (Cepeda, 2004). These conditions began to manifest themselves in both positive and negative ways. "Bombing" buildings and trains (painting over dilapidated facilities with aerosol paint), the formation

and proliferation of gangs, parties on the street, dance-offs to ease the need for competition, and physical activity to burn off stress were all responses to these policies and relevant to the birth of Hip-Hop.

To many New Yorkers the Bronx resembled a war-zone, mimicking what it might look like after being bombed (George, 1998). In July of 1977, the rest of America and the world saw the same thing after a citywide blackout occurred (Price, 2006; Chang, 2005; George, 1998). The Bronx became the site of looting, vandalism, and theft that spread across the entire city during the blackout. The South Bronx officially became known as its own distinct area of New York City due to media coverage. Post-Blackout, the media began to distinguish the "good" from the "bad" neighborhoods. Bad neighborhoods were characterized as being primarily Black and Latino, with a strong gang presence, an overabundance of abandoned or burned out buildings, higher crime rates, and lower property values. Good neighborhoods were seen primarily as occupied by white people who did not leave during the "white flight" of the late 1960s and early 1970s and who had more resources and stability. The media did not analyze why some neighborhoods had different sets of problems created almost entirely by institutional policies that resulted in such oppressive living conditions. The media never discussed that the policies of Moses and other city officials, or the idea that the U.S. government (GI Bill/Red-Lining) had in any way contributed to the conditions that now distinguished these neighborhoods from each other.

Public schools in many areas of New York City were also in deplorable conditions. Sinking property values resulted in a deficient tax base, which wreaked havoc on the schools. Fewer resources meant that most music and arts programs were cut out of

public school budgets (Smith, 2005). According to New York City census records, by the end of the 1970s the South Bronx area was reportedly (Chang, 2005) comprised (almost) exclusively of households where families were collecting welfare benefits. Chang (2005) writes of a general sense of disenfranchisement amongst South Bronx residents due to the obvious urban decay and related problems such as drugs, crime and gangs, which began to emerge more strongly (Asante, 2008; Chang, 2005; Price, 2006).

The necessity for and existence of gangs plays an important role in Hip-Hop history. However, it is critical to note that while gangs are certainly not specific to the Bronx and have been part of the American fabric since the since the 1600s, it is estimated as many as 300 gangs existed in the Bronx in the early 1970s with over 19,500 members (Price, 2006). These gangs provided social outlets, protection and a sense of belonging for many youth in the Bronx because the local and state government had withdrawn most resources from the community. It is also important to note that in U.S. history, the ethnicity of the "gang" membership has often meant the difference between "legitimate" political protestors vs. illegal activity. White men gathering to organize or protest is often seen as acceptable civil disobedience, and as the legitimate political movement of disenfranchised "patriots" (i.e. 1773 Boston Tea Party, 2009 Stimulus Plan Tea Parties) while men of color gathering is often referred to as "dangerous" or "criminal" gang behavior, and this situation in the Bronx was certainly no different and highly racialized (Price, 2006). The circumstances in the Bronx created a fertile ground for youth who were looking to create community through acts of resistance. This became the perfect setting to birth a counter-hegemonic artistic youth culture.

The Birth of Hip-Hop

Most Hip-Hop historians would agree that there are at least two key people who emerged as leaders during this time, contributing to the birthing of Hip-Hop. The first is Clive Campbell, a Jamaican born immigrant who moved to the Bronx with his mother in 1967 (George, 1998; Rose, 1994). Campbell, affectionately and generally known as "Herc" or "Kool Herc," was an avid music fan. He brought his record collection and his love for Jamaican-style sound system-type parties when he immigrated in the 1960s. He and his sister Cindy Campbell began hosting parties for other young people in their South Bronx neighborhood, capitalizing on Herc's passion for playing music. The first party was held at 1520 Sedgwick Ave (Gonzalez, 2007). Herc became particularly popular as a DJ because he would only play the breaks of the song; mostly disco, soul, or R&B, which kept the crowd moving and engaged. At first Herc would get on the microphone and offer up "shout-outs," meaning he would say things to keep the crowd moving, in addition to playing music. Eventually, that job was passed on to another person who became the MC or master of ceremonies, while Herc or other DJs would concentrate on the music. The format and style of the parties began to grow in popularity so that all over the Bronx, young people were hosting parties in public spaces, such as block parties or parks. They opened city lampposts to gain access to free electricity. Reclaiming public spaces, engaging in what was at least a temporary place where young people could dance and have fun was a very liberatory act, given the political and economic climate of the Bronx (Forman & Neal, 2004).

According to Price (2006) while "Kool Herc ignited the spark that created what would later be called rap music and Hip-Hop culture, it was Afrika Bambaataa who

institutionalized it and served as its first ambassador" (p. 12). Kevin Donovan, who changed his name to Afrika Bambaataa, was originally the leader of a Bronx based-gang called the Black Spades. However, he believed that he could use his leadership to bring positivity to the community. Bambaataa, also known as "Bam," organized an alternate group known first as the Organization. It was later known as the Universal Zulu Nation in 1973 (Ogbar, 2007).

Zulu Nation members began to chronicle the basic four elements of what was becoming Hip-Hop culture. The first element was the music itself (the break beats from records) played in a particular way. The second element was the dancing (also known as breaking or b-boys/b-girls). The third element of this emerging phenomenon became the MC or the spoken word part of the party, where someone would use the microphone to talk over the beats of the music. The fourth element of Hip-Hop was the visual imagery known as graffiti writing (Toop, 1984; George, 1998; Rose, 1994). Since the Bronx was filled with shells of homes and buildings-some places actually looked like a war-zone-many young artists began creating their own images by "tagging" spaces (using aerosol art) to create alternatives to the dilapidated trains and buildings in their neighborhoods. Because of the depressed economy, the parties and dance contests also served to alleviate stress and competition between and among young people who lived in various communities within the Bronx and surrounding areas (Toop, 1984).

Bam's breakthrough moment about naming and committing to Hip-Hop as a new cultural movement and alternative to gang life came when his close friend, Soulski, was killed January 10, 1975, by police officers. Up until that point, Bam was still a member of the Black Spades, however after that day Bam hung the death certificate on his wall and

declared that he was officially starting something new through the networks that he had already formed; a positive alternative to what was happening. This new, culturally empowering movement would be anchored through his organization the Zulu Nation (Hager, 1982), which he had officially founded on November 11, 1973 (Bynoe, 2005).

The Zulu Nation gained momentum and by the summer of 1976, operated on the motto, "Peace, Love, Unity and Having Fun." Bam specified tenets that were based on the original four artistic elements and made the founding of the Zulu Nation one of the most important organizations in the history of youth movements in the United States. These tenets also included the belief in knowledge of self, and this became the 5th element of Hip-Hop culture (www.zulunation.com). Bam was able to harness the energy that had been used previously in youth and gang violence and channel it into competitive dancing as well as competitive rhyming. Both were key elements of the burgeoning Hip-Hop culture and thirty years later are still very much alive in performance spaces, on street corners, and in mainstream film and television depictions of Hip-Hop (Ogbar, 2007).

Prior to the end of the 1970s, Hip-Hop and rap music were primarily localized to the New York City metropolitan area. National and, eventually, international exposure came when the song, "Rapper's Delight" was released by the Sugar Hill Gang in 1979. This song became an instant hit on urban radio stations (George, 1998; Toop, 1984). Many people, however, felt that it was the beginning of the exploitation of commercial Hip-Hop because the artists who created it were doing so at the behest of Sylvia Robinson, a music executive from Sugar Hill Records who wanted to cash in on the apparent youth appeal of this new music form, called "rap."

Hip-Hop Culture and its Afro-Diasporic Roots

While Black and Latino youth created Hip-Hop culture in New York City, it was closely reminiscent of the aesthetic of the Black Arts Movement. Hip-Hop music and culture are often credited with providing a counter-narrative voice to mainstream cultural values and media influences. Hip-Hop music is not merely considered a form of entertainment but rather a youth identified culture that is intimately connected to variations of identity expression and values. It is important to acknowledge the mass exposure created by the commercial use of Hip-Hop by popular networks such as MTV and BET. This has resulted in the prominence of Hip-Hop in mainstream culture as a marketing tool, which uses Hip-Hop to sell everything from fast food to ring tones to shoes (Rose, 2008). This dominant cultural narrative regarding the commercial use of Hip-Hop is connected to, but also separate from the socio-political history of Hip-Hop culture, which is decidedly Afro-Diasporic.

As noted earlier, the origins of Hip-Hop are specifically linked to African American and Puerto Rican youth in the South Bronx. However it is equally important to note that the derivatives of Hip-Hop music history and cultural traditions are explicitly connected to African traditions. According to Smith (2005) "the history of hip-hop can undoubtedly be seen as deriving from a variety of cultural mixes, all coming from the Afro-Diasporic reservoir" (p. 19). This is an important piece of the history, as it clearly illustrates the interconnectedness of art and the African Diaspora. Toop (1984) writes,

> Whatever the disagreements over lineage in the rap hall of fame or the history of hip-hop, there is one thing on which all are agreed. 'Rap is nothing new' says Paul Winley. Rap's forbearers stretch back through disco, street funk, radio DJ's, Bo Diddley, the bebop singers, Cab Calloway, Pigmeat Markham, the tap dancers and comics, The Last Poets, Gil Scot-Heron, Muhammed Ali, a cappella and doo-wop groups, ring games, skip-rope rhymes, prison and army songs, toasts, and

> signifying and the dozens, all the way to the Griots of Nigeria and the Gambia. (p. 19)

The actual term Hip-Hop is believed to be derived from a popular party chant that went "The Hip to the Hop, Hippity Hop, Ya don't stop, Hip Hop…" originated with Keith "Cowboy" Wiggins, a rapper with Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and later used by Africa Bambaataa to describe the nascent cultural phenomenon (Keyes, 2004), but the term itself has distinct African roots. The term "hip" derives from the Wolof word for enlightenment or opening ones' eyes; "hipi." Wolof is an African language spoken in Senegal and Gambia and one of many Niger-Congo languages the African American language is derived from (Asante, 2008). The term "hop" is often believed to be derivative of Bebop, which was a form of Black music made in resistance to white appropriation of jazz music (Dyson, 2007).

Specific connections to Afro-Diasporic art forms can be found in each of the five elements (Dyson, 2007). The MC or rapper can be compared to the African griot, storyteller, scribe, and/or oral historian. The Graffiti Artist or "writer" is a modern day graphic storyteller and artist, reminiscent of Egyptian hieroglyphics and developer of written scripts and variations of current script historically created by African people (Osumare, 2007; Hill Collins, 2006). The dancing in Hip-Hop or the B-Boy/B-Girl is the modern embodiment of dance as an integral part of Afro-Diasporic culture. Breakdancing, in particular, has roots in Brazilian Capoeira, which traces its roots to Africa as well as a host of other forms that have a legacy in Diasporic dance movements, which are found throughout the Caribbean (Rose, 1994). The DJ is the spirit of Afro-Diasporic innovation and invention. The DJ and art of scratching, blending and looping

records is one of only a few musical advancements in the last century (Ogbar, 2007). DJs created a new instrument by using a record turntable that was only intended to play prerecorded music and made it into an instrument in and of itself by mixing and matching pieces of other music, and adding a second turntable to create a new music instrument (George, 1998).

The Black Arts Movement sought to create an aesthetic that was rooted in "black resistance and liberation" (Dyson, 2007, p.63) during the Civil Rights Movement (1955-1968), and later during the Black Power Movement (1968-1974). The Black Arts Movement (BAM) attempted to make liberatory art available to the general population, and especially to people of color. The founding of the Black Arts Repertory Theatre/School (BARTS) in 1965 in Harlem, New York, by Ed Bullins was a significant turning point as it is marked the official start of the Black Arts Movement. Amiri Baraka's play "The Dutchman" was one of the first plays to appear at BARTS. Its interracial theme, interrogation of Black authenticity, and its subsequent violent ending were searing commentary on the current state of race relations in the U.S.

Two primary results of BARTS were the development of Black theater groups and Black poetry performance spaces, both having close ties to community organizations. Black theaters served as the focus of poetry, dance, and music performances in addition to formal and ritual drama. Black theaters were also venues for community meetings, lectures, study groups, and film screenings. This is especially important because white dominant culture has had a historically dysfunctional relationship with Black culture. White people simultaneously showing fear of people of color, and yet having the desire to consume their culture is indicative of a racist society. An example of this is the white

appropriation of jazz music. Jazz music, which was Black music, was devoured by white people who wanted to go to Harlem and have a "real Black" (albeit temporary) "non-threatening" experience (Rose, 1994). This practice dates back to the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and continued on through the Black Arts Movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The creation of Black Arts spaces was important and necessary for these reasons. It was a politically engaging and artistic space for Black people to learn from each other, and build community away from the "gaze" of White people (Jones, 1963).

In a 2006 interview, poet/activist Sonia Sanchez, a well-known icon of the Black Arts Movement, commented on the connection between Hip-Hop and the Black Arts Movement,

> Well, you know I don't really call it similarities. What I do, is say the Hip Hop movement came out of the Black Arts Movement. And it was a natural progression, just as in the way we really came of the Harlem Renaissance period, you know. The Depression and the War, and then, here we came! The Civil Rights Movement. And then there was a lull again. And the country took everything that it could away from these young men and women in school. But you know the most important thing about us is that we are so inventive…We invent stuff! They take away our instruments, and we make our own music! I mean, that is amazing…. (Spady, Meghelli & Alim, 2006, p.110)

Many early rap performances and parties may have been "fueled by [the] same energy" (Dyson, 2007, p.65) as the Black Arts Movement (popular themes included Black liberation and resistance to white supremacy) especially from 1987-1993 which is known as the "Golden Age" of Hip-Hop. This was because of the Black Nationalist/Black Liberation themes in most popular Hip-Hop at the time from artists such as Public Enemy, Poor Righteous Teachers, A Tribe Called Quest, etc. And certainly now, many conscious rappers owe a "debt" to the Black Art Movement because there is political

awareness infused in their art. The big difference would be that contemporary Hip-Hop artists aren't necessarily providing music and art to fuel a larger political movement (Dyson, 2007), as was the case with the Black Arts Movement and the Black Power Movement. The art alone is often seen as the political act. However many Hip-Hop artists have attributed the foundations of rap and Hip-Hop culture to BAM icons such as Nikki Giovanni, the Last Poets and Gil Scott Heron.

Hip-Hop as Culture

Fiction writer Adam Mansbach author of *Angry Black White Boy* (2005) describes his view of Hip-Hop culture as more of an aesthetic,

> The practices of b-boying, emceeing, graffiti writing and deejaying had never been seen before, but the aesthetic concepts that underwrite them were updated, not invented. As with everything in hip-hop, the key is how everything is put together, and the energy with which it is diffused…Not just the impulse to think interdisciplinary but the instinct to do so, is hardwired in hip-hoppers in a way no previous generation can claim and is made manifest in every hip-hop art form. (In Chang, 2007, p. 93)

Identifying what Hip-Hop culture is and how it relates to Hip-Hop and education hinges on a further discussion of the four agreed upon foundational elements that are defined as the basis of Hip-Hop culture. Present since the birth of Hip Hop, these foundational elements include the lyrics (poetry/spoken word/storytelling), the beats (DJ's that play music which accompanies the lyrics/creating breaks/sampling from old records without using musical instruments), tag artists (graffiti art which was prominent in urban areas especially those which were experiencing obvious decay from a lack of resources/refurbishing), and dancing/b-boying ("break" dancing or breaking; other forms of dance as culture expression). However other elements have been expanded upon. The 5th element comes from the Zulu Nation and is widely known as "Knowledge of self,

community, others" (www.zulunation.com).

KRS-One, which stands for Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Everyone, a Hip-Hop pioneer from the Bronx known as "The Teacher," has written and lectured at colleges and universities for the past twenty years on the importance of Hip-Hop culture. KRS-One's discussion (Parker, 2003) of Hip-Hop includes additional foundational elements about peace and prosperity. He asserts that critical elements of Hip-Hop culture also include an understanding of technology, appreciation for the fashion created by Hip-Hop culture, acquisition of "street" language, and social entrepreneurship. They are included in an international document called the 'Hip-hop Declaration of Peace', which was signed on May 16, 2001 in conjunction with United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). KRS-One's organization, The Temple of Hip-Hop, was founded in 1998 to begin the work of establishing Hip-Hop as an international "kulture" of peace and prosperity among the governments of the world (www.templeofhiphop.org). Hip-Hop Appreciation week occurs the third week of May (since 1997) and is recognized by UNESCO. KRS-One defines Hip-Hop as,

> Hiphop (Hip´Hop) is a term that describes our independent collective consciousness. Ever growing, it is commonly expressed through such elements as Breakin, Emceein, Graffiti Art, Deejayin, Beatboxin, Street Fashion, Street Language, Street Knowledge and Street Entrepreneurialism. Wherever and whenever these and future elements and expressions of Hiphop Kulture manifest; this Hiphop Declaration of Peace shall advise the use and interpretation of such elements, expressions and lifestyle. (Parker, 2003, p.8)

In his 2006 volume on Hip-Hop culture, Emmet G. Price III includes a narrative of Hip-Hop history, historical photographs of trends and key players, recent statistical information about the Hip-Hop generation, and an analysis of his list of the most influential Hip-Hop songs and albums, thus expanding the idea of Hip-Hop as culture

beyond the aesthetic and original elements. Price identifies additional elements, and specifies including who the Hip-Hop generation is as a significant part of the identification of Hip-Hop as culture. This understanding is relevant in educational contexts because the foundational elements organically lend themselves to the idea of Kolb's (1984) multiple learning styles and awareness of Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences (http://www.graffitiverite.com/HipHopCurriculum.html).

Kolb's (1984) multiple learning style theory is predicated upon the idea that people learn in different ways, and when the preferred learning style has been identified, optimal learning can occur. In short, Kolb asserts that some students learn by observing, others by thinking critically about new information, while others learn by feeling a sense of connection to the material, and yet others learn by participating in activities. While teachers and students may not always share similar learning styles, student success is intimately connected to teachers' ability to synchronize their teaching style with individual students' preferred learning style.

Gardner's multiple intelligences (1993) are based on eight different ways that students learn and he posits that most schools would be better served if disciplines could be presented in a numbers of ways and learning could be assessed through a variety of methods. The learning styles are as follows with examples of how Hip-Hop culture is representative of each: Visual-Spatial (designing the geometric shapes used in graffiti art), Bodily-Kinesthetic (learning the moves in B-Boying/Hip-Hop Dance) Musical (Djing, creation of beats), Interpersonal (knowledge of self) and Intrapersonal (knowledge of self which leads to understanding of self in relation to others), Linguistic (using words effectively to write rhymes/rapping), Logical (ability measure beats per

minute in the merging of written word and created musical beats) and Naturalistic (emphasis in Hip-Hop education of ethnography of analyzing dynamics within communities) (Gardner, 2006, p.31-33).

Defining the Hip-Hop Generation

The Zulu Nation and The Temple of Hip-Hop have become two of the most influential organizations to offer structure, membership, and collective identity to those affiliated with Hip-Hop culture. It is important to note that Hip-Hop culture exists independent of any individual person's belief it. Chang (2005) provides a working definition of the Hip-Hop Generation,

> A generation that brings together time and race, place and polyculturalism, hot beats and hybridity. It describes the turn from politics to culture, the process of entropy and reconstruction. It captures the collective hopes and nightmares, ambitions and failures of those who would otherwise be described as 'post-this' or 'post-that'. (p. 2)

Some pundits have described members of the Hip-Hop generation as simply post-Civil Rights, Post-Modern, Post-Soul Babies, Gen X'ers, Gen Y'ers, Millennials or even Digital Natives. Others have questioned whether there is only one Hip-Hop Generation, and if so, the start and end of it becomes very important.

KRS-One offers a compelling manifesto about what the Hip-Hop generation can and should be in his book *Ruminations*, believing that the Hip-Hop generation has the power and responsibility to transform the world into a more loving, peaceful, and empowering place for all people. "And suddenly I realized the obvious truth! The world will not change unless I change it!" (Parker, 2003, p. 15), suggesting that Hip-Hop culture is a mindset beyond the core elements. According to KRS-One, you are a part of the Hip-Hop generation and the culture because you know, not because someone ascribes

it to you, so the beginning and end are not relevant.

According to Chang (2005), Hip-Hop begins *after* DJ Kool Herc and Africa Bambaataa; it includes anyone who is "down," meaning anyone who is committed to it, and it ends when the next generation "tells us it's over" (p. 2). Kitwana (2002) describes the Hip-Hop generation as being African Americans born in the United States between 1965 and 1984. He gives a specific definition of the Hip-Hop "generation" as being a post-Civil Rights generation that is representative of the entire African Diaspora including the Caribbean.

Kitwana clarifies specific movements and events that politicized the Hip-Hop generation and created the opportunities for cross-cultural coalition building. Much of the general history of U.S. policies can be expanded and modified to discuss other ethnic groups also identifying as members of the Hip-Hop generation, as other racial groups have also been strongly influenced by Hip-Hop culture; specifically, Latinos (Rivera, 2003), East Asians (Wong, 2004), South Asians (Sharma, 2004) and Native Americans (WMC, 2003).

However, in his work Kitwana decidedly chooses to highlight the specific social problems in relation to African Americans so that examples like the opportunity gap in education and the overrepresentation of Black youth in the prison industrial complex take precedence over the multicultural Hip-Hop nation described by Chideya (1999) and other authors. Kitwana suggests that the Hip-Hop generation, as the first to grow up in a world that is post-Civil Rights, holds a more complex and nuanced understanding of social identity because they are the first to be born into a world where race and gender are no longer acceptable reasons for legal discrimination. He also cites the emphasis on building

wealth, the rampant use of technology and the pressing issues of global warming, U.S. terrorism, de facto school segregation, punitive racist drug laws, and back-to-back futile wars as reasons that this generation has different needs and priorities than those who have come before. These reasons are central to why this generation embraces the "authenticity" and counter-narrative voice often found in Hip-Hop culture.

Asante (2008) takes things a step further in alleging that we have already begun the Post-Hip-Hop generation, but because things are still so subtle and interconnected, it may not be entirely evident that urban youth don't feel as represented and connected to Hip-Hop as they once did. Asante writes,

> The term post-hip-hop describes a time-right now of great transition for a new generation in search of a deeper, more encompassing understanding of themselves in a context outside of the corporate hip-hop monopoly. While hip-hop may be part of this new understanding it will neither dominate it or dictate it, just as one can observe the Civil Rights generation ethos within the hip-hop generation, yet the two remain autonomously connected. (2008, p.7)

Kitwana's (2006) subsequent work continues to expand upon the idea that the Hip-Hop Generation is in fact very multiracial and complex in its own negotiation of racial borders. For example, there are some African Americans who do not identify with Hip-Hop at all, and many White, Asian, Latino, Native, and biracial/multiracial people who do. Watkins (2005) seems to agree,

> The story of Hip-Hop, like the story of millennial America, is infinitively more intriguing than typical accounts acknowledge. Most assessments of the Hip-Hop "generation" or "nation" present a culture that is monolithic in its worldview or definable simply by age. But if the thirty-plus career of the movement suggests anything it is that Hip-Hop belies the established definitions and caricatures that tend to celebrate or condemn the culture. Simply put hip-hop is like nothing the world has ever seen. It is a vital source of creativity and industry for youth. Hip-Hop is consumed with pop celebrity and street credibility-and capable, many believe, of transforming young lives. (p. 5)

Those outside of the culture have met Hip-Hop primarily with negativity. In a decade long study conducted on three major media outlets, *Time Magazine*, *Newsweek,* and *U.S. News and World Report* from 1990-2000, Koza (1999) found that nearly 98% of the stories related to Hip-Hop and rap music were in fact negative. With the exception of a 1998 *Time Magazine* cover story, proclaiming Hip-Hop's Takeover of pop culture, in response to Lauryn Hill's five Grammy sweep that same year, most coverage was not simply negative, but derogatory. It focused on violence, crime, misogyny, materialism and the early 1990s fight led by former President Bill Clinton and politician and Civil Rights leader C. Delores Tucker against Sister Souljah and others to "clean up" rap music. Hip-Hop was then, and is now often very misunderstood and misrepresented by the mainstream media, and it is often the primary target of a racist conservative media who does not seek to examine racist historical and institutional inequities (Adams et. al., 2007).

Over the last thirty years, despite negative media coverage Hip-Hop has still managed to move beyond being merely an art form to become a powerful cultural force. This cultural status has created generations of youth who have grown into adulthood and who now have a bridge with younger people that may not have existed before because of this shared Hip-Hop culture. This commonality of Hip-Hop culture creates opportunities for youth and educators to engage around critical issues, citing similar artists, or popular culture references. This capacity of Hip-Hop to forge connections in academic settings is a promising outcome of Hip-Hop culture.

Summary

This section highlighted the racist and classist conditions and policies, which gave

birth to Hip-Hop culture (Chang, 2005). Hip-Hop culture is based on five foundational elements (Price, 2006), as well as many other additional elements (Parker, 2003), which lend themselves to the understanding and appreciation of multiple intelligences and learning styles (Kolb, 1984; Gardner, 1993). It is Afro-Diasporic in foundation, however the Hip-Hop generation is multi-racial, and generally consists of those born between the years of 1965-1984 (Kitwana, 2002). The interrogation of Hip-Hop as a tool of critical pedagogy for educating youth and for the preparation of educators to increase their capacity to develop effective educational programs for the youth of today's classrooms is long overdue. Because of its cultural history as an empowering and critical source of information for its various constituencies (George, 1998), it is useful to explore how Hip-Hop culture is moving from being a public pedagogy by raising issues such as resistance to white supremacy (Hendershott, 2004) to a critical pedagogy which can be negotiated in both formal/informal educational spaces.

Contested Art Form or Opportunity for Political Activism?

> As a generation of scholars steeped in hip-hop's cultural influences graduated into tenure track positions, teaching students in their teens and twenties who have never known a world without hip-hop, the dynamic interrelations and productive overlay between academic and nonacademic spaces have become more obvious.
> (Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 3)

Many educators are opting to use Hip-Hop music and culture as both content and pedagogy for various types of courses including but not limited to: literature, writing, mathematics, history, social studies, physical education, and social justice education at all levels of education K-16 (Runell & Diaz, 2007). Hip-Hop has intrinsically been self-reflective, counter-narrative and critical of dominant social structures (Perry, 2004; Watkins, 2005). However the question of whether Hip-Hop is fundamentally an artistic

medium which can stimulate activism (Dyson, 2007) or a distinct social movement with artistic underpinnings, will be discussed in the next section. Watkins (2005) asserts,

> Over the course of its career Hip-Hop has developed a notorious and even self-perpetuating reputation as a spectacular cultural movement committed to defying the cultural and political mainstream. But as the borders of the hip hop nation continue to expand, it's biggest and most important battle appears to the one it is having with itself. Behind the explosive record sales, trendsetting cachet, and burgeoning economy is an intense struggle for the soul of the Hip-Hop movement. There has never been a consensus within hip-hop about its purpose, identity or destiny. In fact the most robust debates about hip-hop have always taken place within the movement. Hip-Hop has and continues to be its most potent critic and courageous champion. (p. 5)

Watkins speaks to the lack of consensus within Hip-Hop culture to fully realize its potential for social change. I assert that this is because Hip-Hop as an art form is also a commercial entity. While Hip-Hop culture in its' original form largely seeks to critique societal conditions and provide stories of those whose voices are often unheard in mainstream culture (youth, people of color, poor or working class people, and other marginalized groups), there is some discrepancy about the purpose of the commercialized rap music industry. The rap music industry was constructed within a capitalist system that privileges making profit over social change. African American critics such as Stanley Crouch and Adolph Reed (Ogbar, 2007; Dyson, 2007) have even argued that mainstream Hip-Hop culture is the equivalent of modern day minstrelsy, because of the often stereotypical and damaging portrayals of current rap artists, who are almost exclusively African American.

Worldwide, from South Africa to Poland and from the Bronx to Beverly Hills, the popularity and global significance of rap music and Hip-Hop culture has been observed and chronicled by media outlets, social commentarians and scholars (Basu & Lemelle, 2006; Spady et. al., 2006). Both the commercial and political elements of Hip-Hop have

been “remixed” by global Hip-Hop artists who often work as activists to use Hip-Hop to promote ethnic understanding or critique racist or hegemonic policies in places such as Palestine, Nigeria, Morocco and France (Spady et. al., 2006).

However in other countries such as South Africa, many of the negative aspects of Hip-Hop culture such as the infamous East-Coast/West-Coast conflict or “beef” of the early 1990s were exported abroad. In post-Apartheid Johannesburg, South Africa, youth joined rival gangs wearing Tupac and Biggie t-shirts, representing their positionality in the U.S.-based conflict, which was largely media driven to begin with (Kitwana, 2002). In fact, the South African government only allowed specific Hip-Hop music to be played in South Africa during Apartheid (Osumare, 2007). They banned all music that was deemed liberatory or empowering, and instead opted for music that spurred Black on Black crime (Spady et. al., 2006). However, as with all aspects of Hip-Hop culture, the influence in South Africa cannot be analyzed through a binary lens-as being simply good or bad (Dyson, 2007). U.S. Hip-Hop also influenced South African youth to create a form of youth resistance music known as Kwaito, which is largely political and critical of the status quo.

The contradictions within Hip-Hop or the “Hip-Hop Wars” (Rose, 2008) are in large part what make the use of Hip-Hop an organic critical approach to critical pedagogy. This is both an attribute and challenge for educators and students, albeit not easily resolved. Meaning there are not always clear-cut villains and heroes, there are complex characters with multiple perspectives regarding history and societal conditions. Perhaps one of the most fiercely contradictory and controversial figures in both U.S. history and Hip-Hop culture is Tupac Shakur, whose work has been the sole subject of

many Hip-Hop courses (Akom, 2009), and also offers an example of this tension. Is Hip-Hop art or politics?

Hip-Hop as Art

"I may not change the world but I guarantee that I will spark the mind that will."

Tupac Shakur rapper, activist (1971-1996)

For many in my generation, Tupac Shakur, who was murdered over ten years ago, was an influential icon. Named for an Incan revolutionary who led a pivotal uprising, Tupac sparked enthusiasm and controversy and wanted to create social change for marginalized people. Tupac was an artist wrought with contradictions. His mother, Afeni Shakur, was a former Black Panther, well-known activist, and community leader with strong Black liberation political convictions and a network of Black activists who Tupac knew and learned from. However, Afeni later became a recovering crack addict who struggled to make ends meet and at one point had to leave Tupac with a close family friend because she could not take care of him (Dyson, 2001). Tupac, born in Harlem, New York, spent time attending a privileged performing arts high school in Baltimore, Maryland. He later became the most famous face of the East/West Coast Hip-Hop feud of the 1990s after moving to California. Tupac read profusely and studied "great" thinkers, such as Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Marx. His notable albums such as "Me Against the World"(1995) and "All Eyez on Me" (1996) delivered biting social commentary on issues such as poverty, the prison industrial complex, teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, economic policies, and police brutality. He is cited in the Guinness Book of World Records as having sold the most Hip-Hop albums of all time (Dyson, 2001).

Above all else, Tupac was an artist who represented a generation and a culture. Though he had legitimate activist roots, which along with lived experience as a working class man of color (Stefano & Delgado, 1993) helped to garner his "authenticity" as an artist, he was not an activist or a politician. Tupac was an artist and an entertainer. He said it himself, he did not believe he was going to change the world, but he was sure his work and commentary (through his art) could "spark" social change. To this end, it is important to note that art holds an important place in any educational context because of its ability to critique existing social conditions (Felshin, 1995; Greene, 1995; Hirschman, 2002). A debate between scholars Michael Eric Dyson (2001) and Augusto Boal (1979) might illuminate this tension point regarding whether or not all art is political. Dyson asserts that Hip-Hop may function in a political manner, but is not required to do so,

> But its critics often fail to acknowledge that hip hop is neither sociological commentary nor political criticism, though it may certainly function in those modes through its artists' lyrics. Hip Hop is still fundamentally an art form that traffics in hyperbole, parody, kitsch, dramatic license, double entendres, signification and artistic merit. (2001, p. xxi)

Dyson's assessment is accurate in the sense that Hip-Hop is an art form, albeit not just rap music as he implied with the narrow definition of "lyrics," as the only way that Hip-Hop artists can express themselves. They can also design clothes, create marketing campaigns, make films, and utilize drama, dance and photography to represent themselves and their social commentary (Parker, 2003). However, he is right, that it would still only be artistic rendition, not a social movement.

Hip-Hop began as the voice of the underclass, the voice of marginalized people; it was about struggle, activism in the community, storytelling, and about having fun to relieve the stress of the increasingly depressing social conditions. Hip-Hop today remains

fundamentally an art form that in and of itself is not necessarily always liberatory, nor is it entirely political or sociological commentary (Perry, 2004). Although it can certainly be those things depending on which artists are being utilized. However it is intrinsically artistic and creative in its presentation of perspective. Dyson (2007) writes,

> By denying its musical and artistic merit, hip hop's critics get to have it both ways: they can deny the legitimate artistic standing of rap while seizing on its pervasive influence as an art form to prove what a terrible effect it has on youth. (p.xvii)

The contested nature of Hip-Hop culture is clearly racialized, in that the personal "authenticity" of most (White) actors, popular music artists, or other artists, is rarely questioned (Ogbar, 2007). Hip-Hop artists are condemned for discussing "real" issues whether or not they have actually experienced them (criminal, thug stereotype) or born witness to someone else experiencing them (not criminal or "real" enough), despite the fact in either case they are using their art to describe a phenomenon or situation. Meaning a white artist can play a character that has a drug addiction or is a prostitute, but the expectation is never that they have actually experienced this phenomenon. In fact their ability to portray, write about or otherwise chronicle someone else's experience authentically is often deemed worthy of accolades. However, many Hip-Hop artists are critiqued if it is revealed that their street credibility is actually imaginative or representative commentary. Because Hip-Hop as a cultural product is primarily created by urban youth of color, in a racist and classist system, it is difficult to imagine that the critics of Hip-Hop, represented through mainstream and conservative media, (Rose, 2008; Dyson, 2007) are able to understand Hip-Hop as art in an equitable and affirming way.

In order to better understand Hip-Hop as an artistic medium, in the next section I will illustrate three examples of hyperbole or double entendre in Hip-Hop lyrics, which make the songs thought-provoking and entertaining, while illuminating the artistic nature of Hip-Hop music. It is important to note that unlike a film, TV show, or book, a song is likely to be heard hundreds, maybe even thousands of times during the course of a lifetime. So the more "clever" a song is the more enjoyment or consciousness-raising it may illicit.

TI & Rihanna's (2008) "Live Your Life" is about self-empowerment, success, and the downside of the commercialization of the music business. Atlanta-based artist Clifford Joseph Harris Jr. also known as TI, is a Grammy Award-winning rapper, reality TV show star, actor and philanthropist. Rihanna is a Grammy Award-winning pop star from Barbados. The excerpt below is from their popular 2008 duet, "Live Your Life,"

> I'm the opposite of moderate, immaculately polished with the spirit of a hustler
> and the swagger of a college kid.
> Allergic to the counterfeit, impartial to the politics.
> Articulate but still would grab a brotha by the collar quick
> Your values is disarrayed, prioritized all horribly.
> Unhappy with the riches cause you piss poor morally.
> Ignoring all prior advice and fore warning.
> And we might be full of ourselves all of a sudden aren't we? (www.ohhla.com)

In this first verse, TI is using hyperbole by suggesting he is the "opposite" of moderate, since by definition moderate would suggest being in the middle between two extremes. He also rhymes about his work ethic, which is an acknowledgement of his street smarts and the formal confidence that might be equated with higher education. He continues that he is "allergic" to anything that isn't real, meaning he is completely averse to falseness because of the emphasis on authenticity in Hip-Hop, and doesn't see himself as being involved in non-essential business dealings. And he reminds the listener that while he is

"polished" and "articulate" when he needs to be, he is also capable of using his other means of physical power, which may include having to put someone in their place using force if the situation calls for it. TI continues his commentary on the state of the music business generally speaking, but adding that money can't buy happiness, and that false arrogance will bring failure.

The second song I chose is by Young Jeezy with a verse by Nas (who is known for having a very analytic and socio-historic lens in his music). However, Young Jeezy is not well known for being particularly conscious or political, and is currently enjoying enormous commercial success. He came out with a song in summer 2008, during the time Barack Obama accepted the Democratic Presidential Nomination, aptly titled, "My President is Black,"

> Tell him I'm doin fine, Obama for mankind
> We ready for damn change so y'all let the man shine
> Stuntin on Martin Luther, feelin just like a king
> Guess this is what he meant when he said that he had a dream (www.ohhla.com)

In this verse, Jeezy proclaims that he finally understands what Martin Luther King. Jr.'s dream is about by using King as double entendre-both "king" and "King." He declares his happiness with Obama's candidacy in that he feels like royalty. In Nas's verse, he goes on to further use the hyperbole in his warning that President Obama should remain true to the communities who support him, and beware of the high price of fame. However, he ends with the idea that President Obama should have his own U.S. currency; which would mark the first time an African American person would be represented on U.S. currency, which would be affirmation of his historic presidency;

> Yeah, our history, black history, no president ever did shit for me
> Gotta stay true to who you are and where you came from
> Cause at the top will be the same place you hang from

No matter how big you can ever be
For whatever fee or publicity, never lose your integrity
Mr. Black President, yo Obama for real
They gotta put your face on the five-thousand dollar bill. (www.ohhla.com)

And lastly, Lil Wayne is arguably one of the most well-known, successful and popular Hip-Hop artists right now. He is most celebrated for his ability to create and record entire songs that he never writes down. He is also very well respected for rhyming in double and triple entendre. Here is a sample from "Nina" (2009) in which Lil Wayne makes several points in his brieft lyrical prose,

You mcs wack
How bout your funeral? let me MC that
3 mc facts
My name's Dwayne Michael Carter
DMCs back. (www.ohhla.com)

He is saying that he is The MC (D' MC); meaning he is the best MC, or rap artist and will take the spotlight as the careers of other artists are dead or over. He's also saying his skill level is the return of real Hip-Hop in a tribute to Run-DMC (D.M.C.) who are Hip-Hop pioneers. Run-D.M.C. came out with their first album in 1984 and were the first Hip-Hop artists to be nominated for a Grammy; they were also recently inducted into the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame. Lil Wayne is also saying that his name is Dwayne Michael Carter (D.M.C.) and that he is Hip-Hop because he was born in it; thus creating a triple entendre in one verse.

Hip-Hop is clearly an art form with many modes of expression, and the art has arguably "sparked a compelling brand of political activism" (Dyson, 2007, p.68) which I will elaborate on in the next section. However it is art that can fuel, help, inspire and

motivate political activism, but while it is intrinsically educational, I believe it is also political,

> …while black music at its best had often supplied a supplementary argument for political change, it is not a substitute for actual politics. And if you don't have a vital political movement, the music can only go so far. It can help alter the mind-set of the masses; it can help create awareness of the need for social change; it can help dramatize injustice; and it can help articulate the disenfranchisement of significant segments of the citizenry. But it cannot alone transform social relations and political arrangements. Politically charged music can reinforce important social values, but it cannot establish them. (Dyson, 2007, p. 67)

Hip-Hop as Political Activism

"Peace and remember to tell the people: I [Hip-Hop] am their weapon! Peace."

(Asante, 2008, p.259)

In recent years it has been suggested by artists and scholars (Asante, 2008) that Hip-Hop might in fact be "dead." While this review of the literature clearly refutes that idea, is it equally clear that Hip-Hop continues to grow and change. Asante (2008) uses imagination and personification to conduct an interview with "Hip-Hop." When asked how "Hip-Hop" felt about being accused of having died, "Hip-Hop" replied with the following statement,

> I'm not talkin' about school, but real education. Saying I'm dead is a shock thing, it makes people pay attention. Like, look, if you don't watch out, Imma die. I'm not dead, but that doesn't mean I can't die. It doesn't mean that I am healthy either. I need to be conserved. And in the end, people only conserve what they love, and they only love what they understand, and they will only understand what they are taught. So you have to teach them. That's why you see the misogyny, the self-hatred-Black people are not being taught to love themselves. So Black people don't conserve themselves or each other. It's time to change that! (Asante, 2008, p. 259)

The relevancy of Hip-Hop continues to morph as each generation adds their own needs

and desires to the artistic form, as well as their agenda items for social change (Watkins, 2005). For many, Hip-Hop is seen as a powerful tool for political organizing and for bringing about social change (Ogbar, 2007). Pivotal and influential organizations continue to grow and evolve adapting to local and national political agendas. This section will focus on two politically driven Hip-Hop organizations and Hip-Hop culture's presence in the 2008 Presidential election. It will also cite two examples of political or conscious Hip-Hop, which speak directly to the inequities in current public school systems.

