TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE USE OF HIP HOP CULTURE, HIP HOP PEDAGOGY,

AND IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN AN URBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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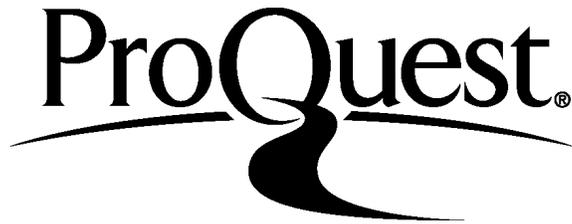Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

KELLY D. WILLIAMS: Teacher Perceptions of the Use of Hip Hop Culture, Hip Hop Pedagogy
and Identity Development in an Urban Elementary School
(Under the direction of Barbara Kawulich, Ph.D.)

This study described the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional school teachers toward the use of Hip Hop music and culture to nurture positive identity development in urban elementary students. The study sought to discover influences of Hip Hop culture on youth identity formation. Inquiry also focused on the participant educators' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop-based pedagogy in educational settings.

The researcher aimed to achieve triangulation through interview data collected from people with different perspectives. Purposeful sampling and snowball sampling procedures were utilized to identify a diverse sample of fourteen participants representing three types of educators: (a) Hip Hop-based teaching artists, (b) traditional teachers who use Hip Hop in the classroom, and (c) traditional teachers who do not use Hip Hop in the classroom. Data for the study were collected using qualitative research methods, primarily, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, observations, and examination of resources used by the participants. Thick, rich description was provided describing participant experiences and perceptions of Hip Hop culture, Hip Hop pedagogy, and identity development.

This study delineated the terms "hip-hop", "Hip Hop", and "rap" in a unique approach which had not yet been defined so thoroughly in a scholarly thesis on Hip Hop pedagogy. Findings suggest that discrepancies and lack of clarity exists among educators about the

definition of Hip Hop music and culture. The participants had multiple perspectives and ideas about the ways in which Hip Hop culture influence youth identity development and how Hip Hop music and culture can be used in educational settings. The lyrical content of mainstream rap music found in popular youth culture posed both benefits and challenges as perceived by the research participants. Educator background, school board mandates, and personal preference influenced participant choice in incorporating Hip Hop-based instructional practices into their daily curriculum. Recommendations included expanding this research to include a broader scope of participants from varying regions of the country, comparing perceptions between educators in rural settings versus urban settings, and extending the research to include quantitative inquiry.

DEDICATION

To the past, present, and future of authentic HipHop Kulture and the field of Hip Hop education. "Rap is something that you do, Hip Hop is something that you live" (KRS ONE, 2009).

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"All things are possible to those who believe," - Mark 9:23.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

Disparities in achievement levels between African-American and Latino students and other ethnic groups in American inner city schools continue to generate major concern. At the same time, classroom teachers struggle to find ways to incorporate culturally relevant lessons that address the popular urban youth culture of Hip Hop. There has been much speculation as to reasons why underrepresented students who identify or display characteristics of Hip Hop culture demonstrate lack of interest, motivation and achievement in school. An itemized list of potential reasons includes but is not limited to: poverty and lack of opportunity (Hart & Risley, 1995), unstable family structure, poor parenting skills and low parental involvement in children's education (Davidson, 2005), lack of ambition, negative peer pressure, poor choice of role models, high levels of teen pregnancies, drugs and crime (Paige & Witty, 2010). These societal ills plaguing the African-American and Latino communities are fueling the passion of researchers, administrators, and educators to think outside of the box and explore more culturally responsive instructional practices and techniques that demonstrate the potential to successfully motivate urban youth to achieve in school. Paving the way for this movement has been the explosive growth of Hip Hop scholarship and research over the past twenty years.

Statement of the Problem

Although it is highly recognized as a major global phenomenon (Price, 2006), many teachers and students are unaware of the difference between "rap music" and "Hip Hop" or the historical origins of Hip Hop as a culture; yet, it is one of the most dominant forces influencing

youth popular culture (Hicks-Harper, 2000). The social tensions of marginalized urban youth culture (e.g., demographics, police brutality, drugs, and gangs) continue to challenge student motivation and desire to achieve academically (Smith, 2008). In efforts to improve the teaching and learning of this student population, Dimitriadis (2004) suggests that educators of urban youth should be knowledgeable about the types of popular culture that incomparably molds those youths' identities. "We need to connect more effectively with students through their pop culture...bring youth culture into the curriculum" (Ferguson, 2004, p.9).

Author and researcher Emdin (2010) argues that Hip Hop music and culture is a distinct, dominant culture of marginalized urban youth, and this culture of urban student reality should be considered in teaching and learning. Similarly, DeJesus (2009) suggests that Hip Hop is a valid literary form, a culture worthy of academic attention and an effective instructional tool. In situations when the exact [academic] skills cannot be taught through cultural material, educators are using Hip-Hop as a bridge to connect school learning to the lives and real world experiences of students (Au, 2005).

Despite the establishment of organizations founded on educational initiatives that support Hip Hop as influential media that educate, inform, and empower youth, general awareness of the instructional potential of Hip Hop beyond the analysis and study of its text at the secondary and postsecondary level is relatively low. There are over 300 courses related to Hip Hop music and culture currently being taught in the United States at various colleges including Berkeley, Stanford, Michigan, Yale, MIT, NYU, Princeton, and Columbia (Walker, 2006; Runell-Hall, 2009). Furthermore, Howard University in Washington, DC, has developed a Hip Hop studies minor into its curriculum. The study and influence of Hip Hop as pedagogy at the elementary and middle school level has been under-researched (Emdin, 2010; Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

Researchers and practitioners in education should gain a deeper comprehension of youth culture that is separate from the platitudinal representation that pervades mainstream media (Prier & Beachum, 2008), but little is known about the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers of urban elementary students towards the influence of Hip Hop music and culture on shaping positive youth identity development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers on the influences of Hip Hop music and culture on positive identity development in urban elementary students.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant, because it examines the potential influences of teaching Hip Hop pedagogy to urban elementary students. This study contributes to the valuable research literature pertaining to the phenomenon of Hip Hop culture and to culturally relevant instructional practices that engage urban elementary students.

Hip Hop has transformed from an art form and subculture into a fully proportioned culture with global, national, and multi-racial significance (Spady, Alim, & Meghelli, 2006). There is a flourishing Hip Hop education movement (Dimitriadis, 2001; Hill, 2009) in which people are using Hip Hop to engage youth, encourage creativity, and heighten critical consciousness. According to Kitwana (2003), an emerging body of members of the Hip Hop generation (e.g., born between 1965 and 1984) are now working in traditional school and out-of-school settings as administrators, teachers, educators, and teaching artists. As members of the Hip Hop generation, they are also proponents of the original philosophy of the Hip Hop community: peace, love, unity and having fun (BamBaataa, 2006; Schloss, 2009).

Culturally responsive classroom practices and interventions positively impact student confidence, curricular engagement, and student-teacher relationships (Gay, 2000; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1995). For example, studies of culturally compatible instructional strategies found that "African-American students prefer learning situations that are active, participatory, emotionally engaging, and filled with visual and physical stimulation" (Gay, 2000, p.169). The use of Hip Hop based pedagogies will continue to grow, because Hip Hop culture is organically multi-modal, multi-sensory, and embraces multiple learning styles as evidenced through the five elements - deejaying, b-boying, emceeing, graffiti art, and knowledge of self (Gann, 2011; Runell-Hall, 2011). It also provides validation for African-American and Latino youth who identify with Hip Hop culture (Emdin, 2010).

One key to increasing academic engagement of African-American and Latino youth who identify with Hip Hop culture is to bring in community members from outside the school. While classroom teachers may burn out by the end of the school day, a second shift of adults can bring fresh ideas, energy, and reinforcement of the skills taught during the regular school hours (Leon, n.d.). Recent education initiatives advocate for the hiring of artists and designers to collaborate with school teachers in an effort to drive innovation through comprehensive and integrated arts education (Turnaround Arts Initiative, http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov/). There are many exemplary community based Hip Hop teaching artists who may not hold teaching credentials but who are able to strongly influence student behavior and learning (Siedel, 2011). This study describes the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers toward the culture of Hip Hop and the ways in which Hip Hop culture can be utilized to influence positive identity formation in urban elementary students.

Research Questions

The primary research question for this study was "How do Hip Hop educators perceive the relationship between the core objectives of Hip Hop culture and student identity development?" The following sub-questions were used to further explore this topic:

1. How do Hip Hop teaching artists perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity?

2. How do classroom teachers who use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity?

3. How do classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity?

4. What do these groups (e.g., Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who use Hip Hop) perceive as the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy in educational settings?

Research Design

This study used a basic qualitative research framework to describe the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers about the influence of Hip Hop culture in developing identity formation in youth. According to Creswell (1994), "a qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (pp. 1-2). Qualitative research is based on constructivist, interpretive ontology in which there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest (Krauss, 2005). Purposive sampling was used to identify

participants for the study. Data for the study were collected using qualitative research methods, primarily in-depth, structured interviews, direct observations, and examination of artifacts (resources used by the participants). Recorded interviews and observational field notes were transcribed, and the transcriptions were coded and analyzed using basic qualitative methods of thematic analysis. Throughout the data collection process, analysis of the data involved identification of recurring themes (Merriam, 2009). According to Bauer and Brazer (2012), a grounded theory approach to coding and analysis assists researchers in thinking about common situations from new perspectives and has strong potential for understanding new phenomena. Discovery of the meanings and understandings of the guiding research question further developed from the analysis of data collected.

Conceptual Framework

A growing body of scholarship has explored the convergence of Hip Hop culture, youth and pedagogy to formulate a concept which contemporary scholars have termed Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE) (Hill, 2009). The field of Hip Hop Based Education has drawn from a variety of theoretical and methodological practices that demonstrate how Hip Hop cultural texts can be used to generate favorable educational outcomes, processes, and learning environments. Shaping the framework for HHBE is a mixture of theoretical underpinnings drawn from critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 1995), multicultural education (Banks, 2001) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977).

The field of culturally relevant pedagogy has largely informed the classroom application of HHBE and serves as the primary conceptual framework for this study. Culturally relevant pedagogical practices aim to establish learning environments that encourage students to remain

connected to their cultural identities while striving to achieve in school (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

In addition to culturally relevant pedagogy and drawing from the literature, this study also

examined tenets of critical pedagogy, critical race theory, multicultural education and social

learning theory as secondary principles supporting the primary conceptual framework.

Perceptions of the research participants were analyzed through the lens of culturally

responsive teaching practices, such as Hip Hop Based Education. Current research does not

explore the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers on the

influence of Hip Hop on youth identity development. Limited research explores the perceptions

of classroom teachers toward rap music and Hip Hop culture. This study was designed to fill a

gap in research about Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers of urban

elementary students and their ideas about the influences of their practices. Findings from this

study may assist curriculum developers, school administrators, Hip Hop educators, and teachers

who seek to advocate the implementation of culturally responsive teaching, such as Hip Hop

Based Education.

Basic Assumptions

The following basic assumptions were used in this study:

1. Participant responses to interview questions were individual and accurate.

2. Participants described processes and methods they actually used with students.

3. Data were collected and analyzed using appropriate qualitative research methods.

Limitations

This study has a specific focus on Hip Hop teaching artists (self-identified members of

the Hip Hop generation who teach elements of Hip Hop culture) and traditional classroom

teachers who are employed at the same site. It does not take into account educators who teach in

secondary or post-secondary contexts. Due to the small sample size used for this study, the results cannot be generalized to other schools.

Definitions

The following terms are used operationally in this study:

Academic achievement - term representing the student attainment of content knowledge and skills (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

African-American/Black - terms used interchangeably with the racial category "Black (Non-Hispanic)"; an American of African and especially Black African descent (Spring, 2005).

Beatmaking - term representing the process of producing instrumental music using synthesizers, drum machines, analog and/or digital recordings.

Caucasian/White - terms used interchangeably with the racial category "White (Non-Hispanic)"; of, constituting, or characteristic of a race of humankind native to Europe, North Africa, and southwest Asia and classified according to physical features; used especially when referring to persons of European descent having light skin pigmentation (Spring, 2005).

Deejay/ dj /disc jockey - terms relating to a person who plays records to keep a party going and people on the dance floor (Westbrook, 2002).

Elements of Hip Hop culture - terms relating to Hip Hop's cultural expressions. There are nine elements of hip hop: *b-boying/b-girling* (break dancing), *emceeing* (rapping; term derived from MC/master of ceremonies), *deejaying* (spinning records as in DJ/disc jockey), graffiti (aerosol art), *beat boxing* (making music with the mouth), street fashion (clothing/style), street language (lingo), knowledge of self (self-awareness), and street entrepreneurialism (White, 2006).

hip-hop - term representing a music genre; used to mean rap music product and those things and events associated with rap music entertainment. Note: The term is spelled using lowercase with a dash between hip and hop (KRS ONE, 2009).

Hip Hop - term representing a culture; the artistic response to oppression; a way of expression; a culture that thrives on creativity and nostalgia. There are nine elements of Hip Hop culture (see elements of Hip Hop culture). Note: The term is spelled as two words with a capital "H" for Hip and Hop (KRS ONE, 2009).

Hiphop - term utilized by attuned hiphoppas representing the unique Spirit, unique collective consciousness, and the creative force behind Hip Hop's elements. Note: The term is spelled as one word beginning with a capital letter H (KRS ONE, 2009).

Hiphoppa - term used to identify an individual participating in Hip Hop culture (KRS ONE, 2009).

Hip Hop generation - term meaning the generation of young Black Americans born between 1965 and 1984 who came of age in the eighties and nineties and share a specific set of values and attitudes (Kitwana, 2002).

Hip Hop music - term that, as a musical art form, incorporates the stories of inner-city life, often with a message, spoken over beats of music (Westbrook, 2002) and that incorporates digital sampling techniques and use of beat machines or beatboxing (making music with one's mouth).

Hip Hop pedagogy - term representing instructional technique in which the elements of Hip-Hop culture are used within classrooms to improve student motivation and engagement, teach critical media literacy, foster critical consciousness, and transmit disciplinary knowledge (Hill, 2009).

Hip Hop producer/beatmaker - term relating to a person who makes music using turntables, digital sampling, and/or other studio methodologies. An integration of roles of the musician and composer (Schloss, 2004).

Latino/Hispanic - term used interchangeably with the racial category "Hispanic (Non-White)"; of, constituting, or characteristic of a race of humankind native to Spain, Mexico and some countries in South America (Spring, 2005).

Popular culture - term representing the beliefs and practices and the objects through which they are organized that are widely shared among a population (Harrington & Bielby, 2001).

Rap - term representing an action (e.g., to perform rap music); term also representing a musical style in which rhythmic and/or rhyming speech is chanted "rapped" to musical accompaniment. This backing music, which can include digital sampling is also called hip-hop, the name used to refer to a broader cultural movement that includes rap, deejaying, graffiti, and breakdancing. (Merriam-Webster, 2005). For the purpose of this study, rap is a commodity (i.e., a product that is bought or sold) of the Hip Hop culture.

Sampling - term representing the music and sounds extracted from other recordings; a process that grew out the deejay's practice of repeating breaks of musical recordings until they formed a musical cycle of their own (Schloss, 2004).

Teaching artist - term representing artists based in a particular art form working with students in schools using the practices, understandings, language, history and wisdom of that art form and connecting their art form to other important areas of life, things happening in the world, and to relevant aspects of people's lives. The teaching approaches used by teaching artists differ from the ones used by school arts specialists, classroom teachers, and those who teach about the

arts. Teaching artists are also commonly referred to as "artist-in-residence", "artist-educator",

"visiting artist", "arts expert", "workshop leader" (Booth, 2003, p.6).

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers of the influences of Hip Hop music and culture on positive identity development in urban elementary students. This review of literature provides an overview of the historical influences and societal conditions that were instrumental in laying the foundation for the establishment of Hip Hop as a culture. Hip Hop culture is rooted in ideology and products of the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, and the Black Arts Movement. It was developed out of the creative response of urban youth culture to poverty, oppression, and lack of opportunity in their community (Chang, 2005). The culture of Hip Hop encompasses nine elements (KRS ONE, 2009; Price, 2006) with strong cultural expressions that have heavily affected not only youth culture but also popular culture in a myriad of ways. Additionally, this chapter briefly grounds the connection between youth popular culture and Hip Hop and outlines trends with education and Hip Hop. Using a conceptual framework of culturally responsive pedagogy as a foundation for Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE), the review of literature includes the theoretical underpinnings framing this study including: critical pedagogy, critical race theory, multicultural education, and social learning theory. This review of literature is comprised of a very thorough, comprehensive, and detailed account of the various theoretical concepts informing this research study. Several ideas and constructs are associated with Hip Hop as music and culture; beginning with a review of the historical origins of the culture.

Historical Review

Although the details vary slightly regarding specific events and persons responsible for the birth of Hip Hop, many authors, scholars, and educators report commonalities in the location, the time period, the events, and the collection of individuals who contributed to the beginnings of Hip Hop music and culture (Chang, 2005; Dimitriadis, 2004; Dyson, 2007; Emdin, 2010; Hager, 2004; Hill, 2009; Jenkins, Wilson, Mao, Alvarez, and Rollins, 1999; Kitwana, 2003; KRS ONE, 2009; Morgan, 2009; Price, 2006; Runell & Diaz, 2007; Siedel, 2011; Taylor & Taylor, 2008). As a descendent of the Civil Rights Movement (Aldridge, n.d.; KRS ONE, 2009), the Black Power Movement (KRS ONE, 2009; Smith, 2008) and the Black Arts Movement (Gladney, 1995; Kitwana, 2003; KRS ONE, 2009; Rose, 1994; Smith, 2008), Hip Hop arose as a youth street culture voicing opposition to oppression, violence, and poverty in South Bronx, New York, in 1973.

Civil Rights Movement. There are some shared ideas and common ideologies between the Civil Rights movement and Hip Hop, because each critiques the societal issues that afflicted U.S. African Americans and other oppressed people throughout the world. Some artists were inspired by the violence against African Americans during the Civil Rights era, and, as a result, songs were recorded as a response to the state of the nation. For example, soul singer Sam Cooke wrote *A Change is Gonna Come* (1964, track 7), which became an anthem for the Civil Rights Movement, especially during the "March on Washington" on August 28, 1963, before the song was published (Smith, 2008):

Verse 1

I was born by the river in a little tent

Oh and just like the river I've been running ever since

It's been a long, a long time coming

But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will.

The lyrics of "A Change is Gonna Come" (Cooke, 1964, track 7) spoke to the soul of Black people's struggles with "the sadness of injustice and frustration with the amount of violence that occurred during Civil Rights protests while simultaneously encouraging hope for change" (Smith, 2008, p. 16).

Black Power and Black Arts Movement. Frustration with the seemingly lack of progress made by the Civil Rights Movement eventually ignited the Black Power Movement and the Black Arts Movement. The Black Power Movement was multifaceted, incorporating varying ideologies, such as nationalism, cultural nationalism, and pro- Black, all of which emerged as a response to White supremacy in the U.S. The movement included organizations, such as the Nation of Islam, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Black Panther Party for Self Defense. Frustrated by their lack of social and political progress of the Civil Rights Movement, many Black people created or joined these organizations. These organizations enlightened Black social consciousness, and Black identity was embraced with pride. "The nationalist message of Black power had begun to overshadow the integrationist ideology of the civil right leader; many soul and funk singers became spokespersons for Black power" (Maultsby & Burnim, 2006, p. 277). Notably, James Brown wrote "Say it Loud" (Brown, 1968, track 1), fostering a sense of Black self-confidence and emphasizing an ideology of Black empowerment that rejected notions of inferiority:

Verse 1

Look a'here, some people say we got a lot of malice

Some say it's a lotta nerve

I say we won't quit moving

Til we get what we deserve

We've been buked and we've been scorned

We've been treated bad, talked about

As just as sure as you're born

But just as sure as it take

Two eye to make a pair, huh

Brother, we can't quit until we get our share

Say it loud,

I'm Black and I'm proud…

The powerful lyrics led to the song eventually becoming an anthem for the Black Power Movement. The Black Power Movement laid foundations for a surge of Black pride in urban communities, igniting the Black Arts Movement and spawning the beginnings of Hip Hop as culture (Maultsby & Burnim, 2006).

Societal conditions of urban communities in the 1970s. Hip Hop culture emerged in the early 1970s as a response to dire social conditions that were prevalent within poor Black urban communities. During this time, urban neighborhoods (e.g., South Bronx, NY, Watts in Los Angeles, CA, East St. Louis, MO) experienced high levels of crime, police brutality, violence, drugs, chronic joblessness, loss of affordable housing, and community demolition (Rose, 2008). These conditions, coupled with compounding factors of the long-term effects of economic,

classist social and racist public policies, left cities in despair and disrepair (Chang, 2005). One author wrote that the area known as the South Bronx was named "America's Worst Slum" in the late 1970s (Price, 2006, p.4).

The literature suggests several factors that contributed to the demise of neighborhood stability in much of Black urban American cities, including, but not limited to, deindustrialization, urban renewal policies, and redlining. The effects of deindustrialization or the swift, extensive loss of unionized, well-paying manufacturing jobs out of urban areas, dramatically undercut the economic mobility of the working class citizens living in Black urban communities. According to Rose (2008), the loss of manufacturing jobs was accompanied by growth in low-wage service jobs offered only as part-time employment opportunities with little or no fringe benefits, which eventually led to economic crisis and instability within families.

Failed urban renewal programs that were implemented post World War II to clear and clean up slums proved to be detrimental to the migration to cities by millions of Black people who were ultimately forced to live in segregated urban housing developments. The practice of redlining, a Federal Housing Administration (FHA) directed policy, resulted in similar detrimental effects on Black urban communities. Redlining allowed for housing assistance for returning White soldiers but denied the same FHA loans and GI benefits to returning Black GIs (Smith, 2003; Rose, 1994). Authors Chang (2005) and Rose (2008) reported that White families were encouraged to leave the cities, while Black families were denied the resources to join them in the suburbs. The so-called "White flight" resulted in many White families fleeing the cities in pursuit of low interest mortgages and the "American dream", while Black and Latino families remained in urban areas.

Many single-family homes were demolished and replaced with subsidized high-rise low-income apartments, such as the opening of Co-op City, a massive 15,000 apartment stacked tower complex in Bronx, NY (Chang, 2005). The pattern of demolishing and not replacing thousands of units of existing affordable housing destroyed low-income, socially stable, Black communities in an effort to make room for private development sports arenas, hotels, trade centers, and high-income luxury buildings. This affected the entire infrastructure of many urban neighborhoods and communities throughout the United States. These communities suffered from lack of resources and limited access to quality instruction in schools, removal of music programs, and closings of community art centers. Youth and young adults living in urban communities during this time began to understand that traditional avenues for working-class job stability and opportunities for creative outlets were being closed to them.

Conditions of joblessness, poverty, crowdedness, racial discrimination, and unstable family structures opened the doors for increased illegal drug trafficking, gang and turf wars, incarceration, and criminalization of minorities living in poor urban communities. Hip Hop emerged in this context (Price, 2006; Rose, 2008; Smitherman, 1997). Often, lyrics in Hip Hop music reflected stories of violence, guns, drugs, crime, prison, and other daily realities of those who had little or no option but to reside in the poorest and most troubled neighborhoods and communities.   Similar to the cultural concept of soul music as it related to Black America's need for individual and group self-definition, several hip hop songs created during the 1980s and 1990s amplified the living conditions of many African Americans and provided a theme song for self-determination. For instance, in the song "Wake Up" (reprise) (Dixon, Murphy, & Dechalos, 1990, track 1), Grand Puba of the Hip Hop group, Brand Nubian, said:

Drugs in our community, that ain't right

Can't even get a job, that ain't right

Lying who is God, that ain't right

Knowledge of self to better ourself

Cause I know myself

That we can live much better than this.

Youth and young adults were beginning to utilize music and art to speak out about their societal conditions and voice their opinions, their frustrations, and their dreams (Chang, 2005).

Early Hip Hop culture. In the early 1970s, access to state-of-the-art discos, dance studios, art studios, recording studios, and music education programs was essentially non-existent in urban Black communities. As a result, the innovative youth created their own street influenced version of performing arts culture. Eventually, Hip Hop would become a common term used to describe the vibrant youth culture, movement, and lifestyle that was spreading like wildfire throughout inner city communities in the United States.

As reported by Smitherman (1997), three Hip Hop pioneers from New York are responsible for conceiving the terms "hip-hop" (i.e., music) and "Hip Hop" (i.e., culture): Busy Bee Starski, DJ Hollywood, and Afrika Bambaataa. Early Hip Hop culture began in 1973 when Clive Campbell (e.g., DJ Kool Herc) hosted a birthday party for his older sister in Bronx, New York. Originally from Kingston, Jamaica, Herc introduced the loudspeaker arrangement that he was accustomed to in his hometown (Assante Jr, 2008; Chang, 2005; Emdin, 2010; Hager, 2004). The quality and sound of the music playing through those speakers, coupled with his tenacity for playing records that people enjoyed, grew into a local phenomenon. As a result, early stages of the formation of the elements of Hip Hop culture can be traced back to the public jams and block parties hosted by DJ Kool Herc and other pioneers, such as Grandmaster Flash and

Afrika Bambaataa. When asked by local reporters what the name of the new phenomenon was, these pioneers told them it was called Hip Hop.

In addition to his innovative speaker arrangement, DJ Kool Herc is recognized for his unique innovation of using two turntables and a mixer and to keep the music going. Research suggests that the block parties captured the interest and regular attendance of local dancers, artists, poets, youth, and young adults (Schloss, 2009). DJ Kool Herc recognized that the audience seemed to prefer to dance to the instrumental breaks of funky, soul records the most, so he would often skip to the musical, instrumental parts of the record, known as the "break beats" (Cepeda, 2004; Schloss, 2004). By using two turntables and two copies of identical recordings, he was able to extend the length of the break beats to keep people dancing longer. Soon, dance groups formed, creating specific dance routines to the break beats of those records and attending parties in anticipation that the deejay would play "the breaks" so they could show off their dance skills (Schloss, 2004, 2009).These groups or crews would become recognized as "break boys" (b-boys) and "break girls"(b-girls).

As mentioned earlier, gang activity in urban communities, such as Bronx, New York, became a prevalent problem for residents in the early seventies. Afrika Bambaataa was the leader of one of the largest gangs in New York called the Black Spades. He would later mature and become inspired to create an organization called the Universal Zulu Nation. The Universal Zulu Nation was a "bold vision of what Black and Hispanic brothers and sisters could accomplish if they worked toward a common cause" (Light, 1999, p.18). As counter action to gang activity, Bambaataa heavily promoted huge block parties centered on the theme of "peace, love, unity, and having fun"(Bambaataa, 2006, paragraph 7). He called for a truce among all gangs, and his organization accepted people from all walks of life and various races, religion, talents, and

anyone else who shared the same interests and vibes (feelings). The Hip Hop movement of the Universal Zulu Nation aimed to replace gang fights with emcee and b-boy battles. The act of using graffiti to mark gang territory would be replaced with colorful, urban art masterpieces. Zulu Nation was a vision for a more peaceful and progressive community.

Subsequently, the Universal Zulu Nation organization exists today, promoting the "5th element" of Hip Hop, which is *knowledge*, and actively tries to educate the masses about the history and foundational elements of true Hip Hop culture. Afrika Bambaataa declared: "When we made Hip Hop, we made it hoping it would be about peace, love, unity and having fun so that people could get away from the negativity that was plaguing our streets (e.g., gang violence, drug abuse, self-hate, violence) among those of African and Latino descent" (Universal Zulu Nation, 2014). Afrika Bambaataa and the Universal Zulu Nation led the way for the first organized construction of Hip Hop as culture, developing and creating the foundational elements of Hip Hop (Light, 1999).

Foundational Elements of Hip Hop Culture

Author and researcher, Emmett G. Price III (2006) released a narrative of Hip-Hop history, historical photographs, statistical information about the Hip-Hop generation, and an analytical list of the most influential Hip-Hop songs and albums. His seminal work expanded the concept of Hip-Hop as culture. The four foundational elements of Hip Hop are deejaying, graffiti tagging, b-boying/b-girling, and emceeing (Assante Jr., 2008; Runell & Diaz, 2007; Siedel, 2011). Additional elements were added later to include: beatboxing, knowledge, street fashion, street language, and street entrepreneurialism (KRS ONE, 2009; Price, 2006). Each of these nine elements serves as a method of expression, relies on individual creativity with highly

personalized modes of performance, and works collectively to construct Hip Hop culture (Price, 2006).

       Deejaying. Dating back to the mid- 1920s, radio disc jockeys presented music over the radio airwaves to audiences of dedicated listeners. Disc jockeys began performing live at "sock hops" or local dances for high school and colleges (Price, 2006). In the early 1970s, DJ Kool Herc, (Clive Campbell, a.k.a. "The Father of Hip Hop") laid the foundation for Hip Hop culture with his unique deejay style of using two turntables, a massive speaker system, and an extensive collection of funk records to keep people dancing (Light, 1999). Kool Herc's inclusion of "emcees" or masters of ceremonies who chanted rhythmic poetic words over the music also set a backdrop for the development of "rap music". His mobile deejay system and stylistic presentation served as a model and guide strongly influencing other deejays to further develop the art and craft of Hip Hop deejaying. Grandmaster Flash (Joseph Saddler) perfected the art of "mixing two records" (e.g., the practice of marking records and using a headset to hear the second record being merged into the first before being played over the loudspeaker to make a smooth, seamless transition from one record to the other). Grandwizard Theodore (Theodore Livingston) is known for inventing the "scratch" or the act of putting pressure on the record to stop its rotation and gently rocking it back and forth, producing a scratching noise.

