Theses and Dissertations

2012

Breaking the Beat: An examination of obstacles hindering systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy in marginalized schools.

Ryan Nicole Glover
Lehigh University

Follow this and additional works at: http://preserve.lehigh.edu/etd

Breaking the Beat: An examination of obstacles hindering consistent implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy in marginalized schools.

Ryan Nicole Glover
Lehigh University

Thesis is accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Comparative and International Education.

Breaking the Beat: An examination of obstacles hindering systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy in marginalized Schools.

Ryan Nicole Glover

_____
Date Approved

_____
Dr. Alexander W. Wiseman
Thesis Advisor

_____
Dr. Floyd Beachum
Committee Member

_____
Dr. James Peterson
Committee Member

_____
Dr. Iveta Silova
Committee Member

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge my family and friends who gave me pushes when I needed to get started or keep going. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Alex Wiseman for his guidance throughout my Masters Program.

Table of Contents

Figures

Abstract

This comparative case study examines hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) in the United States and South Africa. Through an examination of existing literature, interviews, and open-ended questions, this case study details the use and cultural relevance of HHCP, while highlighting its ability to increase academic performance amongst marginalized students in South Africa and the United States. In addition, this paper examines the systemic use of HHCP within marginalized classrooms in the U.S. and South Africa, and explores the obstacles that hinder educators' ability to systemically implement this pedagogical practice in their classrooms or programs. This case study was conducted using qualitative research methods. The data was collected amongst four educators, two in the U.S. and two in South Africa, with extensive knowledge of HHCP or experience implementing HHCP in a classroom or educational setting. An analysis of the data revealed that HHCP's biggest obstacles is its collision with dominant cultures ideologies and the status quo's perception of hip-hop culture. Ultimately, these obstacles reflect the reproduction of the marginalization and social and political inequalities of people of color.

Hate it or Love it[1]

by

The Game, featuring 50 Cent

Coming up I was confused

My mama kissing a girl

Confusion occurs

Coming up in a cold world

Daddy ain't around

Probably out committing felonies

My favorite rapper used to sing

Check, check out my melody

I wanna live good so shit I sell dope

For a four-finger rings

One of them gold ropes

Nana told me if I passed I get a sheepskin coat

If I could move a few packs

I get the hat

Now that'll be dope

Tossed and turn in my sleep that night

Woke up the next morning

Niggaz done stole my bike

Different day, same shit

Ain't nothing good in the hood

I run away from this bitch

And never come back if I could

Chorus:

Hate it or love it the under dog's on top

And I'm gon shine homie until my heart stop

Go'head'n envy me

I'm rap's MVP

And I ain't going no where

So you can get to know me

On the grill of ma low rider

Guns on both sides

Right above the gold wires I four-five'em

Kill a nigga on ma song

And really do it

---

[1] Full song in Appendix 1.

That's the true meaning of a ghostwriter

Ten g'z will take your daughter outta air forces

Believe you me homie, I know all about losses

I'm from Compton, wear the wrong colors, be cautious

One phone call, have your body dumped in Marcy

I stay strapped like car seats

Been banging since ma lil' nigga, rob, got killed for his Barkley's

That's ten years

I told Pooh in '95

I'll kill you if you try me for my air-max 95's

Told Banks when I met'em I'm a ride

And if I gotta die, rather homicide

I ain't had 50 cent when ma grand-mama died

Now I'm going back to Cali with ma jacob on

See how time fly?

[continued]

Hip-hop is a form of music that promotes violence, misogyny, and drugs for many people. However, for those who take the time to listen and digest the music, it is apparent that the lyrics often represent a social reflection on societal inequalities and the cultural construction of the poor and disenfranchised. The above lyrics written by hip-hop artists The Game, featuring 50 Cents' 2006 hit song *Hate it or Love it,* serves as an example of the social construction of marginalized youth that permeates throughout hip-hop culture. Lines such as, *"I wanna live good so shit I sell dope," and "I know all about losses I'm from Compton, wear the wrong colors, be cautious,"* provides marginalized youth with a social commentary of their communities, and represents both their perceived as well as experienced struggles within society as a whole. Forms of hip-hop expression such as rhyming, art, dance, clothing and film "shape the values and identities of urban youth" (Beachum & McCray 2011, p.24). Consequently, these same forms of hip-hop expression shape the cultures of marginalized schools that serve historically disenfranchised

populations, which consistently post higher rates of poverty and operate with a lack of urban services (GEO 2003, pp. 241-243; Russo 2004, p. 1). Furthermore, values and identities gained from these forms of expression are brought into schools that are conversely structured by white, non-urban men and women, who do not take into account the cultural and societal differences between marginalized and mainstream communities, and thus do not incorporate students' experiences into the school structure (Delpit, 2006). This societal neglect results in an immediate cultural disconnect that is evidenced at the school community level as well as in individual student's engagement with the curriculum.

In this space of cultural disconnect scholars have inserted hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) as a means to bridge the culturally constructed education gap. In particular, methods such as using beats to help students learn math, or creating raps to help them memorize history content or vocabulary have been common approaches to the marriage of hip-hop and education. However, there has been a recent shift in the use of the art form within education. In fact, many educators are moving beyond the rhythmic use of hip-hop to incorporate "hip-hop art and culture and student's experienced based knowledge" as an alternate method to educate marginalized learners (Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011, p. 5). In fact, scholars suggest that in order to educate marginalized youth, "understanding the ways in which popular culture affects and infects [them] is critical to the success of [their] education" (Beachum & McCray , 2011, p. 117). Therefore, in order to help narrow the education gap between socio-economic and racial groups, it is critical for educators to understand how to take the popular culture,

specifically hip-hop culture in marginalized communities, and incorporate it into the

learning experience of students. By doing so, educators are shifting the learning process

from a middle class focus, to one that is more relevant to marginalized learners because

of its applicability to their experience. It is this contextualized political and social

relevance that provides the space to incorporate hip-hop as a form of marginalized

pedagogy.

Since its emergence in the late 1970s in the economically-depressed South Bronx

New York,[2] hip-hop has become the dominant art form of the marginalized youth culture

not only in the U.S, but globally. Around the world, hip-hop culture has functioned as a

space of expression for contextualized political history. In this space, the sharing of

similar dynamics with other nations has created a transnational conduit of shared

experiences amongst marginalized communities. Furthermore, hip-hop's global

positioning

> Osumare's (2001) state has injected its own often-self-empowered messages and
>
> attitudes that are not necessarily under the control of the music industry. Rap's
>
> dense, poetic, lyric content is often underpinned by African American messages
>
> about an historical marginalization status. Socially relevant content of some rap

---

[2] hip-hop originated as a response to the post-industrial, economically-depressed South
Bronx New York in the late 1970s. As a result of the flight of the middle-class, the
erection of large apartment complexes run by slumlords, and the influx of poor families,
this community saw a rise in crime, drug addiction, and unemployment. Eventually, these
poor living conditions and economic disparity led to young people expressing their
frustrations and feelings through graffiti painting, DJing, MCing, and b-boying, with the
recent expansion into spoken word poetry, theater, clothing styles, language, and some
forms of activism (Parmar & Bann 2007, p. 145; Petchaur, 2009, p. 946).

groups coupled with hip-hop's driving rhythmic beat resonates with youth internationally. (p.172)"

This statement illustrates the global pervasiveness of hip-hop culture. In addition, it emphasizes hip-hop's relevancy to youth, as a result of its reflection of societal struggles present across the globe.

Although substantial research exists about the effectiveness of hip-hop centered pedagogy in the United States, there is relatively information available out its use or application outside of the U.S. This study begins to fill that gap by illustrating the common threads of hip-hop in South Africa and the U.S., and then explains why and how HHCP can be adapted outside of the U.S. context. Additionally, this study looks at how HHCP is a form of culturally relevant pedagogy for marginalized learners, and how this form of instruction potentially narrows the education disparity between disenfranchised and dominant groups. Furthermore, this study demonstrates how HHCP is implemented within marginalized classrooms, while addressing the inconsistency in its implementation. This research contributes to the field of hip-hop education by bringing the perceived obstacles and hindrances of consistent HHCP implementation to the forefront. Through data collected from educators who have extensive knowledge of HHCP, or have designed and implemented curriculum, the research reported here identifies challenges thwarting the inclusion of this pedagogy within marginalized schools. Using the results of this study to provide an understanding of the challenges of achieving consistent implementation of HHCP, further research can be conducted about

how to overcome these barriers and consistently implement HHCP in marginalized

students' classrooms in South Africa, the United States, and throughout the world.