Hip-Hop activism is widely believed to have started to take hold when U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters, representing the 35th District in South Central Los Angeles, California took on Hip-Hop as her crusade (in the early 1990s); creating a generation of youth who did not want to be scapegoated because of generational divides over language and media representation (Chang, 2005). Artist and activist Marc Bamuthi commented on the political appeal of Hip-Hop culture beginning in the 1980s and continuing until the present, "a broad force of hip-hop resistance was activated by movements against apartheid, police brutality, and the systemic abandonment of social services spurred by Reaganomics" (Chang, 2007, p. 15). And Craig Watkins (2005) agrees in *Hip-Hop Matters*,

> Gone are the discussions about whether hip hop matters; they have been replaced instead by the key issues of who and what kinds of values will define how Hip-Hop matters. The struggle for hip hop is real, and is playing out across a remarkably rich and varied terrain—in pop culture, old and new media, colleges and universities, in prisons, through the conduit of community activism, in suburbia, among youth, and throughout the political minefields of race and gender. (p. 6)

The social justice origins of Hip-Hop culture have given way to the birth of many organizations such as the Hip-Hop Political Action Network (2001) and the Hip-Hop Congress (2000). Non-profit organizations have taken the lead in utilizing the power of Hip-hop to educate and organize. Organizations include H2Ed (2003) based in New York City, The University of Hip-Hop (2000) based in Chicago, and the International Association of Hip-Hop Education (2006) based in Washington D.C. (www.iahhe.org). These and countless other organizations such as Blackout Arts Collective (1997) have pioneered the connection between Hip-Hop, education, and activism in schools, correctional facilities, and out-of-school time spaces.

Hip-Hop Congress

In 1993, Reali Robinson IV (MC, DJ, Producer, Entrepreneur) started the artist-based organization Hip-Hop Congress. In, 1997 after meeting Shamako Noble (MC, activist) in San Diego, California, they formed the first Northern & Southern community chapters. Simultaneously in 2000, Jordan Bromley and Ron Gubitz started an activist group with the same name. The two groups did not know about each other until the summer of 2000, while surfing the web. Instead of squabbling over who should keep the name, in the spirit of unity and activism the two organizations merged and formed the current Hip-Hop Congress. The Congress currently works with more than 30 chapters on university campuses, high schools, and most importantly in local communities. Annual conferences draw over 1,000 members. The various chapters also host many events to promote Hip-Hop culture including but not limited to: teacher training workshops, festivals, concerts, academic discussions, film screenings and mental health information sessions. Nine members serve in the national office and operate as a “think tank” that

creates new initiatives using the Congress's tools to create inspiration and sustained action in local communities by developing strategic partnerships with existing organizations. It is important to note that many members of Hip-Hop Congress endorsed Green Party nominee Cynthia McKinney and her vice-presidential running mate, Rosa Clemente (long time Hip-Hop activist), in the 2008 election. Incidentally, a mirror organization, Hip-Hop Congress Europe, which is based in Paris, France, also has connections to organizations in France, Africa, England, Belgium and the Czech Republic. The international organization hopes to create after school programs and sharing projects created in these global sites schools through the use of technology (www.hiphopcongress.org).

Hip-Hop Action Summit Network (HSAN)

The second influential political organization is the Hip-Hop Action Summit (HSAN) and it was founded in 2001. HSAN is dedicated to harnessing the cultural relevance of Hip-Hop music to serve as a catalyst for education advocacy and other societal concerns fundamental to the empowerment of youth. HSAN is a non-profit, non-partisan national coalition of Hip-Hop artists, entertainment industry leaders, education advocates, civil rights proponents, and youth leaders united in the belief that Hip-Hop is an enormously influential agent for social change which must be responsibly and proactively utilized to fight the war on poverty and injustice (www.hsan.org). HSAN has sponsored bi-annual summits, created unified political platforms, and has notable celebrities such as Russell Simmons (CEO/Founder Def Jam), and Dr. Benjamin Chavis (Nation of Islam) as spokespeople and advisors. HSAN formally endorsed Barack Obama in the 2008 Presidential campaign.

2008 Presidential Election

According to the special "Politics" issue of *Source Magazine*, in October 2008, Obama had the backing of most Hip-Hop artists who participated in the 2008 Presidential election process. This is significant because Hip-Hop artists have not typically been involved in endorsing Presidential candidates (Watkins, 2005). For 20 years, The *Source* magazine has been the leading international voice for the ever-evolving world of Hip-Hop music, culture and politics and it has supported the "I AM C.H.A.N.G.E." campaign which stands for "I am Change, Conquering Human Rights, Action, Needed Global, Empowering, Evolving;" Russell Simmons is the spokesperson for the campaign for I AM CHANGE. In 2001, the University of California, Los Angeles Freshman Survey found that college students were the most politically active they had ever been since the survey was first implemented in 1966 (Chang, 2005), which was certainly evident in the 2008 Presidential election. There were more first time voters of all ages and voters under 35 years old voting for the first time, most of whom voted for President Obama (www.pewresearch.org).

As mentioned earlier, Hip-Hop'ers also had another choice in Cynthia McKinney, running for the Green Party ticket, who picked up Afro-Latina Hip-Hop activist Rosa Clemente as her Vice-Presidential Candidate in June 2008. Clemente has been an activist for over fifteen years. Both were very critical of Barack Obama, and refuted all assertions that he is the first "Hip-Hop President" because he was running on a major party ticket and was seen as too moderate and not radical-enough for the Green Party. Despite the fact that he was born in 1961, just a few years before the official start of the Hip-Hop generation, many Hip-Hop artists have called him the first "Hip-Hop President" simply

because of his age, race and gender (*Source Magazine,* 2008). However President Obama has publicly embraced Hip-Hop, at least to a point, citing that he is a big fan of Hip-Hop and spoke with both Kanye West and Jay-Z regarding ways that they might work together (Synyard, 2008),

> President Obama: I've met with Jay-Z; I've met with Kanye. And I've talked to other artists about how to potentially bridge that gap. I think there is potential for them to deliver a message of extraordinary power that gets people thinking. There are times, even the artists I've named, the artists that I love, that there is a message that's sometimes degrading to women, uses the N-word a little too frequently. (p.1)

In response to Obama winning the 2008 Presidential election, Russell Simmons paid homage to the Hip-Hop generation by claiming that the "vision of the hip-hop generation" is in large part responsible for the change in the American political arena. Simmons (2008) stated,

> The election of Barack Obama, a resounding progressive voice, is a clear reflection of hip-hop politics. Promoting love, compassion and generosity over fear, anger and greed; promoting lasting peace through dialogue and opportunity will be more economic to the American people in these troubled times than the promotion of war. I don't think I'm overstating it when I say that today, I feel like America has dodged a bullet. Let's support this beautiful leader to do the work necessary to promote and execute on the change agenda we all voted for. Let's each do our part to insure that this is a transformative time in America, where our country can be a leader in creating a positive and lasting change in the world. (http://www.thesource.com/2008/11/russell-simmons-post-election-statement/)

Jay-Z, award-winning Hip-Hop artist and entrepreneur agrees with Russell Simmons's analysis and believes that Hip-Hop can also be credited for educating a generation of youth, particularly white youth, about the experiences of Black people which creates empathy and understanding,

> Hip-hop has done more than any leader, politician, or anyone to improve race relations. Racism is taught in the home... and it's very hard to teach racism to a teenager who idolizes, say, Snoop Dogg. It's hard to say, 'That guy is less than

> you.' The kid is like, 'I like that guy, he's cool. How is he less than me?' That's why this generation is the least racist generation ever. You see it all the time. Go to any club. People are intermingling, hanging out, enjoying the same music. (www.contactmusic.com)

I believe that Jay-Z is espousing a version of reality, the fact that millions of young white youth have been emulating Black people through their love of Hip-Hop for at least the past twenty-years, may in fact have helped the Hip-Hop generation feel more connected to President Obama. Or perhaps the social commentary provided through Hip-Hop created a more nuanced understanding of social policy and therefore an appreciation for President Obama's activist roots and agenda. The full range of possibilities regarding the impact of Hip-Hop on politics is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Hip-Hop Music as Political Education

In many educational contexts from middle school through college, varied media and artistic sources are used as supplemental teaching materials. The capacity to critique social conditions, a major tenet of critical pedagogy, has been an integral element of Hip-Hop since its inception-as both art and as activism. Because of its capacity to critique, Hip-Hop is a powerful artistic medium for use in educational settings (Duncan-Andrade, 2008; Hamanci, 2007; Pride, 2007b). In summary, I will include two examples of Hip-Hop artists who have used their artistic talent to comment on dire social conditions in public schools. The first example is the (1989) song called "You Must Learn" by KRS-One. The second song is called "They Schools" by Dead Prez. Both artists are known for their social commentary and activist roots. These songs speak directly to the issue of the connection between Hip-Hop music, culture and education.

“You Must Learn” (1989) KRS-One,

Just like I told you, you must learn
It's calm yet wild, the style that I speak
Just filled with facts
And you will never get weak in the heart
In fact you'll start to illuminate
Knowledge to others in a song
Let me demonstrate the force of knowledge
Knowledge reigned supreme
The ignorant is ripped to smithereens
What do you mean when you say I'm rebellious
'Cause I don't accept everything that you're telling us
What are you selling us, the creator dwellin' us
I sat in your unknown class while you're failin' us
I failed your class 'cause I ain't worth your reasoning
You're trying to make me you by seasoning
Up my mind with see Jane run
See John walk in a hardcore New York
It doesn't exist, no way, no how
It seems to me that in a school that's ebony
African history should be pumped up steadily
But it's not and this has got to stop
See Spot run, run get Spot
Insulting to a black mentality, a black way of life
Or a jet-black family, so I conclude with one concern
That you must learn

(Chorus):
Just like I told you, you must learn
Just like I told you, you must learn
I believe that if you're teaching history
Filled with straight-up facts, no mystery
Teach the student what needs to be taught
'Cause black and white kids both take shots
When one doesn't know about the other one's culture
Ignorance swoops down like a vulture
'Cause you don't know that you ain't just a janitor
No one told you about Benjamin Banneker
A brilliant black man that invented the almanac
Can't you see where KRS is coming at
With Eli Whitney, Haile Selassie
Grand Bill Woods made the walkie-talkie
Lewis Latterman improved on Edison
Charles Drew did a lot for medicine
Garrett Morgan made the traffic lights

Harriet Tubman freed the slaves at night
Madame CJ Walker made a straightenin' comb
But you won't know this if you weren't shown
The point I'm gettin' at, it might be harsh
'Cause we're just walkin' around brainwashed
So what I'm sayin' is not to diss a man
We need the 89 school system
One that caters to a black return
Because you must learn. (www.ohhla.com)

KRS-One directs seething commentary at teachers, principals, and curriculum developers, instructing that "they" must learn how to teach culturally relevant materials to children of color. KRS-One also asserts that Black history is important for all students, and that schools should not be sites of complacency, but in fact sites of critical inquiry and engagement.

Nearly a decade later, Dead Prez (2000) offers another riveting commentary on the inadequacies of teachers and schools in "They Schools." This time the critique has moved beyond just curriculum and pedagogy, but offers a more in-depth systemic analysis about the school-prison pipeline, the lack of job opportunities for working class Black youth with a high school degree, the police presence in most urban schools, and the overall feelings of frustration and futility in dealing with a racist and classist school system (Kitwana, 2002). The song "They Schools" explains some of this commentary,

Why havent you learned anything?
Man that school shit is a joke
The same people who control the school system control
The prison system, and the whole social system
Ever since slavery, nawsayin?
I went to school with some redneck crackers
Right around the time 3rd bass dropped the cactus album
But I was readin Malcolm
I changed my name in 89 cleaning parts of my brain
Like a baby nine
I took a history class serious
Front row, every day of the week, 3rd period

F****n with the teachers had, callin em racist
I tried to show them crackers some light, they couldn't face it
I got my diploma from a school called rickers
Full of, teenage mothers, and drug dealin n****s
In the hallways, the popo was always present
Searchin through n****s possessions
Lookin for, dope and weapons, get your lessons
That's why my moms kept stressin
I tried to pay attention but they classes wasn't interestin
They seemed to only glorify the Europeans
Claimin Africans were only three-fifths a human being

Hook:
They schools cant teach us shit
My people need freedom, we tryin to get all we can get
All my high school teachers can suck my dick
Tellin me white man lies straight bullshit (echoes)
They schools aint teachin us, what we need to know to survive
(say what, say what)
They schools don't educate, all they teach the people is lies
You see dog, you see how quick these motherf****s be to like
Be tellin n***s get a diploma so you can get a job
Knowwhatimsayin but they don't never tell you how the job
Gonna exploit you every time knowwhatimsayin that's why I be like
Fuck they schools!

[Verse 2]
School is like a 12 step brainwash camp
They make you think if you drop out you aint got a chance
To advance in life, they try to make you pull your pants up
Students fight the teachers and get took away in handcuffs
And if that wasn't enough, then they expel ya'll
Your peoples understand it but to them, you a failure
Observation and participation, my favorite teachers
When they beat us in the head with them books, it don't reach us
You either get paid or locked up, the principal is like a warden
In a four-year sentence, mad n***s never finish
But that doesn't mean I couldn't be a doctor or a dentist
They aint teachin us how to stop the police from murdering us
And brutalizing us, they aint teachin us how to get our rent paid
Knowhatimsayin?they aint teachin our families how to interact
Searchin you you walkin in your shit like this a military compound
Knowhatimsayin?so school dont even relate to us
Until we have some shit where we control the f****n school system
Where we reflect how we gon solve our own problems
Them n***s aint gon relate to school, shit that just how it is

Knowhatimsayin?and I love education, knowhatimsayin?
But if education aint elevatin me, then you knowhatimsayin it aint
Takin me where I need to go on some bullshit, then f**k education (www.ohhla.com)

Summary

In this section I sought to illuminate the difference between Hip-Hop as art and Hip-Hop as political activism by fleshing out the nuances. Ultimately Hip-Hop culture originated through an activist organization, the Zulu Nation. And many other activist organizations continue the tradition of setting political agendas and activating Hip-Hop generation(s) through their various means. However, the various art forms of Hip-Hop culture, especially "rap" music, which has been highly appropriated, is not in and of itself a political organizer. However, it is capable of "sparking the minds," educating and inspiring those who are willing to create lasting social change.

Hip-Hop and Social Identity

"In today's increasingly mediated environment Hip Hop remains the most pronounced identifier for young Americans regardless of gender, class or ethnicity." (Feminism & Hip-Hop, Conference, 2005). The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) Report from 2000, which has served as the national voice for sexuality education, sexual health, and sexual rights in the United States for over 45 years, found "For many young people regardless of race, color, or economic standing-Hip-Hop culture is the voice of their often misunderstood and misinterpreted generation—a voice that up until now, was generally ignored" (Elliot, 2000). SIECUS Report author, Elliot urges educators to understand Hip-Hop to better connect with youth by being more authentic with them through honest and straightforward dialogue. He encourages educators to show respect for Hip-Hop music

and not be dismissive of the positive attributes associated with it; acknowledging that Hip-Hop is a major part of youth culture. He encourages educators to listen to students' stories-as well as their CDs or iTunes if they are willing to share and learn from youth rather than be judgmental. DJ Kool Herc and journalist Jason Tanz both offer perspective on Hip-Hop and identity.

> To me hip-hop says, 'come as you are.' We are a family…but even more important hip-hop has bridged the culture gap. It brings white kids together with Black kids, brown kids and yellow kids. They all have something in common that they love. It gets past the stereotypes and people hating each other because of those stereotypes. (Herc In Chang, p. xi, 2005)

While Tanz (2007) describes Hip-Hop as being,

> …a mind-state, a confidence, a swagger, a commitment. It shows itself in the way you wear your clothes, and in the way you walk, and in the attitude with which you slur your words. It is more than a music. More than a culture. It is a mode of being. But however you think of it you probably think of it has being "Black." (p. ix)

To some observers of Hip-Hop culture, these two statements may seem mutually exclusive. Jamaican born, New York City raised Herc, well regarded as the Godfather of Hip-Hop claims the racial heterogeneity and liberatory promise and possibility of Hip-Hop for all youth, while suburban, white, middle-class Hip-Hop fan and journalist, Tanz claims Hip-Hop is, if nothing else, "Black." Therein lies one of the seeming contradictions in Hip-Hop; multiracial fans across the world, being taught to believe and understand the counter-narrative to White supremacy, an Afro-centric view of world history, often coupled with Black nationalist ideology touted by some of Hip-Hop's most important pioneers. In that sense, both Tanz and Herc are right. Hip-Hop is both and full of contradictions surrounding identity politics. Youth culture in a desire to be counter-narrative, has connected to the counter-hegemonic undertones evident in Hip-Hop music.

However, Hip-Hop still exists within a society that is racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, and intolerant of many diverse religious beliefs (Adams, et. al., 2007). Hip-Hop artists both interrogate these conditions; while simultaneously participating as members of society.

However, the greatest appeal of Hip-Hop culture is that whether or not it can provide answers, it allows listeners to ask critical questions and investigate subtle nuances,

> We are forced to think seriously about the white student who grows up in a black neighborhood; the middle-class, black male who raps about a ghetto life; the growing popularity of the African aesthetic (Afros, braids, dreads, etc.) among youth inside and outside of the African Diaspora; the attraction of working-class, white youth or even white racist youth to hip hop culture; an Asian American youth who wears FUBU clothing; the differential tactics of black, female rappers; the difference between an Eminem and a Vanilla Ice; a gay gangsta rapper; or the origin of a lyric rapped in Spanish with a reggae beat. In essence, hip hop's identity performances more explicitly negotiate the tensions of hybridity and intersectionality. (Baszile, 2009, p.15)

I provide a brief overview of the major contributions and seeming contradictions that Hip-Hop culture has contributed to in regard to social identity. All of the topics represented in this section are worthy of their own in-depth study, so this section is intended to be a deliminator in regard to the literature review; but context for the purposes of my study.

Hip-Hop is often praised for bringing issues of race and class to the forefront; creating music and culture in response to dominant cultural supposition. One seeming contradiction is that in many ways Hip-Hop is now mainstream, so which perspectives are counter-narrative? While issues of gender and sexuality in popular Hip-Hop are often written off as being sexist, misogynistic and homophobic, there are many Hip-Hop feminists and “out” Hip-Hop artists and fans. And while the idea of the impact of Hip-

Hop on religion(s) is still a fundamentally new idea, the roots of Hip-Hop are inextricably linked to Black Nationalist religious traditions such as the Nation of Islam, yet the emergence of the Christian use of Hip-Hop such as "Holy Hip-Hop," has taken hold across the U.S.

Hip-Hop and Race

Boyd (2002) writes, "Hip-Hop could care less what white people have to say. In fact hip-hop most often wants to provoke white people to say something, while laughing all the way to the bank" (p. 11). And Boyd is probably right, at least when he refers to White fans, that is as long as they are buying the records. Estimates show that between 60-80% of Hip-Hop albums are consumed by white people (Rose, 2008). Perhaps a better assessment might be that Hip-Hop artists don't necessarily care about making White people comfortable, welcome or included according to their art. Certainly mostly White male record label executives seem to want to make money from Hip-Hop independent of the content, as long as it sells (Asante, 2008; Rose, 2008). And while Hip-Hop is decidedly consumed, produced and loved by multi-racial fans across the United States and the world, the main narratives in popular mainstream Hip-Hop tend to come from Black males and the companies tend to be owned by old, wealthy White men, which is pattern of economic dominance that has persevered in the racial landscape of the United States throughout its existence (Ogbar, 2007). This makes for ripe dialogue and conversation about historical and contemporary manifestations of racism in society, which supports and informs a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy.

The understanding of race in Hip-Hop is complicated by several factors. First, mainstream Hip-Hop narratives are generally created and represented by Black males.

Mainstream Hip-Hop narratives grow out of the life experience of Black youth. While youth are actually the primary consumers of Hip- Hop, and while Hip-Hop culture often offers the opportunity to deconstruct race and racism, ultimately it is left to the consumer to "do the work." The question is, does Hip-Hop teach white people to be more aware of white privilege and white supremacy? Can Hip-Hop do this and still be relevant and innovative for people of color?

Hip-Hop embraces the contradictions and seemingly reconciles itself for fans and activists, and yet perpetuates problematic patterns of domination at other times. In a 2008 interview with Wiretap (Thill, 2007), 37 year-old activist/educator, Jlove Calderon, a White woman, spoke about her understanding of race as taught to her through Hip-Hop,

> WireTap: Some feel whiteness is not a color but a privilege, while others feel it is not a race at all.
> Jlove: I've been taught that race is a social construct, meaning that nobody is white. Back in the day, in order to control the working class and ensure that they would not band together to overthrow the oppressive elite upper class, racial classifications were created and disseminated to cause a social disease. What we have now is the result of hundreds of years of lies and conditioning which has us believing that there is more than one race. Now, despite my belief that there are no separate races, just cultures, because of the racist society we live in, I use the terms in order to communicate and work through these issues. Until we can finally demolish all forms of racial inequity, I will talk about the issues with terminology that everyone understands. When you go up in a high school, or just about anywhere, to give a workshop about racism, it's hard to start with "There's no such thing as a white person." Know what I mean? (Thill, 2007).

Based on Calderon's understanding of learning about racism through Hip-Hop, it has in fact done its job. Chideya (1999) interviewed young people within the continental United States, coast to coast, and spent a considerable amount of time with young, white youth who live in the Midwest and identify primarily with Hip-Hop culture. Chideya categorizes changing racial and ethnic attitudes in U.S. culture as being directly

connected to the dialogue in Hip-Hop. Chideya represents the belief that Hip-Hop has the potential to heal and unify racial divisions because of the number of whites who are loyal fans and avid consumers of Hip-Hop. She interviewed white youth who see themselves reflected in the counter-narratives of Black youth, and who develop empathetic beliefs about current social conditions primarily due to the history, commentary and information they receive in Hip-Hop. The results of her work also prove that Hip-Hop effectively teaches white youth about racism.

However, Kitwana (2006) offers an explanation and premise for the different types of white people that are Hip-Hop fans. He specifies that not all white people, or other non-Black young people, who listen to Hip-Hop form meaningful relationships with Black people, or become informed or politicized by Hip-Hop music. However, he indicates that some do and that it is worthwhile to delineate. He uses a concentric circle model to clarify those who are deeply and intimately connected to Hip-Hop and to Black people, all the way to those who consume Hip-Hop solely in the presence and process of only interacting with other white people or people of their same racial groups (i.e. Asian Hip-Hop),

> Indeed, Hip-Hop has profound things to tell us about race, if we dare to listen. Its pull is irresistible, its range infinite. It rattles our wildest assumptions about race, even as it indulges and bears out every stereotype imaginable. It is a product of America at the dawn of the twenty-first century that instills in nearly everyone, from its most strident opponent to its fiercest defender.... Like W.E.B, Dubois's *Souls of Black Folk*, hip-hop's impact cuts across generations, race and class. (Kitwana, 2006, p. 110)

George (1998) researches all aspects of Hip-Hop culture including the economics of the industry, the myths, and the ethical and moral questions. He makes clear connections between young Black Hip-Hop fans, and other racial and ethnic groups who

claim Hip-Hop identity and culture within the 20-year span of 1978-1998. Race is a central theme and he interviews many Hip-Hop heavyweights such as Russell Simmons about the nuances and contradictions in Hip-Hop especially as it relates to race such as the tension between who the consumers, fans, producers and artists are-and how racial power dynamics influence those interactions between artists and producers/record owners and between artists and fans. His observation is less optimistic than Chideya or Kitwana, in regard to the power struggles between white executives and artists. He believes that the fundamental relationship is still largely opportunistic and based on historical patterns of white domination, and therefore permeates all aspects of Hip-Hop culture. However, I tend to be more optimistic, and believe that the interest in Hip-Hop can bring all students to the proverbial table for dialogue about racism (Rodriquez, 2009) if educators are willing to utilize Hip-Hop to teach about social justice issues because as Campbell (2007) writes,

> Hip-Hop has, in other words, humanized not just blackness-for the Civil Rights movement did that-but ghetto blackness, given it a name, an identity, a voice, and a viable economy of expression. Moreover, Hip-Hop has made suburban youth aware of the lived experience (the actual and embellished) of their inner-city counterparts, giving them cause to seek alternatives to the banality of suburban middle-class life. (p. 328)

While the nuances of Hip-Hop's impact across multiple identities will be discussed further, it is clear, that race is still the primary question, fascination and concern, when analyzing who has the rights to claim an authentic Hip-Hop identity. This makes for ripe dialogue and conversation about historical and contemporary manifestations of racism in society, which supports and informs a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy.

Hip-Hop and Socioeconomic Class

It is not only in academia that Hip-Hop has made a mark (Akom, 2009; Hill, 2009); perhaps more importantly is that it is a billion dollar global industry. Yet Hip-Hop is often a story of extremes. Many of the narratives in Hip-Hop represent the most impoverished conditions or the most decadent lifestyles with very few stories reflecting the middle class, despite the fact that the majority of African Americans are middle class (Rose, 2008; Ogbar, 2007; Dyson 2007). The United States economy, as a capitalist entity, certainly has a major investment in Hip-Hop music and culture. One out of every ten records sold in America prior to 2007 was Hip-Hop, but after 2007 Hip-Hop sales began slightly decreasing (Coates, 2007). Hip-Hop surpassed country music in 2001 to become the third largest music category behind pop and R&B (noting that R&B is considered by many to be a part of Hip-Hop culture, an inextricably linked entity, which would make Hip-Hop and R&B overwhelmingly the largest music category in the world). It is an industry that grossed $3 billion in 2000 and $10 billion by 2008 (Rose, 2008, Watkins, 2005).

Rose (2008) makes the argument that the state of commercial Hip-Hop (which is largely driving the economic discussion) is a result of five key factors existing on a macro level and crucial to understanding the impact of Hip-Hop's commercial success on our individual and collective cultural identity: 1) use of new media/technology and new music markets have changed the entire music industry, 2) unprecedented corporate consolidation of major companies has created less competition and less room for independent products, 3) continued expansion of illegal street economies because of changing labor practices and the prison industrial complex-have been glorified in Hip-

Hop without structural analysis 4) increased post-Civil Rights desire in American popular culture for racist, stereotypical music and television to authenticate the Post-Race state and/or colorblindness 5) overt violence and sexually explicitly/authentic/misogynistic entertainment seen in mainstream culture.

Rose's assertion is that we are in a different time, one that is unlike any other time in U.S. history, and in order to move forward with a progressive social justice agenda, the unique dynamics of the current economic state must be clearly stated. Her analysis is crucial in understanding why Hip-Hop has in some ways become a victim of its own success (Dyson, 2007). Hip-Hop was created in response to racist and classist policies, but has now become a viable commercial entity with many artists benefiting from the "system" that they aim to critique, while maintaining authenticity as a critic of racial and economic inequity.

Hip-Hop, but most especially the rap industry, is exploitative in many ways, focused on social indicators as signs of wealth and happiness. However, it is also cited by Hip-Hop entrepreneurs repeatedly, that more young people of color have gone to medical school, law school, started businesses, bought homes and acquired actual wealth due to the business and culture of Hip-Hop (Liles & Marshall, 2005; Simmons, 2007). This tension within Hip-Hop around who "owns it," who consumes it, who benefits from it, and whose stories get told, is an ever-evolving narrative of the results of capitalism in a racist society. Shawn Ginwright (2004), a teacher from Oakland, CA, highlights the issues between Black middle class youth and low-income Black youth, and how Hip-Hop may be "fantasy" for one group, and reality for another (p.19). The same holds true for youth from various ethnic and class backgrounds; Hip-Hop can be attractive because it

provides a window into another person's lived experience or a mirror of your own. Both the window and mirror functions are equally important and potentially useful in the classroom.

Additionally, considering how the artists who succeed choose to create philanthropic entities offers another conversation around whether "charity" has a place in a social justice agenda. Rose (2008) cites complex artists such as 50 cent, Jermaine Dupree, Dr. Dre, Ludacris, Nelly, P-Diddy, Queen Latifah, David Banner, Wyclef Jean, Russell Simmons and Jay-Z as being philanthropic artists who also profit from stereotypical and/or damaging cultural production. And while Jay-Z has specifically done work on water rights in developing countries and created a powerful scholarship which offers funding to youth that are "average',, non traditional or GED and formerly incarcerated students (www.scartersf.org), is that enough given that he has glorified criminal activities, violence, misogyny and homophobia? I posit that it is the American way to rely on corporations that we support with our business to also create social programs and philanthropy. I don't believe mainstream Hip-Hop should be held to a different standard; however there are examples of artists such as Talib Kweli, Mos Def and Dead Prez who are particularly mindful of the corporations they endorse (Asante, 2008).

Rose (2008) writes definitively, "Charity, absent a powerful social justice agenda, fosters the status quo even as it temporarily abates the symptoms of inequality" (p.212). While I agree with Rose, I do not agree that Hip-Hop artists should be held to different standards than other artists, but perhaps there should be consideration taken on the part of the corporate entities who make money on the backs of working and middle class youth.

Rose's challenge is another reason why educators should cultivate a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy that can begin to wrestle with these complexities and contradictions to create real-time social change.

Hip-Hop and Gender

There is nothing in Hip-Hop more contested right now than the subject of gender roles and how women in Hip-Hop are talked about and represented in popular media (Sharpley-Whiting, 2008), especially women of color (Rose, 2008). The Don Imus debacle in April 2007 clearly illuminated the tension within Hip-Hop culture, when he referred to the women (who were mostly African American although not exclusively) from the Rutgers's University basketball team as "nappy-headed hos," and claimed it was acceptable for him to do so because Hip-Hop artists frequently call women "hos." The tension and opportunity, being that there is the dualistic elements of both oppressive sexism and liberatory feminism operating powerfully within Hip-Hop culture. The overt representations of sexism are often more mainstream than the representations of feminist artists, scholars and fans; however their presence should never be left out of the equation. Prior to this episode Don Imus had not been considered a member of the Hip-Hop generation given his other social identities as an older white male, born in 1940, twenty-five years before the Hip-Hop generation began. However his scapegoating of Hip-Hop created a national dialogue about derogatory language in Hip-Hop, especially as it relates to men and women of color (Sharpley-Whiting, 2008; Dyson, 2007).

Oprah Winfrey, who has not been an avid supporter of Hip-Hop, got involved to try and unpack the mixed messages in Hip-Hop regarding women by holding two "Town Hall" meetings on her daily television show. Unfortunately for many who are Hip-Hop

activists, Oprah's attempt at "honest" conversation made things worse for two reasons. First, it appeared as if she had already taken sides, in that she was squarely blaming Hip-Hop artists for creating a "double standard." This accusation came without any institutional, cultural or historic analysis of race or gender in the United Sates. The seeming "double standard" that exists between Hip-Hop artists (mostly men of color) and men outside of Hip-Hop culture, allowed the artists to use words like "ho" without it being offensive or sexist. The artists claimed that because of historical and contemporary manifestations of racism, their use of sexist language was more acceptable than a white male using similar language in regards to women of color. The second, and more important problem with Oprah's presentation of the issue, is that she was either unaware or chose not to call on the myriad of Hip-Hop feminists, both male and female, who have been analyzing and critiquing commercial Hip-Hop's use of sexist language and imagery for many years prior to Imus's attempt at "passing the buck." Instead, Oprah invited music moguls such as Russell Simmons and Kevin Liles, and young women from Spelman College who were protesting the visit of Hip-Hop artist Nelly because of his video "Tip Drill" which depicted him swiping a credit card between a Black woman's buttocks.

Since Oprah did not have any "experts" on Hip-Hop feminism such as Byron Hurt (2006), Joan Morgan (1999), Tricia Rose (2008), Rachel Raimist (1999) or Hip-Hop activist such as Rosa Clemente (www.greenparty.org), Jlove Calderon (wegotissues.org), Shamako Noble (hiphopcongress.org), it also led to a one-sided, myopic defense of Hip-Hop, primarily coming from leaders of the music industry (Rose, 2008; Williams, 2007).

Snoop Dogg and other commercial Hip-Hop artists are not the only people who

have defended Hip-Hop's often-misogynistic view of women. However, I believe that Hip-Hop tends to be less a creator of misogynistic messages and more of a mirror, reflecting back the same contradictions that have existed in patriarchal U.S. culture for centuries. Dr. Ben Chavis, (President/CEO of the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network) said at the Women's Media Center: In Defense of Hip-Hop, "The truth is, misogyny is not a hip hop created problem. Misogyny is a deep-seated problem that is embedded in the historical evolution of the United States as a nation (www.thuglifearmy.com).

Rose (2008) writes of six distinct defensive "explanations" or justifications that are often cited for why misogyny exists in Hip-Hop, 1) overall society at large is sexist 2) artists should be concerned about their art first and foremost, 3) rappers are unfairly singled out (perhaps because of a highly racialized society) 4) the root of the problem is being ignored (pervasive sexism), 5) Hip-hop is telling us how it really is, and that will help guide us into solutions and 6) most of the radio content spares the listener from the more vulgar sexist sentiments (p. 265). However, Rose goes on to write that none of these defenses actually address why the content of Hip-Hop music needs to be sexist at all and I agree. She suggests that we should encourage progressive young people to "focus on and fight Hip-Hop sexism" specifically as opposed to making all youth who listen to Hip-Hop feel responsible for dismantling the much larger issues of systemic sexism. She believes this will ultimately serve as an opportunity for youth to become more empowered and invested in a Hip-Hop culture that is inclusive and liberating for all of its constituents. This represents another argument supporting the use of Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy; in that using Hip-Hop in educational spaces will create an opportunity for media literacy (Steinberg, 2007) as well as a deeper understanding of internalized

sexism by deconstructing harmful imagery.

Byron Hurt (2006), a Hip-Hop "head," former athlete and anti-sexist educator, created a film (with the assistance of many Black women) called *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*. The film is his attempt to ask the hard questions to Hip-Hop artists, fans, and scholars, about sexism and homophobia in Hip-Hop, such as why does Hip-Hop music need to be sexist at all? The film has become a huge success-worldwide because it is done by and for the Hip-Hop generation and addresses the questions from an insider perspective. Some of the questions include topics such as why men in Hip-Hop often seek to classify women differently as "bitches," "hos," or "sisters/respectable" women. Hurt asks women in the film how they feel about being called "hos" simply based on how they are dressed (which is one signifier for many men interviewed) and the women say that they have no real objection because they know it is not true and in fact allege that the men who are saying that must have "personal" problems. Other questions include, why is it that sexism is not seen as an important topic for men in Hip-Hop to be concerned with, since Hip-Hop readily takes on other social issues such as racism, classism, etc.? The film is ultimately an example of a Hip-Hop text that can be used in an educational context to further our understanding of sexism in Hip-Hop, and subsequently in American culture. In the next section on sexual orientation, I will delve further into this aspect of identity in relation to Hip-Hop culture.

Perry (2004) speaks to the issues of Hip-Hop's overt sexism with an understanding that it is complex,

> I argue that masculinity in Hip-Hop reflects the desire to assert black male subjectivity and that it sometimes does so at the expense of black female subjectivity and by subjugating women's bodies, while at other times it simply reveals the complexity of the black male identity. (p.177)

Essentially, she is asserting another contradiction in Hip-Hop, by not wanting sexism to be at the center all Hip-Hop related work and dialogue, unlike Rose (2008) because sometimes, in her opinion, and I agree, it does not always need to be. Perry focuses on five areas of examination in regards to gender and Hip-Hop: 1) the often difficult and yet historic role women have played in Hip-Hop, 2) the "conflicted" representations and images of gender identity within Hip-Hop, 3) the efforts of women in Hip-Hop to create feminist spaces, 4) the "abundancy" of sexism in the music industry overall, and 5) the on-going possibilities for "gender liberation" within Hip-Hop. Perry calls on examples of women such as Mc Lyte, Salt-n-Pepa and Queen Latifah as seminal to creating pathways for women in Hip-Hop, and commends others such India Irie, Alicia Keys, Mary J. Blige who are continuing the legacy of powerful women in mainstream Hip-Hop by creating empowering and often feminist-inspired art. Perry recommends increased media literacy to break out of the binary of seeing artists as good or bad, positive or negative, conscious or commercial, or feminist or not. She suggests a much deeper rendering of the layers that inform each text (song) or performance by analyzing the many pro-feminist messages that are caught between the obvious binary tensions.

Pough (2007) surmises, "Most Hip-Hop feminists believe that the needs of the hip-hop generation require new strategies and different voices" (p.vii). And she notes that Hip-Hop feminists, while utilizing personal narrative (songs, poetry, essays, etc.) to critique Hip-Hop, also recognize their own "complacency" and "complicity" in maintaining the status quo. And Pough notes that most women in her study, and other young women of color she has encountered have no desire or use for the actual word

“feminism” because of the negative connotations of middle class, white women dominated First Wave feminism in the United Kingdom and Second Wave feminism in the United States in the 1960s. I continue here with the previously mentioned (Thill, 2007) Wiretap interview with white Hip-Hop activist Jlove Calderon on the issue of feminism,

> WireTap: So would you call yourself a feminist? How would you define the concept? Jlove Calderon: I don't call myself a feminist, and I don't know if I am viewed as one. The feminist movement did a lot for women in this society, which of course I am thankful for. But it was fraught with race and class issues, as it was mostly a white, middle-class women's movement. Feminism, the way it lives, doesn't speak to me. I fight for what I believe is just for all people, but especially young women. (Thill, 2007)

Morgan (1999), an African-American journalist, writes about her relationship with the concept of feminism and what that must entail to be reflective of her multiple identities,

> In short, I need a feminism brave enough to f*** with the grays. And this was not my foremothers’ feminism. Ironically, reaping the benefits of our foremothers’ struggle is precisely what makes their brand of feminism so hard to embrace. The “victim” (read women) “oppressor” (read men) model that seems to dominate so much of contemporary discourse (both black and white), denies the very essence of who we are…In my quest to find a functional feminism for myself and my sistas—one that seeks empowerment on spiritual, material, physical and emotional levels—I draw heavily on the cultural movement that defines my generation. As Post-Civil Rights, post-feminist, post-soul children of hip-hop we have a dire need for the truth…We need a feminism that possesses the same fundamental understanding held by any true student of hip-hop.(p.61-62)

Based on my review of the literature it doesn’t appear to me that Hip-Hop is necessarily worse off than other activist movements when it comes to gender issues and certainly not in comparison to U.S. culture at large. In fact I would argue the conversations are more courageous, layered, and realistic but still very much in progress, since traditional labels connected to anti-sexism movements are not sufficient. This is important in the

juxtaposition of white middle class women as teachers, and how they see themselves in regards to sexism and feminism. This critical analysis and deeper understanding of the issues within Hip-Hop culture is extremely necessary in being able to use Hip-Hop as Social Justice Pedagogy, and would surely provide rich dialogue and analysis in an educational space.