       During the early years, Hip Hop deejays mostly played their local area at small venues, private functions, public jams, and night clubs. The commercialization of rap music transitioned the focus of Hip Hop from live expression guided and controlled by the musical selections of the deejay to regulated sound recordings. As stated by Rose (2008),

The term commercial as it is used here is meant to illuminate the significant role of corporate and mainstream American cultural imperatives in shaping the direction and content of what is most visible and most highly promoted in hip hop for profit (p. 242).

Over the years, contemporary Deejaying advanced to a level of dexterous sophistication incorporating a full arsenal of refined techniques (Light, 1999). Eventually, the role of the Hip Hop deejay as the nucleus of a Hip Hop performance would switch to more of a behind-the-scenes role as a producer on album credits. Nevertheless, from mixing to scratching to producing, the deejay is known as the leading innovator of Hip Hop culture.

Graffiti. The term graffiti is used by archaeologists to describe the system of communication and expression depicted by writings, drawings, and scribbling on surfaces. By the 1900s, graffiti was the product of urban revolutionaries who formed subcultures in rebellion against parents, police and other social authorities (Price, 2006). Graffiti writers displayed their messages on walls, freeway overpasses, buildings, trains, telephone poles and other visible public areas. The style of graffiti associated with Hip Hop culture originated in the northeast and was primarily created by inner city youth who were not affiliated with any organization or gang but were eager to express themselves in a visible way (Chang, 2005; Jenkins, 1999). The use of the spray paint can allowed for large visible "pieces" (e.g., masterpieces) of urban art work in multiple colors (Jenkins, 1999). Groups or "crews" of young people would sketch a piece and accomplish it on a set target often during late hours of the night (Price, 2006). Trains were coveted targets because they traveled through various boroughs, allowing for larger visibility throughout the entire city. Attempts by transit authorities and police to apprehend graffiti writers only seemed to increase its popularity amongst the young participants (Chang, 2005; Jenkins, 1999; Price, 2006).

Increasing tension and run-ins with the law led some graffiti artists to pursue gallery opportunities exclusively. Still others continued to use the urban landscape as their canvas, viewing graffiti as an appropriate means for raising awareness of social, political, and economic disparities in the inner city. As a result, politicians and bureaucrats launched numerous anti-graffiti campaigns in the early 1970s, such as the complete repainting of 6,800 Mass Transit Authority cars in 1973 in New York City (Chang, 2005, p.122). Graffiti artists retaliated by painting cars from top to bottom in vivid, colorful wild-styles. Politicians resorted to more aggressive tactics, securing trains with barbed wire gates and wolves. By the mid-1980s, graffiti as a movement subsided, but its essence remained as a frequent theme on clothing, posters, album covers, flyers, stage backdrops, and other visible aspects of Hip Hop culture.

B-boying/B-girling. Local dancers inspired the deejays to expand their arsenal of sound to generate new kinesthetic creation. Dancing was the essence of early Hip Hop culture which, through the leadership of Afrika Bambaataa, brought opposing forces together in a safe location removed from the violence of gang-related warfare with a goal of having fun (Veran, 1999). Hip Hop deejays spent hours digging through crates of albums in record stores, searching for records with funky, up-tempo breakbeats that would motivate and energize local dancers to continue to move throughout the party. The self-trained dancers adapted old moves and created new ones infused with elements of acrobatics, martial arts (e.g., Capoeira and Kung Fu), funk, pop, lock, boogaloo, fancy footwork, and floor spins, creating the street dance movement known as breakdance (Schloss, 2009). The most prominent crew of break dance performers and innovators of the early Hip Hop dance form is the Rock Steady Crew, formed in 1977, whose popularity grew from television performances, film roles, featured spots in documentaries, and a recording deal (2009). Breakdancing as a movement and art form peeked by the mid-1980s, but it is still

practiced, studied, and performed by b-boys and b-girls in competitions and underground Hip Hop scenes throughout the world.

Emceeing. Early Hip Hop deejays (e.g., Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash) are also known for including an emcee to keep the crowd engaged and cover the silence between switching from one record to the other. In the culture of Hip Hop, the title of emcee is adapted from the abbreviated form of master of ceremonies (e.g., MC), an adapted term borrowed from elite high society. The emcee is a "Hip Hop poet who directs and moves the crowd by rhythmically rhyming in spoken word" (KRS ONE, 2009, p.116). According to KRS ONE,

> The emcee is a cultural spokesperson. Technically, the emcee is a creation of one's community whereas the rapper is a creation of corporate interests...Emcees (i.e., different from MCs) seek mastery of the spoken word [expressing] inherent understanding of rhythm, linguistics, physics, mathematics, memory, logical reasoning and high communication skills" (2009, p.116-117).

In early Hip Hop culture, the main responsibility of the emcee was to act as a host to keep the crowd amped for the real performer, the deejay. Over time, deejays, such as Grandmaster Flash, Grandmaster Caz, and Kool Herc, began outsourcing the role of emcee to hired vocalists called "rappers" (Cobb, 2007). The vernacular style of "toasting", derived from Caribbean dancehall tradition to motivate the crowd to keep moving, heralded early catchphrases such as "yes, yes yall", "to the hip hop, you don't stop" and "throw your hands in the air and wave 'em like you just don't care" (Pihel, 1996). It is important to note that several emcees and rappers use the initials "MC" as part of their name and or title (e.g., MC Lyte or MC Kool Moe Dee).

Some scholars emphasize that the role of the emcee predates Hip Hop and is reminiscent of the West African griot, a storyteller who tells the oral tradition of a village over music played

by drums (Naison, 2008; Lipsitz, 2001). Other scholars also trace the practices of call and response, signifying, toasting, and boasting as identified in rap songs to the Afro-diasporic traditions of Caribbean and West African heritage (Akom, 2009; Harrison, 1972; Lee, 1993). Numerous deejay crews and groups evolved, featuring one or more emcees. By the 1980s, the transition to recorded albums (e.g., the release of Rapper's Delight in 1979) and advances in technology, such as the invention of cassette and digital audiotape (Sanjek, 2001), made the emcee the dominant force in Hip Hop culture.

The nature and identity of the Hip Hop emcee has evolved and changed over the years. The inclusive urban flare of the 1970s was exchanged for a widely marketable sound, look, and feel during the 1980s. The late 1980s and early 1990s, graphic lyrics and representation of gang culture in the language, dress, and demeanor of violence-oriented, gangsta rap artists captured the interest and curiosity of suburban kids (Kitwana, 2005). Throughout the 1990s and early 21st century, rap artists were subdivided into various styles and categories, resulting in new sub-genres of Hip Hop music (e.g., conscious rap, battle rap, "krunk" rap, "giggy" rap, commercial rap, underground rap, political rap, gospel rap). According to legendary MC Kool Moe Dee, the best emcees have a high degree of originality and versatility, attain a high level of mastery over substance, flow, and battle skills, have a significant social impact, and possess outstanding live performance ability (Jenkins et al., 1999). The foundational elements of Hip Hop as culture (e.g., deejaying, b-boying, emceeing, and graffiti) served as a creative outlet for youth in urban communities in the early 1970s and eventually led to increased popularity with a broader worldwide audience (Price, 2006) due to the rise and popularity of rap music, an element of hip hop culture that can be bought and sold.

Hip Hop vs. Rap

As stated by Green (2007) in the *Hip Hop Education Guidebook*, "what is more culturally responsive than Hip Hop?" (p.20). Hip Hop music and culture has become one of the most influential forces in popular culture since its inception four decades ago. Currently, Hip Hop represents a multi-billion dollar industry that influences everything, including: fashion, automotive design, television programming, mass media marketing strategies, collegiate and professional sports, arts education, and performance (Taylor & Taylor, 2008)."More and more Black youth are turning to rap music, music videos, designer clothing, popular Black films, and television programs for values and identity" (Kitwana, 2003, p. 9), while simultaneously turning away from pursuing interests in academic subjects such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (U.S. Department of Education, 2010).

Some researchers have admittedly reported that there are certain aspects of Hip Hop music which promote violence, misogyny, homophobia, hyper-capitalist consumption, and other corrupt behaviors that simply cannot be ignored (Paul, 2010; Dyson, 2005; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002).The negative images and messages portrayed through some songs and music videos associated with the Hip Hop music genre have been largely criticized and have led to reluctance and resistance by many teachers and administrators who are against supporting its use in the classroom setting. Some educators complain about the complexities relating to students displaying symbols and characteristics of Hip Hop culture and believe it has negative effects on student attitudes and overall academic performance (Rowland, 2011).

Contrary to wide belief, "Hip Hop is not a violent music genre that degrades women and promotes illegal activity," rather, "these events are the products and effects of corporate marketing in an entertainment arena," (KRS ONE, 2009, p. 133). Hip Hop (upper-case) is a

culture that was developed as an artistic response to oppression, expressed through dance, music, and art. Actually, the foundational core objectives of Hip Hop culture are peace, love, unity, and having fun (Chang, 2005; KRS ONE, 2009; Price, 2006).

The terms "Hip Hop" and "rap music" have long been used interchangeably which leads to misconceptions and misinformed perceptions, when, in fact, they are not the same thing. Hip Hop is the name of the lifestyle, collective consciousness, culture and artistic elements founded by Africa Bambaataa in the 1970's (KRS ONE, 2009). Rap music is a material product bought and sold in the music entertainment industry, identified as rhythmic aggressive poetry (Westbrook, 2002). A rapper is a media-created term for someone who performs raps, which is an element of Hip Hop. Rappers do not have to be products of oppression, which is a condition of the Hip Hop culture (Rose, 2008). Hip-hop (hip hop - lowercase) as musical art form incorporates stories of inner city life and/or an underlying message spoken rhythmically over beats of music (2002).

Hip-hop music, like rap, can also be bought and sold and can be performed by people who have not been oppressed (Bartlett, 2012). The making of hip-hop music usually involves the use of a beat machine and digital sampling (e.g., selective use of available media, texts, and contexts for performative use) (Bartlett, 2012).

The Rise of the Popularity of Rap Music in Popular Youth Culture

The pioneers of the Hip Hop culture never imagined their lifestyle and choice of expression would grow into a mainstream commodity. Hip Hop, as a culture, is a way of life: it is who you are, not something that you do, and it is not something to be sold (KRS, 2009). In an interview for Vibe magazine, legendary Hip Hop artist Chuck D recalled questioning the idea of recording Hip Hop, "I did not think that it was conceivable that there would be such thing as a

hip-hop record" (Chang, 2005, p. 130). The comment by Chuck D is indicative of the broad and often overlapping concept of Hip Hop as an experience (e.g., Hip Hop culture) and hip-hop as product (e.g., rap music) (Schloss, 2009), and in 1979, Sugar Hill Records, an independent record label, released the first commercially produced rap song, which birthed hip-hop music as commodity of the Hip Hop Culture.

"Rapper's Delight" (Sugar Hill Gang, 1979, track 6), a song recorded by a group named the Sugar Hill Gang, used rhythm and music of the song that were widely familiar to the radio listeners, because it was an exact live recording of a popular disco song at the time called "Good Times" (Chic, 1979, track 1). The rather lengthy verses of Rapper's Delight contained catchy phrases and rap lyrics with braggadocio party rhymes. The popular Sugar Hill Gang release gained notoriety through radio airplay, and it became recognized as the characteristic sound of hip-hop music and Hip Hop culture of the seventies; however, there was controversy surrounding this recording, because the artists showcased on the record were not recognized as authentic participants in the early scenes and activities of the Hip Hop culture in New York. As a result, soon after its release, local innovators and pioneers of the Hip Hop culture began seeking out their own recording contracts with small record companies, such as Tommy Boy Records and Def Jam records, as a means to showcase the "real Hip Hop."

The commercialization of rap. In 1980, rap music continued to demonstrate commercial success. A single of Kurtis Blow, the first rap artist signed to a major record label, Mercury Records, called "The Breaks" (1980, track 2), reached certified gold status, selling over 500,000 copies (Light, 1999; Price, 2006). At this time, major record labels began recognizing rap music as a valid, profit generating music genre and began to sign numerous individual rap artists and rap groups, further widening the exposure of rap music nationwide. The emcee, commonly

referred to as a "rapper", was quickly elevated to prominence, while deejays, graffiti artists, and b-boys/b-girls became less visible and less appealing to mainstream media.

By the mid 1980's, several motion pictures that featured elements of Hip Hop culture, such as *Flashdance* (with producers D. Simpson, J. Bruckheimer, T. Jacobson, L. R. Obst, P. Guber, and J. Peters, 1983), *Wildstyle* (with producer and director C. Ahearn, 1983) , *Breakin'* (with producers A. DeBevoise and D. Zito and director J. Silberg, 1984), *Beat Street* (with producers H. Belafonte, D. V. Picker, and director S. Lathan, 1984), and *Krush Groove* (with producer/director M. Schultz and producers G. Jackson, and R. Simmons, 1985) were released. In addition to movies, rap music and other aspects of Hip Hop culture were featured on cable music television networks, such as BET (Black Entertainment Television) and MTV (Music Television). Additionally, Hip Hop oriented trade magazines were established, such as the *Source Magazine* and *Vibe Magazine* (Price, 2006). Thus, multi-media outlets were becoming the main culprits for the expansion of rap music to new audiences outside of urban communities, the exploitation of the element of Hip Hop culture known as "rap", and the gradual demise of the recognition of Hip Hop as culture.

The golden age of Hip Hop. The decade of the 1990s was known as the Golden Age of Hip Hop (Coleman, 2007; KRS ONE, 2009; Wang, 2003). During this time, numerous rappers who became rap music icons (e.g., Tupac, Biggie Smalls, Will Smith, Jermaine Dupri, Master P, Sean "P Diddy" Combs, and Jay Z) were considered the dominant force of Hip Hop in popular culture. Hip Hop artists shared rankings on the Top 100 Billboard charts along with pop music singers, R&B singers, country singers and rock bands. Further, during this time, special categories (e.g., best new rap artist, best new rap song, best hip-hop video) were created to recognize the popularity and success of rap artists at major awards ceremonies like *The*

Grammys. Several albums released during that period were recognized as classic recordings. Most notably were the accomplishments of Lauryn Hill who won two *Grammys'* for best new artist and album of the year in 1998 for the album *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (Ruffhouse Records & Columbia Records, 1998) (Jenkins, Wilson, Mao, Alvarez, & Rollins, 1999).

The commercial success of rap artists during the 1990s created opportunities for them to participate in various business ventures, both within the music industry (e.g., owning record labels, publishing and production companies) as well as outside the music industry (e.g., beverage industry, clothing industry, movies and television). More youth and young adults of different ethnic backgrounds reflected influences of Hip Hop culture in their daily lives (Kitwana, 2005). People began to wear Hip Hop inspired attire (e.g., baggy jeans, hooded sweatshirts, sneakers, fitted baseball caps, and athletic jerseys), buy products sponsored and created by rap artists, and listen to rap music. At that time, reports also indicated that White youth were the primary consumers of hip-hop and rap music (Farley, 1999) and represented "nearly 70 % of its consumption" (Rose, 1994, p. 4).

The information age. The first years of the 21st century, 2000-2013, marked a new era for Hip Hop, known as the Information Age (KRS ONE, 2009), in which Hip Hop culture became common knowledge, not only in the inner cities, but also within institutions around the world. By this time, Hip Hop had grown into a multilingual, multiethnic, intergenerational, and global collection of cultural expressions (wblinc.org, 2014). Also noteworthy during this time was the success of the rap group Outkast, who won two *Grammys* for best rap album and album of the year in 2004 for *Speakerboxx/The Love Below* (LaFace Records, album of the year, 2004) (Grem, 2006). Nations across the globe (e.g., French Hip Hop, Brazilian Hip Hop, Japanese Hip Hop, and Nigerian Hip Hop) used the art form and culture of Hip Hop to speak to their own

unique needs and objectives. Hip Hop culture and music in global communities often shared the passion and practices of American Hip Hop, but, in many instances, it did not necessarily share the same context or content (Price, 2006). Nevertheless, Hip Hop far surpassed the predictions that it was just a local urban fad situated in the ghettos of major U.S. cities and has since become the foci of numerous scholarly articles and research studies in the field of education as of 2013, when the music genre celebrated its 40-year anniversary. Hip Hop music and culture, in essence has become a critical fabric of popular music and culture worldwide.

Popular Culture

The exact meaning of the term popular culture has been debated for decades. Nevertheless, it is essential to attempt to define the term prior to proceeding with an academic writing on the subject. Mukerji and Schudson (1991) offer a clear and concise definition of popular culture: "popular culture refers to the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population" (p. 3). In essence, popular culture includes various forms of mass entertainment, as well as the other beliefs and practices that comprise our daily lived experiences. These everyday lived experiences include the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the people we spend time with, the gossip we share, and the roadways we travel (Harrington & Bielby, 2001).

Popular music is the music that the majority of people value most; however, that music can vary according to the social and economic class and experience of the composers, performers, and listeners. Popular music is not a patronizing or derogatory term; rather, it positively describes music that has successfully been communicated as music (Blacking, 1981). As described by Blacking (1981), "popular music is a category of value that can be applied to all styles of music; it is music that is liked or admired by people in general" (p.13). Blacking further

reiterated that music is a social fact; therefore, variations in musical styles and differences in the musical ability of composers and performers result in the division of labor in society, of the functional interrelationship of groups, and of the commitment of individuals to music-making as a social activity (Blacking, 1981).

Researchers (Harrington & Bielby; 2001; Hicks-Harper, 2000) have suggested that it is as equally valuable to embed more recent popular culture in the academy, such as reality television, videogames, and Hip Hop, as it is for scholars to recognize and validate scholarly guided attempts to comprehend the musical compositions of Phillip Glass or modern translations of Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. According to Harrington and Bielby (2001), there has been a steady increase of academic interest in popular culture as reflected in both expanded scholarship and gradual transformations of formal curricula over the past 50 years. Harrington and Bielby have also highlighted at least three prevalent schools of thought that guided the disciplinary and theoretical frameworks for study of popular culture today: the growing field of cultural studies, the production of culture perspective, and the popular culture studies tradition (2001). These three predominant perspectives share a belief in the legitimacy of popular culture research including studies related to youth and music.

Youth Education and Music

Music has long been used in the classroom. As early as 1920, researchers such as Jean Piaget have shown that young students learn best when playing in an emotionally risk-free environment (McIntire, 2007). Researcher Jean McIntire (2007) demonstrated ways in which the addition of rhythm, music, and movement to a learning experience enhanced the learning experience by sending messages to the brain through various pathways. Other researchers have demonstrated that off-task behavior is consistently lowered during the use of music sessions

(Register, Darrow, Standley, & Swedberg, 2007), and they build arguments on the premise that music enhances learning (Engstrom, 1995). Similarly, other researchers have reported that music invites learning and makes learning easier (Wakshlag, Reitz, & Zillman, 1982).

The literature supports distinct musical involvement and exercises that specifically teach critical literacy learning components (Register et al., (2007). As stated by Portowitz and Klein (2007):

> Music is an alternative field where children can succeed, even if their verbal and mathematical skills are comparatively weak. It has been suggested that the innate joy derived from music can motivate these children to participate in musical activities; their active participation can then be used to promote learning (p. 260).

While addressing the need to effectively teach children who are struggling academically and suffering socially, educators have discovered that the integration of the arts (e.g., drama, writing, dance, song, and music) throughout the curriculum encourages and motivates students who are typically withdrawn from classroom activities (Teaching, 2007). Furthermore, in response to the challenges of keeping the interests and attention of urban youth immersed in popular culture, a growing body of literature has focused on the potential of educational research on Hip Hop music and culture.

Popular Culture and Hip Hop Music

"Rap is the radio's biggest hit source" was the title of an article in USA Today stating that rap is now America's most popular form of music (Barnes, 2003). As noted by Barnes (2003), approximately 40 percent of the Top 100 songs on the Billboard list in 2003 list were rap songs. Since then, rap music (one of the expressive elements of Hip Hop culture) has surpassed pop music and country music as the leading most favorable music genre.

Taking into consideration author Michael Eric Dyson's claim that Hip-Hop culture is the most explosive, engaging, and controversial form of American popular culture to find global circulation and acclaim in the last quarter century; it is more than appropriate to deem this medium of popular culture "worthy of serious critique and investigation" (Dyson, 2004, p. 399). The study of urban youth and Hip Hop is about "identifying spaces where youths' popular culture practices contribute to shifts in the public sphere, in the creation of knowledge, and ultimately to the practice of democracy" (Dolby, 2003, p. 272). Jawanza Kunjufu wrote:

> Hip Hop is in many respects a classic youth oppositional subculture rejecting the norms and values of mainstream, measuring success in terms of peer approval and equating power with the ability to influence the subculture by constantly changing insider cues, taste and values. Its strengths are its energy and creativity (Kunjufu, 1997, p. 2).

Hip Hop has been immediately mimicked and consumed by millions of Whites and non-Blacks worldwide and is now the *flavor* (expression) of many youth in the international community (Reese, 2004).

Hip Hop is viewed as an entry point for nonconventional ways of teaching that could alternatively be considered a practice of democracy in education (Prier, 2009). To further define Hip Hop, Prier suggested that it was once a private cultural practice that now exists within the public sphere (2009). As a result, Hip Hop, is not only worthy of serious critique and investigation, but it is also integral to restructuring a more democratic public education system that includes diverse curriculum and pedagogies that advance the particulars of knowledge construction.

African-American and Latino Youth Identity & Hip Hop Culture

Identity. Identity, as described by Turner and Stets (2006), is the view of self that moves individuals to behave in certain ways in their interactions with others. Members of the Hip Hop community hold multiple identities that guide their role identities in social fields, such as school, that may not value their identities (Emdin, 2012). It has been argued that individuals possess multiple identities, including core and role identities (Turner, 2002). The difference between core and role identity is that role identities are typically expressions of self that vary across contexts, while core identities are relatively stagnant and represent a true self. In other words, in certain academic spaces where Hip Hop is devalued or misaligned to that of the teacher, other non-school identity characteristics are developed, such as disengagement or misbehavior. This navigation between core identity and role identity as it pertains to schools has been related to the seminal "acting White" research of Fordham and Ogbu (1986), where students make efforts to maintain their identity in the Black community (core identity), by adopting an anti-school identity that actively resists academic success (role identity).

Identity in Hip Hop culture. For members of the Hip Hop community, "Hip Hop stands as the chief mechanism through which populations that are not accepted into mainstream society, ...find solidarity" (Emdin, 2012, p. 5). Emdin explains that "hip-hoppas" have created their own lifestyle codes (e.g., ways of communicating, dressing, distinctive walking, headnods, handshakes etc.) that allow them to identify one another as collectively marginalized and outside of mainstream culture. Through these unwritten codes, those with a shared understanding of those seemingly hidden Hip Hop languages enact such communicative modes in social spaces where they encounter one another. As a result, teachers who are unfamiliar or misaligned with the codes of Hip Hop culture can find it extremely challenging to effectively engage students, especially when Hip Hop culture is present within the academic space.

Researcher and professor Thandi Hicks-Harper (2000) emphasized the need for health professionals, educators, and others who intend to effectively reach young students to increase their youth popular culture competency and "get a good read on what is happening within the culture" (p. 19). Hip Hop culture is an "all encompassing" culture for many of America's youth and is America's dominant youth popular culture today (2000). According to Hicks-Harper, Hip Hop represents a "strong and unified youth consciousness; it is a powerful and pervasive movement among youth worldwide" (p. 21). Youth of varying ethnic backgrounds, creeds, social classes, colors, and geographical locations have more likely than not identified themselves with some aspect of Hip Hop culture.

Latino and Black identity. In a series of in-depth interviews conducted with Mexican and Puerto Rican students from the Chicago area, Pulido (2009) discovered that the youth used Hip Hop discourse to comprehend their daily life, to better understand their position in the U.S. racial hierarchy, and to critique traditional schooling for failing to include their racialized identities within mandated school curricula. One youth interviewed as part of the study, eloquently described Hip Hop as "music fit for us minorities" (2009, p. 68) to further illustrate the collective expression that school and society are not there to serve young Latinos and affirming a sense of marginality and invisibility within U.S. mainstream life.

Further exploring the marginalization and alienation of members of the Hip Hop community is an article on Black male intellectual identity and Hip Hop culture (Jenkins, 2011), which suggests that African American male minds have been underserved in classrooms, channeled into prisons, ignored within American society, and devalued within popular culture. Jenkins suggests that Hip Hop has become a cultural territory where marginalized and oppressed individuals have created a space where they can share success (Jenkins, 2006). To deny or

devalue Hip Hop is to essentially deny or devalue the mere existence of members within the Hip Hop community.

By increasing efforts to maintain youth popular culture competence, especially with Hip Hop culture, educators could potentially gain effective communication of ethnic identity, self-esteem, attitudes, behavior, and empowerment of Black and Latino students engaged in Hip Hop (Travis & Bowman, 2012). Knowing about your students' cultural backgrounds as well as recognizing your own can foster greater respect, clearer understanding, and better connections in the classroom (Fitzpatrick, 2012). Students do not often leave their identity with Hip Hop at the door before they walk into the classroom; rather, their Hip Hop identity is strongly interwoven into the multiple strands that make them who they are.

Racial microaggressions. Understanding, accepting, and acknowledging one's ethnic identity can occur in various stages as outlined in the studies of racial identity models (Cross, 1991) and racial microaggressions of African-American and Hispanic students in urban schools (Allen, Scott, & Lewis, 2013). Several Black Americans, whether consciously or subconsciously, experience the psychology of Nigrescence, the process of becoming Black and into their blackness, (Trotman Scott, 2014). The Nigrescence model, developed by Cross (1991) and expanded by Vandiver (2001) divides the racial experiences of African Americans into three categories: pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization. During the pre-encounter phase, Black Americans resemble behaviors of assimilation and anti-Black sentiments driven by miseducation and self-hatred. At this level, they may see themselves as Americans who just happened to be Black or having preconceived notions that being White is superior and better than being Black (Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, O Cokely, & Cross, 2001). During the immersion-emersion phase, Black Americans exhibit more pro-Black behavior and are completely immersed

in all things affiliated with the Black race. Black people at this phase have had an encounter that enables them to openly recognize and realize a difference between the races. During the internalization phase, Black Americans may cycle through four stages of identity including Black Nationalist, Bi-culturalist, Multiculturalist Racial, and Multicultural Inclusive. As described by Vandiver et al., Black Nationalist strongly enforce ideas of Black empowerment, economic independence and awareness of Black history and culture. Bi-culturalist recognize themselves as both Black and American. Multicultural Racial means that a person not only identifies themselves as Black, but also appreciate interactions with people from other cultural and ethnic groups. While Multicultural Inclusive individuals identify themselves as Black Americans who value connections with other groups such as Whites, and the gay and lesbian community.

According to Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal, and Esquilin (2007), microaggressions are transmitted through subtle dismissive looks, gestures, tones, etc. which can materialize in the form of (a) micro-assaults, (b) micro-insults and (c) micro-invalidations. These various textures of microaggressions (e.g., explicit racial derogation, actions that are belittling to a person's racial identity, and actions that negate a person of color's realities) are eminent at the district and school-level of urban education. Districts and schools serve as conduits of racial microaggressions by transmitting socio-cultural messages that perpetuate students' feelings of inferiority, and when internalized, can greatly effect students' well-being (Cokley, 2006). On the contrary, researchers Allen, Scott, and Lewis (2013) theorize that "a comprehensive culturally affirming education has the ability to positively shape the psychological, social/emotional, and intellectual development of African American and Hispanic students in urban schools" (p.117). Thus discussions of ethnic identity, Cross's Nigrescence model, microaggression (Allen et al.)

and youth popular culture competency each serve as a strong foundation supporting the overarching conversation of using Hip Hop to reinvent cultural relevancy in the classroom.

Cultural membership in Hip Hop. Generally speaking, researchers describe Hip Hop as a cultural movement in which urban youth participate that develops their political sense of agency (Dimitriadis, 2001; Emdin, 2010; Kitwana, 2001; Prier, 2010; Rose, 2009). As cultural members in Hip Hop, youth take action and engage in daily practices that reveal concerns about the limits of democratic possibilities that are reactions to their lived realities. Prier (2010) posits that it is the cultural and pedagogical space of Hip Hop, beyond the school buildings, that expands our traditional notions of democratic practice in the public sphere of education. In light of the educational focus on global competition and limitations on learning to some "objective" standard, many youth have opted for alternative cultural sites such as Hip Hop. As a result, teacher researchers and scholars have researched the use of rap music and Hip Hop culture in educational settings. Academic research and critical conversations about Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) have largely informed the classroom application of Hip Hop pedagogy.

Conceptual Framework

As used in this study, culture refers to the system of social values, cognitive codes, behavioral standards, worldviews, and beliefs used to organize and define our own lives and the lives of others (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991). Whether the focus is instruction, curriculum, administration or performance assessment, culture is at the center of all we do in the name of education. Since culture determines our thoughts, beliefs and behavior, it also affects how we teach and learn (Gay, 2000). Spindler and Spindler (1994) articulated ways that both students and teachers bring their personal cultural background into the classroom which in turn influences their prejudice and preconceptions about teachers, students and school itself. "Together, students

and teachers [unconsciously] construct an environment of meanings enacted in individual and group behaviors, of conflict and accommodation, rejection and acceptance, alienation and withdrawal" (Spindler & Spindler, 1994, p. xii). Furthermore, Boykin (1994) explained the cultural fabric of the schooling process in America as primarily based upon European and middle-class origins and is so deeply ingrained in the structure, programming, and etiquette of schools that it is generally considered the "normal" and "right" thing to do. However, educators who continue to conduct classroom business the same way fail to realize that traditional approaches to teaching are typically restrictive, teacher centered and limit the possibilities for meaningful exchanges between teachers and students (Hilliard, 1989). Therefore, they must work hard to take the classroom experience to higher heights by increasing their youth popular culture competence (Youth Popular Culture Institute, 2014).

