

Rewriting the Remix

College Composition and the Educational Elements of Hip-Hop

James Braxton Peterson

Composition courses at universities tend to employ a wide range of thematic content that is often dependent upon who is teaching them. As scholars of Hip Hop culture continue to enter into and thrive within the academy, the advent of formal innovations of composition courses that reflect the scholarly interests of this growing group of composition pedagogues continues steadily. In this context, the emergence of Hip Hop themed composition courses has been inevitable. Hip Hop composition is not, in this chapter, about composing or performing rap lyrics as a means of learning how to compose descriptive, argumentative, analytical, persuasive, or research-based papers. Instead, Hip Hop composition explores various aspects of Hip Hop culture in order to engage the learning processes involved in becoming strong(er) writers and continuous critical thinkers.

This chapter establishes pedagogical and theoretical foundations for the thematic utility of Hip Hop culture in composition courses. These pedagogical foundations rest upon the aesthetic utility of specific elements of Hip Hop culture (such as MCing or DJing) and the intuitive relationships that these elements have with education generally as well as with certain writing/composition techniques specifically (e.g., brainstorming or authorship itself). Hip Hop culture's educational potential and its pedagogical potential in the composition classroom rely heavily on rap music's obsession with language, wordplay, and various linguistic interactions. Many scholars employ the West African term *nommo* to capture this emphasis on the power of the word (Meachum, 2003; Smitherman, 1997). However, the crux of the pedagogical argument is that Hip Hop culture presents numerous opportunities for teachers to leverage popular culture in order to make instructive interventions in the composition classroom.

Hip Hop scholars and, in fact, one of the culture's founding figures, Afrika Bambaataa, argue that the "fifth element" of Hip Hop culture is knowledge. This assertion is predicated on a range of epistemic considerations that are generated through Hip Hop discourses that articulate the artistry and aesthetics in the foundational elements as well as the knowledge that underpins our best comprehension of the culture's history, its relationship to politics, and its emergence in certain socioeconomic circumstances. In this chapter, the fifth element is situated atop the list of what I am referring to as Hip Hop's educational elements: *knowledge*, *consciousness*, *search and discovery*, and *participation*.

THE EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS OF HIP HOP CULTURE

Hip Hop culture as a whole consists of four main expressive elements. Since the early/mid-1970s, these elements have been MCing/rapping, DJing, b-boying/b-girling, and writing graffiti. Although there is direct educational capacity in the literal elements of Hip Hop, less attention has been paid to how education is implicitly framed through Hip Hop culture, or what I call the educational elements of Hip Hop. These four educational elements consist of the following: 1) knowledge, 2) consciousness, 3) search and discovery, and 4) participation. Together with the foundational elements of Hip Hop, the educational elements underwrite many initiatives that bring Hip Hop culture into classrooms at different levels of schooling and across various disciplines. Importantly, these educational elements are not disconnected from the traditional four elements of Hip Hop. Rather, the educational elements derive from the sensibilities, mindsets, and approaches embedded in the four main expressive Hip Hop elements, or what Petchauer (2009) calls "hip-hop aesthetic forms" (p. 961).

Knowledge

Knowledge in (or of) Hip Hop is one of the authenticating principles of the culture's constituents. Much as in jazz or other forms of Black musical culture, the denizens of Hip Hop pride themselves on an ability to reproduce the facts, information, and/or what is known about the culture. This practice has been buttressed by an array of other cultural/social practices such as Hip Hop's overall competitiveness, an infusion of influences from certain philosophical entities such as the 5% Nation of Gods and Earths, and an abiding protectiveness of the culture from exploitation and external appropriation.¹ The knowledge educational element of Hip Hop culture also assumes its traditional meaning of skills and information cultivated (and learned) through education and experience. Thus, the concept of mastery, exemplified via monikers such as "Grand Master," pervades each of the foundational elements. The artisans and organic historians of

the culture demonstrate the wealth of knowledge generated through the practice of any of the foundational elements as well the history that shapes the development of the culture overall. Moreover (and in addition to), this elemental-based knowledge is complemented by the experiential content that Hip Hop music proffers to its constituents.

One of the most widely known verbal purveyors of (experiential content-based) knowledge in Hip Hop culture, Carlton Ridenhour (Chuck D) of Public Enemy, once famously quipped that rap music was Black folk's CNN. This oft-quoted analogy between rap music and the first 24-hour cable news network suggests a number of important parallels about the kind of knowledge particular to Hip Hop. First, it suggests the continuous transfer of information among enclaves of Hip Hop culture the world over. Chuck D was suggesting that the multimedia developments of the information age, in conjunction with Hip Hop culture's explosive popularity, were formulating an international network of informational exchange through various media platforms (e.g., Internet, TV, radio, CDs, and DVDs). Second, a central aspect of Chuck D's equation of Hip Hop with a Black CNN is that Hip Hop was (and in some ways still is) an information source for Black folk. Golden era Hip Hop narratives of power relationships, inner-city poverty, gang violence, and police brutality provided intricate insights into the lived experiences of Black folk across the United States. Still today, the music of the culture is a source of information on the experiences of Black folk around the world in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Within this parallel is the vital point that knowledge within Hip Hop is most frequently a counternarrative to the mainstream news media. That is, Hip Hop is not simply a rich news/information source; it also often challenges the dominant and hegemonic mainstream media platforms.

This educational element has implications for classrooms in general, but it also has precise implications for composition classrooms. One of the ways in which we cultivate critical thinking in the composition classroom is through substantive discussions about current events. Twenty-first-century college students can often be encouraged to engage in continuous critical thinking when they are challenged to interrogate the various media with which they regularly interface. Music is one such form among many, and Hip Hop music proffers a litany of examples to work with in terms of experiential content that, in turn, invites critical thinking on relevant and/or important issues. For almost any topical issue that affects the communities from which Hip Hop culture derives, an artist will craft lyrics that address the issue and/or inform the listeners about the issue. Some examples of songs that do just this are Jay-Z's (2006) "Minority Report" and Lil Wayne's (2006) "Georgia Bush," which address the political aspects of Hurricane Katrina's impact on New Orleans.

One can only imagine how often the Trayvon Martin case came up in college classrooms during the spring 2012 semester. Issues/cases such as these are opportunities to bring Hip Hop directly into the composition classroom in

order to facilitate critical discussions on relevant issues. In my own Hip Hop Culture and Composition courses I regularly bring in lyrics, play songs, or show music videos as points of entry into complex discussions. Although there are too many songs/tributes made specifically to address the Martin case to list here, one selection that I used was Reef the Lost Cauze's 2012 "The Prey (For Trayvon & My Son)," a bleak reimagining of the final minutes of Trayvon Martin's life. Reef the Lost Cauze is an "underground" Philadelphia rapper whose music often chronicles local inner-city life. While his rap moniker alone is enough consideration for an engaging discussion around Hip Hop culture, nihilism, and urban life, his lyrics in "The Prey" recount a version of the events leading up to Trayvon Martin's death, make allusions to historical racism, and outline the practices of institutional racism and police brutality. The epilogue to the song quotes (i.e., samples or excerpts) comments made by Charles Dutton's character in the now-classic Hughes brothers' 1993 film *Menace II Society*. In a cautionary conversation with several of the film's protagonists, young Black men who are inherently seen as society's menace, Dutton's character states the following: "The hunt is on. And you're the prey." The use of this quote in "The Prey" is an important opportunity for composition students to learn and appreciate the value of a well-researched and well-placed quote in terms of developing (or in this case, initiating) their arguments or compositional discussions. It also serves the purpose of opening up a discussion about the vilification of inner-city youth and the institutional challenges that continue to afflict young Black men in America—all of which requires knowledge of these institutions and practices, the film that is quoted here, and some of the reporting on the case itself.

Some of the most common counternarratives that Hip Hop offers deal with the reporting of violence in urban communities and, in the case above, a gated middle-class community. These counternarratives matter because too often the most prevalent reports of violence in urban communities center on various pathologies and deficit explanations for people of color. The knowledge conveyed through Hip Hop often renders a more sophisticated view of violence, including an acknowledgment of social inequalities, an engagement with historical racial violence, and the social toxins that help sustain violence in the present. This type of knowledge from Hip Hop ultimately results in knowledge of self. That is, exposure to the counternarratives and information from Hip Hop (regardless of one's racial identification) feeds and shapes one's understanding of self with relationship to systems of power and oppression in the world.

Consciousness

Directly related to knowledge is consciousness. In this way, consciousness is knowledge of self, one's surroundings, as well the social and/or historical forces at play in one's existence. For Hip Hop, an important aspect of the educational

element of consciousness resides at the heart of the continuing debates about the content of the music. The rampant misogyny, consumerism, and violence in most popular manifestations of the culture are often critiqued based upon the assumption that a certain level of consciousness about social conditions is central to Hip Hop culture. This old school (1970s to mid-1980s) or golden era (mid-1980s to mid-1990s) bias sometimes obscures the rich corpus of underground/grassroots Hip Hop not readily available on mainstream platforms for the music (Peterson, 2006). That said, consciousness is an important element for educators interested in employing Hip Hop in the classroom because it flies so forcefully in the face of the anti-intellectual nature of popular culture in general and mainstream representations of Hip Hop specifically.

A tremendous amount of Hip Hop artistry is dedicated to articulating place and space. Forman's (2002) *The Hood Comes First* is a scholarly monograph dedicated to this phenomenon in the music. At its core, the consciousness educational element of Hip Hop culture requires awareness of one's immediate surroundings, but consciousness also features other relevant issues and learning opportunities beyond the space/place awareness factor. This element, more so than any other educational element, implies a commitment to social justice. In fact, consciousness in most Hip Hop "circles" suggests knowledge of institutional and historical forms of oppression as well as a dedicated interest in addressing and reforming the societies that continue to support forms of oppression. Although there are, again, a litany of examples from which an instructor may choose songs that wrestle with consciousness from a Hip Hop perspective, one of the more light-hearted means of tapping into the potential in this particular educational element, I find, comes from Aaron McGruder's *The Boondocks*.

The Boondocks is an animated series and a serialized, nationally syndicated comic strip. The strip and the series are equal parts urban/Hip Hop humor and sociopolitical commentary via satire and, more often than not, direct attacks on some of the more egregious purveyors of Black pathology in the eyes of McGruder—like R. Kelly or Black Entertainment Television (BET). However, the series offers some productive opportunities for the composition classroom, student writing, and critical thinking. The title of the strip and series gestures directly toward the consciousness of place so prevalent in Hip Hop discourses—artistic and in everyday language. The "boondocks" refers to a place far away from the 'hood or inner-city existence. The distance is geopolitical in the sense that the "boondocks" is further away from the urban world in class or station than it is in plain geography. The main characters of *The Boondocks*, Huey and Riley, are brothers who (together) essentially reflect a sort of 21st-century Hip Hop double consciousness. Riley exudes a thug mentality, he is antisociety, and he devises violent means to steal material items so often lauded in Hip Hop music. Huey (like his founding Black Panther party member namesake, Huey P. Newton) is sociopolitically conscious. Both brothers are voiced by actress Regina King, and their repartee

forms the substance of the strip and the animated series. *The Boondocks* provides exceptional subject matter for comparative analysis composition assignments. It can function as the workshop/in-class example or as the subject for the assignment itself, but it features a wide range of comparative-analytical opportunities: the boondocks and the 'hood; Huey and Riley; and/or DuBoisian double consciousness and that proffered by McGruder through his characters. Ultimately, the consciousness element of Hip Hop culture does not require Hip Hop "texts" to make the point or to shape the lesson. Young people who consider themselves constituents of a Hip Hop generation will likely be invested in the sociopolitical issues of the day, especially as they are chronicled by and through the music of the culture. The ultimate question for educators is if we are prepared to seek these chronicles out so that we might better discover the educational potential of youth culture in the composition classroom.

Search and Discovery

Search and discovery is that rarely realized educational element of Hip Hop culture that beckons young people to locate themselves in the music and experiences of Hip Hop that speak directly to their own lives. Neate (2004) speaks to this element and its central role throughout Hip Hop:

When people say that Hip Hop is dead it just shows they're not in touch. People talk about the elements of Hip Hop culture but . . . in any period of Hip Hop, the best stuff had to be searched for. That's why . . . *search and discovery* [emphasis added] is the most neglected element of Hip Hop. (p. 58)

Search and discovery encourages students influenced by Hip Hop culture to seek further knowledge and to prepare themselves for the ongoing benefits of intellectual discovery. The strongest sense of search extends beyond simply comprehending the lyrics of Hip Hop music. The traditional methods of Hip Hop music composition use "samples" from previous recorded music to create new music (Schloss, 2004). One representative example is Jay-Z's 1998 song "Hard Knock Life," which samples "The Hard Knock Life" from the Broadway classic *Annie*. Often misunderstood as simply copying previous music, the practice of sampling is often so sophisticated that cultural-outsiders cannot recognize when it is taking place. People deeply familiar with Hip Hop and its norms not only easily recognize sample-based music, but they are in tune with the aesthetic and thus expect it. This sensibility and the collage-text can then instigate the listener's search for its historic musicological origins.

This kind of search, however, is not limited to musical sources and origins. Search and discovery also carries over into a search for other important information. One way to situate this element is within the composition unit that features

or requires students to visit the library and familiarize themselves with the various databases and research resources available to them. That said, the spirit of search and discovery is an important element for effectively introducing to students of the Hip Hop composition classroom. Many of these students will be familiar with a wide variety of search engines and Internet-based search tools. The challenge is to impress upon them the meaning of "discovery" that challenges students to view writing and writing courses/assignments as something other than an academic requirement.

Participation

Perhaps most significant among the educational elements is the mandate to participate in Hip Hop culture. For those teachers and scholars who wonder how Hip Hop culture transformed from an inner-city New York, local phenomenon into an international mainstay of popular youth culture, the origins of the b-boying/b-girling are instructive (see Schloss, 2009). The b-boy's role as dancer quickly developed into one of the earliest points of entry for a generation of young people who were invited to participate in the frustrated, angst-ridden, and brazenly responsive culture of the era. Participation is the central impulse that the various initiatives to implement Hip Hop culture into the classroom will employ. According to KRS ONE (2003), the legendary artist and self-professed Teacher of Hip Hop, the culture is driven by being:

"Hip-hop is the mental activity of oppressed creativity. Hip-hop is not a theory and you cannot do Hip-hop. Oppressed urban youth living in the ghettos of America are Hip-hop. Rap is something you do; Hip-hop is something you live" (KRS ONE, 2003, p. 211).

From this perspective, Hip Hop is fundamentally a participatory culture. There is no such thing as being part of Hip Hop yet not participating in some way. Even those who watch, applaud, and cheer for those b-girls whose kinesthetic abilities inspire awe, are fundamentally participating in the culture (Schloss, 2009). This mandate of participation extends beyond the specific element of b-boying and b-girling, too. The cipher,² the key unit of participation in Hip Hop activities, is itself a form of participation (Johnson, 2009). Given the centrality of participation, this educational element leads teachers and scholars to reconceptualize the ways that participation can function in different classroom contexts (see, for example, Emdin, this volume). In the composition classroom, participation is required in each aspect of the course, but it is most important in classroom discussions. The Hip Hop culture composition classroom (like any composition classroom) thrives on the day-to-day in-class discussions that allow students to hone their critical thinking skills and develop their knowledge of composition vis-à-vis

a range of topical considerations—current and historical. All humanities classrooms can thrive off of robust intellectual discourse (i.e., class participation). The Hip Hop composition classroom simply requires active participation.