Historical Background

Marginalized communities within both South Africa and the United States have

experienced social, political, and institutional segregation over the past sixty years. Both

countries' historical societal, cultural and political oppressions provide a foundation to

examine and compare hip-hop's cultural relevance to marginalized learners, and its

potential impact in the classroom, as demonstrated in Appendix 2. During the period of

1896 until 1954, the United States operated under a legalized system of racial

segregation. Prior to 1866, Black Americans were not considered citizens of the United

States (very few non-European populations resided in the country). In 1896, the Supreme

Court passed *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which made it constitutional for institutions to be

separated by race but equal in quality. This ruling meant "Blacks were separated from

whites by law and by private action in transportation, public accommodations,

recreational facilities, prisons, armed forces, and schools" (Library of Congress, 2012).

Plessy v. Ferguson was the legal underpinning for Black Americans, and other minority

groups, to be viewed and treated as second-class citizens, and to be subjected to

economic, educational, and political disenfranchisement. This system of separate-but-

equal was overturned in 1954 with the passing of *Brown vs. The Board of Education*,

which deemed separate institutions unconstitutional. Although legal segregation ended in

1954, the effects of its legacy are still felt among Black communities and economically

marginalized and culturally disenfranchised racial and ethnic groups. It is this historical inheritance that led to the birth of hip-hop and continues to influence the art form today (Beachum & McCray, 2011, p. 13), and it bears many similarities to South Africa's own history of racial segregation.

South Africa' is not as far removed from segregation as the United States' is; thus, political struggles and triumphs are more present within South Africa's hip-hop culture. From 1948-1994, South Africa was under an institutionalized system of apartheid. Under this system, social interactions, marriages, education, public spaces, and more were separated based on race. In 1950, the Population Registration Act required all South Africans to be racially classified into categories, based on appearance, social acceptance and decent. The categories, which consisted of White, Black (African), and Coloured (of mixed descent) and additional categories created over time, determined a person's education, speech and culture. In 1951, the government implemented the Homeland Authorities Act. This Act stripped Blacks from their South African citizenship and made them citizens of a "homeland" (geographical area deemed to be their area of origin). By doing this, Blacks lost any political or voting rights within South Africa; they even needed passports to enter their native country. This form of legal segregation ensured that White minorities maintained power and privilege over native Africans, and other races (Sturgeon, Getz, Zietsman). This legally designed social hierarchy created a legacy of political, geographical, cultural, and societal segregation that did not end with the swearing in of Nelson Mandela in 1994. This history and segregation is apparent within South African hip-hop culture, and many times serves as an underlying theme.

In short, the history of both South Africa and the United States is rooted in legal racial segregation. This historical segregation, which ostracized and disenfranchised specific populations, frames the political, cultural and societal structures of both countries into the 21st century. The history of legal racial segregation is important to hip-hop because not only did it lead to the creation of the art form, but it also has been a part of the story told through hip-hop since its inception. Although the landscape of hip-hop in South Africa and the U.S. varies, the constant themes of community identity, racial empowerment, and overcoming struggles are part of both cultures. These themes are important factors contributing to HHCP's adaptability across nations.

Although the historical backdrop that explains hip-hop's place within both countries is similar, the acceptance of the hip-hop culture is slightly different. The United States has had a cautionary relationship with hip-hop. During the late 1970s into the mid-1980s there was little concern in dominant, mainstream communities about hip-hop due to its containment within poor urban areas (Parmar & Bann, 2007, p. 143). However, as the art form and culture began to spread beyond urban borders, accompanied with the onset of Gangsta Rap and societal reflection songs like N.W.A's *Fuck the Police,* which was a response to the increasing violence among and against Black males in Los-Angeles, hip-hop became a scapegoat for the downfalls of the youth population (Petchauer, 2009, pp.946-947). Consequently, many political and community leaders in the United States labeled hip-hop a destructive art form plagued by baggy jeans, extreme violence, and violence towards women (Gore, 2002).

By contrast, South Africans have been more receptive to hip-hop culture than many in the United States. Over the last two decades South Africa has witnessed a surge of youth, specifically marginalized youth, who have turned to hip-hop culture as a way of telling their stories (R. Booysen, Personal Communication, June 5, 2012).[3] For example, during a visit to South Africa in 2005, this researcher witnessed South African youth expressing their post-apartheid struggles, tributes to Nelson Mandela, and tribal stories during an informal open mic/spoken word session. This tradition of oral storytelling, which is rooted in the surviving African tradition of "Nommo" (Smitherman, 1997, p. 4), is rooted in the culture and is continuously seen in communities across South Africa. Furthermore, in addition to the U.S. hip-hop structured culture, South African township communities have further contextualized the genre to incorporate traditional rhythms and dances in an art form called Kwaito (Cohen, 2008, p.21). Although traditional South African hip-hop and Kwaito are still prevalent within historically marginalized communities, they have also begun to permeate dominant South African culture (English blog, 2010). Unlike the United States, which has stigmatized the art form and the

---

[3] hip-hop gained its popularity in South Africa in the mid-1980s in the Coloured flats of Capetown. Initially, American hip-hop artists such as Public Enemy served as the voice of the South African hip-hop scene. However, as the popularity of the genre grew, South African hip-hop began to transform to reflect their youth movement, and the country's social and political movements. With the onset of intense political and social movements to end apartheid, hip-hop became an outlet for South African youth to discuss their struggles and take a stand. hip-hop crews were creating rhymes in their native language of Afrikaans to discuss the youth perspective. In addition to rhyming, these crews were also incorporating the other elements of b-boying, graffiti and DJ-ing into their movement as well. Although the initial adaption of hip-hop occurred in the Coloured flats of Capetown, the culture has traveled throughout the country. Youth throughout South Africa have taken hip-hop and contextualized it to fit their community and struggles.

accompanying culture, hip-hop is more accepted in South Africa. Its acceptance is seen through collaborative efforts through local universities and educational programs, which have created outlets such as hip-hop centered cultural exchanges and the Hip-hop Archive Museum. These outlets help South African youth gain a further understanding of hip-hop culture.

Although hip-hop culture is not as stigmatized in South Africa as it is in the United States, the similarities between both countries' historical backgrounds provide an opportunity to explore how hip-hop culture's relevance to marginalized youth can address the disparities in both countries' educational systems. With a similar legacy of oppression and institutional segregation, accompanied with modern day societal inequalities, hip-hop centered pedagogy provides the space for students to unpack societal and educational challenges, and allows educators to teach them how to transfer the skills learned on the 'streets' into the classroom (Parmar & Bain, 2006).

Literature Review: Conceptualizing Hip-hop as a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The Voice of the Marginalized Community

Since hip-hop's inception in the South Bronx in the late 1970's, there has been a strong correlation between hip-hop culture and marginalized youth. Over the past three decades of the art forms existence, scholars has contributed a significant amount of literature that discusses this relationship, and have explored how the art form can be used

in conjunction with other societal factors such as education, social work, and community activism (Dyson, 1996; Hill, 2009; Osumare 2001; Parmar & Bain, 2006; Cobbs, 2007, Beachum & McCray, 2011). Although most prevalent in the hip-hop of the late 1970s through the early 1990s, hip-hop culture has consistently communicated the experiences of marginalized communities to the dominant or mainstream population. Songs like The Game's Hate it or love it featuring 50 Cent, which appears in the introduction of this study, and the below lyrics to Talib Kweli's 2002 release *Get By,* demonstrate how this culture tells the story of the communal social and political struggles that encompass marginalized communities.

Ask him why some people got to live in a trailer, cuss like a sailor

I paint a picture with the pen like Norman Mailer

Me Abuela raised three daughters all by herself, with no help

I think about a struggle and I find the strength in myself

These words, melt in my mouth

They hot, like the jail cell in the South

Before my nigga Core bailed me out

To get by.."

(Talib Kweli, Get B*y*, 2002)

These lyrics, and those of many other hip-hop songs, articulate the struggles of those who cannot tell their story. Dyson says "at best, rappers shape the torturous twist of urban fate into lyrical elegies. They represent lives swallowed by too little love or

opportunity. They represent themselves and their peers with aggrandizing anthems that boast of their ingenuity and luck in surviving. The art of 'representin' that is much ballyhooed in hip-hop is the witness of those left to tell the afflicted story" (1996, p. 177). As such, it is up to educators, social workers, and other community advocates to use this normally untold story to start conversations about how to work with, and within marginalized communities.