Cultural relevancy. The academic achievement gap between African-American, Latino American, Native American and some Asian American (ALANA) students and White students has driven researchers and scholars to closely review the cultural congruency of the curriculum as means for increasing achievement and school connectedness for those learners (Asante 1992; Banks 2001; Gay 2000; Giddings 2001; Hale 2001; Ladson-Billings 2000, 2006; Lynch 2006; Sampson & Garrison - Wade 2010; Thompson 2004; Webster 2002). The need for exercises and learning activities that mirror home life, community, and culturally responsive principles are often underrepresented in academic settings where the ethnicity of the students varies from the ethnicity of the teachers (Sampson-Wade, 2010). Researchers have described a cultural mismatch that seemingly occurs when minority students cannot identify with the curriculum and have recurring experiences in which their cultural conduct is not acknowledged (Irvine-Jordan, 1991).

Double dealing. Several researchers (Fordham, 1993, 1996; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Goto, 1997) posit that there are students with high academic potential who deliberately hide their intellectual abilities to avoid being alienated from their ethnic peers who are not as adept in school. Hiding one's intellectual abilities may make the schooling experience unique for racially minority students to the extent in which pursuing academic achievement conflicts with their personal styles of self-expression. To escape being ridiculed by their peers and accentuated by their teachers, the students strived to give the impression that they are just normal kids by intentionally hiding their knowledge base and ability. This concept of simultaneously being highly ethnically affiliated and academically achieving, also known as "double dealing" (Gay, 2000), can cause stress and exhaustion leading to academic failure and higher dropout rates. Cultural responsive theorists believe that students should be able to achieve academically, ethnically, culturally and socially without any of these abilities interfering with one another.

Culturally relevant teaching. Several researchers (Boykin, 1994; Diamond & Moore, 1995; Gay, 2000; Howard, 1998; Tatum, 2000) have shown significant improvement in school achievement and motivation in students when instructional practices are culturally responsive with the intellectual abilities, physical and verbal styles, and cultural principles and references of the students. This theory of teaching has been referenced by a myriad of monikers including *culturally relevant, sensitive, centered, congruent, reflective, mediated, contextualized, synchronized, and responsive*. Generally speaking, they each refer to teaching that:

> acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, builds bridges of meaningfulness between home and school experiences, uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are connected with different learning styles, teaches students to know and praise their own and each other's cultural heritages, and incorporates

multicultural information, materials, and resources in the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools (Gay, 2000, p.29).

Culturally relevant pedagogy. Made popular by Gloria Ladson-Billings in the early 1990s, culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) is a term that allows students to maintain cultural integrity while succeeding academically. Based on a three-year study of eight exemplary teachers of African-American students, Ladson-Billings proposed a culturally relevant theory of education in efforts to make pedagogy a central focus of inquiry regarding discussion about improving education, teacher education, and diversity. Ladson-Billings (1995), defined culturally relevant pedagogy as a critical "pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge skills and attitudes" (p.18). She also defined culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy of opposition with similarities to critical pedagogy but more focused on a commitment to collective empowerment (Ladson-Billings, 1992).

As described by Ladson-Billings, CRP follows three main criteria: "an ability to develop students academically, willingness to nurture and support cultural competence and the development of sociopolitical or critical consciousness" (1995a, p. 483). In addition to these three criteria, Ladson-Billings (1995a) also explained that the theoretical perspective for CRP was developed from three broad propositions which emerged from her study: (a) the conceptions of self and others by culturally relevant teachers, (b) the manner in which social relations are structured by culturally relevant teachers, and (c) the conceptions of knowledge held by culturally relevant teachers. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is comprised of a specific set of teaching characteristics.

Characteristics of Culturally Relevant Teaching

Authors Gay (2000), Ladson-Billings (1995a) and Lipman (1995) have outlined six characteristics of culturally relevant teaching: 1) validating and affirming, 2) comprehensive, 3) multi-dimensional, 4) liberating, 5) empowering, and 6) transformative. Recognizing the strengths of students' diverse heritages makes culturally relevant teaching validating and affirming by acknowledging that there is some legitimacy in the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups as legacies that affect students' attitudes towards learning and as content worthy of attention in the formal curriculum.

According to Gay (2000) culturally relevant teachers recognize the importance of academic achievement and strive to provide well-rounded instruction that maintains cultural identity and heritage. Ladson-Billings explained that by "using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (1992, p.382), culturally relevant teachers develop intellectual, social, emotional and political learning. Hollins (1996) added that the practice of designing education intentionally for students of color incorporates "culturally mediated cognition, culturally appropriate social situations for learning and culturally valued knowledge in curriculum content" (p.13); thereby supporting the notion that culturally responsive pedagogy is comprehensive.

Culturally relevant teaching is comprised of a wide span of disciplines while applying multicultural theories to the classroom environment, instructional practices and assessment. Multidimensional culturally responsive teaching encompasses the context of learning, the content of the curriculum, classroom environment, student-teacher relationships, teaching practices and performance evaluations (Gay, 2000). For example, Gay explains how teachers from various disciplines (e.g. language arts, music, art, science, history) may collaborate in teaching a single cultural concept, such as protest. It can be examined from the perspective of

their respective disciplines such as how protest against discrimination is expressed by different ethnic groups in poetry, song lyrics, painting and political activism. This method of teaching thereby addresses a wide range of cultural knowledge, realities, contributions and frames of reference.

Liberation and empowerment. Culturally relevant teaching liberates students (Assante, 1991; Au, 1993; Erickson, 1987; Gordon, 1993; Lipman, 1995) and empowers students (Gay, 2000) giving them opportunities to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Empowerment is described as academic competence, self-efficacy, and initiative. It is a learning environment in which students believe they can excel in performance tasks and have motivation to persevere. Shor (1992) characterizes empowering education as:

A critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change. It is a student-centered program for multicultural democracy in school and society. It approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other…the goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, to develop strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change… the learning process is negotiated, requiring leadership by the teacher, and mutual teacher-student authority. In addition…the empowering class does not teach students to seek self-centered gain while ignoring public welfare (pp. 15-16).

Multicultural education scholar, J. A. Banks (1991), asserts that transformative education empowers marginalized groups. In other words, it involves "helping students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become social critics who can make reflective decisions in effective personal, social, political, and economic action" (p. 131). Likewise, culturally

responsive teaching does not integrate conventional educational methods with respect to students of color (Gay, 2000). Rather, it means respecting the cultures and realities of various ethnic groups and then using them as resources for teaching and learning. For instance, some researchers have demonstrated how the verbal creativity and storytelling practices unique to African-Americans in informal social interactions (Assante, 1998; Harrison, 1972; Smitherman, 1977) can be acknowledged as gifts and contributions and explicitly leveraged to teach literacy skills to students (Delain, Pearson, & Anderson, 1985; Foster, 1989; Howard, 1998; Lee, 1993; Perry & Delpit, 1998; Williams, 1997). In similar fashion, researchers have illustrated how students who belong to other ethnic groups (e.g., Mexican American) prefer to study in small groups (Losey, 1997) and have demonstrated the pedagogical power of cooperative learning for students across ethnic, gender, and ability groupings (Stevens & Slavin, 1995).

Principles of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Besides the characteristics of culturally relevant teaching, there are six principles of culturally relevant pedagogy: identity development, equity and excellence, developmental appropriateness, teaching the whole child, student-teacher relationships and managing student emotions (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Schmidt, 2005). According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), teachers who are comfortable with themselves and teach within their identity and integrity are better able to make student connections and bring subjects alive. Strong student-teacher connection is critical when implementing CRP in the classroom. Concepts of disposition, integration of multicultural curricular content, equitable opportunity and high expectations contribute to the principle of equity and excellence. The incorporation of excellence and equity in CRP involves establishing a program that focusses on inclusion of students' cultural realities and setting high expectations for the academic achievement of the students (Brown-Jeffy &

Cooper, 2011, Schmidt, 2005). Within the context of CRP, the researchers also contend that the ways in which students learn, the instructional methods of the teachers, and cultural variation in psychological needs (e.g. motivation, morale, engagement, and collaboration) define developmental appropriateness. The goal is to assess student cognitive development progress and incorporate learning activities that are challenging and culturally relevant. The concept of teaching the whole child (Gay, 2000) includes the concepts of skill development, home-school collaboration, learning outcomes, and supportive learning communities within a cultural context. Within the context of CRP, and also in alignment with concepts of caring, relationship, interaction and classroom atmosphere is the theme of student-teacher relationship. Caring, in the form of teacher expectations and their attendant instructional behaviors, is pivotal in shaping the educational experiences and outcomes of ethnically diverse students (King, Hollins & Hayman, 1997; Smith, 1998). Lastly, educators should be prepared to manage students that may have strong emotional experiences to culturally diverse readings. Whereas positive emotions may enhance the learning experience, negative emotions may generate discourse and prevent some students from engaging (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). Thus, educators should be aware and utilize a sense of cultural sensitivity in exploring the principles of culturally relevant pedagogy when integrating into the curriculum through the use of such techniques as culturally relevant instruction.

Culturally Relevant Instruction

Culturally relevant lessons teach to the diverse needs of students through the use of cultural artifacts, language, ethnic referents, cognitive and linguistic contexts familiar to children of color (Gay 2000; Irvine-Jordan, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Although culturally relevant teaching has been used to describe effective means of teaching students of diverse backgrounds

including Native American, Hawaiian, and Latino American students, much of the literature (e.g., Allen & Boykin, 1992; Asante, 1998; Hanley & Noblit, 2009; Howard, 1998; Smitherman, 1977) describes techniques and strategies which most complement the learning styles of African-American students with respect to emotionality, variability, novelty, and active participation.

Incidentally, Hanley and Noblit (2009) affirm a significant relation among arts-based culturally responsive pedagogy, positive racial/ethnic identity, and academic success. To facilitate students' exploration of personal or collective issues in their homes or communities resulting in student construction of knowledge and demonstration of learning in culturally responsive ways, Hanley and Noblit indicate that several teachers implemented arts projects such as hip-hop, poetry, rap music, popular theatre, and digital storytelling. These arts projects were integrated into subject-area learning (e.g., social studies, history, and geography) and enabled students to improve academic skills in reading, writing, and content knowledge. As the students, who were typically categorized as at-risk for low academic achievement, or racially underrepresented enthusiastically completed the projects, they also increased competencies for academic success (Hanley & Noblit, 2009).

In like manner, one of the John F. Kennedy Center's in-school programs, Changing Education through the Arts (CETA), has been a laboratory for arts integration. In the CETA program, for example, students learn about the solar system through dance, about math through music, or about plot structure and use of language through drama. Four significant findings yielded from a longitudinal study examining the impact of the CETA program on 4th and 5th grade students in 32 schools in the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area (Kennedy Center, 2014). In comparison to students who did not receive arts-integrated instruction, CETA students showed an increase in creativity, had higher levels of engagement in learning, had more positive attitudes

about the arts, and became more flexible in their thinking and problem solving abilities over the course of the school year (Kennedy Center, 2014).

Hip Hop, rap music, and street performance are not always considered worthy for formal learning environments (Lai, 2012). However, as Lai describes, when students were encouraged to learn [Hip Hop] or incorporate [it] into learning, they found it liberating that their ethnicity, community, or local arts and cultures were validated (2012). This positive sense of racial/ethnic affiliation, as described by the six characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and supported through practices of culturally relevant instruction, is thought to contribute to academic success of these targeted student populations (Bennett, 2007; Gay, 2010). Notwithstanding, a discussion on culturally relevant pedagogy is seemingly incomplete without also addressing some key related theoretical constructs.

Theoretical Underpinnings

In addition to culturally relevant pedagogy in education, the organic roots of social justice and political activism found in authentic Hip Hop culture also lends itself to a connection with multiple theoretical underpinnings. The following sections will discuss theories of critical pedagogy, critical race theory, multicultural education and social learning theory.

Critical pedagogy. The critical theory of the Frankfurt School and the humanist pedagogy of Paulo Freire serve as the "main theoretical antecedence of critical pedagogy (Arthur, 2013). As equally important to development of critical pedagogy is the work of Greene (1975) on the role of imagination to critical learning. Mainly, critical pedagogy is largely associated with North American writers such as Apple (1982), Giroux (1983), and McLaren (2000). Examining her own classroom experience through African-American and feminist perspectives, author bell hooks is another strong influential contributor. In addition, Shor (1992)

drew from his classroom experiences exploring ideas of sharing power and authority with students.

One of the most acclaimed theorists associated with critical pedagogy is philosopher John Dewey. Dewey (1938) was an important influence on thinking about purposes of education in a democratic society. Dewey suggested reconsideration of traditional approaches to schooling, giving fuller attention to the social development of the learner and the quality of his or her total experience. Dewey (1938) suggested that education should fit itself to the child not the child to the school. In the progressive school of thought, passive, abstract, factual learning is replaced to some extent by activities, projects, and units of work (Dewey, 1938). The teacher's role is that of a facilitator not a dictator. Education is provided in a safe, free atmosphere giving students a sense of self-direction, personal pride and ambition. The progressive education movement brought all of these concepts together. The main tenets of progressive education included such ideas as: the child's physical well-being, opportunity for full development, social development and discipline, beauty of environment, interest as the motive of all work, the curriculum based on nature and needs of youth, teacher as a guide, scientific study of pupil development, cooperation between school and home, and the school as a contributor to educational progress. In many ways, Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE) strongly mirrors the progressive education school of thought and critical pedagogy.

Embedded within Hip Hop culture is a critical discourse linked to reflection and critique of systems of oppression voiced through the language, dance, art, poetry, and music of urban youth. Hip Hop culture was laid on a foundation of rebellion and opposition to cultural and economic oppression (Chang, 2005; George, 1998; Price, 2006). Furthermore, Hip Hop culture has roots in the identity of the griot in West African culture (Keyes, 2002), Caribbean tradition

(George, 1998; Rose, 1994; Kitwana, 2002) and the dilapidated, poor living conditions of inner city neighborhoods throughout the United States, (e.g., Bronx, New York)during the early 1970s. Around the same time as the birth of Hip Hop culture, the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970) was exploring how students were disempowered by schools and were not given the opportunity to actively construct their own realities. The lack of critical consciousness in the United States has afforded a pattern of systematic control and oppression in schools that diminish student rights to be viewed as subjects (Williams, 2008).

In the field of education, Freire is considered one of the fathers of critical social theory: "multidisciplinary knowledge bases with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipator function of knowledge" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 11). In his widely cited book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire applied critical social theory to work towards the spiritual growth of students in the face of oppressive and debilitating social, political, and economic regimes (Williams, 2004). Freire (2002) envisioned that critical pedagogy would be in resistance to the concept of "banking education," emphasizing that truly liberating education "is not another deposit to be made in men," rather authentically liberating education is the formation of mutually constructed knowledge between the teacher and student. Further illustrated by Runnel-Hall (2011), banking describes a system where students are empty storage units in which teachers deposit selected and constructed knowledge through narration. Under banking methodology, students are not encouraged to think critically about the information they receive, are not invited to develop new knowledge, or encouraged to illicit social change in their communities. Freire writes that "education is suffering from narration sickness" (2002, p.71) and believes that knowledge should not simply be regurgitated in the form of testing withdrawals from the bank of information taught to students.

By allowing for a social justice analysis of their respective communities, a critical pedagogy is able to transform how people make sense of their place in the world (Steinburg, 2007; Shor, 1992). The claim by Freire that lack of creativity in education is by design and is replicated in order to maintain the status quo possibly explains the criticism and fear of many educators to implement Hip Hop as critical pedagogy (Dyson, 2007; Runnel-Hall, 2011). Freire writes:

> 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 nor 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 is not content with the partial view of reality but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another or one problem to another (Freire, 2002, p. 74).

Nevertheless, using the problem-posing method, several educators and researchers (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Runell-Hall, 2011; Stovall, 2006; Turner, 2013) have taken heed to Freire's request to create new theory, knowledge and innovative practice by developing their own takes on Hip Hop as critical pedagogy. The problem-posing method, according to Freire, allows teachers to move their students toward *consientizacao,* a critical consciousness that is not only a goal, but also a method that serves to humanize both the oppressed and the oppressor by providing both with a more democratic and liberating method of exchanging knowledge. Similarly, HHBE instructional techniques rooted in developing critical consciousness in students have been utilized by teachers and professors in secondary and collegiate classrooms throughout the United

States (Dimitriadis, 2004; Emdin, 2010; Forman & Neal, 2012; Hill, 2009; Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

Critical theorists (Kincheloe, 2008; Paul, 2000; Nieto, 1999) have contributed to the expansion and transformation of Freirian critical pedagogy by extending the original focus on socio-economic class/workers' rights to include culture, race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, language, age, religion and ability. As noted by Runell-Hall (2011), educational theorists such as Giroux (1983), McLaren (2000), Shor (1992) and Kincheloe (2008), have criticized the prison industrial complex, the military, globalization, popular culture and identity politics around the examination of multiple social identities in efforts to broaden the foundations of Freirian ideology. While maintaining emphasis on critique through interruption of oppressive power dynamics and calling for social change, contemporary critical educators have espoused more postmodern, anti-essentialist conceptions of identity, language and power. Although critical pedagogy is difficult to teach (Wink, 2005), similar to Hip Hop pedagogy, critical pedagogy is a way of life in which individuals are able to label, to criticize, and to act. If this pedagogy "speaks to an educator because of who they are or because of who their students are, then it is an organic connection likely to bring a great deal of success to their educational practice" (Runell-Hall, 2011, p.100). In efforts to achieve cultural congruence in the classroom, educators must also consider and reflect on the racial identities of the students in their classroom.

Critical race theory. Race must be considered in how culturally relevant pedagogy is enacted (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper, "the delivery of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is partially the acknowledgement of who children are, how they perceive themselves, and how the world receives them" (2011, p. 70). Therefore, the authors attest that the complexities of the social construction of race in America should be

explored. One of the main reasons for the development of CRP was in response to school settings where student alienation and hostility characterized school experience (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 112).

According to Delgado & Stefancic, (1995) emphasis on the social construction of race and the interconnections between race, racism, and power encompasses Critical Race Theory (CRT). Critical Race Theory highlights three main points that are specifically related to education: "(1) race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States; (2) U.S. Society is based upon property rights; and (3) the intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool, through which we can examine social and school inequality" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995b, p. 48). CRT can be used to inquire about social justice, inequities in education, social consciousness, and power in educational settings.

According to Sampson and Garrison-Wade (2010), theorists on critical race have broadened the precepts of CRT by contending that it addresses the origin of racism as a deeply rooted component of American life, inherent through old, intellectual consciousness and is commonplace in educational systems (Bell, 1988; Delgado, 2002; Harris 1983; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995b). The researchers explain that "teachers must understand their own biases and experiences they bring to the educational arena to monitor unconscious and conscious practices that maintain educational inequities" (Sampson & Garrison-Wade, 2010, p. 283). Critical Race Theory positions issues of race into the power and privilege components of educational systems and deepens the discussions about how topics of oppression and race filter through educational settings. Likewise, recent explorations in teaching of, about, and with Hip Hop (Hill, 2009) [commonly referred to as Hip Hop Pedagogy] have emerged in the literature with resounding reference to critical pedagogy and critical race theory.

Multicultural education. A discussion about Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Hip Hop Based Education with its ties to Critical Pedagogy and Critical Race Theory is incomplete without a mention of Multicultural Education. Giroux wrote, 'Knowledge has to be meaningful to students before it can be critical' (1988, p.14). Mahiri (1998) stated that teaching Hip Hop establishes non-oppressive "human interactions that increase the prospects of individuals finding their personal gold… make viable connections between streets and schools to create more shareable cultural worlds for learning" (p. 159). It has been duly noted that including elements of pop culture into the curriculum can have immense benefits for marginalized students who are more likely to remain interested in school when their cultural realities are affirmed and appreciated (Nieto, 1999).

The benefit of using something that is culturally responsive to motivate and stimulate students is one of the key aspects regarding the use of Hip Hop because it is relevant to their everyday lives (Hendershott, 2004). James Banks (1993) argues that the use of personal experiences within the realm of a multicultural approach to learning can help students to better understand the process of knowledge production and its sociopolitical implications. As discussed by Ford (2014), Multicultural Education is a progressive approach towards a transformative education initiative that challenges discriminatory curriculum, practices, and policies in education. Multicultural education is rooted in ideals of social justice and equity, critical pedagogy, and a commitment to affording educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as socially and culturally aware responsive citizens.

Multicultural Education is both a concept and a process. As outlined and explained in the dictionary of multicultural education (2011):

It is a concept built upon the philosophical ideals of freedom, justice, equality, equity, and human dignity contained in the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence. It recognizes that …equal access does not necessarily guarantee fairness. Multicultural Education is a process that takes place in schools and other educational institutions and informs all subject areas and other aspects of the curriculum. It prepares all students to work actively toward structural equality in the organizations and institutions of the United States. By providing knowledge about the history, culture, and contributions of the diverse groups that have shaped the history, politics, and culture of the United States Multicultural Education helps students develop positive self-concepts and discover who they are particularly in terms of their multicultural group memberships (p.171).

Since Multicultural Education is conceptually defined in several different ways and educational practices are implemented based upon several different frameworks, educators have developed specific approaches to Multicultural Education. For example, Dr. James Banks, Multicultural Education scholar, developed the five dimensions of Multicultural Education: *content integration, knowledge construction, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction* and *an empowering school culture and social structure*. Banks (1993) explained that it's not the race of the teacher but a set of cultural characteristics that makes them effective with children of color. In an interview, Banks cited Gloria Ladson Billings who found that it was teachers who knew the culture of the kids, who understood daily lives of the students, who related to students, who understood verbal and nonverbal cues that demonstrated effectiveness in reaching marginalized students. Likewise, scholars have found that Hip Hop Based Education offers genuine insight into the daily lived experiences of classroom students in a myriad of ways (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Stovall & Morales, 2010).

The phrase "keeping it real" served as a mantra for perceptions of realness within Hip Hop throughout the 1990s (McLeod, 2012). Hip Hop was still very tethered to Black cultural production and thought to circulate solely within spaces where such production was valued. As mentioned previously, the literature suggests that hip-hop music reflects African American youth oriented culture originating from Bronx, NY in the early seventies (Neal, 1999). Nearly 20 years after the release of first hip-hop record, Hip Hop music and culture were firmly entrenched within mainstream U.S. culture. Hip Hop artists struggle to maintain a pure identity which they preserve by invoking the concept of authenticity.

The question of authenticity or "keeping it real" is often raised in the Hip Hop community and Hip Hop scholars theorize about whether the current commodification and increasingly suburban manifestations and outgrowths of the music is in fact "Hip Hop" (Rowland, 2011). Similarly, students in urban schools question the authenticity of the curricular content presented for them to learn and the intention of the teacher– they want to know how the content applies to their lives and if the teacher genuinely cares about them.

As it was so eloquently explained,

> It [critical multicultural education] is not neat; it does not have all the answers 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 (Runell-Hall, 2011, p.108).

An important goal of multicultural education is to improve race relations and to help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to participate in cross cultural interactions

and in personal social and civic action that will help make our nation more democratic and just (Gay, 2000). Along with its ties to social justice, critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and culturally relevant teaching; multicultural education is an essential component of the multiple theoretical underpinnings shaping the framework of this study. Subsequently, many actions and behaviors of both students and teachers are learned traits which requires a discussion of social learning theory.

Social learning theory. Views of racism in schools being associated with negative teacher attitudes ultimately leading to challenges with student behavior can be largely associated with the stereotypical beliefs that teachers and administrators have towards Hip Hop culture (Resnicow, Soler, Braithwaite, Selassie, & Smith, 1999). As described by social cognitive theorists, experiences throughout the course of one's life can lead to the development of various beliefs about different items, subjects, and ideas which may have been influenced by direct observation (Bandura, 1977). Some beliefs grow and persist over time while others are abandoned and other beliefs are formed. According to Bandura (1986), social learning theory offers a succinct explanation for the beliefs of humans by emphasizing the cognitive ability to actively develop and construct reality.

Developed and proposed by theorist Albert Bandura, social learning theory is an acquired learning process in which the individual picks up new behavior through observation and imitation. Social learning theory is primarily concerned with how the behavior of others influences one's capacity to acquire and master new beliefs (Ormond, 1999). In most cases, the observed behaviors will result in either a negative or positive attitude. Both negative and positive behaviors are situated within the context of Hip Hop culture. Researchers stated that nearly 57% of the content of music videos consists of socially inappropriate behavior including sexual

immorality and violence (Rich & Wood, 1998). Bandura and Walters indicated that people have the instinctive ability to develop beliefs based on the behaviors of others. Henry (1987) suggested that age, social status, and gender influence beliefs. Therefore, in order for beliefs to translate into attitudes each of those factors must be taken into consideration. The majority of socially learned beliefs are strongly informed by real life experiences (Bandura, 1971). Thus, Bandura's social learning theory was ideal and served as a practical canvas for examining the influence of Hip Hop music and culture on the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of Hip Hop teaching artists and classroom teachers of urban elementary students in the San Francisco Bay area. The Bay Area, the site selection for this research study, has a rich history of social tension, marginalized students, violence, and poor societal conditions which may strongly influence the perceptions of the participants.

The theory of social learning focuses on observation, the acquisition of new forms of information, and how beliefs are established. Bandura (1971) contested that observational learning is responsible for a vast majority of newly acquired beliefs. He also argued that specific beliefs influence whether or not new behavior will be accepted or rejected. Social learning theory shapes the belief system by furnishing direct attitudes for certain actions or behaviors. Symbolic, self-regulating, and vicarious processes shape and mold conditions in which observation and imitation take place thus setting the foundation for social learning to occur (Bandura, 1977). Observations of students imitating the lifestyle and modeling portrayals of Hip Hop in mass media may have direct influence on the perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of teachers and educators in either positive or negative ways depending upon their real life experiences. Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of culturally relevant pedagogy (critical pedagogy,

critical race theory, multicultural education and social learning theory) lays the foundation for the review of literature regarding the use of Hip Hop in education.

Hip Hop and Education

According to Petchauer (2009), Hip-Hop music and culture has become relevant to the field of education and educational research in three distinct ways. He emphasized that (a) teachers are centering rap music texts in urban high school curricula, (b) Hip Hop exists as more than a musical genre, and (c) higher education institutions throughout North America are engaging Hip Hop in an academically stringent demeanor through courses, research, conferences, and symposia (Petchauer, 2009). Williams (2008) has identified three additional ways that Hip Hop has crept into classrooms: (a) Hip Hop is in afterschool programs where teachers are taking an entrepreneurial approach with students as they are constructing their own music and expressions (Anderson, 2004), (b) Hip Hop has been used to scaffold subject matter in formalized classroom settings at both elementary and secondary levels (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Sitomer, 2004), and (c) Hip Hop is utilized in classrooms to introduce critical analysis of systemic forms of oppression that corrupt society.

Teacher perceptions of Hip Hop culture. A search through education databases (e.g., ProQuest education journals, EBSCO-Host, Academic Search Complete) revealed that there is no existing study on the perceptions of elementary school teachers and teaching artists toward the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity. There is one study which examined the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of suburban high school faculty towards representation of Hip-Hop culture and its impact on the educational environment (Rowland, 2011). In that study, Rowland (2011) found that negative public stereotypes associated with Hip

Hop culture tended to influence teacher perceptions of deviance related to cultural nuances such as clothing, music, behavior and language.

Hip Hop based education. A review of Hip Hop educational research unveiled that Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE) is commonly referred to as the use of Hip Hop (culture), rap songs, and rap lyrics as curricular and pedagogical resources (Hill, 2009; Petchauer, 2009). The bulk of the literature pertaining to Hip Hop Based Education scholarship has been primarily from teacher-researcher accounts (Irby & Hall, 2013). Furthermore, researchers Irby and Hall (2013) have argued for a more balanced body of knowledge in the field in an effort to turn the focus away from teacher-researcher perspectives and toward practicing K-12 (e.g., non-researching) teachers. Researcher Levin (1998) indicated that the lack of opportunities for students to express Hip Hop culture in places such as general education classrooms, potentially limit students' abilities to communicate or make decisions about the subject-matter at hand, and is consequently undemocratic. Emdin (2012) supported Hip Hop music and culture as a distinct, dominant culture of marginalized urban youth and strongly emphasized that this culture of urban student reality should be considered in teaching and learning. In a similar fashion, Elmesky (2005) explained that students' cultural resources are an important part of how they engage freely in school. In essence, the research advocated for the music and culture of Hip Hop and urban education to be closely connected in order to enhance the relevance of the curriculum. All in all, researchers have emphasized that if the curriculum does not reflect cultural relevance, then alienated students will embrace a Hip Hop culture because the culture readily accepts them (Emdin, 2010; Elmesky, 2005; Paul, 2011; Prier & Beachum, 2008).

Hip Hop pedagogy. Educators and scholars have researched and experimented with the use of Hip Hop music and culture to improve empowerment of students, skills of literary

analysis, critical literacy and cultural responsiveness moving toward a Hip Hop Pedagogy (Petchauer, 2009). Author and educator Marc Lamont Hill argued that Hip Hop Pedagogy is not a set of prescribed strategies or techniques for reaching students through Hip Hop culture. Rather the growth of Hip Hop scholarship over recent years has shown how the nine elements of Hip Hop culture (e.g. rap, deejaying, b-boying, graffiti art, beatboxing, knowledge, street fashion, street language, street entrepreneurialism, KRS ONE, 2009) are used within classrooms to improve student motivation and engagement, teach critical media literacy, foster critical consciousness, and transmit disciplinary knowledge (Hill, 2009).