REMIXING IS REWRITING

Although the four educational elements of Hip Hop have specific implications for classrooms in general and composition classrooms specifically, there is a key connection between the notion of remix in Hip Hop and composition classrooms. The theoretical underpinnings of this discussion stem from a synthesis of Lawrence Lessig's (2008) *Remix: Making Art and Commerce Thrive in the Hybrid Economy* with ideas detailed in Joseph Harris's (2006) composition primer, *Rewriting: How to do Things with Text*. Each of these scholars negligibly acknowledges the import of Hip Hop culture in the development of their own scholarly work on composition, mostly because neither is a scholar of Hip Hop culture. Thus, Lessig and Harris tend to skirt the issue of Hip Hop culture's emergence and its inherent capacity to formally embrace the rewriting and/or remixing of music, culture, history, and politics.

The theoretical synthesis of Lessig and Harris's work concerns the areas of Read Only (RO) and Write/Read (WR) cultures, two opposing concepts in composition that deal with artistic and commercial engagement with media. According to Lessig (2008), advancements in technology, especially the Internet, and the exponential growth in memory/space capacity of computers has facilitated the emergence of a WR culture that uses "tokens" of RO culture in order to produce new artistic texts. Lessig's formulation considers how countless computer users excerpt, sample, or quote from previously produced images, films, or music (content easily found online) in order to revise, remake, or remix these RO tokens into completely different artistic texts. Although Lessig is largely concerned with the limitations of current copyright law to account for the potential creativity inherent in 21st-century WR culture, he also provides a solid operational definition of remix, which bears repeating here: "remix is collage; it comes from combining elements of Read Only culture; it succeeds by leveraging the meaning created by the reference to build something new" (Lessig, 2008, p. 76).

Hip Hop culture has been engaged in WR culture (e.g., sampling tokens of RO culture) since its inception in the mid-1970s. With a long and storied presence in Hip Hop culture, the musical remix provides one of the clearest examples of this engagement. The remix is a retooled or revised and updated version of a song. Some might argue that rap music's first prominent and popularly received single, the Sugar Hill Gang's 1979 "Rapper's Delight," is a lyrical remix of Chic's "Good Times," a disco single that sports the original beat sampled/replayed in the Sugar Hill Gang's breakout song. Remixes have taken various forms. They can feature

additional artists/lyricists, new or distinct lyrics, new sample-based productions, and/or extended versions of the original. Often in contemporary Hip Hop music, the most popular or successful rap songs are revisited and remixed by adding other lyricists to the production. Remixing in Hip Hop culture further underscores the extent to which the culture itself relies on collage and the reuse of other texts, especially previously recorded sound in order to produce new texts, new records, and new styles. Here again, Hip Hop culture is a heuristic device. For all of Lessig's (2008) astute theorization of the relationship between WR and RO cultures, Hip Hop is historically and in current practice already there. Remix is a fundamental component of the compositional aspects of Hip Hop culture; thus, it models Lessig's sophisticated discussion of remix culture.

This sense of the remix also lends itself directly to Harris's (2006) thesis in *Rewriting* and my own sense of the interstitial relationships among Hip Hop culture, Harris's approach to composition, and Lessig's (2008) conceptualization of RO/WR cultures. For Harris (2006), the kind of intellectual writing most often "done" in composition classrooms takes certain qualities:

[It is] bound up inextricably with the books we are reading, the movies we are watching, the music we are listening to, and the ideas of the people we are talking with. Our creativity thus has its roots in the work of others—in response, reuse, and rewriting (p. 2).

Harris goes on to define rewriting as a "social practice" so that he can develop his emphasis on the "how" of composition in the 21st century; he hopes to respond to this how prompt by delineating key moves that rewriters make. At issue here is rewriting as social practice, a concept with direct ties to the aesthetic forms of remix and revision within Hip Hop culture. His book's subtitle, *How to Do Things with Texts*, is a not-so-subtle remix of John L. Austin's (1965) book title *How To Do Things With Words*. Harris insists that this remix, rather than attempting to repeat with texts what Austin attempts with words (i.e., capture the performative nature of language), is his way of transforming the dialogue about composition from something that is static into something much more dynamic.

Throughout *Rewriting*, Harris (2006) develops five rewriting moves: (1) *coming to terms*, which he defines as "re-presenting the work of others in ways that are both fair and useful" in your own writing; (2) *forwarding*, which is the practice by which writers forward other texts, concepts, and so on with their own framework or commentary; (3) *countering*, which is the process by which the "rewriter" rethinks or qualifies a position or argument; (4) *taking an approach*, which is drawing upon a distinctive style or mode; and (5) *revising*, which is combining the previous four moves in efforts to revisit and rework your own writing. These five moves formulate a writing template for the Hip Hop culture and composition

classroom. Here again, the aesthetic forms of Hip Hop culture function heuristically as a means to attain the learning outcomes of the traditional composition course. Each element of Hip Hop culture (DJing, graffiti artistry, breaking/b-boying, and MCing) relies on various rewriting moves. Moreover, writing about Hip Hop culture invites students to assess the rewriting and remixing elements of Hip Hop's aesthetic forms utilizing the tools of rewriting and remixing in their compositional efforts. For example, quoting another scholar or writer in order to develop an argument is both a rewriting move (either forwarding, countering, and/or taking an approach) as well as an implementation of the aesthetic form in Hip Hop most commonly referred to as sampling (Schloss, 2004).³

Each of the rewriting moves has its advantages (and disadvantages), but the notion of forwarding, because it relies on an email analogy and because it specifically requires the reuse of other texts and concepts, makes a striking connection with Lessig's ideas about Write/Read culture and challenges us to rethink this particular move as a model of composition students. Over the last 10 years, email forwarding has degenerated into an endless succession of prayer chains, banking scams, and the occasionally inappropriate attempt at humor. As an analogy for a move that students might make/take in the processes of writing or composition, forwarding will ring stale among current students, as many of them automatically delete any and all forwards. In fact, many of us likely do the same or simply ignore them altogether (as I do). Forwarding, then, is probably not the best metaphor for Harris's attempt to explicate a move that is essential to the Hip Hop culture and composition classroom. He clarifies that "a writer forwards the views of another when he or she takes terms and concepts from one text and applies them to a reading of other texts or situations" (Harris, 2006 p. 6). And here is where the confluence of Lessig's (2008) and Harris's concepts is productive. While Harris signals the import of considering newer technologies and media in the composition classroom, Lessig is ready and willing to minimize traditional notions of composition and enhance the concept with the kind of democratized participatory processes that result in the proliferation of sample-based digital compositions found on various media sites (e.g., YouTube).

Harris's (2006) *Rewriting* and Lessig's (2008) *Remix* are certainly not either/or propositions for the Hip Hop composition classroom. Instead, they offer distinct, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contested approaches to crafting compositions that are formally and aesthetically consistent with various aspects of Hip Hop culture. Note well here that Hip Hop culture developed parallel to the Information Age. The Hip Hop Generation, those born between 1964 and 1985, have witnessed an extraordinarily fast pace in technological advancement (Kitwana, 2002). Consider the shift in musical platforms from the eight-track, to vinyl, to the cassette, to CDs, to digital formats such as MP3s. Harris argues that the reuse of texts in this moment or climate is completely natural and should

be cultivated in the composition classroom, while Lessig strongly suggests that technology now allows us to use other texts to create original compositions—something that the artisans of Hip Hop have been doing since the mid-1970s. Although these theories or pedagogical approaches put into bold relief the formal aesthetic potential of Hip Hop in the classroom, many in the academy (and beyond) remain unconvinced or even hostile to the idea that Hip Hop should even be in a classroom. According to Kermit Campbell (2005),

instead of reaching out to youth in communities and schools by drawing on their potential for critical consciousness through rap and hip-hop, politicians, parents, and media pundits censure such creative expression, turning a deaf ear to a generation increasingly shaped by the digitally mixed and sampled rhetoric of hip-hop. (p. 329)

The best of Hip Hop scholarship seeks to reverse the trajectory of this quote. What follows are brief sketches of the Hip Hop culture and composition courses that I have proffered in this effort to leverage the intellectual interests of "a generation increasingly shaped by the digitally mixed and sampled rhetoric of hip-hop."

HIP HOP COMPOSITION

The first Hip Hop and Composition course that I taught was entitled "Writing About Hip Hop Culture." I offered this course as a part of the Writing Across the University program at the University of Pennsylvania during the spring of 1997. Arguably one of the earlier attempts to connect Hip Hop and composition at the post-secondary level, this course reached capacity immediately and was one of the most diverse groups of students that I had ever had while teaching at the University of Pennsylvania. As this course took place in 1997, most of these students were born in the late 1970s and thus fit squarely within Kitwana's (2002) Hip Hop Generation timeframe. At this time, much of the scholarship on Hip Hop culture, remix culture, and the shifting sense of revision and rewriting in the Information Age such as that of Harris (2006) and Lessig (2008) either did not yet exist or was otherwise unavailable to me at this early stage of my career as an instructor. There were few critical texts centered on Hip Hop studies, so this early iteration of the Hip Hop and composition course was very much grounded in the aesthetic sensibilities of Hip Hop.

Students in this course were particularly concerned with the aesthetic forms of Hip Hop and how they connected to composition. Their commitment to these specific cultural and/or aesthetic principles challenged them to engage in practices related to the classroom but indicative of their own relationships to Hip Hop culture. The students in this class, for example, generated a bevy of

cultural products and compositions that underscored their critical engagement with Hip Hop culture beyond the classroom. Several students organized a journalistic publication entitled H2O. This publication focused on the local Hip Hop scene and the artistry of the students in the course. Other students established a weekly open-mic performance event in Philadelphia called "The Gathering," open to all artisans of Hip Hop culture. Since its inception, the event has been maintained by many different community members in Philadelphia (including Emery Petchauer, one of this volume's editors) and still operates as one of the longest running all-ages Hip Hop community events in the United States. Some of the students in this course have gone on to film school, the fashion industry, the academy, and the music industry.⁴ In fact, Dr. H. Samy Alim, a pioneer of Hip Hop sociolinguistics, was an undergraduate student in this course. In each of these cases, Hip Hop culture has been a common presence in the subsequent careers of these former students.

For many reasons, this initial composition course does not present a replicable model. In fact, most of my own Hip Hop composition courses after this initial one were essentially different in both form and function. Yet there are still important points about course design and classroom practice from this first course that I continue to employ in a variety of Hip Hop courses—composition and others. These points serve as the basis for practical applications in Hip Hop composition courses.

The Design of Hip Hop Composition

In over 15 years of teaching various incarnations/iterations of the Hip Hop culture and composition course, I often distill the educational elements within the mix of the traditional composition course and its requisite "outcome" expectations. The ways that I have done this, however, have changed over the years. These changes illustrate some of the quintessential characteristics of Hip Hop composition courses. An introduction to one of my early course syllabi is an important starting point to illustrate these changes:

This course is designed to enhance and develop your writing skills for the challenges, experiences, and assignments that you will face and/or be required to execute as an undergraduate. In general this course uses various aspects and/or artistic manifestations of Hip Hop culture as the impetus to think critically, articulate accurately, and to write clear and compelling prose. The goal of English 15 is to enhance students' writing by sensitizing them to their composing processes and familiarizing them with the features of effective and persuasive prose. Students will learn to think critically, observe closely, and assess rhetorical situations accurately in order to respond confidently and flexibly to various audiences, aims, subjects, and forms.

Rewriting the Remix

In this course overview, Hip Hop culture is the impetus for writing. Students are asked to engage the culture more as observers than as actual participants, participant-observers, or constituents of the culture. Thus, in this initial iteration of the course, the educational element of participation is less then salient. Of course, students were expected to participate in the class in various ways, as they are in every course, but the types of participation that are central to Hip Hop were not infused in the class (a point I will return to below).

Note also that in this first course, the aesthetic forms of the culture are not necessarily held out as models for composition or engagement. The course description implies that Hip Hop is an object about which students will write, respond, articulate, and think critically. The description largely ignores that Hip Hop operates according to sensibilities, habits, mindsets, and so forth. It is important to keep in mind that during this early period, there were few documented connections between Hip Hop and formal school settings. Without a doubt, this was a burgeoning time for Hip Hop scholarship more broadly, with the seminal publications of Rose's *Black Noise* in 1994 and Perkin's *Droppin' Science* in 1996. Additionally, Hip Hop educational activities were taking place undocumented by scholarly disciplines during this time. But specific educational and pedagogical connections in scholarly communities were yet to develop.

A more recent introduction to one of these course syllabi reflects some important changes based upon the developments within Hip Hop and education since my first composition course in 1997. Attention is still given to the traditional aims of the composition classroom, but my approach shifts generally to understanding Hip Hop as a discursive and compositional model. This shift is based upon a tacit recognition that Hip Hop is not simply an object but a culture with aesthetic forms. The description that guided the course reads as follows:

This course is designed to explore the numerous ways in which Hip Hop culture functions as a discourse in the public sphere, including but not limited to the study of: poetry, cultural criticism, journalism, literature, drama, film, and sociopolitical movements. These various exploratory approaches to Hip Hop reveal the complexities of a culture, once labeled a "fad" that has since become ubiquitous on the American popular landscape. The course uses film, literature, music, music video and scholarly-cultural criticism to investigate Hip Hop and the various discourses that attend it. We will explore the origins and various eras (Old School, Golden Age, and Current) of Hip Hop and we will compare, and contrast the critical and creative literature that derives from rap music and Hip Hop culture. We will take up the debates of authenticity and identity, and through close readings, hearings, and viewings of the texts of Hip Hop, we will construct well-informed positions on how writers, rappers, and regular folks use texts

and contexts to achieve "authentic" identities. A key goal of the course is to explore and develop scholarly ways of engaging Hip Hop culture.

Subtle changes in the second course overview above shifts the compositional focus in a few key ways. First, there is a move away from Hip Hop as an object and toward Hip Hop as a discursive model. In this way, the course centers on the notion that various manifestations of Hip Hop possess argumentation, debate, persuasive logic, and emic ways of making truth claims. These manifestations then become useful tools for the composition student when they are the subject of rigorous study.

A second key change is a shift in participation. Students study the critical discourses on Hip Hop culture, debates of authenticity and identity, and other discursive aspects of Hip Hop, but students are also invited to participate in this very discourse. Unlike in the earlier iteration of the course, students are not simply writing *about* Hip Hop. By studying the ways that Hip Hop makes claims and then using those same modes to make claims about Hip Hop, composition students are engaging in a deeper type of participation unique to Hip Hop. Forman (2002) makes the important point that scholarly, journalistic, and social commentary literature that engages Hip Hop is actually a critical part of Hip Hop culture. This is evidenced by the longstanding tradition within Hip Hop of independently collecting cultural documents such as flyers, tapes, records, video and television footage, newspaper clippings, personalized and time-period clothes, interviews, and more into personal archives. From this perspective, writing about Hip Hop through studying the discursive models of Hip Hop is a form of participation in the culture.

Hip Hop Composition in Practice

Beyond these ways of conceptualizing Hip Hop in composition courses in general, the scholarly ways of engaging Hip Hop in the composition classroom specifically take on a variety of forms and/or approaches. With each of these approaches, the general aesthetics of Hip Hop serve as the bases for classroom composition techniques.