Hip-Hop and Sexuality

> Hip-hop's one of the most homophobic of all musical genres… There's excitability in our culture around issues like homosexuality, transvestites and so on. And as wonderful and outrageous and avant garde as rap is, it's never meaningfully challenged any of these boundaries… the hip-hop community isn't suddenly going to embrace these folk [gays/lesbians], but they're going to have to make their peace with them one way or another. ---Michael Eric Dyson (In Amani, 2007)

> Hip-hop is just one aspect of our society that reflects this [homophobia] and reflects these ideas and puts them out there in music and they probably use language that is a little more offensive to some of us than we are comfortable with. But the system we live under is homophobic. The system we live under is sexist. Gay people in New York, one of the most, you know, so-called progressive cities in the world, we are still rallying, and begging, and lobbying, and protesting for the right to marry each other, and to adopt babies, and to live in a world where we are or hold people accountable. And so it is important just to say that the world is change.
> - Staceyann Chin (Chin, Bealsey & Deadlee, 2008)

Dyson and Chin are both right; Hip-Hop music is often homophobic and it is also reflective of the larger societies' overall ignorance about homophobia. However, as is the case with many issues in Hip-Hop, the often-homophobic mainstream representation of Hip-Hop is not the end of the story. In the past few years Queer People in Hip-Hop are becoming more visible as artists, organizers, and perhaps most importantly as consumers. This is evident through new organizations, out artists, allies such as Kanye West and Byron Hurt speaking up against homophobia, and books that have claimed that many

Hip-Hop artists are in fact closeted or on the "down low" despite their homophobic rhetoric (Dean, 2008). The "down low" phenomenon, while often referring to Black men, is symptomatic of the larger homophobic culture that exists within the United States. The fear of being "outed" as a phenomenon stretches beyond Hip-Hop culture (Rose, 2008).

Regardless of the mechanism, homosexuality in Hip-Hop has become a pressing topic of discussion. This means homophobia may become less acceptable within Hip-Hop culture as people become more sensitized to difference and accepting of various expressions of sexuality. However, it is still seen as somewhat socially acceptable to be homophobic, just as it is acceptable to be misogynistic in mainstream American culture. These two areas are deeply connected in how manhood, especially Black manhood, is constructed within Hip-Hop. The hetero-hyper sexualization that is a result of hundreds of years of oppression is evident in the outright indignation of gay men in particular. Homophobic artist Trick Trick recently stated that he didn't want Queer people buying his records with their "faggot money." But many believed this statement was connected to a publicity stunt created by him, since the controversy created more buzz than his actual album. Out gay artists and bloggers such as Rob Smith (2008) responded by writing,

> While it is great that there are gay rappers out there battling some of the homophobia in the hip-hop community, I wish they didn't have to resort to the same faux-macho swagger as their straight counterparts. I suppose I'm a part of the problem just by writing about this, but there's a reason none of us knew who this Trick Trick fool was 10 days ago. Blatant homophobia like this in hip-hop is becoming less and less mainstream, as we have gay-friendly rappers like Kanye West and openly gay rappers like Tori Fixx and Deadlee on the scene. (http://www.afterelton.com/blog/robsmith/gay-rappers-stand-up-to-homophobic-trick-trick)

It is also helpful that Byron Hurt, a feminist, straight-male-identified ally, made the film,

Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes because he was able to question Hip-Hop artists about their overt use of hate speech directed at gay men, even so-called conscious rappers like Common, are participants in heterosexist and outright homophobic language. In addition, Khalil Amani, another straight male ally, (www.myspace.com/khalilamani) writes somewhat in jest, albeit with an undercurrent of truth, on the subject of why there isn't a sub genre of "gay rap,"

> First of all, why not? We've got gangsta rap (Just Ice/NWA/Snoop Dogg/The Game), beefing rap (50 Cent/Ja Rule), freaknik rap (Two-Live Crew/Petey Pablo), party rap (Hammer/Young Joc) dope boy rap (Young Jezzy/Rick Ross), sex rap (Trina/Lil Kim), backpack rap (A Tribe Called Quest/Kanye West), conscious rap (Common/Talib Kweli), militant rap (Public Enemy/dead prez). And then there's Snap, Crunk, and Hyphy rap genres. So what's the problem with gay rap, besides homophobia? (www.myspace.com/khalilamani)

And, he goes on to equate struggles for civil rights for Queer people, as being synonymous with other civil rights movements,

> You homophobic hip-hop rap African Americans sound just like white folks sounded forty years ago when the day came for integration and they had to "allow" black folk to eat in the same restaurant and drink out of the same water fountain and shit in the same toilet! They used to call white people who helped blacks achieve civil rights "African American lovers." So, by all means, call me "faggot lover." I'll be dat! (www.myspace.com/khalilamani)

Since 2001, there is an international Queer Hip-Hop Festival that happens across the world, called Peace OUT. Peace OUT is a gathering of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender hip-hop artists, activists, fans and supporters who celebrate the LGBT presence in hip-hop music and culture. Originally hosted by East Bay Pride, it is produced by Sugartruck Recordings in conjunction with Phat Family Records. Peace OUT is the first and only Hip-Hop performance event hosted by a pride festival in a major U.S. city and features independent LGBT hip-hop artists from throughout the U.S. and Europe (sugartruck.tripod.com/id19.html). This is a major cultural shift and an

alternative for fans and artists who want to participate in Hip-Hop culture without heterosexism and homophobia. The following organizations create alternative spaces for artists and fans to find community and solidarity without having to compartmentalize their "Hip-Hop" selves: Phat Family is a record label and website which includes profiles of "Homo Hop" performers, Gayhiphop.com has a webpage discussion forum, and Rainbowallianceent.com is a GLBT Hip-Hop forum.

On June 20, 2007, National Public Radio hosted a roundtable discussion on Hip-Hop and homophobia entitled "Is it free speech or hate speech?" (Chin, Beasley & Deadlee, 2007). New York-based writer and poet Staceyann Chin (who identifies as West Indian and an out Lesbian), rapper and satirist Deadlee (who identifies as being an out gay African American man), and author and educator Mo Beasley (who identifies as being a heterosexual African American man), were the invited guests. Social commentator and writer Farai Chideya (a heterosexual African American woman) conducted the interview. Their frank and courageous conversation highlights the multiple issues present in truly understanding homophobia in Hip-Hop (www.npr.org retrieved February 13, 2009).

Deadlee, a self proclaimed "homo thug" artist who fully embraces a Hip-Hop aesthetic discussed the importance of him being "out" so that his fans would have a role model. He sees this as a very important part of his life's work. He said he was inspired to come out with his own rap album because he was tired of hearing his favorite artists like DMX, 50 Cent or Eminem, use words like "fag" in their work. He notes that this did not hinder him from listening, because ultimately he felt that he reaped more benefits from their work, however, it did inspire him to want to add his own stories and political

viewpoint. I believe Deadlee epitomizes what is attractive about Hip-Hop to so many youth, namely the ability and opportunity to add your own critique and perspective. Deadlee released a song called "Good Soldier," which addresses suicide and young people, and believes his contribution to Hip-Hop can make it better and change the world.

There is still a long way to go within Hip-Hop culture, and society at large, but my belief is that various members of Hip-Hop communities are having courageous conversations about sexuality that will lead to liberation for all members of the Hip-Hop generation(s). The homophobic examples as well as the liberatory role models both provide opportunity for dialogue and understanding that is more culturally relevant for many urban youth in comparison to more traditional progressive movements. This is another example of how a critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy can use the texts, voices, and lived experience of the Hip-Hop generation(s) to dialogue about an inclusive social justice agenda.

Hip-Hop and Religion

> Hip-hop and religion is huge. There is an entire generation that has grown up on hip-hop, so it just makes sense that the generation would express its spirituality in the culture that it has grown up in. (Kitwana, 2006)

Collaborations and conversations about religion and Hip-Hop go back to the beginning of Hip-Hop. Much of what Africa Bambaataa had hoped for was that Hip-Hop would become the spiritual movement for a whole generation of youth. Hip-Hop and religion can be most closely linked to Hip-Hop and activism. The art of Hip-Hop can be used to spark interest in religion or deeper understanding of the impact of religion on current societal conditions, however Hip-Hop in and of itself is not a religion, just as it is not a full-fledged political movement. It can be used as the soundtrack spark for various

religious traditions. This is not especially unique as there have been Rock-inspired religious services such as the "U2 Eucharist," a fusion of Episcopalian liturgy and the music of Irish rock band U2. There is also Dharma Punx, Buddhism inspired by punk rock and Judaism emboldened by rap.

But in the last decade, Christian Hip-Hop has spread as more young people come to churches, log onto related web sites and use buying power to support Christian Hip-Hop music created by artists such as Cheryl Wray (one half of Salt-n-Pepa) Reverend Run (one third of Run DMC, Chris Martin (one half of Kid-n-Play) Kurtis Blow (Hip-Hop pioneer turned Pastor), Mase (Hip-Hop artist turned Pastor) or specific gospel Hip-Hop artists such as Kurt Franklin. This is known as the Holy Hip-Hop Movement. Much of this movement is believed to be in response to youth wanting a Hip-Hop aesthetic without negativity (ww.holyhiphop.com).

However, many believe that Islam is Hip-Hop's official religion (Ogbar, 2007). Whether rappers are Muslim or not, many of their lyrics are influenced by Islam, the Nation of Islam and the 5% Percenters movement. There are two mains reasons for this: their inherent Afro-Centric and self-reliant philosophies and Bambaataa and Herc's relationships to the organizations during the early years of Hip-Hop. All three of these religions are distinct and have separate ideology and leadership. Further explanation is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Black Nationalist ideology in any religious tradition (Chang, 2005) also complimented the fact that Hip-Hop was first created as a tool to fight racist oppression and white supremacy and to uplift people of color. Although, the Nation of Islam has different core beliefs from Islam, Louis Farrakhan and Dr. Benjamin Chavis are intimately connected to the Hip-Hop Political Action Summit (HSAN) and regularly

speak at their events, encouraging and challenging Hip-Hop artists to improve the future of the youth that follow them, by focusing on positivity in their lyrics. The Nation of Islam seeks to eliminate racism and bring peace to disenfranchised communities worldwide, and believes that Hip-Hop is a vehicle for doing that (Asante, 2008).

Hip-Hop artist Russell Simmons has publicly declared that he does not practice Islam or Christianity, but are in fact is Buddhist. In 2000, KRS-One came out with an album that was called Spiritual Minded, ultimately urging fans to see his organization, The Temple of Hip-Hop as being a spiritual option for Hip-Hop heads. Incorporating conversations about religious beliefs and doctrine is not a simple task for many educators. Fortunately understanding the contemporary and historical contributions and manifestations of religions' influence on Hip-Hop and vice versa, a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy is another opportunity to invite students to question, critique and understand the role of religion in society.

Summary

Hip-Hop culture has a rich history in Afro-Diasporic art forms, with deep roots in activist traditions and social movements. However, it is essentially an art form that has become a rich culture, which often seeks to critique societal conditions. Each new Hip-Hop generation adds their own aesthetic based on their current needs and social location. Because of this complex history and interplay, Hip-Hop culture is organically positioned to offer layered and nuanced pedagogical frameworks based on the tenets of critical pedagogy. The review of the literature in this chapter was based on the following assumption that social identities matter for both the teacher and the student. We all have a worldview that is informed by experiences within our various communities. Therefore, it

is not helpful to ignore this in the classroom. Hip-Hop does not purport a color-blind or otherwise homogeneous understanding of the world.

In fact, knowledge of Hip-Hop culture requires that educators have an understanding and belief that multiples levels and types of oppression exist. This includes institutional and cultural racism, classism, sexism, and that Hip-Hop both perpetuates and interrogates these ISMs. Hip-Hop does not exist in a vacuum. It was started by and for young people of color in urban areas, and this should never be left out of the analysis, discussion, or history. Otherwise, it is likely to replicate oppression. And, it is essential that educators respect the reality that Hip-Hop is a culture complete with agreed upon elements as well as shared language, dress, style, history, values, and unifying capabilities, whether they agree with and/or approve of it or not.

In this chapter, I have examined Hip-Hop music and the historical process by which it moved from being seen as only an art form and subculture to a critical cultural movement with global and national significance (Asante, 2008; Spady et. al., 2006). In addition, I have provided a socio-political account of the conditions that gave birth to Hip-Hop music and culture. I have explored how historical and contemporary issues frame the significance of the social justice roots of Hip-Hop culture and how that lends itself to its use as Social Justice Pedagogy. I also addressed some of the major claims made on behalf of Hip-Hop culture as a tool for social change and the impact of Hip-Hop on social identity and how that can contribute to the creation and understanding of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Chapter 3 will delve deeply into the process through which Hip-Hop culture has become Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy for many educators. Using the tenets of critical

pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and other critical theories that support the use of Hip-Hop as pedagogy, I will describe the elements of Hip-Hop that lend itself to use as pedagogy, and describe how Hip-Hop has become its own radical pedagogy for many educators.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW: HIP-HOP & EDUCATION

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the theoretical grounding for Hip-Hop as pedagogy and present a framework for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. I will also review the literature examining the process through which Hip-Hop culture has lent itself to/ is being used as/ has become incorporated as a Social Justice Pedagogy for many educators. Drawing on the literature examining the tenets of critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, critical race theory, critical multicultural education and feminist pedagogy, I demonstrate how Hip-Hop has evolved to exhibit the elements of Social Justice Pedagogy. This manifests in three distinct ways: Hip-Hop as public pedagogy (Baszile, 2009), Hip-Hop as the subject of study (Hill, 2009) and Hip-Hop as pedagogy to teach other subject areas (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

In this first section I will discuss the relationship between Hip-Hop culture and education. The debates about whether Hip-Hop is an effective tool for educating youth are complicated, often contentious and passionate, because Hip-Hop culture emerged in the context of and in response to racist and classist societal conditions (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994). There are traditional educators and administrators who do not think that the value of using Hip-Hop outweighs the negative connotations associated with "rap" music (Dyson, 2007). Critics of Hip-Hop generally cite song lyrics that encourage "vulgar" language, misogynistic content, glorification of violence, and an overemphasis on materialism (Rose, 2008). The caution from the other end of the spectrum comes from Hip-Hop artists, such as KRS-One, long regarded as "The Teacher," who suggests that

teachers need education and training from Hip-Hop artists before attempting to teach about Hip-Hop (Akom, 2009; Parmar, 2005). Some artists believe Hip-Hop may be best left outside the classroom to preserve its "authenticity" as an out-of-classroom phenomenon (Kelley, 1998). Some educators (Baszile, 2009; Rodriguez, 2009) challenge the idea of the dichotomy about whether it should be utilized or not since Hip-Hop already has a "significant presence in the classroom" (Akom, 2009, p.53), regardless of whether or not it is acknowledged by teachers or artists. I agree with the latter, and assert that a debate about the effectiveness of utilizing Hip-Hop in educational contexts might have been necessary in 1978 as Hip-Hop was blossoming in the New York City underground scene, or perhaps even in 1987 when radio personality and social commentarian Davey D. (David Cook) turned in his Masters thesis on Hip-Hop entitled "The Power of Hip-Hop," or even in 1999 when *Time* magazine declared the Hip-Hop takeover as evidenced through Lauryn Hill's Grammy triumph that same year. However, it is clear that Hip-Hop is here to stay, and the influence of Hip-Hop on both students and teachers is profound (Hill, 2009; Hendershott, 2004) and worth researching (Baszile, 2009).

Scope of Literature Review on Hip-Hop & Education

As early as 1990, Georgia Lee Smith graduated from Texas Woman's University with a dissertation entitled, *The effects of using rapping as a method of teaching directional map reading skills to African American third-graders.* Public school teacher Louanne Johnson, portrayed by Michelle Pfeiffer in the film *Dangerous Minds* (Smith, 1995), used the lyrics of Hip-Hop group Public Enemy to successfully teach urban high school students, not the Bob Dylan lyrics substituted in the Hollywood film. El Puente

Academy in Brooklyn, NY, began incorporating Hip-Hop into the curriculum in the early 1990s with ample amounts of both criticism and success. Clearly, Hip-Hop in education is not new, even in the high school classroom.

Houston Baker (1995), author of *Black Studies, Rap and the Academy*, called on the broader public audience to embrace Hip-Hop as a tool for education in the early 1990s. The desire to utilize Hip-Hop stems from the idea that the music and culture are often cited as providing public pedagogy, meaning that the music itself has intrinsic educational value (Rodriguez, 2009; Baszile, 2009; Parmar, 2005; Hendershott, 2004).

H2Ed which stands for Hip-Hop Education (founded in 2002) is based in New York City, the University of Hip-Hop (founded in 2000) is based in Chicago, and the International Association of Hip-Hop Education (founded in 2006) is based in Washington, D.C. are three independent examples of successful non-profit organizations who have begun collecting data to substantiate their belief in the transformative power of Hip-Hop culture within education (www.hiphopassociation.org). These and other programs, such as Blackout Arts Collective (founded in 1997), have pioneered the connection between Hip-Hop, education, and activism in schools, correctional facilities, and out-of-school spaces. For over thirty years, educator/fans/artists have been studying Hip-Hop and utilizing it for educational purposes, many with great success (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Akom, 2009). As some educators and artists debate its effectiveness, others continue to move forward in utilizing Hip-Hop as an educational tool.

The Hip-Hop Generation(s) as Bridge Builders

In an interview conducted by Jeff Chang (2007) in the book *Total Chaos*,

Marc Bamuthi Joseph (educator/activist/artist) echoed this shift in *who* the educator is and *why* their perspective may lend itself to adopting a Hip-Hop Pedagogy,

> There is an entire generation of educators who come to the classroom with radically different relationships to oral language (hip-hop), access to information (Internet), and velocity of thought (wireless communication) than their predecessors. As such, we've sought to change the way literature and literacy are taught, invoking a different approach to language to empower young people to dismantle the narrow images that hip-hop reflects back to them. (p.14)

Pioneering Hip-Hop scholars such as Tricia Rose, Robin D.G. Kelley, Michael Eric Dyson, Todd Boyd, and Mark Anthony Neal are often referred to as the "new black intelligentsia," in part because of their major contributions to Hip-Hop scholarship (Hamilton, 2004, p. 34). Hip-Hop studies, while not yet a distinct sub-discipline, is moving out of African American Studies programs and is increasingly found in American Studies, cultural studies, communications, media studies, English, ethnic studies, performance studies, sociology, and women's studies at the college level because its broad global and national appeal continues to increase (Watkins, 2005; Forman & Neal, 2004). "A new group of scholars is coming of age. The current generation of scholars is definitely a 'Hip-Hop generation:' they grew up immersed in the culture" (Hamilton, 2004, p. 35) and this new generation is influencing education overall and the academy specifically. In the article "Making some noise: The academy's Hip-Hop generation" Kendra Hamilton (2004) quotes Dr. Scott Heath, Assistant professor at Georgetown University, "Making polemical statements and throwing in a few rap lyrics is not hip-hop scholarship" (p.35). But Hip-Hop scholarship does have the opportunity to begin to ask a new set of questions, as illustrated by Dr. Heath. He asserts that the essential issues are "what hip-hop is, who it belongs to, who it's speaking to and [who it is] speaking for"

(2004, p. 35). Hip-Hop studies within the academy is fast becoming its own discipline. But where does that leave K-12 teachers who also want to utilize Hip-Hop?

Public schools in urban areas are like what Hip-Hop once was: under-resourced, ripe for social change, and full of organic creativity (Runell, 2006). It makes sense that teachers representing the Hip-Hop "nation" or Hip-Hop generation would eventually find a way to bring Hip-Hop into the classroom. The term "*hip-hop nation* has emerged as a cultural commonplace, employed in reference to a relatively coherent social entity founded in shared interests or values and collective practices that bind constituents within a symbolic unity" (Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 5). In 2007, self-proclaimed Hip-Hop head and educator Tony Mohammed called for like-minded educators to take their Hip-Hop selves "out of the closet," and do what needs to be done to build bridges with the students by utilizing shared knowledge and appreciation of Hip-Hop culture. He started a popular Myspace blog entitled, "Trials of a Hip-Hop Educator" (www.blog.myspace.com) to create a cyber-community of Hip-Hop educators.

Hip-Hop songs, videos, and artist profiles provide much-needed texts and offer counter-narratives to dry, often hegemonic, social studies and civics classes. They put forward missing commentary on the lasting effects of racism and classism; stories that are not typically found in mainstream history textbooks (Baszile, 2009). Analyzing Hip-Hop lyrics offers the opportunity to create rhyming dictionaries, expand vocabulary and encourage poetry and creative writing skills; giving voice to students who often feel powerless in schools that aren't meeting their needs (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Parmar, 2005). The business of Hip-Hop has proven educational in economics classes where teachers use case studies of young Hip-Hop entrepreneurs to teach successful

business strategies (Morikawa, 2005). Some teachers use Hip-Hop to educate younger children in mathematics, memorizing times tables to popular Hip-Hop beats (Kajitani, 2006). Gym teachers are capitalizing on the "pop" of Hip-Hop to motivate students to enjoy physical education classes by offering Hip-Hop dance classes (Anthony, 2001) and theater programs are incorporating Hip-Hop Theater initiatives to diversify drama programs (Hoch, 2007).

Such creative strategies in schools are redefining the way educators think about curriculum. The "classics" as we know them in most schools generally entails books authored by and about old, dead, white men (Baszile, 2009). While the themes of jealousy, betrayal, greed, lust, courage, fear, and love are universal, the social identities of the characters in the stories found in most textbooks are not. According to New York University Professor David Kirkland, he emphasizes, "I have argued that you can learn the same practices/approaches/knowledges in language and literature from reading Tupac as you can from Shakespeare. The themes and conflicts present in Shakespeare are all present in Hip Hop" (Runell, 2006, p.2). Conflicts, such as murder, deceit, family violence, and poverty, are clearly present in Hip-Hop lyrics. The legendary Tupac himself stated in an October 1995 interview,

> I love Shakespeare. He wrote some of the rawest stories, man. I mean look at Romeo and Juliet. That's some serious ghetto shit. You got this guy Romeo from the Bloods who falls for Juliet, a female from the Crips, and everybody in both gangs are against them. So they have to sneak out and they end up dead for nothing. Real tragic stuff. (http://www.streetgangs.com/topics/tupac/102595out.html)

Hip-Hop Artists' Perspective

Harlem rapper, Juelz Santana added his perspective in a 2006 *VIBE* article, "How can Hip-Hop be taught if it is a culture, a way of life? It would be great if a teacher is

familiar with the Hip-Hop culture in schools so that he/she can use this culture to better explain the lesson to his/her pupils. Better examples in a lesson and/or teaching can be provided to students by a teacher who is familiar with the Hip Hop culture" (Runell, 2006, p.2). Stic Man of Dead Prez agrees, "If we are gonna put Hip-Hop in schools it shouldn't just be taught by teachers and scholars, it should be taught by people who actually do Hip-Hop; real DJs, real graffiti artists, it will make it relevant" (Runell, 2006, p. 3). Some artists are up for the challenge, such as mega-producer 9th Wonder, who currently teaches a course on Hip-Hop at North Carolina Central University.

9th Wonder, teaching as an artist-in-residence, utilizes his unique position as a long-time Hip-Hop consumer and current artist/producer. He says,

> I plan to spend the rest of my life teaching about the real history of hip hop-especially at HBCU's, [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] furthering the teaching of Hip-Hop studies by people who lived through it. I am in the unique position of still being in the industry and teaching about the industry. It's like I would rather talk to someone who lived through the Civil Rights Movement than just read about it in a book. I am also in a unique position because I am from the South. I didn't grow up in New York with artists like KRS-One walking around my neighborhood, which makes my perspective unique too. Teaching about hip hop history is what I am supposed to be doing." (Runell, 2006, p.4)

9th Wonder is currently teaching the historic course he designed beginning with the "birth" of Hip-Hop in the early 1970s, spanning through March 9, 1997, the day Notorious B.I.G. was killed, (Runell, 2006). His emphasis on geography, perspective and authenticity is an important layer in understanding who can and should teach about Hip-Hop. While it may be ideal that all courses which emphasize the artistic elements of Hip-Hop (i.e. making beats, writing songs, learning graffiti art, or elements of Hip-Hop dance), are taught by practicing artists, I don't believe that is always necessary or feasible. However, much of what I have advocated for in the creation of a Hip-Hop

pedagogy involves other aspects of Hip-Hop, including its use in teaching other subject areas (i.e. language arts, social studies) or as its own study (i.e. politics of Hip-Hop), which means that multiple skills sets and different types of educators are necessary. However, for this to be successful, the creation of a model that is squarely based on the understanding and social justice history of Hip-Hop culture is essential.

Other Hip-Hop artists are not losing out on the chance to impact education in a direct way. Kanye West created a program called "Loop Dreams," which puts state-of-the-art music studios and Afro-Centric curriculum in under-resourced schools (Runell, 2006) to combat the severe dropout problem in today's high schools (Noguera, 2008). Russell Simmons has supported New York City teacher's unions in asking for more pay for teachers. He also started an organization called Hip-Hop Reader, a youth-based literacy and leadership program that offers incentives for high school students to improve their reading skills (www.HSAN.org). Dead Prez, created a documentary, *It's Bigger than Hip Hop*, which offers viewers a history lesson on Bay Area political movements connected to larger civil rights movements. On the organic connection and importance of his role in Hip-Hop and education, M-1 of Dead Prez says,

> It's our culture. It's not split in two. I see myself as a contributing factor—a freedom fighter. It's why I started rappin.' My true education came from our movement. I have seen it work inside schools, but more in the community. Schools can be authoritative, like jails. The real world education comes from observation and participation. We are directly involved in charter schools, independent schools, for Black and Latino kids. We are always doin' fundraisers, or talking to, or providing some assistance to schools or administrators in those schools. (Interview, June 13, 2006)

Leaders of the New School

For many educators across the United States, utilizing Hip-Hop feels like a radical, solitary experience. But for others, the writing is on the wall, and there is an urgency to improve the curriculum and pedagogy in fledgling public schools. Kirkland says, "There is a Hip-Hop education movement right now and while it runs the risk of becoming a fad, we must continue to add fuel to 'the hip-hop education movement' because it promises real and radical social and educational change" (Runell, 2006, p.2). Toni Blackman, U.S. State Department Hip-Hop Ambassador, has traveled all over the globe educating teachers about how to maximize the use of Hip-Hop in the classroom, "When people say it's not a movement, maybe they should say 'I don't know about this movement" (Runell, 2006, p.4). Blackman advocates for all teachers to learn how to use utilize Hip-hop as an educational tool in order to better serve their students.

The resistance to Hip-Hop is complicated by three primary factors. The first factor is the negative public perception of mainstream Hip-Hop without the balance or knowledge regarding the positive aspects or activism associated with and credited to Hip-Hop culture (Koza, 1999). Critics such as John McWhorter and Stanley Crouch (Dyson, 2007) claim that Hip-Hop is too riddled with violence, commercialism and misogyny, to be useful in the classroom. McWhorter (2003) writes,

> Many writers and thinkers see a kind of informed political engagement, even a revolutionary potential, in rap and hip-hop. They couldn't be more wrong. By reinforcing the stereotypes that long hindered blacks, and by teaching young blacks that a thuggish adversarial stance is the properly "authentic" response to a presumptively racist society, rap retards black success. (www.city-journal.org.html/13_3_how_hip_hop_html)

Unfortunately McWhorter does not offer tangible evidence of Hip-Hop as the culprit in hindering anyone's success, nor does he offer a viable alternative. In fact, his

perspectives often sound elementary and over-generalized (Dyson, 2007). Incidentally, even critiques of Hip-Hop can offer the most valuable teachable moments because the biggest critic of Hip-Hop and society in general, is usually Hip-Hop itself (Dyson, 2007; Watkins, 2005; Paul, 2000). Daniel Zarazua, DJ/Teacher, at Unity High School in Oakland, CA agrees, "Through Hip-Hop my students and I have tackled everything from immigration to homophobia and sexism" (Runell, 2006, p.2).

A second factor is the overall cultural disconnect between teachers and students inherent in most U.S. classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2001). At present in the United States, approximately 41% of school-age children in grades K-12 identify as Black or Latino (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). In contrast, 80 % of the teachers in U.S. schools are white women (National Collaborative on Diversity of the Teaching Force, 2004). In fact, almost half of U.S. schools do not have a single teacher of color on staff (Jordon-Irvine, 2003). This means that most students of all backgrounds will graduate from high school having been taught primarily by white women. While it is understood that race and gender are only two salient social identities in educational settings, they are important in how students navigate "success" in educational spaces and often serve as indicators of who will be successful in formal school settings (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Despite the positive results reported by many educators (Hill, 2009; Runell & Diaz, 2007, Parmar, 2005) it has been an uphill battle to prove the merits of formally infusing Hip-Hop into education. Blackman (In Runell, 2006) recalls, "It's only recently that Hip-Hop in education has been embraced. I remember getting cancelled by the principal the day of an event, they didn't care that I had a Masters degree, they didn't give a damn that I traveled the world, all they knew is that this girl is… a rapper" (p.3).

The third factor is the hidden curriculum and the ceiling that is imposed by the opportunity gap for students of color (Baszile, 2009; Love, 2004; Apple & King, 1983). The opportunity gap for students of color in the United States is often mistakenly referred to as an achievement gap, which measures Black and Latino students standardized test scores in comparison to white students. This is a mistake because over the course of U.S. history, public schools have repeatedly failed to create equitable educational opportunities for students of color (Love, 2004) as evidenced in monumental court decisions such as *Plessy v. Ferguson 1896*, which required separate and *equal* schools. And then *Brown v. Board of Education 1954* was meant to be an "equalizer" for students of color by creating access to well-funded predominantly white schools. Unfortunately rather than measure the "achievement" of such legal decisions, school policies, school administrators, curriculum developers, or teachers, it has been erroneously framed as a *student* achievement gap. Solely measuring the achievement of the students is a byproduct misguided policies and decision-making. The achievement problem is more of an opportunity gap (Noguera, 2008). The use of Hip-Hop as pedagogy will not be able to change the history or the obvious policy-maker "achievement" gap that is present in schools, however it does offer a new way for teachers to think about student culture, and an opportunity to create more culturally relevant teaching methods (Ladson-Billings, 2001), which are not only reflective of the often hegemonic, white, male version of American culture (i.e. hidden curriculum), but in fact are reflective of all students; which has proven to create more opportunity for student success for all students (hooks, 1995).

Teaching Hip-Hop culture as its own subject area or using a Hip-Hop text as a hook to get students engaged is not the same as utilizing a critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy and

should not be seen as lure or trick to other more traditional canonical knowledge, which would otherwise undermine the intent of creating a Hip-Hop Pedagogy based on the tenets of Social Justice Education (Paul, 2000). In order to understand how Hip-Hop can be utilized as Social Justice Pedagogy, it is important to understand the origin of, and the journey from Hip-Hop culture to Hip-Hop pedagogy, by analyzing the theoretical underpinnings.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Hip-Hop Pedagogy

> I came to theory because I was hurting-the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend to grasp what was happening around and within me. Most importantly, I wanted to make the hurt go away. I saw in theory then a location for healing. (hooks, 1994, p.59)

hooks's description of the significance of theory and its usefulness in her journey is a poignant commentary on the quest to theorize Hip-Hop as pedagogy. The practical applications of Hip-Hop as pedagogy are being demonstrated daily in classrooms across the U.S. Yet the justification for this pedagogical application of Hip-Hop remains under-theorized. Using the pedagogy aspect of the four-quadrant model designed by Adams & Marchesani (1992) as a framework, it will allow for a more detailed understanding of the dimensions and development of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. The Four Quadrant model is based on nurturing the following elements, which are equally necessary for achieving a "socially just" educational experience for all students: Educator/Teacher, Student, Curriculum, and Pedagogy.

The principles of Social Justice Education originate from "multiple pedagogical traditions and epistemologies" (Adams et. al., 2000, p. 30) and extend beyond simply focusing on pedagogy by paying equal attention to the examination of institutional,

cultural and individual elements of oppression such as racism, classism and sexism. It is also investigates how these types of oppression influence all aspects of education including policies, administrators, curriculum developers, as well as teachers, students, curriculum and pedagogy (Marchesani & Adams, 1992). Adams et. al. (1997) define social justice as both a process and a goal, "The goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" (p. 300). As evidenced in Chapter 2, I assert that the foundation of Hip-Hop culture is based on similar tenets of social justice education, and therefore the use of Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy is a logical manifestation of Hip-Hop culture. All aspects of social justice education could be used in relation to analyzing and understanding the impact of Hip-Hop culture on education, which is why it is essential that Social Justice Education tenets provide the foundation for utilizing a Hip-Hop Pedagogy. The next section will further clarify the elements of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, explain the roots of Social Justice Education, and further examine the impact and interplay of critical pedagogy in the development of Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy. A Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy manifests itself in three ways: Hip-Hop culture as public pedagogy, Hip-Hop culture as subject area of its own, and Hip-Hop as pedagogy to teach other subject areas.

Foundational Assumptions of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is a layered approach founded on social justice education and is embedded in an understanding and appreciation of Hip-Hop culture. It is reliant on critical pedagogy and community activism, which validates youth culture and allows for increased media literacy. Educators are currently teaching Hip-Hop as its own

subject, utilizing Hip-Hop as pedagogy to teach another subject, and/or rely on public pedagogy to draw students into the class.

Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is not the only answer to urban education problems, white supremacy, or other societal ills (Hill, 2009; Nieto, 1999). It can be a tool for liberation when utilized in an affirming and exploratory way. Hip-Hop Pedagogy does not require or encourage educators to speak in Ebonics/Black English, slang, or learn how to rap, dance, dress in a particular way, or otherwise appropriate a culture that is not their own. But it does encourage "cultural congruence" with student culture (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Paul, 2000). Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy also requires that educators merge their knowledge as a teacher with the knowledge of the students thereby creating a learning environment that is mutually beneficial (hooks, 1995).

Social identities matter for both the teacher and the student. We all have a worldview that is informed by experiences within our various communities. Therefore, it is not helpful to ignore this in the classroom, and while Hip-Hop culture can offer complex and nuanced understandings of identity, educators should also be aware of the social power dynamics historically associated with their identities (Ladson-Billings, 1997).

It is essential that educators respect the reality that Hip-Hop is a culture complete with agreed upon elements as well as shared language, dress, style, history, values, and unifying capabilities, whether they agree with and/or approve of the elements of the cultural or not (Price, 2006; Parker, 2003).

Geography matters in Hip-Hop (Kitwana, 2002; Watkins, 2005). Hip-Hop culture generally has local influences, heroes, stories, and values. Hip-Hop music in Tel Aviv,

Israel or Lagos, Nigeria may sound very different than Hip-Hop music in Atlanta, Georgia. Utilizing students' expertise to investigate how the narratives and culture are influenced by geographic locations is often very helpful (Parmar & Bain, 2006; Watkins, 2005).

Hip-Hop *music* has a short shelf life, particularly with young people. As soon as educators "figure it out," it has probably become dated. Accepting the short shelf life and the desire for youth culture to be counter-culture is beneficial. It is okay not to know what is "hot." It is more important that educators are open to learning from students. This interest in students is a sound strategy for keeping the students engaged (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Utilizing Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy to engage students is based on tenets of critical pedagogy (Freire, 2002), including storytelling as a counter-narrative (Love, 2004) and is transferable beyond Hip-Hop music and culture (Baszile, 2009).

Principles of Social Justice Education

The principles of Social Justice Education originate from "multiple pedagogical traditions and epistemologies including: laboratory and intergroup education, community organizing, women' studies, black studies, adult literacy education, experiential learning, and social and cognitive development models" (Adams, 2000, p. 30). Social Justice Education principles include five important elements.

The first is balancing the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process. This element acknowledges a holistic approach in working with students (Akom, 2009). This is especially important in utilizing Hip-Hop as pedagogy because, Hip-Hop culture often provides an outlet for students that is separate from the traditional

educational experience (Hallman, 2009). The mis-use of Hip-Hop as a manipulative lure (Paul, 2000) to other subject areas, or an overzealous critique of Hip-Hop, could disrupt the students' ability to find comfort or understanding in their private consumption of Hip-Hop culture (Rodriguez, 2009).

The second element is to acknowledge and support the personal (the individual student's experience) while illuminating the systemic (the interactions among social groups). This is reflective of how students learn best (hooks, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1997, Nieto, 1999) because students are able to reflect on their own stories, as well as how their lived experience is part of the Cycle of Socialization (Harro, 2000). The Cycle of Socialization allows for an extensive examination of how elements of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, religious oppression, and gender oppression are manifested in individual interactions, cultural norms/values and how systemic inequities are created or reinforced through laws, policies and institutions.

The third is attending to social relations in the classroom, meaning that all students need to feel safe, secure, and represented in order to learn. For students to find value in any learning environment, they have to be in schools that are functioning properly on all levels. Many urban public schools in the U.S. are plagued with unsanitary, dilapidating, crime-ridden environments that do not properly address the needs of their students or teachers. A student cannot feel safe and secure in a classroom that is part of a "broken" system (Noguera, 2008). Utilizing a Hip-Hop pedagogy cannot address this issue, however, utilizing diverse artists texts such as "They Schools" by Dead Prez (2000), may provide students with an opportunity to begin assessing the socio-political of their community and their school. Additionally, teachers are also responsible for tone

setting in the classroom, and creating learning environments that are conducive for all students (Ladson-Billings, 1997).

The fourth principle of Social Justice Education is utilizing reflection and experience as tools for student-centered learning. "Teaching that begins from the student's world view and experiences as the starting point for dialogue or problem posing" (Adams et. al., 2000, p.43) is optimal in Social Justice Education. Curriculum and pedagogy that are reflective of students' lives is fundamentally more useful for *all* students. However, since there is an obvious disconnect between the social identities of the mostly white public school teachers (90%) and students of color (41%) (Ladson-Billings, 2001); it is unlikely that knowledge of, and/or inherent appreciation of Hip-Hop as a legitimate source of curriculum and pedagogy will exist, however it can be taught (Baszile, 2009). Noting that Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy necessitates an understanding that meeting the students where they are, and finding common ground, is the priority i.e. using Hip-Hop to connect only if that is what students are interested in, not forcing or assuming their interest.

The fifth is to value self-awareness, personal growth, and social change as outcomes of the learning process. Understanding that there are multiple ways to measure student success, beyond simply utilizing test scores (Noguera, 2008) allows for a more liberatory learning process for students (Love, 2004). While it may require more imagination and creativity to find multiple modalities of assessment (Akom, 2009), it ultimately creates a learning environment that fosters ingenuity because various learning styles (Kolb, 1984) and intelligences (Gardner, 1993) are celebrated and valued. Noting

that public school teachers may still have to "teach to the test" but they can still find engaging ways to do so.

Summary

Social Justice Education is both a process and a goal, and encompasses many of the tenets of other critical theorists (Nieto, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1997), and as such it is essential that it be the foundational basis for a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy. Social Justice Education seeks a holistic balance in how teachers view students, including the primary aspects of their classroom experience—emotionally and cognitively. The argument for bringing Hip-Hop into the classroom is based on students being able to bring their whole selves into the educational experience (Nieto, 1999). Additionally, Social Justice Education recognizes the individual student's needs, experiences, and roles in society, but also recognizes the fact that individuals exist within systems. This is especially true in Hip-Hop pedagogy, because Hip-Hop culture is both critical of the structural systems but is also a participant in them.

Utilizing reflection and experience for student-centered learning allows for the student to be in control of documenting their own experience and creating counter-stories utilizing Hip-Hop culture (Love, 2004). Students are also empowered to bring new knowledge into the classroom, such as Hip-Hop texts (songs, lyrics, books, quotes, etc.) that the teacher may not be familiar with, which provides the opportunity for new knowledge to be created, fusing the expertise of both teacher and student (hooks, 1995). This also allows for media literacy to take place, because the teacher can then pose questions that allow the students to begin to fairly critique or further investigate the Hip-Hop texts they are consuming (Steinberg, 2007). Personal growth, awareness, and social

change as key elements of a Social Justice Education pedagogy allow students the freedom and support to develop on multiple levels and recognize how they might be able to effect social change in their respective communities. Therefore, the elements of Social Justice Education are the basis for bringing Hip-Hop Pedagogy into any learning community.

Fundamentally, my understanding is that Social Justice Education is a more fully developed all encompassing view of education that was influenced by the tenets of critical pedagogy as demonstrated by Freire (1970). The foundation of a Hip-Hop pedagogy is rooted in a Social Justice Education foundation, but is specifically manifested through the evolution of critical pedagogy. For the remainder of this paper I will refer to a Hip-Hop Pedagogy, and a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy, as being synonymous. Akom (2009) has also created a Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy based more literally on the original work of Freire (1970), which he refers to as CHHP. The model I am positing is based on the history, framework and origins of both Social Justice Education and Freire's Critical Pedagogy. However, in an effort to distinguish the specific characteristics I have attributed to a Hip-Hop pedagogy, I have labeled my framework: Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Critical Pedagogy

Beginning with the assumption that Hip-Hop music and culture have indeed provided a public pedagogy (Hendershott, 2004) for many educators as well as students, it makes sense that Hip-Hop would fit into a model of critical pedagogy as set forth by Freire (2002) because it has provided popular education for many people; often referred

to as the CNN (a U.S. based national source of news) for Black America or the BBC (a British based international source of news) for global youth (Ogbar, 2007).