Researchers and practitioners have also shown numerous ways that educational contexts are enhanced when forms of popular culture such as Hip Hop are introduced within formal school contexts and is supported through a variety of disciplines and theories (Akom, 2009, Clemons, 2008; Emdin, 2010; Hall, 2007; Hill, 2009; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Horton, 2013; Irby, 2006; Ginwright, 2004; Pickney, 2007; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Petchauer, 2009, 2012; Stovall, 2006; Turner, Hayes, & Way, 2013; Wakefield, 2006). Hip Hop pedagogy challenges scholars to discover deeper and broader analyses of ways that Hip Hop Based Education responds to and shapes the lived experiences of students within Hip Hop culture. It is useful for educators who are more concerned with transforming schooling processes in ways that yield more enriching, democratic, and productive outcomes that are fundamentally more responsive to student ingenuity, interests, and needs (Hill, 2009; Seidel, 2009). It is an expanded vision of teaching and learning that re-imagines and reconsiders the relationship between students, teachers, texts, schools, and the world in a broader social context.

During a videotaping of a TEDx (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) event in New York City in 2012, Dr. Christopher Emdin stated that "Hip Hop pedagogy is education focused

on the culture of a marginalized population who've been told for a long time that they don't have the tools necessary to be successful in classrooms and they become successful in spite of that" (TEDxNYED, 2012). Some people perceive Hip Hop pedagogy to be the act of students listening to and memorizing subject/content area based rap lyrics, however, such practices would more appropriately be termed rap pedagogy. Emdin (2012), contests that the act of rapping is a small part of the complexity of the Hip Hop culture. According to Emdin, a true Hip Hop pedagogy establishes an educational setting in which students can create (rap), write and express thoughts freely (graffiti), engage in movement (b-boy/b-girl), and manipulate technology (deejay).

In an effort to define, clarify, and articulate Hip Hop pedagogy, Hill (2009) explained three distinct interrelated forms that he has termed *pedagogies of Hip Hop, pedagogies about Hip Hop and pedagogies with Hip Hop*. According to Hill, "*pedagogies of Hip Hop* reflect various ways that Hip Hop culture authorizes particular values, truth claims, and subject positions while implicitly or explicitly contesting others" (2009, p. 120). *Pedagogies of Hip Hop* extends beyond traditional notions of text analysis and reaches into practices of a Hip Hop world view demonstrating how Hip Hop culture is a rich powerful site of authentic cultural production. The use of educational space to analyze, critique and reproduce Hip Hop texts is what Hill referred to as *pedagogies about Hip Hop*. Hill (2009) explained that engaging in *pedagogies about Hip Hop* allows students and teachers to operate as cultural critics who deploy critical literacy in order to identify and respond to structures of power and meaning located within Hip Hop text. The third distinction, *pedagogies with Hip Hop*, is concerned with developing processes for using Hip Hop to enhance student motivation, transmit subject area knowledge and develop habits of mind appropriate for learning (p.123). Again the author did not emphasize a rigid set of strategies or curricula to be replicated but rather engaging pedagogies with Hip Hop

in which educators identify how Hip Hop texts can be used to navigate traditional academic subject matter.

Identification and articulation of Hip Hop pedagogy was further explored by researcher and educator Runell-Hall (2011) who categorized three distinct educational applications for Hip Hop Based Education: (a) hip hop as its own subject area (e.g., learning about its history, origins, trends);(b) hip hop as public pedagogy (e.g., learning about issues, concepts situated within lyrical content/ messages portrayed by hip hop artists;(c) hip hop used to teach other subjects (e.g., rap songs created to teach multiplication tables). HHBE searches for deeper understanding of aesthetic, epistemological forms of Hip Hop and connections to student lives (Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

Learning styles, multiple intelligences, and cultural congruency. Emerging theories on learning styles have suggested that both music and music education offer alternative methods to effectively motivate and teach all students (Hanson & Silver, 1991). By reshaping the instructional strategies and techniques used by teachers to address the multiple intelligences present amongst diverse student populations, educators can develop an approach to instruction that reaches every learner and contributes to the development of students who are more emotionally and intellectually healthy.

Researchers (Gann, 2010; Runnel-Hall, 2011) have described how the understanding of Hip Hop culture is relevant in educational contexts by aligning the foundational cultural elements of Hip Hop to the idea of Kolb's (1984) multiple learning styles and awareness of Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences (2011). In a similar fashion, Geneva Gay (2000) discussed instructional practices and research studies that highlighted components of different learning styles (Allen, 1987; Boykin & Allen, 1988; Allen & Boykin, 1991, 1992; B. Allen &

Butler, 1996). For example, the incorporation of rhythmic music and movement in learning activities as a technique for improving academic performance of African-Americans was studied to explore the effects of using music and movement in learning (Gay, 2000). In two experimental studies, Allen and Boykin examined the effect of music and movement on a learning task performed by low-income White and Black students in first and second grade. In one experimental condition, students were tested on learning task skills while accompanied by music, physical actions, and hand clapping. In the other experimental group, there was no music was present. The results indicated that the Black students performed the task much better to the accompaniment of music and movement while the White students performed much better without. The researchers concluded that African-American students can "attain levels of academic achievement equal to their more educationally successful peers if certain factors derived from their cultural experiences are incorporated into task contexts" (Allen & Boykin, 1992, p. 325).

Theory, research, and practice on teaching through sensory modalities (Barbe & Swassing, 1979), multiple intelligences (Armstrong, 1994; L. Campbell, Campbell, & Dickinson, 1996; H. Gardner, 1983; Lazear, 1991, 1994) and multiple learning styles (Kolb, 1984) can assist in recognizing learning styles and designing compatible instructional strategies for students immersed in Hip Hop culture. According to Gay (2000), parallelisms exist between the above models and ethnic learning styles even though they were not designed with people of color in mind. For example, a study by Armstrong (1984) clearly demonstrated connections between Gardner's seven intelligences (e.g., musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, kinesthetic, visual, verbal, and logical) and Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive objectives (e.g., knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation). By organizing ethnic individuals

and their contributions by type of intelligence, Armstrong illustrated how multicultural content can be taught. Overall, characterizations of learning styles are multidimensional, habituated processes that are the central tendencies of how students from different groups engage with learning encounters (Gay, 2000).

Kolb's (1984) multiple learning style theory is based upon the premise that people learn in different ways. It suggested that if the preferred learning style has been identified, then optimal learning can occur. All things considered, Kolb argued that while some students learn by observing, others learn by thinking critically about new information, others learn by feeling a sense of connection to the material, and likewise others learn by participating in activities. In short, student success is closely related to teachers' ability to match their teaching style with individual students' preferred learning style.

Gardner's multiple intelligences (1993) identified eight distinct ways that students learn. Furthermore, he declared that most schools would be improved if disciplines were presented in various ways and learning was assessed through a variety of methods. Runell-Hall (2011) described the multiple intelligences 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) (pp. 28-29).

Therefore, teachers and teaching artists with a working knowledge of multiple intelligences and learning styles may have differing perceptions from traditional classroom teachers of the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive identity and self-awareness in young students.

Hip Hop based curricula. Researchers have continually explored the potential of Hip-Hop based curricula. Kitwana (2002) argued in defense of Hip Hop music and culture and advocated the excitement about the possibilities of Hip Hop used as a tool to reach elementary, middle, and high school students. As stated by Green (2007) in the *Hip Hop Education Guidebook*, "what is more culturally responsive than Hip-Hop?" (p. 20). Hip Hop based companies have created catalogs of culturally relevant teaching materials based on the rap lyrics of popular recording artists and aligned them with national reading standards.

As mentioned previously, to most, Hip Hop Based Education means the study, analysis, and creation of song lyrics, texts, and other aspects of Hip Hop culture. The *Hip Hop Education Guidebook* offers a compilation of interdisciplinary standards-referenced Hip Hop education lesson plans submitted by educators throughout the United States (Runell-Hall, 2009). While some Hip Hop instructional approaches refer to song lyrics by established rap artists, other approaches include organically developed rap, dance, and multimedia produced to communicate concepts. Therefore, educational Hip Hop lends itself to further exploration of the use of Hip Hop text and culture in a classroom setting.

There is also a growing industry of Hip Hop based companies and nonprofits that are currently creating CDs and workbooks marketed and measured as tools for success within established education systems (Siedel, 2011). Some Hip Hop based curriculums have gained nationwide attention for effectiveness in fusing Hip Hop music and instructional practice. The Hip Hop Educational Literacy Program (HELP) is a series of supplemental reading workbooks

designed to assist students of varying reading levels through the innovative use of Hip Hop (music and culture) for critical analysis, multicultural relevance, and literacy instruction (Hip Hop Education Literacy program, 2014). Flocabulary is a music-based program that promotes literacy and academic success through a Hip Hop based curricula focusing on building vocabulary for SAT preparation (Flocabulary, 2014). Smart Shorties, is a program supported by Scholastic Incorporated that engages students in song production that teaches math concepts using catchy lyrics and popular rap beats. The songs are sold to schools for students to memorize through repetition of lyrics and choreographing of dance. The Smart Shorties program boasts improved test scores of 67% of its participants. Such testimonials of academic achievements occur at a time when less than 50% of Black males entering the 9th grade actually graduate from high school four years later (Siedel, 2011). Each of the three programs mentioned above have been purchased and utilized by school districts throughout the United States and demonstrate examples of effective use and implementation of Hip Hop based curricula in traditional school contexts.

Despite the establishment of organizations founded on education initiatives that support Hip Hop as influential mediums that educate, inform and empower youth; general awareness of the instructional potential of Hip Hop beyond the analysis and study of its text is relatively low. As stated by Ferguson (2004) "we need to connect more effectively with students through their pop culture...bring youth culture into the curriculum" (p. 9). Likewise, Dimitriadis (2004) suggested that educational administrators, who work with urban youth on an everyday basis need to have some working knowledge about the form of popular culture that significantly shapes those youths' identities. This study aimed to describe the under-researched perceptions of teachers and teaching artists toward Hip Hop culture in the lives of elementary students.

High school for the recording arts. One real world example of the practice of utilizing Hip Hop culture to shape youth identity is the High School of Recording Arts in Minneapolis, MN. This particular high school model has established a Hip Hop culture atmosphere and curriculum that mirrors student interests, identities, and instincts by successfully merging creative youth empowerment with a diploma granting academic program (Siedel, 2011). In pure ingenuity, the founder, created an alternative high school setting and curriculum fully designed both physically and conceptually around two recording studios. The core elements of Hip Hop culture (deejaying, emceeing, graffiti, and b-boying) are clearly emphasized by giving students open access to a fully equipped recording studio, a marketing and promotions department, and a large performance stage complete with professional grade audio and lighting equipment. Seidel (2011) emphasized the need for educational approaches that foster an environment in which young people can be themselves, represent their culture, broadcast their voice, and have authority in the governance of the program through such innovative approaches as the High School for the Recording Arts.

Expanding Hip Hop based education across the curriculum. In addition to using Hip Hop as a scaffold for teaching traditional skills, educators can draw from alternative forms of knowledge and categories of meanings produced through pedagogical encounters with Hip Hop. An example of creative explorations of Hip Hop as pedagogy has been presented by teacher-researchers who describe using a Hip Hop cipher to re-imagine classroom participation (Emdin, 2013; Hill, 2009). A cipher, by definition in Hip Hop culture, is the act of creating rap lyrics extemporaneously in a group setting over an instrumental beat. In Hip Hop culture, rappers who generate originality and creativity in their lyrical presentation under the pressure of a captive audience are highly commended and given the utmost respect. Educators are flipping this

concept to a classroom setting in which students are using the aesthetic of Hip Hop ciphers to demonstrate their knowledge of science content through communication and argumentation (Emdin, 2013).

Another innovative example of incorporating Hip Hop culture into the curriculum is the use of graffiti, the visual art form of Hip-Hop expression, as an introduction to the concept of cultural expression. As presented in a study by Jenkins (2009), the examination of graffiti is an effective way to show students the value of communicating their culture and identity through art. Graffiti is a particularly exciting form of art for students because it eases "the pressure towards producing realistic art," (Pavlou, 2006, p. 199).

Other compelling uses of Hip Hop culture in a classroom setting beyond the typical analysis of its music and text involve the use of sampling techniques to teach research and writing skills (Petchauer, 2012; Wakefield, 2006). Sampling, as defined in hip-hop music, is the musical practice of using other artists' work in one's own song. Studying the lyrics of Hip Hop moguls that are most notably known for creative sampling not only introduces pop culture into the classroom, but also allows teachers to teach the philosophy of citation, fair use, and the importance of academic honesty, as well as techniques for quoting and paraphrasing sources in a format that is culturally relevant for the student (Wakefield, 2006).

Summary

The literature contends that popular culture, youth culture, minority youth identity, and music are each interconnected. There is an undeniable relationship between youth popular culture and Hip Hop music. A historical overview of the inception of Hip Hop as culture revealed that Hip Hop is rooted in ideals of peace, love, unity, having fun, and stems from urban youth responses to poverty, oppression, and lack of opportunity. The creativity and innovation of

the urban youth of the 1970s spawned a worldwide phenomenon comprised of street art, street fashion, street dance, street music, street language and street entrepreneurialism. This section included a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework for this research study: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and its relationship to Hip Hop and education. Four theoretical underpinnings strongly inform the conceptual framework: Critical Pedagogy, Critical Race Theory, Multicultural Education, and Social Learning Theory.

According to Prier and Beachum (2008), educational researchers and practitioners must gain an in-depth understanding of youth culture aside from the hype and stereotypical imagery that pervades mainstream media. Hence, Prier and Beachum advocate for the venue of Hip Hop as a means to gain understanding into the way that many students make meaning of their lives and the world around them. The literature suggests that this approach has been under-researched despite the fact that in many schools, Hip Hop has become a part of the school's culture because it is a part of the students' culture. Therefore, this study was designed to deepen awareness and encourage the exploration of Hip Hop pedagogical practices as reflected through the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers. The next section outlines the methodology employed for this research study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This chapter on research methodology describes the research design for this study including rationale, setting and site selection, participants, the role of the researcher and relationship to subject, data collection methods, data analysis, consent protocol, trustworthiness and researcher background. The use of qualitative research methods allowed for the exploration of teaching artists' and traditional teachers' perceptions toward the influence of Hip Hop culture on youth identity formation. Qualitative data demonstrate more in depth information about a case or individual than do quantitative data which tend to summarize findings based on numbers and statistics (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As described by Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1996), qualitative research begins from a different methodological assumption, particularly in that the subject matter of the social or human sciences is fundamentally different from the subject matter of the physical or natural science; therefore, qualitative research calls for a different set of investigative methods. A qualitative design was selected in order to portray the complexity of describing the influence of Hip Hop culture on young students and teacher perceptions of such.

Research Questions

The objective of this research study was to describe the processes and methods used by Hip Hop based teaching artists and traditional teachers to nurture positive identity development in young students. Using the perceptions of these educators potentially shed an understanding of the meaning of Hip Hop culture in elementary school settings. The primary research question for

this study was "How do Hip Hop educators perceive the relationship between the core objectives of Hip Hop culture and student identity development?" The following sub-questions were used to further explore this topic:

1. How do teaching artists who use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity and self-awareness?

2. How do traditional teachers who use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity and self-awareness?

3. How do traditional teachers who do not use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity and self-awareness?

4. What do these groups (e.g. Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop and classroom teachers who use Hip Hop) perceive as the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy in educational settings?

Design and Rationale

The four central tactics for conducting qualitative research are as follows: (a) participating in the setting, (b) observing directly, (c) interviewing in depth, and (d) analyzing documents and materials (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). A qualitative approach was selected for this study to facilitate an in-depth investigation of how Hip Hop culture influences the perceptions of educator practice in engaging students and fostering positive identity formation. Qualitative research is appropriate and commonly used to conduct research in applied fields such as education (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative researchers are interested in the underlying meanings of things (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 2009). The motivation behind this study was to better understand the innovative culturally relevant instructional practices centered-on Hip Hop culture

that educators are using to shape student identity. In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection (Creswell, 1994, p. 145). In this study, I attempted to better understand the natural environment both in terms of its key features and its core assumptions. In keeping with qualitative research practices, data were collected and analyzed using thematic analysis through an interpretive process. In addition, time was spent in the field for approximately four weeks during data collection to interact with the people and the setting that was being studied (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

As stated by Creswell (1994), "qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures" (p. 145). This study used words (e.g., interviews, lesson plans), images (e.g., photographs, drawings) and observation of the Hip Hop based after-school program as the sources of data collection. These qualitative research practices were particularly appropriate for an initial study such as this, because qualitative research did not attempt to provide definite answers, but rather the goal was to better understand how various players view Hip Hop culture in the context of education. Using this research design enabled me to understand the processes and nature of the perceptions of the educators in a manner more thorough than that of a quantitative approach.

Site Selection and Setting

Site selection. The history of social tension, marginalization, racial discrimination, injustice, and poverty that shaped the formation of Hip Hop culture in Bronx, New York in 1973 was simultaneously problematic in other urban, metropolitan areas across the United States, including Oakland, California. Today, Black youth residing in Oakland and surrounding cities, known as the San Francisco Bay Area, experience the same frustrations and social inequalities of early Hip Hop pioneers from over 40 years ago (Smith, 2008). Yet, due to generational gaps and

lack of understanding, many youth are disenfranchised and fail to recognize the connections between their current situation and the struggles of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement.

The slogan "Black Power" was first picked up by the national press in 1966 during the James Meredith Freedom March (Chambers, 1968). To an outraged crowd of protesters in Greenwood, Mississippi, the national chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Stokely Carmichael, (also known as Kwame Ture), cried out: "…We been saying freedom for six years and we ain't got nothin'. What we gonna start saying now is Black Power" (1968, p. 269). As described by Chambers, the crowd began chanting "Black Power!" and the newspapers and TV cameras captured the scene (1968). Although Carmichael had used the term several times before, it was this particular incident which propelled the Black Power slogan as the protest cry of young militant Blacks.

Around the same time of the emergence of the "Black Power" slogan, the Black Panther Party of Oakland, California, formed after the 1965 Los Angeles Watts riots as a means to advise Black ghetto residents of their legal rights when falsely accused of the police (Chambers, 1968; Hine, Hine, & Harrod, 2008). Prior to representing Black rebellion nationwide, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was strongly rooted in responding to the local poor economic conditions resulting from "White flight" of Oakland city residents to San Francisco or the suburbs. Dramatic imbalances in post-World War II metropolitan development, massive redistribution, the swelling migration of Blacks to the Oakland area and racially charged housing practices further impoverished the city (Ciccariello-Maher & Andrews, 2010) and established the foundation for racial tension between residents and local police departments. As a result, poverty, violence, gang activity, illegal drug activity, and police brutality played a central role in

the development and content of Bay Area rap music and Hip Hop culture (Ciccariello-Maher & Andrews, 2010; Hine et al., 2008).

Quintessentially, the historical accounts of the Black Power Movement and the Black Panther Party were significant to describing the setting and site selection for this study, because some of the people who were actively involved in Hip Hop culture in the San Francisco Bay Area were also sons and daughters of activists and members of organizations like the Black Panther Party. For example, the late Tupac Shakur, quite notably one of the most influential rap artists of all time (Jenkins et al., 1999), was the son of Afeni Shakur, former member of the Black Panther Party. Thus, it is likely that some of the participants situated within the environment surrounding the research site may hold a politically evolved worldview, either for or against, the Hip Hop music and culture representative of the region (Brooks, 2011). Also, Oakland, which is considered to be a part of the Bay Area and is located about 20 miles East of San Francisco, is known for producing other seminal rap artists, such as E-40, MC Hammer, Mac Dre and Too Short (Thompson & Deterville, 2007).

Setting. The Urban Bay Unified School District (UBUSD), a pseudonym, located in the San Francisco Bay area, was one of the lowest performing districts in the state of California. Particularly common in this district was a faculty comprised mostly of White teachers at mid-career or near retirement. These demographics provide a significant difference in cultural and linguistic backgrounds between students and staff. A revolving door of multiple administrators, poor attendance rates, and lack of student motivation has resulted in particularly low African American, Latino, and Native American achievement throughout the district (personal communication, Garcia-Davenport, 2014).

Table 1.

UBES Student Demographics

Group	Percentage
Latino	81%
Black	8%
White	3%
American Indian	1%
Pacific Islander	2%
Asian	2%
Filipino	2%
English Language Learners	56%
Students participating in free/reduce price lunch program	79%

This study examined the perceptions of a select group of teaching artists and teachers at Urban Bay Elementary School (UBES). Consistent with the demographics of the school district, UBES had a large population of culturally diverse students and similar indicators of low student engagement and achievement coupled with distortional representation among faculty and staff (see Table 1). Reportedly, 97% percent of the students who attend UBES were either of Latino, African-American, Native American, Pacific Islander descent (Greatschools.org, 2014) or English Language Learners (ELL). Over the past decade, UBES had not established distinguished school status and had struggled to meet federally mandated measures in English Language Arts (Garcia-Davenport, personal communication, July 16, 2014). As a result, programs were developed to increase the academic success of students.

The Students with Academic Attitudes, Gifts and Goals (SW(AG)^2) program, was an after school pilot program designed to empower the academic and social potential of UBES students. The objective of the program was to build upon the individual cultural and linguistic strengths of the students, while increasing parent community engagement and preparing youth for college and for their future careers (Garcia-Davenport, personal communication, July 16, 2014). The program offered culturally responsive integrated arts and academic literacy lessons, mentoring, identity development and critical consciousness for youth and professional growth opportunities for adults and community members. The SW(AG)^2 courses were ran by teaching artists who were either community members or parents who also honored the wide range of gifts, cultures, and languages represented throughout the demographics of the UBES community.

Some of the activities offered through the SW(AG)^2 program included: a Hip Hop chess club, graffiti art class, rap and freestyle class, dance class, djing and beat-making class, and cultural arts education class. Much of the activities were relevant to this research study due to the nature of the activities, their relationship to the Hip Hop culture and their potential for shaping positive youth identity.

The Hip Hop based elements that were presented and taught to students during the SW(AG)^2 after-school program at Urban Bay Elementary School (pseudonyms were used to preserve the identity of participants who teach these activities/programs) included aerosol art, freestyle fellowship, step team dance, beat making and deejaying.

The aerosol art course honored the legacy of African-American and Latino urban culture by teaching the contribution, narrative, and experience of graffiti writing. The program was designed to protect, preserve, and promote the legacy of spray can art in urban communities. The freestyle fellowship course was designed to help students develop self-awareness and effective

communication skills through rhythm, voice and language. It is based upon the emcee aesthetic known as "freestyling". Students were introduced to a broader extension of the Hip Hop element of b-boying through the step team dance class. This class used acrobatic and athletic movements centered-on its own philosophy, history, culture and music. This class is relevant because historically, several Hip Hop b-boys and b-girls have adopted various styles into their dance routines (Schloss, 2009). In the beatmaking and deejaying class, students were introduced to the fundamentals of music production through Hip-Hop based beat-making and djing techniques. The students created and recorded their own instrumental musical compositions while integrating art, music, and mathematical concepts.

Traditional teachers using Hip Hop consisted of classroom teachers from UBES who participated in recent professional development seminars centered-on using Hip Hop pedagogy to engage students. The professional development seminar included a 10 week series on teacher reflection, engagement and critical literacy. Throughout the series, the teachers were trained and observed utilizing instructional strategies based on educational Hip Hop pedagogies.

Participants

The participants for this study were chosen using purposive sampling techniques to investigate teaching artists' and traditional teachers' perceptions of the influences of Hip Hop culture on student identity formation. Purposive sampling was useful for deliberately selecting information particularly relevant to specific research questions that cannot be obtained as effectively using other sampling methods (Maxwell, 2013). On the occasion when there are only a limited number of sites, interview, and observation settings, purposeful sampling is more feasible (Maxwell, 2013).

While attending the third annual Hip Hop Think Tank Conference in New York City in 2013, I met numerous Hip Hop educational elites, professors, teachers, and teaching artists one of whom described a special, unique Hip Hop based afterschool program offered at an elementary school in the San Francisco Bay area. The program piqued my interest. I corresponded with the principal of the school via phone and literature (see Appendix A), which lead to permission to conduct research at UBES.

Sampling procedures. I identified specific criteria for selecting the sample (Gay et al., 2006). At the onset of the study, the minimum criteria for participation in this study was that individuals must be either Hip Hop based teaching artists in the $SW(AG)^2$ after-school program or fully credentialed teachers at UBES. Participation was completely voluntary from individuals who understood and had an interest in this research study as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (2000). Potential participants were sent a recruitment letter by email (see Appendix B). If they responded and showed interested in participating in the study, I contacted them by email and/or telephone to explain the study, goals and the interview process. Once on site, I presented a brief overview of the research at a faculty meeting, which resulted in additional participants. All participants signed a letter of consent (see Appendix C).

The 14 participants in this study were either regular classroom teachers or teaching artists. The regular classroom teachers were certified full-time teachers who either used a Hip-Hop based pedagogy in their classroom or did not. The teaching artists provided supplemental Hip Hop based education during the afterschool program. Each of the participants worked at Urban Bay Elementary School located in the Urban Bay Unified School District in Northern California. Urban Bay Elementary School and the Urban Bay Unified School District are pseudonyms used to protect the privacy of the participants.

I recruited a diverse sample of participants for this study by utilizing two well-known forms of participant sampling procedures: purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1994) and snowball sampling (Castillo, 2015). Through personal communication with the principal of Urban Bay Elementary School, I discovered the SW(AG)^2 afterschool program and their pilot implementation of Hip Hop based pedagogies at the elementary school. The school principal mentioned that seven of his faculty members were participating in a voluntary professional development series centered on culturally relevant teaching. I solicited those seven faculty members through a recruitment letter sent via email (see Appendix B) and recruited two participants for my study. The first day that I arrived on site, I attended a school-wide faculty meeting and discussed my research study. As a result of making a brief presentation at the faculty meeting, I recruited five more teachers. I recruited the seven Hip Hop teaching artists by emailing the same recruitment letter (see Appendix B) to each of the seven Hip Hop based instructional leaders who taught in the afterschool program. All seven teaching artists responded to the email solicitation and agreed to participate in the study.

Once consent was received, I conducted interviews. The interview instrument (see Appendix D) was designed to appropriately preserve the dignity of the participants and was sensitive to the nature of information being collected. Participants were given the opportunity to refuse to answer any question that may have been interpreted as offensive. Participants were also given the opportunity to tell their own story. Furthermore, access to the results of the study was provided to participants upon request.

As suggested by Smith (2008), a small sample size allowed sufficient in-depth engagement with each participant and provided me an opportunity to retrieve a detailed explanation of similarities and differences. I aimed to achieve triangulation through interview

data collected from people with different perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Thus, three types of volunteers were purposefully solicited: (a) Hip Hop based teaching artists, (b) traditional teachers who use Hip Hop in the classroom, and (c) traditional teachers who do not use Hip Hop in the classroom.

A total of 14 participants (see Table 2), seven Hip Hop teaching artists, four traditional teachers who did not use Hip Hop, and three traditional teachers who used Hip Hop, consented to participate in the study. A synopsis providing detailed descriptions and participant narratives is presented in the findings in Chapter four.

Human as Instrument

Researcher position or "reflexivity" is a qualitative research method used to express researcher integrity. As described by Lincoln and Guba (2000), reflexivity is "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, 'the human as instrument'" (p.183). Merriam (2009) explains that researchers must articulate and clarify their assumptions, biases, experiences and dispositions in order to allow the reader to better understand how the investigator arrived at the particular interpretation of the data. As noted by Creswell (2007), researchers may further shape their research by incorporating paradigms or worldviews into the inquiry. According to Creswell, paradigm or worldview is "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (2007, p. 19). I subscribed to a social constructivist belief system.

Social constructivist worldview. In the social constructivist worldview, individuals seek to better understand or describe human nature as it functions within the world in which they live and work. Constructivists develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are "varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few

categories or ideas" (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). Consistent with assumptions of other social constructivists, the goal of this research study is to rely on the participants' views of the circumstance as much as possible (Creswell, 2009). I positioned myself within the research to acknowledge how my analysis stems from personal and cultural experiences. Therefore, constructivism describes the interdisciplinary lens used to view the research process.

Ontology. An ontological assumption associated with constructivism suggests that multiple socially constructed realities exist. Assuming the existence of multiple realities means that constructivists believe that reality is subjective and value-laden. Reality is influenced by the context of the situation (e.g., individual experience, perception, social environment, and interaction between participant and researcher) (Creswell, 2007).

Epistemology. An epistemological assumption associated with constructivism suggests that the researcher is not independent from what is being researched. Instead, constructivists contend that the knower and the known are co-created during the inquiry. My position in this study implied that all the research was biased to my individual perceptions. My own values and lived experiences were not divorced from the research process. Therefore, conducting research that was connected to my background brought increased concerns of bias. I was not an impartial researcher without personal and professional interests in the topic of the study. Nevertheless, the connection to the research also carried potential for deeper comprehension that may be used to advance the field. I embarked this study with the realization that others may have differing perceptions of the influences of Hip Hop culture and was open to receiving new insights and perspectives from the participants. Since the personal subjectivities brought to this study may have influenced my interpretations and analysis of the data, I strived to fairly analyze the data and present the findings.

Researcher Subjectivities

My academic achievement included a bachelor's degree in communication and a master's degree in post-secondary education. I completed all course work for the doctorate of education in school improvement at University of West Georgia. The 10 years of educational experiences as an educator for combined experience on both the secondary and elementary levels as well as graduate level research, provided me with an extensive overview of public elementary schools and the populations they served and influenced my position.