These conversations are essential to the education system, because this voice of struggle and oppression are commonly left out of the composition of school. This missing voice, along with the survival behavior that marginalized youth adapt, contribute to the collision between the street culture and school culture that is present in their learning environments. In recognizing that the collision between street culture and school culture exists, educators need a way to transform the interaction between the cultures into a positive one, and incorporate the marginalized societal culture into the learning process. One way this can accomplished is through the use of pedagogy that draws from the societal culture and interest of the learners, and incorporates them into the curriculum. This form of culturally relevant pedagogy is the bridge connecting marginalized learners to school.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Throughout this paper the term Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), which is a pedagogical practice that incorporates learner's culture, specifically societal culture, into the classroom, has been referenced several times. In order to gain a better understanding

of CRP, this section will deconstruct it, then segue into how hip-hop centered pedagogy is a form of CRP, and briefly discuss why it is essential for marginalized learners. Although CRP is important for all learners, it is especially important for marginalized learners who operate in an environment that is predominately non-white, has a higher rate of poverty, and consequently a higher rate of crime. Additionally this environment has a higher rate of limited English proficiency, lacks government support and services, and ultimately does not coincide with the dominant Anglo-American culture that exists within its schools (Borrero, 2011, p. 18; Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.467; GEO, 2003, pp. 241, 242, 243; Russo, 1, 2004). Additionally, statistics indicate that in 2002 Black students comprised 17 percent of the U.S. student population, while Black teachers only comprised of six percent. Furthermore, in 44 percent of U.S. schools there were no teachers of color; in fact, evidence suggests that the majority of U.S. teachers are white middle class females (Beachum & McCray, 2011, p.22). These statistics represent the fact that the majority of minority students are being educated by teachers they cannot racially relate to, and assumingly culturally relate to. This difference between the cultures and environments of marginalized learners and their educators is another contributing factor to the cultural collision between the institution of education and marginalized learners in the United States.

The collision that occurs in South Africa between marginalized learners and the institution of education is slightly different than in the United States. As a result of many South African educators who work in the marginalized communities they live in, or come from the same communities in which they teach in, the argument that educators do not

14

understand the societal culture does not apply. However, other factors such as language of instruction, education reform, and student teacher generational gaps, contribute to the cultural collision in South Africa. The language of instruction within South African public schools is customarily English. Conversely, as a result of the racial, and consequently, language divide of apartheid, many schools continue to be racially segregated and continue to instruct in their native tongue. This cultural collision, which is rooted in apartheid, makes it very hard for marginalized learners to achieve academic success because of their inability to align with the English speaking culture of the education system. This misalignment results in students performing disproportionately lower than their white, middle class, and trained English-speaking counterparts (Fleisch, 2008, p. 105-106; Gerad, 2010, p. 8-11).

Another factor that contributes to South Africa's educational collision is the curriculum. During the post-apartheid education reform of 1994, significant thought was put into how the new curriculum could and should reflect the new South Africa. As a result, curriculum was created and implemented to reflect values of "peace, prosperity, non-sexism, non-racialism and democracy." Additionally, the new curriculum "had to foster universal access and common expectations for all learners." Even though, this curriculum runs parallel to South Africa's constitution, it does not explore the reality and culture of crime, poverty, violence, and difficult living conditions brought upon by societal inequalities that encompass South African marginalized learners. Although laws are in place to prevent segregation based on race, the inherent legacy of racial inequality is still present within the South African education system. According to post-apartheid

educational reform, schools are supposed to permit any student that meets its entrance criteria. Still, many historically white and privilege schools are able to omit applicants who do not meet the schools financial or geographical criteria. This system of selectivity enables racial and class segregation to persist within the education system, which signals an unequal education to those who are adversely affected. The unequal access to education contributes to the cultural collision between marginalized learners and the curriculum because the learners are being taught a reality they know not to be true (Sayed, 2009, pgs.25-32; Fisk & Ladd, 2004, p. 154). In this space educators have the opportunity to tap into the historical and cultural roots of hip-hop culture in order to discontinue the perpetuation of the false reality.

Lastly, the collision also occurs due to generational gaps between the students and educators. In 2006 only 21 percent of the South African public teaching force was under the age of 40 (Van Der Berg & Burger 2010, p.22). These statistics represent a cultural collision because of the differences between the interests of the learners and educators, and because almost eighty percent of the educators were not in the same media market group as their students. This generational gap heightens the collision between marginalized learners and school, because educators are not fully aware of the media influences that are constructing their student's identities and values. Without awareness of student's cultural influences, the ability to connect with students using relevant pedagogy becomes virtually impossible.

As problematic as the recognition of the cultural collisions in both South Africa and the United States are, they do not signal a condemned education system. However, they do represent a "key issue of teacher [and system] expectations" that does not coincide with learners' cultural structure. These unclear expectations result from an educational structure and teaching force that is not culturally abreast with its learners (Borrero, 2011, P. 18). The current structure does not emphasize the need for educators to understand the learners, their families, and communities in order to create a learning environment void of cultural collision. Although the conversation about how to eliminate the cultural collision is taking place, the conversation is theoretical and has not developed into practical implementation. However, in order to be effective, this message needs to take shape in the classroom (Delpit, 2006).

Delpit provides an interesting analysis of how the potential manifestation of the collision negatively affects the learners. She identifies two ways in which the lack of educators understanding of learners' culture impacts their experience in school. The first way is seen through educators misreading student's "aptitude, intent [and] abilities as a result of the style, language use, and interactional patterns." Secondly, the collision produces educators who utilize styles of instructions and/or discipline that are at odds with community norms" (2006, p.167). While the first manifestation carries severe consequences, it is something that needs to be addressed during pre-service training. However, the second manifestation holds itself to be altered through the exploration of culturally relevant pedagogy, in particular, one that draws popular culture and the media's influence on learners.

With the passing of legislation such as No Child Left Behind in the U.S. and the Education Reform in South Africa, current education systems are structured in a manner that are focused on outcomes that satisfy dominant proficiency. The "current [education] systems are modeled in a way that neglects the societal and media influences that students are exposed to in favor of "synthetic rationality that overlooks creativity and intuition in favor of information storage and retrieval (Bishop, 2010, p.49)." This "synthetic rationality" that Bishop refers to is the educational process of feeding students information that the dominant group think they need to know. This process widens the collision beyond the learners' societal culture and school environment culture, and expands it to encompass learner's relevant knowledge and school curriculum. Although some collision will always exist due to the difference between educators' and learners' population demographics, in order to minimize the collision there is a need restructure the classroom community.

"For educators to create classroom communities that serve as vibrant centers for active pursuits in learning, where students can experience opportunities for engaged explorations in and reflections of their current and historical contexts. For this to happen, educators, administrators, and youth organizers alike must establish connections to the lived realities of young people to prepare them for their future (Bishop, 2010, p.48)."

The research suggests for marginalized students, this connection is established through the incorporation of hip-hop (Beachum & McCray, 2011; Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera 201; 1Hill 2009).

Although the conversation about culturally relevant pedagogy is most prevalent within the United States, the concept is expanding globally. With an increasingly globalized world, education systems are looking to other countries for examples of policies and curriculum implementation. This is the case throughout Africa. "During the 12th conference of the Association of African Universities, a serious concern was raised regarding the exported material from other continents without testing its cultural applicability to African Systems and its effectiveness in African Education Systems (de Beer, 2010, p.3). While the conference focused on higher education, the concern of culturally irrelevant pedagogy has trickled down to the secondary and primary school levels. In line with other countries, African scholars have recognized that student's will achieve academically when the pedagogy is presented "in a manner responsive to the student's home culture". Just as in the U.S., in order to provide students with the knowledge needed to bring them [marginalized students] to the same level of their white counterparts, modifications in classroom teaching need to take place in the form of culturally relevant pedagogy. In fact, African intellectuals have begun to communicate the need for Africanized[4] education systems. These systems would be based on African philosophies and African values. Although, a completely Africanized education system

---

[4] "The term Africanisation is a verb referring to addressing issues that are endemic to Africa. The concept of Africanisation implies that education should address issues that are relevant to African in its curricula (de Beers 2010, p. 3).

would be the reverse of the current colonial system, the idea of making it more reflective of the native roots is a step towards making the education system more reflective of the cultural roots of its learners. In doing so, educators must not ignore the global cultures that have impact their student's identities-such as hip-hop (de Beer, 2010 p. 15).

Hip-hop culture is a form of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) because of its reflection of historical legacies and present cultural conditions of Marginalized youth. Furthermore, the cultures pervasiveness throughout communities around the world solidifies its relevancy to marginalized youth. From the suburbs of the United States to the townships of South Africa, hip-hop culture has impacted youth's identity development, social and political understandings, and relationships to the world. For those youth part of the dominant group, hip-hop is culturally relevant because of its ability to reflect the historically marginalized communities. However, for those youth who are part of the marginalized communities, hip-hop is culturally relevant as demonstrated by Figure.1, because of its ability to reflect their current society, reflect their positions as an 'other,' and to create culturally shared experiences based in societal, racial, and political oppression. The following section will discuss in greater detail how hip-hop culture becomes a form of CRP through the use of hip-hop centered pedagogy.