Creative Revision. Creative revision is an excellent approach to writing in the composition classroom. Of course, students have to document all of their sources accurately, but in the spirited sense with which Harris (2006) positions rewriting, I have encouraged my students by helping them understand that their work is in collaboration with hundreds of other scholars who have spoken and written before them. Thus, "saying something new" is a matter of "how" rather than "what." From the perspectives of Lessig's (2008) remix theory and Harris's (2006) rewriting approaches, we have only begun to institute the means of defamiliarizing texts and manipulating them in composition environments (paper, online, audiovisual,

and so on). Much of the language about compositional citation focuses on the consequences of poor documentation or misdocumentation, rather than acknowledging the central problem in 1st-year composition courses: How do students write something new, insightful, and interesting to themselves and their intended audience? The answer has been defamiliarization: representing a text in such a way that it appears in a new light to your audience. Defamiliarization requires various aspects of Harris's rewriting moves, including coming to terms, forwarding, and countering. And at its best, it also allows students to incorporate multimedia resources into their research as well as their actual compositions. A useful assignment for the application of creative revision is the album review assignment. This assignment requires students to choose a popular album and research the reviews written about the album. When composing their review, they must cite and otherwise situate themselves within the published discourse on the album. However, as part of their argument/discussion, they must establish a reading/listening of the album that cuts against the grain of the conventional reviews. Students will almost always rely on the texts of the album itself or music videos made from specific songs in order to present a less familiar take on the album under consideration.

Cutting and Quoting. A viable way of defamiliarizing a text aesthetically/for-mally consistent with Hip Hop culture is through the use of the cut. The cut defamiliarizes the text from which it is borrowed. According to late literary critic James A. Snead (1984), "James Brown is an example of a brilliant American practitioner of the cut whose skill is readily admired by African as well as American musicians" (p. 69). Snead suggests that in Brown's performance, the ruptures (i.e., cuts) strengthen the rhythm rather than weaken it. Furthermore, Snead argues, "black music sets up expectations and disturbs them at irregular intervals: that it will do this, however, is itself an expectation" (p. 69).

Two important pedagogical opportunities derive from this section of Snead's discussion. First, current and practical examples of cut and repetition are located in Hip Hop culture. Taking Brown as the example, the rap group EPMD samples (i.e., cuts from and repeats) James Brown's song "The Payback" (from Brown's 1973 album of the same name). On EPMD's song entitled "I'm Mad" from their 1990 album, *Business as Usual*, the group uses the line "I'm mad" from Brown's "The Payback" as the refrain or quote. Their use of this cut demonstrates their own acknowledgment of Brown's authenticity and the respect that he garners in African and American communities. In some ways, a James Brown cut supports and authenticates a rap lyric while it reinscribes the musical genius of Brown. If his lines are quotable in rap music, then he is "down with" the Hip Hop generation. If his lines are quoted in rap music, then rap music is connected to the success, social acceptance, and cultural iconography of James Brown. In EPMD's "The Big Payback" (from their 1989 album entitled *Unfinished Business*), the group signified off of Brown's "The Payback" again. This time, they sample the line/refrain, "the payback," and modify the title of the original

("The Big Payback") so that at the same time that they are referencing Brown's musical authenticity, they are submitting their own virtuosity in relation to his.

This kind of cutting in Hip Hop functions as a heuristic device for the composition classroom. Through a fairly common use of sampling and cutting, EPMD demonstrates the value of the principles of Harris's rewriting and the formal properties of Lessig's notion of remix culture. EPMD quotes/samples James Brown and in doing so, they defamiliarize Brown's text, authenticate their own, and in the process also craft an original composition. This is a classic model for the work that writers strive to do in the composition classroom. The musical interactions between EPMD, Brown, and the cut reflect the connections between composition writers, texts, and the quote. Intertextual quotes should not only authenticate and/or exemplify the composition, they should, by virtue of being a part of the text in some new and interesting way, posit the original text in an unfamiliar light. The relationship between the quote and the essay should be similar to the recursive relationship between EPMD's "I'm Mad" and "The Big Payback," and James Brown's "The Payback."

Freestyling and Brainstorming. As another example, brainstorming is a vital component in all composition processes and of special import in the Hip Hop culture and composition classroom. Brainstorming is still one of the most effective prewriting strategies available to students who are learning how to write. No matter what form it takes from listing, clustering, and/or tree diagrams, the brainstorm is a central step in the composition process. For the Hip Hop composition classroom, the ritualistic pastime known popularly as freestyling is an important cultural counterpart to brainstorming. When explored and employed as a writing strategy, freestyling sparks student creativity and other important writing tools such as structural and spatial order, chronology, and improvisation. Freestyling or freestyle sessions are when groups of MCs/rappers form a cipher and improvise rhymes/lyrics in turns. In many cases, a freestyle rhyme functions much like an improvised jazz riff in that it derives from the author/MC/musician but crystallizes in the performance.

The freestyle prewriting exercise is designed to function in much the same way. Groups of students are challenged to freestyle (not necessarily in verse) their ideas, theses, or topics in small groups. They all have a turn to verbally freestyle while another person within the small group takes notes on their content. In the best-case scenario, each student-writer can freestyle his or her ideas and take notes on someone else's. Students then share/compare results. Usually, students realize that freestyle is actually not that free at all, but it is an opportunity to verbalize ideas in a setting conducive to creativity. This freestyle exercise actually adds a subtle competitive aspect to traditional brainstorming activities. Fortunately, there are various DVDs and YouTube clips that demonstrate freestyle performances so that while students might learn about this specifically Hip Hop form of brainstorming, they can also come to appreciate the competitive

nature of on-the-spot composition. By positing brainstorming as a form of freestyling or vice versa, students are invited to approach this prewriting exercise via an aesthetic form particular to Hip Hop culture and valuable to those developing writers for whom traditional structures might seem limiting or impertinent to their own writing processes.

CONCLUSIONS: RESISTING PRESCRIPTIONS

Alongside the guidelines and strategies in this chapter, my intention has not been to prescribe rigid ways of implementing Hip Hop culture and/or rap music into composition courses. Instead, my intention has been to share some themes, approaches, examples, successes, and challenges that I have encountered on my journey to integrate my own culture (such as Hip Hop) into specific academic and pedagogical practices. I have to acknowledge also that although I tend to argue for a constructivist, culturally pertinent appeal of Hip Hop culture in a wide variety of classrooms (high school and college), there are clear limitations to integrating Hip Hop music and lyrics into the composition classroom. The central limitation bears revelation here. The *nommo* or word power of rap music and Hip Hop culture derives primarily from the African American oral and folk traditions. As such, rap music, much like the blues or a Black Baptist sermon, tends to thrive in oral-aural contexts and can appear to be flat and/or stale on the printed page. Any of the examples described herein will certainly bear this out when compared with listening or viewing the recorded performances of Hip Hop. This particular challenge is one with which Hip Hop scholars and teachers are regularly confronted.

Despite these challenges, the composition classroom proffers a lesson that can be drawn from this problem of context. That is, every composition has a particular and appropriate context. This particular oral-literal dichotomy only serves to underscore this fact and in turn provide Hip Hop composition instructors with an inaugural lesson about writing. To wit: The situation (i.e., the assignment, the audience, and the platform) shapes the reception of the composition. "The purpose and audience for each text define writing tasks. Because tasks are not uniform, students need to have the ability to write in multiple genres, formats, and styles" (Copeland, Mitchler, & Hesse, 2005, p. 3). If, as scholars and teachers, we can come to appreciate and understand the Hip Hop Generation's preference for technological composition and Hip Hop as a viable economy of expression, then the potential of our composition classrooms increases exponentially.

This thing called hip-hop, this inner-city, youth-driven artistic and cultural movement has accomplished in our society what embattled multiculturalism has been powerless to accomplish—that is, to make the inhabitants of America's inner cities relatable and indeed lovable (Campbell, 2005, p. 328).

NOTES

1. The 5% Nation of Gods and Earths, founded by Clarence 13X in the early 1970s, is a philosophical offshoot of the Nation of Islam. Five percenters (as they are often called) believe that 85% of the human population is "dumb, deaf, and blind," 10% is enlightened but they tend to exploit the 85%, and 5% are the poor righteous teachers who challenge the corrupt 10% for the minds of the 85%.
2. The vernacular use of the term *cipher* in Hip Hop culture does not just linguistically appear out of language limbo, and it does not directly derive itself from "Standard English." Instead, it flows into the everyday language of Hip Hop from and through the 5% Nation of Gods and Earths, from the minds and mouths of those poor righteous teachers who view the cipher as encompassing 360 degrees of daily lived experiences.
3. In a scholarly work central to Hip Hop studies, *Making Beats: The Art of Sample-based Hip Hop*, Joseph G. Schloss (2004) catalogs numerous repetitive processes and initiatives in the production of Hip Hop music. Some of these include: looping, or repeating a sampled excerpt of music; sampling itself, which might be characterized as a form of allusion; chopping—cutting or partitioning a portion of previously recorded music or vocals; digging, which is the process by/through which DJs sometimes feverishly search for previously recorded material to loop/chop/sample; and locking up (i.e., achieving the desired effect of a beat/musical production), an aesthetic result whereby the beat or musical production achieves a certain and sublime combinatory praxis.
4. Yaminah McKessey is currently at USC film school and is working on a documentary that studies Old School Hip Hop; Aaron Jones is an MC in Dujeous, a live Hip Hop band from New York City, and he is a buyer for Dr. Jays, a Hip Hop-oriented urban clothing store; H. Samy Alim is an associate professor at Stanford University who has already published several books on Hip Hop culture and education; and Ted Chung is a music industry executive who has worked with a "who's who" of Hip Hop artists.

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CURRICULA, COURSES, AND PEDAGOGIES WITH HIP-HOP

One of the most expansive developments in HHBE has been using hip-hop as a framework to organize courses and curricula inside and outside of schools. Similar to the work in the previous section of this volume, chapters under this heading expand beyond using aspects of hip-hop as hooks or prompts to learning. Instead, these efforts include curricula and courses that use multiple dimensions of hip-hop—or the full culture of hip-hop—in more comprehensive, organizing, and structural ways. In some instances, actually doing hip-hop is a key part of these curricula. These types of programs most often operate in community or afterschool settings and focus on important educational goals not addressed in formal state-related schooling.

Many of these classroom and curricular expansions are initiated by educators who are absent in much of the HHBE literature. These groups are (1) hip-hop affiliated educators who do not study their practices through research methods and (2) educators who have a genuine interest in HHBE and other student-centered pedagogies but do not personally affiliate themselves with the culture. Many of these educators have engaged in meaningful dialogue since the fall of 2010 through the Twitter-based #HipHopEd discussion Tuesdays from 9:00 P.M. until 10:00 P.M. (EST). Many of these educators have met like-minded pedagogues through this international, weekly discussion.

As some of the chapters in this section will address, classroom and curricular uses of hip-hop sometimes come at a cost by presenting educators with challenges. These are the kinds of challenges that emerge in many types of progressive, student-centered initiatives, and understanding them helps to refine HHBE and other practices. Often, these challenges revolve around constructs such as race, womanhood, place, masculinity, and citizenship that are shaped by hip-hop and, consequently, bound to the learning environment via HHBE. Although educators can anticipate some of these challenges, some only emerge in the midst of deep engagement. Interrogating some of these challenges, the chapters in this section help educators to anticipate some of them and constructively deal with the unanticipated ones when they arise.

Chapter 5 begins this section of the volume at the same place where many HHBE course and curricula begin: with the teachers. Decoteau J. Irby and H.

Bernard Hall draw from data collected during HHBE professional development workshops to explore the changing professional and cultural demographics of teachers who are interested in using HHBE at increasing rates. With this focus, the authors directly address the ways that HHBE is expanding beyond hip-hop identified educators and into a variety of schooling contexts. In Chapter 6, Bronwen Low, Eloise Tan, and Jacqueline Celemencki use two hip-hop based afterschool programs focusing on youth writing and documentary filmmaking in Montreal, Canada, to explore how the central tropes of authenticity and realism shape the ways that students engage with these programs. The authors argue that when teachers use rap, both as text and as a creative practice, it should be conceptualized and studied as an aesthetic, cultural, and imaginative production rather than as a mirror of the real. In Chapter 7, Derek Pardue examines the use of hip-hop culture as a state-based political project in São Paulo, Brazil, aimed at creating opportunities for poor and working-class youth to learn about “being Brazilian.” Pardue examines how these “Cultural Points” have become alternatives to conventional school classrooms and analyzes ways that organizing hip-hop as a national culture has influenced popular notions of citizenship in Brazil. In Chapter 8, David Stovall describes a college bridge social studies course designed to study the current waves of gentrification and urban “renewal” in Chicago by using the corollary historical context of hip-hop’s genesis in New York City in the 1970s. Stovall analyzes the generational obstacles between him and his students (living on opposite ends of the hip-hop generation spectrum) to offer pedagogical insights about how HHBE practices in social studies classes can contribute to education for self-determination and social justice.

Overall, the chapters that comprise Part II of this volume provide concrete examples of HHBE within a wide range of contexts, curricular foci, and teacher/student demographics. Like the chapters in Part I, authors stop short of rigid prescriptions but instead aim to inspire similar educational practice that readers and practitioners can tailor to their own local needs.

CHAPTER 5

Fresh Faces, New Places Moving Beyond Teacher-Researcher Perspectives in Hip-Hop Based Education Research

Decoteau J. Irby and H. Bernard Hall

Hip-hop based education (HHBE) refers to the use of hip-hop, especially rap songs and lyrics, as curricular and pedagogical resources (Hill, 2009; Petchauer, 2009). The research presented in this chapter strengthens HHBE scholarship and supplements the current literature by identifying lines of inquiry that encourage the field to explore in greater detail “who is using hip-hop in the curriculum, their motivations for doing so, and their prior experiences with hip-hop” (Petchauer, 2009, p. 964). This study makes problematic many tacit assumptions about who is using HHBE and where they are using it by presenting professional demographic, school, and survey response data collected from nonresearching teachers. The educators examined in this study were participants in one of four teacher education workshops called “Schooling Ourselves.” The workshops were designed to prepare teachers to incorporate hip-hop into their classroom teaching practices.

Hip-hop based educational research documents and evaluates the effectiveness of HHBE in transmitting disciplinary knowledge, improving student motivation, teaching critical media literacy, and fostering critical consciousness in primarily urban K–12 educational settings (Dimitriadis, 2001; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Emdin, 2008, 2009; Hill, 2009; Pardue, 2004; Stino, 1995). The body of research derives primarily from urban public school teachers or community-based educators who use HHBE as a supplement to existing curricula and/or who work with urban K–12 populations (e.g., Alexander-Smith, 2004; Bitz, 1998; Cooks, 2004; Jeremiah, 1992; Pike, 2000). Consequently, the current body of research is dominated by teacher-researcher accounts. Such studies are typically qualitative and/or ethnographic accounts that explore student responses to HHBE

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TEACHER RESEARCH AND HIP-HOP BASED EDUCATION

Hip-hop, rooted in the inner-city post-industrial experiences of urban youth of color (Rose, 1994), has long been considered a driving force in education for urban youth (Powell, 1991). As early as 1991, educators, realizing hip-hop's potential to educate youth, began tapping into the music and culture as a means of exploring "the values and attitudes of young people" (Powell, 1991, p. 257) as well as a way to teach language arts (Jeremiah, 1992). The first educational arena where hip-hop was recognized as an educational force was the streets (e.g., Macklis, 1989; Powell, 1991; Sullivan, 2003). Powell (1991) recognized that hip-hop was a source of informal education. The ability of hip-hop to educate youth is precisely why it has been adopted by individuals who are part of formal and semiformal educational settings.