Through professional development, I was trained to experiment with and implement research-based strategies that utilized Understanding by Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2000), Bloom's taxonomy (Bigge, 1982), classroom management (Wong & Wong, 2005), and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) within the classroom setting. I was also exposed to various projects utilizing qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research techniques as a part-time work graduate assistant in the research and evaluation center at University of West Georgia.

My experience also included serving in leadership roles such as a grade level chairperson, content area coordinator, a Great and Effective Lead Teacher, a certified Teacher Support Specialist, a teacher mentor, and developing and facilitating professional learning courses that provided teacher education and professional learning units during evening classes for full-time certified teachers and paraprofessionals.

Researcher relationship to the topic. My first encounters with Hip Hop date back to the early 1980s. I grew up in the urban city of Compton, CA and listened to 1580 KDAY, a radio station which played rap music exclusively 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When not listening to the radio or playing outside, I watched "Yo! MTV Raps," or "Rap City," two video

music programs that played on MTV (Music Television) and BET (Black Entertainment Television) respectively. The radio and cable television programs exposed me to various styles of Hip Hop culture and rap music that spanned from New York City to Los Angeles and everywhere else in between. I lived only a few blocks away from a local skating rink turned nightclub, called Doo To's, a very popular venue for community based parties during the early 1980s. So it was not uncommon to hear Hip Hop music blasting from the speakers of low-rider vehicles on their way to an event or party that was held there. I was immersed in the Hip Hop culture, and at a young age I created my first rap song that described my perceptions, derived from observations from my front yard observing of life "in the hood". As early as age nine, I had an understanding of the confidence, savvy, and expressionism found in rap music as written within my first rap lyrics:

> People in khakis and white T-shirts
>
> It looks so ugly man it hurts
>
> It doesn't turn me on, it turns me off
>
> Saw the homeboy in it almost made me barf
>
> He got the Nike's on the Nike Cortez
>
> "Nigga I kill Crips" is what he said
>
> I don't care
>
> I got luscious lips that make you smile
>
> Baby I know you want to kiss me for while
>
> Hold me and hug me oh so tight
>
> And if you say you love me you can spend the night, Sike! (Just kidding)

My Hip Hop cultural immersion progressed during my early years in high school, when I joined a dance troupe called "the Wierdos", a name developed because the troupe wore baggy clothes, promoted Afro-centric awareness and danced to conscious Hip Hop and House music. Later in high school, I switched roles from "b-girl" to "emcee" and continued to rap throughout my college years, performing freestyle rap and memorized rhymes at nightclubs and talent shows.

In 2003, I created an independent music production company and became its primary artist. Through the production company, I released a full length Holy Hip Hop (Christian-based rap) album entitled "*Ready for War" (Williams, 2002)*, toured the country, and performed at various youth gatherings and Christian concerts including two main stage performances for crowds of over 20,000 youth at the Georgia Dome and the Alamo Dome (ELCA Youth Gathering, 2003; 2006). I also wrote an article that was published by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (2005) that provided churches with advice on how to incorporate the four elements of Hip Hop culture into the development of Hip Hop based contemporary worship services. At the time of writing this research study, (summer 2015) I became a recipient of the Atlanta Gospel Choice Award for Best Holy Hip Hop Artist honoring my efforts in urban music ministry.

Each of my experiences with Hip Hop music and culture outside of the classroom contributed to the creation of a full length album, which I co-produced in 2009, consisting of standards-based, 3-6th grade level appropriate rap songs centered-on Math and English. While serving as a certified classroom teacher in 2010, I used the educational rap album extensively, along with a series of self-created Hip Hop based lesson plans to teach a small group of 5th grade students in a self-contained early intervention classroom. That year, 13 of the 14 students (who

had not previously succeeded in their educational careers) passed the yearly summative assessment for students in the state of Georgia (e.g., the Criteria Referenced Competency Test or CRCT) by meeting or exceeding the standard.

As a result of these experiences, I can identify with members of the Hip Hop culture and educators alike. Moreover, I am considered a member of the Hip Hop generation, therefore, I have had experience as a Hip Hop artist and used Hip Hop as an instructional tool in a classroom setting, which also allows me to be called a Hip Hop educator. As noted earlier in this chapter, it is important to note the experience and background that I had in teaching and Hip Hop in order to express researcher subjectivities and identify possible researcher biases. I am knowledgeable about effective teaching strategies and Hip Hop culture. This may allow for stronger connectivity between the researcher and participants which is an added strength. Likewise, the generally positive, life-long interaction that I have had with Hip Hop music and culture could have possibly served as a limitation to viewing the research objectively. Yet, as described throughout this chapter, several measures have been utilized to control for such bias.

Reliability, Validity, and Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers employ a variety of strategies to ensure reliability, validity and trustworthiness. The role of the researcher as human instrument in a qualitative study requires adherence to specific procedures to certify rigor in methodology and to allow the reader to evaluate the trustworthiness and usefulness of the results (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Credibility helps the reader trust the information provided in the data analysis (Roberts, 2010). I utilized a number of strategies to increase validity including: peer debriefing, use of member checks, use of an audit trail, triangulation of data sources, rich description of the setting and clarification of any researcher bias (Hendricks, 2013).

Peer debriefing. Since I was an outside researcher who was not affiliated with the afterschool program, the school district or the research site, some concern for bias were lessened. I did not have a professional or financial interest in the organization which allowed me to examine the research from a non-vested vantage point. For assistance, in viewing the data with a fair-minded, even handed perspective, and to reduce additional concern for bias, I utilized peer debriefing to help maintain neutrality. Peer debriefing is the process of allowing a colleague to provide feedback on the ongoing study (Greenwood & Levin, 2000; Merriam, 2009). It involves discussing the study with a colleague, peer, or critical friend who is not invested in the study. The peer reviewer provides alternative interpretations of collected data, helps to point out researcher biases, and assists in creating new directions for ongoing study (Hendricks, 2013). I had access to two knowledgeable peer reviewers who were fellow doctoral students who provided supported through the process of completing the study. I also utilized doctoral committee members as expert reviewers.

Member checking. As a self-identified member of the Hip Hop generation, my position and my ability to conduct this research was not negatively impacted. My personal and academic connection to the subject matter strengthened the study, because I was able to gain access to participants and make connections between Hip Hop culture and culturally relevant instructional strategies that others from outside the culture may not be able to obtain. In order to decrease the possibility of misinterpretation of interview data, I used member checking (Merriam, 2009) to audit data collected for accuracy and understanding. Once each interview was transcribed (Miles & Huberman, 1994), I provided a summary of the content to the participants through email. Participants were encouraged to respond with clarifications, modifications, and/or additions to

the notations provided in the summary. These measures helped to reduce the chance of misinterpretation of participant meaning as presented during the interview.

Audit trail. Some authors have suggested that providing an audit trail adds dependability to a study (Hendricks, 2013; Merriam, 2009). As noted by Merriam (2009), a research journal provides an audit trail for retaining specific details of when and how data was collected, particulars outlining the formation of a list of codes for analysis and the researcher's general thoughts throughout the study. The audit trail demonstrates a "researcher's ability to show convincingly how they got [their results and] how they built confidence that this was the best account possible" (Richards, 2005, p.143). I recorded analytic memos in a reflective research journal to maintain data that may be triangulated with other sources in efforts to increase transparency and trustworthiness of the findings. The reflective research journal was instrumental in helping me identify thoughts and experiences which influenced my decision making process as it related to the study.

Triangulation. Several authors (Hendricks, 2013; Merriam, 2009; Roberts, 2010; Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012) have discussed triangulation as a mechanism for increasing the internal validity of a study. As stated by Hendricks (2013), "when a researcher uses multiple sources to corroborate findings… the credibility of the findings is increased" (p.128). As emphasized by Merriam (2009), viewing research from an interpretive-constructivist perspective is a principal strategy to ensure for validity and reliability in a qualitative study. To triangulate the data for this study, I used three methods of data collection: interviews, observations, and artifacts. In addition to employing various data collection methods, I also interviewed participants who held three different perspectives: Hip Hop based teaching artists, traditional teachers who use Hip Hop in the classroom, and traditional teachers who do not use Hip Hop in

the classroom. The use of triangulation further increased the credibility of the findings of this study, because it aided in safeguarding the attempt to study the entire complexity of the phenomenon under examination (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Instrumentation

I developed an interview guide (see Appendix D) consisting of 20 interview questions based on the theories and ideas discussed in the literature review. Since the respondent supplies his or her own words, thoughts, and insights (Patton, 1990), the questions were open-ended, neutral, singular, and clear. The interview questions were developed using the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The Appreciative Inquiry approach was first introduced by Cooperrider and Srivastava (1987), as a research method that sustains a generative and socio-rational theoretical base. It serves as a base for promoting individual ability for symbolic interaction and the acquisition of new knowledge which carries the strong potential of changing the social environment. According to Sullivan (2004), Appreciative Inquiry is suitable for use in this research study due to its association with social modification through the exchange of ideas, knowledge and beliefs that are central to reality formation. Instead of focusing on problems, needs, and deficits, it targets the awareness of strength and potential.

The choice of Appreciative Inquiry to assist in the development of interview questions was in part due to the notion that Appreciative Inquiry theory helps individuals learn to value differences by assisting in the development of positive themes (Rowland, 2011). Appreciative Inquiry, in the context of this research study, emphasized teaching artists' and teachers' perceptions of the influence of Hip Hop culture on the process of shaping positive youth identity. The predominant model for the Appreciative Inquiry approach is a four stage process called the 4-D cycle which guided the interview questions (Appendix D). The four stages are: discover,

dream, design, and deliver. This 4-D cycle was designed to be a general description of the process for unveiling the experiences, visions, desired attributes, the individual commitments of the interviewees. Therefore, I believe that the Appreciative Inquiry approach was an appropriate selection for guiding the interview questions for this study which aimed to better understand the perceptions of teaching artists and teachers at Urban Bay Elementary School.

Ethical considerations

This research included the interviewing of human participants. In accordance with University of West Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the following basic principles are relevant to the ethics research involving human subjects: the principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice, and confidentiality, privacy and anonymity (Kawulich & Ogletree, 2012).

Respect for persons. Participant autonomy and researcher obligation to respect that autonomy is acknowledged in this study. It protects participants with diminished autonomy (e.g., children) from possible exploitation. The informed consent process was derived from this principle. I provided potential participants with information about the study in a manner in which they could comprehend and then allowed them choose whether or not they wished to participate (see Appendix C).

Beneficence and justice. The researcher is obligated to protect participants from harm as well as to maximize the anticipated benefits of the research and minimize the risks to participants as much as possible (Kawulich & Ogletree, 2012). There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. Furthermore, justice requires equitable distribution of both the benefits and the burdens of research. I was required to avoid selecting participants solely due to accessibility. Also, researchers are not to exclude participants who are likely to benefit from a

study. The purposely selected participants in this study specifically met the criteria for participation.

   Confidentiality. As the principal investigator, I had access to the data collected. In order to ensure that data was not linked to identifying information, actual participant names were not used in the study; rather input was referred to using pseudonyms. Participant input was used only for the purpose of the study. All research data for this study was stored in digital format and information was saved on a password protected computer. To provide off-site data back-up, key documents such as interview transcripts were stored in a secure cloud-based file storage account. To further safeguard study data, consent forms and subject codes linking to identifiable information was maintained in a separate location from research data.

Data Collection

   Multiple methods of data collection were used to gather rich descriptions of participant perception and strengthen the accuracy and validity of the findings. The most thorough source of information from each participant was supplied by the semi-structured interview. Secondary methods for data collection included observation and artifacts to facilitate triangulation. Additional data were received from email correspondence and phone calls. In qualitative research, "researchers collect data in natural settings with sensitivity to the people under study and they analyze their data inductively to establish patterns or themes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 51). The interpretive or constructivist paradigm is characteristically inductive, emergent and shaped by the researcher's experience in collecting and analyzing data. The purpose of this study was to go beyond observable actions of people in the context of social phenomena and understand the subjective meanings they assign to their actions in order to interpret and understand the reasons

behind those actions (Klein & Myers, 1999). It was my intent to "make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

Prior to scheduling the interviews, participants were asked to review the consent form (see Appendix C). The consent form had specific information including, but not limited to, the central purpose of my proposed study, collection methods, explanation of confidentiality, the benefits and risks of the study, and signature of the participant and researcher (Creswell, 1994). Full disclosure was given to each participant. The University of West Georgia's IRB policies and procedures were strictly adhered to protect human research subjects in conducting this research.

Interviews. This research included virtual face-to-face interviews using video conferencing and screen capture software in effort to collect data while simultaneously experiencing maximum participation (Ary et al., 1996). The data collection method of recording the interview provided me with authentic, unfiltered data for use at any time (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). Video conferencing provided a valuable tool for observing verbal and nonverbal cues as well as interviewing participants from a long distance (Sedgwick & Spiers, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews, lasting 45-65 minutes, allowed for the sharing of in-depth knowledge from each of the participants. An interview guide, including a set of detailed questions, was used to organize the opening cycle of questioning for the interview (Appendix D). The interview protocol was divided into three sections. First, participants were asked about their core assumptions and relationship to Hip Hop culture. Participants were then asked how they perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping youth identity. Lastly participants were asked about the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy. As the interview progressed, I adapted my questions according to the direction of the conversation. In the instance where one topic of discussion had been fully discussed, I introduced another topic based upon

participant responses. Some topics were revisited throughout the course of the interview. Participants were allowed to discuss each topic with as little prompting as possible (Smith & Osborn, 2008). To gain in depth data from the interview, a responsive interviewing technique was used. Responsive qualitative interviews have similarities to a natural conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interview guide helped me to remain on topic; but I remained flexible about the order in which questions were asked, and continuously adjusted questions to reflect the information received from the participant. This process was consistent with qualitative research practice of semi-structured interview techniques.

The participants in this study conveyed information related to their experience using hip hop as an instructional tool through semi-structured interviews. Additional data were collected through direct observation and collection of artifacts. To develop an understanding of each participant's individual attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about how Hip Hop culture affects student identity, I transcribed each interview into text and analyzed the interview transcripts and other data. Each participant had a unique response toward the use of Hip Hop music and culture as it relates to positive youth identity development which I have described in further detail in Chapter 4.

Observation. I visited the Urban Bay School District in the San Francisco Bay area for four weeks in March 2015. During my visit, I conducted 14 direct observations of Hip Hop teaching artists during the Hip Hop based afterschool program at Urban Bay Elementary school, two observations of regular classrooms, one observation of a teaching artist staff meeting, and one observation of a school faculty meeting. I collected artifacts such as lesson plans, instructional materials, promotional literature distributed to the community, photographs of classroom arrangements and photographs of whiteboards. Each observation lasted approximately

four hours in which the primary focus was the delivery and instructional practices of the participants.

The qualitative method of observing participants created a socially constructed dynamic interaction between the research participant and the researcher; therefore, knowledge was established through the meanings attached to the phenomena studied, making it both transactional and subjective. In this study, my role was that of observer as participant. From this stance, "the researcher's observer activities are known to the group; participation in the group is definitely secondary to the role of information gatherer" (Merriam, 2009, p. 124). To conduct observations, I followed the Generic Observation Guidelines (Appendix E) as suggested by Merriam (2009).This level of participation provided access to a wide range of information and was appropriate for the stated research questions (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Artifacts and documents. In addition to using the two data collection strategies, interviewing and observing, which were designed to gather data that specifically address the research question (Merriam, 2009), artifacts and documents were utilized when pertinent. Some of the data not gathered through interviews or observations used in this study were films, videos, newspapers, magazines, songs, photographs, websites and lesson plans. Using public documents, visual documents, and artifacts was appropriate for this study. The documents furnished descriptive information, advanced new categories, and offered historical understanding. Specifically related to the data analysis procedures used in this study, the documents were particularly useful in theory building (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Data Analysis

The data analysis process for this research study followed general procedures described by the systemic, analytic ground theory approach. The analytic procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1990), in which the researcher seeks to systematically develop a theory that explains process, action, or interaction on a topic, were used for guidance. The data analysis involved a multistage process of organizing, categorizing, synthesizing, analyzing and writing about the data. It was a multistep process (e.g. open, axial, and selective coding) of classifying and coding the data, then grouping the coded data into categories of related ideas or concepts that enabled me to identify emerging themes (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Grounded Theory Approach to Data Analysis*

Throughout the process of conducting open coding, axial coding and selective coding of the data, I utilized a three step process of taking information from data collection and comparing it to emerging categories which is commonly known the constant comparative method in qualitative research. The constant comparative method consists of (a) examining the data and organizing it into as many categories as necessary, (b) delineating major themes or theories and (c) describing each resulting individual major theme and its respective component characteristics (Merriam, 2009). This method requires continual revision, modification and amendment until all new information can be placed into an appropriate category and the inclusion of additional units into categories provides no new information.

As part of the data analysis process, I personally transcribed the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and made sure transcription was phonetic to accurately reflect the actual words being said in order to have a better assessment of the participants' intended meanings. I also engaged in member checks (Creswell, 1994; Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994) whenever possible, which included sending the transcribed documents to the interviewee to guarantee accuracy and also took notes while conducting the interviews to reflect participants' facial expression, body language or other nonverbal behavior that may be relevant to the expression of their ideas (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Personally transcribing the data allowed for "intimate familiarity" with the data (Merriam, 2009, p. 110) as opposed to hiring someone to transcribe the interviews for me.

Once the interviews were transcribed I began employing a grounded theory approach to the analysis of the data. Grounded theory analysis has four key aspects: (a) discovering codes which identify 'anchors" for the data collection, (b) creation of concepts or theme , (c) categories or themes organized into similar concepts and used to generate theory and (d) formation of

theory acts as an explanatory schema to illuminate the subject of the research (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Likewise, the grounded theory approach to analyzing data for this study began with open coding of the data for its major categories of information. Within each category, I looked for several properties to show the extreme possibilities on a continuum of the property. Next, axial coding was used to identify one open coding category or "core phenomenon" to develop the axial coding paradigm. Data were assembled in new ways using a visual model to identify the central phenomenon, explore causal conditions, specify strategies, identify context and conditions, and delineate the consequences for this phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Lastly, drawing from the axial coding model, selective coding was used to develop propositions that described the interrelationship of categories in the model.

Data coding. I divided my coding methods into two phases: phase 1 (open coding) and phase 2 (axial and selective coding). The first cycle of coding involved the "beginning stages of data analysis [to] fracture or split the data into individually coded segments" (Saldana, 2009, p. 42). This form of coding, in which the researcher is being open to anything possible, is often called open coding (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative researcher Charmaz (2006) suggests that the purpose of open coding is to "remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by your readings of the data" (p.46). Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that initial coding, or the process of breaking down qualitative data into smaller chunks, facilitates the process of examining the data and comparing them for similarities and differences.

Open coding. I employed a number of styles of coding during the first cycle coding phase of this research study, including In Vivo Coding, Process Coding, Descriptive Coding, Versus Coding and Values Coding (Saldana, 2009).

In Vivo coding. In Vivo Coding, sometimes called Literal Coding or Verbatim Coding, involves quoting words or short phrases from actual language found in the qualitative data. More specifically, In Vivo Coding is the process of recording terms used by research participants themselves (Saldana, 2009). Saldana suggests that the In Vivo Coding method is useful in extracting indigenous terms from "members of a particular culture, subculture, or micro culture" (p. 74).

Process coding. Process coding, as explained by Saldana, uses gerunds to signify action in the data. The researcher codes observable activity and/or general conceptual action through a Process Code. Corbin and Strauss (2008) state that Process coding is appropriate for qualitative studies, particularly when searching for "ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations or problems" (pp. 96-97).

Descriptive coding. Descriptive coding refers to the method of summarizing the qualitative data in a word or short phrase. Descriptive codes identify the topic of the content. As described by Saldana (2009), Descriptive Coding is an approach to answering general and reflective questions to assist in analyzing the data's basic topics. Descriptive codes help to answer questions such as "What is going on here?" and "What is this study about?"

Versus coding. The nature of this qualitative study suggests potential differences between participant groups (e.g., educators who use Hip Hop and educators who do not use Hip Hop). Versus Coding connotes in binary terms specific groups, concepts, and phenomena that are in direct conflict with each other (Saldana, 2009). For example, conflicting perspectives or philosophies present in the data were coded as binaries, such as "classroom teacher vs. teaching artist" or "rap vs. hip hop."

Values coding. Additionally this research study examines the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of the participants. Saldana (2009) writes that Values Coding "is the application of codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspective or worldview" (p.89). According to Saldana, Values coding is an appropriate method for exploring cultural values, participant experiences and participant actions for virtually all qualitative studies.

This first cycle phase of line-by-line open-ended coding generated 58 codes. Out of the preliminary open coding phase, the following themes emerged: background and relationship to Hip Hop, early memories, core assumptions about hip-hop music and Hip Hop culture, emphasis on teaching practices, ideas about social and personal student identities including race, and class, student behavior, and methodologies, implementations and strategies for using Hip Hop music and culture in the classroom. These themes, which emerged from the data, became the initial units of analysis.

I kept a journal of analytic memos throughout this phase to serve as "an additional code- and category- generating method" (Saldana, 2009, p. 41). The analytic memos were instrumental in advancing to the Second Cycle phase of coding the data, which included the Axial Coding and Selective Coding process. According to Merriam (2009), Axial Coding extends beyond Descriptive Coding in that it stems from "interpretation and reflection on meaning" (p.180).

Axial coding/Selective coding. In order to discover more specific and relevant findings related to my research questions, I compared the emerging themes from the initial round of open coding and began a second round of axial coding. During the second cycle of coding, the researcher constantly compares, reorganizes, and groups the codes into categories in order to develop a central category around which the others revolve (Saldana, 2009). In transitioning

from Open Coding to Axial Coding, I began to recognize patterns that were used to formulate

categories and reduced the number of codes from 58 codes to 22 codes. To further reduce and

refine the list of codes into a smaller number of manageable themes that I could use later to write

my narrative (Creswell, 2007), I followed the five criteria for formulating categories as outlined

by (Merriam, 2009, p. 186). Those five criteria are as follows: categories should be responsive to

the purpose of the research, categories should be exhaustive, categories should be mutually

exclusive, categories should be sensitizing, and categories should be conceptually congruent.

As I further examined the data, I continued to label everything with codes/categories. The

next set of codes included such categories as elements of Hip Hop, rap music, Hip Hop music,

positivity, negativity, values, social learning, teaching practices, identity/validation, pros and

cons etc. I selected from the transcripts the units of analysis in which the interviewees' expressed

any idea relevant to hip hop culture and/or student identity. The units of analysis were coded

using a grounded theory approach to analysis. The codes were further grouped together to form

categories such as youth culture, Hip Hop, teacher perceptions, perks, difficulties, identity

development, and pedagogical practices.

From this categorical round of axial coding, the following four concepts became visible

themes: defining Hip Hop, views, attitudes and beliefs, benefits and challenges, and instructional

strategies. These four themes were developed to aid in interpretation of the meaning of the data

as a means of best arranging the material into a narrative account of the findings. Findings

related to these four prevalent themes are explained following the description of the participants

in Chapter 4.

Limitations of Methodology

This was a small study concentrating on a sample within similar demographics. The participants were volunteers chosen from the same locality with the same objectives (e.g., teaching elementary students). Since this was not a diverse group, these findings cannot be generalized for other groups. The challenges that teaching artists and teachers at UBES faced in implementing Hip Hop culture into educational settings is most likely qualitatively different from secondary and post-secondary teachers. The sample was selected, because they had been identified as meeting the research criteria. Whether or not the research results would be comparable if used with another sample is not known. This can be addressed in additional studies.

Summary

This section outlined the qualitative research methodology utilized to conduct this study. Over the course of four months, direct observations were made, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted, and artifacts were collected in order to ascertain the necessary elements needed to describe elementary educator perceptions toward the use of Hip Hop and youth identity development. The sample was diverse in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, years of experience and role in education (e.g., classroom teacher or teaching artist), and a grounded theory approach was utilized for data analysis. The following chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the research findings.

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter briefly describes the research design for this study (e.g., a short discussion of qualitative research, and purpose of the research) as well as provides a detailed narrative of the research findings including a description of the participants and thematic analysis of the data.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), 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" (p.97). I selected a qualitative research design for this study because it allowed for rich description and exploration of the core principles of Hip Hop culture and youth identity development in elementary students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers of the influences of Hip Hop music and culture on positive identity development in urban students. It sought to discover the attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop and their feelings toward the use of Hip Hop music and culture for nurturing positive identity development in urban elementary students. Any differences in attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions between Hip Hop teaching artists and classroom teachers were noted. In addition, as related to the research questions, the purpose was to provide findings that further explain the benefits and challenges associated with utilizing a Hip Hop Based Pedagogy in an

educational setting. Further, it was to provide a basis for further discussion for implementing Hip Hop-based pedagogical practices in elementary schools.

Description of Participants

To ensure confidentiality to my participants I have referred to all participants in my study by pseudonyms to protect their identities according to IRB protocol as noted in the letter of consent (Appendix C). An overview of the list of participants is outlined in Figure 3.

My sample included 14 educators in total. There are seven Hip Hop teaching artists and seven traditional classroom teachers (see Table 2). The Hip Hop teaching artists represented the full range of the original elements of Hip Hop culture (e.g., deejaying, b-boying, graffiti, and emceeing). Of the seven Hip Hop teaching artists, four were deejays and/or Hip Hop producers, one was a graffiti artist, one was an emcee, and one was a dancer. The traditional classroom teachers were asked to identify themselves as either teachers who use Hip Hop music and culture in the classroom or teachers who do not use Hip Hop music and culture in the classroom. Of the seven classroom teachers, three identified themselves as teachers who use Hip Hop music and culture, and four teachers identified themselves as teachers who do not use Hip Hop music and culture. Specific genders represented in the sample population were as follows: six women and eight men. Of the fourteen participants, six identified as being African American, three identified as being bi-racial, one identified as being Polynesian, and four identified as being white.

Table 2.

Participant Description

Name	Gender	Ethnicity	Experience	Role
Sam	Male	Black	3 years	Classroom teacher who uses Hip Hop
Josh	Male	Multi-racial	13 years	Classroom teacher who uses Hip Hop
Brandon	Male	Polynesian	13 years	Classroom teacher who uses Hip Hop
Samantha	Female	Black	20 years	Classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop
Jasmine	Female	Bi-racial	8 years	Classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop
Cheryl	Female	Black	11 years	Classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop
Jessica	Female	White	15 years	Classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop
Roger	Male	White	10 years	Teaching artist
Leslie	Female	Black	2 years	Teaching artist
Kareem	Male	Black	20 years	Teaching artist
Chance	Male	Black	3 years	Teaching artist
Amy	Female	White	1 year	Teaching artist
Nathan	Male	White	4 years	Teaching artist
Seneca	Male	Bi-racial	9 years	Teaching artist

Sam is a classroom teacher at Urban Bay Elementary School. He holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and a Master's degree in elementary education. At the time of the research interview, spring 2015, he had three years of experience as a classroom teacher, and he was teaching third grade. He served in a leadership capacity involving technology on the school campus. His ethnic background is African-American. Sam identified himself as a classroom teacher who, although sparingly, uses Hip Hop in the classroom.

Josh is a self-identified "hiphoppa" (KRS ONE, 2009, p. 698) who uses Hip Hop in the classroom. He is a multi-racial (e.g., African-American and Latino) educator who has served as both a classroom teacher and as an administrator. He served in an educational leadership position at Urban Bay Elementary School at the time of this research study. He has an extensive knowledge of both Hip Hop culture and effective teaching practices. He leads professional development workshops centered-on culturally relevant teaching and shares Hip Hop-based pedagogical strategies with other faculty. Josh has over 13 years' experience incorporating Hip-Hop based pedagogy in educational settings.

Samantha is a regular classroom teacher with a professional background in fashion merchandising and business mortgage loans. She started teaching as a second profession over 20 years ago. She teaches fourth grade students at Urban Bay Elementary school. She identifies as an African-American woman who does not use Hip Hop in the classroom. However, she does utilize music at specified points in the social studies curriculum. She admittedly has limited knowledge about rap music and Hip Hop culture.

Jasmine is a bi-racial, bilingual classroom teacher with an "appreciation for conscious Hip Hop" (personal communication, March 22, 2015). Although she has used Hip Hop in the classroom in the past, at the time of this research study she was not using Hip Hop in the

classroom. She regularly attends conferences and workshops which promote the use of Hip Hop for educational purposes centered on a social justice worldview. Jasmine co-facilitates the culturally relevant teaching professional development workshop at Urban Bay Elementary. She has eight years of experience as an educator. Her educational background includes two master's degrees in curriculum and instruction and language literacy and culture. At the time of this research study she was also pursuing a doctoral degree.

Cheryl is a bilingual fourth and fifth grade classroom teacher at Urban Bay Elementary School. She identifies as an African-American who does not use Hip Hop in the classroom. She has over eleven years of experience as an educator. She holds certification in teaching English as a second language and a master's degree in Sociology. Her knowledge of Hip Hop culture relates to social justice issues, consciousness and critical conversations surrounding the African-American community.

Jessica holds a certificate in bilingual language learner instruction and teaches second grade at Urban Bay Elementary School. She also holds a bachelor's degree in history and a Master's degree in Latin American Studies. Her experience as an educator spans over fifteen years. She identifies as a white female classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop in the classroom. She admittedly reports having limited knowledge about rap music and Hip Hop culture.

Brandon teaches a fourth and fifth grade combination classroom at Urban Bay Elementary School. He has over 13 years of experience as an educator. He holds a master's degree in elementary curriculum studies. He identifies as a Polynesian male, raised in Samoa, who uses Hip Hop in the classroom. His knowledge of rap music and Hip Hop culture is

somewhat limited, and he just recently began utilizing Hip Hop in his classroom after attending a professional development focusing on culturally relevant teaching strategies.