The roots of critical pedagogy can be traced to the origins of critical theory (which derive from the Frankfurt School, whose influence is evident in the liberatory works of Freire and other critical scholars (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). Despite the fact that they did not employ the term “critical,” scholars and activists, such as W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, and Ida B. Wells were early critical theorists whose work laid the foundation for post-modern interpretations of critical pedagogy (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008). For Freire, liberatory education is based on the development of critical consciousness, which enables learners to recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences within the social contexts in which they are connected. Coming to consciousness is the first step of "praxis," designed as an ongoing, self-reflective approach to taking action. Praxis involves engaging in a process of learning theory, application of theory, evaluating the process of applying it to a situation, reflection on the results, and eventually taking that information to create “new” theory. Social transformation then becomes the product of praxis at the collective level (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008).

While there is no fixed definition of "critical pedagogy," the term has undergone many transformations as educators have continued to create new strategies to confront changing social and historical contexts. However, the term has traditionally referred to the following elements. The creation of educational theory and teaching/learning practices should be designed to increase critical consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. There is also a focus on liberation through the development of critical

consciousness, including a collective socio-political element and belief that critical consciousness is the necessary first step of a larger collective political struggle to challenge and transform oppressive social conditions and to create a more equitable society. A reconfiguring of the traditional student/teacher relationship in which the teacher is the active agent (the one who knows, and the students are the passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge (elimination of the "banking concept of education") is also necessary. Thereby the classroom is visualized as a site where new knowledge, grounded in the experiences of students and teachers alike, is produced through meaningful dialogue (http://mingo.info-science.uiowa.edu/~stevens/critped/definitions.htm).

Freirian Critical Pedagogy is based on five main elements which constitute his Critical Praxis, all of which must be present: identification of a problem, analyzing the causes of the problem, developing a plan to address the problem, implementing the plan which addresses the problem, and evaluating whether or not the plan was successful in addressing the initial problem (Freire, 2002). Because Hip-Hop culture was originally developed (Chang, 2005) in response to a series of social problems, its historical essence resembles Freire's trajectory of problem-posing education. Presently, many Hip-Hop artists still seek to critique oppressive social conditions, and utilizing a critical pedagogy becomes the necessary approach to analyzing the problems on various levels and for creating attainable solutions that have yet to be conceived. .

Freire (2002) writes, "Problem posing education is revolutionary futurity. Hence it is prophetic (and, as such, hopeful)" (p.84). Banking education as outlined by Freire describes a system where teachers "deposit" selected and constructed knowledge through "narration" into empty vessels also known as students. Students are not required or

encouraged under banking methodology to think critically about the information they are receiving, to assist in the creation of new knowledge, or to act to make social change in their communities. Freire's idea of popular education exists in response to the banking model by encouraging educators to humble themselves by changing their paradigm. Freire believes that knowledge should be co-constructed by teacher and student and should not be simply reiterated back in the form of testing withdrawals from the "bank." In fact, he writes that, "Education is suffering from narration sickness" (p.71).

Freire goes so far as to claim that this lack of creativity in education is by design and is replicated in order to maintain the status quo, which may explain the criticism (Dyson, 2007) and fear of many educators to learn how to implement Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy,

> the capability of banking education to minimize or annul the student's creative power and to stimulate their credulity serves the interests of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed or to see it transformed. The oppressors use the idea "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical facilities and it not content with the partial view of reality but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another (Freire, 2002, p.74).

In order to create new knowledge, it is important to understand that Freire wanted educators to take his lead by creating new theory and innovative practice. Paulo Freire said in an interview with Donald Macedo in *Teachers as Cultural Workers* (1996), "I don't want to be imported or exported. It is impossible to export pedagogical practices without reinventing them. Please tell your fellow American educators not to import me. Ask them to re-create and rewrite my ideas" (p. xi). I posit that the many of the iterations of Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy (Akom, 2009; Baszile, 2009) are in the spirit of, and pay homage to Freire's concern about being exported or imported.

Context is especially important in understanding how critical pedagogy continues to morph and be transformed because ultimately as students change and are empowered, critical pedagogy becomes uniquely nuanced in different contexts. Steinberg (2007) cautions against a quick-fix definition of critical pedagogy because,

> Critical pedagogy isn't formulaic, it isn't stagnant, and it isn't an *is*... Critical pedagogy is not guided by do-gooders, not guided by liberal groupies, or rayon-clad teachers who want to save needing students from pedagogies of prescription, administration, state standards, or even the latest flashdance pedagogical method. (p.ix).

Many critical theorists (Kincheloe, 2008; Paul, 2000; Nieto, 1999) have played a role in expanding and transforming Freirian critical pedagogy by expanding the initial focus from socio-economic class/workers rights to include categories such as culture, race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, language, age, religion and ability. Contemporary critical educators have adopted more postmodern, anti-essentialist conceptions of identity, language, and power, while at the same time maintaining the Freirian emphasis on "critique" by interrupting oppressive power dynamics and calling for social change. Contemporary critical educators, such as Giroux (1983), McLaren (2000), Shor (1992), and Kincheloe (2008), have also taken on the critique of institutions such as the prison industrial complex, social structures, such as the military, as well as other issues such as globalization, popular culture, and identity politics around the exploration of multiple social identities, in an effort to expand what Freire originally created.

Wink (2005) defines critical pedagogy as being able to name, to reflect critically, and to act. But she stresses, "I doubt I can teach someone how to do critical pedagogy. We do not *do* critical pedagogy; we live it. Critical pedagogy is not a method; it is a way of life" (p. 120). I believe the same to be true of Hip-Hop as pedagogy; if this

methodology speaks to an educator because of who they are and/or because of who their students are, then it is an organic connection and will likely bring a great deal of success to their educational practice. While critical pedagogy may be difficult to teach, I assert that it is not impossible and that the fundamental elements of Social Justice Education should be taught, as well as an appreciation and understanding of Hip-Hop culture. Like Hip-Hop culture and Social Justice Education, emotion can be expressed through critical pedagogy,

> Critical pedagogy has the right to be angry, express anger, anger at the uses of power and at injustices through the violations of human rights. Critical pedagogy isn't talk-liberals talk. Critical Pedagogy takes language from the radical-radicals must do. (Steinberg, 2007, p. ix)

A more organic understanding of Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy, or Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy, would be better learned if these two areas-Social Justice Education and Hip-Hop culture- were given ample attention. The next section of this literature review will focus on contributions to a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy by critical theorists, Romney, Tatum & Jones (1992), hooks (1995), Nieto (1999), Ladson-Billings (1997), Delgado & Stefanic (1993), and Love (2004).

Feminist Pedagogy

Similar to critical pedagogy, the importance of collaboration and partnership is also supported through Feminist pedagogy, asserting that teaching and learning about oppression must be a joint effort between teachers and students, as well as between different social identity groups. Romney, Tatum & Jones (1992) write about the "partnership model," which is based on cooperation and sharing of selves. They believe that a feminist pedagogy, as illustrated through a partnership model, is focused on sharing

and collaboration. It is life-generating and nurturing for both students and teachers (Adams et al., 2007; Akom, 2009).

This pedagogy also maintains that learning should be grounded in the life experience of both teachers and students and that interrelationships between participants are a critical part of achieving a successful learning environment. Romney et. al. (1992) believes this is best achieved through storytelling (Love, 2004). Allowing students and teachers to tell their own stories contributes to the learning of other participants, as well as the teacher, and allows for healing (hooks, 1995). This contributes to a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy because Hip-Hop is inherently based on storytelling and by bringing in culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1997) and often counter-narrative stories (Baszile, 2009; Love, 2004), students may feel inspired to critique societal conditions and therefore empowered by the curriculum. This framework potentially creates a partnership between the teacher and the students by validating student experiences (Romney et al., 1992, p. 97).

Engaged Pedagogy

bell hooks has been a strong proponent of liberatory pedagogy, which she refers to as engaged pedagogy (Stovall, 2007; Rodriguez, 2009). hooks believes 'Engaged' is a powerful and useful way to talk about liberatory classroom practice, "It invites us to always be in the present, to remember that the classroom is never the same. Students leave any classroom with information whether the pedagogy is engaging or not" (hooks, 1995, p.159). hooks's observations are primarily but not exclusively reflective of her work in higher education.

This examination of the problems within education, are better understood though the analysis of systemic inequities and the ways in which social power impacts educator/student relationships (Shor, 1992). hooks (1995) states, "In the institutions where I have taught, the prevailing pedagogical model is authoritarian hierarchical in a coercive and often dominating way, and certainly one where the voice of the professor is the "privileged" transmitter of knowledge" (p.85).

Hooks (1995) understands that educators have the "power" to change educational outcomes by making changes in classroom power dynamics,

> To focus on covering material precisely is one easy way to slop back into a banking system. That often happens when teachers ignore the mood of the class, the mood of the season, even the mood of the building. The simple act of recognizing a mood and asking, "What's this all about?" can awaken an exciting learning process. (p.156)

But this often makes educators uncomfortable because they do not get to retain their "expert" status when delving into unknown areas or subject matter. However, hooks asserts that this is precisely why it is important. It is not only students from underrepresented backgrounds who benefit from validation in the classroom. When students are able to share their experiences, this offers a counter-narrative (Baszile, 2009; Love, 2004; Parmar, 2005) in the classroom that affirms the presence of all who are part of the classroom community. In fact, hooks (1995) believes that an engaged pedagogy is critical for success because, "This pedagogical strategy is rooted in the assumption that we all bring to the classroom experiential knowledge, that this knowledge can indeed enhance our learning experience" (p.84).

However a liberatory or engaged pedagogy can also be co-opted just as any other idea in a system that is inherently flawed and can also be misused when the educator is

not prepared (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Hill, 2009). This has repeatedly been the case for people of color and for women who are negatively impacted by hegemonic educational structures and policies (Love, 2004). Appropriation of selective pieces of liberatory framework and ideology is a major issue,

> Within white supremacist capitalist patriarchy, we have already witnessed the commodification of feminist thinking (just as we experienced the commodification of blackness) in ways that make it seem as though one can partake of the "good" that these movements produce without any commitment to transformative politics and practice. (hooks, 1995, p.71)

hooks cautions that educators need to think differently about themselves and their work if they are to be successful in implementing engaged liberatory pedagogy,

> If professors are wounded, damaged individuals, people who are not self-actualized, then they will seek asylum in the academy rather than seek to make the academy a place of challenge, dialectical interchange, and growth. (hooks, 1995, p.165)

These two tenets (possible co-option and self-work) require that educators who wish to utilize Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy remain aware of the potential, but seek to make liberatory choices in the use of a Hip-Hop pedagogy. Hip-Hop culture as pedagogy (Hallman, 2009) can be co-opted in a manner that makes it more oppressive to students, rather than liberating. This is a major issue in making a decision to utilize Hip-Hop in the classroom, because it has historically been a separate space for students (Hill, 2009; Hallman, 2009). The second tenet is that educators must work on themselves. Utilizing a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy is not about educators appropriating a culture that is not their own or working out unresolved issues on the students. It is about creating a place where new ideas can flourish and where both educators and students are healthy participants (Adams et al., 2007).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1997) posits her version of a critical pedagogy under the umbrella of culturally relevant pedagogy. Ladson-Billings' work is based on several years of research in elementary schools. She worked to chronicle the elements of successful teachers of African American students, who are systemically targeted through the misnomer of the "achievement gap," when in fact what we have in the U.S. is an "opportunity gap." Ladson-Billings highlights at least ten commonalities in teachers who practice culturally relevant methods.

Culturally relevant teachers are clear about how their own social identities impact their work with students and parents and are confident about how they see themselves and others in relation to their respective school communities (Adams et. al., 2007). They view teaching as an art rather than a skill (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Additionally, they also believe that *all* students can succeed academically, rather the inevitable failure for some students (Cochran-Smith, 2004). Culturally relevant teachers view themselves as part of the community in which the school and the students exist and see teaching as a way of giving back to their respective communities (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2002). Culturally relevant teachers assist students in making connections between their local, national, racial, cultural, global, and social identities, and they do not compartmentalize these aspects of student learning to specific subject areas (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Jordan-Irvine, 2003). They are also able to structure social interactions in a way that is fluid, equitable and extends beyond the classroom (Rodriguez, 2009).

Because relationships are the basis for culturally relevant teaching, teachers in Ladson-Billings' study also demonstrated sincere connectedness with students and encouraged students to connect with each other, so that organic and authentic relationships were able to form. These relationships encouraged a learning community where students were able to learn collaboratively (Adams et. al., 2007). This collaborative environment is supported by the belief of the teachers that knowledge is continuously recreated, recycled, and shared by teachers and students alike (Akom, 2009; Freire, 1998). Lastly, despite differences in approach, all of the teachers who were deemed successful as culturally relevant teachers shared a view of curriculum content that was critical and evolving to meet the needs of the students by scaffolding learning opportunities for all students (Wink, 2005).

"Cultural congruence" is also a major factor in how teachers interact with students (Hallman, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1997). Cultural congruence describes the ways that teachers alter "their speech patterns, communication styles, and participation structures to more closely resemble those of students' own cultures" (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p.16). Similarly to hooks (1997) and Romney et al. (1992), Ladson-Billings' primary argument is that students learn when they are recognized as adding value to a learning environment. This comes from being comfortable with culture and cultural differences and finding materials and pedagogy that are reflective of the social identities of the students. Teachers can do this in many different ways, but pretending to be colorblind, or uncomfortable in naming and reflecting upon racial identities or racial dynamics, is not one of them, "The negative effects of cultural normativity are brought about by not seeing one's history, culture or background represented in the textbook or

curriculum or by seeing that history, culture, or background are distorted" (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 17).

Successful culturally relevant teachers do not expect or reinforce the status quo, because reinforcing what already exists would not be optimal for the students they are serving; "The passion for equality in the American ethos has many teachers (and others) equating equality with sameness" (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 33). Most importantly, not only are the teachers dissatisfied, but they want the students to question what they have been taught about themselves, society, and possibilities for change,

> Culturally relevant teaching is about questioning (and preparing students to question) the structural inequality, the racism, and the injustice that exist in our society. The teachers I studied work in opposition to the system that employs them. They are critical of the way that the school system treats employees, students, parents, and activists in the community. In their classrooms they practice a subversive pedagogy. (Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 128)

Culturally relevant pedagogy continues to build on critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy, and engaged pedagogy by being specific about what it does and does not look like. All of the aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy are applicable to a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy because each idea is connected to what is necessary to effectively utilize Hip-Hop as pedagogy. The main ideas, such as creating new knowledge, questioning systems, and teachers being clear and confident in themselves, contribute to what a Hip-Hop pedagogy strives to do. Additional aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy that are applicable in adopting a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy include: not compartmentalizing aspects of the students' identity (leaving Hip-Hop out of the classroom for so long has done just that). As well as creating "cultural congruence" with the students by being aware of cultural norms amongst students, which are largely based on Hip-Hop culture

for many students; this would greatly increase the ability to form more organic connections and partnerships with students (Baszile, 2009; Parmar, 2005).

Critical Multicultural Education

According to Nieto (1999) Critical Multicultural Education works to effectively make learning experiences more positive for students, particularly students from marginalized groups. Critical Multicultural Education (CME) pedagogy is categorized by the following five tenets. A CME pedagogy affirms students' culture without trivializing the concept of culture itself; a CME pedagogy challenges hegemonic knowledge; a CME pedagogy encourages teachers to complicate traditional pedagogical perspectives; a CME pedagogy problematizes a simplistic focus on self-esteem; and a CME pedagogy acknowledges that it cannot do it all by itself.

One of the key aspects regarding the use of Hip-Hop is the benefit of using something to motivate and stimulate students, which is relevant to their every day lives (Hendershott, 2004). Nieto (1999) writes that in relation to the content in education, students are eager to express opinions regarding both the tangible curriculum, which is the obvious content, as well as the covert "hidden" curriculum (Baszile, 2009). Nieto cites a particular study, which revealed that over a third of the students found that *none* of the course content related to their lives outside of the classroom. Similar to Ladson-Billings (2001), Nieto stresses that a successful component of critical multicultural education is when teachers take an active role in learning about their students' backgrounds and lives (Romney et. al., 1992). Understanding Hip-Hop culture is a critical piece in how this works, because it is a powerful influence over students, which helps the teachers to learn more about various cultural and environmental conditions

influencing their students, and that has the potential to create a more active learning environment (Parmar, 2005). Hip-Hop music also enables students to learn through their ability to tell their stories via the music or listen to other stories told through the music. Hip-Hop is intrinsically a medium that allows stories to be told about struggle and overcoming obstacles related to race, class, gender, religion, and other forms of oppression (Rose, 1994).

"It [critical multicultural education] is not neat; it does not have all the answers" (Nieto, 1999, p. 207) and like critical multicultural education, a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy does not provide all the answers to closing the opportunity gap, dismantling white supremacy, or creating resource equity in under-resourced urban schools. However it is a place to start in meeting the needs of students who long to be affirmed in a genuine way and feel validated in educational spaces (Rodriguez, 2009).

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) originated from the field of Critical Legal Studies, and is predicated upon the idea that dominant groups are interested in preserving their power by maintaining the current status quo, and that this is the guiding influence behind most, if not all, legal judgments. The first major tenet of critical race theory which is especially relevant to the creation of a critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy, is the idea that CRT is a "race-based form of oppositional scholarship" (Love, 2004, p. 228) developed post Civil-Rights (like Hip-Hop) in response to slow moving and ineffective movements for racial justice. A major tenet of CRT is the idea that current systems, such as the educational system (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), like the legal system, are also designed to maintain the

current racial arrangement and thus benefit people already in power, while further disempowering marginalized groups

The second tenet is the importance of storytelling/counter-storytelling as a way to "name one's own reality" (Love, 2004). Hip-Hop as its core has always been about telling stories, in one's own voice, about one's own experience, regardless of how it makes other people feel, and without apology to people who may disagree with your version of truth (Parmar, 2005; Paul, 2000). For example, in order to understand how many people of color feel about the police and the justice system, Hip-Hop has been espousing the results about living in a racist and classist system since its inception. Hip-Hop artists such as Dead Prez and KRS-One, especially from urban areas in the U.S., have spent their entire careers reporting (through lyrics), that the legal system is unjust because of racial profiling, mandatory sentencing and police brutality (Ogbar, 2007; Dyson, 2007).

An additional tenet is increasing representation of people of color working within current racist systems (this includes all systems such as education, healthcare, banking, legal etc.) as potential advocates for other people of color (Delgado & Stefanic, 1993). In many Hip-Hop artists biographies, such as Russell Simmons (2007; 2002) and Kevin Liles (2007), they often cite that because of their success in Hip-Hop, there will be more and currently are more Hip-Hop financed doctors, lawyers, business owners, and bankers than the U.S. has ever seen. Thus, the implication is that more Black and Latino professionals are needed to balance the inequitable power dynamic as it currently exists.

A final tenet is criticism of oppressive conditions (Delgado & Stefanic, 1993). While Hip-Hop has always served to critique, Watkins (2005) and other Hip-Hop scholars have cited repeatedly that Hip-Hop is its own biggest critic. Critical race theory

in its original form (as a realistic view of the U.S. legal system, or in its interpretive, nuanced form within the field of education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), is a very clear description of what Hip-Hop culture, in its original form, seeks to do within our society—to critique the status quo through the voice of those who continue to be underrepresented in U.S. institutions (Parmar, 2005).

Hip-Hop Culture and Pedagogy

> They schools ain't teaching us what we need to survive, they schools don't educate, all they teach people is lies. (Dead Prez, 2000)

A major goal of this literature review is to provide a theoretical basis for the innovative pedagogical practices, based on Hip-Hop culture, that are rapidly spreading throughout schools and classrooms in the U.S and other parts of the world. In the previous section I detailed the foundational theorists who paved the way for a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy based on the foundations of Social Justice Education. This review of the literature revealed three specific ways that Hip-Hop is being utilized for educational purposes or to provide what Hill (2009) refers to as a "Hip-Hop Based Education" (HHBE).

The first is that Hip-Hop culture acts as its own pedagogy (Baszile, 2009; Hill, 2009). Some theorists posit that Hip-Hop culture provides its own "public" pedagogy (Hill, 2009; Hendershott, 2004; Scherpf, 2002; McLaren, 2000), meaning that the music itself provides intrinsic value and curriculum (Baszile, 2009). Hill (2009) refers to this as "pedagogies of Hip-Hop" (p.121).

This theory is predicated upon the idea that "conscious" or "progressive" Hip-Hop is meant to be more of a "repairing" element of Hip-Hop culture, seeking to uplift and empower marginalized people, critique societal conditions, and educate as its

primary function (Parmar, 2005). While "gangsta" and/or "commercial" rap is meant to make money, and often also seeks to rebel, act out against, and to mock the oppressive conditions critiqued by "conscious" Hip-Hop (Baszile, 2009; Stovall, 2006; McLaren, 2000a; Kelley, 1998). Stovall (2006) suggests that many students also make the case that the "beat" is more important than the lyrics—whether it is conscious or commercial—because a primary function of Hip-Hop is also being able to enjoy a "good" song. However, my assertion is that most forms of Hip-Hop music and culture are capable of providing a public pedagogy (Baszile, 2009; Hendershott, 2004).

The second way that Hip-Hop is being used for educational purposes is that it is being taught as its own subject area. This is particularly relevant in colleges and universities where courses on Hip-Hop are being taught from many perspectives, including from political, historical, cultural, and performance lenses. Howard University offers courses such as "Hip-Hop and the African-American Experience" and "Black Youth and Hip-Hop." North Carolina A&T State University has a course on "Topics in Literature: The History, Literary Connections, and Social Relevance of Hip Hop," and the New School for Social Research offers the course "Hip-Hop as Critical Pedagogy." Hip-Hop as its own subject area in K-12 is most common in arts-based electives or experiential after-school activities, such as learning the art of Djing (using turntable technology to manipulate beats and create music) or Hip-Hop dance classes.

The third way that Hip-Hop is used for educational purposes is when Hip-Hop is utilized as pedagogy to teach other subject areas. This is most common in K-12 settings where Hip-Hop songs, videos, or lyrics may be utilized to teach subject areas, such as Math, Science, Language Arts, or Social Studies (Runell & Diaz, 2007). Often Hip-Hop

texts are also used to create a critical lens for students investigating socio-historical conditions (Stovall, 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Hip-Hop beats or graffiti may be used to teach memorization of times tables or geometry (Runell & Diaz, 2007). Hip-Hop is also utilized in educational settings as a warm-up, hook, or bridge to another session or idea. This can be done in formal educational settings or in informal spaces like prisons and community centers. This may involve quoting a lyric, playing a song, or otherwise using an element of Hip-Hop culture to capture students' attention (Paul, 2000; Hill, 2009). This method can be a low-risk way of engaging students and introducing a Hip-Hop Pedagogy because it involves minimal commitment from the teacher in terms of researching or learning about Hip-Hop. The following section will gives examples of Hip-Hop as Public Pedagogy, Hip-Hop as Subject, and Hip-Hop as Pedagogy to teach other subject areas.

Hip-Hop as Public Pedagogy

> I don't see my character reflected. Tell me why the schools are fallin' apart and they the youth not taking no music or art, why the professionals really don't know where to start, no one really cares about why. (KRS-One, *Why*, 2001)

> I never relinquished the gifts that hip-hop bestowed me. It is from these experiences that I began to form my intellectual interest in the complex relationships that young people forge with hip-hop culture… Also, my own engagement with hip-hop helped me to consider the ways that youth approach hip-hop texts as sites of public and counterpublic pedagogy that counternarrate their lived experiences. (Hill, 2009, p.xvii)

I open with these two quotes because one is from Hip-Hop artist KRS-One, critiquing the inequities of our current school systems, clearly demonstrating the nature of Hip-Hop as public pedagogy. The second quote is from Marc Lamont Hill, a Hip-Hop fan/scholar/educator who is paying homage to Hip-Hop and its influence on his work. Because Hip-Hop music and culture "comprises an immensely powerful cultural art form

that works to mobilize desire, legitimate particular forms of knowledge and question commonly held assumptions about the world" (Hendershott, 2004, p.iii) and given the extensive popularity and global significance, I believe it has shifted from being merely a form of entertainment, and is therefore necessary to acknowledge its power as a compelling form of public pedagogy because it challenges hegemonic thinking, by offering alternate accounts of current and historical events (Scherpf, 2002).

Baszile (2009) posits that the last three generations of urban students have been products of the Hip-Hop generation(s), and the public pedagogy of Hip-Hop has massive implications for understanding social justice issues in urban schools. Hill (2009) also refers to the importance of learning about the "pedagogies *of* hip-hop" (p.123). Hip-Hop culture in and of itself has its own educational value that "authorizes particular values, truth claims, and subject positions while implicitly or explicitly contesting others" (Hill, 2009, p.120). Hill writes that Hip- Hop culture is important because it "is not merely a derivative or reactionary cultural form, but a rich and dynamic site of authentic cultural production" (2009, p.121).

McLaren (2000b) also agrees that there is a public pedagogy resonating from Hip-Hop, albeit he specifically refers to the genre of "gangsta rap," and more specifically the Black Nationalist gangsta rap of the 1990s, such as N.W.A. and Public Enemy. He believes that a Black Nationalist worldview as articulated in the works of these artists is useful pedagogy for both dominant and subordinate groups in society in that it can be validating for subordinate groups, and critical of false notions of white superiority for dominant groups. Hendershott (2004) asserts that, "Pedagogies of rap music are complex and often contradictory" (p.13). She believes that while the public pedagogy of rap music

began as oppositional and counter-narrative, created "by and for youth," it is also heavily commercialized at this point in its history. However, Hill (2009) writes that "pedagogies *of* hip-hop" are important to explore, because "we must resist the urge to romanticize hip-hop culture because hip-hop culture is not, nor could ever be, a space for purely transgressive, revolutionary, or even resistant practice. It operates as terrain of struggle over competing meanings, values and truth claims" (p.121).

Baszile (2009) writes that understanding how Hip-Hop as public pedagogy acts "as a response to the repression, suppression, and oppression operating in the curriculum of traditional schooling" (p.10) will help educators to better understand why students trust Hip-Hop and find meaning and authenticity in Hip-Hop texts. Baszile suggests that the prominent idea in Hip-Hop texts is that identity is "a performance played out and within relation to and against discourses of power" (p.12) not a rigid, fixed, non-negotiable set of characteristics which create the predominant perception that there is a myth of normalcy which is typically white, male, middle-class, and adult.

Hendershott (2004) refers to the idea that "school is just one site that works to engage youth, and therefore cultural texts must be analyzed as a powerful form of public pedagogy that serves an educational force outside of schools" (p.12). Based on the assertion that Hip-Hop acts as public pedagogy which should be taught as a form of pedagogy and body of knowledge for urban teachers, Baszile (2009) offers four recommendations for teacher education programs and educational leadership programs that are looking for "transformative and socially just visions of education" (p.14). She first argues that young people currently experience a profound sense of social isolation in traditional schools. She surmises that they often find connection and solace in Hip-Hop

culture, and that for that reason it is a primary source of education. She believes this is because Hip-Hop doesn't use a "traditional" view of American identity, makes visible the invisible people, places, and conversations that are left out of mainstream education. Secondly, the understandings of the categories used to define people are "disrupted" in Hip-Hop because the stories told through Hip-Hop are almost exclusively by people of color (Love, 2004). Thirdly, there is an expectation and practice within Hip-Hop culture that allows for naming oneself, and this allows for "negotiable, fluid identity construction" (Baszile, 2009, p. 16) which is much more desirable for youth who may feel marginalized for multiple reasons. And lastly, by "destabilizing" meritocracy and "traditional conceptions of American identity," Hip-Hop allows for new understandings of national identity and civic engagement (p.16).

Dimitriadis (2001) conducted a four-year groundbreaking study on urban youth in a community center situated in a "racially-divided" city in the Midwest. His research detailed the ways in which Hip-hop impacted the identity of the youth he worked with. His post-modern analysis of the youth he researched proved that Hip-Hop served as the main source of cultural connection, as well as education and information for African-American youth in particular. Depending on which artists or texts the students were engaged with at any given point, the impact and the meaning-making associated with a particular song or feeling changed. The "performance" of identity therefore is fluid, and in many cases multidimensional and contextual. Not all students react or make the same meaning from songs, texts, or artist representations. A student could listen to a song privately on headphones and feel liberated and motivated but hear the same song in a different, more public context and not feel as connected to it. Because of these nuances

and despite the fact Hip-Hop had been commodified by dominant culture, it still represents the voice of marginalized youth in profound and evolving ways.

Hip-Hop as Subject

In an open letter to educators, KRS-One (2006) wrote,

> Presently Hip Hop is being taught all across the United States in a kind of "freestyle" way with most educators basically "doing their own thing." And for those that are short-term teachers or objective observers of the Hip Hop phenomenon limiting their courses to rappers and Rap lyrics this may be fine. But for those that are seriously seeking to become long-term educators on Hip Hop's history, elements, music, culture and politics—accuracy, usefulness and credibility is crucial. And it is crucial for one's own success. Those seeking a long-term career teaching Hip Hop (for a living) need to be educated and then accredited themselves with legitimate certification from legitimate Hip Hop institutions. We can't just make shit up! (Personal Correspondence, June 10, 2006)

In a 2006 *VIBE* article, Talib Kweli said,

> "Teachers have no other choice but to learn how to use Hip-Hop in the classroom. It's the language of the children. They have to respect the culture of Hip-Hop." (Runell, 2006, p.2)

In the opening quotes, both KRS-One and Talib Kweli, as Hip-Hop artists are advocating for teachers to learn more about Hip-Hop as its own subject area in order to better serve students. Hip-Hop is currently being taught as its own subject area which is evidenced through the 300+ college courses currently offered in the U.S. and abroad (Hamanci, 2007). Hip-Hop arts courses are also commonly held in out-of-school spaces such as after school programs (Morikawa, 2005; Christen, 2003) and community centers (Dimitriadis, 2001). But perhaps one of the most promising practices in Hip-Hop as subject, which I will delve into further in this section, is the burgeoning analysis of the importance of learning about Hip-Hop as pedagogy in urban teacher education programs. (Akom, 2009; Baszile, 2009; Hill, 2009; Rodriquez, 2009; Parmar, 2005; Beady 2001a;

Paul, 2000). Baszile (2009) posits that learning about Hip-Hop is essential for teachers because it provides commentary on the current state of education and the positionality of urban youth,

> …we [as educators] are missing the lessons the hip-hop generations are trying to teach us about why school—as we have come to know it and practice it—is itself disenfranchising young people. A relational analysis of both the curriculum of traditional schooling and that of hip-hop culture is important to providing any viable vision of the potential connections among education, hip-hop and social justice. (p. 9)

In an education system that suffers from chronic failure (Noguera, 2008), learning about Hip-Hop culture, or "pedagogies about hip-hop" (Hill, 2009, p.121) is a promising practice for creating more liberatory and authentic classrooms. Guy (2004) suggests that educators, similar to Freire but specific to Hip-Hop, get to know about the music and the culture of Hip-Hop to be more effective in working with their constituents (p.45). All of the educational theorists cited have managed to do that, as I will illustrate in the following section. Hendershott (2004) writes and I agree, "In short, I believe that using rap music in the classroom allows educators to make the pedagogical more political" (p. 99).

This methodology is meant to create educational spaces where students can learn about, deconstruct, and grapple with various Hip-Hop texts. This can be done with structured formulaic curriculum but also in more spontaneous ways by allowing students to bring their Hip-Hop selves into the classroom in an organic way. Hill (2009) writes, "given the salience of hip-hop culture within the lives of many students, pedagogies about hip-hop cannot be restricted to hip-hop based-curricula" (p.122) because analyzing Hip-Hop can be used to "deconstruct allegiances to" (p.123) or explain the liberatory nature of particular artists' lives, songs, videos, and other texts. This is especially helpful

when done using various social identity lenses such as race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. to examine examples of homophobia, sexism, classism, and/or internalized racism. However, Hill cautions, that while media literacy is one goal of "pedagogies about hip-hop" students may not feel comfortable sharing their personal and often-private thoughts about Hip-Hop texts in a formal school environment. Hill (2009) adds,

> …even under the most optimal conditions, the practice of pedagogies about hip-hop will be met with tremendous apprehension from students who are appropriately fearful of confessing desires and putting their lives on display for academic scrutiny. (p.123)

Hip-Hop as Subject: Teacher Education

Charles Beady, principal of the nation's largest historically Black boarding school, came out with a CD entitled "Whatever it Takes 2 Motivate 2day's Youth" (2001) aimed at communicating between generations by encouraging teachers to learn about Hip-Hop culture. The CD addresses topics such as ambition, behavior, and learning the valuable life-lessons utilizing a Hip-Hop aesthetic. Students seem to respond well to it, Beady reported, because of the beats, the rhythm and the delivery of the content. Beady's work is predicated upon the fact that elementary schools will continue to have more Black and Latino children (Steinberg, 2007), while the vast majority of teachers continue to be white and female (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2004). Therefore, using Hip-Hop is a way to tackle two problems with education: teachers have difficulty connecting with students, even when they share a racial or cultural affinity but especially when they don't share a common culture and the second problem being that many teachers overall are unfamiliar with popular youth culture. Beady (2001b) strongly believes, "If we can find a way to tap into the popular culture that captivates youngsters and use its power to motivate and educate, we will have a powerful teaching tool at our disposal" (p.38).

In Rock Hill, South Carolina, C.P Gause, an Assistant professor at Winthrop University, is training teachers and principals to become better administrators through the use of a Hip-Hop pedagogy (Gause, 2002). Gause strongly believes in "the medium of pop culture to influence the educational process." (p. 27). He believes that the culture of rap and Hip-Hop is connected to the failure and success of his students. He says, "We have to reach them where they are and raise them up." He encourages African American educators, specifically, to be social activists and "drum majors for justice" (p.29) in educating children of color. I believe his message extends to all educators, particularly in urban environments (Gause, 2002).

William Eric Perkins (2002) founded the Hip-Hop Center at the University of Pennsylvania. After thirteen years of working with the Educational Testing Center, Perkins developed a teacher-training curriculum utilizing Hip-Hop to enhance basic literacy skills. He has also taught high school and college students who serve as mentors to younger students who are having difficulty with the reading comprehension portion of standardized tests. This is in part, Perkins suggests, "because there aren't inclusive or relevant images of urban youth in most of the standardized tests, and there are textbooks that fail to help students prepare (p.1)" Perkins took the cadence and rhythm of rap music and structures of the rhymes to write children's stories for elementary school students to encourage reading and to improve reading skills. Perkins says this changes the old paradigm of teaching language arts through the Standard English lens, these students are learning consonant-vowel-consonant words and concepts like "the silent E rule, all with stories that the kids eat up" (p.2). It is a shift from memorizing vocabulary and studying grammar. Although he has received a great deal of criticism for his approach, he has

reported incredible success with the students he has worked with, and he writes with optimism, "Classical music was the popular music of its day. One day hip-hop will be the canon" (Perkins, 2002, p.3).

Priya Parmar (2006) has worked as a high school teacher and currently serves as a faculty member in a New York City teacher education program. Parmar created an innovative program which offered a new professional development opportunity for school professionals from various New York City high schools (Brooklyn College Academy, East New York Family Academy and Freedom Academy), entitled "Lyrical Minded: Enhancing Literacy through Popular Culture and Spoken Word Poetry." Parmar worked with teachers from across disciplines including administrators and guidance counselors. The units that were created incorporated specific genres of popular culture and Hip-Hop culture to promote literacy, analytic skills, and other essential skills by making connections between students' experiences and the high school curriculum. The aim was also to raise students' and teachers' critical awareness of the ways in which the popular media shape individuals' conceptions of self and of the world. The units were successfully implemented in all participating high schools and included a professional development and a counseling curriculum as well as units in several academic disciplines and the arts. Students whose classes were included in the program participated in poetry slams held at each school and attended a culminating performance featuring participating students at the Nuyorican Poets Café in Manhattan (Bain & Parmar, 2006).

As evidenced by the evaluation and assessment of the program, students showed overwhelming interest and motivation in reading and writing. Teachers reported changes in their students' attitudes and behaviors towards literacy, thereby showing promise of

academic improvement. During the program, both teachers and students reported improved academic performance when taking the Regents exam (most notably, 10th grade Global History) (Bain & Parmar, 2006). Based on preliminary findings for the program, from student and teacher focus groups and individual interviews, students reported accessibility and interest to learn curricular content as "more enjoyable" and accessible. Teachers reported increased attention, motivation, and engagement to learning and improved attendance records. Parmar (2006) believes the critical aspects of utilizing Hip-Hop are important because,

> Many rap songs make (structural racism) this difference painfully clear and problematize this system of racial difference whereby Blacks (and other minority groups) are marginalized, silenced, and excluded from the cultural dialogue, and where "whiteness" is assumed to be the norm. (p. 7)

In a June 2006 interview, I was able to ask Parmar about her personal views regarding Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy and she responded about how it impacts her practice,

> Educators who incorporate the teaching of Hip-Hop culture legitimate and validate their students' culture, voice, knowledge, experiences, and histories as well as aid in the healthy construction of student's own racial and cultural identities. Furthermore, students learn to critically examine issues such as race, class, gender, culture, ethnicity, and identity instead of passively allowing traditional mainstream ideologies to unconsciously shape their values, thoughts, and beliefs. Finally, the critical examination of Hip-Hop culture allows students to dispel myths and question stereotypes and representations that mainstream ideologies often perpetuate. Hip-Hop texts lead to consciousness-raising discussions, essays, and research projects attempting to locate an explanation for the current state of affairs for urban youth. The knowledge reflected in these lyrics could engender discussions of esteem, power, place, and purpose and encourage students to further their own knowledge of urban life. (Interview, June 1, 2006).

Educators must embrace the idea of learning and valuing Hip-Hop as its own pedagogy because continuing to promote the status quo is damaging and demoralizing. An understanding of Hip-Hop as pedagogy will,

> help young people identify with and galvanize around the positive and productive aspects of hip hop culture… we have to recognize the ways in which their self-expressions, their counter stories, are both a rearticulation and a resistance to the stories, the identities we [educators] tend to impose on them through the official school curriculum. (Baszile, 2009, p.16)

Akom's (2009) research and creation of a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy is based upon the idea that Hip-Hop is a fundamental aspect of his own identity and experience. He teaches a collaborative Hip-Hop course for Pre-Service teachers in California and has created what he refers to as a Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy (CHHP). His research is situated upon the notion that there is a significant relationship between Hip-Hop culture, and whether or not Hip-Hop is utilized *in the classroom* it still has a substantive influence on education. Akom (2009) situates himself by writing,

> What I am suggesting, however is that hip hop-for those of us from the hip hop generation or post-hip hop generation-it has had a significant presence in the classroom; particularly during the 1990s and in to the twenty-first century when a remarkable thing happened: aspects of youth culture in general, and aspects of white and Asian youth culture in particular, underwent a Black reincarnation [appropriation] via the hip hop aesthetic. The reality that hip hop is a growing presence in the classroom is obvious to any casual observer of the expressionistic style and innovation of young people today. However the fact that hip hop as an academic field of inquiry has been historically marginalized—particularly, however not exclusively by our cathedrals of "higher" education that we have been anointed with the task of training teachers for urban and suburban communities—speaks volumes to just how "mis-educated" our society has become. (p. 53)

CHHP is predicated upon the idea that Hip-Hop music and culture provide a socio-political analysis and representation for marginalized communities that is not generally available in formal hegemonic curriculum and that youth-driven research on Hip-Hop culture provides the opportunity for students to analyze resource allocation, surmise alternative reasons for urban problems that are institutional and systemic rather than based on individual inadequacies (Freire, 1970). Akom (2009) encourages students to

explore “artifacts and media” and to turn their “sociological gaze” back to their respective communities to provide alternative explanations for school inequalities and other social issues, such as the opportunity gap (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Akom (2009) asserts that his method of CHHP is a unique and beneficial way to successfully increase “diversity and cultural competency” (p.54) for pre-service teachers because of the critical thinking and experiential nature of it. He believes that his version of CHHP is uniquely positioned to do so because it offers teachers and students an opportunity to reconstruct knowledge about marginalized communities. CHHP achieves this by developing a counter-hegemonic space where multiple means of expression are validated. Learning to deconstruct “deep-seated” beliefs about important social identifiers such race, class, and gender are encouraged (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Love, 2004).