Hip-hop based education scholarship results primarily from teacher-researcher accounts or what Baumann and Duffy (2001) refer to as *writing and reporting classroom inquiry* produced by teachers. The notion of "teacher as researcher" emerged most prominently in the early 1990s in reference to a set of professional staff development techniques designed to help teachers improve their own teaching practices by addressing "the perception of a gap between a current state of affairs and a more desirable state" in classroom or school settings (Bracey, 1991, p. 404). Defined as *systematic intentional inquiry*, teacher research varied in the institutional settings where it occurred and ranged from a systematic collection of particular information about a class with few expectations that the data would be used to inform future classes to well-carried-out studies, resembling academic research, conducted with the intent of informing future practice. Problems and solutions to problems were purported to exist within the classroom context itself. Teacher as researcher professional development techniques such as keeping logs, analyzing student essays and journals, observing students and self-observation (audio and video recording) are all practices reflected in contemporary teacher-research scholarship (Bracey, 1991).

Teacher research as methodology was established through the work of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993, 1998), who offered theoretical and methodological underpinnings to the otherwise professionally oriented set of practices. The authors' work distinguishes research on teaching from teacher research by wrestling with epistemological and methodological issues inherent to teacher research. Baumann and Duffy (2001), in their review of teacher-research methodology, identify four broad themes that comprise teacher research: (1) *General attributes of teacher research* refers to the source from where teachers' research questions and inquiry generates, (2) *process of teacher inquiry* captures the collaborative nature of teacher research and reliance on learning from and with students, (3) *teacher researcher methods* capture the practical processes of both teaching and collecting data, and (4) *writing and reporting classroom inquiry* identifies the forms and structures used to share findings. Of concern within the field of HHBE is the issue of general attributes of teacher-researchers and its alignment with the goals of academia or the "visibility" (i.e., publication) of the teacher research (Bracey, 1991).

Curricula, Courses, and Pedagogies with Hip-Hop

and rely on teacher-researcher reflection as a means of examining teacher identity and researcher positionality, respectively (Hill, 2009).

Despite the richness of the burgeoning HHBE research, the overreliance on teacher-researcher accounts of HHBE practice and theory is wrought with shortcomings. Regarding nonresearching teachers, there is little knowledge of who is interested in HHBE, the characteristics of the educational spaces and student populations with whom teachers work, or their motivations for employing HHBE. Findings often fail to consider the demographics of the urban teaching force and the issues of identity that may mitigate the effectiveness of HHBE if and when it is taken up by teachers who do not identify with hip-hop culture. As such, current HHBE practices and theory may not accurately account for many issues that nonresearching teachers may face in implementing HHBE. Understanding what issues may emerge for subaltern nonresearching practitioners is critical given the growth in numbers of research studies, curricula, professional development opportunities, and conferences that encourage more extensive use of culturally relevant teaching generally and of HHBE more specifically.

The teacher-researcher perspective and analytical lens of HHBE research has not kept with the trend of HHBE practice. That is, it has not expanded into traditional K-12 educational spaces with nonresearching teachers or considered the diversity of teachers and places where HHBE possibly occurs. Recent scholarship has encouraged exploration of HHBE possibilities for K-12 teachers in primarily urban educational spaces with nonresearching teachers (e.g., Hill, Perez, & Irby, 2008). The current literature situates HHBE almost exclusively in the urban classroom context, commonly understood as educational spaces that cater to "at-risk" youth. Such a narrow conception of the urban classroom context fails to account for the diversity of places, teachers, student populations, pedagogies, and outcomes that may be associated with HHBE. We are concerned with learning more about practicing K-12 teachers who are interested in HHBE, where they might take up these practices, and how identity and place influence the effectiveness of practices and outcomes of HHBE. Such insights will help academic researchers strengthen HHBE theory and practice. It will also help teacher educators and hip-hop pedagogues prepare teachers to effectively incorporate HHBE into their teaching and learning practices.

We build a case for addressing the identified lacunae through presenting information about a small sample of teachers who attended a professional development workshop designed to prepare teachers to effectively incorporate HHBE into their classrooms. Drawing primarily from survey data collected during these workshops, we examine who is interested in using HHBE and explore critical issues of relevance to teacher educators and researchers. Our findings push the field by calling for HHBE research to give more critical attention to (1) the diversity of teachers interested in using hip-hop in their classrooms; (2) the need for basic teacher education about hip-hop and critical issues within hip-hop culture; and (3) the variable of educational setting (place) and the place-related constraints that teachers may face in their attempts to adopt HHBE.

Within the HHBE literature, the bulk of what is known about the use of hip-hop pedagogies within traditional K-12, nontraditional K-12, and post-secondary settings derives from the firsthand experiences of teacher-researchers who themselves employ the practices and publish in academic journals (e.g., Abowitz, 1997; Alexander-Smith, 2004; Hill, 2009; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Sundeen, 2003). Teacher-researchers of HHBE have primarily employed qualitative methodologies that locate teacher effectiveness in a "range or continuum of teaching behaviors," specifically teachers' conceptions of the self and other, the structure of social relations in the classroom, and teachers' notions of knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 478).

The attributes of the teacher-researchers, especially those who employ teacher research toward a goal of visibility, and nonresearching teachers must be given due consideration to round out the knowledge within the field. Teacher attributes and the places from where theoretical underpinnings for HHBE derive undoubtedly shape inquiry, methods, and writing and reporting of findings. Many hip-hop based educators/teacher-researchers rely on critical theories of learning and apply them to classroom practices (e.g., Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2005; Emdin, 2008, 2009; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Stovall, 2006). Some rely on culturally relevant pedagogy (e.g., Abowitz, 1997; Alexander-Smith, 2004; Hill, 2009), while others use critical pedagogy grounded in the Freirean tradition that represents an "approach to schooling that is committed to the imperatives of empowering students and transforming the larger social order in the interests of justice and equality" (McLaren, 2007, p. xvii). Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995) offers both a practice and theory that "not only addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequalities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuate" (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 469).

We assume that hip-hop based educators possess additional knowledge (personal, professional, cultural) about hip-hop. We also assume that teacher-researchers who conduct studies for the purpose of visibility are familiar with recent research and concerns of the larger field and are different from teacher-researchers who seek only to solve their specific classroom or school problems. Separately, these attributes equate to either a teacher who understands hip-hop or a teacher who is well informed. Taken together, additional knowledge and familiarity with current literature inform the ability to perceive a gap between a current state of affairs and a more desirable state—that HHBE offers a platform for culturally relevant and critical theories of learning to be made increasingly relevant for today's youth. Although critical and culturally relevant theories are well known to teachers, the connections may not be as clear for educators who lack a knowledge base in hip-hop culture that guides and informs their theoretical understanding of what possibilities HHBE affords in solving everyday problems encountered in classroom settings and of the larger concerns within the field of education

(content and context—see Bracey, 1991). This makes HHBE teacher-researchers unique. In regard to nonresearching teachers, their knowledge base is different, as often are their reasons for conducting teacher research. The failure to recognize and wrestle with these dissimilarities is a weakness of the current literature.

The broader understanding of the importance of hip-hop (content) and how it is inextricably connected to the issue of place (context) is recognized in HHBE but remains critically underexplored. Most HHBE research is nested in the urban context—at the city, district, school, and/or classroom level. Too often, it does not look beyond or unpack the meanings or relations of HHBE educational practices and theories to the diversity of educational settings that comprise urban districts. This tendency narrows *urban* so that the term seems to refer to marginalized educational settings, such as underperforming districts and schools, community centers, or educational spaces for "at-risk" youth (e.g., Dimitriadis, 2001; Pardue, 2004; Stephens, Braithwaite, & Taylor, 1998; Stino, 1995). Further complicating the issue of place are the associations of place and people that the term *urban* connotes. *Urban*, *minority*, *at-risk*, and other identifiers become conflated, rendering the significance of HHBE to urban educational settings vague and uncharted.

It is often unclear how settings and populations can be characterized. Among the research studies reviewed by Petchauer (2009), nearly all, regardless of educational setting, examine African American or Black youth, ethnically diverse, low-income, and/or poor student populations. The conflation of populations and places and the decontextualized use of the term *urban* may be a push back on deficit-oriented labels that are often afforded to oppressed populations. Instead of labeling students in deficit-oriented ways, students and the educational environments are reduced to "urban." At the other end of the educational spectrum, HHBE has a presence in higher education (e.g., Abowitz, 1997; Anderson, 1993; Baker, 1991; Petchauer, 2012; Rice, 2003; Saunders, 1999). In these ways, what is known about HHBE is gleaned from either K-12 educational spaces that appear to serve urban populations or from higher education settings; however, the variable of place beyond the urban context and as nested within the urban context remain unclear at best.

Teacher-researcher studies of HHBE make important contributions to the field of HHBE regarding curricular strategies and pedagogical interventions in traditional and nontraditional educational environments. However, insufficient attention has been paid to nonresearching teachers working in a variety of K-12 settings and the impact of teacher identity and place on teacher effectiveness. To address the identified gaps in the literature, this research study turns the investigative lens away from teacher-researcher perspectives toward practicing K-12 teachers (i.e., nonresearching). It focuses on teachers who are interested in using HHBE but are not necessarily inclined to document their experiences in the classroom through publishing in scholarly journals.

RESEARCH METHODS, QUESTIONS, AND CONTEXT

The Schooling Ourselves teacher education workshops were designed to encourage and prepare teachers to use HHBE. Workshops are based on the content and methods contained in *Do the Knowledge*, a standards-based hip-hop learning and curriculum guide (Irby, 2006) that explores cultural literacy, critical literacy, and media literacy through hip-hop. The creation of the guide and workshops are the brainchild of a community-based organization with a mission of promoting African American art forms. The organization sought to create a guide that would be teacher-friendly and aligned with Pennsylvania state academic standards for "Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening" and "Arts and Humanities." The workshops supplement the learning guide by offering educators the opportunity to learn how to work with the content and methods of the guide. Workshops were offered through the educational component of a local museum. One workshop per semester was held for 2 academic years.

Twenty-seven teachers attended the first workshop. Thirteen teachers attended the second workshop and 18 and 21 attended the final two workshops. Certified teachers who participated in the 3½-hour workshops were offered Act 48 professional development credits for completing the workshop. Act 48 requires all Pennsylvania educators holding Pennsylvania public school certification to participate in ongoing professional education. Under Act 48, educators must obtain six credits of collegiate study; six credits of continuing professional education courses; 180 hours of continuing professional education programs, activities, or learning experiences; or any combination of credits or hours equivalent to 180 hours every 5 years to maintain active status.

We analyze workshop registration forms, pre- and post-surveys, and workshop evaluations collected by the hosting institution to answer the following questions: What are the general characteristics of teachers who participate in Schooling Ourselves? How familiar are participants with hip-hop culture and HHBE, and what is their intent for using HHBE after completing the workshops? What are general characteristics of the places where the teachers work? Finally, what is the relation of the findings to the current aims, theories, and practices of HHBE, and how might these findings contribute to urban teacher preparation?

Data Sources

This research relies on information collected through three primary data sources: workshop registration forms, Likert-scale workshop pre- and post-surveys, and continuing professional education learning experience evaluations. All surveys were collected independently by the institution providing the ACT 48 teacher professional development workshop. Data were provided to the researchers after all personal identifiers were removed. From data gathered, we glean basic

information about participants, including school name (or organization), school address, grades taught, number of years teaching, certification status, and zip codes in an effort to understand who participants are and the places where they might employ HHBE.

All participants completed a registration form to participate in the workshop and to obtain Act 48 credits for participation. Because registration forms are mandatory and collected prior to the workshop day, the return rate for this data is the highest of that collected. The forms contain school names and addresses, participant zip codes, certification status, and grade levels from a total of 79 workshop registration forms.

Pre- (n = 29) and post- (n = 45) workshop survey items are included for analysis. The voluntary one-page surveys combine Likert-scale and open-ended items to evaluate the value added from the specific workshop. Photocopies of surveys were mailed to the workshop facilitator after each workshop to offer formative feedback for improving workshop content and delivery. Response rates were 37% and 57% for pre- and post-surveys, respectively. It is unclear why response rates were low; however, of the three data sources analyzed in this study, the pre-survey is the only data source administered both on the day of the workshop and in the morning.

We examine select survey items to understand participants' knowledge of HHBE before the workshop and to learn if the workshop improved their knowledge of HHBE and increased their willingness to use HHBE in their classrooms. Applicable items from pre-surveys include: How much do you know about hip-hop culture? Have you ever used hip-hop in your classroom? Do you feel knowledgeable about using hip-hop to improve literacy and critical thinking? Relevant post-evaluation survey items include: Do you now have a better understanding of the history of hip-hop's development and culture? Do you now feel more knowledgeable about using hip-hop to improve literacy and critical thinking? Do you plan on using any of the information you learned in your classroom?

Certified teachers in attendance to receive Act 48 professional development credits completed continuing professional education learning experience evaluations as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education. Sections of the forms related to our research questions include certification data, teacher subject areas, grade levels taught, and open-ended feedback for improving the workshops.

Data Analysis

Using the described data sources, we provide a broad description of workshop participants. Our primary interest is understanding the professional and school characteristics. We examine residential and school zip codes to understand where teachers live and work. To ascertain school characteristics, we supplement primary data by matching National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Common Core Data set for public, charter, and private school information with school names and addresses.

Survey data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software. Frequencies and crosstabs reveal basic descriptions of workshop participants' professional and school characteristics and summarize survey responses. Racial compositions of schools are collapsed into two variables indicating majority White or majority Black, Hispanic, and Asian (students of color). Geographic data are organized using dichotomous variables based on both residential and school locations (city/suburb). School information and teaching experience are organized using categorical variables based on grade level, school type, years teaching, certification, and urban or suburban locale. The number of pre- and post-surveys available was too few to pursue any reliable comparisons of means.

WHO ARE THE TEACHERS?

Teacher Characteristics

To develop a general profile of the workshop's population, we collected information from the workshop registration forms and professional development evaluation forms. Findings are summarized in Table 5.1. For each item, the table presents a raw number of teacher responses as reflected on the various feedback forms, the percentage based on number of responses, and the overall response rate. The data source(s) are listed in the final column. The findings reveal that teachers who are not represented in HHBE research are interested in using HHBE.

Of the 63 participants for whom certification data are available, 87% of respondents indicate that they are certified in their respective state (Pennsylvania and New Jersey). A relatively high level of certification is expected since the workshop offers Act 48 credits for continuing education of certified teachers. Overwhelmingly, workshop participants report teaching at the K-12 level. A majority works with populations in grades 1-8. Eighty percent work in the primary grades, 11% work in secondary schools, and 10% work in settings that either do not cater to any specific grade or do not work with K-12 populations. Grade levels on pre-workshop surveys reveal a similar pattern and also highlight a tendency for teachers to work with elementary school populations within the primary grades.