Leslie is a teaching artist who serves in various capacities at Urban Bay Elementary School. She has over two years of experience working as a noon schoolyard supervisor and as a youth enrichment program leader. She is both a fan and lover of hip hop music. She has a passion for dance and leads the Urban Bay Elementary School Step Team.

Roger is a well-known advocate and practitioner of Hip Hop culture in the San Francisco Bay area and nationwide. He co-founded a non-profit organization that teaches music production, Beatmaking, deejaying, and media arts to youth at schools, community centers, and special events. At the time of this research study, he had over 10 years of clinical experience using Hip Hop and electronic music production as both educational and therapeutic resources for inspiring positive youth identity formation. Roger identifies as a White male teaching artist who holds a doctorate in psychology with an emphasis on therapeutic Hip Hop activity groups.

Kareem is an African-American male who has mastered the skill and techniques of graffiti writing. At the time of this research study, he had over twenty years of experience as a teaching artist teaching graffiti writing and aerosol art. He travels the world painting and teaching others how to paint graffiti style murals. Kareem is the director of an organization committed to documenting, promoting and developing the history of the first element of Hip Hop known as graffiti or spray can art. He considers himself a fan, practitioner, teacher, and lover of Hip Hop culture.

Chance is a teaching artist at Urban Bay Elementary School. He is an African-American male in his late twenties. His artistry includes emceeing and beatmaking. He has over three years of experience serving as a teaching artist. He attended a few years of college but later he left

college to study audio engineering. Chance considers himself a "nerd core artist" who is into video games and comic books. He creates produces music of all types of genres but he specializes in making Hip Hop music.

Amy is a White, female deejay in her late thirties. At the time of this research study she worked as a web designer by day and a club deejay by night. She had just recently begun volunteering her time as a teaching artist with a Bay Area organization specializing in teaching deejaying and Hip Hop production techniques to youth. She holds a master's degree in English Cultural Studies and has a strong knowledge of rap music and Hip Hop culture.

Nathan works as an active lead instructor and teaching artist teaching beat making and music production to young students. He holds a degree in audio engineering from a local technical college. He also works as a music producer making music for both aspiring and professional artists and musicians. He is a White male in his mid-twenties who began playing drums and making music at an early age.

Seneca is a biracial male in his early thirties who grew up in a musical family. At an early age he played classical piano and the trumpet. He began writing his own rap songs when he was in the fifth grade. At the time of this research study, he was serving as a teaching artist at several schools throughout the San Francisco Bay Area teaching spoken word, emceeing and freestyling techniques to youth. His educational background includes college degrees in entertainment industry and critical studies in film and television. He has been honored and critically acclaimed for his accomplishments in songwriting and developing visual and performing arts based emcee/spoken word curriculum.

The next section includes a thematic analysis of the findings related to the four prevalent themes that emerged from the data.

Thematic Analysis

Participants in this study had varying perceptions of Hip Hop music and culture and its influence on positive youth identity. An analysis of the interview responses of the participants, and researcher observations related to Hip Hop music and culture and youth identity revealed that there are several common perceptions all of the participants shared. All of the participants perceived that Hip Hop music [as part of Hip Hop culture] influenced formation of youth identity. All of the participants described a knowledge of and/or an experience with Hip Hop music. In sharp contrast to the common perceptions shared among the research participants, there were some varying participant responses regarding Hip Hop as culture as it relates to youth identity development. Four main themes emerged from the data: (1) defining Hip Hop, (2) views, attitudes, and beliefs, (3) benefits and challenges, (4) and instructional strategies which are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

Defining Hip Hop. During the process of data collection and throughout the cycles of coding the data, I began to notice patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest within the data corpus (Braun & Clarke, 2006). One such pattern was found in the participants' responses to the interview question regarding the definition of Hip Hop. While some participants described Hip Hop in terms of a lifestyle and a culture, some participants described Hip Hop in terms of a musical genre, and other participants defined Hip Hop as a combination of both a lifestyle and type of music.

Four participants described Hip Hop in terms of being a culture or a lifestyle. Participant Kareem said, "Hip Hop is a continuum of African peoples' will to express themselves particularly in one way of getting free here in the Western hemisphere". Kareem went on to say that,

[Hip Hop] is the ability of a people to pull an expression of culture and resource of

knowledge into a very attractive form that commands your attention and inspires you.

In this response, Kareem was referring to the cultural, linguistic, traditional, and historical ties

that connect Hip Hop culture with African-American culture.

Participant Seneca replied that,

Hip Hop is a way of relating to life; to the living experience. It's a way that allows

someone to fully engage in their fullest emotion of all their critical thinking abilities and

the extreme expression of your logical sense tied in with your feelings [all of which can

be expressed] through your passion for music, passion for movement, or passion for

visual art. It's like the pathway to your purest self.

In this response, Seneca was describing the fifth element of Hip Hop culture known as

"knowledge of self" and the expression of such through the other four elements of Hip Hop (e.g.,

graffiti, b-boying, deejaying, and emceeing).

Participant Cheryl took a slightly different stance on defining Hip Hop as,

A form of social and political commentary and critique as a way of dialoguing with the

mainstream from people who were often left out of the main discourse, mainly around

issues of poverty, racial discrimination and other types of isolation in communities in the

United States.

In this response, Cheryl was defining Hip Hop as a non-mainstream subculture of marginalized

urban youth. She further expanded her definition to include Hip Hop as a means of

communicating dissatisfaction with the status quo of society within the Black community.

Participant Josh began his definition of Hip Hop by stating the five elements,

My definition of Hip Hop is knowledge of self, turntablism [deejaying], spray can art, emceeing and breakdancing/b-boying. It's a culture, a style, and all the things [associated] with a culture. It's a way of being, doing, and knowing. It's also a way of making sense of the world and finding things in its own right.

While attempting to define it, each of these four participants made references to Hip Hop as culture.

In contrast, five participants defined Hip Hop in terms of a style of music or a musical genre. Four of the five participants who responded in this manner were classroom teachers, and the other participant was a teaching artist. Two of the teachers who defined Hip Hop as a type of music actually used Hip Hop in the classroom, and two of the teachers did not use Hip Hop in the classroom. Sam, a classroom teacher who used Hip Hop in the classroom, said that "Hip Hop is basically spoken word and rhyme, generally [sung] over strong back beats." Brandon, also a classroom teacher, simply defined Hip Hop as "mostly rap music." Classroom teacher Jessica thought of Hip Hop as a style of music that developed after rap music. According to Jessica, "it's friendlier, more positive, and more upbeat [than rap]." Samantha, a seasoned educator with over twenty years' experience in the classroom, referred to Hip Hop as an "old school term." In her words, "Hip Hop is what's hip; it's what you're listening to at the moment or what's in style. It's the type of songs that have a rap melody." In similar fashion to these four classroom teachers, Nathan, a teaching artist, also referenced a musical definition of hip hop, describing it as "sample-based music…anything that ranges between 70-110 beats per minute." For each of these participants, Hip Hop can be defined as merely a musical art form.

While some participants defined Hip Hop as culture and some participants defined Hip Hop as music, a few participants defined Hip Hop as a combination of both music and culture.

One participant simply stated that Hip Hop is both a music genre and a culture. Participant Chance replied that,

> Hip Hop is using words in a more poetic format over melodic rhythmic beats, but Hip Hop is [also] life, Hip Hop is your struggle and how you view where you are coming from.

Likewise, Participant Roger explained,

> Hip Hop is a culture and a style of music. It includes the five elements but for some people it's a lifestyle that grew out of the plight of oppressed people in the South Bronx.

For each of these participants, the definition of Hip Hop involved an overlapping and intertwining of music and culture; there is a coexistence.

In further analysis, it seems that a discussion about the definition of Hip Hop is seemingly incomplete without a discussion about the relationship between rap and Hip Hop. The follow up interview question to the definition of Hip Hop was "What is the difference between rap and Hip Hop?" This question allowed for deeper exploration of participant knowledge of Hip Hop and an opportunity to come closer to further defining it. While reviewing the data, I noticed that there was some consistency in answers among the varying groups of participants. Whereas most of the teaching artists seemed to acknowledge Hip Hop as a way of life or culture and mentioned the different elements of Hip Hop, the classroom teachers more consistently referred to Hip Hop as a genre of music and did not reference the cultural aspects or elements of Hip Hop. Moreover, nearly all the participants mentioned that there is a difference between rap and Hip Hop. Some participants, however, were better able to make a distinction between the terms rap and Hip Hop than others.

According to the Random House Dictionary (2015), rap music, also called rap, is "a style of popular music, developed by disc jockeys and urban Blacks in the late 1970s, in which an insistent, recurring beat pattern provides the background and counterpart for rapid, slangy, and often boastful rhyming patter glibly intoned by a vocalist or vocalists." (paragraph 1). The same reference provides two definitions of Hip Hop (1) the popular subculture of big-city teenagers, which includes rap music, breakdancing, and graffiti art, and (2) rap music (Random House Dictionary, 2015). Again the question was posed to the participants whether there is a difference between rap and Hip Hop? Based on these definitions and as participant Roger so eloquently described,

> It depends on if you're talking about rap music versus Hip Hop music or if you're talking about rap music versus Hip Hop culture…I mean rap is a pretty essential part of Hip Hop…they kind of go hand in hand, and they grew out of the same thing, but arguably people were rapping [in the sixties] before Hip Hop existed [in the seventies. Nevertheless] rap is an element of Hip Hop.

Upon contemplating the difference, if any, between rap and Hip Hop, one participant poignantly described an existence of "blurred lines" between those two terms. There were some participant responses which implied that rap and Hip Hop were essentially the same thing (e.g., a type of music) and some participant responses which suggested that the two terms were independent of one another (e.g., rap is a genre of music, and Hip Hop is a culture). Most strikingly, however, were the quite strong and often contrasting views that some of participants shared involving what they perceived as the differences in style and content between rap music and Hip Hop music.

It is important to note that several participants made a distinction between rap music and Hip Hop music. Comparisons between rap music and Hip Hop music included mainstream versus underground, commercial versus independent, simplistic versus creative, lyrical versus musical, and negative versus positive. One participant who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom perceived Hip Hop music as having a positive expression and rap music as having an angrier expression. Another participant who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom described rap music as music that has been co-opted by corporations and used to corrupt marginalized communities, while Hip Hop music is a tool for raising consciousness. One participant who uses Hip Hop in the classroom suggested that rap music is destructive and Hip Hop music is educational, because rap music is commercially produced to market a lavish lifestyle, while the lyrical content of Hip Hop music has more substance and relevance. Participant responses such as these attest to the ambiguity that exists in describing and defining Hip Hop. Additionally, participant Josh refused to try to break down the semantics of making a distinction between rap and Hip Hop but rather posed the following statement, "Is all rap Hip Hop? No. Is all Hip Hop rap? Yes."

In essence, all of the participants had preconceived notions of how to define Hip Hop whether correct or incorrect, popular or unpopular. Most referred to the musical aspects of Hip Hop, while others were quite clear about mentioning the cultural aspects of Hip Hop. Nearly all of the participants made some type of distinction between rap music and Hip Hop music. Although there was not one consistent answer among participants, there were several similarities expressed throughout the participant responses. According to the participants, Hip Hop is music, Hip Hop is culture; Hip Hop is both a music and a culture.

Perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists on Hip Hop music and culture and youth identity. The first three sub-questions of this research study inquire about the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and classroom teachers toward Hip Hop culture and youth identity formation. Participants were asked how they view Hip Hop culture and how does Hip Hop culture influence formation of positive youth identity?

One participant, a Hip Hop teaching artist, described Hip Hop as a vehicle to connect with youth and help them establish positive identities. According to the participant, mastery of skills through Hip Hop such as beat making, deejaying and rapping in a way that is culturally relevant creates an instant point of connection to their interests. The participant stated:

> Hip Hop as an expressive modality, not only enables relationships to happen and deepen, but also Hip Hop is necessarily expressive where one can channel one's feelings and express them. It seems way easier to write poetry in the context of Hip Hop and raps than it is to write poetry and have your peers make comments like 'that's weak' or that's feminine to talk about your feelings'. [However], expression through rap is not seen that way.

Another participant, also a Hip Hop teaching artist, explained the influence of Hip Hop culture on the formation of positive youth identity in this manner:

> I think it allows youth to define themselves and I think a lot of times socially growing up you are defined by other people. [Elementary students] don't even necessarily have the language for understanding their social context yet they can express themselves so purely through the creative elements. It gives them space to define themselves through their passion and their love and I think that's a positive step… Especially youth coming from an oppressed condition where originally you don't have a voice so you make your voice

heard through graffiti or emceeing or deejaying etc. Hip Hop is a self-reflective culture

meaning within the culture is the only genre of music that will critique itself and hold

itself up to a higher standard because of the tradition of competition and battling

embedded within it which makes everyone push themselves to be a better version of

themselves.

Another Hip Hop teaching artist, who worked with the students in the area of dance, described

that participation in her class is teaching the urban elementary students how to get along, learn

how to come together for a common goal and how to deal with frustration. In her words:

Sometimes I still have to remember these are elementary students, they are not in middle

or high school. They can get really nervous and they don't quite yet know how to deal

with their fear or nervousness but activities like these helps to build their confidence, and

self-esteem, and teaches them how to problem solve and work together.

As a response to the question of Hip Hop culture and youth identity yet another Hip Hop

teaching artist said:

Hip Hop can be used as a means to source cultural history and background. I think it's

very important for young people to see themselves as the source of the information. It

does something positive for your conscious, your psyche, your self-esteem and your

world outlook. Unfortunately, what most schools usually do is present information to a

particular demographic as something coming from outside of them.

Each of the preceding statements by the Hip Hop teaching artists share some insight into

their perspectives of the influences of Hip Hop music and/or Hip Hop culture on shaping a

positive youth identity formation. The Hip Hop teaching artists view Hip Hop as a source of

cultural history and background, as tool for building character by promoting teamwork and

problem solving skills, and as a source of cultural expression. Each of those resources are viewed by the Hip Hop teaching artists as resources for shaping positive youth identity.

Perceptions of traditional classroom teachers on Hip Hop music and culture and youth identity. The traditional teachers also shared their perspectives regarding Hip Hop and formation of positive youth identity. One traditional classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop in the classroom said:

> I think it can do a lot if we're using it intentionally to raise consciousness in young people…like using Hip Hop as a way of incorporating critical media literacy and just awareness of what students are consuming is a beautiful way to be able to demonstrate examples of good Hip Hop and bad Hip Hop. When I say bad Hip Hop I would define it as music that has been co-opted by corporations that are using it to put out messages that are disruptive to communities that are already marginalized and suffering from poverty, crime, and violence.

Another classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop in the classroom replied:

> I think it is mostly positive. Well, I think any kind of music or understanding of music and musical education whether it's in school or out of school is good for kids. It's good to have musical abilities and even just have a sense and be in tune with any kind of music.

One traditional classroom teacher who uses Hip Hop in the classroom explained:

> I'm using [Hip Hop music] as a life lesson for the kids. So as they grow up if they experience any of this then maybe they'll remember some of the lessons we went over in class. So they can empathize with others and be able to understand what the other person is feeling or why the other person is acting the way that they do. It is building a respect for other cultures.

Another traditional classroom teacher who uses Hip Hop in the classroom explained,

> It supports positive identity formation for all youth in amazing ways. I see some of their cultural competencies really highlighted by the Hip Hop programs that we are doing here at [Urban Bay Elementary] because they get to express themselves through rhythm, dance, artwork and voice. I think it also creates a really interesting space for mixed races like myself who maybe don't have such fixed identity construction. If you are a mixed race person that can be very confusing, but I think Hip Hop programs, through art, poetry, and working together in social groupings, is probably the most critical element in developing a positive youth identity.

General values, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants. In addition to offering insight into their perceptions of Hip Hop music and culture as it pertains to youth identity formation, the participants' responses to the interview questions unveiled certain truths about their general values, beliefs, and attitudes. The values, beliefs and attitudes of the participants are described here in their respective groups. There were some values, beliefs and attitudes that all of the groups shared, and there were some responses that were more uniquely consistent with a particular group. Overall, the participants disclosed quite specific, opinionated, and direct answers to the interview questions which provided further insight into the types of values, beliefs, and attitudes that they held toward the use of Hip Hop, both as a culturally relevant teaching tool and as a resource for developing youth identity.

Values, attitudes and beliefs of the Hip Hop teaching artists. Three hip hop teaching artists emphasized the importance of participating with Hip Hop as a means for building awareness and understanding of the culture. As one teaching artist explained,

Part of training and educating people about Hip Hop involves having them to participate in it. It becomes more humbling, and you appreciate it more, if you are willing to engage in it.

When asked how they would respond to someone voicing a concern about using Hip Hop in the classroom, two teaching artists had similar answers. One teaching artist said, "[I think they should] just sit in on a session to see what we do." Another participant said, "Come check out what we do." These participant responses insinuate that others would be more likely to have an appreciation for Hip Hop, if they were able to have a more intimate experience with the music and the culture.

Other Hip Hop teaching artists elaborated on their attitude of appreciation for Hip Hop. One teaching artist said, "Hip Hop is love; [it's] a comfort zone." Another teaching artist said, "Hip Hop is freedom." Nearly all of the teaching artists mentioned that Hip Hop was an integral part of their lives and valued Hip Hop as being very influential in their childhood and adolescent years. For example, some of their comments were:

"I began listening to Hip Hop, when I was 14 or 15 years old."

"For me, it was watching MTV back in '85, I saw Run DMC as it was over from there."

"I think it was about 6th grade with Run DMC and Ice T and Too Short, and that's the first time that I remember Hip Hop really grabbing my attention."

"I began writing my own rhymes in the 5th grade."

"My father was a DJ, so I grew up around Hip Hop."

Perhaps the values that teaching artists held with their early encounters with Hip Hop music and culture were best summed up by the response from Amy:

It's impossible to separate it out of our experiences as young kids. Music is such a large part of our lives, and Hip Hop is something that really resonates with most kids.

A few Hip Hop teaching artists mentioned a sense of value and appreciation for Hip Hop from a slightly different perspective. These participants placed value on understanding the historical origins of Hip Hop music and culture. They seemed to favor more of an Afro-centric view. For example, one teaching artist mentioned that Hip Hop can be traced back to the old tribal tradition of African griots telling stories using rhythm and rhyme to share oral histories. Another teaching artist explained that he always takes the time to educate students on the contributions that their ancestors have made to math and science. In his words,

> If young people, particularly of African descent, knew that much of the concepts taught in school originated with their people, it would automatically change the way that they see the world…Egyptians were some of the first writers, and they wrote their writings on the walls.

His comment about Egyptian writers implies that hieroglyphics were a very early form of graffiti which essentially traces that element of Hip Hop culture back to African heritage and tradition.

Values, attitudes and beliefs of the classroom teachers. Whereas the teaching artists placed emphasis on their personal relationship with Hip Hop during their early years and its historical ties to African heritage, the classroom teachers who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom presented a more multicultural education approach and understanding. These classroom teachers consistently voiced the importance of presenting a variety of materials and resources in efforts to be more culturally responsive to the span of ethnicities represented in the student population. Jasmine explained, "I try to make sure that I am bringing in different kinds of books, literature, and different teaching tools that reflect whose in my classroom." Jessica simply

stated, "I want everyone to feel included." Samantha did not use Hip Hop in the classroom, but she did incorporate music into the curriculum. Samantha stated:

> Since I have a diverse classroom, I have to make sure that I am in tune with all of the cultures within my diverse classroom. I don't hit them all. I don't go out and find music in Mandarin or Filipino. But if I'm teaching about Native Americans, then I'll play some Native American music, or if I'm teaching about the Chinese New Year, then I'll play some Asian music, or if I'm talking about Cesar Chavez, then I want to play music that is Hispanic.

Each of these participant responses demonstrated a knowledge and sensitivity toward acknowledging the cultural diversity present in their classroom.

Consequently, Sam, a classroom teacher who used Hip Hop in the classroom, held a strong belief that his colleagues are missing the mark. In his words,

> A lot of teachers are removed from the culture and are not really making an effort to try to see what their students are interested in. They are not watching the TV programs or listening to the music that the students are listening to.

In similar fashion, Jessica admitted that she believed that younger classroom teachers are more in tune with Hip Hop and that the majority of classroom teachers do not consider Hip Hop as an instructional tool.

The classroom teachers who used Hip Hop in the classroom described it as a valuable resource, especially when teaching English Language Arts subject matter. One teacher mentioned that the storytelling aspect of rap songs is excellent for teaching reading comprehension strategies such as theme, tone, point of view, and main idea. Another teacher described how she used Hip Hop to teach descriptive writing techniques such as simile,

metaphor, and analogy. A few teachers had also begun using Hip Hop songs for interactive writing, a technique that was recently presented during a professional development workshop at the school.

All of the teachers, whether they used Hip Hop in the classroom or not, made it a point to say that any music used in classroom should be appropriate in its content and aligned with the curriculum. As one teacher explained, "I wouldn't use Hip Hop just to be using Hip Hop."

Shared values, beliefs, and attitudes of both Hip Hop teaching artists and traditional classroom teachers. There were a few values, beliefs, and attitudes that were shared across all the participant groups. Four participants shared the belief that the majority of consumers of rap music were White youth. Although their estimates of the percentages of White consumers varied, 60%, 80%, 90%, each of their estimates favored in the majority. It was as if they mentioned that fact to make the point that Hip Hop is cross-cultural and not linked to just one racial group.

Nearly all of the participants mentioned the fact that negative Hip Hop music exists and strongly influences youth culture. One participant said that "mainstream Hip Hop is destructive." Another participant said that rap music "is violent and misogynist." Yet another participant said that the music on the radio perpetuates the negative ideas that people have about Hip Hop culture in that it promotes "sex, drugs, alcohol and a party lifestyle."

In sharp contrast to mentioning the negatives in Hip Hop music, the participants also mentioned positives in Hip Hop music. "Hip Hop is very positive, even though there is a lot of negative Hip Hop, there is a lot of it that is positive," suggested Nathan, a Hip Hop teaching artist. A traditional teacher who used Hip Hop in the classroom explained that there are some Hip Hop artists that are doing a fantastic job in really pushing a positive message, and a message of positivity could be something useful in the classroom. The juxtaposition between positive and

negative images and lyrics associated with Hip Hop music and culture has presented both benefits and challenges for educators which are further explained in the following section.

Benefits and Challenges. This research study described perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and classroom teachers towards the influence of Hip Hop music and culture on shaping youth identity. The second sub-question for this study asked, "What do these groups (e.g., teaching artists, teachers who use hip hop, and teachers who do not use hip hop) perceive as the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy in educational settings?" This section describes the benefits and challenges posed by the research participants.

Benefits as described by traditional classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop in the classroom. The classroom teachers had very similar perceptions of the use of Hip Hop music and culture in an educational setting. This group of participants mentioned using Hip Hop in the classroom as a tool for student engagement, classroom management, and rote memory. The classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop explained that they use music in general to signal students for changes in the daily schedule such as transitioning between subjects, lining up for lunch, or packing up at the end of the day. These same teachers perceived that Hip Hop music could be used in the same manner to signal transitions.

Benefits as described by traditional teachers who use Hip Hop in the classroom. The classroom teachers who used Hip Hop in the classroom said that Hip Hop is beneficial for drawing and maintaining the attention of the students. Each of the three traditional teachers who use Hip Hop in the classroom described heightened examples of student motivation, on task behavior during Hip Hop based activities, high student engagement during Hip Hop based activities. They also mentioned that using Hip Hop in the classroom is helpful in building recall and retention of subject matter provided that the Hip Hop songs are curriculum-based.

Benefits as described by Hip Hop teaching artists. While all of the traditional classroom teachers, both those who used Hip Hop and those who did not use Hip Hop, described the benefits of implementing Hip Hop based pedagogy in conventional ways, the Hip Hop teaching artists described a more expanded view of the use of Hip Hop in the classroom. The Hip Hop teaching artists portrayed multi-dimensional, multi-faceted benefits of using Hip Hop. One teaching artist described Hip Hop as "the language of the youth" and that being able to speak the language of Hip Hop opens a gateway to fostering unique student-teacher relationships.

Five out of seven teaching artists mentioned the multiple skill building activities that are associated with the practice of making and performing Hip Hop music. They listed such skills as problem solving, comprehending, and public speaking. For example, one participant explained the multitude of skills that are used when making a beat,

> When you make a [Hip Hop] beat there are a lot of things happening all at once. It involves calculating, collaborating, problem solving, arranging, analyzing, and mathematical reasoning using ratios and fractions.

Another teaching artist described the benefit of using Hip Hop for building a foundation for teamwork, social skills, and communication skills,

> When we first started, these girls did not like each other, but being on the Step Team forces them to learn how to communicate with each other and work together to become one sound.

Another participant explained that using Hip Hop in the classroom is a student-centered activity built on student interests which allows students to take ownership of their learning.

In addition to interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, some of the teaching artists also described some characteristics of positive identity formation as a benefit for using Hip Hop in

the classroom. One participant from this group said that using Hip Hop "affirms student identity and culture." Another Hip Hop teaching artist described the use of Hip Hop in the classroom as "spiritually invigorating" and a useful tool for "building a deeper sense of purpose". One Hip Hop teaching artist simply stated that the benefits of using Hip Hop include opportunities for students to engage in "self-reflection, entrepreneurship, and creativity" which allows for "personal self-definition to evolve with the attainment of both external and internal knowledge."

Overall the participants in this study, teaching artists and classroom teachers alike, perceived the benefits of using Hip Hop in the classroom as a mechanism for such ideals as student engagement, student empowerment and motivation, raising consciousness, self-improvement and opening the doors for deeper conversations with students about themselves.

Challenges as described by classroom teachers. The participants in this study did not hesitate to elaborate on the challenges associated with implementing Hip Hop music and culture into an educational setting. Three of the classroom teachers perceived the use of Hip Hop as time consuming, difficult to incorporate, and a hassle to manage. Some of their comments were as follows:

"It is troublesome to incorporate music into the classroom; it gives the teacher extra work to do".

Sometimes the technology doesn't work properly, like you can't pull up the video from the internet when you need it, or the CD player won't play and it interrupts the flow of instruction."

"It requires a lot of time and reflection to find the right songs to use in your classroom."

Specifically, one classroom teacher emphasized the challenge of managing student behavior when playing Hip Hop music in the classroom. Jessica, a classroom teacher who does

not use Hip Hop, recalled an instance in which she played a rap song for her students that a colleague shared with her. When she played the song, the students were very responsive and engaged; some of the students were singing along, dancing and otherwise enjoying themselves. Once the song stopped playing, however, she had a difficult time getting the students to settle down and refocus. Some of the students were still very excited and unruly. It took her several minutes to regain order and discipline.

Another classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop in the classroom described her frustration with managing student behavior when using Hip Hop music in the classroom. Cheryl explained that choosing to use a song that is popular with the students can be tricky because even the so-called "clean versions" of the songs have inappropriate content that has been bleeped out. Even though the content is temporarily removed, it is still very subjective and the students are still familiar with the deleted material. In the past, when she played the "clean versions" of mainstream Hip Hop songs in the classroom, the students would still recite the words that had been bleeped out, or they would have a strong reaction to that portion of the song. Cheryl explains,

> At that point, you have to take time to deal with the giggling, laughing, and immaturity of the students because of how they are responding to something that was implied in the song.

Managing student behavior was the most common challenge among the classroom teachers. The second most popular challenge that they perceived was having access to appropriate material. The findings in this study revealed that the most widely used element of Hip Hop culture utilized by the traditional classroom teachers was Hip Hop music and/or rap music. Most of the classroom teachers, both those who used Hip Hop and those who did not use

Hip Hop, voiced concern that the amount of content available for use in the classroom was limited. They emphasized having much difficulty in finding Hip Hop music and/or rap music that was age appropriate, clean, positive, and relevant for use in the classroom. They all seemed to use a similar approach in locating music for classroom use; they either searched the internet or utilized YouTube. After hours of searching, however, they found themselves eliminating more songs from their lists than adding songs due to the inappropriate content in the songs. Overall, the classroom teachers perceived the search for classroom appropriate Hip Hop music as quite challenging.

As explained in the definition section of chapter one of this research study, there are nine elements of Hip Hop culture: b-boying, emceeing, deejaying, graffiti writing, beat boxing, street fashion, street language, street entrepreneurialism, and knowledge of self. Out of the nine elements of Hip Hop, only one element was mentioned by the traditional classroom teachers: rap music which is associated with emceeing. When the traditional classroom teachers said "hip-hop" they were referring to the term as representing the genre of rap music and the products bought or sold for purposes of entertainment as opposed to the term "Hip Hop" representing the culture.

Challenges as described by Hip Hop teaching artists. The Hip Hop teaching artists voiced quite different perceptions of the challenges associated with using Hip Hop music and culture in the classroom. Whereas the classroom teachers focused on the challenges linked with the students, the teaching artists seemed more concerned with challenges linked with logistics and perceptions of other educators. Several teaching artists described challenges stemming from dispelling the negative stereotypes linked to Hip Hop music and culture and the perceptions of traditional educators towards the teaching artists. Kareem explained that most people have been

misinformed about what Hip Hop culture is and are only familiar with the "commercial perversion of the culture." Chance explained that many educators assume that Hip Hop teaching artists are uneducated, unprofessional, and underestimate their value. "Many of us are graduates from universities and technical colleges, have practical work experience in the industry and own our own studios," said Chance. Overcoming the negative thoughts and ideas prevalent in the minds of those outside of Hip Hop culture was perceived to be a major challenge by the Hip Hop teaching artists.