The cornerstones of CHHP are that it is participatory and youth driven. All courses using CHHP must be taught in a cooperative style; cooperation between and among students, artists, community members, and teachers (Romney et. al., 1992). Engaging students as joint researchers (regardless of what age group or level) is paramount to CHHP. The educational process must also be equitable and consistent for all members of the learning community. There is no colorblind ideology in CHHP, so that a CHHP “foregrounds” social differences (i.e. race, gender) in designs, data collection, and analysis (Ladson-Billings, 2001). There should be a strong correlation between and among social identities, illuminating the intersection of difference. Traditional, more essentialized paradigms around racial discourse and other issues of identity should be challenged. Using a CHHP demonstrates commitment to “co-learning, co-facilitating, and multi-directionality” (Akom, 2009, p.55). And a CHHP requires that the curriculum and

texts be trans-disciplinary in nature. CHHP requires action-oriented programs that strive to include local capacity building. A CHHP is meant to be an empowering process for participants to "increase control of their lives." A CHHP strives for a balance between "critical thinking, reflection, analysis and action." And lastly, a CHHP "emphasizes a union of mind, body, and spirit" (p. 56). I believe the guiding principles of a CHHP as defined by Akom are highly desirable but ultimately may be difficult to implement. For example, most teachers may want to have artists from the community come to their classrooms or be able to team teach, but they may not have the access to artists or the budge to pay for them to come to their classrooms. Also, not all teachers have a strong research background and many need training and mentorship to help students create research projects.

A final analysis of how a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy is being utilized in teacher education is based on Rodriguez's (2009) experience as an alternative high school teacher and pre-service teacher educator. As previous scholars have noted (Hill, 2009, Parmar, 2005; Stovall, 2006; Akom, 2009), Rodriquez also situates himself as a member of the Hip-Hop generation and refers to his knowledge and long-standing participation in Hip-Hop culture as his "cultural capital" with students. He asserts that the predominant element in Hip-Hop that is useful to educators is the emphasis on *dialogue* (Freire, 1970). He (2009) posits,

> …hip hop culture is a dialogue with the world—a dialogue between youth and the world in which they operate daily. This dialogue emerges through music, art, dancing, writing and political activism. One way to capitalize upon the possibilities associated with dialoguing is to deliberately use high school and university classrooms as space for young people to dialogue with one another. I argue that school is one space where intellectual maturation should be performed, but fails to capitalize on a vital cultural practice that is central to hip hop culture—dialogue. (p.21)

Ultimately Rodriguez cites Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy as the fundamental theory upon which a Hip-Hop pedagogy is based. He asserts that a critical pedagogy is "driven by principles of love, hope, and justice which are in many ways, the same principles that drive hip hop culture" (Rodriguez, 2009, p.22). I agree that dialogue is an essential element of utilizing Hip-Hop as critical pedagogy, however it seems rudimentary to only focus on dialogue, as there other fundamental aspects of student learning, such as basic literacy skills, that also need to be included and may not be achieved through dialogue. Additionally Rodriguez also positions his own understanding of Hip-Hop as "cultural capital" without clearly explaining how it should or could be taught in teacher education courses.

Hip-Hop as Subject: Arts-Based Education

During the course of conducting this literature review, I mentioned that there were many non-profits and out-of-school time initiatives (Christen, 2003; Dimitriadis, 2001; Jocson, 2008) as sites of critical Hip-Hop pedagogy. A new program called "hip-hop school" has been developed as an after-school program in Arkansas, which teaches the four elements of Hip-Hop as its curriculum. The Mandela Arts Center in West Oakland, California and the Let's Get Free (a program of the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, also in Oakland, California) are two additional examples of innovative after-school programs that implement a critical Hip-Hop pedagogy, which utilize Hip-Hop to teach an arts-based curriculum. There are other examples of successful programs and organizations which provide out-of-school time education about Hip-Hop culture including but not limited to: Art Start, Urban Word, Brave New Voices, The Brotherhood

Sister Sol, University of Hip-Hop, Project 2050 which are well regarded as pioneering Hip-Hop as pedagogy (see Appendix 1).

An additional example of Hip-Hop Pedagogy in an out-of-school space is through visual art. Graffiti artists or aerosol artists are considered a main staple of Hip-Hop culture, though most people outside of Hip-Hop communities might deem graffiti a criminal act and graffiti artists as menaces to society. Christen (2003) profiles the inter-workings of urban communities and the Hip-Hop graffiti art culture. Christen explains that graffiti artists create "crews" which create safe communities; these communities are alternatives to gang or drug related pressures in urban environments. Christen believes that these crews also help develop community activism because they merge "cowboy individualism" with "organizational unity" and create artists who are accountable and responsible to their communities. Wimstatt, a Chicago native, who is an activist and author of several books on Hip-Hop culture and the prison industrial complex, including *Bomb the Suburbs* (2001), writes, "Student-writers [graffiti artists] have been found more likely to attend school and be promoted to the next grade because the kind of kid who can be motivated to work for hours each day tagging [doing graffiti art] to become famous can also accept the grind of school to get a degree" (Christen, 2003, p.20).

Hip-Hop as Pedagogy to Teach Another Subject Area

In this section, I describe examples of how Hip-Hop Pedagogy is specifically being used in various learning communities, including high school language arts (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2002; Mercadal-Sabbagh, 2004) and social studies (Stovall, 2006) classrooms. A critical Hip-Hop pedagogy has been successfully used with urban

middle and high school students, "at-risk" students (Weinstein, 2007), and college students from various backgrounds both internationally and domestically (Parmar, 2005).

Mercadal-Sabbagh (2004) describes Hip-Hop Pedagogy as a powerful tool for increasing critical literacy for "at-risk" youth, while Parmar (2005) describes Hip-Hop pedagogy as a strategy for increasing critical literacy for *all* students by illuminating oppressive conditions for majority students and validating the experiences of marginalized students. Mercadal-Sabbagh (2004) defines "at-risk" students as those who have been or are currently involved in the justice system, come from abusive backgrounds, have substance abuse issues, or are in alternative schools. Others such as Weinstein (2007), Alexander-Smith (2004), and Hallman (2009) describe Hip-Hop Pedagogy as a strategy for improving reading and writing skills by cultivating opportunities for identity development. Campbell (2007) discusses the use of Hip-Hop as a strategy for examining race, specifically constructions of whiteness and blackness through college writing courses. Stovall (2006) describes Hip-Hop Pedagogy as an anti-banking method of education in social studies classrooms. Meacham (2005) helped to create an International Literacy curriculum utilizing a Hip-Hop Pedagogy with "at-risk" youth in England in order to help students pass rigorous testing requirements.

Hill (2009) refers to the use of Hip-Hop Pedagogy as "pedagogies *with* hip-hop" and believes this methodology can "enhance student motivation, transmit subject knowledge, and develop habits of mind appropriate for learning" (p.123). However, he does not suggest "a rigid set of strategies or curricula to be transmitted and replicated" or a "prefigured set of strategies or activities for reaching students through hip-hop culture." (p.120) But rather that a "hip-hop pedagogy reflects an alternate, more expansive vision

of pedagogy that reconsiders the relationship among students, teachers, texts, schools, and the broader social worlds" (p.120). The following examples describe additional examples of "pedagogies *with* Hip-Hop," (p.121) but Hill cautions,

> Given the often-sharp contrasts between urban teachers and students with regard to race, gender and class, pedagogies with hip-hop will frequently produce feelings of discomfort, alienation and frustration. Even for educators such as myself who claim "insider" status. Such feelings are an inevitable part of the pedagogical process. (p.125)

Parmar has written (2005) extensively on the power of Hip-Hop to educate all students for a variety of reasons and believes that utilizing Hip-Hop can benefit students from both dominant and subordinate social identities. On the power of Hip-Hop to increase literacy she writes,

> Students who are able to deconstruct media images are able to recognize, question, and critically analyze its historical, cultural, social, political and economic implications. They can see who benefits most from mis and under representations. By critically examining and deconstructing the lyrical content of rap, educators and students open the doors for a transformative dialogue to occur, and confront the most neglected text: culture. (Parmar, 2005, p.7)

Educational theorists (Baszile, 2009; Akom, 2009) provide researched perspectives that have strategically placed Hip-Hop music and culture at the center of their pedagogy. These educational experiences span a range of classrooms, curriculum, content and locations. Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2002) define critical pedagogy as being,

> an approach to education that is rooted in the experiences of marginalized peoples; that is centered in a critique of structural, economic, and racial oppression, that is focused on dialogue instead of a one-way transmission of knowledge; and that is structured to empower individuals and collectives as agents of social change. (In McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007, p.187)

They acknowledge many critical theorists (Ladson-Billings, 1997; Freire, 1970) who have influenced their work, but believe they still are not adequately addressing contemporary urban school issues by only utilizing race in their cultural analysis. Using

tenets of critical pedagogy, Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2002) attempt to use empirical data to create a more nuanced and particular theory of critical pedagogy as it applies to urban education. They make the point that "an oppressive rendering of a culturally diverse text is still oppressive" (2002, p. 186).

In their classrooms, lessons are taught using various forms of media including: newspapers, magazines, music, novels, poems, and plays. They encourage students to be in dialogue with each other about current issues by problem-posing. They are not afraid to hold out the contradiction of the "bootstrap" mythology and the fear of failure, meaning that most students want to succeed, but should be aware that it is not simply a matter of their individual will and desire. They also explore what is possible when working from an individual perspective vs. helping to share a collective consciousness. They support other teachers to think outside of the box, but perhaps most importantly, they encourage meaningful links between popular culture and the canon but never suggest that one should fully replace the other. Their pedagogy must value the cultural norms and genuine interests of the students. They also critique earlier multicultural educators who focused culture as only being connected to race and believe this narrow definition of culture does not allow other pedagogies to truly acknowledge other salient student identities.

As teachers in an urban West Coast high school, they created a liberatory ethnographic, media literacy curriculum that focuses on Hip-Hop culture. They are well regarded within educational circles as Hip-Hop pedagogy "elites," meaning they have pioneered much of the original scholarship on harnessing the power of Hip-Hop for

education (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) and are seen as experts in the field. In regards to their philosophy Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2002) write,

> In no way shape or form did our focus on academic literacy compromise our commitment to critical pedagogy and to literacy education for individual freedom and social change. In fact, we felt that it was only within a pedagogy firmly committed to freedom and social change that we were able to motivate students to develop sophisticated academic literacies. Additionally we were able to honor the existential experiences of our students and work toward the development of academic literacies by complementing the canonical literature with popular cultural texts from music, film, mass media, and sports. Most importantly, though, we were able to situate all texts and curricula within a critical pedagogy that was explicitly aware of issues of power, oppression, and transformation; and that honored the nonschool cultural practices of the students and included the students in authentic dialogue about inequity and advocacy for justice. One of our core foundational philosophical principles to classroom pedagogy and practice included a belief that multiculturalism was more related to pedagogy than curriculum. (p.185)

Mercadal-Sabbagh (2004) believes Hip-Hop holds a unique ability to help "at-risk" students tell their own stories. She conducted ethnographic work within the confines of an alternative high school program, where she successfully implemented Hip-Hop into her language arts writing curricula. She reported positive results such as "increased self-expression" and increased confidence in writing ability. Her students were more enthusiastic to share their work and seemed more invested in the course. She also believed that the increase in class participation led to a viable alternative to fighting, which had previously been an issue in the school. She also found that the Hip-Hop texts were easily amenable to engaging in traditional curricula, and the practice of bringing Hip-Hop Pedagogy into her classroom encouraged models of action-oriented research and reciprocal empowerment (Akom, 2009).

She also found that utilizing Hip-Hop Pedagogy with her students resulted in her own increased understanding and appreciation of Hip-Hop and because Hip-Hop creates

a counter-public space for students, this can be liberatory for many students (hooks, 1994). Utilizing Hip-Hop Pedagogy proved that any knowledge brought into the classroom had to also be of value to the students before it could be critical for them. She learned about the power of Hip-Hop to teach story-telling and narrative (Baszile, 2009) and was very impressed by the idea that students wrote as if the teacher were the primary listener, but that there was also an imagined third listener who mattered to them and informed how they presented themselves. Mercadal-Sabbagh (2004) also writes about the ability of Hip-Hop to critique itself and increase media literacy,

> Hip-Hop pedagogy allows the engagement with, and discussion about artificially transforming Hip-Hop music as opposed to that which may seem commodified, or to engage in critical analyses exploring the tensions between the negative and positive aspects of the genre. (p.3)

Weinstein (2007) found that utilizing Hip-Hop Pedagogy allowed her writing students the opportunity to provide nuanced and complex identity formations via their poetry assignments. She worked primarily with urban high school students in the Southern part of the United States. Like Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2002), Weinstein (2007) also advocates for pairing Hip-Hop texts with canonical texts, "When appropriate youth' imaginative writing can be brought into the classroom as literacy text for analysis, side by side with canonical literature, providing engaging sources for comparison among historical and contemporary mores and styles" (p.45). Weinstein urges that for researchers "interested in the connections between writing and identity development," (p.46) attention to young people's "poetry, prose and song lyrics provide invaluable insights into their struggles to situate themselves within harried and sometimes conflicting worlds" (p.46).

Hallman (2009) reports similar findings; although it is important to mention her results are based on observing another teacher and his students. The previous authors cited (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2002; Mercadal-Sabbagh, 2004, Weinstein, 2007) used ethnographic work based on their own classroom experience. Hallman conducted her research in an alternative school in the Mid-West and focused on successful strategies for increasing literacy skills for students that she refers to as "at-risk" youth. The multiracial school is designated for pregnant and parenting teens only.

A White male, in his forties, who had been teaching English in the school for nearly twenty years, taught the course that was the subject of Hallman's research. Hallman describes Hip-Hop as having been "recruited" into the curriculum through the use of journal writing, narrative writing and poetry writing. This Hip-Hop Pedagogy resulted in four predominant themes. The first was that students were able to reflect on current events and social issues in the classroom and voice their opinions about the events (Scherpf, 2002). They were then able to become active agents in their academic work and interrogate their social location using the work of Tupac with songs such as "Brenda's Got a Baby" (in regards to how others might view them as pregnant or parenting teens). They were also able to increase their traditional in-school literacy acquisition because they were engaged and committed to the class (Weinstein, 2007). Lastly, both teacher and students viewed Hip-Hop has a "critical bridge between out-of-school and in-school literacies" (Hallman, 2009, p.42).

Hallman observed that the teacher was able to develop meaningful relationships with the students because of the perception that he showed "cultural congruence" (Ladson-Billings, 1997) and valued what the students were interested in. Also, because

the students were so engaged, the teacher was able to go beyond the minimal "basic skills" curriculum typically expected of alternative school students at this school (Hallman, 2009). Understanding this important element for student success becomes very important,

> By naming hip hop as an "out of school" literacy, it is recognized that Eastview students' knowledge and affiliation with hip hop is a critical part of their lives, yet the way hip hop is positioned in adolescent lives aligns with spaces considered "separate" from school. Recognizing that sites like students' affiliation with hip hop may be critical places from which to engage meaningful learning, researchers and educators have begun to explore how such sites may be successfully recruited for in-school learning. (Hallman, 2009, p.37)

Despite the fact that Hallman's research was successful, showing increase in test scores, attendance, and skill acquisition, like Hill (2009) and Baszile (2009) she cautions that "there is also a risk that educators may destroy youth's affiliation with out-of-school texts when we bring them into academic discussion in the classroom" (p.39), so she recommends being mindful of this limitation by not trivializing Hip-Hop culture.

Alexander-Smith (2004) a former middle school and high school teacher believes that using Hip-Hop music as spoken word poetry can help engage students in the study of literary terms, she writes,

> I found that incorporating urban adolescents discourse into my instruction increased student engagement. Listening to Hip Hop music, an element that shapes their language and discourse, allowed them to question their world, reconstruct their identities, and develop their voice. (p. 63)

Often students do not realize they are affected by underlying social issues in the lyrics and in the visual media because they believe they simply enjoy the music (Stovall, 2006). Alexander-Smith (2004) found that her students were accepting images without questioning their validity, and she believes that through the spoken word aspect of Hip-Hop students can begin deconstructing the negative messages they are receiving.

Alexander-Smith cites Ladson-Billing's (1997) concept of "culturally relevant pedagogy" and writes that socio-political consciousness and cultural competence are meant to foster instruction that will educate students about critical issues that shape their lives.

The locations of the aforementioned language arts curriculum utilizing Hip-Hop are diverse and far reaching (West Coast, Mid-West, Southern United States). But successful language arts courses utilizing Hip-Hop pedagogy are gaining considerable international attention as well. The following quote launched an international partnership between Shuaib Meacham from the University of Delaware and the Sheffield College in the United Kingdom,

> Hip Hop… is a form of sophisticated language use that young people have a passion for. Hip Hop is a form of traditional literacy, Hip Hop requires language mastery and the implementation of a variety of literary devices and strategies into its processes of lyrical composition. (AERA Presentation, Meacham, April 12, 2005)

Representatives of the English Department from Sheffield attended a workshop on Hip-Hop Pedagogy in 2005 at the American Education Research Association conference (AERA) and heard Professor Meacham speak about the promises of Hip-Hop for the enhancement of literacy. Students at Sheffield were having trouble passing a qualifying test known as the General Certificate of Secondary Education. Only about half of all students were passing the test. The English department decided it was time to implement a new literacy curriculum with three main goals: to develop language and expressive skills, to develop skills of stylistic analysis in Literature, and to take students back to basics with literacy. Wilson's "Third Space Theory" was used as an underpinning theoretical framework. Professor Hooper, the primary faculty person who created the program wrote,

> Hip-Hop can be viewed as a discourse, a fund of knowledge from home or the social world that can interface with the discourse of the classroom to create a third space where that knowledge is valued and exploited for its potential for developing literacy. (Meacham & Hooper, 2005, p.3, AERA handout)

The course they designed infused Hip-Hop artists and their works with more traditional canons and/or social issues. The course covered issues such as "Home and Homelessness," citing the works of artists, such as Ms. Dynamite and Eminem, and then expanded the conversation from childhood home life to the experience of young refugees from Somalia, some of whom were students at Sheffield college. Another topic was "Views on Violence" where artists, such as Tupac, are utilized to talk about domestic violence and what it feels like being the victim of violence and fear. Students also used the Rap Poetry unit to learn skills of figurative language, sound effects of assonance and alliteration, rhythmic structures, and verse patters. They were also encouraged to make cross-cultural comparisons between poems.

The class concluded with comparisons of literary themes, such as Hip-Hop Icon Nas and his song "Fetus" and William Blake's 'Infant Sorrow.' Another example, which is an exploration of literary concepts, is the thematic "boast" which dates back the ancient Anglo Saxon story of Beowulf and is used in comparison to Hip-Hop artists boasting as part of the competitive nature of Hip-Hop. Artists from Jay Z to Eminem have lyrics which expose the "boasting" that happens in Hip-Hop and the roots of where the boasting/competition are derived from. In the literary theme section basic literacy skills, such as spelling, vowels, consonants, and syllables are also taught within the unit.

The results of making these curriculum changes were extremely favorable. The student evaluation and overall levels of engagement were excellent. The test scores went from about half passing which was in the "Cause for Concern" category, beyond

Satisfactory which was (60%-70%) and into the "Good" category with (70%-80%) of students passing the test. Retention in the program also improved from 58% to 71% (Hooper & Meacham, 2005, p.8, AERA Handout).

David Stovall is an urban-Mid-West based educator, working simultaneously as faculty in a teacher education program at a major university, as well as teaching social studies in a local public high school. He, like Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (Hayasaki, 2004) is also widely regarded as an "elite" or expert on Hip-Hop and education (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) He refers to Hip-Hop pedagogy as being an anti-banking method of education and like Mercadal-Sabbagh (2004), also utilizes ethnographic study with his social studies students. Stovall (2006) writes that "where hip-hop has been castigated in the popular media for its controversial lyrics and presuppositions," (p. 47) his work locates Hip-Hop as a transformative element of critical thinking and teaching. He frequently uses song lyrics to supplement texts in his social studies classes, offering new perspectives and voices, pairing Hip-Hop texts by Talib Kweli with the work of Howard Zinn's (1997) A *People's History of the United States* (Stovall, 2006). He also works with students to deconstruct music videos and decipher predictable formulaic video sequences such as: the club shot, the money shot, the booty shot, the hood shot, etc. to help students decipher what they are seeing. Similarly to Hill (2009), Stovall (2006) reflects upon his personal relationship with Hip-Hop culture, and when asked about his own participation in Hip-Hop culture and how it impacts his work as an educator, his identities, and his politics, his response was very clear,

> For me it's critical. Especially in terms of the relevance to students… It's a genre of music they listen to, and a cultural phenomenon that can be… dissected in the multitude of ways to develop critical analysis.

> Pedagogically it's central because of some of the genre's challenge to mainstream society. In terms of my identity, it's critical to me because it challenges me to analyze the positive and negative aspects of the world due to my love for the music. Politically I feel intimately connected because the origins of the genre came about as a response to the living conditions in New York City. For me that was big, because it was the voice of young people making a stand while balancing out their frustrations with enjoying themselves. (Interview, June 15, 2006)

Implications

It is clear that Hip-Hop is a powerful influence on today's culture, influencing almost every aspect of modern adolescent and young adult life in the United States (Watkins, 2005; Elliot, 2000). Many scholars believe that Hip-Hop has transcended the boundaries of urban areas and become an international force in popular and capitalist culture (Spady et. al., 2006). Hip-Hop appeals to a broad, multiracial, multi-ethnic, and multinational constituency (Guy, 1995). Since Hip-Hop is such a powerful force it only seems natural that educators with an understanding and appreciation for the culture would tap into its power and begin to design opportunities to use Hip-Hop in the classroom. However, there are numerous limitations at this time.

The first limitation is that in the majority of the research conducted using Hip-Hop as pedagogy to teach other subject areas by scholars such Mercadal-Sabbagh (2004), Stovall (2006), Parmar (2005), and Weinstein (2007), the data is primarily self-reported and ethnographic, with the exception of Hallman (2009) who observes another teacher utilizing Hip-Hop Pedagogy. A broader based research lens would be useful in collecting more information to better understand the impact of using Hip-Hop Pedagogy, perhaps also using a mixed-methods approach of collecting quantitative data on student outcomes, which might help to substantiate the case for Hip-Hop Pedagogy. A second limitation is that many of the researchers such as Hill (2009), Rodriguez (2009), Paul (2000) and

Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) position themselves as self-identified members of the Hip-Hop generation, while others such as Weinstein (2007) an Hallman (2009) do not mention how or why they chose/learned how to incorporate a Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Further research focused on educators who have expertise in Hip-Hop culture, as well as those who have learned about Hip-Hop culture would also be helpful, in creating strategies for incorporating Hip-Hop Pedagogy into teacher education curriculum. The third limitation is that much of the research has been done on urban students, who are believed to share a cultural affinity with Hip-Hop culture (Rodriguez, 2009; Hill, 2009). While some scholars (Parmar, 2005; McLaren, 2000a) mention the possibility of reaching a majority of students with Hip-Hop Pedagogy, by creating opportunities for discourse about oppressive conditions, the literature review did not offer many concrete examples of how this can be done. The final limitation being that as KRS-One said, most educators using Hip-Hop Pedagogy are teaching it "freestyle" and a well-researched model that incorporates a theoretical framework, such as the Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is necessary to further the use of Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Summary

> Our purpose as educators is not to simply replace one dominant ideology with another; the goal is not to make them slaves to a different (more politically correct) ideology. (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p.187)

Creating a model for utilizing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is not about creating a new rigid set of requirements or a quick fix to major educational inequities. I realize that for some of my colleagues their relationship to and/or interest in Hip Hop music and culture may not be organic, so to utilize the work of these theorists could create uncomfortable moments and legitimate fear of critique over the meaning and

content of the material. But as Charles Beady (2001a) writes, "Even teachers who have a racial and cultural affinity with their students often have difficulty motivating them. Young people will listen to and talk about things they are 'into.' Regardless of race and culture, they are into rap and hip-hop" (Beady, 2001a, p. 39). It is evident that comfort level or lack of information may be one obstacle.

The actual content and controversy embedded in Hip-Hop such as the glorification of violence and/or crime, an emphasis on materialism, misogyny, homophobia, offensive language, appropriation, inability to decode what is being said, and feeling alienated from the culture are also legitimate concerns for educators. Hip-Hop music and culture are multi-faceted, evolving, complex and layered elements of society. Hip-Hop was not created to be neatly packaged for the educational system, so it is messy and often hard to work with. It can also seem contradictory at times. But it is art, which means it is always subject to critique, dialogue, and analysis (Dyson, 2007). There are many different artists representing multiple viewpoints on any given issue coming from just about any place on the globe and any region of the U.S. (Kitwana, 2002). Hip-Hop is complicated, fascinating, and as illustrated previously, full of potential for creating more engaging classrooms. Hip-Hop Pedagogy certainly provides a challenge for educators who are willing to engage in it to reach their students (Akom, 2009).

The research has shown that the basic elements and principles of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy include an emphasis on storytelling, dialogue and active listening. I also believe that creating an awareness and space for analysis of social issues that is a counter-narrative to mainstream supposition is necessary. Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy openly encourages discussion of difference as it relates to personal and social

identity (Stovall, 2006). It encourages community/geographic identification, and is culturally relevant to many students (Parmar, 2005). It requires authenticity from all those involved-teachers, students, artists, and community members. It is fundamental that educators believe that students already have valuable knowledge and that action-oriented/creation of social change is possible (Akom, 2009). These themes are present in my guiding assumptions listed at the beginning of this chapter.

The development of this theoretical base for a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy will enable myself and other like-minded educators to move from a "bag of tricks" approach to an organized, multifaceted, complex pedagogical structure that encompasses the key elements of critical pedagogy in the exploration of a range of issues not always easily explored in the classroom, as well as the successful development of skills and competencies with students for whom traditional pedagogies have failed (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Since I first used the film, *Higher Learning* (1995) in my College Seminar course in 1996 and realized my students (as well as myself) wanted to read *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* just because Ice Cube's character recommended it in the film, I have continued to incorporate more popular culture and media into my pedagogy. I have relied more heavily on Hip-Hop music and culture as an effective way to do this. I believe that Hip-Hop culture has a profound effect on every aspect of urban life for young people in the U.S., and both suburban and urban students can benefit from an infusion of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy (Parmar, 2005). There are aspects of Hip-Hop music and culture that transcend its use as merely a pop culture medium. As evidenced in this chapter, it can be used as a springboard to dialogue about social issues

such as racism, sexism, and classism, and it can be deconstructed and used to dialogue about internalized oppression, homophobia and misogyny. The possibilities are virtually limitless for educators who are willing to engage in the conversation. Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy provides me with a creative praxis and more authentic teaching style. I realize this is not a universal experience for all educators. But I am interested in continuing to tell the success stories of those who are finding Hip-Hop Pedagogy to be transformative in working with students for whom this is a meaningful cultural expression and central to their identity.

In the words of Brooklyn rapper, educator, and activist Rha Goddess, who is working towards creating a community of hip-hop intellectuals, "There's street knowledge and then there's academe. The ones who marry both… are able to process what goes on… and some step up and influence it" (Christen, 2003, p.23). In an interview, I asked David Stovall (2006) what he thought was most important for me to know about researching Hip-Hop Pedagogy, since his work is often used as an example of successful Hip-Hop Pedagogy practice, and he replied emphatically,

> Over the next couple of years, it will be critically important for educators who use hip-hop to demonstrate its necessity in the classroom. Without it, another art form created by people of color will be washed away. Unfortunately, that process is well on its way. (Interview, June 15, 2006)

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter on research methodology describes the research design for this study, including the rationale, site selection and participants, the researcher role and relationship to subjects, the value of research to participants, data collection methods, data analysis, consent protocol, trustworthiness, relevant ethical considerations, as well as my personal biography. I selected the qualitative research method of in-depth interviewing for this study because it allowed me to explore how Hip-Hop culture influences the creation of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy based on the experience Hip-Hop education *elites.*

Research Questions

This study examined how Hip-Hop culture impacts educators' pedagogy and sought to create a new model of Hip-Hop as Social Justice Pedagogy by conducting in-depth interviews with influential Hip-Hop educators/scholars (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Thomas, 1993). In order to examine the necessary elements of a conceptual framework for creating Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy this study has attempted to answer the following four research questions:

1. How do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe the core assumptions, beliefs, guiding philosophies and/or theories, which inform their Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?
2. What do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as the core tenets or non-negotiable aspects of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

a.) What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as necessary in the creation of a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

3. What theories inform the Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy of the *elites*?

a) How do Hip-Hop education elites use Hip-Hop culture to serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

4. What methodologies do Hip-Hop education *elites* believe to be the necessary for teaching about and/or implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

a) What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* identify as necessary for teaching about Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

Design and Rationale

There are four central methods for conducting qualitative research: "(a) participating in the setting, (b) observing directly, (c) interviewing in depth, and (d) analyzing documents and materials" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 97). I selected the qualitative research method of in-depth interviewing for this study because it allowed me to explore how Hip-Hop culture influences educators' Social Justice Pedagogy. Qualitative interviews are predicated upon the idea that, "The participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as participant views it (the emic perspective), not as the researcher views it (the etic perspective) (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.101). A qualitative study provides the researcher the opportunity to co-construct new theory and knowledge.

Population Selection & Data Collection

The study used the data collected from the interviews with *elites* in the blossoming field of Hip-Hop Education. Marshall & Rossman (2006) define *elites* as

those who are "considered to be influential, prominent, and/or well-informed in an organization or community; they are selected for interviews based on their expertise in areas relevant to the research" (p.105).

Participants in this study are well-known leaders in the field of Hip-Hop education. They have either created and documented the results of their own Hip-Hop education courses/programs, present regularly at national research conferences on Hip-Hop education, publish scholarly work in the field and/or have started notable Hip-Hip education organizations. All participants are self-identified members of the Hip-Hop generation, born between 1965-1984 (Kitwana, 2002).

My sample includes 23 educators in total. There are four women, and nineteen men. Eleven of them have founded non-profits, which promote Hip-Hop education related content and resources, while twelve of them currently work in formal education settings. There is overlap between and among the *elites,* as they tend to occupy multiples roles through various relationships to both Hip-Hop culture and the field of education (i.e. scholar/artist/non-profit founder). Three of them identify as queer/bisexual, two as Jewish and one as Muslim; and two expressed Christianity as a salient identity. Fourteen of them are primarily currently living and working in the Northeast, four are on the West Coast, three in the Midwest, and two in the Southern region of the U.S. Overall, about half of them are primarily teaching at the high school or college level, while half are primarily working in education non-profits teaching students and/or teachers. Their formal relationship to schools and non-profits tend to be fluid, as they often wear many hats. Twelve of them identify as artists (MCs, DJs, etc.) as well as educators. Of the 23

educators, ten identify as being African American, five as white, three as Latino, three as Bi/multiracial, one as Asian, and one as Middle Eastern.

I recruited a diverse sampling of 23 participants for this study. I was able to interview five participants at an annual Hip-Hop education summer institute held at a large Mid-West university in July 2009. This conference is a weeklong summer intensive course that attracts teachers, primarily from the Mid-West region, who are interested in learning methods for incorporating elements of Hip-Hop and spoken word into their pedagogy and curriculum. The participants that I interviewed were instructors for the summer institute since they are deemed experts in the field of Hip-Hop education. I was able to recruit an additional 19 participants, which I interviewed over the course of the following seven months due in part to recommendations from Hip-Hop education colleagues and in part due to my own relationships with these *elites*. The two forms of participant recruitment I used are known as snowball sampling (Castillo, 2009) and purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1994). Many of these additional participants were referred by other *elites* whom I interviewed or consulted for this study and/or due to my relationship and interest in Hip-Hop education. All participants were emailed a proposed recruitment letter (Appendix C).

I promised confidentiality to my participants, although some of them expressed interest in having their names cited, because they are *elites* and well known in the field of Hip-Hop education. However, I have referred to all participants in my study by using pseudonyms to protect their identities and to maintain confidentiality according to IRB protocol as noted in the letter of consent (Appendix D).

Participants

Damali (2009) is a middle school teacher in a public school in a major urban center in the Northeast. She has worked in formal and informal education programs for the past seven years and is in her late 20s. She was an instrumental leader in the education arm of a non-profit organization where she helped to generate standards-based Hip-Hop infused curriculum. She identifies as being biracial (Black and white) and heterosexual (Interview, November 4, 2009).

Max (2009) is a Latino from a major urban center in the Northeast who created his own Hip-Hop education non-profit, which has both local and global elements. He is an artist, poet and MC, and frequently brings martial arts into his pedagogy and curriculum. He is in his mid-20s (Interview, November 30, 2009).

Vaughn (2009) is an African American man who founded a non-profit Hip-Hop education organization in a major urban center in the Northeast. He is originally from the Caribbean and saliently identifies as being Christian. He is a well-known artist, MC, actor and motivational speaker. He believes strongly in using Hip-Hop to teach life skills He is heterosexual and in his mid-30s (Interview, October 21, 2009).

Manuel (2009) is the founder of a leading political organization dedicating to preserving Hip-Hop culture, and the utilization of Hip-Hop related curriculum for political education. He is a well-known activist, educator and MC. He identifies as African American, heterosexual, is in his early 30s and is from the West Coast (Interview, December 30, 2009).

Javier (2009) is a DJ turned public school teacher turned Vice-Principal. He is also a well respected author and blogger about Hip-Hop culture, specifically Hip-Hop for

social justice. He identifies as Biracial (Asian and Latino), heterosexual and is in his mid-30s. He is located in a progressive urban area on the West Coast but is originally from the Mid-West (Interview, December 22, 2009).

Giovanni (2009) is primarily known as a popular underground MC, but also founded a nationally recognized non-profit organization that promotes literacy through Hip-Hop. He is currently the director of a school for "special education" classified students and is located in a major urban center in the Northeast. He is in his mid 30s and identifies as African American and heterosexual (Interview, July 30, 2009).

Kyle (2009) is a white-Jewish Hip-Hop scholar located on the East Coast in his early 40s. He primarily writes books about the various artistic elements of Hip-Hop culture, has relationships with many of the pioneers and teaches at the Higher Education level. He is also a well-respected B-Boy (Interview, December 5, 2009).

Hakim (2009) is a public school social studies teacher who also works in higher education training future teachers. He is from the Southern region of the United States and is a well-known blogger about Hip-Hop education issues. He identifies as being Middle Eastern, Muslim and in his mid-30s (Interview, October 31, 2009).

Julius (2009) is most notable for his exceptional Beat-Boxing talent, but has been a teaching artist for over a decade. He is originally from a major urban center in the Northeast, but currently does most of his work in Europe. He was an instrumental founder in a non-profit dedicated to exploring the elements of Hip-Hop culture in after school settings. He identifies as being white, Jewish and in his mid-30s (Interview, July 6, 2009).

Sam (2009) is in his mid-20s and was inspired by Hip-Hop culture as a young person in profound ways. After many challenges with the criminal justice system, he found solace and validation through Hip-Hop. A Latino from the Midwest, with a salient Christian identity, Sam has created a non-profit and award-winning Hip-Hop curriculum that teaches critical literacy and life skills (Interview, October 5, 2009).

Carlos (2009) is a scholar in higher education whose work focuses on gender, patriarchy and sexism in Hip-Hop. He co-founded an influential political Hip-Hop education web site and works with a major non-profit. He is based in the Midwest. Carlos regularly organizes national conferences, which promote the use of Hip-Hop for educational purposes stressing the importance of a social justice lens. He is in his mid-30s (Interview, December 1, 2009).

Renjit (2010) is one of the most well known Hip-Hop scholars and historians. He currently works and lives on the West Coast and is in his early 40s. He is of Asian ancestry and believes that Hip-Hop studies are a continuation of earlier struggles for ethnic studies and cultural centers. His socio-political analysis of the significance of Hip-Hop is a foundational staple for many Hip-Hop courses taught at the college level (Interview, February 16, 2010).

Zoë (2009) is a prolific writer, who lives and works in a major urban center in the Northeast. She has published several Hip-Hop education curricula, and believes Hip-Hop is a powerful tool for teaching social justice, particularly through the use of narrative writing. Zoë has worked as a teacher in secondary schools but is currently working with a non-profit, which utilizes Hip-Hop to increase literacy. Zoë is in her early 30s and identifies as heterosexual (Interview, November 1, 2009).

Justin (2009) is both a scholar in higher education and the founder of an international non-profit that was created to give structure and consistency to Hip-Hop curricula and programs. His non-profit hosts global Hip-Hop education conferences in a major urban center in the Northeast. He is also a classically trained musician and identifies as an African American, heterosexual man in his early 40s who is originally from the Bronx, New York (Interview, November 2, 2009).

Rudy (2009) is a Latino male who grew up listening to and participating in Hip-Hop culture. He is from a major urban center on the West Coast. His journey utilizing Hip-Hop for social justice began on his first day of classroom teaching. He serves as a hybrid-public schoolteacher and scholar, working with future teachers. His research and writing have informed much of the national dialogue about Hip-Hop pedagogy. He is in his late 30s (Interview, November 10, 2009).

Allen (2009) is a principal and teacher educator from the Southern part of the U.S. in a rural area. He identifies as an African American man, who is also saliently Christian and heterosexual. He is a well-regarded speaker and expert on implementing Hip-Hop pedagogies in various educational contexts, and conducts a major Hip-Hop education teacher-training program that is statewide. He is in his early 40s (Interview, November 15, 2009).

Eden (2009) is an African American woman from a major urban center in the Midwest who now lives and resides in an urban center in Northeast. She is in her late 30s. She created a groundbreaking course at a prestigious liberal arts university explicitly about the creation of an authentic critical Hip-Hop pedagogy. She is frequently asked to present her work at conferences and panel discussions, and has published ethnographic

studies about the work of her students in the Hip-Hop pedagogy class (Interview, November 25, 2009).

Shawn (2009) is a talented artist/actor who worked as faculty at a major research university in the Northeast, where he pioneered many Hip-Hop theater programs utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. He is currently on the board of a major Hip-Hop education research center, and continues to publish about his cutting-edge Hip-Hop pedagogy. He is a Queer, biracial, Jewish man who lives and works in the Northeast and Southwest (Interview, November 30, 2009).

Jason (2010) is one of the most well known Hip-Hop scholars, originally a Hip-Hop journalist, who began by documenting the socio-politics of Hip-Hop culture. He is a frequent lecturer and influential thinker in the field of Hip-Hop studies. His books are required reading in most Hip-Hop studies courses. He is an African American, heterosexual man, living and working in both the Midwest and urban Northeast. He is in his mid-40s and has co-founded several non-profits dedicated to political activism and Hip-Hop culture (Interview, February 2, 2010).

Romeo (2009) is the director of a major non-profit that is utilized by teachers and students in an urban center in the Northeast. Romeo is a white male from the Northeast, in his mid-30s who grew up listening to and consuming Hip-Hop. Later, he became a spoken word artist, educator and eventually a social justice activist. He oversees many of the national Hip-Hop education training conferences and is a published author (Interview, July 9, 2009).

Alejandro (2009) is in his late 30s, Latino and works as a secondary school teacher who grew up in the Midwest. He is currently located on the West Coast, and has

been influential in the creation of teacher certification for Hip-Hop courses and content. He believes in holistic education, and the mind-body connection, and emphasizes the healing potential in Hip-Hop education and culture (Interview, July 6, 2009).

Eric (2009) is a public school teacher, working primarily with middle school special education students. He currently works in and is originally from the Northeast, but grew up in the suburbs rather than the urban space he occupies now. He is a published author of many innovative Hip-Hop curricula, and like Damali, played an instrumental role in the educational components of a seminal non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Hip-Hop culture (Interview, December 3, 2009).