Twenty-nine participants complete the workshop pre-survey. Slightly over 50% report having more than 10 years of teaching experience: 31% report having from 11 to 20 years of experience and 21% report having more than 20 years of teaching experience. Among less experienced teachers, 28% have between 2 and 5 years of experience and the remaining respondents have less than 2 years

Table 5.1. Summary of Teacher Characteristics

Teacher Characteristics (N = 79)	Number (n)	Percent (%)	Response Rate (n/N)	Source (Reg. Eval, Pre-, Post-, NCES)
Certification				
Yes	55	87	.797	Eval.
No	8	13		
Grade Level*			.81/.367	Eval./ Pre-survey
Primary	51/23	80/79		
Elementary	na/14	na/48		
Middle	na/9	na/31		
Secondary	6/3	9/10		
Other	7/3	11/10		
Years Teaching			.367	Pre-survey
Less than 2	2	7		
From 2 to 5	8	28		
From 6 to 10	4	14		
From 11 to 20	9	31		
20 or more	6	21		
Teachers Workplaces by Locale and School Type			.873	Reg.
Urban	35	51		
Public (traditional)	9	26		
Public (charter)	16	48		
Private	5	14		
Other	5	14		
Suburban	34	49		
Public (traditional)	14	41		
Public (charter)	0	0		
Private	16	47		
Other	4	12		
Residential Locale			.810	Reg.
Urban	24	39		
Suburban	40	61		

*Grade-level data were available from two sources: professional development evaluation forms and pre-workshop surveys. Results from both sources are reported in Table 5.1 using Source A/Source B format.

Table 5.2. Pre- and Post-Survey Responses

Pre- (N = 29) & Post- (N = 45) Survey Questions and Responses	Number (n)	Percent (%)	Response Rate (n/N)	Source (Pre-survey or Post- survey)
Pre- Knowledge Level of Hip-hop's History and Development				Pre-survey
A great deal	0	0		
Some	7	24		
Very little	15	52		
Nothing	7	24		
Pre- Knowledge Level of Today's Hip-hop Culture			.367	Pre-survey
A great deal	2	7		
Some	13	44		
Very little	7	24		
Nothing	7	24		
Workshop Improved Understanding(s) of Hip-hop			.570	Post-survey
A great deal	27	60		
Some	17	37		
Very little	1	2		
Have Used Hip-hop in Class			.367	Pre-survey
Often	0	0		
Occasionally	9	31		
Never	20	69		
Pre- Prepared to Use Hip-hop to Improve Literacy & Critical Thinking			.367	Pre-survey
Very prepared	0	0		
Somewhat prepared	8	27		
Not prepared	21	72		
Post- Prepared to Use Hip-hop to Improve Literacy & Critical Thinking			.570	Post-survey
Very prepared	14	31		
Somewhat prepared	30	67		
Not prepared	1	7		
Plan to Use Information Learned in Your Classroom			.570	Post-Survey
Often	14	31		
Occasionally	28	66		
Never	3	7		

experience. Many report teaching multiple subjects, a consequence undoubtedly related to the large proportion of teachers working in elementary and middle school settings.

School locations for participants are almost evenly split between the number of participants who report teaching in the local urban school district (defined as schools located inside the School District of Philadelphia) and in the surrounding suburban school districts. Fifty-one percent of respondents report teaching in the city of Philadelphia; however, of this 51%, only nine teach in district public schools, a mere 26%. In other words, most participating teachers who work in the city of Philadelphia teach in private schools or public charter schools (74%), illustrating that although participants teach within the geographical boundaries of an urban district, the actual schools in which they teach may be quite different from traditional public schools. This finding begs further exploration to understand why more urban public school teachers did not attend the Schooling Ourselves workshops, while teachers from private and charter schools attended in higher rates. The differential rates of attendance between traditional public school teachers and private and charter school teachers may reflect issues such as inflexible curriculum or lack of administrative support that can be common in this current era of accountability. Private and charter schools, in contrast, may offer more autonomy and support to teachers who wish to adopt educational practices such as HHBE.

The remaining 49% of teachers report teaching in the suburban and rural areas surrounding the city. Beyond the geographic boundaries of Philadelphia, teachers' responses indicate that workplaces are split almost evenly between public and private schools. For suburban teachers, 41% report teaching at public schools and 47% report teaching at private schools. The remaining respondents are affiliated with post-secondary institutions, community organizations, or other education-related institutions. No suburban or rural teachers report teaching in public charter schools.

A final indication of teacher characteristics, place of residence, reveals that 40% of participants reside in the city of Philadelphia. Sixty percent reside in the surrounding suburban or rural areas. A slight majority of participants teaches in schools located within the geographic boundaries of Philadelphia, revealing that teachers who are suburban residents commute to teach in schools located with the city limits.

Teacher Knowledge and Interest

Pre-survey responses were analyzed to understand workshop participants' use of and knowledge of HHBE prior to the workshop. Post-survey responses allow us to understand if Schooling Ourselves increased basic knowledge of hip-hop and encouraged the likelihood that participants would attempt HHBE in their classes. Table 5.2 summarizes findings from pre- and post-survey responses. Presented for each item is an abbreviated version of the survey question

to which participants responded, the total number of answers, percentages, response rates, and the data source.

Seventy-five percent of pre-survey respondents report knowing very little or nothing about the history and development of hip-hop culture. Roughly half reports knowing some or a great deal about hip-hop culture today. The findings are consistent with the percentage of teachers who indicate not using hip-hop in their classroom. No respondents answered "often" when asked "Have you ever used hip-hop in your classroom?" Thirty percent acknowledge that they have done so occasionally.

Many participants' understandings of the history of hip-hop's development and culture improved either a great deal (60%) or some (37%) after attending the Schooling Ourselves workshops. Although respondents feel their knowledge of the history and development of hip-hop improved, the surveys display less optimism concerning their preparedness to use hip-hop to improve literacy and critical thinking. Respondents report feeling very and somewhat prepared at rates of 31% and 66%, respectively.

Despite participants' lack of familiarity with hip-hop's historical and social roots, music and culture, the survey respondents report intentions of using the information presented in the Schooling Ourselves workshops at the rates of 30% ("often") and 63% ("occasionally"). Despite a relatively low understanding of hip-hop's history, development, or contemporary cultural relevance, the workshop's ability to improve the knowledge of the attendees corresponds with their intent of using the information in their classrooms. Pre-existing knowledge of hip-hop history is not an indicator of whether or not teachers plan to introduce HHBE into their teaching and learning repertoire. Instead, enhancing teachers' understandings of the historical and social significance of hip-hop and HHBE pedagogical practices, through workshops such as Schooling Ourselves, encourages teachers to attempt HHBE. Most Schooling Ourselves workshop participants indicated a willingness to implement what they learned in the workshops into their teaching practices. Given this finding, we thought it important to understand the characteristics of schools and educational institutions to which teachers would take these practices.

WHERE DO THE TEACHERS WORK?

School Characteristics

As many attendees work at the same schools and attended the workshops in groups, the 69 participants who reported working in K-12 settings represented a total of 31 different schools. Using school names and addresses to identify schools, we examine locale and basic demographic characteristics of the 31 schools by referencing NCES Common Core Data set for 2006-2007 school year. Based on the

limited availability of income-level indicators (free/reduced lunch), we only report the racial composition of schools. An overview of school characteristics—school locale, grade level, school type, and racial makeup—are presented in Table 5.3. A breakdown of school characteristics by locale appear in subsequent figures.

The school grade levels reflect teacher workplaces reported in the previous section. The similarities underscore the likelihood that most workshop participants will take their newfound knowledge of HHBE to primary school settings. Additionally, most participants will return to private school settings, institutions that have not been explored within the literature. Of the 31 schools, data on the racial demographics are only available for a total of 24 schools; of these 24 schools, 55% contain majority White student populations. HHBE research has yet to consider this population and the implications of hip-hop based interventions and outcomes in majority White K-12 educational settings. Our analysis is limited to the school level. Therefore, classroom-level demographics are unknown. The fact that teachers from majority White schools show interest in HHBE, by virtue of their attendance at Schooling Ourselves, is an emergent finding that the current literature does not address.

Table 5.3. Summary of School Characteristics (All)

School Characteristics (All) (N=31)	Number (n)	Percent Within Category (%)	Percent of All Schools (n/N)	Source (Reg., NCES, PDE)
All Schools	31	100	.1	Reg.
Grade Level				
Primary	25	81		
Secondary	5	16		
Other	1	0		
School Type			.90	Reg.
Public (traditional)	9	32		
Public (charter)	2	1		
Private	16	57		
Other	1	0		
Racial Makeup			.77	Reg., NCES
Maj. Students of Color	11	45		
Maj. White Students	13	55		

Schools in the Urban Setting

Urban school characteristics (Table 5.4) complicate assumptions about what urban schooling contexts entail. Our population of schools reveals that a diversity of educational settings and student populations may be exposed to HHBE.

In the city of Philadelphia, traditional (noncharter or magnet) public schools are not well represented in our sample: Of 31 schools, only three are traditional urban public schools. One school is identified as a public charter school. Within the geographical boundaries of Philadelphia, 73% of the schools in which *Schooling Ourselves* participants work are private. Relying solely on geography as a measuring rod for "urban" implies that teachers work primarily in traditional urban public schools. If other factors, such as school type and racial composition, are used as proxies for "urban," a picture with different implications emerges. Students' and teachers' experiences in private and charter schools settings may be very different from those of their counterparts in traditional urban public schools. What it means

Table 5.4. Urban (Philadelphia) School Characteristics

Urban School Characteristics (N=17)	Total Number (n)	Percent Within Category (%)	Percent of All Schools (n/31)	Source (Reg., NCES)
Urban (Philadelphia) Schools	17	100	.55	Reg.
Grade Level				
Primary	15	88	.48	
Secondary	2	12	.06	
School Type				
Public (traditional)	3	20	.09	
Public (charter)	1	7	.03	
Private	11	73	.37	
Racial Makeup				Reg., NCES
Maj. Students of Color	10	67	.32	
Maj. White Students	5	33	.16	
School Type x Race				Reg., NCES
Public w/ Maj. Stud. of Color	0	0	.0	
Private w/ Maj. Stud. of Color	8	62	.25	
Public w/ Maj. White Stud.	2	15	.06	
Private w/ Maj. White Stud.	3	23	.09	

to attend an urban school and whether school location and school type shape the likelihood of HHBE curricula and pedagogy and what the curricula and pedagogy are able to accomplish is a line of inquiry that warrants further exploration. This is particularly salient if HHBE scholarship is to become more relevant to theory and practice for nonresearching teachers working in diverse school settings.

The racial compositions of Philadelphia city schools in our sample are indicative of shortcomings of current HHBE research. Of the three public schools with urban locale, racial composition data is available for two. Both have majority White student populations. Contrarily, eight of 11 private schools located in the urban district serve populations that are primarily students of color. Because the student of color category considers all non-White students, the fact that in eight of the 11 private schools, students of color comprise a pure majority masks the possibility that White students make up a proportional majority. This is important to note because the wide range of racial diversity in the urban school context may complicate how HHBE looks and what it accomplishes in comparison to urban educational settings that are more racially homogeneous.

Schools in Suburban Settings

A diverse set of teachers from a diverse set of school settings in both urban and suburban districts is interested in HHBE (a topic that will be explored with more depth in the following section). The suburban districts surrounding the city of Philadelphia reveal a different set of patterns from the analysis of urban schools, as presented in Table 5.5—Suburban School Characteristics. Within the surrounding suburban areas, 100% of schools reported are majority White. Traditional suburban public schools account for 50% of the school settings.

Diversity of School Settings

In summary, our data suggest that HHBE may be occurring in a variety of K-12 educational settings, including majority White urban public schools, majority students of color private schools located in urban school districts, and majority White suburban district schools. If private schooling, suburban, and majority White are used as proxies for privilege, our findings suggest that HHBE may find its way into "privileged" rather than marginal K-12 settings. These findings run counter to the descriptions of urban educational settings that are reflected in the HHBE literature.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The findings presented underscore the fact that *Schooling Ourselves* participants differ greatly from the teacher-researchers who produce HHBE scholarship.

the current HHBE literature are indeed interested in learning about using hip-hop to engage students in learning. Additionally, teachers indicate a willingness to incorporate HHBE into their teaching and learning repertoire, given the right guidance through teacher education and professional development. It remains uncertain if and how *Schooling Ourselves* participants actually use what they learn from the workshops in their classrooms. Despite this uncertainty, our findings, along with the absence of accounts of how HHBE might be taken up by non-researching teachers, point to the need for new approaches to HHBE research, practice, and theory.

Three central concerns about HHBE that relate to our findings illuminate critical issues relevant to nonresearching teachers: teacher diversity and identity, the motivations behind the increased interest in HHBE, and the constraints and affordances of places of practice. First, we revisit the narrowness of teacher-researcher perspectives in HHBE scholarship and contextualize our critique by considering the demographic imperative (Banks, 1995; Dilworth, 1992; Gay & Howard, 2000) and the ongoing discussion of multicultural teacher preparation (Lowenstein, 2009). We address the selection bias of the workshop population and wrestle with why this particular group of teachers attended the workshops and what their attendance might signal for the field of HHBE. Next, we make problematic the ambiguity of place through discussing the constraints that non-researching teachers might face in their attempt to implement a program of HHBE.

Fresh Faces: Exploring the Diversity of Teachers Interested in HHBE

HHBE literature, produced largely by teacher-researchers, many of whom hold the status of hip-hop cultural insiders, fails to consider the diversity of teachers interested in the practices espoused within the literature. Nonresearching teachers who lack foundational knowledge of hip-hop are interested in incorporating hip-hop culture into their teaching and learning practices. The workshop participants' lack of foundational hip-hop knowledge underscores their status as hip-hop cultural outsiders. In the same way multicultural educators identify a "demographic imperative" among an increasingly White and middle-class teaching force and increasingly diverse student population (Banks, 1995; Dilworth, 1992; Gay & Howard, 2000), our findings suggest the existence of an analogous demographic imperative between teacher-researchers who use HHBE for critical and culturally relevant pedagogical aims and nonresearching teachers (i.e., cultural outsiders) who may hold different motivations for using HHBE (as will be discussed shortly in this section).

Schooling Ourselves participants more accurately reflect the actual teaching population than do teacher-researchers who produce HHBE literature. Thus, it is critical that HHBE researchers consider what contributions can be made to the broader discussion of how to prepare a largely White middle-class teaching

Table 5.5. Suburban School Characteristics

Suburban School Characteristics (N = 14)	Total Number (n)	Percent Within Category (%)	Percent of All Schools (n/31)	Source (Reg., NCES)
Suburban Schools	14	100	.45	Reg.
Grade Level				
Primary	10	77	.32	
Secondary	3	23	.10	
School Type				
Public (traditional)	6	50	.19	
Public (charter)	1	8	.03	
Private	4	33	.13	
Other	1	8	.03	
Racial Makeup				Reg., NCES
Maj. Students of Color		0	.0	
Maj. White Students	8	100	.26	
School Type x Race				Reg., NCES
Public w/ Maj. Stud. of Color	0	0	.0	
Private w/ Maj. Stud. of Color	0	0	.0	
Public w/ Maj. White Stud.	6*	86	.19	
Private w/ Maj. White Stud.	1	14	.03	

*This figure collapses the one public charter school with the five traditional public schools.

Participants in the sample teach at similar rates in urban and suburban school settings, albeit at different rates within each locale. Most teachers work in primary schools, are certified in their respective subject areas, and reside in suburban residential areas. The general profile of participants that emerges is a new face for HHBE: suburban certified primary school teachers with more than 10 years of teaching experience who are likely to work in either a suburban school with a majority White student population or in a nontraditional urban school (private or charter) that serves a majority of students of color.

DISCUSSION: FRESH FACES, NEW PLACES

Nonresearching teachers who use HHBE remain a subaltern population; however, this research confirms that teacher populations who are not represented within

force to become multicultural learners capable of understanding and appreciating diversity (Lowenstein, 2009) across multiple educational contexts. If offered the opportunity, teachers such as those at *Schooling Ourselves* will likely continue to self-select to learn and subsequently employ HHBE, ultimately becoming the new faces of these teaching practices.