Another challenge described by the teaching artists was obtaining proper support and funding for implementing Hip Hop based programs in the schools. Three teaching artists specifically mentioned funding and finances as a major challenge. Along with overcoming the challenge of dispelling stereotypes associated with Hip Hop, convincing administrators, parents, and organizations to properly fund it has been a major hurdle. Josh explained that bringing in teaching artists as supplemental educators or artists in residence costs additional funds. Roger explained that teaching Hip Hop production requires the use of specialized equipment and the purchase, transport, and maintenance of that equipment requires financing. Amy emphasized that having one set of DJ equipment (e.g., two turntables, a mixer, a laptop and speakers) is not conducive for teaching a group of 20 students. Rather, it would be ideal to have several DJ stations at a ratio of 2:1 to better serve a group of 20 students. However, purchasing several sets of DJ equipment requires money. Many schools do not or have not allocated monies in their budget to support using Hip Hop in the classroom. As these teaching artists have described, having to resort to using their own personal equipment and having limited resources can be challenging.

Instructional Strategies. There were a number of instructional strategies used by both the classroom teachers and the teaching artists who participated in this study. Some of the techniques were discussed during the semi-structured interviews, and some of the techniques were observed during participant observation. One thing that was consistent across all groups was a sense of authority. The participants, whether it was the teaching artist or the classroom teacher, established themselves as the instructional leader giving instructions for the students to follow. In each setting, it was clear who the teacher was and who was the student. Each of the participants seemed to follow a predetermined plan of action. It did not appear that any of the lessons were being created on the spot. Further, all of the participants began with whole group instruction and then allowed time for individual student practice during their lessons.

Another instructional practice that was popular among each participant group was the use of call and response. When asked which type of teaching techniques worked best with their students, nearly all of the participants responded "call and response." They identified this as an effective strategy that they utilized quite often with the students. According to the participants, the students responded very well when the instructor presented a word or phrase to the whole group and then had the entire class respond in unison. In this regard, there were a few instances in which the participant educators seemed to follow a similar protocol for instructing their students. In addition, there were some distinct differences between the instructional strategies utilized by participant groups.

Instructional strategies used by classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop. The classroom teachers who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom were very adamant about addressing the diversity represented in their classrooms and incorporating multi-cultural resources into their lessons. Many of the classroom teachers in this participant group were bi-

lingual teachers. They demonstrated a concern and a heightened sensitivity towards English Language Learners. Additionally, the research site had a high population of Latino American students. As a result, the teachers in this participant group consistently discussed incorporation of resources, books, materials and experiences relative to Hispanic/Latino culture.

For example, participant Jessica, explained that, over the years, she had collected several trade books with Spanish characters and Latino characters to counterbalance the school supplied literature. She mentioned a story that she read in class about two children who lived on the border of Mexico and the United States. One child possessed documents to enter the U.S., and one did not. Participant Jessica also mentioned another book about a Latina girl who shared a bedroom with her five Latino brothers. Jessica explained that she incorporated these materials into the curriculum, because she felt that they had storylines that her students could relate to.

In similar fashion, participant Jasmine described a time when the topic of tamales was introduced in a story that she was reading in class. The story referenced tamales made in Mexico, but Jasmine is a native of Nicaragua. At that moment, she realized that it would be important to have a discussion about tamales, because Latino people from different regions may prepare the food differently. She encouraged her students to go home and ask their parents about the process for making tamales and the typical ingredients that they use, so that they could compare their findings with the story. She also encouraged them to bring in samples to share with the class. This participant felt very strongly about not only recognizing ethnic diversity within the classroom but also acknowledging the diversity within particular ethnic groups.

Along the same lines of recognizing diversity within a particular ethnic group, Participant Jessica spoke about the challenges of translation. She explained that sometimes there is no direct translation in English for some Spanish words and that the dialect or arrangement of words

spoken by various Latino cultures can vary. The bilingual teachers who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom were mindful of the variations in language and culture that exist and were cognizant of attempting to address this issue in their classroom in various ways. They have opted to have discussions among themselves, invite parents to the classroom, or simply employ aid from the students themselves. Participant Jessica was also careful to acknowledge the diversity among bilingual teachers. Some of the bilingual teachers are natives of Spanish countries, some of them speak Spanish but grew up in America, and some of them are non-Hispanic who learned Spanish as a second language; therefore, each of them may employ a different instructional approach based on their comfortability and experience with the Spanish language, which ultimately affects the instructional strategies and techniques that they adopt for classroom use.

   Instructional strategies of classroom teachers who used Hip Hop. The classroom teachers who used Hip Hop in the classroom employed a combination of traditional instructional techniques in conjunction with Hip Hop based pedagogy. One popular form of incorporating Hip Hop into the curriculum utilized by this participant group was the use of song lyrics. Both participant Brandon and participant Sam used Hip Hop song lyrics in their classroom but in quite different ways. Brandon explained that he searched YouTube for copies of lyrics of Hip Hop songs that have been released in mainstream radio. He then printed off several copies of the lyrics and read them in class with his students. While they read the lyrics, they applied various literary and reading strategies. For example, he employed pedagogy with Hip Hop by having his students read the song lyrics to find evidence of inference, main ideas, point of view, and tone. Participant Sam used song lyrics to expose students to new vocabulary and positive messages. He used a popular Hip Hop based program called "Flocabulary" that taught vocabulary through curriculum based Hip Hop songs recorded exclusively for educational purposes. As described by

Sam, these songs serve a dual purpose, because "not only are the students moving forward in their studies, but also there is a message of positivity embedded within the song." Again, these are two examples of how the classroom teachers who used Hip Hop mixed traditional instructional practice with Hip Hop based pedagogy.

   Instructional strategies of Hip Hop teaching artists. Whereas the classroom teachers adopted traditional approaches to instruction, the Hip Hop teaching artists employed some instructional techniques and strategies that were less traditional. While each Hip Hop teaching artist was a unique individual with his/her own methods for teaching, they all employed a very informal and conversational approach to teaching. Often, the tables or desks in the classroom were rearranged by the Hip Hop teaching artists to allow for more intimate, less structured environments. Students were highly encouraged to speak at will and express themselves vocally, which was quite a different approach than the expectations that were set by the classroom teachers. The open dialogue between the teaching artists and the students created a more informal setting that appeared like a group of friends spending time with one another, rather than a classroom teacher and her students.

   More specifically, there were a few instructional techniques that were unique to the teaching artists. There was a heavy emphasis on the use of music throughout the lessons. Music was the focal point in several of the Hip Hop teaching lessons that I observed for this research study. For example, while participant Kareem taught his lessons on spray can art, he continuously played songs by Bob Marley at a low volume in the background. The music played while he lectured, during the short field trip into the hallways, and while the students worked independently. Participant Seneca used music at various moments throughout his lesson on

freestyle rapping. He performed songs acapella for the students, he played songs for reference, and he led students in creating drum patterns using their desks.

Naturally, the Beatmaking teaching artists also used music extensively throughout their lessons. They introduced the concept of Beatmaking by leading the students in recreating drum sequences for popular songs like *"Billie Jean"* by Michael Jackson and *"We Will Rock You"* by Queen using their hands and feet. Then they played the actual tracks for the students to reference. They used keyboards, beat machines, and synthesizers to help the students create their own music. They taught basic math reasoning by counting and analyzing the rhythmic measures of songs and dividing it into fractional parts. They played music from all different types of genres, (i.e., rock, jazz, alternative, electronic dance, hip hop) to motivate and inspire the kids to make their own beats. Additionally, students were allowed to sing, rap, dance and improvise according to their comfort level.

Another unique activity used by nearly all of the teaching artists was incorporating a cipher into the lesson. During the cipher, the students took turns in a round robin style sharing what they have been learning or working on during the lesson. Everyone was given the opportunity to perform, improvise, play, or recite his/her work with the entire group. Positive feedback and cheers were exchanged after each sharing during the cipher. Each student was attentive and waited patiently for his/her opportunity to share during this time. The use of the cipher was a teaching strategy that was unique to this participant group. I did not witness anything of that caliber conducted by the classroom teachers. It was a portion of the lesson that the student participants were anxious to participate in and an opportunity for personal expression that they came to expect. It was as if the students were waiting for their time in the spotlight

during the cipher. It was not competitive, per se, but there was a sense of showmanship and pride in the air on the part of both the students and the teaching artists.

In short, there were a variety of instructional techniques exhibited by the research participants. Some strategies were common, and some were uncommon. Some were traditional, and some were non-traditional. Nevertheless, the teaching strategies were readily observable and openly discussed throughout this research study.

Summary of Thematic Analysis

The information, experiences, and teaching techniques of the research participants varied; however, among their differences were common themes interwoven throughout the data. The four common themes were (1) defining Hip Hop, (2) views, attitudes and beliefs, (3) benefits and challenges, and (4) instructional strategies.

Defining Hip Hop allowed participants to identify Hip Hop music and culture and determine the extent to which they utilized it as an instructional tool. Some participants had an expanded view of the definition of Hip Hop, while others closely associated Hip Hop with rap music. Participants were adamant about their understanding of Hip Hop or lack thereof, whether they recognized it as a culture, a musical genre, or a combination of both.

Overall, the research participants had favorable perceptions toward Hip Hop music and culture and its influence on the formation of positive youth identity. The participants mentioned such positive influences as: providing a platform for self-expression through the arts, highlighting cultural competencies of the students, a resource for building life lessons, a resource for teaching cultural history not often taught in traditional school settings, and raising student consciousness on choices of consumer production and consumption. The research participants viewed each of those things having a positive influence on shaping youth identity.

The views, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants toward the use Hip Hop in the classroom were generally positive in nature. Most participants agreed that using Hip Hop in the classroom could be beneficial; however, several participants voiced their concern for the lyrical content of the Hip Hop songs that are played on mainstream radio stations. Most of the participants consistently stated that the content of the majority of mainstream Hip Hop, or rap music, is not appropriate for classroom use.

Out of the discussion of participant views, attitudes, and beliefs arose conversations of the benefits and challenges of using Hip Hop in the classroom. Participants mentioned such benefits as active student engagement, classroom management, and building rote memory skills. Other participants suggested problem solving, critical thinking, and strengthening interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as benefits of using Hip Hop in the classroom. In sharp contrast, the participants mentioned time constraints, difficulty of incorporation and management of student behavior as challenges associated with using Hip Hop the classroom. In addition, the Hip Hop teaching artists described challenges with dispelling negative stereotypes, raising funds, and soliciting support in favor of it use.

Instructional strategies varied among participant groups. Participants were generally concerned with meeting the instructional needs of the students and addressing diversity of ethnic groups situated within the student population. Some participants went beyond customary duty by making a conscious effort to bring in multicultural materials that were not provided with the basic curriculum. The teaching artists allotted heavy emphasis on the use, awareness, and incorporation of music in various forms throughout their lessons. The teaching artists' approach to instruction was generally less formal than that of the classroom teachers. Overall, the participants took great care in the planning, preparation, and execution of their chosen teaching

techniques with goals of being effective educators. The conclusions, implications and recommendations that derive from the findings of this research study are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

This qualitative research study was designed to describe the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop towards the use of Hip Hop for nurturing positive youth identity. The study was conducted at Urban Bay Elementary school (pseudonym) in the Urban Bay Unified School District (pseudonym) located in the San Francisco Bay area. A review of literature (Au, 2005; Dimitriadis, 2004; Hall & Martin, 2013; Howard, 2001; Petchauer, 2009; Netcho, 2013; Siedel, 2011; Wakefield, 2006) revealed that use of Hip Hop pedagogy is relevant for teaching at all levels. While various topics of Hip Hop pedagogies have been researched at the collegiate, secondary and middle school levels (e.g., Clark, 2002; Drake, 2010; Hall & Martin, 2013; Love, 2009; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Pinckney, 2007; Rodriguez, 2009), research on the attitudes and perceptions of elementary school teachers towards the use of Hip Hop pedagogy was not found.

The research for this study was conducted using qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. In applied fields of practice such as education, Merriam (2009) reports that basic, interpretive study is the most common and most appropriate type of qualitative research. Constructionism, the ontological and epistemological process in which individuals construct reality through interactions within their social world, serves as the underlying research method for this qualitative study. According to Crotty (1998), meanings are constructed as people engage

with the world they are interpreting, which results in interpretive understanding related to a certain situation (Mertens, 2009). As described by Merriam (2009), analysis of the data in a qualitative research study is comprised of identification of recurring patterns, or themes that represent the data; those findings are identified themes supported by the research data from which they emerged.

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and examination of artifacts. Purposive sampling of a list of educators and teachers in residency at Urban Bay Elementary School was the means for participant selection. Interviews with 14 educators were conducted, recorded, and then transcribed for analysis. The participants consisted of seven classroom teachers (three who used Hip Hop in the classroom and four who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom) and seven teaching artists who teach elements of Hip Hop culture to students in the afterschool program. I used an Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987) format to engage the participants in conversations about Hip Hop culture at their elementary school. The Appreciative Inquiry approach to data collection allowed for creation of wording and sequencing of questions during the course of the interview. This approach also allowed me to probe and dig deeper into the phenomenon through the eyes of the participants.

The process of data analysis began with the initial interaction with participants and was ongoing throughout the study. Codes were developed to identify essential elements situated in the data, during multiple cycles of reading and reviewing the data, and writing analytic memos. As the list of codes grew throughout the data collection and initial analysis phases, I reflected on commonalities between the responses and actions of the participants. Extensive and thorough analysis of the data was conducted until saturation was achieved. Upon saturation, codes were

clustered to identify themes that were common among all participants and related the primary research question.

The primary research question for this study was: How do Hip Hop educators perceive the relationship between the core objectives of Hip Hop culture and student identity development? The secondary questions used to provide additional focus for the breadth of the study were: 1) How do Hip Hop teaching artists, regular classroom teachers, and classroom teachers who use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity? 2) What do these groups (e.g., Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop) perceive as the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy in educational settings? The following sections include general findings related to topics revealed in the literature review, implications and suggestions for interests groups, and suggestions for further research.

Conclusions: Relating Findings to the Research Questions

This section includes interpretation of the analysis of data collected from the fourteen research participants as it relates to the research questions. The findings are viewed through the lens of the theoretical underpinnings of this research study: Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995), Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1970), Multicultural Education (Banks, 2001), and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Relevant findings confirmed a wide range of attitudes, beliefs and perceptions among the participants as a result of the presence of Hip Hop in their school and are further explained in relation to the research questions.

Primary Research Question: How do Hip Hop educators perceive the relationship between the core objectives of Hip Hop culture and student identity development?

According to Fishbein (1975), attitude theory involves a person's attitude toward any object as a function of his beliefs about the object and implicit response associated with those beliefs. Attitudes are the catalyst that can cause a person to perform a specific action and perpetuate how a person discerns and gauges situations and other people (Fishbein, 1975). Additionally, Fishbein defined attitude as "a complex mental state involving beliefs, feelings and values" (Fishbein, 1975, p. 2). As stated by Fishbein, "belief, the driving force in people's minds, refers to a person's subjective probability of their world" (Fishbein, 1975, p.131). In describing belief theory, Fishbein (1975) argued that beliefs about an object provide the basis for the formation of an attitude toward the object. Therefore, attitudes and beliefs are co-relational and share similarities.

Value is "the importance that one attributes to oneself, another person, thing or idea"; *attitude* is "the way one thinks and feels about oneself, another person, thing or idea"; and *belief* is "part of a system that includes values and attitudes" (Saldana, 2009, p.89). Each of these three constructs share a complex exchange of thought, feeling and action (Saldana, 2009). The values, attitudes, and beliefs of the research participants combined to form their perceptions toward Hip Hop culture and youth identity.

A portion of their perception developed from either their knowledge or lack of knowledge of Hip Hop music and culture. Some of the participants were highly knowledgeable about Hip Hop, the history of Hip Hop, and the five foundational elements of Hip Hop. Other participants had blurred depictions of Hip Hop and rap music. While some participants identified rap as an element of Hip Hop, others considered rap and Hip Hop one in the same. The ability to

make a distinction between Hip Hop music, Hip Hop culture, and the elements of Hip Hop had considerable impact on the perception of the research participants towards Hip Hop and student identity. Those who considered Hip Hop as culture and could distinguish it from rap music discussed positive influences of Hip Hop on youth identity but also mentioned that mainstream rap music was not representative of the ideals and objectives of authentic Hip Hop culture. For example, one participant said:

> I think that when used properly, hip hop music and culture can be a very positive influence for our youth. The younger generation tends to gravitate towards the Hip Hop culture, celebrities, reality television, social media, etc. Because of this, Hip Hop culture can be used to help promote all types of positive things such as self-worth, pride, the importance of education, and numerous other things.

In contrast, those research participants who considered Hip Hop and rap as identical, emphasized that it was detrimental to positive youth identity development. Those research participants' perceptions of commercially produced pop culture rap songs were generally negative and labeled as "inappropriate for classroom use." In essence, the participants described the lyrical content of popular rap songs as in misalignment with the values, beliefs, attitudes that they prefer and/or are mandated to display in their classroom. Although the participants did acknowledge that not all Hip Hop is bad, there was an overwhelming response by most of the participants that the majority of the lyrical content in popular rap/Hip Hop songs is derogatory and, therefore, detrimental to youth identity development.

Secondary Research Questions #1-3: How do Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop on shaping positive youth identity?

As stated previously, the findings of this research study are viewed through the lens of a variety of theoretical underpinnings. The conceptual framework for this research study was strongly based on the theory of Culturally Responsive Teaching. The concepts and tenets of Culturally Responsive Teaching, also commonly referred to as Culturally Relevant Teaching, have been studied and developed by pedagogical theorists Dr. Geneva Gay and Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings over the past four decades. Generally speaking, Culturally Responsive Teaching refers to pedagogy that affirms the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups, makes connections between home and school experiences, uses a wide variety of instructional strategies that are aligned with different learning styles, teaches students to acknowledge and praise the cultural heritages of themselves and others, and incorporates multicultural resources into the curriculum routinely taught in schools (Gay, 2000).

There are six principles of Culturally Relevant Teaching 1) identity development, 2) equity and excellence, 3) developmental appropriateness, 4) teaching the whole child, 5) student-teacher relationships and 6) managing student emotions (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Schmidt, 2005). Evidence of and references related to the six principles of Culturally Relevant Teaching were found in varying instances throughout the data collected for this research study. These principles were most easily identifiable through specific words, actions, and behaviors of the research participants. Each of the six principles are further described and discussed as related to the research questions in the subsequent sections.

Identity development. According to Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011), the first principle, *identity development*, relates to the concept that teachers who are comfortable with themselves and teach within their identity and integrity are better able to make student connections and bring subjects alive. Strong student-teacher connection is critical when implementing Culturally Relevant Teaching in the classroom. The participants in this study had very strong and, at times, contrasting opinions regarding the influence of Hip Hop culture upon youth identity development. Each participant was quite clear about his/her own relationship with Hip Hop music and culture, how it may or may not have influenced his/her own identity, and the effect that is has on their current students. In terms of opinions and actions of specific participant groups, the Hip Hop teaching artists and those who used Hip Hop in the classroom had more favorable opinions than those who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom. Each group alluded to the fact that Hip Hop has some bearing on the identity development of the youth as described below in the following paragraphs.

All but one of the teaching artists mentioned and/or recalled their own personal early encounters with Hip Hop music and culture as youth. They suggested that Hip Hop music and culture has some of the same influences on youth today as it did when they were younger. As teaching artist Roger explained,

> Hip Hop and [certain aspects of the culture] is done in the context of community and identities are formed within the context of that community. Who am I in relation to you? Who am I in relation to myself? Who am I in relation to my community? It becomes a peer group of those who help me to define who and what I am.

This type of experience with Hip Hop music and culture promotes healthy identity development.

According to Roger, group activities such as Hip Hop beat making, emceeing, and b-boying create groups bonded by common interests, create a space for shared ideas, and create a space for positive support from peers.

Similarly, other teaching artists discussed and demonstrated the influences of Hip Hop music and culture on developing healthy, positive identities in youth. During observation of one of the afterschool sessions, Leslie, the dance instructor, pointed out the ways in which the Step Team brings out the personality, confidence, and self-esteem of the students. She emphasized that although they are all doing the same routine, each student is able to express himself/herself individually by approaching the movement in his/her own way. Yet, he/she still has to have the courage and the tenacity to perform the routine in front of others with very little guidance from the instructor. "Live performances," Leslie explains, "forces them to face their fears." Likewise, teaching artist and beat maker Chance, shared that when he first begins working with students they are often shy, unfamiliar with the equipment, and afraid to make mistakes. Yet, over time, as the students get more comfortable exploring the Hip Hop beat making process; they are able to overcome their self-critical, rebellious nature and open up more. Furthermore, a few other teaching artists referred to the expansion and personal growth that occurs when students get serious about developing their skills and mastering one of the elements of Hip Hop. Building confidence, self-esteem, exploration and personal growth are healthy traits associated with forming positive identities.

Not all of the participants had completely favorable opinions regarding the influence of Hip Hop music and culture on youth identity development. A total of 11 participants, seven classroom teachers representing both participant groups, those who used Hip Hop and those who did not use Hip Hop alike, as well as four Hip Hop teaching artists, had serious concern for the

popular, mainstream rap songs played on the radio and its influence on youth today. At the time of this research study, one very popular tune played on the radio was a song by O.T. Genasis entitled "I'm in Love with the Coco" (Atlantic Recording Corporation, 2014). The song had a catchy chorus over very heavy drum beats with lyrics that glorified the process for preparing and selling cocaine. While very popular with mainstream radio listeners, the mere content of the lyrics was considered inappropriate for school age youth by many of the research participants. Out of the 14 participants, 10 of them made reference to the song, whether directly or indirectly, as having a negative influence on youth identity development.

The major concern that the participants emphasized about the "Coco song" was the manner in which the students inadvertently and subconsciously recite the words to the song. Five participants used the word "mimicry" when describing their observation of the students. Classroom teachers and Hip Hop teaching artists alike mentioned that they felt that the young people just recite the words to the song because it is popular, but many of them have no real notion about the true meaning of the words. These participants felt that many of the youth do not have a clear understanding about what they are singing. For the students that do understand the lyrics, it sends a negative, anti-school, pro-delinquent message that is potentially being internalized by the youth. One teaching artist went as far to say that the lyrical content of songs such as "I'm in Love with the Coco" are dumbed down and intellectually debilitating. Jasmine, a classroom teacher who occasionally uses Hip Hop in the classroom, said that student mimicry of such songs are "self-destructive." From this vantage point, the identities of the students and the music that they choose to listen to are difficult to separate in the eyes of the participants.

Equity and excellence. Concepts of disposition, incorporation of multicultural curricular content, equal access and high expectations contribute to the second principle of Culturally

Relevant Teaching, *equity and excellence* (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011). The integration of excellence and equity in Culturally Relevant Teaching, is predicated upon establishing a curriculum that is inclusive of students' cultural experiences and setting high expectations for students to reach (Brown-Jeffy & Cooper, 2011; Schmidt, 2005). Consequently, equity and excellence in instruction was either highlighted or demonstrated as a priority by all participant groups in this study. There was not one participant group that favored equitable and quality instruction over the other group. All participants seemed consciously aware of the diverse ethnic groups represented within their classes and felt compelled to address the diversity in one way or another. They spoke about diversity, not only in race and ethnicity, but also in terms of learning styles. Throughout the interviews, some participants used words such as "inclusive", "community", and "same" to imply collectiveness and equity among students. They also used words and phrases such as "meaningful", "relevant", or "aligned with the curriculum" to describe the type of instruction that they felt students should receive.

My observations of the participants were perhaps the most telling in demonstrating the desire for equity and excellence in instruction among the research participants. I observed strategies and techniques utilized by both the Hip Hop teaching artists and the classroom teachers that were aligned with equity and excellence. The classroom teachers utilized best teaching practices such as differentiated instruction, small group instruction, randomized selection, and interactive writing. The Hip Hop teaching artists also utilized best practices such as proximity, small group instruction, real-world context, and use of technology. In addition, both the classroom teachers and the teaching artists were highly inclusive of all the students by making deliberate efforts to include everyone in the activity and purposely attempting to leave no one out. They did this by checking in with the students using such phrasing as "all eyes on me", "is

everyone with me"; or just redirecting student behavior when they were off task. Such actions by the research participants can be considered as relational to desire for developing positive identity in urban elementary students by affirming and validating their mere existence.

Developmental appropriateness - teaching the whole child. Within the context of Culturally Relevant Teaching, Brown-Jeffy and Cooper (2011) also contended that learning styles, teaching styles, and cultural variation in psychological needs (e.g., motivation, morale, engagement, and collaboration) define the third principle of Culturally Relevant Teaching, *developmental appropriateness*. The goal is to assess student cognitive development progress and incorporate learning activities that are challenging and culturally relevant. Similarly, the fourth principle of Culturally Relevant Teaching, *teaching the whole child* (Gay, 2000), includes the concepts of skill development in a cultural context, home-school collaboration, learning outcomes, supportive learning community and empowerment.

This research study was primarily concerned with Hip Hop music, Hip Hop culture and Culturally Relevant Teaching at the elementary school level. There are a number of studies concerning Hip Hop pedagogy at the secondary and collegiate levels, but very little research examines Hip Hop and elementary students. The research participants were well aware of the elementary student population with whom they worked and discussed topics of developmental appropriateness. For example, participant Josh spoke rather eloquently about Hip Hop education researchers and practitioners located in the San Francisco Bay Area whose work is centered-on literacy-based curriculums for secondary and college students. As described by Josh, Hip Hop Education at the secondary level is focused on critical conversations and critical writings about race, media literacy, and production and consumption within the context of Hip Hop music and culture. Such topics are potentially complicated for elementary students to comprehend. In

similar fashion, classroom teacher Cheryl suggested that the mere content of most popular rap songs is controversial and generally inappropriate for classroom use. Furthermore, sparking a conversation with elementary students regarding the lyrical content of the songs could pose challenges with immaturity of the students as well as preferences of their parents. As Cheryl explained,

> Some of the students just aren't ready to handle conversations about the lyrics. [Also] some of the parents don't want their children learning or talking about those type of things.

For the most part, developmental appropriateness of using Hip Hop in the classroom with elementary students was of concern for each of these research participants. Nevertheless, Hip Hop music and culture was also perceived as having some importance in the lives of the students and the culture of Urban Bay Elementary School through the mere fact that there was a Hip Hop based afterschool program offered at the school with seven Hip Hop teaching artists and three traditional classroom teachers who actually used Hip Hop in the classroom.

Student-teacher relationships. In alignment with concepts of caring, relationship, interaction and classroom atmosphere is the fifth principle of culturally Relevant Teaching, *student-teacher relationship*. Discussions and examples of student-teacher relationships, emerged in various ways throughout the data set of this research study. Ideas and comments regarding student-teacher relationship varied among research participant groups. Generally speaking, all of the classroom teachers who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom were transparent about the fact that they did not relate to their students very well regarding their interests in popular culture. This participant group described themselves as being "out of touch" and "relatively disinterested" in the mainstream songs most popular with their students. The

research participants in this group explained that most of their awareness of song titles came primarily from what they had witnessed or heard their students sing in and around the school campus.

On the contrary, the teachers who used Hip Hop in the classroom admitted that they were a little more informed about popular Hip Hop songs, because they took the time to research and become familiar with them. The teachers who used Hip Hop in the classroom, however, concluded that, more often than not, they were are unable to use those songs in the classroom due to inappropriate content. Being aware of the popular songs better equipped these research participants to understand the thought processes of the students.

The participant group most in tune with the popular culture of the students was the Hip Hop teaching artists. Many of the Hip Hop teaching artists described their knowledge of popular culture as a "gateway" for building student-teacher relationships. Nathan, Hip Hop Beatmaking teaching artist, shared that a discussion with a student about a popular song allows him to break down barriers faster than usual. Hip Hop teaching artist Roger said:

> Sharing my knowledge of rap and Hip Hop creates an instant point of connection with the youth. [The students open up to him more] as opposed to saying 'Oh you're an upper middle class white dude that I have nothing in common with.' It's more like we have something in common.

The comment above emphasizes one example of how the teaching artists utilized popular culture to build a student-teacher relationship.

All things considered, Hip Hop music and culture was perceived by most of the research participants as one means for developing a student-teacher relationship. Three of the participants

did not perceive Hip Hop as a means for developing student teacher relationships while 11

participants recognized it as an effective way to reach the students.

Managing emotions. Educator awareness of emotions and utilization of a sense of

cultural sensitivity when integrating culturally relevant material into the curriculum identifies the

sixth and final principle of Culturally Relevant Teaching, *managing emotions*. The participants

in this study made little reference to managing emotions other than the occasional mention of

concern for student behavior when playing Hip Hop music in the classroom. Two Traditional

classroom teachers who did not use Hip Hop music and culture mentioned that they had

experiences in the past where students usually had a high response to hearing Hip Hop or rap

songs in the traditional educational setting and tended to get very excited. As described by those

research participants, once the students are aroused, it was very difficult to calm them down and

regain control.

There was no discussion of the negative or positive emotions potentially displayed by

students as a result of interpreting song lyrics as the review of literature for this study suggested.

Perhaps the absence of such discussion may lie in the fact that the educators in this research

study worked primarily with elementary students. Ideally, the culturally responsive principle of

managing student emotion as associated with lyrical content is better associated with secondary

and postsecondary learners where they are perhaps more equipped to have critical conversation

about the social justice topics situated within Hip Hop song lyrics. As mentioned previously in

this study, the majority of the academic research pertaining to Hip Hop and education has been

conducted at the secondary and postsecondary level.

Generally speaking, the research participants perceived connections between Hip Hop

music and culture and youth identity development. As evidenced in the preceding paragraphs,

use of Hip Hop in the classroom is aligned with practices of culturally relevant teaching. Several participants recognized Hip Hop as a culture and emphasized the importance of incorporating that culture into the curriculum. Each of the participants identified Hip Hop music and culture as an influential force in the daily lives of the students. With the exception of their concerns for the lyrical content of the mainstream rap songs most popular in youth culture, the majority of the research participants perceived favorable influences of Hip Hop on shaping positive youth identity.