Alara (2009) is a community organizer turned teaching artist who has published numerous Hip-Hop curriculum, and strongly believes in the power of Hip-Hop for social justice education. An African American woman from a major urban center in the Northeast, she identifies as bisexual. She has helped to found one of the first non-profits dedicated to harnessing the power of Hip-Hop culture for activism and education in people of color communities (Interview, July 7, 2009).

Data Collection

"Qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena: the approach is naturalistic, and interpretive, and it draws on multiple methods of inquiry." (Rossman & Rallis 2003, p. 3). The purpose of in-depth qualitative interviews is to explore participants' perspectives about a specific topic through a semi-structured guided interview (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The methodology is of particular significance because it "provides a rationale for the way in which a researcher goes about getting knowledge" (Griffiths, 1998, p. 35). In this case I conducted the interviews using a structured interview protocol in order to ensure comparable data, while still allowing for participants to share unique responses, anecdotes and perspectives. I analyzed a single data source in this study to discover participants' understanding of the ways in which Hip-Hop culture influences their social justice pedagogy. I aimed to have an equal representation of high school and higher education educators. The sample is diverse in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and geographical location.

I conducted 23 semi-structured digitally recorded 75-90 minute, face-to-face and phone interviews with each participant over an eight-month period between June 2009 and February 2010. Prior to scheduling the interviews, I asked participants to review the consent form (Appendix D). The consent form has specific information such as the central purpose of my proposed study, collection methods, explanation of confidentiality and participant rights, the benefits and risks of the study, and signature of the participant and researcher (Creswell, 1994).

I developed a structured interview protocol (Appendix F), which included an interview agenda and set of detailed questions. The interview protocol is structured into

three sections. In the first section, I asked participants about their core assumptions and relationship to Hip-Hop culture and the impact that Hip-Hop culture has on their pedagogy. In the second section, I asked how Hip-Hop influences their worldview regarding societal conditions, how they use it to educate for social justice and how that impacts their ability to build bridges with students. The third section of the interviews focused on how Hip-Hop informs their social justice pedagogy as educators, and I sought specific examples of methodology, particularly as it is used for social justice education.

In addition to the interviews conducted at the national Hip-Hop conference held at a large Mid-Western University in July 2009, the remaining interviews were conducted in Washington D.C., New York City and via telephone. I emailed letters to all educators in order to solicit their participation, to conduct member checks (Creswell, 1994) and ask follow up questions when appropriate.

Data Analysis

Data analysis can be detailed in seven stages: (a) organizing the data, (b) immersion in the data, (c) generating categories and themes; (d) coding the data, (e) offering interpretations through analytic memos; (f) searching for alternative understandings; and (g) writing the report or other format for presenting the data" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 156). I began my analysis by having all 23 interviews transcribed. Next I listened to the digital audio recordings, while following along with the transcripts to ensure that the recordings were transcribed accurately and reflected cultural and situational nuances. I made sure transcription was phonetic so as to accurately reflect the actual words being said in order to have a better assessment of the meaning intended. I engaged in "member checks" (Creswell, 1994), whenever possible

which included sending the transcribed documents to the interviewee to guarantee accuracy. I also took notes while I conducted the in-depth interviews to reflect participants' facial expressions, body language or other non-verbal behavior (Marshall & Rossman, 2006) that may be relevant to the expression of their ideas. Additionally, I read the transcripts in order to get familiar with the data.

I began the process by doing open coding in order to gauge common themes and ideas. After the preliminary open coding phase, the following themes emerged: background and relationship to Hip-Hop, experience creating new programs or classes or curricula connected to Hip-Hop culture, early memories and personal relationship to Hip-Hop culture, core assumptions about Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, theories which inform or support Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, non-negotiables in either Hip-Hop or Social Justice, Hip-Hop culture (contradictions, definitions, in relationship to rap and music industry) understanding of social justice in relation to Hip-Hop and self, emphasis on social and personal identities including race, class, gender, and geographic location, and methodologies/implementation and strategies for utilizing Hip-Hop culture. These themes, which emerged from the data, became the initial units of analysis.

In order to make the study more specific and relevant to my research questions, I compared the emerging themes from my initial round of open coding and began a second set of more axial coding. This provided me with more specific units of analysis to begin to answer my research questions. There was a great deal of convergence in the data analysis, however because of the enormity of the data set, I did a third round of more specific coding. I began axial coding in which I utilized the five social justice education principles (Adams, et. al, 2007) in order to compare the emerging categories: 1)

balancing the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process; 2) validating the personal experience while illuminating the systemic; 3) attending to social relations in the classroom; 4) using reflection and experience as tools for student learning and; 5) an emphasis on self-awareness, personal growth and social change.

I selected from the transcripts the units of analysis in which the interviewees' expressed any idea relevant to one of the social justice education principles. My justification was based on my larger research question: what are the necessary elements, core assumptions, beliefs, guiding philosophies and/or theories necessary to create Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy? (Adams, et. al., 2007). I then coded the units of analysis using grounded theory (Foss & Waters, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glazer & Strauss, 1967). Grounded Theory analysis has four key aspects: a) discovering codes which identify "anchors" for the data collection; b) creation of concepts (which is a gathering of codes that are comparable and can be used to generate the data which can be grouped into categories); c) Categories (or themes) are then organized into similar concepts and are used to generate theory and d) formation of theory acts as explanatory schema to illuminate the subject of the research (Foss & Waters, 2007).

In the more specific round of axial coding, concepts such as paying homage to Hip-Hop, finding healing through Hip-Hop, and the legacy and importance of Hip-Hop as a theoretical framework became visible themes. Additionally, the importance of the following emerged as critical to the development of the *elites'* pedagogy: knowledge of self and community, ability to listen and ask questions, the necessity of honest feedback, creating sacred space in educational contexts, emphasis on relationships, and allowing for vulnerability.

Through the units of analysis, an explanatory schema emerged, which I discovered through my analysis of the data, which describes the important functions and tenets necessary to create Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. The schema begins with participants' explanation of their understanding and relationship to Hip-Hop culture and the profound influence it has had in their lives. The second part of the schema illuminates the participants' views on the organic connection between Hip-Hop culture and social justice education. The final part of the schema unfolded in two concrete ways: how Hip-Hop informs the participants personal social justice pedagogy by providing counter hegemonic educational narrative opportunities and how they were able offer examples of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy supported by the understanding, appreciation and working knowledge of participants' personal pedagogy. The critical element in the schema being that neither Hip-Hop nor Social Justice should be manipulated to make room for the other; so as bodies of knowledge they needed to be equally explored, and the research revealed where the organic connections actually exist.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are its specific focus on self-identified members of the Hip-Hop generation. It does not take into account educators who may be using Hip-Hop as pedagogy but identify as being outside of the culture. It does not take into account educators who teach in elementary school contexts or those who have a casual relationship to Hip-Hop education. It is limited in that there are a disproportionate number of men interviewed; however, this is reflective of the field of Hip-Hop education and Hip-Hop culture in general (Rose, 2008). I attempted to provide as much additional biographical information based on what participants had shared. For example some

participants did not specify their sexual orientation or religious identity, while others did, and cited this as being connected to or relevant to their connection to Hip-Hop culture. Wherever identifying language was specified, I included it; otherwise I left it blank so as not reinforce stereotypical binaries (i.e. assuming heterosexuality as a default) (Adams, et. al., 2007).

Researcher Positionality

> For all of the problems and passions it arouses, Hip-Hop connects with its youth constituency like nothing else can or will. When virtually nothing else could, Hip-Hop created a voice and vehicle for the young and dispossessed, giving them both hope and inspiration. (Watkins, 2005, p. 7)

I identify myself as a member of the Hip-Hop generation, because of my long-standing relationship to the music and my passion for the culture. I cannot remember a time without Hip-Hop, but I do remember many times when it felt new, special, or under the radar. Hip-Hop has a major influence on how I see the world, and how I experience my various social identities as an urban, white, raised working-class, thirty six-year-old woman. And because it is a generation that I am a part of and something that I am continually thinking about in my professional experience as a social justice educator, I believe it is useful to explore as pedagogy.

I remember hearing the Boogie Down Productions (KRS-One) song, "Love is Gonna Getcha," in 1989, and it seemed to be describing exactly what I was experiencing in my life. I felt such a strong connection to that song because it was a witness to the crazy things I was observing as the result of an unforgiving and ravishing drug culture. From that point, Hip-Hop always served as a counter-narrative and informer of current events in a way that no other medium could be for me.

Personal Biography

As an educator, I began realizing that Hip-Hop might have the power and strength to create an identity and a political agenda, and that meant Hip-Hop might also work as critical pedagogy. That is once I learned what critical pedagogy was and realized Hip-Hop had always been a public critical pedagogy for myself, and many of my friends. Although it would be sometime before I found other people who were working towards a similar goal, I felt that I was on the brink of witnessing a movement.

When I entered the Social Justice Education program, I came in ready to prove my theory that Hip-Hop, as critical pedagogy was also social justice work. I was met with a lukewarm response at best. Most of the well-intentioned faculty and many of my fellow students asked questions, such as, "Why Hip-Hop? Why would you study that?" After hearing these responses, I thought, how could I not? As I learned about Freire and the idea that "popular education," meant meeting students where they are in order to name, reflect and act for/create social change, I started to understand the power of using Hip-Hop to teach for social justice. The music and culture provided intrinsic value, and seemed to be engaging and interesting for many students. Hip-Hop had provided me with my most powerful lessons in social justice throughout my childhood and continuing on into my adulthood through the work of artists such as KRS-One, Sister Souljah, Public Enemy and Queen Latifah.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

While I identify as a member of the Hip-Hop generation, and could meet the standard definition of a Hip-Hop education *elite*, my positionality did not negatively impact my ability to conduct this research. I was able to do it an unbiased way so as to

focus on the emic perspective of the participant (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). My personal and academic connection to the subject matter is strength in that it helped me to gain access to participants and to make connections between the field of both Hip-Hop and Social Justice Education.

I did interview many *elites* with whom I had prior working relationships. The circles within Hip-Hop education are fairly small, so interviewing former colleagues was expected. However, I made every ethical consideration not to interview anyone with whom I am currently working with or have a personal relationship with that extends beyond our work.

Summary

Over the course of eight months, I conducted 23 in-depth qualitative interviews with Hip-Hop educator *elites* in order to ascertain the necessary elements needed for the creation of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. My sample was diverse in regards to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender, geographic location and educational context. I used grounded theory to create an explanatory schema to interpret the results.

CHAPTER 5

CORE ASSUMPTIONS & TENETS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE HIP-HOP PEDAGOGY

Introduction

The implications for an innovative, well-researched model for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy are numerous. The primary one being that it has the potential to liberate educators and students from an archaic and oppressive educational system through the creation of new ways of learning and thinking. This findings chapter will focus on the results of the first part of my research, which explain the core assumptions and tenets of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. I will explain this by answering my first two research questions:

1.) How do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe the core assumptions, beliefs, guiding philosophies and/or theories, which inform their Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

2.) What do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as the core tenets or non-negotiable aspects of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

   a. What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* describe as necessary in the creation of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy?

The research revealed the answers to these questions and tells a story about the significance of Hip-Hop culture as public pedagogy, and appreciation for the personal connection and "home" that many educators have found in Hip-Hop culture. The foundational theoretical premise is that Hip-Hop culture provides a counter-hegemonic narrative to the often one-dimensional set of social codes, which inform the current

educational system. This counter-hegemony is achieved through many distinct pedagogical strategies. I coded and categorized the *elites*' answers to the research questions and the four primary *functions* of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy emerged, which the *elites* explained as their core assumptions and guiding philosophies about Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Additionally the research revealed that there are seven key *tenets*, which are the non-negotiables aspects of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, and serve as essential tools for teaching about and/or implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

While the *elites* are all well-known, influential players in the blossoming field of Hip-Hop education, they are also cognizant of the pitfalls of essentializing, oversimplifying or misrepresenting Hip-Hop Pedagogy as a quick fix to structural inequities. I will discuss some of the limitations and warnings regarding the misuse of Hip-Hop Pedagogy in Chapter 6.

Note, throughout both the findings chapters, Chapters 5 and 6, I often interchangeably use Hip-Hop Pedagogy and Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy to describe what the *elites* are referencing, unless otherwise noted. As one of the most well known *elites*, who holds a PhD, and is an international scholar in Hip-Hop education, Rudy explains the importance of clarifying terms,

> [Regarding the creation of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy] I guess I would argue that it's a false binary. Because that would presume you could have a Hip-Hop Pedagogy that's not connected to social justice. And I don't think you can. You can have a rap pedagogy, I think Hip-Hop as a culture is, its essence is the investment in the interested and the needs and the stories of the people who have the least among us…I think that is the core of any social justice mission. So I think if you are using Hip-Hop then by virtue of that decision that you are aligning yourself with a certain set of interests and a certain cultural and political framework that raises a set of issues that are intimately tied to justice. (Interview, November 10, 2009)

Rudy is describing the nuances and complexities that many of the *elites* struggle with, and that I also struggled with initially. Describing and eventually decoding what makes Hip-Hop Pedagogy unique and useful is a complicated process. There are many layers to unpack in relation to the individual educator's relationship to Hip-Hop, the creation of personal pedagogy, and which functions and tenets could be agreed upon. However, despite the many cautions and warnings, most of the *elites*, with assurance that it would not be oversimplified, could explain what they believe to be authentic when describing the interplay between Hip-Hop and Social Justice and the creation of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. As Rudy states, the concept may be redundant for those who practice it, but for those who do not, the specificity is crucial. The research revealed some very specific functions and non-negotiable tenets, which explain a complex and culturally relevant Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

A core premise that emerged throughout the research is that Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy functions as a counter-hegemonic narrative to an often middle/upper class, white, male, Christian narrative present in United States public school curriculum (Zinn, 2003). This is a natural derivative of the history of Hip-Hop culture, and is explained through the Social Justice Education principles. The principles originate from "multiple pedagogical traditions and epistemologies" (Adams, 2000, p. 30). There are five key SJE principles: balancing the emotional and cognitive components of the learning process; acknowledging and supporting the personal (the individual student's experience) while illuminating the systemic (the interactions among social groups); attending to social relations in the classroom; utilizing reflection and experience as tools for student-

centered learning and valuing self-awareness, personal growth, and social change as outcomes of the learning process.

Justin is both a scholar in higher education and the founder of an international non-profit organization that was created to give structure and consistency to Hip-Hop curricula and programs. His non-profit hosts global Hip-Hop education conference in a major urban center in the Northeast. He is also a classically trained musician and identifies as an African American, heterosexual man in his early 40s. Justin underscores the central point that Hip-Hop acts in a liberatory manner by illuminating often under-represented voices and experiences that force the dominant culture to take note. Justin says,

> Some guiding philosophies around Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy would be that Hip-Hop is a language of counter-hegemonic resistance. It seeks to create a voice outside of the dominant discourse to shine light on the cracks in the structure of society. Hip-Hop also seeks to empower those who do not have power through the medium of sound and rhythm. These individuals tend to be youth but not necessarily. (Interview, November 2, 2009)

Justin's point is reflective of one of the salient themes amongst the *elites*, which was the myriad of ways in which they described Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy as being a counter narrative to the dominant discourse in education. Education that is liberatory seeks to critique the current social arrangement, by providing voice and experience of subordinate groups in society. It also allows for discourse to happen through multiple modalities, while increasing the capacity for critical literacy.

Based on my research it appears that Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy functions as being liberatory and counter-hegemonic in four distinct ways: increasing critical thinking, exploring social identities, fostering vulnerability and cultivating strengths

(such as use of technology). This is especially impactful because these attributes are true for both teacher and student-interrupting traditional power dynamics, whereby creating new knowledge and unconventional pathways to learning.

Core Assumption #1: Fosters Vulnerability

The idea that vulnerability can and should exist in an educational context-for teacher and students-is in many ways a radical notion. It ensures that traditional hierarchical paradigms are being disrupted and replaced with genuine human connections. This is a primary function of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, because a core function is increased vulnerability and authenticity for educators and students involved in the educational process. Out of the 23 *elites* interviewed, 15 (65.2%) of them cited vulnerability as a critical function of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Educators who allow themselves to be vulnerable can establish connections through role-modeling their connectedness to personal subject matter; inviting students to begin to make personal meaning of the texts or lessons. Giovanni and Alara make reference to this in two different ways,

> Giovanni: I was reading the lyrics one day, and I'll never forget this shit, when I finished I looked up and there was a kid sitting at the table crying, he was crying. I was like what's wrong with you? He was like nothing. So when he said nothing like that I'll leave him alone, I don't want to put him on the spot. So like after class I went to talk to him and I was like what was wrong? He was like man, I don't know who this Ghostface dude is but I feel like he grew up in my house. And I was looking at him like, he said like fifteen of us in a four-bedroom apartment. He was just reading shit like yo' it shook him up. It's not the fact they are writing it, it's the fact that they give a shit enough to express themselves in the way they are doing it. Its like that would never be used or recorded, its just a rare moment in time that a kid actually, from a prime knowledge standpoint you get to say, 'look I know all about this shit.' It's that dialogue that engagement-and you get to find out how they really feel about power. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Giovanni's account of a student being moved by a Hip-Hop artists' rendition of his life is an explicit example of how Hip-Hop makes space for a counter narrative by creating room for vulnerability. This anecdote illustrates the power that Hip-Hop texts can have in encouraging vulnerability in the classroom. The student mentioned that he hadn't previously felt seen or heard in that same manner. And not only did he feel his story was reflected, it was able to happen in an educational space, so that someone else (a teacher) could bear witness and offer support. Giovanni felt that in that moment, as un-quantifiable as it might be, both he and the student were able to share a moment of humanity, a moment of vulnerability. Alara makes it clear that this shared vulnerability is the basis for connection, and this is how "real" and new learning can occur. Pretending to have expert status in all subject areas (Freire, 1970) creates an educational environment that maintains the status quo as Alara notes,

> This is who I am and this sort of like you know, this is where I come from. I'm upper middle class, blank, blank, blank person and no I've never listened to Hip-Hop. There is a lot to learn from your students. I mean it really is all about just being able to ask the question so that you don't have to pretend it's you. There has to be a willingness to be vulnerable and to take a journey with your students. Are you willing to sit down and listen to the music and make the connections yourself? Make some personal connections to what these artists are talking about? (Interview, July 7, 2009)

Alara makes an important point about using the vulnerability to make personal connections, and about how authenticity in the teacher/student relationship can increase the capacity for learning for both teachers and students. Another unique and important element of the counter-hegemonic narrative in Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is the acknowledgement of social identities in educational spaces. Often educators are mislead by teacher training programs, which emphasize banking methods of education, and

promote the belief that education is neutral and social identities, which actually inform life experience, do not or should not matter in educational spaces.

Core Assumption #2: Explores Social Identities

Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy acknowledges that students and teachers come to educational spaces with lived experiences, which are informed by their roles in society, and much of this is based on the socialization process. To ignore race, class, gender, age, national origin, first language, ability, religion, or sexual orientation, is to ignore important power dynamics. Conversely, by providing outlets for exploring social identities, educators are able to learn with and from students about how to dismantle oppressive dynamics. Hip-Hop texts offer many opportunities and examples to openly discuss social identities, whereby offering tangible ways to provide counter narrative. Out of the 23 elites 17 (73.9%) expressed the importance of acknowledging social identities in educational spaces. Both Zoë and Eden acknowledge this important opportunity, Zoë says,

> Acknowledging differences and similarities with regard to social identities; this is what makes Hip-Hop's potential as social justice pedagogy so important and distinct. (Interview, November 1, 2009)

Eden agrees with Zoë regarding the value of Hip-Hop Pedagogy, in that it creates language and opportunity to discuss identity, and that this is an important piece of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, "Hip-Hop and social justice are so much about identity. There must be an appreciation for the complexity [regarding identity] that resides within Hip-Hop" (Interview, November 25, 2009). This becomes especially important as Damali identifies a key reason social identities matter for teacher and student, which is the

question of relevance. Without an understanding and exploration of social identities, it is difficult for teachers to make consistently relevant pedagogical choices, Damali says,

> If anything education/curriculum being relevant to student communities, individual experiences and critically analyzing that in a safe way, whether in delivery, objective or product (or all three) is what guides me in developing curricula. Understanding why you as an educator are using Hip-Hop/Social Justice in your pedagogy (especially in the case of non-teaching artists), should be clear and evident in what you want to take from the work you will do together… creating frameworks that lead to understanding the value of Hip-Hop as culture, as well as the social issue (or identity) being explored or activity being taught… students need the opportunity to not only see the connection, but to make it explicit themselves. (Interview, November 4, 2009)

Fostering vulnerability and exploring social identities are especially important in setting up the foundation for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy because they are often unusual in traditional educational spaces. Being able to do this through Hip-Hop culture is a unique bridge because educators can use the text, history, and unique elements of Hip-Hop to learn with and from students, and to tell and listen to their stories with a critical lens. Using a critical lens or critical thinking is the third important function of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

For some educators, critical thinking can take the form of media literacy, problem solving or ethnographic investigations. But for all of the *elites*, critical thinking is a major function necessary for disrupting current oppressive educational spaces, and current oppressive conditions in society at large.

Core Assumption #3: Encourages Critical Thinking

The first element of encouraging critical thinking is challenging the status quo; acknowledging language can be limiting and binaries should be disrupted. Critical thinking universally came up amongst nearly all of the *elites* (21 out of 23 or 91.3 %) as a

positive attribute created by Hip-Hop music and culture, which naturally creates space for critical analysis in the classroom because of the vast content present in Hip-Hop texts. As Renjit concurs, a major responsibility of social justice education is the ability to provide educational spaces that nurture critical thinking,

> Hip-Hop Pedagogy is a continuation of the ethnic studies struggles, education should be liberatory, education should be relevant, bodies of knowledge should move forward, are crucial, and necessary, an educational process should always look toward the bottom, hear the voices that are unheard, transform society in the direction of social and racial justice. (Interview, February 16, 2010)

Max makes a similar connection, and cites the multiple modalities of Hip-Hop culture as being part of a larger movement, which inspires critical thought and engagement. Students are often able to engage in critical thinking when they feel connected to the material being presented. Often when "banking methods" (Freire, 1970) are used in educational spaces, there is only one method of teaching being deployed: memorization and regurgitation. Using multiple modalities (Morrell, 2008) allows students to engage more fully because they can cultivate various strengths through participation in different aspects of the learning process. Max references the importance of multiple modality in social justice education,

> Social justice means working in solidarity with all peoples to achieve a humane society, Hip-Hop means the "party people", the oppressed, who use written, oral, visual and any practical element available to make others aware of their conditions as a means for social justice, pedagogy is critical education. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

Sam is the one of the most hopeful and optimistic of the *elites*; he makes the case that critical thinking takes the burden off of students to individually "own" oppression or the residue of oppression. But in fact he understands that thinking critically allows them to hope and dream, and re-imagine the world they want to be a part of,

> It shatters the myth that says they are stupid, powerless and mundane and replaces it with the reality that they are brilliant, powerful uniquely anointed. Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy helps young people to have a critical awareness on what is happening in the world but it doesn't stop there, it gives young people space to dream, an cultivate the skills and power necessary to make those dreams a reality. (Interview, October 5, 2009)

The *elites* were quick to point out that critical thinking is not only for the students, and in fact is applicable to all bodies of knowledge including their own use of Hip-Hop, as Zoë states,

> I firmly believe that as educators we have a responsibility for creating learning environments where young people see themselves as social actors with collective responsibility through what they learn. Every subject, every lesson, and every text is an opportunity to help students see themselves as connected to ideas and people beyond them-regardless of differences in social and other identities-this is at the core of creating a social justice learning environment. Hip-Hop was born as a social movement. Hip-Hop culture, if treated properly is a serious teaching, pedagogical tool in all different types of classrooms (and across age groups) but all Hip-Hop is not social justice oriented. (Interview, November 1, 2009)

Zoë illustrates a popular critique; Hip-Hop is often unwieldy and messy, not always neatly packaged for teaching for social justice. However, holding ourselves accountable to the same level of social responsibility and critique that students are being held to helps to answer the question of content. It is often less about the content and more about the larger philosophical decisions and beliefs in identifying a teachable moment, as Javier points to,

> My focus is on critical thinking, academic fundamentals and social justice awareness. Hip-Hop isn't always the best tool and I often just use it as an entry point, however I pretty much reference it at least everything day. Having said that I still use some lessons I've been using for years including ones using "Brenda's Got a Baby" and "Peruvian Coke." They are not the newest songs but the issues are still relevant. (Interview, December 22, 2009)

Javier emphasizes that Hip-Hop isn't *always* the primary way to engage students in critical thinking, and this point is a very important one for most of the *elites*. The very notion of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy encourages multiple perspectives, and seeks to avoid replacing one canon with another. It is just as much about process as content, critical thinking is about continuing to understand and investigate oppressive conditions, and finding empowering ways to respond and take action.

Core Assumption #4: Cultivates Strengths

One of the most powerful functional attributes of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is that it focuses on cultivating strengths. It does not operate from a deficit model. It encourages students and teachers to learn from and with each other, recognizing that there are multiple learning styles present in any educational context as Sam notes,

> Hip-Hop taught me to define myself from strengths not my deficiencies and I began to apply my newfound genius to my classes. I studied vocabulary words from ecology class by using them properly and putting them into raps. I read Shakespeare's *Tempest* and related it to what I saw happening in the community. I did projects on the history of Hip-Hop. I can honestly say I did not become literate until the age of 19. I began to read books and write with a critical lens [because of Hip-Hop]. (Interview, October 5, 2009)

Sam's experience with Hip-Hop and the positive impact it had on his self-esteem and relationship to education is not unusual. Most of the *elites* credit some of their interest or academic success as being connected to the additional knowledge base provided by the public pedagogy of Hip-Hop, as Justin says,

> Hip-Hop will continuously teach you something about life and it is a fabulous tool for all levels of education. The memorization skills that it builds helps to develop connections in the brain and the vocabulary skills that is requires helps to develop one's language and ability to express oneself. (Interview, November 2, 2009)

Sam and Justin credit the uniqueness of Hip-Hop in that it brings out talents and strengths thereby allowing for a more flexible and empowering educational process. But Kyle makes an even more specific claim about Hip-Hop,

> Hip-Hop is the purest meritocracy I have ever encountered. Either your idea is good or its not; it doesn't matter who you are. This attitude has two benefits. First, it encourages students to define their own educational goals and evaluate teachers in terms of their abilities to further those goals. Secondly, as part of this process, it encourages students to think about how they themselves would teach what they know to others and in many cases, may actually do so. Hip-Hop is the only environment in which I have seen teenagers teaching adult how to do things, and just that fact that such interactions can happen at all seems to me to be very empowering. (Interview, December 5, 2009)

It is arguable whether Hip-Hop is in fact the "purest" meritocracy, since it is unclear about the criteria for such an absolute proclamation, but whether or not it is *the* purest, is irrelevant. It is arguably a meritocracy that encourages entrepreneurial ideas and enterprise in a creative way. Kyle's point that students, and young people in general, can benefit from the concept that your idea and your abilities are what is important, not the traditional hierarchy that is present in most educational spaces, is important to note. Additionally Hip-Hop is often credited with valuing skills such as knowledge of technology and popular culture, which are not always valued in educational spaces because teachers do not necessarily have access to the similar skill sets or bodies of knowledge. Vaughn uses an example from the popular comic book series *The X Men*, to underscore the *elites*' general consensus around the importance of focusing on strengths in order to create a counter hegemonic educational space,

> …there is this cartoon called the X Men and the leader of the X is professor X, hence the X men. And in the cartoon he is a leader that runs a school and brings in these kids who are outcasts from the society because they are different. But the thing that makes them different he teaches them it's the thing that also makes them special. And he shows them at his school how to use that power and then go

> out into the world and use that for good. Little did I know that the context of the whole cartoon would shape my whole life and my work today. And how much it was connected to Hip-Hop for me… how I design programs and the work that I do-that is Hip-Hop for me, that is my X. (Interview, October 21, 2009)

Core Tenets and Non-Negotiables of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

In this next section, I will illustrate how Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy actually works; what are the actions and forms that it represents and delivers for students and teachers. The four functions were based on the overall core assumptions about SJHHP demonstrated through the use of Hip-Hop culture, which seeks to redefine the educational experience. The four functions of how that is done were clearly documented in the first section; allowing guideposts for teachers and students to create education spaces that are capable of: fostering vulnerability, exploring social identities, encouraging critical thinking and cultivating strengths; which is revolutionary and powerful. These four functions operate in unison to dismantle traditional oppressive dynamics in educational spaces. However, it is important to specify how this shows up; the practical application of the pedagogy, its core tenets.

Seven Tenets of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

In order to fully understand the newly forming Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy model, it is important to understand the tenets that emerged through the research which support this specific brand of Hip-Hop Pedagogy. A Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy has seven core tenets for teacher/student interactions: values prior knowledge, cultivates experiential learning, makes interdisciplinary connections, generates enthusiasm for learning, attends to group dynamics, focuses on importance of community, and emphasizes relationship building. Some of these tenets draw inspiration from the core principles of Social Justice Education, such as attending to group dynamics. But these

tenets are much more specific and nuanced as they relate to Hip-Hop culture. For example, attending to group dynamics in a Hip-Hop space might mean having students work in a cipher (or sacred circle). But even where there is overlap between a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy and Social Justice Education principles, the salient, unique dimension is the relationship of Hip-Hop culture to both students and educators. What is similar is the desire to promote social justice education in the classroom. Giovanni expresses the importance of education, and of Hip-Hop culture in how it informs the tenets,

> That's why the equalizer is education. You being able to read, lift yourself up out of this shit. Like they never looked at it that way before. And I am telling you there are no other ways that I could get them to see it without Hip-Hop. There is no other way to do it. I can't use any other popular culture format, maybe sports, not even sports, only Hip-Hop. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Giovanni's point that education is key for social change is an important concept, which undergirds the significance and relevance of Social Justice Education. His belief that Hip-Hop is an essential mechanism for achieving this, explains the essence of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy because he believes that Hip-Hop is the key to creating social change.

Tenet #1: Values Prior Knowledge

The *elites* uniformly felt that a strength and important dimension to utilizing a Hip-Hop Pedagogy was the opportunity to illuminate students' prior knowledge. This takes the form of Hip-Hop texts, biographical information about particular artists, or the opportunity to bring other Hip-Hop elements into an educational context. The central idea being that if students feel their prior knowledge is valuable they will be more motivated to succeed, and this will make the teachers' job much easier because the bridge is in

place. Carlos makes this point when he compares a students' ability to make use of Tupac as an interdisciplinary site of information and understanding,

> Perhaps students cannot discuss interdisciplinary ideas, but they can read the life, work and philosophy of Tupac in extremely sophisticated ways. Or use the commodification of rap music to talk about the cultural industries and conspicuous consumption. (Interview, December 1, 2009)

In addition to prior knowledge specific to various artist texts, the idea that students can be successful in a classroom because they have additional skills such as dance or visual arts is uniquely embedded in the elements and modalities of Hip-Hop. This is evidenced in Hip-Hop through the "call and response" aspect of the culture, which encourages participation for everyone rather then didactic lecturing. Additionally, Justin highlights the valuable prior knowledge that students have as being a way to make a bridge with students across other identities or differences,

> Some theories or practices are call and response methods of rhyming, enhancing knowledge retention through physical involvement (Hip-Hop dance), enhancing knowledge retention through visualization (graffiti or visual arts projects). Hip-Hop is an ideal bridge between students and teachers of all walks of life because it can incorporate many languages and creative modalities. Hip-Hop can be thought of as a malleable system or framework that cultures and people can use to formulate identities of themselves that embody their truest concepts about life and how to express it. (Interview, November 2, 2009)

It is a powerful testimony that Hip-Hop can "formulate identities" which allow people to "embody their truest concepts about life." This is at the heart of what makes Hip-Hop Pedagogy such an attractive and engaging opportunity for educators. Giovanni illustrates the way in which he honors students' prior knowledge while scaffolding a lesson plan based on many Hip-Hop texts and Hip-Hop knowledge. The examples are multi-layered

and masterfully executed as they employ many artists, concepts and ideas, as Giovanni notes,

> Hip-Hop works because you are working with kids' prior knowledge. You are not going in saying, "we are going to talk about the importance of learning about environmental science," you are going to say have you ever heard of Mos Def? Ok Mos Def has a song called New World Order. "Oh I know that song!" Even if they don't know the song they know who Mos Def is. SO there you got it. So now you play the song and you ain't talking about carbons and monoxide, fish looking cockeyed. You play some Marvin Gaye and he's talking about fish full of mercury. And they are like what are you talking about? Then I pull out the MTV clip with Jay Z when he went to Angola and the water, so now that they are like wait a minute, I never it was like that for some people. These cats will walk two miles a day to get water for their family. They didn't' realize all the uses of water-brushing their teeth, flushing the toilet-then you say ok-that's what it looks like when there isn't enough water-what about when there is too much water? Then we move to Katrina and the Tsunami. So in one song we have gone to social studies, science, English, math, we have done all subjects. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Shawn works in non-profits and higher education contexts, but is quick to point out the problem of the power dynamic in most educational spaces. Most educational spaces are not designed to value students' knowledge, it is typically more of a power-over model or banking model (Freire, 1970). Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is based upon the tenet that knowledge is already in the room, before the teacher writes a lesson plan or even arrives. Shawn believes it is about the power dynamic present between adults and youth,

> It's really about adultism, educational environments have perpetuated environment that is oppressive to young people. The learning environment has to side step or avoid of specifically counteract the on-going practice of dismantling adultism, has to be an attempt at democracy and dismantling hierarchies… attempt at group learning and teaching rather than sole learning or teaching, based on the assumption that there is a vast array of knowledge in the room prior to the arrival of the teacher or facilitator, it is the role of this person to activate or catalyze, not through a doing but a being-what you stand for-that you really know its not about you-its about everyone else-suppressing ones need to show off or be smart, but to inspire others, but even inspiring is too uni-directional of a word. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

In addition to valuing what students already know, Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy also values learning while doing, rather than rote memorization and regurgitation, commonly known as experiential learning.

Tenet #2: Cultivates Experiential Learning

Hip-Hop culture places a significant emphasis on participation, so it is a natural connection that Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy also emphasizes this mechanism for teaching and learning. Experiential learning necessitates that students have the opportunity to learn by doing, that they are afforded this mode of education, is a tenet of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, which Manuel explains,

> Since one of Hip-Hop's most valuable teaching aspects is experience, a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy would make experience learning a great platform for a greater degree of exploration, While I typically use it but have opted not to and see many instructors and situations where it is not used. We can summarize the primary strength of it (Hip-Hop) as leveling the playing field between teacher and student so that the student becomes teacher of self and teacher of others. (Interview, December 30, 2009)

The level playing field can happen when a student knows important geography or history because of a Hip-Hop text, or has an aptitude for technology that has come through making beats or downloading music or ringtones. Because Hip-Hop is not stagnant, the experiential nature also helps to sort out questions of identity. Jason references his global research, and the important distinction of valuing the experiential nature of Hip-Hop,

> In Hip-Hop you've got these kids, who have taken this music and this culture and helped, used it to help define themselves. [They say] I want to do that. And that is what I see happening. I see young people across cultures, I've been to Japan, I've been to Italy, I've been to France… and interacted with communities in all of these places. And I see the same pattern. People saying how can I do it? Not that

> they want to be the Black kids. [They say] Oh they just want to be like the Black kids. That's not what people are doing. They are saying let me use that medium to redefine myself and this cultural global movement. Like how is my culture different from my parents' generation? This is a lesson to other groups who are trying to break this strangle hold of globalization as it manifests itself in other parts other world. I don't really think you can understand the music if you don't understand the other things. (Interview, February 2, 2010)

Jason's explanation of Hip-Hop's global impact is a clear indicator of the experiential nature of Hip-Hop, because in many cases the actual language or even cultural nuances of a Hip-Hop artist may not fully translate, but the fashion, dance trends, use of technology, the visual literacy seen in graffiti art or the beats themselves, may be the cultural broker in helping to form identity and learn through experience.

Damali, a public school teacher, uses Hip-Hop to teach many important social justice lessons. Many times critics of Hip-Hop pedagogy will ask how to bring it in to the classroom successfully. Damali illustrates the ways in which this works in her urban middle school class. Her methods would bring validation to students' prior knowledge, but also allow for multiple ways to think about social justice issues, Damali explains,

> I have included demographic information and social statistics with a light emphasis on song lyrics or any musical element with math or science investigations. For example, a song demonstrating a social condition, a controversial position about sexual politics, having students write a rhyme with several pre-selected phrases or words to push creative writing around a topic. (Interview, November 4, 2009)

Sam uses a similar approach to Damali, and makes it specific to the urban Midwest communities that he teaches in by encouraging community engagement and activism as a piece of learning through experiential knowledge. Sam explains his methodology,

> Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy encourages students to, write research questions, develop rubrics, collect data, analyze data and give recommendations for further study. (Interview, October 5, 2009)

Sam uses a critical pedagogy embedded in the narrative of Hip-Hop texts to give students the space to conduct ethnographic studies, and create sophisticated frameworks for engaging in social studies and language arts curriculum that is engaging and very much based on students' experiential knowledge.

Tenet #3: Makes Interdisciplinary Connections

Valuing prior knowledge and experiential learning, allow educators the space and creativity through Hip-Hop Pedagogy to also make connections between and among different bodies of knowledge. The organic diversity of Hip-Hop lineage makes it ripe for teaching across disciplines. The research revealed a holistic and fruitful body of knowledge that inspires educators to teach in new and creative ways. Julius notes the importance of connecting Hip-Hop to its Afro-Centric roots as well as the importance of new media,

> So for me it's like the Diaspora, the history, the technology, the creation of independent media and creating our own representation-there is an entrepreneurial piece that is really important. I think there also the interdisciplinary nature-across mediums. So having you know, when we make a CD, we always had one group making the music, another making the lyrics, another designing the artwork and then we would perform it and bring in dancers. You know that holistic interdisciplinary practice, artistically and then also the business side of things. (Interview, July 6, 2009)

Julius is a world famous beat-boxer and global Hip-Hop educator, and while he identifies as a white, Jewish male, he acknowledges the importance of knowledge of the African Diaspora as both a key piece in teaching with and about Hip-Hop. Carlos, a PhD from the Midwest, is an African-American man, and echoes the importance of the connection between Hip-Hop and the Diaspora, as well as other progressive social justice movements,

> In my experience I have used Pan Africanism, Afrocentricity, learning centered teaching practices, critical theory, critical pedagogy, third wave feminism, black feminism, Africana womanism, and various modes of textual analysis. Hip-Hop serves as a bridge for some obvious reasons. Students come to the class with their own set of understandings, and critical perspectives that is often articulated through the readings of Hip-Hop. (Interview, December 1, 2009)

Carlos further explains his relationship to Hip-Hop and social justice, and the value and importance of celebrating the interdisciplinary nature of it. He expresses the care and genuine appreciation for being able to embrace Hip-Hop Pedagogy, including the idea that "love" is a part of the multiple disciplines present in Hip-Hop culture. Carlos explains,

> Any effort in social justice has to begin with the premise of love, love for what you do, the people you commit to and love for humanity. It is essential to understand Hip-Hop as not just a musical genre which some do, but to see it as a life force as a praxis of hope that may be explicitly stated as such… it should be discursive and a constant thorn in the side of the status quo. A core assumption should be that Hip-Hop is inter-textual and offers intersectional analysis with many social challenges facing communities across the globe. (Interview, December 1, 2009)

Carlos describes a theme that many of the *elites* struggled to explain, a desire to challenge the status quo is omnipresent in Hip-Hop narrative, yet a desire to do that from a place of love and hope is a somewhat radical notion for many educators. It means that a liberatory version of education that is grounded in Social Justice and Hip-Hop culture, is at its core-interconnected and unique in comparison to traditional forms of education.