As the field shifts inquiry from teacher-researchers like Hill (2009), Emdin (2008), Stovall (2006), and Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) toward subaltern nonresearching teacher populations, critical questions surrounding issues of teacher identity, practice, and student outcomes beg for further exploration. More expansive, penetrative, methodologically diverse studies are required that: (1) capture how personal (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, cultural disposition) and professional (teaching experience, educational background, grade level, subject area, and so on) identities shape the ways hip-hop pedagogies are implemented and to what ends, and (2) better understand the relations between teachers' respective identities, pedagogies, and student outcomes. An example of such a study might use interviews and observations to compare and contrast the identities, pedagogies, and outcomes evidenced across a cohort of nonresearching hip-hop based educators. Additionally, survey research could be conducted to explore teachers' perceptions about, content knowledge of, and willingness to learn and use various aspects of HHBE.

Schooling Ourselves participants self-selected to attend the workshops. The process of self-selection leads us to ponder why the teachers who attended the workshops did so. Discovering who might be interested and why certain teachers are interested are two central questions that the HHBE literature does not address. Our findings illustrate that teachers who are less informed of the history, content, and aesthetics of hip-hop are interested in learning about HHBE; as a consequence, the motivating factors of teachers may not be situated in the theoretical and practical objectives of critical and culturally relevant pedagogies. There is a strong likelihood that what nonresearching teachers want and need from HHBE—history, aesthetics, and content—is different from what teacher-researchers cite as their wants and needs regarding HHBE.

A range of intrinsic and extrinsic factors may compel teachers to consult HHBE resources. Among these unexplored factors are professional development credits and other incentives, a genuine curiosity about the history and development of hip-hop culture, and the opportunity to explore the pedagogical possibilities of HHBE. Many educators in our study may have been interested in learning more about hip-hop content as a means of increasing their own cultural competence and/or understanding students' cultural frames of reference. Contrarily, some teachers may have attended *Schooling Ourselves* as a matter of spectacle of the "other" absent of the intent of using the content and practices covered in the workshop.

Our findings highlight the need to understand why teachers are interested in learning about HHBE and what motivates them to seek opportunities to develop

the competencies required to effectively implement the practices. Enhancing our understanding of motivations by investigating self-selection processes would address one shortcoming of teacher-researcher perspectives. Current teacher-researcher perspectives mistakenly presume that nonresearching educators interested in HHBE possess funds of hip-hop knowledge that are essential prerequisites to engaging in hip-hop pedagogies. This implicit assumption has resulted in a body of work that is not well suited for the diverse pool of educators who do not possess similar cultural competencies (i.e., hip-hop) as HHBE teacher-researchers.

Scholarship produced by teacher-researchers succeeds in substantiating HHBE as relevant, effective, and acceptable in the minds of many teachers. The fact that nonresearcher teachers who are hip-hop outsiders (as reflected by teacher knowledge) rather than cultural insiders comprise a majority of workshop participants highlights the need to educate teachers about the history, content, and aesthetics of hip-hop culture. The findings also signal the need to move beyond concerns about legitimating HHBE. As teachers become more interested and committed to using hip-hop as a means of educating students in formal learning contexts, then the work of legitimating HHBE in and of itself as a useful pedagogical aim should become less tantamount within the field.

New Places: The Importance of Place as a Site of Inquiry

Teacher educators and researchers engaging in HHBE must be mindful of the constraints teachers may face as they attempt to take the practices back to their home institutions. Place-based variables such as school location, school type, institutional characteristics, and grade level require additional attention. Depending on these variables, professional, cultural, administrative, and personally held convictions may run counter to HHBE. The variable of place should consider whether the imperatives and interventions of HHBE collide and conflate with the varying definitions of teacher effectiveness and student achievement operating within urban and suburban, public and private, and secondary and elementary schools. Additionally, a focus on place and how urban is obfuscated with student demographics would unpack the loaded and often ambiguous use of the term *urban* within this body of work.

The literature depicts practices primarily in marginalized educational settings that serve urban youth (i.e. poor, racial and ethnic minorities) and higher education settings. Ironically, many of the marginalized settings benefit from having talented academic-oriented teacher researchers leading the HHBE curricula and programs. But HHBE may also be occurring in majority White schools in urban and suburban districts, as well as in public and private K-12 educational spaces. If private schooling and/or majority White are used as proxies for privilege, many of the schools identified in our study may be considered "privileged" K-12 spaces, even within locales that are defined as urban. Consequently, understanding where

groups. If the field wishes to move beyond romanticized portraits of how effective HHBE is for at-risk urban youth, researchers must explore the nuances of various institutions where HHBE is attempted.

CONCLUSION

The data presented in this chapter illustrate that nonresearching teachers who work in a variety of educational settings are interested in learning about hip-hop based education. These findings underscore shortcomings of teacher-researcher perspectives that dominate the field of HHBE. Taking into account the new faces and places of HHBE, it is imperative that the investigative lens of academic research move in new directions. As a matter of teacher education, research, and professional development, we recommend that the field consider the differences between teacher-researchers and nonresearching teachers, explore teachers' motivation to learn about and use HHBE, and take seriously the place-based constraints that nonresearching teachers face. Inherent in such discussions are issues of place, diversity, identity, and the ability of teachers to effectively implement a program of HHBE, given the wants and needs of their teaching and learning contexts.

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HHBE practices might be attempted and the possibilities and limitations inherent to particular places and populations is warranted.

Places beyond the locations where teacher-researchers' studies occur have been theorized but not empirically examined. For example, Pardue's (2004) argument that hip-hop "is about restructuring institutional spaces, especially those places of discipline and surveillance (e.g., prisons, schools) that have historically and systematically been indifferent if not hostile to popular culture in any organized fashion" (p. 423) fails to take into account the real institutional constraints on curricula and pedagogy, together with daunting pressures to improve students' performance on high-stakes tests. Both of these factors are critical areas of concern that have contributed to the frustrations of teachers, especially in urban districts where the curriculum has become increasingly narrowed (Crocco & Costigan, 2007). The expectation that HHBE transforms institutional spaces presumes that teachers intend to use HHBE for such ends. It may be the case that teachers wish to use HHBE, not for transformative purposes, but to improve reading or make annual state testing goals. The literature would benefit from additional portraits of hip-hop based educators employing HHBE in response (or resistance) to the politics of accountability in public schools and in various contexts that account for the diversity of urban school (and suburban) settings.

Whereas the practices and outcomes of HHBE may be compatible with the cultures of institutions chosen or established by teacher-researchers, nonresearching teachers will likely face unique challenges in workplaces (public or parochial, urban or secondary, secondary or elementary) where critical interrogation of Eurocentric epistemologies and culture are discouraged, if not disallowed altogether. What might HHBE look like in urban Catholic schools with predominantly students of color and working-class students? What about in suburban public or elite private schools with predominantly White and upper-class student populations—does HHBE have a future in these places? If the answer is yes, how, then, might HHBE be modified given new sets of place-based and population-related constraints?

Elementary schools may pose another set of challenges to HHBE. The majority of Schooling Ourselves respondents teach in K-8 schools; however, the teacher-researchers who depict hip-hop based interventions and outcomes function almost exclusively in high schools and post-secondary learning environments. Such glaring incongruence within the literature raises concerns pertaining to the prevalence, effectiveness, and appropriateness of HHBE theory and practice in primary grades. Until the canon considers the primary school context and pursues questions such as "Is it ever too early for teachers to draw on students' hip-hop literacies to begin cultivating in-school literacies?" the field will remain unaware of the possibilities and pitfalls of HHBE in these settings. HHBE scholars should take issue with whether the sociocultural objectives presented in the literature are achievable for students and teachers of various age

Curricula, Courses, and Pedagogies with Hip-Hop

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CHAPTER 6

The Limits of "Keepin' It Real"

The Challenges for Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogies of Discourses of Authenticity

*Bronwen Low, Eloise Tan,
and Jacqueline Celemencki*

I'm not gonna say I'm from anywhere else. I don't expect you to say you're from anywhere else except where you come from. I don't expect to hear from your rap that you did this, or you're doing that, and you know, if shit comes down to defend, don't say you're drivin' hard when you ain't got no car!

—Alex, 15 years old

Hip-hop journalist "Angela N." complained in a newsgroup posting that "You haven't lived until you've edited a 2-hour interview and heard 'keepin it real' after every other sentence, tried to cut most of them out of the finished product, then have your boss ask could you do 'something' about all of these 'keeping it real's'?" (McLeod, 1999, p. 139). This suggests that the phrase is so ubiquitous that it is now a speech mannerism or habit, in the mode of "you know what I'm sayin." But as we will see below, the charge to "keep it real" has so many different, sometimes conflicting, meanings that one might wonder if it continues to mean anything at all. We want to argue instead that this polysemy and malleability is at the heart of its power and usefulness. The concept contains an entire hip-hop belief system, even an ideology, which gets used in ways that are both generative and restricting, creative and policing. Speakers use the concept to do different kinds of identity, aesthetic, cultural, and political work, drawing upon their context of utterance and audience expectations and knowledge in order to make "realness" signify. This does not, however, mean that the signification is always clear.

This chapter works to better understand authenticity and realness in hip-hop as well as their implications for critical hip-hop pedagogies, for in our educational

work with hip-hop identified youth we have found that "keepin' it real" can create a very rigid template for what it might mean to be a young, urban, person of color.

Hip-hop culture is a framework that informs how youth interpret, represent, and negotiate aspects of their sociocultural identities, including race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender. Given that hip-hop is a means by which "youth and young adults conceive of themselves, others, and the world around them" (Petchauer, 2009, p. 947), youth such as the participants in our research perform a variety of hip-hop narratives in their everyday lives. This happens even in activities that are not directly related to their consumption or production of hip-hop culture, making intelligible, for instance, one project participant's claim that "I brush my teeth hip-hop." The importance of those narratives to identity and thus to education, given that who one thinks one is will shape how and what and why one learns, makes them worth analyzing, critiquing, and sometimes reworking.

Close attention to the stories that young people tell about their identities in relation to hip-hop is also valuable for educators working with youth affiliated with other popular scenes such as "emo" or "rave" because a popular culture lens offers an additional heuristic that can complicate, complement, and intersect with traditional sociocultural frameworks such as race, gender, and class. While we here advocate the importance of popular culture to identity, we are also wary of reifying notions of "hip-hop identities"; identity is not something one can possess or lose (Côté, 2006), nor should it be "fetishized" as static and essential (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Although in this chapter we focus specifically on how the youth participants in our projects and studies are constructing their identities in relation to hip-hop culture, we remain aware that these identities are built, and rebuilt, in relation to other cultures, communities, and affiliations.

In this chapter, we explore the workings of authenticity in identity in relation to two community-based educational projects. In 2007, Jacqueline created an afterschool writing group called *Writing Our Minds Through Rap* with six young men from ages 15 to 18, each a member of a racialized minority, each a writer of rap lyrics. Their monthly meetings provided the young men with opportunities to share their experiences of racial profiling, poverty, and neighborhood violence in their original rap lyrics. In 2008, Eloise collaborated with a community media production company called *Chronicle Creations* (a pseudonym) to create a participatory documentary with a team of hip-hop youth artists in four elements—b-boying, graffiti, emceeing, and DJing (see Tan, 2009). The documentary was designed to explore the role of hip-hop culture in the lives of 13 youth and in the lives of Montreal youth more broadly. Eloise worked with the two producers, two youth coordinators, and 13 youth as a participant-observer over 4 months in their preproduction working sessions.

Given the centrality of discourses of authenticity to hip-hop culture writ large, it is not surprising that the concept of "the real" played an important part in the two pedagogic projects we describe in this paper. We present a typology of

hip-hop realness that works to make sense of the many things being referenced, sometimes simultaneously, when members of hip-hop culture invoke authenticity. Its elements are the following:

1. The "streets"
2. "Hard" heterosexual masculinity
3. "Blackness"
4. The importance of representing the place and culture you are from
5. The importance of being true to yourself
6. Politically conscious, "underground" hip-hop¹

Our data analyses will concentrate on the workings of discourses of "the streets" and "hardness."

CRITICAL HIP-HOP PEDAGOGIES

As this edited collection makes clear, there has been an explosion of academic interest in existing and potential relationships between education and hip-hop (Petchauer, 2009). Much of the literature documents current curricula and programs, many in the "informal" educational sector, including community centers and afterschool programs, given the relative curricular freedom these spaces often have in relation to schools as well as the frequent presence of hip-hop generation youth as facilitators and organizers in community programs in urban centers. (See the appendix in Rose, 2008, for a listing of some of the hip-hop programs found across the United States, as well as Hall, 2009.) Our experiences as and with hip-hop educators outside of schools have made clear how powerful this work can be, with youth and facilitators often building important relationships and developing innovative pedagogies. However, these are not utopian spaces, for difficulties of inclusion and exclusion can shape the dynamics of teaching and learning in informal educational settings as well as in schools (Kim, 2007). This chapter takes up some of these difficulties.

While much of the work on hip-hop pedagogies disrupts the business as usual of mainstream schooling by bringing urban popular culture into curriculum, some educators have worked to do more explicitly political work by using hip-hop as a lens for sociopolitical critique (e.g., Alim, 2001, 2004; Baszile, 2009; Rodriguez, 2009; Stovall, 2006). Williams (2009) provides a helpful definition of critical hip-hop consciousness that works to create counternarratives and develop a language of critique and transcendence in relation to hip-hop culture.

However, very few educators detailing their critical rap pedagogies grapple with the tensions that hip-hop culture's contradictory politics of representation around issues such as violence, gender, race, and materialism pose to education; this is in large part because scholars and educators are working in an advocacy

mode to legitimize knowledge and literacy practices that are either ignored or disparaged by mainstream schooling. In advocating for this work, scholars often gloss over the tensions between hip-hop and school. An important exception to this is Hill's (2009) recent study of a language arts course that taught students the elements of literary analysis through close examinations of rap lyrics. Despite the powerful exchanges made possible by Hill's culturally responsive teaching and curriculum, including the sharing of stories by students and teacher in a process of "wounded healing," Hill (2009) also described how this curriculum based in hip-hop "inevitably creates spaces of both voice and silence, centering and marginalization, empowerment and domination" (p. 10). Resonating with this chapter's analysis, Hill found that a politics of hip-hop authenticity was complicit in the silencing and that some hurtful comments "were in direct conversation with, and sometimes buttressed, prominent themes within mainstream hip-hop culture" (p. 10). We argue that *critical* rap pedagogies not only need to use rap texts to do critical thinking about the world, but they also need to be aware that the students themselves might be invested in some of the more oppressive representations provided by hip-hop, and that these investments can prove powerfully resistant to the pedagogic impulses of progressive teachers. According to Tan (2009), this means that critical hip-hop pedagogies need to be:

1. Rooted in hip-hop culture while recognizing that its histories and ideologies are socially produced and at times must be challenged and reworked.
2. Socially conscious of how hegemony operates within society, while paying particular attention to how hegemony and power operate within hip-hop culture to marginalize populations it seeks to liberate.
3. Responsive to marginalization whether it be through structures of gender, class, race, religion, sexuality, or ability.
4. Culturally productive by encouraging learners to be producers of their own hip-hop culture.
5. Inclusive of multiliteracies across forms of media, technology, and culture. (p. 59)

Tan (2009) includes a sixth element for researchers of critical hip-hop pedagogies, indicating that they need be "cognizant of the complex ways that positioning (including hip-hop insider or outsider) affects research within the [critical hip-hop pedagogy] community" (p. 59). This framework informs our analysis of both projects.