Figure 1. The Pyramid of engagement
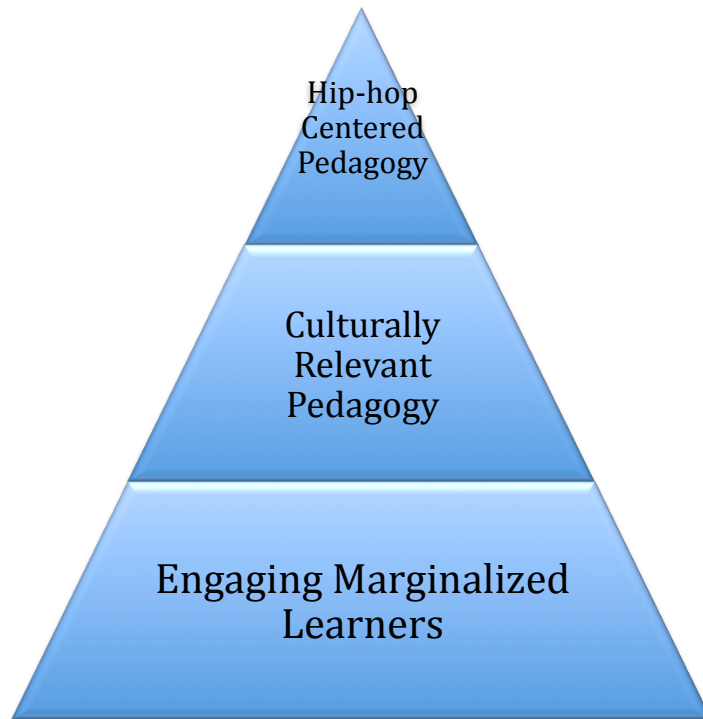
Hip-hop Centered Pedagogy

Hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) is a subset of culturally relevant pedagogy. While HHCP has been in practice for nearly 20 years, the increased attention to the educational disparity has brought the pedagogical method to the forefront of rethinking education. Outcomes such as the intellectual, emotional and social empowerment of students, improved student motivation, the development of critical media literacy, and many more have made hip-hop relevant to the field of education, specifically amongst marginalized learners (Hill 2009, p. 2; Petcahuer, 2009). As discussed in previous sections, hip-hop culture's relationship with marginalized learners is built upon the culture's ability to capture the learner's reality, a reality that does not have a space within the school environment (Beachum & McCray, 2011; Delpit, 2006). Therefore, HHCP

provides the space for learners to confront their societal circumstances, and use their expressive tool, hip-hop, to learn the skills to advance learners through the education system.

In an effort to incorporate pedagogy that focuses on the students' needs, many educators are turning to hip-hop education as a method of reaching marginalized learners (Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011, p.6). Educators are using hip-hop in multiple ways to assist their learners. One of which, is using hip-hop "in the name of culturally responsive teaching, and critical pedagogy, to empower marginalized groups, teach academic skills, and educate students about how aspects of their lives are subject to manipulation and control by capitalist demand (Petchauer, 2009, p. 947)." This method is supported by previously explored literature that demonstrates that culturally relevant pedagogy is imperative to combat the cultural collision between school and the 'streets.' Therefore, using pedagogical practices that acknowledge the collision and provide ways to reconfigure the curriculum towards relevancy to marginalized learners has the potential to help them in school, and subsequently throughout life.

Another use of HHCP is as a form of identity formation "by which youth…conceive themselves and others, and the world around them (Petchauer, 2009, p.947). This use of HHCP is critically important to marginalized learners, because through it, educators have an opportunity to combat one of the biggest challenges that marginalized student's face, which is how they construct their identity in relation to others. As conferred in the section that discussed marginalized communities' relationship

with hip-hop, these communities are viewed as being in a constant state of societal oppression. Thus, this state of oppression is projected onto society's perception of the youth. "This is an important point because it identifies how participating in the hip-hop culture transcends race [and geographical boundaries]. If urban students find their lives portrayed in this culture, it logically follows that teaching...in the context of these expressions could coalesce students' identities around pertinent...experiences in the same way (Brown, 2010, p. 522)." Therefore, by incorporating shared experiences of the learners into the classroom, individuals are given an opportunity to navigate their identity in relation to the curriculum, and the class is given the opportunity to construct a communal identity, and unpack the communal challenges associated with that identity. This method of unifying based on shared experiences is a common and important thread in the construction of hip-hop and the implementation of HHCP.

Characteristics of Hip-hop Centered Pedagogy

The use of HHCP is seen in classrooms throughout various socio-economic communities. Common practices such as learners memorizing their timetables with the help of rhythmic beats, or educators creating raps to help their student's learn their mathematic concepts, are ways that educators, worldwide, are tapping into the pervasiveness and influence of hip-hop as a pedagogical tool. Although most who utilize this pedagogy do it as an optional form of engagement, educators in marginalized communities turn to HHCP as a necessary method of connecting with their students. The examples of HHCP that will be examined in this section were chosen as a result of their subjects. In recognition that South Africa's marginalized learners are disproportionately

trailing their white and middle class counterparts in literacy and math, the examples of classroom implemented HHCP in this research will be focused on these subjects. Additionally, only two examples are used because I did not discover much variation in implementation methods, therefore these examples serve as representations of what I found.

The first example that will be reviewed is provided by Dr. Marc Lamont Hill's book *Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life: hip-hop Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity*, in which he explores how the use of hip-hop culture connects a classroom full of marginalized students to literary curriculum. Hill's study took place in an inner-city high school in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with 20 students. Although this curriculum was implemented within a school, it was done through an alternative program designed for students "who do not fit comfortably in the school day environment," such as teen parents, behavior problems, learners over the age of 18, and others. This study, which took place over the course of a year, was done through an English literature class, entitled hip-hop Lit. Hill, and co-teacher Colombo, introduced a new hip-hop song every week that fit into one of their thematic units, Roots of hip-hop and Literature, Love, Family, "The Hood," Politics, and Despair. However, instead of using the song in its entirety, the educators used the lyrics as texts, and referred to the artists as authors, in order to focus on hip-hop texts as literature and demonstrate the "literary values of the reading." Once a new song was introduced, Hill taught a formal "analysis of the text and an introduction of the key ideas. At the end of every unit, the class was assigned a unit project that "allowed [the learners] providing a deeper response to the texts and making a creative use of some literary strategies they learned in the unit." In addition to the work associated with the

thematic units, Hill also had the learners make journal entries every day. These entries provided learners with an opportunity to write and share their responses to specific themes present within their communities (2009, pp. 13-29).

Although Hill does not provide the learners' final grades or follow-up information about his students post hip-hop Lit, he does provide the following statement as a testament to the potential impact of Hip hop centered pedagogy (HHCP). He contends that through this study he was able to "examine the complex relationships that the students and teachers forged with hip-hop course texts and one another inside and outside the classroom." Additionally he commented on "how these relationships created a space in which members of the Hip-hop Lit community performed, contested, and re-inscribed a variety of individual and collective identities that informed classroom pedagogy in deeply beneficial and highly challenging ways (2009, pp.2-3)." This statement speaks to the benefits of using culturally relevant pedagogy. The use of HHCP not only created an engaging environment for the students, but it also allowed most to self-identify with the curriculum. This identification allowed students to analyze and interpret texts in a way that previous educators struggled to accomplish. Additionally, the identification provided learners with the tools to build their literacy skills.

The second example of HHCP does not come from published research, such as Hill's work. Instead, the following example of HHCP's implementation in a math classroom yield from a Los-Angeles, California eighth grade teacher who achieved national recognition for his use of hip-hop as a form of pedagogy. LaMont Queen, a

young teacher, uses his love and familiarity with hip-hop to write rhymes to help his marginalized students memorize complicated algebra concepts and formulas (TheGrio, 2010, June 19). Queen's songs such as *Distance Rate and Time*, allows students to not only have the math concepts taught to them in a manner that is present in their everyday lives, but it also promotes a positive relationship with math and with school.

Chorus (x2) 'Cause in an instant we'll learn about the distance D = R x T with the quickness You can get this, it's just distance, D = R x T

Verse 1 D is for distance, R is for rate

T is for time, Imma say it one more time

The D is for the distance, R is for the rate, T is for the time

All you gotta do is plug it in, plug it in

What's given to you in the problem?

Just take your time, think about it, never quit

Check out the problem

And see what's given to you, that it's relevant

A car drives at 60 mph for 3 hours on a trip to a lake

Okay, we have a rate, and we know how long it takes

Just multi-multi ply-ply, times by the rate 60 times 3, that gives you 180

Just cancel out the hours

And the miles are the units, you see...see?

I told you how it's done I bet you never thought math could be fun

But we've only just begun

(musicnotesonline, 2011)

* Full song available in appendix

The above song is a good example of how hip-hop can be fused with education. This song explicitly provides the important concepts of distance, by using a catchy hook and incorporating examples to make the point clearer. In addition to the rhymes, Queen and fellow teachers and business partners, also create music videos to accompany the songs. These videos incorporate other aspects of hip-hop culture such as writing the formulas in graffiti style and having hip-hop dancers in the background. This expansion on the culture further engages the students and allows them to remain in a place of relevancy throughout their learning process. Although appealing, the songs are used just as an introduction to the concept. Queen uses the songs and videos as an introduction to the unit, but he proceeds with the lesson by having his students do sample problems and continual work on the white board. This form of pedagogy has proved to be very successful in his classroom. In the Associated Press article, several students were interviewed about their progress, and all reported moving from a C, or lower, to at least a B, with the majority reporting a larger growth (TheGrio 2010, June 19).