Tenet #4: Generates Interest and Enthusiasm for Learning

There is overlap between and among the tenets, but they are all distinctive and specific beliefs about what constitutes Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. One of the more salient being that is generates interest and enthusiasm for learning, as Julius notes,

> I think because the program that I created is just really good and educational and builds students' vocabulary, builds their knowledge of geography, like it hits all the things a school would want to be hit, I think at the end of the day teachers are always pleased and excited. Because we are talking about globalization of Hip-Hop and we are having students' identify different continents and countries. We are talking about different points of reading and vocabulary building and connecting that to free styling. Also we talk about the history of American music and African American music. (Interview, July 6, 2009)

Julius is referring to a school assembly that he is commissioned to bring to schools all over the world. He has taught thousands of young people about Hip-Hop through this multimedia assembly. Hakim also uses specific examples about how he is able to generate interest with students. He emphasizes the importance of listening to students and allowing them to question their beliefs and ideas in a safe space. The *elites* uniformly believed that utilizing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy typically generates enthusiasm, but should always be done with care rather not with judgment. Hakim explains how he is able to do this,

> In order to have students explore their own thinking and behavior through Hip-Hop, the teacher is to serve as a coach or a guide, never judging the students, but rather, having them question why they feel a particular way when they hear certain music, why they "must have" the latest apparel, etc. The teacher serves as a bridge to get the students from the known the unknown; providing information/material that forces students to question their own past and present choices in life, preparing them for tougher choices and greater responsibility in the future. For example, lessons that I have taught in these areas include having students analyze the effects of popular songs such as Snoop Dog's song "Gin and Juice" on gin sales in America and having students realize how much it costs to put name brand sneakers together in "third world countries" versus how much they are sold for in this country. (Interview, October 31, 2009)

Hakim's example about encouraging students to think about their choices, and to get excited about what they are learning is really important. Two other *elite*s also mentioned the idea of teaching about consumerism, connections to capitalist entities and Hip-Hop

corporate sponsorship, in examples like Hakim cited. In fact another *elite*, Vaughn, made the connection that Seagrams, as a gin and juice company, also owned shares in the same record company that Snoop was working for. So Hip-Hop artists endorsing, promoting or otherwise glamorizing products, can often be connected to corporate greed. Students may connect better to lessons about capitalism if the examples are as relevant as this one; less so if seems like a more abstract lesson about Wall Street.

Tenet #5: Attends to Group Dynamics

The *elites* repeatedly mentioned the importance of environment, both within the classroom (group dynamics) and in the larger society (importance of community). This became as specific as how a classroom is set up to building solidarity between and among groups. *Elites* talked about everything from tone setting to body language in what constitutes group dynamics, and Allen expresses the importance of tone setting,

> I ask educators to think outside the box and even think of ways to create a welcoming environment at the school. This includes playing of popular Hip-Hop instrumentals to having after school programs that delve into music production and other entrepreneurial Hip-Hop endeavors. (Interview, November 15, 2009)

Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy cannot remedy the abject poverty present in so many school communities, however it can create a more welcoming and conducive learning environment to study, analyze and critique oppressive social conditions. Having students feel welcomed, enthusiastic and embraced in an educational space often makes the learning process truly successful, especially for students who may need additional attention. Eric explains why this is a core tenet in his pedagogical practice, and the way in which Hip-Hop necessitates this,

> Though not a one-stop fix for every ill in public education, I found that bringing Hip-Hop into the classroom changes the dynamic of the class in many ways that I

> hoped. Hip-Hop music in class creates a level of comfort, gets people HYPED which should be the norm but often is not in school, is something students can identify with and become part of the conversation, as a special education teacher, I would work with many students who have language based disabilities so reading from a book is uncomfortable and frustrating, music is a different experience… for this type of Hip-Hop education…bringing songs to class and using them as a way to create interest and link knowledge… your expectations should be open to change. Poetry is up for interpretation, so I am always prepared to give my take on a song, present what I was prepared to present and then listen to the ideas and interpretations of students. (Interview, December 3, 2009)

Eric creates positive group dynamics by responding to the needs of his students, being flexible with his lesson plans and trying new things. Alara also does this, but gives specific care to every environment she has influence over. She has taught in many different spaces, from one end of the spectrum to the other in regards to resources, and believes spaces can and often should be transformed in order to create better learning environments, Alara explains this by saying,

> I believe in creating sacred space… going into prisons taught me just how important sacred space is no matter where you are… in this circle I am safe and can share whatever I want to share-aware of our bodies aware of ourselves as facilitators. The cipher is an important part of Hip-Hop, working in a circle, teaching in a circle-the cipher…. (Interview, July 7, 2009)

The concept of teaching in a circle to create equity between teachers and students is a fundamental part of Hip-Hop culture. Two elements of Hip-Hop-dance and rhyming-are often "performed" in the sacred space of a circle. This equitable marker provides participants a safe space to compete, and when used in an educational context, can increase participation and equity. Shawn also agrees that the cipher and other markers of a creative, transformative space are important,

> For me its really a nonnegotiable to have flexible seating, we have to be able to meet in a circle or cipher, and push the chairs back and have a space with no chairs, there needs to be alternative materials like paper to cover the walls,

> markers, paper for the floor, learning statements have to be big and bold and off the page and out of the book and appreciation of multiple literacies, not just a validation of one type of knowledge. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

Additionally, creating a liberatory group dynamic that focuses on hope is also important so that students do not feel overwhelmed. As other elites have mentioned, hope and love are all necessities in creating positive group dynamics. Alara specifically believes the idea of empowerment and action to combat disillusionment or detachment, is an important role for an educator attending to group dynamics,

> There is a way to do this [using Hip-Hop] so that students walk away feeling reflective and empowered to create change. Instead of sort of beating them down. Like this is how the system works, this is what it does. You know our songs, our culture shows us over and over again the ways in which we are disenfranchised. (Interview, July 7, 2009)

This is a clear example of macro level group dynamics that must also be taken into account, such as the history of oppression. The ways in which groups relate to each other based on shared power or history can be just as significant as the way a classroom is set up, if it reproduces hierarchy and oppression. An extension of the focus on group dynamics is the attention to the importance of community. Consumer culture has placed an artificial emphasis on the individual, but Hip-Hop's roots are based on the interconnectedness and belonging to various communities.

Tenet #6: Importance of Community

A prominent theme in Hip-Hop culture is community, despite commercial representation, which tends to focus more on the individual. The knowledge that students and teachers are part of communities, accountable to communities and participants in communities, can be empowering and useful in grappling with social justice issues. Shawn discusses how he encourages community in his classroom,

> Community building activities, creative, always important. I always try to get every one to participate. Group needs to be empowered to practice feedback. The space should always be there for that kind of sharing and participating. Many people don't know how to commit to a group process without getting their individual needs met at all times. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

Shawn emphasizes the importance of having students create group community guidelines for his courses, and allowing group members to take responsibility for various aspects of the educational process, even and often especially as it relates to sharing and receiving feedback. This idea that opposing ideas can be shared, and diverging thoughts can be acceptable in a socially acceptable manner is often present in Hip-Hop. Additionally, because Hip-Hop often seeks to critique leaders and conditions, there is a space made to grapple with community concerns. Damali uses Hip-Hop texts to support informed dialogue about community concerns,

> Hip-Hop always provided a framework to express and reflect on real-time community concerns. And ultimately connecting students to whatever curricula through an individualized viewpoint (often assisted by Hip-Hop) makes it relevant, gives it staying power in their minds and leads them, and myself to create genuine, authentic learning experiences. (Interview, November 4, 2009)

Part of the reason teaching from a community based perspective is important is because it allows connections to be made to the Black Arts movement and other civil rights movements. Students can then analyze social justice concerns with a layered lens. This scaffolding can be done in an especially creative way, when teachers are able to bring in multiple artists or songs to teach generational lessons. Hakim offers a creative example of how to scaffold a lesson,

> In dealing with music of the past, I would include Hip-Hop's foundation music (the music from which samples derive from). The approach has to be historical, it would have to include music that has a social message and would encourage the student to look into social justice matters more. For example, the teacher could

> include the song "Strange Fruit" by Billie Holiday as a way to teach the history of lynchings and White on Black violence in this country and then follow it up with the 1989 collaboration song "Self Destruction" to have students think about Black on Black or Latino on Latino or even Black-Latino violence today. (Interview, October 31, 2009)

Hakim is referring to a seminal song written and produced by a contingent of Hip-Hop artists in the early 1990s, which addressed the systemic issues of urban life and the proliferation of gangs in urban communities. Making a connection between that song and Billie Holiday's commentary on racist lynchings in the U.S. could make for a very intricate American history lesson on violence, and internalized oppression in communities. Alara describes work she did with the non-profit arts collective that she was a part of. Her community based education efforts extended to adult learners in multiple contexts, and one of the major issues she worked with was the impact of the criminal justice system on communities, as Alara explains,

> We would do what I call a PIC [Prison Industrial Complex] mind map. Where it was like you know we had this huge really complex term, the prison industrial complex and what the hell does that mean? We would create a poetic definition, a collective definition of what the prison industrial complex was in relationship to the way it was affecting us. SO we would start with this huge brainstorm this is all the things that it is and then you know it was sort of like Soul Train where a group would into the paper and take different words and put them together into a definition or people would kind of like riff off it and create poems, then we would do these visionary exercises where folks would write poetry, write songs, create performance pieces that talks about all the money that was spent on prisons in our state-what was taken and invested into the community-what would we do with is? That left people inspired; this is the way my creativity can be used in service of my vision, a service of my community to make it better. (Interview, July 7, 2009)

Inspiring service to communities can be a very practical outcome of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. In addition to community based approaches providing inspiration and

connectedness, Hip-Hop texts can also provide knowledge about legacy which is an important aspect of relationship building.

Tenet #7: Emphasizes Relationship Building

As each tenet builds on the last, the final one is perhaps the most important. It is an element often found in Hip-Hop culture, and permeates the philosophies of all of the *elites.* While there is a tendency to focus on the individual, Hip-Hop artists, more than many other artists, often collaborate, work in pairs/teams, and roll with entourages and crews. Relationships between teachers and students, individuals and Hip-Hop culture, and relationship to self, are all important aspects of relationship building. It is paramount that educators also build relationships with students, and with each other. The ability to connect and grow through relationship is the ultimate liberatory mechanism. It is what allows educators to be accountable and present in their interactions with students. It eliminates the need to be right, or be the only expert. It is the culmination of all of the other tenets because it encourages dialogue and understanding, and creative praxis. Giovanni talks about building trust through non-judgment and questions rather than mandates or proclamations,

> To my kids I'm old as shit. But I still know its just I have to be careful not to put my opinions on Souljah Boy or Lil' Wayne. I can't put my own opinions on it I have to use all of it. Just as a teachable moment. You know what I mean, I use the good, the bad and the ugly to really spring board a critical discussion around why do you like it? Is that your boy? Is he speaking to you? (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Rudy further explains the importance of relationship building and how the elites describe the nuances of doing this without replicating more traditional oppressive binaries. He explicitly comments on the importance of allowing any moment to become a teachable

moment, rather than manufacturing learning through the educators' choice in popular Hip-Hop. Rudy explains his position,

> Whether its you know teaching kids rhyming scheme or you know social critique thought examining [Hip-Hop] images and messages they are receiving through mainstream Hip-Hop today. And the mistake I see people make when try to expose kids to it, they create a binary. This is good Hip-Hop and the stuff you listen to is bad Hip-Hop] I mean kids would be like fuck you then right you come in here all self righteous and you know with you Immortal Techniques that sound misogynistic. I don't know what the term that I am looking for is, this moral superiority [referencing teachers]. And that is the same shit we hated that adults would do to (Interview, November 10, 2009)

Giovanni and Rudy are referencing one aspect of relationship building; between educator and student. Alejandro speaks about relationship building as being at the foundation of Hip-Hop, in that it was always a community-centered culture that had people from many backgrounds building relationships between and amongst each other. The relationship building is especially important, because it creates space for dialogue and communication as Alejandro says,

> African traditions mixed with indigenous philosophies and spiritualities and rhythms over 200 years and all that coming together in the Bronx [referencing the birth of Hip-Hop]. Not just Black people, but from that, Jewish people, the Italians, the Irish, all getting mixed up there… created as a way of celebration, in a way that other art forms hadn't. I think it provides a space for communication. Hip-Hop itself you can say it encompasses a space for communication? Conversation and dialogue… a community driven interdependent aspect. (Interview, July 6, 2009)

Alejandro makes the connection between relationship building and communication, while Hakim explains how he felt like he needed to make artificial divides in his persona, which created relationship schisms for him that took a long time to heal,

> [Growing up] the students nicknamed me "Malcolm." I don't think it is by coincidence that career wise I ended up becoming my own worst enemy, a social studies teacher. In college I was socially pressured to put Hip-Hop in the closet

> somewhere and embrace the culture of the academic world…. I had allowed academia to separate me from what was happening in the "real" world. For years [after] I had to reprogram myself and learned how to adjust to the students' level of thinking… constantly seeking to bridge the gap… judging them because of the music they listen to today does not help the process. (Interview, October 31, 2009)

Hakim is referencing the relationship between Hip-Hop and self, and how detrimental it can be to be Javier also highlights the importance of relationship building, in that he acknowledges the personal and systemic relationships that are keys to his success as an educator. It is important to have a nuanced pedagogy that is inclusive of the various function and tenets of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, so as not to create a false binary or shallow connection to students. And relationship building is not meant to supersede the importance of high standards; it should be an additional marker of excellence as Javier notes, "All the educators I respect focus on relationship building, high standards, and making information relevant" (Interview, December 22, 2009).

Javier has occupied many roles along the education spectrum from public school teacher to administrator, to scholar and activist. His cautionary tales about the importance of equitable relationships, in all facets; with students, with self and with the culture of Hip-Hop, this is the culminating piece in describing what is necessary to develop a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Summary

Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is reliant on four functions: fostering vulnerability, focusing on strengths, encouraging critical thinking and the exploration of social identities. This is important because it is not only true for students, but for teachers as well. Additionally, the unique practical tenets about Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

are that it: values prior knowledge, values experiential learning, makes interdisciplinary connections, generates enthusiasm for learning, attends to group dynamics, focuses on community, and emphasizes relationship building. These functions and tenets expand upon the idea that Hip-Hop can be used for Critical Pedagogy (Akom, 2009) and allow for a nuanced and specific explanation of what Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is predicated upon, moving it from an abstract idea to a concrete theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 6

INSPIRATION FOR IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL JUSTICE HIP-HOP PEDAGOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides the theoretical basis for understanding and explaining the methodology inherent in Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy by answering the following research questions and sub-research questions:

1. What theories inform the Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy of the *elites*? a) How do Hip-Hop education *elite*s use Hip-Hop culture to serve as a bridge between students and teachers?
2. What methodologies do Hip-Hop education *elites* believe to be the necessary for teaching about and/or implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy? a) What bodies of knowledge do Hip-Hop education *elites* identify as necessary for teaching about Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

The data illustrates the critical components that the participants cited as contributing to their understanding of a personal Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy, which is a critical piece of the methodology; it must be personal and not a one-size fits all approach. It is also deeply rooted in the knowledge and appreciation of Hip-Hop culture.

Theories that Inform Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

During the course of my research, many times I was asked whether or not jazz, punk, rock, country music or other genres could fulfill the same role as Hip-Hop for the purposes of creating Social Justice Pedagogy. Throughout the course of my interviews, a

dominant narrative emerged regarding the "who" and the "what" that makes Hip-Hop music and culture so uniquely positioned for Social Justice Pedagogy. According to participants, Hip-Hop culture is credited with many positive attributes for educators themselves, including boosting self-esteem, generating interest in education, and overall serving as a public pedagogy for most of the participants.

While Alara references the idea that popular education was similar to "a common sense approach" to education, it is when she learned about Freire and other formal theories about the usefulness of popular education, that she was able to further value her own practice, which strongly emphasizes critical thinking for her students, Alara says,

> I had no idea that it was sort of "popular education." I was just sort of trying to see what would happen. And I think it worked in some ways you didn't even know, it was a lot like writing, watching video, talking about song lyrics, as a way of sort of thinking critically about you know, sexism, patriarchy, racism, white supremacy, class. In the end we kind of got to, so what are we going to do about it? (Interview, July 7, 2009)

Alara felt that it was extremely important to not reinforce feelings of hopelessness or powerlessness with her students. Alara emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and analysis, especially in the form of media literacy, which is especially helpful because it can be a transferable skill. However, she also believes critical thinking must lead to action steps. Once the problem has been identified, what are the action steps? How can solutions be constructed? This piece of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is very important to the larger questions of function and utility, and is reconciled through the emphasis on critical thinking as Romeo says, "you know then it took on Frerian concepts-language and power-it's all married together in my mind" (Interview, July 9, 2009).

A critical element in understanding how educators came to view the evolution of their individual pedagogical practices is deeply embedded in the ways in which they conceive of Hip-Hop culture. Universally, all of the *elite* participants believed in the value and uniqueness of Hip-Hop culture as being a critical part of their development and theoretical knowledge base. Participants cited Hip-Hop as being a form of public pedagogy that taught them many valuable lessons about life. These lessons include history, political education, critical literacy and life skills. This was the foundation and in many ways, the motivation for their success in the blossoming field of Hip-Hop education. As Giovanni notes,

> So I learned e*verything* from it [Hip-Hop]. So I just felt like if I could phrase it or put it in a perspective that they [students] knew then it would eliminate half the steps that I would have to go to introduce it to them… for me how easy it was to pull from because I felt like you know *I am Hip-Hop*…. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Giovanni identifies closely with Hip-Hop culture, and he was able to use it to connect with his students. Giovanni is a well-known MC, who has had commercial and underground success. He also started an internationally renowned non-profit organization, and is a successful special education teacher who is utilizing his own Hip-Hop Literacy curriculum. Zoë articulated her enthusiasm for Hip-Hop texts in a more specific way, "I am a Hip-Hop lover. I am an educator. I found pleasure in Hip-Hop narratives and artists who told stories about their lives" (Interview, November 1, 2009). Zoë teaches about the power of the narrative in language arts curriculum, as a way to better understand self.

Many of the participants also remarked that Hip-Hop not only played a role in their formative years (as youth) but that it continues to influence and inform who they are

now. Rudy is a sought-after public speaker, published scholar, and pioneer in the field of Hip-Hop education and his proclamation about the ways in which Hip-Hop has served as a public pedagogy for him are indicative of the ways in which many of the *elites* have referenced Hip-Hop, Rudy explains,

> I think on a personal level that Hip-Hop was a big part of my adolescence and young adulthood and remains a pretty significant part of my life. Just in terms of personal, intellectual, spiritual, emotional development in kind of understanding my own identity and my own condition but also the broader social conditions that you know that we deal with on a regular basis in urban communities and globally. (Interview, November 10, 2009)

Eden, an African American woman, who holds a PhD, is a scholar from the Mid-West, living and working in the Northeast concurs with Rudy's assessment of the influence of Hip-Hop on her identity,

> I believe myself to be part of the culture. In many ways the music, language, communicative styles and behavioral norms and have helped to shape my young adult and adult lives. (Interview, November 25, 2009)

Giovanni, Zoë, Rudy and Eden all come from different geographic locations throughout the U.S., have diverse social identities, and occupy unique social roles (artist, scholar, teacher, writer) but they all credit many life lessons to Hip-Hop, in regards to their own identities and their understanding of the world.

Jason also concurs about the importance of Hip-Hop, and the desire to protect it because it is so important to him. In referring to his impetus for writing about Hip-Hop, first as an international Hip-Hop journalist, later as an Ivy League Hip-Hop scholar; he cites what he perceived as the misrepresentation of Hip-Hop by "older" African-American scholars who did not seem to value the cultural and socio-political generational

elements of Hip-Hop, but focused merely on the art form without proper social context, Jason says,

> I just knew that Henry Louis Gates and Houston Baker didn't know what they were talking about [referencing early Hip-Hop scholarship in late 1980s-eary 1990s]. They were trying to think about Hip-Hop strictly as poetry almost. And they were thinking about the literary production exclusively. And for me Hip-Hop was always cultural and generational. I started writing about Hip-Hop because I felt it was saying something distinctive and original and it was something that was important. (Interview, February 2, 2010)

The *elites* make it abundantly clear that Hip-Hop culture is of paramount importance to their identity formation and serves as a theoretical framework for influencing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Hip-Hop culture continues to influence the participants in many important ways, which in turn tells a uniquely American story of identity, politics and pedagogy.

Warning Teachers: Appreciate Don't Appropriate

Above all else, the *elites* in this study are well respected in the field of education, regardless of their relationship to Hip-Hop. Allen cautions against the oversimplification and salaciousness of using Hip-Hop, urging educators not to think of is simply as a way of entertaining students, meaning Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is not about honing your rhyming skills or sharpening your dance moves, as Allen notes,

> Ineffectively guiding educators to use Hip-Hop to integrate, not entertain [is problematic]. Although there are many successful stories of teachers that actually 'rap' to their kids the multiplication table (which is fine), but it is important to inform educators that the attempt is not to become entertainers. In many respects, they will be teaching a new perspective of Hip-Hop that the youth have never heard before (because now youth think that Biggie/Tupac are old school rappers-go figure!). So media literacy asks for "us" to understand not what is being shown to us, but what isn't. (Interview, November 15, 2009)

Javier is very specific in his critique, cautioning that while Hip-Hop has played a huge role in his life, he doesn't intend for his contributions to be simplified or oppressive to students or teachers. He warns that progressive thinkers can unintentionally replace one dogma with another, in an effort to be innovative, as Javier states,

> Ironically I respect Hip-Hop's diversity and know how it changed my life, but I'm leery of "Hip-Hop educators" who forget the purpose of our jobs, which is to create productive, forward-thinking individuals. Having spent time working in different parts of the country, I've found that progressives can be just as close-minded as conservatives and end up pigeonholing our students. Educators need to be aware of the bias we bring such as the Golden Era of Hip-Hop, etc. and remember to respect or at least acknowledge where students come from. (Interview, December 22, 2009)

Rudy takes it a step further, and underscores the need for care and thought in Hip-Hop pedagogy by making the case that the use of Hip-Hop actually requires additional skills and politicalization by emphasizing,

> I think you can't teach Hip-Hop without a sophisticated racial analysis, social, political, economic analysis of urban America. But I think there are so many creative ways that I have seen educators use Hip-Hop that I would be worried about saying well if you are going to use Hip-Hop, you know you are not really doing Hip-Hop pedagogy unless… And so you know, it's usually the people who come up with these kinds of scripts or these absolutes who don't fully understand the dynamics of being in a K-12 classroom every single day with 30 kids where it just doesn't work like that. (Interview, November 10, 2009)

Eden concurs with Rudy, and has strong feelings about the propensity for educators to want to use Hip-Hop to manipulate or lure students into some other more "valuable" knowledge base. While, Rudy cautions against the "silver bullet" nature of how Hip-Hop pedagogy can be manipulated,

> I think most recently as Hip-Hop has become sexy more and more people have taken up Hip-Hop specifically and I have issues with that because I that they act as though somehow it's a silver bullet and they don't develop their pedagogical skills… like kids like Hip-Hop, let me use Hip-Hop. So I think the better thinkers

> are the ones who are looking at Hip-Hop as one element of a more inclusive pedagogy. They are dependent upon some broader theoretical perspectives in which Hip-Hop in today's moment is included but it's the broader theoretical framework that I think has the most potential to have lasting power for improving the quality of education that kids receive. (Interview, November 10, 2009)

The final warning regarding the over-simplication of Hip-Hop pedagogy is the mis-labeling of it as a tool, which connotes that it is in fact a strategy that can be picked up and put down as needed, rather than a way of thinking, interacting and being. This is somewhat commonplace in education, as policy makers and administrators often look for temporary solutions that are set up for failure (Noguera, 2008). Romeo explains his process of trying to find the language to describe how to teach about using Hip-Hop Pedagogy,

> Like because Hip-Hop's use in education thus far has been a tool. I try never to use that word anymore like you always hear it. Like Hip-Hop is a great tool to get kids to do this. Hip-Hop is a great tool, and then I just feel uncomfortable. So even when I write up a description if I'm going to use Hip-Hop as a tool I will always write something like utilizing Hip-Hop to engage critical thinking, creative writing and know identification or whatever… I've settled on utilizing. (Interview, July 9, 2009)

The *elites* consistently reference the power and possibility for Hip-Hop Pedagogy, the ways in which it can engage students and inspire learning. In summary is it important to note the warnings issued by the *elites*. They caution against making Hip-Hop Pedagogy a silver bullet or quick fix because that is a set up for everyone involved. They also make it clear that utilizing Hip-Hop is not for entertainment purposes. Additionally, they noted that Hip-Hop Pedagogy should always be evolving, never stagnant, so there is no need for scripted one-size fits all lesson plans or mandates. My analysis reveals that the *elites* uniformly believe that Hip-Hop cannot be artificially separated from its roots as a youth

driven, social justice movement. Hip-Hop Pedagogy should not manipulate students or lure them into other field of study without proper context. And, the use of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy should be in the context of larger sociopolitical frameworks regarding levels and types of oppression.

How Hip-Hop Serves as a Bridge

A salient theme that emerged throughout the research was the way in which Hip-Hop could be used to connect with students. The bridge between an educator's relationship to Hip-Hop and a more modern student-centered connection to Hip-Hop became evident. Eden believes that the power of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is that it can create a bridge; a "cultural glue" that builds trust and relationship with students,

> in some ways without having the social and/or cultural glue between the student and teacher one might run the risk of treating Hip-Hop as pedagogical lure when Hip-Hop is not employed as a pedagogical lure, it is apprehended as a valid unit of analysis. Unfortunately, in the minds of some educators, one of the only worthwhile ways Hip-Hop can be integrated into the curriculum is if it serves as a way to entice students into studying another subject that has garnered the respect of the educator. (Interview, November 25, 2009)

Eden warns against the use of Hip-Hop as lure to something that is more valued. Many of the *elites* were drawn to Hip-Hop because they fell in love with the promise and possibility of imagining education that can be liberatory. However, their relationship to education, actually becoming educators and developing their personal pedagogy often stems from a reactionary place that is more connected to adverse feelings about education, and wanting to see a "change." Shawn is a PhD Scholar, author, actor, and non-profit founder who found voice and hope in Hip-Hop Pedagogy who says,

> I have always been dissatisfied with traditional forms of education, listening to an older, often white male voice is particularly challenging for me. I've discovered through Hip-Hop and critical pedagogy that other people feel the same way that

> through different influences and cultural values (Hip-Hop and youth culture) I found there are more effective ways to do education. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

An important piece of pedagogy is making choices to be more inclusive. Max is an artist, a poet and MC, who is also a non-profit founder, and in his mid-twenties. Max sees the uniqueness of Hip-Hop pedagogy being the options and freedom available through multiple modalities. The idea that Hip-Hop is intrinsically layered and appeals to multiple learning styles through visual arts, kinesthetic, reading/writing, musical appreciation, semiotics is infinitely important to understanding its value. Gardner's theory (2006) of multiple intelligences as well as multiple literacies (Morrell, 2007; Kirkland, 2007) validates the idea of student centered learning, and by nature creates more inclusive educational spaces in that all students are included. Max underscores this point by saying,

> No one person can be the author for another. As long as we can express what we choose to change, the resources are infinite, from rap to breaking, to graffiti, to a poem, a dance, a painting, to a political speech, to a collage. A Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy needs to explore different histories… and how to make people whole physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

Max is explaining the inclusive nature of Hip-Hop Pedagogy, because students can enter into the educational cipher with different points of connection, and still feel validated and seen by the teacher and other students.

Methodologies Necessary for Teaching/Implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

This next section will focus on how the *elites* created their own personal pedagogy through their connection to Hip-Hop culture. Prior to fully understanding the way in which educators have come to use Hip-Hop to create a social change through their

teaching, it is important to illustrate the impact that Hip-Hop culture has had on the educators' identities and beliefs about education because this informs their methodology. Carlos is located in the Midwest, holds a PhD, works as a scholar, and also co-founded one of the most influential and pioneering Hip-Hop non-profits. His organization is responsible for annual international conferences, national political education and setting agenda for Hip-Hop education initiatives. Carlos cautions,

> You can't just do Hip-Hop… one needs to live it, this doesn't mean you need to know the latest song, or what the current gossip is, but one needs to be connected to the community of Hip-Hop. Regardless if you are a scholar, B-Girl, DJ, or all of the above, there needs to be some face time with this community. To be a truly relevant "social justice" Hip-Hop pedagogy it has to engage all of these areas or in the words of Joan Morgan it has to "fuck with the gray." (Interview, December 1, 2009)

Carlos summarizes the multiple ways in which educators can engage with Hip-Hop culture, and underscores the point that it can be varied and nuanced; there is not a one-size-fits all approach. However, some of the *elites* did not come to Hip-Hop as active participants of the culture. And yet, their work has also been influential. Eric is a white, male public school teacher who grew up in an upper middle class suburb of a major northeast urban area who says,

> During my first year as a teacher for a 6th grade self contained special education class, I made use of every and any way that I could make lessons and school different and appealing, I began to bring Hip-Hop songs into my lessons connecting them to ideas, events and topics that were part of the curriculum. I am not a Hip-Hop expert and I was not born and raised listening to Hip-Hop. I'm not walking into class trying to teach anyone what Hip-Hop is or act as if I am an expert; I speak from respect and admiration because that's something a teacher should have for any material they present. Students know very well when you are faking it, and they will usually call you on it. (Interview, December 3, 2009)

Eric has written numerous award winning and critically acclaimed curricula utilizing Hip-Hop and he has also served in leadership roles in powerful Hip-Hop non-profit

organizations, playing a national role in the Hip-Hop education conversation. Eric's curricula projects have been cited by notables such as Davey D (finalist in Davey D.'s Hip-Hop Book of the Year) and WNYC's Soundcheck radio show, as well as reviewed in *Rethinking Schools Magazine* and *El Diario*. Romeo is another white male Hip-Hop educator *elite*, who oversees one of the largest national Hip-Hop/Spoken Word arts-based programs in the United States. The organization works with hundreds of youth annually, provides trainings for mentors and teachers, and is often cited as a model non-profit by scholars researching out-of-school time programs. He is also a well respected spoken word artist and educator who co-created the annual summer teacher institute in the Midwest where I conducted many of the interviews. He grew up in a suburb in New England, and was always a fan of Hip-Hop, but understands context can often change personal relationship to the music, he makes the point by saying,

> So when you are singing, "Fight the Power" as a sixteen-year-old kid from the suburb or whatever, growing up at that time and watching the video in Bed-Stuy it doesn't resonate the same way-and it doesn't resonate until you as a person actually engage and interface with that culture. So when I talk about being a Hip-Head head my whole life, I don't necessarily know if I was a part of Hip-Head culture until I was… by the process of my life engaged within you know, people of color culture. I always say year after year, I feel like it's dangerous to just write these lesson plans. I guess you know some people will never get that lived experience but still work with young people that are into Hip-Hop, Hip-Hop heads. Learn how to deal and the best way to do that I learned is just to be myself and to really kind of see and learn and take it in…. (Interview, July 9, 2009)

Romeo and Eric present important voices, because as white men who are educators utilizing Hip-Hop, they have developed a humility and reverence for the culture, without appropriating or bastardizing it. Their sincere connection is in part why they have been able to become influential *elites* in the field. Renjit, an Asian American male scholar, whose writings about the socio-political context of Hip-Hop culture, are used as core

textbooks in numerous Hip-Hop education courses around the world offers an important framing of the importance and significance of Hip-Hop culture,

> Knowledges don't have to be validated within institutions, Hip-Hop education says here is an entire body of knowledge that is going to exist whether you validate it or not within the university, it is going to exist and it's a body of knowledge that effects people all over the world, and if you aren't making any kind of effort to incorporate this body of knowledge than you are missing the future where we are all headed… As Dead Prez would say, its bigger than Hip-Hop, all the bodies of knowledge are sitting out there, that are crucial it our survival, to the public education system. (Interview, February 10, 2010)

The *elites* are generally in agreement that Hip-Hop culture is a valuable knowledge base. And whether you have been "born into it" or choose to become a part of it, it is a powerful and impactful aspect of their practice and worldview. This is true even beyond an interpersonal connection, because a relationship and understanding of Hip-Hop culture can impact policy, practice and institutions. As Giovanni affirms, he feels that he genuinely learned *everything* from Hip-Hop. And he is now in a position where he is influencing policy on a local and national level and he says,

> Just the fact, well for one the lyrical content. Two, um from my perspective everything I learned was from Hip-Hop growing up. So I grew up on X Clan, and Public Enemy, Ice T, NWA. My nationality I learned from Hip-Hop. Male/Female relationships I learned from Hip-Hop. Spirituality I learned from Hip-Hop…. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

As evidenced in the prior section, an appreciation, understanding and connection to Hip-Hop culture is a common element for all of the *elites*. Additionally, the process by which they began to make the connection between Hip-Hop and education is also particularly important. Zoë explains this by saying,

> My 'aha' moment came when I started sharing Hip-Hop lyrics with my college bound students before they started writing their college essays. The connection for me was obvious: use a narrative context that students already understood and embraced, Hip-Hop, to help empower their own voice in another context that was

> seemingly unfamiliar (the college essay). My hope was that over time students would write their narratives and "right" the often incorrect and incomplete perspectives that are so commonplace about young Black and Hispanic students. (Interview, November 1, 2009)

While Zoë made the connection through writing narrative, self-expression and the need for marginalized voices to become central, Giovanni's bridge was somewhat more nuanced, using one of the elements of Hip-Hop culture, Djing, as well as current events/popular culture.

While many teachers spend personal money on additional school supplies, Giovanni took that concept to a new level,

> I bought a pair of turntables and I had it in my classroom and it just started from there. Every year that was my thing. I would just incorporate song lyrics or just popular culture stuff like the BET Awards and the MTV Video Awards or whatever. We would talk about it and I realized my kids, because of my age, I was so young 22, 23, my kids listened to the same kind of music I did. I just found it was such an easy connection and really gain their trust and gain there… you know engage them. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

As mentioned in the section on bridge building, not all of the *elites* reference current Hip-Hop or popular culture related to Hip-Hop as a point of connection. As Carlos said earlier, knowing what is current isn't necessarily feasible or a requirement. Romeo describes his utilization of Hip-Hop as being connected to his understanding of multiple forms of literacy, and the ways in which literacy and language are reflective of social power,

> The beginning [of using Hip-Hop] was the simple literacy of reading and writing and like standards based English language arts and then beyond that when I started to work in more of a social justice organization and in organizations where literacy expanded to include the knowledge of self and what literacy really mean. (Interview, July 9, 2009)

Giovanni subscribes to Gardner's (2006) theory of multiple intelligences and references the organic modalities of the elements of Hip-Hop in order to present interdisciplinary approaches to learning, while utilizing Hip-Hop. This is precisely what is unique to Hip-Hop; the multiple intelligences embedded in the foundational elements (djing, mcing, dance, visual art), as Giovanni notes,

> I would play instrumentals while kids would do free writing assignments, listening to beats, they would paint music for me and I would lay it out… and I learned from there how to incorporate different things like in math lessons or science or whatever… just add little components of Hip-Hop to make them want to do it. I just believe Hip-Hop is the way to do it. I am sure there is other ways, but for my generation, for my youth point, Hip-Hop is the only way I can do it. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Making the "organic" connections between Hip-Hop and education seemed to be fairly self-evident for the *elites*. The shared passion for Hip-Hop culture fueled by their fervor for culturally relevant and critical education illuminated the obvious. However, getting to the more specific ways in which these knowledges and connections emerged as a personal Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy was how this was cultivated for each of the *elites*, also begins to illuminate some of the challenges... and opportunities.

This is especially important in urban schools, where students are systematically marginalized on multiple levels (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Giovanni, one of the respected Hip-Hop education pioneers, is one of the few who is revered for his artistry as well as his contribution to education, even garnering formal recognition from President Barack Obama, expresses his personal pedagogy and gratitude for Hip-Hop,

> I'm not a super magician teacher but I am just using what I have to pull this stuff out of them, you know what I mean. And to me that is the goal. If I can get them talking and writing and thinking then that's the goal. That's the goal of any teacher but right now we just trying to dump shit into their head that we think they need to know and not giving any credence to what they already know… a lot of

> academics don't want to give Hip-Hop that credit. That's why this work is so critical because eventually you are not going to be able to say anything against it. All the data is going to point to it. (Interview, July 30, 2009)

Giovanni, Max and Shawn explain the process by which they began to form their own personal pedagogies, but Kyle makes a cautionary point that was salient for many of the *elites*. Many of them did not want Hip-Hop or the use of Hip-Hop as pedagogy to seem like a quick fix or an essentialized gimmick or lure to something else. It is important to note that the elites believe Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy should never be manipulative or misleading. Kyle explains this by saying,

> For me the most important principle in creating a social justice Hip-Hop pedagogy is not to try to bend either Hip-Hop or social justice to fit the needs or assumptions of the other. I have seen many cases where either progressive analysis of societal conditions is dealt with superficially in order to fit pre-existing assumptions of Hip-Hoppers, or Hip-Hop is presented simplistically in order to conform to the beliefs of activists. To me either of these approaches destroys the most important part of combining the two pursuits, which is that they can challenge each other and provide critical perspective. (Interview, December 5, 2009)

Kyle is making an important point with his clarifying disclaimer, and this is really at the heart of why this methodology of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy needs to be clearly researched, explained and documented. To oversimplify it, would be to dilute its potency and relevance. Manuel takes the warning a step further, by explaining that the complexity of social justice work and Hip-Hop culture is such that an educator should always evaluate the usefulness of specific pedagogical choices, in order to maintain integrity and authenticity in the process,

> I am not confident at this point that there are core tenets or non-negotiables. Both the realms of Hip-Hop and social justice are too subjective. Depending on the class or the instructor it is not always necessary or beneficial to use of teach the

> four elements [of Hip-Hop] as part of the curriculum. (Interview, December 30, 2009)

This complexity is at the heart of the matter for *elites* creating a personal Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. But context is also important, how educators see themselves in relationship to the students is an important factor in the development of personal pedagogy as Rudy notes,

> Most teachers tend to incorporate things in their pedagogy that move them because they teach it with a lot more passion. Obviously Hip-Hop transcends virtually every aspect of the lives of young people from race to class to gender to geographic location. Music I think generally does but all of my K-12 teaching has been in urban schools so it's a pretty steady part of their lives. Even kids that might have some eclectic music tastes still tend to have some level of interest or certainly some level of cultural relationship to Hip-Hop. I can remember my first day teaching that I used Little Ghetto Boy from the Chronic, that was my first day…it's been kind of omnipresent for me. (Interview, November 10, 2009)

Rudy highlights his personal connection to Hip-Hop and the ability to use that as a bridge for connecting with students, and developing pedagogy. Alara, a young Black woman from a major Northeast city, has experience as an activist, artist, and non-profit founder. Her work has taken her all over the world as a performance artist and educator, and Alara says,

> I was really excited to start applying the arts-Hip-Hop immediately, because I was so young and teaching for the first time, it was like, it was a way in which to connect with the students around something that I cared about, something that I knew-and something we were both… moved by. (Interview, July 7, 2009)

Similarly to Alara, Vaughn has traveled internationally teaching teachers about how to successfully harness the power of Hip-Hop. Vaughn's work with students, combining music business production, opportunities to hone artistic talent and life skill acquisition, has captured the attention of many powerful funders, including Bruce Willis

and Queen Latifah, who funded his award-winning documentary. The documentary chronicled Vaughn's life story, the creation of his Hip-Hop arts based non-profit and gave voice to his personal pedagogy,

> …we all have a purpose in life. And our passion is another indicator of the thing that excites us. Its like something turns on in you and you can teach that also to the kids then um the rest I always believe that if you teach a kid how to think and how to be creative and figure things out, your work is done. You don't need to give them a whole bunch of information… how to think critically … however I am best equipped… and if I never see them again in life… I know that they will be good. SO that is how I got Hip-Hop education. (Interview, October 21, 2009)

Both Vaughn and Alara are fueled by their enthusiasm and passion for social change, and the power and possibility found in Hip-Hop. Through different mediums they have been able to explore and chronicle the development of their beliefs about Hip-Hop education. Vaughn was able to convince powerful Hollywood investors of the meaning and significance of utilizing and chronicling the power of Hip-Hop. While Alara has also been able to share with people the source of her excitement and passion for Hip-Hop pedagogy. Both Vaughn and Alara have helped to fuel the Hip-Hop education movement, by spreading their perspective and experience to multiple audiences. The shared message in both their stories is the manner in which Hip-Hop culture encourages critical thinking about art, life, and society. This is an attractive attribute of Hip-Hop culture, and one that is readily embraced by educators using Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Bodies of Knowledge Necessary to Teach About SJHHP

Due to the intertextual nature of both Hip-Hop and Social Justice, the *elites* had a wide variety of suggestions about what is necessary to teach about Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Jason makes the suggestion that there are many opportunities for teaching across disciplines when teaching about SJHHP,

> I think Hip-Hop has to be taught as a generational thing. If it is taught just because of music you aren't really going to get it. If you don't understand the history of colonization for example, you can't really understand Hip-Hop. You can't teach Hip-Hop without teaching that, which involved politics, involves economics. If you talk about it just as music, you are going to miss why young people gravitate towards it, they see themselves in it but they also see themselves as part of history when it taught in that way. And that is why Hip-Hop is so important; you can't talk about Hip-Hop without talking about colonialism and globalization. (Interview, February 2, 2010)

Understanding the layers and collective history that is shared through Hip-Hop can help students to see the bigger picture, and how they fit into it. It can take away from personal internalization patterns around oppression, but can also highlight why students feel empowered through Hip-Hop artists.