"KEEPIN' IT REAL" IN HIP-HOP CULTURE

A preoccupation with authenticity shapes many other music subcultures, including rave, country, and rock (McLeod, 1999), but the emphasis on authenticity in hip-hop culture verges on obsession and conveys so many values and

men and women in hip-hop who contribute and participate in the culture (Hill, 2009), and equate masculinity with dominating women (Hurt, 2006). This has posed particular difficulties for women rappers (see Pough, Richardson, Durham, & Raimist, 2007; Rose 1994) and hip-hop identified women more generally, who must reconcile feelings of love and hate for a culture in which they are frequently debased (Morgan, 1999).

Hard hip-hop heterosexual masculinity defines a woman's value in whether she can support, pleasure, and serve men, making available only two identity options: either the low-status bitch/slut/ho who sexually satisfies her man or the higher-status sister who supports her man in a multitude of ways (Rose, 2008). This dichotomy between bad ho and good sister is "a key to belonging" (Rose, 2008, p. 173) to hip-hop culture. This can obviously have a harmful impact on the identity formation of young Black women; for instance, the teenage girls in Richardson's (2006) work were keen to question hegemonic structures of race and class but did not extend this to issues of gender, which meant, ironically, that "in their quest to keep it real, they also display instances of succumbing to racist stereotypes and controlling myths of Black womanhood" (p. 49).

Blackness

Blackness comes together with the streets and hard heterosexual masculinity to form the image of the MC that dominates popular representations in outlets like BET (Black Entertainment Television) and perceptions of hip-hop both within and outside the community, while eliding the participation in hip-hop of groups other than African Americans (see, for instance, Rivera 2003; Wang 2004), as well as hip-hop's global reach and its evolving forms (Chang, 2006).

Representing Place, Culture, and Where You Are From

An extension of the emphasis on representing the street is that hip-hop identities are firmly grounded in the particulars of place. Soon after hip-hop's birth in the Bronx, it spread to the West coast and across the country, and eventually major (and arguably minor) urban center in the United States now has some kind of hip-hop scene. Regions have distinct styles, and rappers regularly make claims to authenticity by calling out their area codes or the names of their neighborhoods.

Being True to Yourself

The equation of authenticity in hip-hop with being "true to oneself" bears most kinship to a wider North American preoccupation with authenticity. This element is heavily promoted by central figures in what gets considered "old school"

commitments (some of which are contradictory) that it deserves its own examination. Although we concentrate mostly on the "streets" and "hardness" elements of the typology of hip-hop authenticity in our analysis, we first offer a brief overview of all of them in order to map out the complexity and contradictions of "keepin' it real."

The Streets

With its geographic and symbolic origins in the streets of the South Bronx (Toop, 1991), hip-hop has from its inception been envisioned as a conduit for the voices of the dispossessed. Implied in popular phrases like "keepin' it real" and "representin'" is that the space of the real, of the represented and in need of representing, is the "street" (Keyes, 2002; Spady, Lee, & Alim, 1999). As part of hip-hop's "ghetto-centricity" (Kelley, 1994), this stands as a metaphor for the Black underclass. The romance of the streets also takes part in the "rags to riches" narratives so central to the American dream, particularly when voiced by rappers who have "made it." Perry (2004) posits that hip-hop is the first popular cultural space in which one's origins in the "projects" get celebrated rather than rejected "as an embarrassment," a move that signals street-smart toughness and resilience as well as a class-based identification with poor Black people (p. 89). Busta Rhymes's 1998 track "In the Ghetto," which samples Rick James's "Ghetto Life," paints a portrait of this space, both real and symbolic, in which one needs to become a hustler in order to survive and support a family. While the rapper points to the irony of the fact that "we romance the street," given the dangers there of attacks by police and other gangs and the limited opportunities it offers, the ghetto is intrinsic to the narrator's identity as he explains that you can take a person out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of the person.

"Hard" Heterosexual Masculinity

This dimension of hip-hop authenticity is closely linked to the "streets," and its investigation requires an understanding of how the gangster rap genre reworked the idea of rap as street social realism. Gangsta rap describes "gang life, or more generally, life in the ghetto from the perspective of a criminal (or liminal, transgressive) figure" (Krimms, 2000, p. 70). It became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s particularly on the West coast of the United States, first in South Central, Los Angeles, with artists such as N.W.A, whose explicit stories of gang life and warfare burned a virtual template of what realness should look like into hip-hop consciousness. This template included an elaborated set of criteria for "hardness" by which an MC's credibility continues to be measured by many.² Hip-hop hardness is also steeped in particularly narrow narratives of heterosexual masculinity that make heterosexuality compulsory, exclude and silence the voices of queer

as well as "conscious" hip-hop, for instance by "Teacha" KRS-One who explained that "Hip-Hop begins with the courage to be yourself. Being you has consequences" (quoted in Zafar, 2007).

Politically Conscious and Underground

This final dimension of 'keepin' it real' reacts against and critiques mainstream hip-hop, and in particular excessive bling-bling materialism, violence, formulaic and uncreative lyrics, and videos with their emphasis on expensive cars, big "cribs," and "video hos." These critiques work in the tradition of conscious hip-hop, which includes all those rappers who use their music as a platform for education, often striving to return the culture to its more community-based "old school" grassroots and realizing its political potential.

THE LIMITS OF AUTHENTICITY

Our work with youth in these and other educational projects has made clear that the elements of the typology regularly play themselves out in students' hip-hop identities, coming together, clashing, and producing sometimes disabling contradictions, as social criticism collides with sensationalism, documentary realism with fantasy, and masculine strength with sexism. Although hip-hop authenticity was important to the students' ability to connect with curricula in which they felt their lives and experiences were prominently featured, the rap "real" also worked to set up some fairly strict dictates about what it could mean to be young, Black, immigrant, male, female, or poor in urban Montreal.

Jacqueline created and led the Writing Our Minds Through Rap project in 2007 as a series of writing workshops in a high school designed for youth at risk of dropping out. In Jacqueline's project, we see how participants' lyrics continually perform authenticity by invoking "the streets," with their implications of violence, urban neighborhoods and poverty, and "hard" heterosexual masculinity, which intersect to reproduce the familiar tropes of gangster rap.

Eloise worked in 2008 as a participant observer over 4 months in the weekly preproduction sessions of a documentary project that explored the role of the elements of hip-hop in the lives of youth hip-hop artists in Montreal. Through Eloise's work with Chronicle Creations, we focus on how hip-hop discourses of "hard" heterosexual masculinity and their attendant economy of stereotypes of women, organized around a dichotomy between female/ho or bitches/sisters, limit how both male and female participants categorize women. We then map out some of the possibilities for critical engagement with the stranglehold of authenticity in hip-hop.

WRITING THEIR MINDS THROUGH RAP

In Jacqueline's project, Writing Our Minds Through Rap, she met with a group of six young male rap lyricists once a month for a period of 5 months. These 90-minute meetings were hosted at a local community center located near the young men's high school, a public alternative school for students who have dropped out of the mainstream system. During each of the meetings, Jacqueline used a set of discussion questions that prompted the young men to discuss the challenges they faced in their daily lives, such as poverty and violence in their neighborhoods, as well as academic challenges. These discussions provided a context for the young men to articulate their frustrations and thoughts through writing rap lyrics. The young men talked about how rap music provides a space for them to discuss things that are not mentioned in their classroom, such as being visible minorities and the realities of their violent neighborhoods. They also described how their teachers discredit rap music's potential as a pedagogical tool in the classroom, mostly because of the discourses of moral panic circulating about hip-hop culture (Koza, 1999) and the overrepresentation of commercial gangster rap music in the media and on the airwaves. Each of the young men in Jacqueline's study faced socioeconomic challenges and came from some of the lower-income neighborhoods in the city of Montreal, such as western Notre Dame de Grace, St. Michel, and the Barclay area of Cote des Neiges. They were all second-generation Canadians, with parents from Jamaica, Trinidad, Sri Lanka, and El Salvador.

For all of these young men, the usual tropes for claiming an authentic hip-hop identity resonated powerfully, and they drew upon many elements of our typology in conversation and through their lyrics in order to make a case for their value and legitimacy as hip-hop insiders. Particularly powerful were the discourses of "the streets" and "hardness," both of which got mobilized in terms of respect and street credibility. For instance, Alex described how among his circle of friends it is believed that the more dangerous your neighborhood, the more respect you deserve for having survived it. He spoke about his childhood experiences of growing up in a southeastern United States urban tenement housing project—where drive-by shootings were a regular occurrence—to explain why he uses violent iconography in his rap lyrics: "The place where I was living in Florida, like 2–3 years back, I mean, I used to hear a lot of murders." Given that U.S. cities are plagued by higher rates of crime than their Canadian counterparts,³ it makes sense that this aspect of Alex's family history was invoked in defense of his lyrics.

Another youth, Michael, advocated strongly for the importance of rap lyrics as a street social realism, or what Chuck D (1997) described as the "Black CNN" (p. 256). He claimed:

Right now around you someone's getting shot or raped or what not, you wanna portray that, you wanna tell people about it and make people open their eyes, cause a lot of people are ignorant about it, and they don't want to hear about it. I personally want to open up my eyes to all of these things.

Michael is driven to witness the crimes he sees around him, casting rap lyrics as the vehicle for educating himself and others. He later links the importance of witnessing to "keepin' it real," in contrast with being "fake":

I see a lot of shit. I see people getting robbed with guns to their faces, I see a lot of things. The reason why I'm all, like don't be fake, cuz if people go around saying like yo . . . I see what I see, I don't see everything. On my block alone, there was like four shootings.

Here, authenticity is linked to actively experiencing, through seeing, violent crime. When asked why some adults, including teachers, criticized rap music, Alex responded: "People don't want to hear the truth. They live in this society, but they're boxed in. They're like, okay, this doesn't happen in my neighborhood."

This social witness as critic theory is challenged, however, by lyrics in which the youth seem to fantasize themselves as more active participants in a violent culture, intertwining "the streets" with images of their own hard masculinity as they adopt gangster personae in which they become perpetrators of violent crime. For instance, Michael raps:

You see me pressin' these bitches, don't think you're not included
This is for the motherfuckers these bitches and greedy suckers
Money, money's on my mind,
Gotta grip my balls and I grind
Any niggas try to interfere me, your bodies will be goin' flyin'.

In analysis of such lyrics, it is important to keep in mind that these images of violence in hip-hop are often metaphoric (Hill, 2009), used to describe a rapper's ability to "kill" or "wreck" any contenders in the long tradition of rap and breakdance battles. An instance of this is found in some of Stuart's lyrics, in which he raps: "Your rhymes are repetitious, I'm kickin' it fresh/Spit the wrong words and I'm rippin' your flesh."

Although the notion of street realism persistently shaped participants' discussions of their art, the young men's rap lyrics offered no specifics or nuances that would make more precise and unique the experience of their lives in Montreal. Instead, they invoke the general tropes of "ghetto life" so central to hip-hop authenticity and forged in U.S. contexts. And these tropes are consistent across the

boys' lyrics despite their different relationships to "the streets." One of the first sets of lyrics shared with the group came from Mark, who repeatedly discussed the violence in his neighborhood:

This is DG, these ain't no regular streets, brothers leave you dead for the way
that you speak
This ain't a joke, so don't provoke, the brothers who will choke you by the
throat
You brokeback snitch, you should walk with a clip
Cuz at any given moment nigga you could get hit
While you drivin' your four door, you should be strapped with a 4-4
Kickin' in the front door
Niggas you want more? Nah you don't, just hope I won't miss

The gangster personae Mark adopts here, linked to Blackness and hardness, seems to bear little relation to his own experiences in his neighborhood; in a discussion about his work, Mark admitted that his mother does not allow him to go out at night and that he has never witnessed violence (though he hears about it from his peers). And although Mark comes from one of the lower-income neighborhoods in the city (or more specifically, from a lower-income pocket in what is largely a middle-class neighborhood), Mark's lyrics suggest that violent crimes such as drive-by shootings are much more prevalent in Montreal than they really are.³

In their conversations with Jacqueline, the youth often spoke about the power of rap as a "literacy of lived experience," describing the importance of conveying your true self in your rap lyrics and the lived conditions on the margins. They described how in their high schools they feel they have limited opportunities to express themselves, and turn to rap as a way to come to terms with what are often challenging life circumstances. In hip-hop, these young men feel embraced as they are, both validated and affirmed in their identities as economically insecure, racially marginalized youth. However, these sets of lyrics also reflect the extent to which their hip-hop identities also function as forms of personal armor, as they adopted gangster personas impervious to dissonance between their actual experiences and those found in the rap lyrics they consume. These narratives and personas act to glorify and sensationalize violence, and seem to limit the imaginative possibilities the youth might have for themselves. The draw to tough and street personas is understandable, beyond the way it dominates the rap representations they all consumed, for many of the youth feel actively discriminated against. Many of the participants discussed police racial profiling and the heightened presence of law enforcement where they lived, citing the many times when they felt they were unfairly targeted simply for being

young, non-White, and wearing hip-hop attire. Such experiences of racism help make sense of why violence holds court as a major theme in the young men's lyrics; it is through these graphic and violent iconographies that real and imagined narratives are intertwined. The narratives seem to offer a hard, violent, and hyper-masculine identity as a form of self-protection (as in, for instance, Alex's case), and as means of living up to an authentic and "hard" hip-hop identity when it might be in doubt (perhaps for Mark).

THE BOUNDARIES OF BEING FEMALE IN HIP-HOP: BETWEEN "FEMALES" AND "BITCHES"

In the next section of this chapter, we turn to Eloise's work with Chronicle Creations. Of the 13 participants, there were 2 females and 11 males, all between 18 to 23 years old. As each participant was an active artist in at least one hip-hop element, hip-hop culture unified the 13 participants who came from a variety of ethnic, linguistic and, transnational backgrounds. The two situations presented took place during weekly preproduction sessions of Chronicle Creations where 13 participants met to discuss various themes in hip-hop culture with the purpose of brainstorming ideas for their participatory film on hip-hop culture in Montreal. During this project, authenticity regularly emerged in a number of ways. For instance, project participants (all hip-hop "insiders," including artists) used "realness" as a way to control what counted as "true hip-hop," who could "be hip-hop," and who could speak about it. They also regularly invoked the streets in order to validate the informal paths through which they had learned the hip-hop arts, often demeaning in the process formal education (a pattern that poses a real challenge for those interested in building bridges between hip-hop culture and schools). We here explore a moment during Eloise's participant-observant work that illustrates the workings of "hard heterosexual masculinity" in terms of how participants, male and female alike, mobilized binary constructions of the sister/female and the ho/bitch.

The producers and coordinators focused the second weekly meeting on "women and hip-hop." At the end of the 3-hour session, the producers and coordinators opened up the discussion to a debate on the issue of sexual discrimination in hip-hop. Given that the staff (two producers and two youth coordinators) had framed the debate around sexual discrimination, the conversation began with participants discussing the sexist representation of women in hip-hop videos and lyrics. The conversation shifted when emcee Theo interjected:

Hip-hop is not disgracing women; we're disgracing women ourselves and women are disgracing women. So guys who gotta mention that there's a ho and that there's a slut in every song that they make, or in most of them, need

to find something else to do with their lives. But girls who are going to be hos and sluts need to find something else to do with their time.

The room was filled with "mmm-hmmms" and "uhh-huhs" and applause from a few people.