As successful as Queen and Hill are, one of the limitations of this pedagogy is educator's possible lack of knowledge of hip-hop, and their comfort with using the culture. However, several educators like Queen have created websites and curriculums to

help those less knowledgeable utilize this pedagogy. These resources allow educators worldwide to bring HHCP into marginalized classrooms, where they are desperately needed. Recently, there has been a growing body of work that discusses hip-hop's relevancy within marginalized schools. This approach is situated around the question of how Hip hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) can contribute to student's learning experiences and how it help can narrow the education gap between socio-economic status and race (Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera , 2010, Beachum & McCray, 2011).

Although growing, most of the literature approaches hip-hop's incorporation into education theoretically, and there is a lack of literature that discusses its practical implementation. In a 2010-2011 "national online census of hip-hop education courses and programs as they relate to the current developmental state of the hip-hop education field," the authors identified that the majority of the three hundred participating courses and programs of hip-hop education were being implemented outside the classroom. According to the authors 37% of the courses surveyed were in after school programs, 2% took place in Saturday Programs, 3% in summer camps, and 37% in other settings outside of school. "The other settings included Juvenile correctional facilities, town halls, religious congregations, and human rights forum" (Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera, Fergus & Noguera, 2011, p.8). Although the out-of school implementation of hip-hop education is beneficial, the lack of in-school implementation thwarts the pedagogies full potential to demonstrate its ability to produce academic success.

Educational Benefits to HHCP

Throughout this research I have discussed how the in-school implementation of Hip hop centered pedagogy benefits marginalized students by making the curriculum relevant to their society. In the preceding section on cultural relevant pedagogy, I examined how HHCP assisted students in developing analytical and critical thinking skills through the exploration of hip-hop songs in the form of texts, as well as how the pedagogical method enabled learners to memorize, conceptualize, and put into practice math concepts that resulted in significant progress for many of its learners. These examples demonstrated the pedagogies ability to improve learner's academic performance. Although the two examples focused on literacy and math, these outcomes of higher academic performance can be seen across subjects such as Science, History/ social studies, and even within subjects such as physical education and nutrition because of its adaptability. The pedagogies ability to improve student's academic success is grounded in its ability to present the information in a relevant and engaging manner.

As previously stated, HHCP's ability to present a concept that is perceived by students to be foreign and not pertaining to their lives, in a manner that makes the concept understandable and incorporates familiar aspects of the learners' lives into the content, is one of its greatest benefits. Through HHCP's ability to connect learners with their curriculum, educators can expect outcomes such as an improvement of student motivation, development of critical thinking skills, development of debate skills, media literacy, and peer to peer mediation, which are all critical to educational advancement and necessary for preparing marginalized learners to compete with their middle class counterparts (Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011; Irby & Hall 2010, p. 217). Although many

educators and scholars blame a lack of resources in schools and surrounding communities as a main cause of the educational disparity, this pedagogy allows educators to utilize a tool that they literally have at their fingertips to help compensate for their lack of resources. This use of an easily accessible resource is a turning point towards bridging the educational disparity.

In addition to the academic benefits, HHCP has also been praised with "empowering thousands of youth and adults in the U.S. and around the world to develop their identity, voice, and leadership in society" (Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011). Some may not perceive this to be a direct benefit to education, however identity formation, and finding one's voice is extremely important for the academic success of marginalized learners. As discussed, most marginalized school cultures do not reflect or incorporate its learners' societal and community culture. This lack of reflection and incorporation results in a cultural disconnect, which contributes to the disengagement of marginalized learners with school. Furthermore, the lack of space to identify with the curriculum results in the theoretical and literal silencing of marginalized learners' voices, which fine contributes to a major contributor to dropping out (Fine, 1991). Through in-class implementation of HHCP, educators have the ability to help learners find their identity within school, by helping them find their identity within the curriculum. Below, Hill provides an example of this in a conversation, which demonstrates his student's seeing themselves as individuals worthy of representation:

Jay: When we would read [local narratives], I get hype' cause that's my hood.

Like, when Freeway and Beans and them be rapping about my hood I know the

whole world gonna know about the shit I go through.

Me [Hill]: Why is that important to you?

Josh: 'Cause people gonna know we exist. A nigga in Compton ain't never

been to South Street or the Gallery but they gonna know about it from the rappers,

Jay: Plus, niggas gonna know our hood is real too!

Keisha: Yeah, like, don't nobody care about your 'hood till someone else rap

about it. (Hill, 2009, p.42).

This conversation represents the connection that the students had with the

literature. Through reading texts that discussed their communities and represented their

lives, students were able to see themselves in their curriculum. This identification with

the text gave legitimacy to the learner' communities, and as a result, their struggles. This

reflection of identity within the curriculum provides learners with ownership over how

the curriculum is perceived. This ownership empowers students to own their story

imbedded within the curriculum and consequently, own their educational experience

(Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera& Fergus & Noguera 2011, p.6). Getting students to own their

education is a momentous step towards achieving academic success.

Lastly, another important benefit of HHCP is its ability to be adapted and

contextually transferred to fit other classrooms, schools, and communities. This

pedagogy's foundation in hip-hop culture allows it to be transferred to any population

that has experienced oppression, specifically populations that are historically

31

marginalized, and as a result, economically and socially disenfranchised. Although hip-hop originally served as the voice of marginalized Black Americans, it has since developed into the voice of marginalized communities throughout the world. Alarmingly, it is this voice of marginalization that has been silenced within society, and specifically within the education system. Therefore, in addition to the aforementioned benefits of HHCP, the incorporation of hip-hop into education is extremely beneficial simply because it speaks for those who do not have a voice. By recognizing the fact that the missing voice is that of historically marginalized and currently disenfranchised learners, educators and scholars can begin to rethink why there is an educational gap between marginalized and dominant learners', and also look at how pedagogical practices can be adjusted to fill the void of that missing voice. This need to fill the voice is extremely important in both South Africa and the United States due to the epoch of legal segregation. This period of time, which is being omitted from the educational framework of marginalized learners', constructed the racial and cultural identities for these students and communities. Therefore, the incorporation of culturally relevant pedagogy, such as HHCP, is beneficial and imperative in providing educators with a mechanism to incorporate marginalized learners' history, identity and community into their education experience.

Hip-hop Criticism

This paper argues for the incorporation of hip-hop culture into marginalized education systems on the basis that is embodies culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). However, it would be naïve and misleading to not acknowledge the opposing argument

that hip-hop should not be incorporated into marginalized education system because of its negative impact on youth. Although I did not come across an oppositional argument specifically focusing on hip-hop's incorporation in education, there exists much criticism about hip-hop culture's social value, and how it negatively impacts youth It is worth noting that although the work used in this paper has been published, most of the articles are opinionated pieces that are not research based. The following section will examine scholarly and media based literature that expresses an oppositional viewpoint to the above argument.

To many, hip-hop is a culture that glamorizes negative societal challenges, while setting the stage for the popularization of deviant behavior. Hip-hop culture has been the scapegoat for making themes such as violence, illegal activity, and misogyny an acceptable and even celebrated part of U.S. society, and emulated across the world (McWhorter, 2003). Although few would argue against the fact that these themes readily appear in the music and culture, critics of the art form have made the argument that there is a definitive correlation between hip-hop [5] and the negative behaviors of its listeners (Rose, 2008, 35; McWhorter). As a result of this theory, many critics blame hip-hop culture for an increase in crime, violence against women, and many other problems plaguing the youth population. According to one scholar, "the rise of nihilistic rap has mirrored the breakdown of community norms among inner-city youth over the last couple of decades. It was just as Gangsta rap hit its stride that neighborhood elders began really

[5] The themes discussed above are present in other genres of music and other forms of media, such as video games. However, hip-hop receives the majority of the criticism because it perpetuates the image of the dangerous other (Rose,2008, p32).

to notice that they'd lost control of young Black men, who were frequently drifting into lives of gang violence and drug dealing (McWhorter, 2003). Although the rise in popularity of Gangsta rap and the rise in crime happened simultaneously, there is no evidence of a direct correlation. Furthermore, this theory is negates the fact that hip-hop is a reflection of marginalized communities. Therefore, the rise in the popularity of Gangsta rap may be a reflection of the rise in crime, and additional societal inequalities. Regardless of which came first, the reality is that statements such as the one above are impacting how people, specifically those disassociated with the culture, perceive hip-hop, and the members of its community[6].