Secondary Research Question #4: What do these groups (e.g., Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop) perceive as the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy in educational settings?

As described by Professor Nolan Jones (personal communication, 2014), Hip Hop pedagogy is the art and science of teaching by using your Hip Hop sensibility to merge Hip Hop practice with educational philosophy. For learning to be effective, the delivery of the message should be relevant to the audience. The literature suggests that diverse students are not achieving because of cultural differences in the ways they learn best and the ways they are taught (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Therefore, experimentation and implementation of culturally relevant pedagogies (e.g., Hip Hop pedagogy) are being used as conduits for teaching ethnically diverse students more effectively (Gay, 2002).

Characteristics of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, such as *empowerment, liberation*, and *validation* (Gay, 2000), are used here to describe how the research participants perceived the benefits of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy into educational settings. In some instances, subliminal messages of empowerment were conveyed from the Hip Hop teaching artists to the

students through the text on their clothing. For example, I observed instructors wearing t-shirts that read "Hope Dealer" and "Got Goals?" Yet, in other instances, messages of empowerment were directly communicated to the students. Such was the case in which one of the research participants told the youth that "they have the power to create their own visual landscape," meaning that they are in control of their destiny and that they are fully capable of creating their own masterpiece of art.

Liberation was evident in the manner in which Hip Hop pedagogy was taught to the students. Whether it was used by classroom teachers or teaching artists, the approach was informal, inclusive, and conversational. Students were encouraged and allowed to be expressive. Moments in which rap music or other elements of Hip Hop were being utilized in educational settings were less structured. Students were able to move about freely, were given choices, and activities were student-centered. For example, in both the Beatmaking class and the Step Team dance class, students had the liberty to maneuver between stations and move from one group to the other. They were not restricted to working with the same group for the entire duration of the session, rather they had the freedom to move in and out of groups as they desired. Further, the students were often included in deciding the content and the direction of the lessons. Including the students in the decision making provided them with a liberty not often found in the traditional classroom setting.

While empowerment and liberation were viewed as benefits to some research participants, they were viewed as challenges to others. Using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as conduits for teaching them more effectively (Gay, 2002) caused challenges for some educators. Culturally Responsive Teaching requires teaching characteristics such as empathy, reflection about attitudes and beliefs of other

cultures, reflection about one's own cultural frame of reference, and knowledge about other cultures (Rychly & Graves, 2012). Two of the research participants in this study viewed students' excited responses toward the playing of Hip Hop music in the classroom as rowdy and unruly. They viewed any loud, vocal response and active body movement from the students in response to playing Hip Hop music in the classroom as difficult to manage.

Another concern, more consistently perceived by nearly all of research participants as a major challenge, was the lyrical content of mainstream rap music as found in popular culture. The lyrical content of mainstream rap songs was viewed as debilitating and inappropriate for classroom use by a majority of the research participants from each group, classroom teachers and teaching artists alike. The major concern was the mere mimicry of reciting the lyrics by the students. During my period of data collection, I observed a young student reciting the words to a popular rap song called "No Type" by American rap duo Rae Sremmurd that was being played on the radio at the time of this research study. The young boy sang:

I ain't got no life

Cups with the ice and we do this every night

I ain't check the price, Make my own money, spend how I like

Let my momma tell it, I ain't living right

It was clear and evident that the young student was just reciting the words as he remembered hearing them on the song. Although the words he sang were a bit out of sequence, they were relatively close to the original lyrics. The original version reads:

I ain't got no type, Bad bitches is the only thing that I like

You ain't got no life. Cups with the ice and we do this every night

I ain't check the price. I make my own money so I spend it how I like

I'm just living life, and let my momma tell it I ain't living right

(Interscope Records, 2014).

Notice that the young student interchanged the word "I" for the word "you" in one of the lines. In doing so, he changes the words from "you ain't got no life" to "I ain't got no life". Although, both interpretations have a negative connotation, using the word "I" inadvertently depicts a hopeless future for the young student. He is singing about living a lavish lifestyle of which his mother does not approve. For a young boy in elementary school who could not be older than 11 years old, it is disheartening for his teachers to hear him mimic and recite such a counter- narrative to the message of hard work and integrity taught in school. Thus, circumstances such as these further validate their concern and challenge of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy into the classroom setting. All in all, the research participants in this study perceived the implementation of Hip Hop pedagogy as both beneficial and detrimental, depending on the circumstance of its use.

Summary of Findings as Related to Multicultural Education

This study expands our knowledge of the perceptions of three distinct groups of educators (i.e., Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop) on influences of Hip Hop music and culture and positive youth identity. It also widens our understanding of how culturally relevant pedagogy can be represented through Hip Hop pedagogy. Using Hip Hop pedagogy is one way for educators to integrate culturally relevant content into the curriculum. As found with discussions of implementations of culturally relevant teaching practices (Ladson-Billings, 2014) the participants in this study demonstrated multiple levels of multicultural education infusion. The differences

within the participant groups resulted in differences in approaches to implementation of Hip Hop pedagogies resulting in varying levels of the multicultural education infusion.

For instance, the teachers who did not use Hip Hop in the classroom were essentially operating at the lowest level of multicultural education infusion which is contribution. At the contribution approach, content is limited to special days, weeks, or months related to ethnic events (Banks, 1990). This group of participants opted not to implement Hip Hop music and culture into their lesson planning which means that any recognition of Hip Hop culture in their classroom would only potentially occur at a specified time such as during Black History Month. The teachers who used Hip Hop in the classroom were adopting an additive approach to multicultural education infusion in which content, concepts, and themes were added to the curriculum without changing its structure (Banks, 1990). This participant group did not seek to transform or restructure the curriculum, rather they sought ways to fit Hip Hop pedagogy into what they were already teaching (e.g., canvassing the lyrics of a rap song for inferences and main ideas). Lastly, the Hip Hop teaching artists in this study were not only concerned with teaching the elements of Hip Hop culture but also with empowering students for making positive, healthy decisions. Essentially, the participants in this group were operating at the highest level of multicultural education, social action (Banks, 1990) infusion by having the students decide on important social issues and take action to solve them. In this study, the Hip Hop teaching artists assumed the role of facilitators, allowing the students to develop their own content and message (e.g., painting positive messages in graffiti style on mini replicas of mass transit trains). In short, each participant group presented a different view of culturally relevant teaching as related to their different approaches to multicultural education infusion.

Implications

      This study delineates the terms "hip-hop", "Hip Hop" and "rap" which had not yet been defined this thoroughly in a scholarly thesis on Hip Hop pedagogy or represented by such a diverse group of educators (i.e., Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop, and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop). Incidentally, the field of Hip Hop scholarship would benefit from educating the masses on a clear definition of Hip Hop culture and, in turn, Hip Hop pedagogy. Such a refined explanation is essential for classroom teachers who intend to use Hip Hop in the classroom. Although there are a myriad of books and articles currently in existence which discuss topics of Hip Hop and education (e.g., Comissiong, 2007; Dimitriadis, 2001; Emdin, 2010; Forman & Neal, 2012; Hill, 2009, Morrell & Duncan-Andrade; 2002; Runnel-Hall & Diaz; 2007; Siedel; 2011), as evidenced from the interview responses of the research study participants, there are several misconceptions and discrepancies about what Hip Hop is and is not. Some of the research participants consider rap and Hip Hop as the same, some of the research participants claimed that rap is an element of Hip Hop, and yet others were not quite clear about the distinction between rap and Hip Hop.

      If one were planning to adopt a Hip Hop pedagogy in the classroom, it would be necessary for him/her to be able to clearly articulate exactly what that would entail. Even within the field of Hip Hop scholarship, there are some discrepancies in the name by which Hip Hop pedagogy is called. Some scholarship refers to it as Hip Hop Pedagogy (Hill, 2009; Rodriquez, 2009), while other scholars refers to it as Hip Hop Based Education (Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Irby & Hall, 2011). The lack of ability to articulate and clearly distinguish between the terms "hip-hop", "Hip Hop", and rap essentially served as a barrier that influenced the levels at which the research participants were able to infuse Bank's continuum of multicultural education

(Banks, 1990). To move this pedagogy to a higher level in benefiting our youth and their identity, we must acknowledge potential barriers that could derail our efforts. It will be critical for authors and scholars to establish a consensus of how to best proceed with naming and presenting Hip Hop pedagogies to classroom educators in an effort to provide coherence and consistency and move the field of Hip Hop scholarship forward.

In addition to clearly articulating and defining Hip Hop as music and culture, it will become equally essential to promote and educate the masses about the foundational principles and practices of Hip Hop culture. On May 16, 2001, the International Hip Hop Declaration of Peace was presented to the United Nations headquarters in New York, NY (KRSONE, 2009). This document was signed by over 300 Hip Hop pioneers, artists, activists, authors, government officials, ministers, philosophers, students as well as organizations such as the Temple of Hip Hop, Ribbons International, and the United Nations educational, scientific, and Cultural organization (UNESCO) (2009). As stated by KRS ONE (2009),

> Through the principles of this Hip Hop Declaration of Peace we, Hiphop Kulture [see definition of terms in chapter 1, p.10], establish a foundation of Health, Love, Awareness, Wealth, peace and prosperity for ourselves, our children and their children's children, forever. For clarification of Hiphop's meaning and purpose, or when the intention is questioned; or when disputes between parties arise concerning Hiphop; Hiphoppas shall have access to the advice of this document, as guidance, advice, and protection (pp.552-553).

Several authors and scholars (Davidson, 2005; Ford, Grantham & Whiting, 2008; Ginwright, Hart & Risley, 1995; Paige & Witty, 2010; Paul, 2011; Steinburg, 2010) have discussed and proposed causes for the apparent academic achievement gap between White

students and students of color (e.g., African-American students, Latino-American students, Native American students). While academic achievement of particular student sub-groups are of major concern, the findings of this research study imply that there may not be so much as an achievement gap as there is a passion gap. Authors Maiers and Sandvold (2011) suggest that the overemphasis of school reformers and policymakers on testing and accountability is causing millions of students to mentally and emotionally disengage from learning. More simply stated, "Today's schooling is damaging the single most essential component to education – the joy of learning" (2011, p.1). A passion-driven classroom is one which incorporates practices of culturally responsive differentiated instruction (Metropolitan Center for Urban Education, 2008). A combination of the research, theory, and practice of culturally responsive teaching, coupled with responding to the needs of all learners through differentiated instruction, is a strong, viable answer to the disparity in academic achievement between ethnic groups.

Hip Hop pedagogies as demonstrated in this research study involved such instructional best practices as the use of differentiated classrooms (McTighe & O'Connor, 2005; Tomlinson, 1999) and culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995). These practices were perceived as having potential for effective use of Hip Hop culture in educational settings and fostering positive youth identity formation provided the Hip Hop music and culture being incorporated into the classroom is centered-on positive content and/or messages. The implementation of Hip Hop music and culture into the elementary classroom seemingly sets a foundation for igniting a lifelong student-driven passion for learning based on the interests and culture of the student. Generally, the educator participants in this research study supported the use of positive, appropriate Hip Hop music and elements of Hip Hop culture in the classroom because it is relevant for all students, regardless of race (e.g., Black or White) or residence (e.g.,

urban or rural). In essence, the language and culture of Hip Hop is directly associated with popular youth culture.

The findings of this study revealed that as traditional classroom teachers began to seek ways in which they can adopt and utilize Culturally Relevant Teaching strategies such as incorporating Hip Hop music popular in youth culture, they found it difficult to find music that was appropriate for classroom use. This implies that traditional classroom teachers are incorrectly defining Hip Hop pedagogy as being the sole use of hip-hop music and/or rap music in the classroom. There are eight other elements of Hip Hop culture including graffiti, deejaying, emceeing, b-boying, street fashion, street language, and street entrepreneurism that were not mentioned or considered by the traditional classroom teachers as resources for use with Hip Hop based pedagogies. The classroom teachers explained that it was very difficult to find Hip Hop music with clean, positive messages that could be used in the classroom.

The Hip Hop teaching artists did not mention any difficulty in finding appropriate music to use in the classroom setting. Consequently, the Hip Hop teaching artists voiced their concerns for the messages conveyed in popular, mainstream media as having negative influences on youth identity development. Such findings suggest that not only does the knowledge of the variety of ways in which to implement Hip Hop pedagogy and the types of material available for classroom use needs to be increased but also deeper awareness of more socially conscious, positive rap music is necessary.

In summary, there are implications resulting from the findings of this qualitative research study that suggest that use of Hip Hop based pedagogy in the classroom is in alignment with the principles of culturally relevant pedagogical practices, knowledge of Hip Hop music and culture by educators working with urban elementary students lacks clarity in its definition, and serious

concern for the lyrical content and visual images portrayed in popular mainstream hip-hop music exists among all educators. Nevertheless there are resources that exist for educators, students and activists who are intentional about preserving the guiding principles of Hip Hop culture such as the Hip Hop Declaration of Peace.

Recommendations

This qualitative research study sought to describe the perceptions of elementary school teachers toward the use of Hip Hop culture in the classroom and shaping positive youth identity. Through interviews and participant observation, this study explored the ideas and practices of Hip Hop teaching artists, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop in the classroom, and classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop in the classroom. There are a number of possibilities for how the research may be continued or expanded. In my professional opinion, there are three key areas that would benefit from more extensive scholarship.

First, it would be interesting to expand this research study to include elementary teachers and Hip Hop teaching artists from varying regions of the country. The scope of this study was limited to one specific school located in one specific region. It would be interesting to compare the results of a similar study of educators in other major cities, where Hip Hop culture is known to have a strong presence such as Los Angeles, CA; Houston, TX; Atlanta, GA, New York, NY; Chicago, IL; and Philadelphia, PA.

Secondly, some may argue that the impact of Hip Hop culture differs between urban youth culture and rural youth culture. Following the completion of this research study, I wonder to what extent are teachers in rural educational settings utilizing Hip Hop culture? In what ways? What are the perceptions of rural elementary school teachers toward the use of Hip Hop in the

classroom and positive youth identity? Expanding this research to include rural areas would provide further insight into the impact of Hip Hop culture as popular youth culture.

Thirdly, the lack of clarity in usage of terminology related to Hip Hop as demonstrated by the research participants emphasizes a need in the field of education to distinguish the difference between "rap", "hip-hop", and "Hip Hop." It is recommended that any professional development related to the field of Hip Hop studies begin with clearly defining what we mean when we say "Hip Hop" and clearly articulating what is meant by Hip Hop pedagogy. All future scholarly writings on the topic of Hip Hop should follow the guidelines on terminology of Hip Hop that have been so eloquently outlined in the *Gospel of Hip Hop* (KRS ONE, 2009).

Lastly, the field of Hip Hop scholarship is heavily saturated with qualitative research studies. As more school districts adopt and use Hip Hop based pedagogies within the classroom, it will be necessary to track the longitudinal academic progress of the students involved in such programs. Administrators and policymakers will want to know the manners in which Hip Hop pedagogies are effective in increasing academic success in students. How is it measurable? Which Hip Hop pedagogies are most effective with students? Such questions remain to be answered through extensive quantitative research.

Summary

The outcomes of this study are not intended to produce generalizable knowledge; rather, they provide examples documenting the perceptions of elementary educators towards the use of Hip Hop to foster positive youth identity development. To make general claims about perceptions of Hip Hop culture and its impact on youth identity development in elementary schools, the sample sites and participants must be expanded. Analysis of the commonalities and differences in perception of the 14 participants uncovered themes which potentially apply to

other elementary educators who are teaching artists, who use Hip Hop in the classroom, or who do not use Hip Hop in the classroom. Rich description was used to provide each of the participants' experiences in an effort to allow other educators to consider the transferability and applicability of the concepts and activities presented in this study to their own instructional practice.

Reflection

Conducting this qualitative research was a life experience that has affected me, both professionally and personally. On a professional level, it has allowed me to hone and refine research skills such as active listening, detailed note-taking, interviewing technique, data analysis, analytic memoing, interpersonal communication, time management and academic research writing. On a personal level, I feel that I have grown in areas such as patience, tenacity, commitment, and resilience. Not to mention that I have made new friendships and acquaintances that I intend to continue in personal relationship with for many years to come. Midway through my involvement in this research study, I experienced a time of personal reflection and soul searching that has ultimately brought me to an epiphany of my authentic self. One of the books that I read as part of my literature review has profoundly influenced my life, *The Gospel of Hip Hop*, (KRS One, 2009). This text helped me to come to the realization that "I am Hip Hop" (2009, p.643) and "Rap is something that you do, [but] Hip Hop is how you live" (2009, p.643). Now, more than ever before, I am dedicating my life to the education, practice, and preservation of Hip Hop as culture.

It was enlightening to hear the responses and comments of the research participants as they spoke candidly about their perceptions of Hip Hop culture and its relationship to positive youth identity formation. I learned that people have varying perspectives of what is and is not

Hip Hop and how important it is to clarify specifically what one is referring to when they say the word "Hip Hop." Not only in general conversation but also in relationship to its use in education. I found it intriguing that several of the research participants who represented cross-cultural, multi-generational demographics each had similar opinion regarding the appropriateness or lack thereof of certain mainstream rap songs for use in the classroom setting. Their opinion on the subject confirmed for me that elementary educators and teaching artists working with elementary students are generally cognizant of moral and ethical boundaries for presenting material in the classroom. What needs more attention is consideration for the various cultures represented within one classroom and expanding cultural relevancy to include such cultures as Hip Hop.

In Closing

It is apparent that Hip Hop culture is one of the most visible youth popular cultures represented in the media today. There is a sense of urgency that resonates within Hip Hop culture that is psychologically seductive and infectious (Powell, 2006). Hip Hop culture is cross-cultural, strongly influencing minorities (e.g., African-American, Latino American) as well as European-American youth (Kitwana, 2005). Through movements on social media such as the weekly educational blog on Twitter, #HipHopEd, progressive educators around the globe are brainstorming ways to utilize Hip Hop culture in the regular education classroom to facilitate discussion and differentiate instruction. Equally growing in popularity are educational forums and conferences centered on notions, concepts, and practices of Hip Hop Pedagogy (e.g., Hip Hop Education STEMposium, University of Toronto; Hip Hop Literacies Conference, Ohio State University; Hip Hop in the Heartland Summer Institute, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Hip Hop Education Think Tank, NYU-Steinhardt).

At the time of this study, while one element of Hip Hop, (i.e., rap music), continues to gain in popularity and commercial success worldwide, the culture of Hip Hop maintains its original ties to social justice issues and community activism as Hip Hop artists, musicians, dancers, deejays, organizers, and educators join efforts in holding rallies and marches in defense of victims of officer involved shootings (e.g., the Ferguson is Everywhere Concert, August, 9, 2015, marking the one year anniversary of the death of Mike Brown in Ferguson, MO).

At the time of writing this reflection (July, 2015), a search in the ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database resulted in 14,102 hits for dissertations and papers related to the topic of Hip Hop and education written between the year 2000 and 2015. Therefore, the field of Hip Hop studies is viable, rapidly growing, and worthy of attention to educators and teachers at all levels. However, with increasing numbers of younger generations of students who do not know a life without the presence of Hip Hop music and culture influencing youth popular culture, it is equally imperative to continue and expand research of the impact and potential of Hip Hop culture on elementary aged children. I propose that some aspects of Hip Hop culture are becoming less and less a subculture and more of a way of life, understanding, and being for American youth. Anything that educators can do to reinvent Culturally Relevant Teaching practices to reflect the core principals of Hip Hop culture, "peace, love, unity, and having fun," (Bambaataa, 2006) can only promote healthier identity development in our youth.

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Appendix A: Letter to the Principal

Dear Principal:

 Greetings from Georgia! Your school was recommended as a potential site for conducting my research study in fall 2014. I am hoping that you will consider allowing me to conduct my dissertation work in your school and my goal from this email note is to introduce myself and schedule a time we could talk on the phone.

 Currently, I am a doctoral student in the School Improvement Program at the University of West Georgia. Professionally, I have taught public school students: 7 years' experience at the elementary level and 3 years' experience at the high school level. I also have an affinity and passion for Hip-Hop music and culture and I've often found myself incorporating elements of Hip Hop into my own instructional methods and techniques as a classroom teacher.

 To give a quick overview of my planned study, I would like to observe the integration of Hip Hop pedagogical methods as implemented through teaching artists and traditional teachers in your school. I anticipate visiting the school between 10 and 15 times for approximately 2 hours per visit. In addition, I would attempt to interview the teachers. Again, this study is in its early stages and may be altered as I continue to develop the research proposal this summer.

 I would like to further discuss the Hip Hop based activities offered at your school and hear your goals and interests. I am almost certain this current email is part of a larger process. In addition, my university has strict research requirements which I will be obligated to follow. Nevertheless, I am excited about the opportunity to discuss conducting research related to the unique, culturally relevant experience of integrating Hip Hop into the classroom for students at your school.

 I would appreciate it if you would consider speaking to me about my study at your earliest convenience. You can call me anytime at (909) 567-9467 between 8am and 7pm (Pacific). If there is a good time for me to call you, please let me know when and what number to call.

 Thank you for taking the time to consider my request and I hope to hear back from you soon.

With gratitude,

Kelly D. Williams
Student, University of West Georgia
hiphopdocteur@hotmail.com

Appendix B: Initial Email to Possible Participants

Hello_____,

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating teacher perceptions of Hip Hop culture and youth identity formation.
The study is being conducted by Kelly D. Williams, a doctoral candidate within the School Improvement program at University of West Georgia, located in Carrolton, GA. I am completing this study under the guidance of Dr. Barbara Kawulich to fulfill requirements for the doctoral degree.
The research study focuses on the perceptions of Hip Hop based teaching artists and elementary school teachers toward the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping youth identity. Researchers, administrators, and educators have been interested in culturally relevant instructional practices that increase engagement and motivation for underrepresented, minority students. I commend the work in progress at your school of implementing and exploring Hip Hop pedagogies both during both regular school and after school hours.
You were selected because you fit one of the following criteria for participation in this study: teaching artists who use Hip Hop, classroom teachers who use Hip Hop, or classroom teachers who do not use Hip Hop. I believe that you have a valuable perspective that may contribute beneficial information to others in the educational field.
This research study has been approved by the University of West Georgia. I seek to identify perceptions, benefits and challenges of using Hip Hop to teach elementary-aged students. Participation in this study is voluntary and I hope that you will consider participating in this study to expand the knowledge base for your profession.
If you are willing to participate, please do the following:
- Consult the attached informed consent form document to see how your confidentiality will be maintained
- Review the attached calendar and select a 1st and 2nd choice date/time for our interview
- Reply to this email that you are willing to participate and supply a telephone number at which you may be reached

I sincerely thank you in advance for your time and consideration. Your participation will make this research study possible. If you have questions or concerns about this research study, or any related proceeding, please feel free to contact me at (909) 567-9467.
Sincerely,
Kelly D. Williams, Ed.D. Candidate
University of West Georgia

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

UNIVERSITY *of*
West Georgia.

CONSENT FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TO PARTICPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

STUDY TITLE: Using Hip Hop Culture to Reinvent Culturally Relevant Pedagogy
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Kelly D. Williams
    UWG DEPARTMENT: School Improvement
    PHONE: (909) 567-9467
    EMAIL:hiphopdocteur@hotmail.com
SUPERVISING UWG FACULTY (if PI is a UWG student):   Dr. Barbara Kawulich
    DEPARTMENT: College of Education
    PHONE: (678) 839-6135
    EMAIL: bkawulic@westga.edu

Purpose of the study:
The purpose of this qualitative study is to describe the perceptions of Hip Hop teaching artists and classroom teachers toward the use of Hip Hop culture in shaping positive youth identity.
Procedures to be followed:
Interview Procedures
You are being asked to participate in a telephone/Skype interview, describing your perceptions toward the use of Hip Hop culture for shaping positive youth identity. The interview will be semi-structured and may last up to 30-45 minutes (depending on your needs). The interview will be conducted and recorded via internet technology and software.

Member Checking of Interview Transcripts/Notes
After the interview, I will send you a typed summary of the interview. You will be invited to read over it and send additional feedback through email or for further interviewing/discussing in a synchronous manner. Additionally, the original interview may elicit further questions, which I may pose to you through email or other means. Your participation in this study will continue to be optional, based on your comfort and availability.
Observation

If applicable, you are being asked to allow for observations of your instructional techniques and practices, according to your role as it relates to the SW(AG)^2 program (classroom teacher who uses Hip Hop, classroom teacher who does not use Hip Hop, or Hip Hop teaching artist). Observations will take place during each program session for a period of 3 weeks. The focus of the observations will remain solely on the teachers and Hip Hop teaching artists, not the students.

Time and duration of the study:
The study will take place from Feb.1, 2015, through April 30, 2015. I would like to conduct all interviews in March, 2015. The estimated time to complete the interview is 30-60 minutes. Some participants require more time, and some participants need less time.

Discomforts or risks:
Minimal risks are anticipated as a result of your participation. The researcher believes there are no known risks associated with this study. There may be uncommon or previously unforeseen risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

Benefits of the study:
Research is designed to benefit society by gaining knowledge. As a participant in this research study, the researcher believes that the information produced will improve the quality of instruction and types of services provided for all children in public schools. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study.

Compensation:
You will not receive anything for taking part in this study

.How will your privacy be protected?
The principal investigator will have access to the data collected. Actual participant names will not be used in the study; rather, participants will be referred to using pseudonyms. Participant input is used only for the purpose of the study. You should also know that while every effort will be made to keep research records private and information confidential, there may be times when federal or state law requires the disclosure of records. This is very unlikely, but if disclosure is required, UWG will take steps allowable to protect your personal information. In some cases, the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) may inspect study records as part of its auditing program, these reviews will only focus on the researchers and not on your responses or involvement. All data and documentation pertaining to this study will be stored for three years. After three years, the documentation will be destroyed.

Participation:
You are being asked to take part in this research study. Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty. You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research.

Questions about the research study: If you have questions about this research study or any research related problems, you may contact the researcher or faculty advisor listed above.

Questions about your rights as a research participant:
To contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Operations Compliance for answers to questions about the rights of research participants or for privacy concerns please email irb@westga.edu or contact the UWG Compliance Officer, Charla Campbell, at 678/839-4749 or charlac@westga.edu.

Participant Agreement:

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I have kept a copy of this informed consent statement for myself. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Research Team Member   Date
Obtaining Consent

___Kelly D. Williams_____
Printed Name of Researcher

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Target participants: consenting adult teaching artists, teachers using Hip Hop, and teachers not using Hip Hop
Professional information

Type of educator: Years educating:
Years at current school: Years using Hip Hop:
Majors/Specializations degrees held: Highest degree held:
Age: Race/Ethnicity: Gender:
Research Question: How do educators perceive the relationship between Hip Hop music and culture and student identity development?
Sub-questions:
1. How do Hip Hop teaching artists, teachers who use Hip Hop, and teachers who do not use Hip Hop perceive the influence of Hip Hop culture on shaping positive youth identity?
2. What do these groups perceive as the benefits and challenges of implementing Hip Hop pedagogy in educational settings?

Interview questions
Stage 1: Discover
Tell me about your knowledge of Hip Hop?
How do you define Hip Hop?
What is the difference, if any, between rap and Hip Hop?
What are elementary students' understanding of the difference between rap and Hip Hop?
Describe your relationship or affiliation with Hip Hop.
Stage 2: Dream
How do you view Hip Hop culture?
In what ways does Hip Hop culture influence the formation of positive youth identity?
In what ways is Hip Hop culture present at your school?
How is Hip Hop culture manifested in your classroom?
How would you describe the importance of Hip Hop culture to elementary school students?
Stage 3: Design
What strategies can be used to reach ALANA students who are influenced by Hip Hop but lacking in active classroom participation?
What is this school doing to address the presence of Hip Hop culture?
What are the benefits of implementing Hip Hop based pedagogy into the curriculum?
What are the challenges of implementing Hip Hop based pedagogy into the curriculum?
Stage 4: Deliver
Tell me about the differences in assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs amongst faculty and staff towards the influence of Hip Hop culture in students' lives.

In what ways is there a gap between the cultural and linguistic experiences of the students and the instructional materials and methods used at this school?

What can be done, or what has been done to bridge this gap?

Provide examples of culturally relevant strategies or techniques that you have used to promote healthy social, emotional, and/or academic development for students.

Appendix E: Generic Observation Guidelines

Merriam (2009) cites the physical setting, participants, activities and interactions, conversation, subtle factors, and your own behavior (pp. 120-121) as important elements to include in an observation.

Merriam's Questions to Guide Observation

Focus	Relevant Questions
The Physical Setting	What is the physical environment like? What is the context? What kinds of behavior is the setting designed for? How is space allocated? What objects, resources, technologies are in the setting?
The Participants	Describe who is in the scene, how many people, and their roles. What brings these people together? Who is allowed here? Who is not here who would be expected to be here? What are the relevant characteristics of the participants? Further, what are the ways in which the people in this setting organize themselves?
Activities and Interactions	What is going on? Is there a definable sequence of activities? How do the people interact with the activity and with one another? How are people and activities connected? What norms or rules structure the activities and interactions? When did the activity begin? How long does it last? Is it a typical activity, or unusual?
Conversation	What is the content of the conversations in this setting? Who speaks for whom? Who listens?
Subtle Factors	Are these present: Informal and unplanned activities Symbolic and connotative meanings of words Nonverbal communication such as dress and physical space Unobtrusive measures such as physical clues 'What does not happen' (from Patton, 2002, p. 295)—especially if it ought to have happened.
Your Own Behavior	How is your role, whether as an observer or an intimate participant, affecting the scene you are observing? What do you say and do?

Focus	Relevant Questions
	In addition, what thoughts are you having about what is going on?