The first female comment came when one of the producers, Marissa, asked the group to let Leesha, a participant who was starting to learn how to DJ, speak. Leesha responded, "I was just gonna say, there's a difference between a female, and there's a difference between a [pause] bitch." At the word *bitch*, there was laughter from the participants. Ivan, a graffiti writer, piped in and said, "It's true!" Drawing upon the good woman/bad woman dichotomy, Leesha continued, "A female I would say has the choice to do whatever she wants with herself. She's proud of herself. But um, I dunno." Another participant, Vanessa, went on to explain how the identity of good sister or bad ho is a conscious choice made by women in hip-hop: "They basically put it on themselves, you make a choice, you deal with it." After another participant affirmed, "Yeah," Marissa asked, "I know I'm interrupting, but how do you two as women feel about that?" Leesha responded, "It's not me!" and Vanessa said, "I know who I am, I know what I'm doing, I don't care what they do. They can go shake their little booties and whatever." The conversation continued, but it revolved around the group consensus that there was an inherent difference between females and bitches, affirming Leesha's original comment.

Leesha and Vanessa's comments about females and bitches were revealing in that the debate eventually became a conversation between Leesha, Vanessa, and Marissa. The focus shifted from the men in the group to the women, given that Leesha and Vanessa were the ones who were exhibiting the anti-female comments. Marissa most often took the stance of moderator in the weekly sessions so as to not impede the voices of the participants, although her facial expressions sometimes betrayed a frustration with the lack of critical thinking displayed. While it seemed important to Marissa for her to address the two women in the group, she never turned to the men and explicitly asked them for their opinion on the comments, which suggests a feeling that sexism was more relevant to the women than to the men in the group.

Though the staff attempted to continue discussions of women and hip-hop throughout the sessions, they inevitably evolved into the type of discussion in the previous scene. Moments like this were often met with laughter, though Marissa often would try to get the participants to speak directly about what was going on. For the young women in the group, the reproduction of the existing stereotypes within hip-hop culture is especially harmful, given that the documentary production group was supposed to be a supportive space for participation and exploration of what it means to be hip-hop. Instead, the discussions around women in hip-hop only reinforced the dichotomous tropes of femininity in hip-hop defined by the women's relationship to men. Evidence that this dichotomy stems from

hip-hop emerged in a different session where Carlos, a graf writer in the group, insisted that Eloise listen to Jay-Z's (2002) song "Bitches & Sisters" so that she could gain insight into his perception of women in hip-hop. This perpetuation of the "authentic" hip-hop woman is especially frustrating, given that the participants, like those in Richardson (2006), were keen to question hegemonic structures of race and class but not of gender.

Despite the fact that gender is one of the most obvious axes that affect how we inhabit a space (Massey, 1994), it also continues to be an axis that represents great challenges to community educators struggling to develop a critical consciousness among their participants. Although the participants in Eloise's work were more than apt at creating the types of counternarratives Williams (2009) advocates for based on class, immigration experience, education experience, and their hip-hop experiences, they were less able to do so surrounding authentic constructions of gender.

CHALLENGES TO CRITICAL HIP-HOP PEDAGOGIES FROM THE AUTHENTICITY DEBATES

Many of the conversations and lyrics described above seem like a far cry from critical hip-hop pedagogies, despite our aims and those of the facilitators in Chronicle Creations. This does not mean that there were no critical aspects to both projects. In both projects, the youth did display the development of critical consciousness while they attempted to identify and deconstruct how structures of class and gender affect others. For instance, the young men and women in Chronicle Creations were quick to point out how the hip-hop industry objectifies young women and how those young women objectify themselves. And yet they did not see themselves as implicated in, and potentially limited by, the dichotomy, even for the "good" female participants. And the young men in Chronicle did not see that their perpetuation of hip-hop's dichotomous construction of women as the ho/sister was sexist. In response, we wonder why the youth participants in Eloise's project were not able to see themselves as actors within hip-hop culture who contribute to and perpetuate its conventions of authenticity in relation to gender. Similarly, the participants in Jacqueline's writing project built powerful critiques of racism and socioeconomic marginalization in conversation, but in their lyrics were not able to imagine different roles, in response, other than the gangster.

Why such inconsistencies? Why didn't Jacqueline, Eloise, and the producers feel able to really challenge the youth they were working with? Similar dynamics shaped both projects. In both instances, they relied on the voluntary, uncompensated participation of the youth. The programs ran separately from formal education institutions and, particularly with Chronicle Creations whose meetings lasted over several months, every week was never the same as the last week,

and a range of participants would come back. This type of setup can be common in hip-hop education programs. Consequently, informal educators are sometimes overcome by a feeling of "thank goodness they showed up" when entering the community center or recreation room. In Jacqueline's case, the data from her workshops were the basis of her master's thesis. If participants dropped out, she'd have no data. The documentary project also relied heavily on participation because, if no one came, there would be no one to film, and they were working to create a product that could be professionally broadcast. The producers and coordinators were extremely cognizant of the participants' sacrifice of their own time and made every attempt to let participants know that their voices were valued and a priority. However, if the focus is so strongly on "getting them to come back," educators in this environment may shy away from creating instances that might be uncomfortable for youth in favor of perpetuating a "this is really fun" atmosphere. For instance, although the Chronicle Creations participants were all for deconstructing the corporatization and commercialization of hip-hop culture and enjoyed these types of critical debates, it remains to be seen if they would have enjoyed a similarly critical debate about their own role in perpetuating a limiting model authenticity in hip-hop.

Tied to the "thank goodness they came" mentality mentioned above is the push to create cohesion within groups in voluntary informal education settings. This was especially the case with the documentary project, which needed to build a team atmosphere among the participants. If participants saw themselves as a cohesive group, they would want to come back each week, feel a sense of accountability to each other, and be more likely to follow the project through until the end. There were two primary aspects uniting the group as a team: 1) they were all hip-hop artists, and 2) they all shared a common vision of hip-hop culture as revolutionary. In an effort to create cohesion with the group, Eloise and the producers and coordinators may have been shying away from getting participants to ask critical questions of themselves and their role in hip-hop. Specifically related to the moments of sexism examined in this chapter, it would have been difficult to get participants—male and female—to talk about their role in sexism within hip-hop without seeming to be passing judgment.

In both projects, educators attempted to acknowledge, validate, and draw upon the experiences of young people, opening up spaces for students to share their stories. Of primary concern to Jacqueline's work with the young men in her group was supporting their aspirations to be "culturally productive" (Tan, 2009, p. 59), using their own contexts and familiarity with rap music as artistic inspiration. Most of the young men in the group claimed disinterest in classroom writing assignments but drew regularly from hip-hop as a source of inspiration and as a catalyst to write, reflect, and perform what they saw as their lived experiences of poverty and neighborhood violence. She worried that challenging the young men's depictions of their neighborhoods that at times seemed to glorify violence and

danger might have limited their sense of the importance of their creative freedom of expression, making the workshops seem more like school.

Chronicle Creations, like many youth media projects, regularly invokes the discourse of "letting the youth tell their stories." As a starting point, that discourse might make it difficult for the project coordinators to ascertain whether or not it is their role to help shape the youth's consciousness and telling of their story or if it is their role to step aside and let the youth speak for themselves. When we throw into the mix that it was a "documentary," it becomes even more complicated, as most people would have the initial reaction that a documentary must be committed to the real, pure telling of the youth's stories.

All of these factors stood in the way of realizing the type of critical hip-hop pedagogy provided by Tan (2009) at the beginning of this chapter. It is easy to say that a critical hip-hop pedagogy will be "responsive to marginalization whether it be through structures of gender, class, race, religion, sexuality, or ability;" however, as we saw from both Jacqueline's and Eloise's projects, it is difficult to see what that "response" will look like or what obstacles will stand in its way. How can educators approach critical hip-hop pedagogy where students move beyond identifying constructions of authenticity and can begin to question how their own identity is bound by these hip-hop authenticity constructions?

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

We have been thinking about and developing a few strategies since these experiences. A first strategy that speaks directly to the obstacles in the documentary project Eloise worked with is to let youth participants know from the beginning what critical thinking means, what you will be expecting from them, and what they can expect of you in relation to enacting a critical hip-hop pedagogy. Although the participants in the documentary project knew that they would be asked to think critically about *hip-hop*, they were not told that they would be asked to think critically about *themselves*. If you are working within a critical hip-hop pedagogy framework, write out what that means to you and put it up somewhere participants can see it every time they walk into the program; perhaps they can write their own versions of what it means to them. Let them know that learning in hip-hop does take work and do not be afraid that they will leave because you will be asking them to think. They want to think.

A second strategy is to draw upon critiques from hip-hop insiders, such as some of the "old school" rappers (as discussed in relation to the politically conscious, "underground" hip-hop element of the typology) as well as contemporary ones (such as Nas, who has claimed "hip-hop is dead") who are critics of the banality of violence and the rise of the "studio" gangster that accompanied rap music's commercialization. Given how complex rap's representational politics

are, however, the work of these artists also needs to be interrogated for its own contradictions (for instance, artists who will critique bling-bling culture but perpetuate sexist stereotypes). Thoughtful critics also include hip-hop journalists and scholars such as Joan Morgan, Bakari Kitwana, and Greg Tate. This kind of study will reveal that hip-hop can be a contested space and that there is no consensus on what counts as "real."

A third strategy for educators in reworking what it means to be authentic for young people in hip-hop is to engage rap lyrics as artistic rather than mimetic representation. When we approach hip-hop as an art, we call for a more complex debate surrounding hip-hop texts (such as rap lyrics), and urge students to move beyond questioning *if* rappers "really" live the type of life they depict in their songs, and instead ask *why* rappers choose to depict that type of life. This can prompt discussion about why artists make the choices they do, and the value and limits of these choices—thus, denaturalizing the hip-hop "real." One might ask, for instance, following Perry (2004), "Why is the violence of the illegal underground economy, for example, more compelling than other features of community life" (p. 93) as a subject in rap lyrics? This project of denaturalizing is central to a critical hip-hop pedagogy.

As part of this project, rap music and hip-hop culture should be explored with students in light of aesthetic traditions such as African American oral storytelling and competition, including the dozens, boasting, and toasting, as well as Black Atlantic cultural forms such as dub poetry, or Jamaican sound system and dance hall history. They can be read in relation to Henry Louis Gates's (1988) treatment of the trope of signifying(g), a cornerstone of African American cultural and literary theory, which groups together a system of Black vernacular rhetorical strategies that draw upon the arts of indirection in order to trick or play, as in playful punning. Signifying celebrates the multiplicity and even chaos of meaning making, and therefore complicates the notion of a static, knowable "real." Emphasis can also be placed upon the performative, playful, even postmodern aspects of rap music, such as sampling and the ways in which it, like many Black vernacular modes, works in the way of irony and satire—both inside and outside the object of critique, playing on the audience's ability to recognize the difference (Potter 1995).

A fourth strategy for educators working with the stereotypes of authenticity in hip-hop is to open up discussion on the complexity of performing identities. In the projects discussed here, how the students performed their identities in hip-hop culture was the sole focus, and when other aspects of their identity (e.g., race, gender, class, neighborhood affiliation) were discussed, it was primarily in relation to hip-hop culture. In Eloise's work with Chronicle Creations, Leesha and Vanessa spoke of girls "shaking their booties" in the club and in videos and immediately drew the conclusion that they were "hos" and "sluts." In the context of identity performance, Leesha and Vanessa could have been asked if women

who seem to represent one type of construction of femininity in one situation can represent a completely different identity in another situation. For instance, educators may ask whether a scantily clad woman dancing in a video could also be a university-educated woman? When we open up a discussion on the performance of identity, educators can help students see its complexities instead of understanding identity through dichotomous notions of authentic/fake. As part of this project, youth could be encouraged to write "persona" raps in which they take on the identity of another and experiment with different voices, exploring the ways that believability and richness in character need not be confined to the factual real.

These strategies ask us to study rap lyrics and songs as texts shaped by particular, historically situated, conventions of representation. Although central to many of the students' sense of themselves as young, urban, perhaps Black, or as men or women, these texts are also open to contestation and reinvention. Rap can also be studied as art, fiction, performance, and product of the imagination. These frameworks should help students gain the critical detachment necessary to explore both the possibilities and limitations of hip-hop's representations of urban youth and life. Here, they can work to gain some of the perspectives on pop culture developed by Stuart Hall (1996):

Popular culture, commodified and stereotyped as it often is, is not at all, as we sometimes think of it, the area where we find who we really are, the truth of our experience. It is an arena that is profoundly mythic. It is a theatre of popular desires, a theatre of popular fantasies. It is where we discover and play with the identifications of ourselves, where we are imagined, where we are represented, not only to the audiences out there who do not get the message, but to ourselves for the first time. (p. 32)

NOTES

1. For an extended discussion of the hip-hop realness typology, see Low (2011). These categories overlap at points with McLeod's (1999), a six-item typology of the "semantic dimensions" of authenticity in hip-hop developed through discourse analysis of a significant data corpus, which includes interviews with rappers, fans, and music executives; articles in hip-hop magazines; album lyrics; hip-hop newsgroup postings; and press releases for rap albums. He outlined the various dimensions as: social-psychological (staying true to yourself rather than following mass trends); racial (Black versus White); political-economic (underground as opposed to commercial rap); gender-sexual (hard versus soft); social locational (the street); and cultural (the old school versus the mainstream of rap music).
2. Many blame the corporatization of hip-hop in the production and promotion of an apolitical version of gangster rap, including Immortal Technique (2006), who argues that "if you look at Gangsta Rap now and then back then, the Revolutionary element is for the most part completely sanitized by the corporate structure." As music industry executives

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recognized the tremendous marketability of the ghetto fantasy, the "Gangsta Entertainment Complex" (Aaron, 1999) was born and the gangster became the predominant persona among mainstream rappers.

3. While there is violent crime in Montreal, the city is fortunate to have a lower homicide rate per capita than any other Canadian city and, less surprisingly, any U.S. city of comparable size. For instance, in 2008, Montreal reportedly had 29 homicides (down from 42 in 2007) while similarly sized Phoenix had more than 200 and Philadelphia had almost 400 (<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/montreal/story/2008/12/30/mtl-homicide-rate-1230.html>).

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Who Are We?

Hip-Hoppers' Influence in the Brazilian Understanding of Citizenship and Education

Derek Pardue

People often refer to a great basketball center as a “man-child”
 The physical force of an undeniable masculinity
 Coupled with the playfulness and charm of a boy . . .
 Today I saw a version of the contrary
 Trivial yet absolutely revealing
 A moment of release from my iPod
 Remembering my youth with the Bad Brains
 The bus stopped and I observed an “infant-teen”
 A grown boy with a pacifier
 Carrying boxes, crates, bags creating his place under the urban avenue overpass . . .

In early 2009 I scribbled these notes down on one of the many long bus rides part of everyday life in São Paulo, Brazil. The anonymous boy protagonist here is not donning the pacifier in a gesture to an Ice Cube sidekick from the 1990s (see, for example, the film *Boyz in the Hood* [1991]). Over the past decade, I have seen dozens of toddlers in Brazil with pacifiers but never a full-sized boy, perhaps, given his probable diet, a preteen of 10 or 11 years of age. As I watched the “infant-teen” perform his mental tasks over a span of several days, I came to see the pacifier as a metaphoric symbol of the serious systemic problems in Brazilian citizenship.

For more than a decade I have spent hundreds of hours shuttling from one periphery neighborhood to another meeting with hip-hoppers, educators, and community activists. I have witnessed not only the steady popularization across various mainstream media in urban Brazil of Hip Hop in all of its elements (MC, DJ, graffiti, street dance) but also the development and cultivation of homegrown messages

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