In addition to scholars, hip-hop has also received much criticism through the same vehicle that helped it reach its popularity and shape its structure…the media. Any given night one can turn on the television, read a blog, or read a news story and find criticism about at least one aspect of hip-hop culture. Through the media, messages about how hip-hop has destroyed marginalized communities, and hindered the educational advancements of marginalized populations, are disseminated through airwaves, print and social media. Critics suggest that marginalized listeners quest to stay connected to the streets or "keep it real," has manifested itself into a new form of racism in which "the inverted-pyramid hierarchy of values stemming from the glorification of lower-class reality in the hip-hop era -- has quietly taken the place of white racism as the most formidable obstacle to success and equality in the Black middle classes (Williams, 2007, May 28)." Furthermore, according to these critics, hip-hop has also deemed

education as something belonging to the white population. This classification

disallows the dual interest in both hip-hop and Education, thus, perpetuating the

educational gap between marginalized learners and their white counterparts

(Williams, 2007, May 28).

According to the critics, hip-hop culture is destroying the marginalized youth

population. This genre, is responsible for thwarting the advancement of the Black

middle class, and is a key reason why America cannot close their educational gap.

Although I have acknowledged the pervasiveness of hip-hop culture, I do not agree

with the critics who negate to address social and political factors when criticizing

hip-hop. Furthermore, these same critics fail to discuss the multiple facets and sub-

groups of the art form. Instead of discussing socially conscious and politically driven

hip-hop, critics focus on the capital driven hip-hop that is dictated by record

companies very rarely run by people from marginalized communities. As stated in

the beginning of this paper hip-hop is a reflection of marginalized communities.

Therefore, by criticizing hip-hop critics are not solely condemning hip-hop, but they

are simultaneously condemning the societal and political construction of

marginalized communities, which has been given the face of hip-hop.

The Next Step

Hill starts off the last chapter of his book by asking three questions that situate

the experience of conducting successful educational research: (1) why does it work?; (2)

for whom does it work?; and (3) what's at stake when it works? The first two questions "Why does it work" and "For whom does it work?" are discussed in detail throughout this paper. However, the third question "What's at stake when it works," was not discussed because it calls for an acknowledgment of the success of hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP), and forces scholars and educators to theorize how the existing research can be expanded. Throughout this research I have discussed why HHCP should be implemented in marginalized classrooms, what it looks like when implemented, and, the benefits of in-class implementation, in order to build a framework for my future research. With that complete, I am going to contribute to the discussion of the benefits of in-class implementation of HHCP by identifying the factors that hinder or promote the pedagogies consistent implementation within marginalized classrooms.

Although it is important for the advancement of hip-hop education scholarship to explore how to increase the consistent implementation of HHCP into classrooms, it is equally as important to understand the challenges keeping it from being consistently implemented. The majority of the existing literature about hip-hop and education focuses on hip-hop's cultural relevance to marginalized students, how hip-hop education is implemented, and the outcomes of hip-hop based education programs. There is little research in the U.S., and I did not come across any in the South Africa context, that discusses the contributing factors to the suppression of HHCP's consistent implementation in marginalized classrooms. This research will add to the field of hip-hop education by extracting and highlighting the obstacles that educators and scholars face in their struggle to consistently incorporate HHCP in marginalized classrooms.

Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

The theoretical lens used to examine hip-hop's relevancy in marginalized classrooms is Gloria Ladson-Billings Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (1995). This theory posits that pedagogy that incorporates aspects of learner's home and community cultures, especially with students of color, helps learner's achieve academic success (1995, p. 466-467, Gay, 2000). This theory supports the main argument of this paper, which is, hip-hop centered pedagogy should be consistently implemented in marginalized classrooms because it makes the curriculum and school relevant for marginalized learners. This theory provides the framework to examine how hip-hop's cultural aspects such as b-boying, rapping, graffiti, fashion, etc. can serve as pedagogical tools to help educators teach marginalized learners. Furthermore, this theory provides the framework for exploring the cultural collision that exists between school culture and home culture, with specific attention paid to the collision between dominant groups and minorities. Within the construction of the theory, Ladson-Billings makes an important point about the societal collision between marginalized communities and dominant communities, she states that " the goal of education becomes how to "fit" students constructed as "other" by virtue of their race/ethnicity, language, or social class into a hierarchical structure that is defined as meritocracy (1995, p.467)." This struggle of fitting and other' into a box created by the norm, is a discussed on a larger scale through hip-hop culture. Understanding the misfit is an essential component for educators in order to assist their students in identity development, empowerment and achieving academic

37

success. Therefore, the theory of culturally relevant pedagogy sets the foundation for understanding why HHCP should be implemented in marginalized classrooms on a consistent basis, and supports the research of understanding the obstacles and hindrances preventing this implementation.

This literature review provided an overview of hip-hop culture in both the United States and South Africa context, it's relevance to marginalized learners, and a look at how it is a valuable form of pedagogy within marginalized communities. Additionally, this review closely looked at two examples of what in-class implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) looks like and provided readers with a summary of the benefits of HHCP. Lastly, this review looked at criticism of hip-hop culture, and set the framework to think about the future research in hip-hop education, specifically identifying obstacles preventing consistent implementation of the pedagogy. The following sections of this research will look at the research methods, the collected data, and the data analysis.

Methods

Research Design

Hip-hop centered pedagogy has been around for nearly 20 years. However, over the last 10 years the pedagogical form has gained traction as a method to engage learners, with a specific focus on its impact within communities that have a high rate of poverty, crime, violence, and a high rate of minorities. Research exists which supports the theory

that systemic use of HHCP within marginalized classrooms results in academic success. However, the majority of HHCP implementation is occurring outside of marginalized classrooms in alternate programs. This research is a case study that examines the views and perspectives of four participants who were chosen because of their knowledge about hip-hop education. Although single case case-studies are not common, this research is situated as a case study because the examination of systemic implementation of HHCP is not occurring elsewhere, to my knowledge, therefore this research is in the preliminary stages. Furthermore, this research is defined as a case study because through the data collected researchers will be able to generate a hypotheses about how to overcome the obstacles identified in this research (Flyvbjerg, 2004, 420, 429). This research will be a qualitative cross-country comparative study looking at the perceived obstacles to systemically implementing HHCP within marginalized classrooms. From the data collected, I will identify multiple obstacles that educators and scholars face when attempting to regularly implement HHCP.

Participants:

The participants in this case study consists of four hip-hop educators/scholars who have knowledge and experience in designing and/or implementing hip-hop centered pedagogy, or scholars who have expertise in the field of hip-hop education. Of the four participants, two were educators in an urban area in the United States, who have implemented hip-hop centered pedagogy in their classrooms for a combined 20 plus years. One participant (Participant1) is currently a secondary teacher in a marginalized

classroom in Pennsylvania, while the other participant (Participant2) is a former

secondary teacher and current scholar who currently holds positions in several

universities throughout the Northeast. These participants offered their experience and

knowledge of implementing the pedagogy; however they could only speak to obstacles

within the U.S. context. The additional two participants have experience and expertise in

hip-hop scholarship in South Africa. One South African participant (Participant3) runs a

NGO that implements hip-hop curriculum during afterschool programs. The other South

African participant (Participant4) is a scholar who studied the field of hip-hop scholarship

for over ten years. The sampling method used in this research was purposeful;

Participants were identified and selected based on their experience, reputation and

ongoing work with the scholarship.

   Although all participants are voluntarily participating, I want to ensure that they are

protected from any professional repercussions, and minimize any emotional or

psychological effects that participating in the study my cause. Even though the

questionnaire and interview questions are about individual's experiences and

relationships to hip-hop, all participants identities were withheld and identifying

characteristic were omitted or altered. Therefore in the findings section the participants

are identified as Participant1, Participant2, Participant3 and Participant4. The participant

number is indicated in their above participant description. Additionally, all participants

received a consent form, which clearly stated that if they wish to discontinue the

questionnaire or interview at any point they can do so without any consequences.

Furthermore, all data collected will be kept in a safe and locked location for at least one

year after the publication of the research.

Methodology:

Through this research I examined scholars and educators perceived obstacle to systemically implementing hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) in marginalized schools. Prior to collecting any data I secured institutional review board approval. After, I contacted participants and e-mailed them the reflective questionnaire. Once participants e-mailed me their completed questionnaires, I then conducted a personal interview over skype or in person for approximately 45 minutes with each participant. As a result of the distance between the participants, and myself, even those located in the U.S., I e-mailed the reflective questions to a personal mailbox. Additionally, the e-mailed questions allowed each participant to take answer each question thoroughly without being concerned about time. Once completed, the participant e-mailed me their completed reflective questions. In addition to being coded and analyzed, the reflective questions also helped me to enhance and personalize the interview questions. Once I utilized the reflective questions, they were stored on a USB drive that is being kept in a locked box for at least one year after the publication of this paper.

After the reflective questions are returned, I arranged a time of approximately 30 minutes to interview each participant. For those participants geographically located within driving distance I conducted the interview face to face. However, for those outside of driving distance and in South Africa I conducted them via Skype. Although South

Africa's Internet is not as accessible and stable as the United States, I was able to communicate with my participants without a problem. All interviews were be audio-recorded and too stored on the USB drive that is being kept in the lock box.