The *elites* gave profound insights into what make Hip-Hop Pedagogy work, and through their common elements the emergent foundation for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy became evident. Renjit and Kyle, both well respected, published Hip-Hop scholar/authors summarize the importance of learning about the possibilities of liberatory Hip-Hop scholarship. As Renjit says,

> To the extent that Hip-Hop studies becomes a space to debate whether Rakim was better than Big Daddy Kane, I am into that (em... Rakim), but like what if you don't place debates within context, then what kind of good are they? Hip-Hop education builds upon what has already been done in multiculturalism and ethnic studies, which is non-white, Eurocentric ways of understanding world. (Interview, February 16, 2010)

Renjit posits that the academic connection to Hip-Hop studies is the next phase of a social justice movement that began over fifty years ago in higher education; a continuation of earlier struggles to make students feel seen and validated in educational spaces. While Kyle underscores the relationship that Hip-Hop has to identity formation and self-expression, and the overarching value of this in educational spaces,

> The guiding philosophy of Hip-Hop is that self-expression can be used to empower youth in defining their own persona, controlling how that persona is perceived by others, and using that relationship to influence their community. Specifically, Hip-Hop provides youth with the opportunity to systematically experiment with different modes of self-presentation in order to ultimately find one that is both honest…that is consistent with their actual personality…and effective in achieving their personal goals. (Interview, December 5, 2009)

Max underscores the point that using Hip-Hop to teach and to learn is not new, and has been going in various iterations for a long time through various members of the Hip-Hop community via artist texts and public pedagogy. This can be liberating for both educators and students because it creates a sense of connectedness and shared lineage as Max notes,

> Methodologies for teaching an implementing a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy are firstly acknowledging the people who have already been educating throughout the United States and internationally for years as actual educators, and educators of intellectual capacity such as KRS-One, Mos Def, Talib Kweli, Dead Prez, Aesop Rock, Pop Master Fable, Danny Hoch, Lemon Andersen, Mega Heartz, Wutang Clan and Lauren Hill amongst others. Youth and adults across the States have already been learning about history, English, sociology, anthropology, psychology, martial arts, religious and spiritual traditions, and different sciences for years. (Interview, November 30, 2009)

Max makes the point that some of the *elites* also mentioned, the idea that Hip-Hop education is not new, and that a variety of artists, some with commercial success, others with underground notoriety, have been achieving a level of Social Justice consciousness raising through various communities since the inception of Hip-Hop.

Summary

In summary, Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is heavily influenced by Hip-Hop culture as the theoretical framework, which undergirds the personal pedagogy. The personal connection to Hip-Hop culture that each of the *elites* made to Hip-Hop is

coupled with the organic connection they also made between Hip-Hop culture and pedagogy. This allowed the *elites* to begin to create their own personal Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, which functions as a way of creating a counter-hegemonic educational space. This new model, which I will describe in Chapter 7, provides a framework for understanding how Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy can be explained. By its very nature Hip-Hop Pedagogy derives from social justice movements and has the power and responsibility to create social change for both educators and students.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy has the potential for liberation from within a stagnant and broken educational system (Hill, 2009; Noguera, 2008) where few other pedagogical strategies do, and this chapter will focus on the results and implications of my research, which explain how and why. The explanatory schema that I have created tells a story that in many ways serves as homage to Hip-Hop culture but clearly describes that this pedagogy is "bigger than Hip-Hop" (Dead Prez, 2000). The research also reveals an appreciation for the personal connection that the 23 racially diverse, interviewed educators have found, in the distinctly Afro-Diasporic Hip-Hop culture. The data illustrates the ways in which Hip-Hop influenced the participants' identity development, as well as the functions and tenets necessary to create personal and transferrable Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

This study examined how Hip-Hop culture impacts educators' pedagogy and sought to create a new model of Social Justice Hip-Hop as Pedagogy by conducting in-depth interviews with Hip-Hop educator *elites* (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002; Thomas, 1993). Marshall & Rossman (2006) define "elites [as those who are] considered to be influential, prominent, and/or well-informed in an organization or community; they are selected for interviews based on their expertise in areas relevant to the research" (p.105).

Summary of Findings

The findings revealed a multi-tiered process for how Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is developed and implemented. The model (Figure 1) illuminates a process by

which Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is created. It begins with educators who have grown up or grown into a connection and passion for Hip-Hop as public pedagogy. Because they are also saliently educators, they report finding an initial personal and organic connection between the culture and their personal pedagogy, which in most cases fueled their passion for the creation and articulation of a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy (SJHHP). Meaning, Hip-Hop texts inspired interest and often careers based in their respective educational contexts, and on some level they have a desire to invest back into Hip-Hop culture what they by sharing their passion for both Hip-Hop and education.

The first major function of a SJHHP is to create an alternative way of "doing" education, and so a SJHHP primarily works to dismantle the hegemony found in many educational spaces. Therefore, the core elements of a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy are reliant on four primary functions which can dismantle hegemonic conditions in educational spaces; a SJHHP does this by 1) fostering vulnerability, 2) cultivating strengths 3) encouraging critical thinking and 4) exploring concepts of social identity. I coded these functions based on the responses of the participants, as these were the general core functions or non-negotiables. Potentially there could be others revealed in further research however these have been proven as core effective strategies for interrupting hegemony in educational spaces utilizing SJHHP. This is unique because a SJHHP encourages these elements-for *both* teachers and students. That is what transforms the educational space. These functions are the how and why Hip-Hop can be used for liberatory education.

The way in which this happens can be explained by the seven specific tenets of a SJHHP which demonstrate how educators are able to create and maintain more liberatory

educational spaces. The tenets explain the methodology that is being utilized through SJHHP. The participants revealed these seven tenets as being of paramount importance for a SJHHP: valuing prior knowledge, cultivating experiential learning, making interdisciplinary connections, generating enthusiasm for learning, attending to group dynamics, focusing on the importance of community and a strong emphasis on relationship building.

However, while the participants are influential players in the field of Hip-Hop education, they are also cognizant of the pitfalls of essentializing Hip-Hop Pedagogy as a solution to structural inequities, or other societal ills such as poverty, institutional racism or homophobia. This means that Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy should be one piece of a larger equity agenda, which includes resources and accountability at all levels of the educational system.

Importance of Hip-Hop Culture and Relationship to Identity Development

The first part of the model is the relationship that the *elites* have to Hip-Hop culture. This relationship cannot be understated. And while Hip-Hop is a vibrant, complex and primarily youth-driven culture, it often allows for "cultural glue" to exist between students and teachers because it is multigenerational. The participants shared many accounts of life skills, missing/critical historical analysis and social commentary that they learned exclusively through Hip-Hop texts. This unique body of knowledge and cultural identification in many cases propelled them into formal education, and continues to help guide them in their identity formation.

Personal Pedagogy

I did aim to have an equal representation of high school and higher education educators. The sample was diverse in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion and geographical location. And despite diversity in regards to personal and social identities, the desire to want to be a good teacher who does things better and different was a universal sentiment amongst all participants. The participants take their pedagogical practices as seriously as someone honing an artistic craft; they treat it with integrity and desire for ingenuity. They demand much from themselves, their various constituencies and the students. Using Hip-Hop as a basis for connection and pedagogy is certainly not a short cut; but in fact an example of excellence in teaching and scholarship.

Functions and Tenets of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy

The final part of the schema unfolded in two concrete ways, the first being how Hip-Hop informs the participants social justice pedagogy by providing counter hegemonic narrative opportunities. The second being how SJHHP can be used as liberatory methodology supported by the understanding, appreciation and working knowledge of participants' personal pedagogy. Therefore the core functions of a Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy are reliant on the idea that a SJHHP 1) fosters vulnerability, 2) cultivates strengths 3) encourages critical thinking and 4) explores concepts of social identity. As mentioned previously, this is unique because a SJHHP encourages these elements-for both teachers and students. Many critical pedagogical theories refer to the importance of "engaged" pedagogy between educator and student (hooks, 1994), but the

elites universally felt they were just as much a part of and responsible for each of the four functions as the students.

Fosters Vulnerability

The participants shared concrete examples of the ways in which Hip-Hop helped students to open up and share various aspects of their lives. Additionally, educators felt that it was their responsibility to be transparent with students about their own experiences, personal identities and relationship to Hip-Hop and society in general. For example, if a teacher identifies as white and affluent from a privileged background and is teaching working class Black and Latino students, Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy would encourage the teacher to share that with her students, rather than pretend to be someone else. The vulnerability would enable an authentic relationship to develop, rather than maintain a false sense of neutrality.

Under the core function of fostering vulnerability for teacher and student, two of the tenets for implementing a SJHHP are exemplified: *attending to group dynamics* and *emphasizing relationship building*. The participants felt that it was critically important to arrange classrooms or educational spaces in a manner that encouraged safe space, generally preferring a circle arrangement or cipher; and asking students to create community guidelines in order to take ownership of the space. The idea that group dynamics can make or break a classroom, and acknowledging how important that can be for successful relationship building is critical. All of the *elites* referred to the emphasis on building lasting equitable relationships with students and with other educators, as a matter of increasing the proverbial cipher, and creating learning communities that actually foster vulnerability so that authentic learning and engagement can occur. I coded

what the *elites* described as the core function of Fostering Vulnerability, offer the methodology of the two tenets; attending to group dynamics and emphasizing relationship as examples of how to achieve this.

Cultivates Strengths

The *elites* were also firm in the belief that Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy must work from an assets model, rather than a deficit model. Meaning students come into educational spaces with talents, skills, and abilities. They have already mastered many skills, but that is not always evident in prescriptive educational contexts. A major function of dismantling hegemonic norms is for both students and teachers to be liberated enough to cultivate the things they are naturally gifted in order to develop their strengths. This is critically important for validating students and often teachers in educational spaces. This can be done through Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy by utilizing the tenets: *valuing prior knowledge* and *cultivating experiential learning* as methodology. Acknowledging and finding ways to incorporate students' knowledge into teaching is not specific to SJHHP, but within Hip-Hop culture it is typically an easier connection to make because the body of work is so robust. Many of the participants cited examples of scaffolding lesson plans beginning with a Hip-Hop text or a story about a particular artist, and allowing that to be the starting point for an entire unit.

Additionally, many people (students and educators) learn best when they are presented with information in multiple forms, one of the most important being learning experientially. Again, because Hip-Hop culture is intrinsically a culture that values multiple ways of knowing (New London Group, 1996) this is a tenet that is easily implementable. Students can learn by doing, and can become the teachers in many cases

if they are able to present information in various forms, utilizing the five elements of Hip-Hop culture (Price, 2006) or other newer elements such as technology.

Encourages Critical Thinking

Perhaps one of the most fundamental pieces necessary for creating liberatory, counter-hegemonic spaces is good old-fashioned critical thinking. The *elites* were uniform in their understanding that the public pedagogy of Hip-Hop relies heavily on its ability to draw attention to circumstances or stories that warrant critical thinking and off-set the status quo. When educators are able to replicate that in an educational space, new knowledge can actually be created, because rote memorization and regurgitation is no longer the norm. This function is intrinsically at the heart of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. The two tenets, which support this methodology are: *generating enthusiasm for learning* and the *importance of community*. When students feel engaged about what they are learning because it is relevant and challenging in a holistic way, they are excited to learn, this is part of the human condition (Freire, 1970). Many of the participants cited the use of Hip-Hop in their own classes or out of school time experiences as being a turning point in believing in education. Additionally, the idea that students are part of larger systems and communities is an idea that is omnipresent in Hip-Hop, even when individual artists are focused on their own success or individual narrative. Thinking critically about communities and the collective history as well as the social responsibility, is one of the main premises for Social Justice Education, and its evolving counterpart Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy.

Explores Concepts of Social Identity

The final function or core belief about Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is the ability to be conversant about complex identity politics. Typically, Hip-Hop culture will not allow for simplistic one-dimensional narratives, especially in regards to social identities such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, language or ability (Rose, 2008). Consequently naming the nuances or encountering the stereotypes can come with the Hip-Hop Pedagogy territory. This can be the most challenging function for educators if they have been taught to believe that their social identities and experiences are neutral or the mythical norm. Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy encourages fierce dialogue about personal experiences. This is particularly done when operationalizing the tenet of *making interdisciplinary connections*. Ultimately there is universality in Hip-Hop that can often be a window into a new experience, or a mirror of a personal experience. Either way, finding the connection to the larger picture through interdisciplinary approaches makes the journey more fulfilling for educators and students.

Discussion of Findings

In summary, is it important to note the warnings issued by the participants. They caution against reducing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy to a passing education fad or trend, or an abbreviated commitment to societal injustices. They also make it clear that utilizing Hip-Hop is not for entertainment purposes, meaning honing your rhyming skills to promote the same one-dimensional version of U.S. history found in many textbooks (Zinn, 2003) is not SJHHP. Additionally, Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy should always be evolving, never stagnant, so there are no true absolutes or need for scripted

one-size fits all lesson plans or mandates. Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy should not manipulate students or lure them into other fields of study without proper context. Creating a model for utilizing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy is not about creating a new, rigid set of requirements. The research highlighted the importance of place for analysis about social issues that is a counter-narrative to mainstream supposition. Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy openly encourages discussion of difference as it relates to personal and social identity (Stovall, 2006) as well as structural inequality. It encourages community/geographic identification, and is culturally relevant to many students (Parmar, 2005). It requires authenticity from all those involved-teachers, students, artists, and community members. It is fundamental that educators believe that students already have valuable knowledge and that action-oriented/creation of social change is possible (Akom, 2009).

Implications for Teaching

I have identified four implications for teaching based on the new model for Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. Ideally the model and the tenets explained through the research would be taught in teacher/urban education programs. This would allow for future educators to learn about Hip-Hop culture, as well as the critical roots of utilizing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy to enhance student success. The second implication would be to teach Hip-Hop Pedagogy in educational leadership/administrative programs so that policy and decision makers could be aware of the nuances and multiple fields of study represented in Hip-Hop scholarship. Often survey diversity courses tend to be one-dimensional, less interdisciplinary and can feel obsolete in a fast paced youth driven culture. Teaching about Hip-Hop as Social Justice Pedagogy can validate and encourage

inquiry into a body of knowledge such as ethnic studies, critical multicultural education, etc. with global implications.

The third implication for teaching would be to increase resources for teachers who want to use Hip-Hop, in the form of lesson plans, curriculum, professional development opportunities, journal articles, and study groups. Rather than essentializing or exoticising this body of work, the academy can begin to institutionalize SJHHP as an innovative and valuable teaching practice. Lastly, the final implication is that colleges and universities can be ahead of the curve by institutionalizing Hip-Hop studies programs that cut across disciplines such as political science, gender studies, American History, economics, and ethnic and cultural studies, which could then further support teacher education programs by creating shared courses/faculty while protecting finite resources.

Implications for Research

There are many possible outcomes for how the research could be continued or expanded upon. However, there are four specific areas that could benefit from more extensive scholarship in the immediate sense. The first being, how might teacher education programs and scholars design a curriculum for pre-service teachers to learn the functions and tenets of Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy? What would the sequence of courses and canon be for this type of entry point or how could it connect to more traditional multicultural or Social Justice Education practice? The second implication being, how can teacher education programs or other education leadership programs tap into the talents and knowledge base of Hip-Hop scholars and other knowledgeable teaching artists, to incorporate them into faculty or curricular decision making?

The final two outcomes are based on assessment. A comprehensive survey about who is doing what and how they are utilizing Hip-Hop Pedagogy is necessary. Much of the research in the literature review was based on qualitative and ethnographic research that was self-reported. It would be helpful to have statistical and qualitative data to learn about program and course outcomes with educators who are using Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy. The last implication, being a true reflection of the critical process, how do we measure and assess results at all levels, but especially with students, beyond increased test scores or attendance (albeit these are important indicators of success)? How does it feel to be in a classroom where an educator is implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy? How is it different from other classrooms? How can you quantify or describe that experience, and convey the information to third party administrators, funders or other scholars? A more holistic brand of assessing how Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy influences students would be useful for the field and for future research.

Summary

In summary, Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy shares a lineage with the activist origins of Hip-Hop culture. This personal connection to Hip-Hop culture that each of the participants made for themselves is coupled with the organic connection they each made between Hip-Hop culture and education. This allowed the participants to begin to create their own personal Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy, which functioned as a way of creating a counter-hegemonic educational space. This counter-hegemonic space is made possible through the core functions of: fostering vulnerability, focusing on strengths, encouraging critical thinking and the exploration of social identities. This is unique because it is not only true for students, but for teachers as well. Additionally, the

methodology for implementing Social Justice Hip-Hop Pedagogy are found through the seven tenets: values prior knowledge, cultivates experiential learning, makes interdisciplinary connections, generates enthusiasm for learning, attends to group dynamics, focuses on community, and emphasizes relationship building. These functions and tenets are guideposts for a pedagogy that is nuanced, critical, evolving and creative, and offer promise and possibility for an authentic and innovative way of creating liberatory education.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Ally: A person who supports marginalized, silenced, or less privileged groups without actually being a member of those groups. This person will often directly confront and challenge systems of oppression (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Classism: The systemic assignment of characteristics of worth and ability based on social class. It includes individual attitudes and behaviors; systems of policies and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes, resulting in drastic income and wealth inequality; the rationale that supports these systems and this unequal valuing; and the culture that perpetuates them (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Diaspora: Movement of any population sharing common ethnic identity who were either forced to leave or voluntarily left their settled territory, and became residents in areas often far removed from the former (Williams, 2005).

Dominant or Agents: Members of dominant social groups privileged by birth or acquisition who knowingly or unknowingly exploit and reap unfair advantage over members of target groups. Members of agent groups are also trapped by the system of social oppression that benefits them and are confined to roles and prescribed behavior for their group (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Elements in Hip-Hop: There are four foundational elements: MCing, DJing, Graffiti, and B-Boying/B-Girling. Zulu Nation and Temple of Hip-Hop have also added additional elements (Bynoe, 2006).

Ethnicity: It can be used to describe how people are defined, differentiated, organized, and entitled to group membership based on assumed shared cultural characteristics. Ethnicity can also be used in reference to a consciously shared system of beliefs, values, practices, and loyalties shared by members of a group who perceive themselves as a group. Ethnicity can essentially be thought of as an attachment that a person or a group feels towards a common cultural heritage but like race is also a social construction (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Feminism: A term commonly used to describe a person who believes women should be treated equal to men. Some of the currently used definitions include: (a) a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women equal to those of men; (b) an organized movement for the attainment of these rights; (c) the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have created; (d) belief in the necessity of large-scale social change in order to increase the power of women (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Heterosexism: The concept that heterosexuality and only heterosexuality is natural, normal, superior, and required. This can refer to any institution or belief system that excludes or makes invisible questioning, lesbian, non-labeling, bisexual, transgender, queer, and gay people, as well as any system that constructs queer sexualities as deviant, wrong, or immoral. Heterosexism is deeply rooted in the culture and institutions in our society. Homophobia, biphobia, and

transphobia all stem from and are supported by heterosexism. Heterosexism, as well as gender oppression enforces and is enforced by a binary gender system. Binaries similarly enforce racism and other systems of power (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Heteronormative: The often-punitive rules (social, familial, and legal) that force us to conform to hegemonic, heterosexual standards for identity. The term is a short version of "normative heterosexuality" (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Hip-Hop: The musical expression of Hip-Hop culture. Often seen as separate from rap music but similar content in terms of beats, djs, producers, and lyrical content delivered by MCs. In this work, I choose for consistency to spell Hip-Hop with capital letters and a hyphen. There are many different spelling such as hiphop, Hip Hop, hip-hop, etc. (George,1998). For the purpose of this work, there is no difference in meaning between any of the aforementioned spellings.

Hip-Hop Culture: Hip-Hop was birthed in the 1970s in New York City by and for young people of color. It is built on the four elements (DJing, MCing, Graffiti art, and B-boying/B-girling). However, it is currently widely seen as being global youth culture, as well as being an important sociopolitical movement (Bynoe, 2006).

Homophobia: The fear or hatred of gay, lesbians, or queer-identified people in general. This can be manifested as an intense dislike or rejection of people who are queer-indentified (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Internalized Classism: The acceptance and justification of classism by working class and poor people. Examples include: feelings of inferiority to higher-class people; disdain or shame about traditional patterns of class in one's family and a denial of heritage; feelings of superiority to people lower on the class spectrum than oneself; hostility and blame towards other working-class or poor people; and beliefs that classist institutions are fair (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Internalized Homophobia: The fear or hatred of or discomfort with one's own queer sexuality. Internalized homophobia is linked to low self-esteem and is presumed to be a contributing factor in the high rates of suicide among queer teens (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Internalized (Racial) Oppression: The internalization by People of Color of the images, stereotypes, prejudices, and myths promoted by the racist system about People of Color in the United States (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Nationalism: An ideology that creates and sustains a nation as a concept of a common identity for groups of humans. According to the theory of nationalism, the preservation of identity includes the independence in all subjects, the well-being, as well as the glory of one's own nation. These are fundamental values (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/nationalism).

Oppression: The systemic and pervasive nature of social inequality woven throughout social institutions as well as embedded within individual consciousness. Eradicating oppression ultimately requires struggle against all its forms, and building coalitions among diverse people

offers the most promising strategies for challenging oppression systematically (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Prison Industrial Complex: The prison industrial complex (PIC) is a complicated system situated at the intersection of governmental and private interests that uses prisons as a solution to social, political, and economic problems. The PIC depends upon the oppressive systems of racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia. It includes human rights violations, the death penalty, industry and labor issues, policing, courts, media, community powerlessness, the imprisonment of political prisoners, and the elimination of dissent (http://criticalresist.live.radicaldesigns.org/article.php?preview=1&cache=0&id=58).

Privilege: An "unearned advantage" that works to "to systematically over-empower certain groups" (p.11) in society/the world. Privilege assigns dominance simply based on gender, race, sexuality, and nationality, among other factors of identity (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Race: A term used to describe people who are often classified together on the basis of physical similarities (such as skin color, shape of the eyes, hair texture), deriving from common ancestry and who are thought to share cultural and social traits. Usually, however, a racial group will include a number of different ethnic communities. Race is primarily a social construction created for the purpose of exploitation of one group over another i.e. white supremacy (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Racism: Refers to a set of beliefs (often complex), which asserts the natural superiority of one racial group (white people) over another (people of color), at the individual, cultural, and institutional level. In one sense, racism refers to the belief that biology rather than culture is the primary determinant of group attitudes and actions. This belief can then be used to extol the inherent superiority of certain 'races' and justify deferential treatment and social positions. Racism goes beyond ideology, however, primarily involving discriminatory practices that protect and maintain the position of certain groups and sustain the inferior position of others (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Rap Industry: This is meant to be a distinction between the corporations who largely benefit from the sale and consumption of Hip-hop culture and the people who participate in all the elements of Hip-Hop culture (Bynoe, 2006).

Religious Oppression: The subordination, marginalization, and persecution of an individual or group based on their religious beliefs and/or practices. Occurring on the individual, cultural/societal, and institutional levels, religious oppression stems from opposing dualistic beliefs around religion, as well as certain teachings and traditions. Much like ethnocentrism, the beliefs of the dominant religious group of the society become engrained in its customs and traditions, including those customs and traditions that are secular/non-religious (e.g. court system swearing on the Christian Bible) (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Sexism: The system of values deliberately designed to structure privilege for male identified people by means of unequal treatment of women for the purpose of social advantage over

resources. Like racism, classism, and religious oppression, sexism exists on individual, cultural, and institutional levels (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Social Change: Social change is a general term that is used in the study of history, economies, and politics and includes topics such as the success or failure of different political systems, globalization, democratization, development, and economic growth. The term can encompass concepts as broad as revolution and paradigm shift, to narrow changes such as a particular cause within small town government (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Socio-Economic Class: A class consists of a large group of people who occupy a similar economic position in the wider society based on income, wealth, property ownership, education, skills, or authority in the economic sphere. Class often affects people not only on an economic level, but also on an emotional level because the United States if often seen as being a "classless" society (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Social Justice Education: It is both a process and goal that seeks full and equal participation for all groups in society. It is also an inter-disciplinary conceptual framework for analyzing multiple forms of oppression and a set of interactive, experimental, and pedagogical principles to help learners understand the meaning of social difference and oppression both in the social system and in their personal lives. The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Spirituality: It is acknowledged that spirituality is not only about religion and related practices but must be understood more broadly as relationship with God or a higher power (Adams, et. al. 2007).

Subordinates or Targets: Members of social identity groups that are disenfranchised, exploited, and victimized in a variety of ways by the oppressor and the oppressor's system or institutions. Target groups are those which are subject to containment, having their choices and movement restricted and limited; are seen and treated as expendable and replaceable, without an individual identity apart from the group; and are compartmentalized into narrowly defined roles (Adams, et. al. 2007).

APPENDIX B

HIP-HOP EDUCATION ORGANIZATIONS

B-Girl Bench offers professional development opportunities and educational resources for women in Hip-Hop and connects women Hip-Hop artists with education, activist, and cultural organizations in the Pacific Northwest region. (www.bgirlbench.com)

Blackout Arts Collective (BAC) is a grassroots coalition of artists, activists, and educators working to empower communities of color through the arts. They use the tools of culture and education to raise awareness and catalyze action around the critical issues that impact communities of color. They believe in the power of the creative process to transform lives, mobilize communities, and build a more just society and have been using Hip-Hop to educate since 1997. (www.blackoutartscollective.org)

The Brotherhood/Sister Sol is a Harlem-based organization with a mission to empower Black and Latino young women and men to develop into critical thinkers and community leaders. It is not simply an organization; it is a way of life. Providing youth with an opportunity to explore their ideas, identities and futures among peers with the support and guidance of their immediate elders is a natural method of promoting positive development into adulthood. They have been using Hip-Hop culture to engage students for more than a decade. (www.brotherhoodsistersol.org)

El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice is a community based human rights institution that promotes leadership for peace and justice through the engagement of members (youth and adult) in the arts, education, scientific research, wellness, and environmental action. El Puente educators created two Hip-Hop education curricula, RAP: Rhythm and Poetry which uses Hip-Hop lyrics and poetry to teach English and Sankofa: Using Hip-Hop and Story-telling and Cultural History to teach Social Studies. (www.elpuente.us/homepage.htm)

The Hip-Hop Association is a media, education, and arts community building organization whose projects are designed to encourage critical thinking, education reform, cross-cultural unity, and civic engagement. The Hip-Hop Association's education initiative (H2Ed) was founded under the premise that Hip-Hop, one of the most influential cultural forces today, has the ability to educate, inform, and empower today's youth. They offer Hip-Hop education teacher summits, a newsletter, and a wealth of Hip-Hop education resources. (www.hiphopassociation.org)

Hip-Hop Congress provides the Hip-Hop generation with the information, tools, and resources to respond to social, economic, and political conditions with special attention to creating and education agenda. There are approximately 70 chapters nationwide. (www.hiphopcongress.com)
Hip-Hop Matters, hosts a website with educational resources (www.hiphopmatters.org) as well as information on The Journal of Hip-Hop, which provides a space for critical dialogue about Hip-Hop culture. (www.johh.org)

Hip-Hop Action Summit was founded in 2001; HSAN is dedicated to harnessing the cultural relevance of Hip-Hop music to serve as a catalyst for education advocacy and other societal concerns fundamental to the empowerment of youth. HSAN is a non-profit, non-partisan national coalition of Hip-Hop artists, entertainment industry leaders, education advocates, civil rights proponents, and youth leaders united in the belief that Hip-Hop is an enormously influential agent for social change which must be responsibly and proactively utilized to fight the war on poverty and injustice. (www.hsan.org)

Hip-Hop Theater Festival invigorates the fields of theater and Hip-Hop by nurturing the creation of innovative work within the Hip-Hop aesthetic; presenting and touring artists whose work addresses the socio-political issues relevant to the Hip-Hop generation; and serving young, urban communities through outreach and education that celebrates contemporary language and culture. (www.hiphoptheaterfest.org)

Loop Dreams was started By Kanye West and his late mother Dr. Donda West; they created an innovative education program dedicated to keeping at-promise (often called at-risk students in school through the creation of engaging curriculum, providing studio equipment in schools and encouraging strong leadership. (www.erniebarnes.com/kanyewestfoundation.html)
Seattle Debate is an organization that utilizes Hip-Hop, spoken word, music, and culture in traditional policy debate to middle schools, high schools, and community centers.(www.seattledebate.org)

The Temple of Hip Hop, founded by KRS-ONE, promotes, preserves, and protects Hip-Hop as a strategy toward health, love, awareness, and wealth. (www.templeofhiphop.org)
Urban League, in partnership with Russell Simmons, created a literacy program for NYC high school students called Hip-Hop Reader. Their mission is to enable African Americans and other marginalized people to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights. (www.nul.org/hiphopreader.html)

Urban Word NYC™ exists to ensure that New York City youth have a safe, supportive, dynamic, and challenging community in which to discover their powerful voices—through written and spoken word—and use them to express their views, strengthen self-esteem, and engage them in opportunities that address the sociopolitical issues that affect them. (http://www.urbanwordnyc.org/)

The University of Hip Hop provides a useful model for educators seeking to implement Hip-Hop education programs. (uhiphop.uchicago.edu)

We Got Issues! has a mission to ignite the next generation of young women leaders and awaken a new brand of social/political activism in America. We Got Issues! has utilized a Hip-Hop curriculum since its inception in 2004 to accomplish this mission. (www.wegotissues.org)

Words Beats & Life Inc. transforms university classrooms and campuses through Hip-Hop culture via interactive workshops, exhibitions, and gallery installations. This is

accomplished through the DC Urban Arts Academy; a multi-medium Hip-Hop arts Academy which was the first initiative, *Words Beats Life: The Global Journal of Hip-Hop*, and an emerging initiative *The Cipher: A Hip-Hop Business Incubator* (www.wblinc.org).

World Up is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about international cultures and issues that affect the global community through Hip-Hop. Through ongoing events, educational programming, and an annual music festival, World Up actively promotes and fosters diversity, cross-cultural understanding, and social change through Hip-Hop culture (www.worldup.org)

APPENDIX C

PROPOSED RECRUITMENT LETTER

Date

Dear Participant,

My name is Marcella Runell Hall and I am a doctoral candidate in the Social Justice Education Program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. My dissertation research focuses on Hip-Hop as pedagogy. As a social justice educator and member of the Hip-Hop generation my research seeks to create a new model for utilizing Hip-Hop as pedagogy.

As part of my research I am recruiting educators who utilize Hip-Hop as pedagogy. As a participant, you will be asked to partake in a 75-90 minute face-to-face, digitally recorded interview. Your expertise in the field of Hip-Hop education is crucial to developing a well-researched model for Hip-Hop pedagogy. For this reason, your input is essential to this study. In order to make this research as mutually beneficial as possible, at the end of the study, I will forward a summary of my findings.

If you are interested in the study or have any questions or comments regarding this study please feel free to contact me. My phone number is 413-687-4963. I can also be contacted via email at mrunell@educ.umass.edu.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Marcella Runell Hall, B.S.W., M.A., Ed.D Candidate

University of Massachusetts, Amherst
Social Justice Education Program

APPENDIX D

CONSENT LETTER

Education in a Hip-Hop Nation: Our Identity, Politics & Pedagogy

My name is Marcella Runell Hall and I am a doctoral candidate in the Social Justice Education Program at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. I am conducting this research project as part of the requirements for my doctoral dissertation. The purpose of the research project is to examine the ways Hip-Hop culture influences educators' identities.

You are being asked to participate because you were identified as meeting the following criteria (1) you are a high school or college level educator who has had measured success using Hip-Hop as pedagogy (2) and you have either started a Hip-Hop-education based organization, present at National conferences on Hip-Hop as pedagogy, or have written in scholarly publications on Hip-Hop education. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 75-90 minute digitally recorded interview. Your decision to participate in this interview is voluntary. Confidentiality will be maintained and participants' identities will be protected by using a pseudonym in place of your name and having other identifying factors removed from any documents produced from this research. You have the right to refuse to answer any question or to terminate your participation in the interview at anytime with no penalty or prejudice to yourself. In addition, you have the right to review any of the materials to be used in the study, and a summary of the findings will be made available to you at your request.

There are a number of benefits for participating in this study. The benefits of participating include the chance to reflect your experiences of incorporating Hip-Hop culture into your pedagogy, as well as participating in the creation of a well-researched model for Hip-Hop pedagogy. You will not be compensated monetarily for your participation. As with any research, there are some potential risks including feelings of vulnerability or emotional reactions.

You will be furnished with two copies of this informed consent, both which should be signed if you are willing to participate. One copy should be retained for your records and the other for my records. By signing this consent form, you are giving me permission to share the results of the study as well as excerpts from your interview with my dissertation committee members and in the dissertation as part of the doctoral degree requirements. The results may also be disseminated in academic and conference presentations as well as manuscripts submitted to professional journals for publication.

YOU ARE MAKING A DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES THAT YOU UNDERSTAND AND HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE, HAVING READ THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE.

_____	_____	_____
(Print your name)	(Participant Signature)	(Date)

_____	_____
(Researcher Signature)	(Date)

If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 413-687-4963 or email me at mrunell@educ.umass.edu.

APPENDIX E

PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Name	Race	Religion	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Geographical Location	Profession
Damali	Biracial	-	Female	Heterosexual	Northeast	Middle School Teacher
Max	Latino	-	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Non-Profit/Founder/ Artist/MC
Vaughn	African American	Christian	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Non-Profit Founder/Artist/MC
Manuel	African American	-	Male	Heterosexual	West Coast	Non-Profit Founder/Artist/MC
Javier	Biracial	-	Male	Heterosexual	West Coast	Teacher/Principal/artist/DJ
Giovanni	Female	-	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Non-Profit Founder/ Teacher/Artist/MC
Kyle	White	Jewish	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Scholar/Higher Education/artist/dancer
Hakim	Middle Eastern	Muslim	Male	-	Southern	Teacher/Higher Education/Blogger
Julius	White	Jewish	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Non-Profit /Educator, Artist/Beatboxer
Sam	Latino	Christian	Male	Heterosexual	Midwest	Non-Profit Founder/Artist/MC
Carlos	African American	-	Male	-	Midwest	Scholar/Higher Education/Non-Profit Founder
Renjit	Asian	-	Male	Heterosexual	West Coast	Scholar/Higher Education/Writer
Zoë	African American	-	Female	Heterosexual	Northeast	Secondary Education Teacher
Justin	African American	-	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Scholar/Higher Education/Non-Profit Founder
Rudy	Latino	-	Male	Heterosexual	West Coast	Scholar/Higher Education/Secondary Education Teacher
Allen	African American	Christian	Male	Heterosexual	Southern	Principal
Eden	African American	-	Female	Heterosexual	Northeast	Scholar/Higher Education
Shawn	Biracial	Jewish	Male	Queer	Northeast/ Southwest	Scholar/Higher Education/Artist/Actor
Jason	African American	-	Male	Heterosexual	Midwest/ Northeast	Scholar/Higher Education/Writer
Romeo	White	-	Male	Heterosexual	Northeast	Non-Profit Leader/Artist/Poet
Alejandro	Latino	-	Male		West Coast	Secondary School Teacher
Eric	White	-	Male	Queer	Northeast	Middle School /Special Education Teacher
Alara	African American	-	Female	Bisexual	Northeast/ Southwest	Non-Profit Leader/Educator/Artist/ Actress/Poet

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

A. Agenda

a. Introductions
b. Review Informed Consent Letter Verbally; Have Participant Sign Letter
c. Begin Recording
d. Interview Commences

B. Interview Questions:

Please tell me about your background and/or connection to Hip-Hop culture.

Please give a brief description of your relationship to Hip-Hop and education.

How has Hip-Hop shaped your understanding of social justice?

In your experience, what are the core assumptions, beliefs, guiding philosophies and/or theories which inform a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

What are some of the essential core tenets or non-negotiable aspects that constitute a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

What bodies of knowledge do you feel are necessary in the creation of a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

What theories and/or practices inform your teaching utilizing a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

How might Hip-Hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers beyond social identities?

What are the methodologies for teaching about and/or how to implement a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

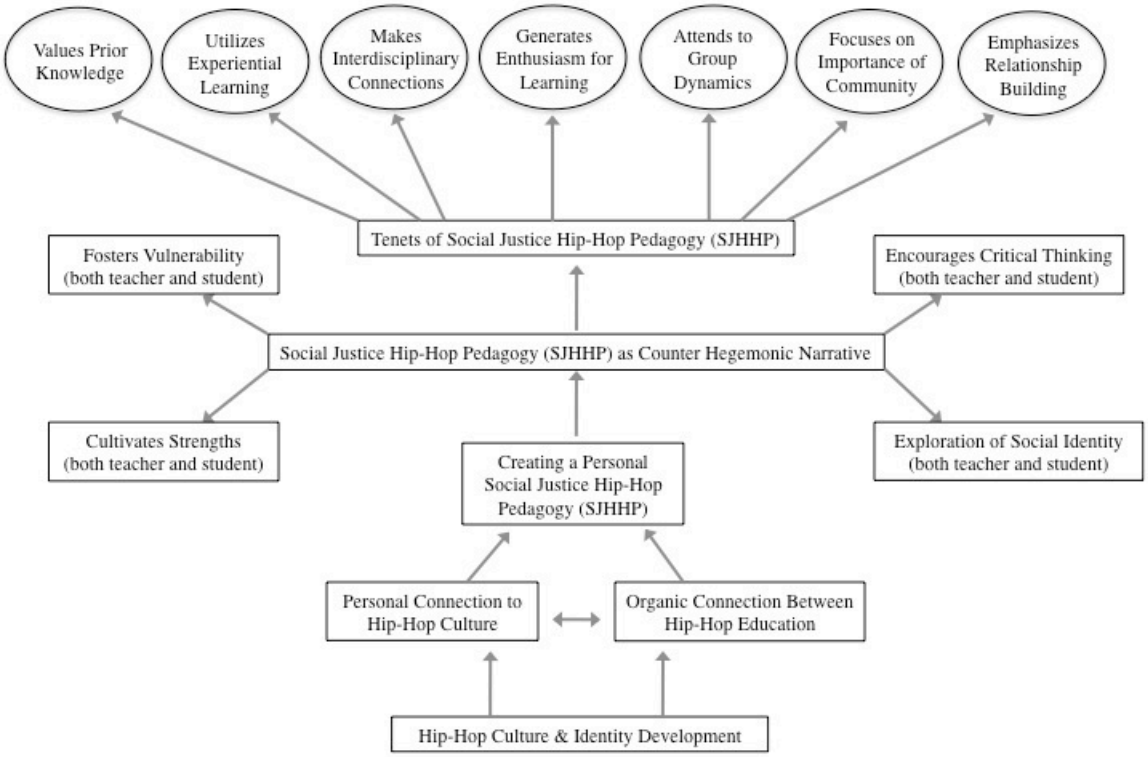
What bodies of knowledge do you feel are necessary for teaching about a Social Justice Hip-Hop pedagogy?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

C. Thank them for their time and remind them that they will get a copy of the transcript so the participant can perform a "member check" to ensure that the data is correct.

APPENDIX G

A MODEL FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE HIP-HOP PEDAGOGY



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