After the data was collected, I brought together two sources of data into one in-depth analysis, which was organized into three stages (Miles & Huberman, 1994). First, the data analysis focused on generating common themes and patterns based on repeated readings of interview transcripts and open-ended reflections. Second, after closely examining each data set several times, initial categories of cross-sectional "data coding" developed. Initially, the categories were created based on the reflection and interview questions. However, the categories were re-worked to reflect the analyzed data. Third, after the coding catergories were finalized, the data was coded and sorted to highlight differences in opinions about hip-hop culture and the use of hip-hop centered pedagogy. The data was organized base on thematic coding (Bui, 2009, pgs. 160-190). This approach of theme organization helped to clarify and explore new ideas emerging from the research. Additionally, I expanded upon the explanations and generalizations of the themes identified throughout the research. Lastly, I made a comparative analysis on the challenges facing systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy in South Africa and the United States. I ended with a broad interpretation of what I have learned from the case study, and offered my suggestions for future research

Instruments:

The instruments that were used in this research were a six question reflective open-ended questionnaire and a six-question interview. Each instrument was conducted on all participants. The open-ended questionnaire is structured to gain an understanding of the participant's relationships with hip-hop culture, and whether or not the participants view hip-hop as a reflection of marginalized youth. The following questions helped to construct the participants' relationship with hip-hop through examining their history with the culture.

1. Approximately how old were you when you were introduced to hip-hop, and what was your response to it?

2. How would you describe hip-hop culture?

3. What is your opinion on the current state of hip-hop?

4. What messages do you think hip-hop communicates?

5. In your opinion, does hip-hop contribute to the morals, values, and identities of poor and urban youth? If so, how? If not, why not?

6. Do you think instruction that uses hip-hop rhythm, lyrics, artwork, and dance as a way to teach content, aids students in connecting with curriculum? If yes, how? If no, why?

The interviews, which consist of six questions, explore participants' use of the scholarship, and examine their opinions of HHCP's use within the classroom. Additionally, the interview allowed the participants to discuss what they perceived to be obstacles to implementing HHCP systemically, as well as their perceived

benefits of its implementation. The following questions will be used in order to

collect the data:

1. Do you think that hip-hop has a place in Education?

    a. If yes, why?

    b. If no, why not?

2. Have you used hip-hop instruction in a classroom?

    a. If yes, in what capacity and how frequent?

3. Do you feel that an increase in the use of hip-hop instruction would improve

    your student's academic success?

4. What are your perceived benefits of using hip-hop instruction?

    a. If none, why?

5. What are the perceived obstacles to using hip-hop instruction?

6. Do you think that hip-hop instruction should be a systemic part of

    marginalized classroom?

These open-ended and interview questions helped to identify the obstacles

hindering HHCPs systemic implementation in marginalized classrooms, because

they offered insight into the participants personal experiences and obstacles with

implementing hip-hop centered pedagogy within the classroom. Furthermore, the

above questions also provided the opportunity to understand educators'

relationship to hip-hop and how they perceive the genre's potential impact on

marginalized learners and the learning process. By collecting data about the obstacles hindering HHCP implementation, scholars and researchers can begin to think about the next steps to overcoming these barriers and working towards systemic implementation of the pedagogy.

Limitations:

As with any study, this research has potential limitations. One of the limitations is the fact that this is a case study and not a large-scale research. Therefore, my small sample size represents a small population and does not represent the general population. Another limitation lies within the fact that none of my participants are in a position to make decisions about school-wide development and implementation. This limits the scope of the obstacles to the perspectives of teachers, and educators who work outside of the school system. Additionally, this limitation limits the participant's knowledge of the process and stages of getting curriculum to the classroom level. Lastly, one of my limitations is the fact that the South African participants are both Coloured, grew up during Apartheid, and work primarily within the Coloured community. This is a limitation because South Africa is, for the most part, still racially segregated. Since both participants are Coloured, their views and perspectives are specific to their community and may not incorporate the perceived obstacles outside of the Coloured community. Although there are limitations to this study, there is still a lot of valuable data about the obstacles standing in the way of HHCP systemically being implemented in marginalized classrooms worldwide, which was collected through this research.

Findings

The main assertion of this study is that hip-hop centered pedagogy should be a systemic part of marginalized students' educational process because of its cultural relevance. In order to support this assertion, I have examined how hip-hop culture acts as the voice of marginalized communities, what culturally relevant pedagogy is, how hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) is a form of culturally relevant pedagogy, and I provided in-class representations of what HHCP looks like. Additionally, I have examined the educational and communal benefits of HHCP, while also looking at the criticism of hip-hop culture and its implications to systemic use within the classroom. The above information structured a framework that highlighted HHCP's value to education, marginalized communities, and its impact on educational inequalities. In addition, this framework also provided the basis for further exploration into hip-hop scholarship, specifically, the exploration into achieving systemic implementation within marginalized classrooms. Therefore, this paper has set the foundation to examine the research question, what are the obstacles hindering HHCP's systemic implementation within marginalized classrooms?

In an effort to address this question, I have conducted a case study using four participants who have implemented HHCP, designed hip-hop centered curriculum, and/or have extensive knowledge of hip-hop scholarship. In addition to providing qualitative data about the obstacles surrounding HHCP, this case study is also designed to be a

46

comparative analysis of the contextual adaptability of HHCP. As discussed in the

methods section, two of the participants contributed a knowledge base specific to the

United States, while the other two contributed their knowledge from a South African

context. Although the participants are from two geographically different places, the data

collected supports the previously stated argument that HHCP has a place within both

communities as a result of their parallel history with oppression. This parallel history is

affirmed through the emersion of four themes from the collected data.

1. negative stigma of hip-hop

2. hip-hop not being perceived as a legitimate form of knowledge

3. media's use of hip-hop to oppress and construct marginalized experiences

4. educational bureaucracy of implementing and supporting HHCP

Negative Stigma of Hip-hop

As discussed in the section about hip-hop criticism, there is a negative stigma

attached to hip-hop culture, its listeners (which is different than the consumers)[7], and the

communities that it is reflective of. There was a general consensus amongst the

participants that this stigma was created, and is being reinforced by members of dominant

groups who are not from marginalized or oppressed populations. Although the

participants agreed that the construction of the negative stigma is a result of hip-hop

culture being different than mainstream culture, and the dominant group not

---

[7] The listeners reflect marginalized communities, while consumers tend to be
middle class white youth (Petchauer, 2010, p.951).

understanding the elements of hip-hop, the perspectives of why this difference occurs differs based on the country of the participant.

Both Participants from the United States described hip-hop culture as being connected to the experiences of living and growing up in poor, marginalized, and/or oppressed communities. Participant1 discussed how hip-hop communicates resiliency, diversity, and adversity that result from growing up in marginalized communities and struggling through life. She states that "the lyrics that involve success despite the lack of money and broken homes" is what marginalized youth identify with. However, she acknowledges that the dominant group perpetuates a negative stigma of hip-hop because they are not a part of it and "can't define it". Furthermore, she says that this stigma exists because of hip-hop's association to urban environments, which in itself carries a negative image amongst mainstream culture.

Participant2 shared a similar opinion to Participant1. She felt that members of the dominant population have assisted in the creation of the negative stigma of hip-hop. She believes that the association exists because members of the dominant group are not able to connect to hip-hop in the same way that oppressed populations' can. Participant2 provides an example of her connection with hip-hop. She explains how hip-hop is rooted in her growing up in a marginalized community and being a member of an oppressed population.

Participant2

I saw hip-hop culture as an extension of family…family unit. Being first

generation I did not have any family members here. I was the first one to

be born in the U.S. and so my friends, the streets, and hip-hop that was my

extended family. So hip-hop taught me about life, history, how to survive,

how to express myself, how to communicate to make a statement, taught

me how to stand up for myself, taught me I didn't have to follow the

oppressive system. I could change the system, that I had a voice …so

family father, mother, hip-hop.

Although the South African participants also discussed how their connection to hip-hop is rooted in marginalized communities, they also acknowledged that the connection is as a result of hip-hop culture's representation of the marginalized political struggle. Both Participants 3 and 4 grew up during apartheid, and were first introduced to hip-hop through b-boying while under the regime. Although b-boying was used as the initial form of expression, Participant4 discussed how U.S. artists such as Public Enemy captured South Africa's political environment of oppression and struggle in their rhymes, even though the content was about the U.S. political environment.

Participant4:

Public Enemy touched on a lot of issues I saw in South Africa. They also made

me question society and what the music was speaking about. Obviously

differences, but a lot of similarities with the issues and the struggle.

The opportunity to express one's struggles through b-boying, in addition to being able to relate to musical content is what solidified South Africa's oppressed populations connection to hip-hop.

Participant4

It gives a voice to people who don't normally have a voice. If you don't grow from a rich background you can't go to a school that gives you a good foundation. Hip-hop seems to be that movement that allows people to come up and give them space to say anything that they want to say.

Participant3 further demonstrated hip-hop's value to youth during the political oppression, through his recount of how crews risked their freedom and were subjected to harassment in order to express themselves through b-boying.

Participant3

In 1985 the state of Emergency was implemented by the then Apartheid regime and groups bigger than 3 people were not allowed to move around the city, so breakers were affected by that in the way that we had to be aware and also harassed by the security police when traveling as a crew from one neighborhood to another…we realized that it was entire culture early on and did more than just break."

The discussions about the importance of both South African and U.S. marginalized communities connections to hip-hop is important because it helps to demonstrate how valuable the culture is to marginalized communities. Although in the United States the relationship is based more on living and growing up within the communities that shaped the culture, while in South Africa the relationship is grounded in hip-hop's portrayal of the oppressive climate. Both relationships demonstrate how hip-hop culture is the voice of the marginalized experiences, and how members of these populations are able to express themselves through it. Therefore, for those people who stigmatize and stereotype hip-hop culture, it can be assumed that they are not from these communities, are part of a generation that did not grow up with hip-hop, or are not part of an oppressed population, thus they don't see or don't understand the value of hip-hop. One of the participants describes the mind frame of the dominant population below.

Participant1

> Someone who grows up in Suburban areas hasn't seen it [all the elements of hip-hop] because they haven't been introduced to. They don't understand it because its different and people don't deal with different that well…a lot of negative terms are associated with urban, it brings people fear; and to say I don't want to be a part of it, they don't want to learn. They want nothing to do with it because they don't see artistic expression.

In addition to not having a connection to hip-hop, all four participants also discussed the lack of distinction between hip-hop as a culture and commercialized rap as the music as another factor to hip-hop cultures negative stigma. For many outside of the hip-hop culture, and even some who are a part of the culture, rap music is the sole element that defines the culture. Many fail to recognize the other elements of DJ-ing, b-boying, and graffiti that contribute to the formation of hip-hop culture. This lack of distinction is detrimental to hip-hop because according to Participants 2 and 3, mainstream rap is an exploited, commercialized, and a capital driven element that is used to serve as a representation of the entire culture. Furthermore corporations of "suit and tie guys" who are not from marginalized communities are creating negative images and storylines that are defining hip-hop culture.

Participant3

> They create the perception that hip-hop is gangster and the whole world believes their creation and version of this ancient form of expression…as a whole culture it is not seen as such by the masses of the people. People think that rap/MCing is hip-hop because the media has named it such.

By not distinguishing between rap as music and hip-hop as culture, hip-hop cultures' social value is diminished and replaced with the commercially driven image that those in power need to uphold in order for their product to continue to thrive.

Hip-hop not being perceived as a legitimate form of knowledge

In addition to the elements of DJ-ing, b-boying, rhyming and graffiti, there exists an underlining theme of knowledge that is inherent to hip-hop culture. Some scholars label this theme as the fifth element of hip-hop, while others simply just discuss hip-hop as a vehicle of knowledge. Regardless of how it's referenced, all the participants spoke about alternate knowledge gained from hip-hop. Although all participants agreed upon the existence of the knowledge, depending on the participants' relationship with standard education their perspectives differed. Both participants from the United States approached the discussion from an educators' perspective.

Participant1, who is a full-time teacher, spoke of prompting her students to think about their history by engaging in conversations, and having them answer the questions "where did hip-hop come from, who were the influences, who were the forefathers, and how does that correlate to me?" By having them navigate these questions, she feels that she is welcoming the child to bring in their additional knowledge, perspectives and inputs, and demonstrating that she is accepting of them. By accepting her students' contribution to their education, Participant1 is aiding in their holistic, artistic, academic, and spiritual development.

Even though Participant2 approached the alternate knowledge from an educational perspective as well, she focused on hip-hop providing self-awareness and personal and political empowerment. It is her belief that before you can begin to

understand curriculum, you have to know its history, know why you are doing it, and know how you are doing it.

Participant2

The first thing I [she] realized in hip-hop culture, before you can even solve a problem you have to know who you are, you have to know history, your skill, and you have to go through experiential learning. It has to be a collaborative learning.

For marginalized students, this process of learning who you are and where you come from provides a wealth of knowledge that is new to them. This knowledge empowers students to become active members in their school and greater communities. It challenges them to choose whether to stand-up or to be part of the oppressed. This information helps to develop an alternate knowledge that is not in the history books.

Similar to Participant2's approach, both South African participants also discussed the importance of using hip-hop to gain alternate knowledge about who you are and where you come from. Participant4 credited hip-hop as being his "education outside of education, the education that school doesn't give him." Due to Participant4's age, it is assumed that his education was under the Apartheid regime and the heritage of the Coloured community was not a part of his standard curriculum. He discussed how contextualized hip-hop "enables people to tell their own stories." Sharing topics and issues they find in their community. Participant3 discussed an interesting form of alternate knowledge that is probably not specific to South Africa, but definitely not

experienced in the United States. Participant3 spoke about using hip-hop as a form to counter the negative stereotypes of Black America that is being pushed on youth in South Africa, and that the youth are adapting.

Participant3

> I think the preconceived idea that they [students] might have of Black America is connected to the media they consume. If there's intent to change the image hip-hop could play into that. It can be used to counter the main ideas using a local context, its important to counter the main idea, the stereotypes of Black America also creates a stereotype of themselves.

Participant3 is referring to the Western influence that is pervasive throughout South Africa. He is also discussing how those in power have taken the negative stigma of hip-hop and being Black in America, and have projected it onto marginalized South African youth. In his work as a hip-hop educator, Participant3 specifically incorporates contextual historical content into his curriculum. This history empowers his students to take ownership of who they are. He aims to have youth from marginalized and oppressed communities be the reporters of their reality.

Participant3

> "History that is told by the status quo is boring because it is an illusion. When kids are told they are part of that story, and the way it is spoken is different. When you hear yourself or someone from your community in a song, and it is being

played in places that we don't have power in those circles it gives them [the

students] power to say they are speaking about my reality and I can do it too. If he

writes a book, I can write a book. If he wrote a rhyme, I can write a rhyme."

Although Participant3 views empowering his students and exposing them to their

history and ancestry a positive thing, he also fears that giving them this alternate

knowledge is setting them up for hardships. He feels "like giving them this alternative

information is detrimental because then they're going to speak out and challenge" the

legitimate form of knowledge-educators. Throughout the interview, Participant3 spoke

candidly about the rigid nature of the Western Cape education system, and about his

personal feelings of how it has not changed since Apartheid. He felt that the rigid system

did not offer students the opportunity to challenge knowledge or to bring in their own

knowledge. In his opinion, the system itself is problematic because it does not give the

kids an opportunity to learn unless it's the content those in power choose to give them.

Media's use of hip-hop to oppress and construct marginalized experiences

In the previous section that explored the negative stigma of hip-hop culture, the

media's influence over the culture was discussed. All participants acknowledged the

media's impact on hip-hop culture; however the views of the media's influence differed

amongst participants. Participant1, a 40 something Latina woman was introduced to hip-

hop at a young age and presumably grew up with art form. She viewed the media's

influence of hip-hop as minimal. Although she enjoys the music, and is knowledgeable

56

about the elements that comprise the culture, like many she is undecided about blaming the media for the image of hip-hop, or the artists for promoting this negative image. Due to her connection with hip-hop she acknowledges that commercialized music is not reality, but charges Gangsta' rap with the glorification of the negative aspects that have become hip-hop's legacy. She notes that " Early on hip-hop was glorifying things in a negative aspect and they were getting media attention." However, she does indicate that the Gangsta image is not representative of the culture today, but infers that the artists from that error are responsible for this legacy.

Although Participant1 holds rap artists semi-responsible for constructing and perpetuating the negative stigma attached to rap music, she does acknowledge that the media has shaped our perception of hip-hop as it pertains to other elements. Participant1 discussed how people immediately assume that graffiti is the same as tagging and that it is done illegally and distastefully. She discussed how people don't understand that it is an element of hip-hop and holds a social and educational value. She made the point that this expression of art that takes time, planning, and skill, is not always representing the artists. Many times, the art is commissioned by property owners to commemorate a message or pay homage to a community figure.

Participant1

     Sometimes you see graffiti and its not garbage on the side of the building…Not

     all graffiti is illegal, sometimes you see a mural with bubble letters; out of

ignorance we will say look what we did. How do we know that the owner didn't

commission that work? It's the ignorance of seeing and saying it's this.

This form of positive graffiti is rarely discussed. Therefore the mainstream populations

don't see graffiti as a positive thing.

Of the four participants, Participant1 was the only one who wavered on the

media's influence on hip-hop. The remaining three participants communicated their

frustration and anger with the media for creating a negative interpretation of hip-hop

culture. Participant2 identified the media as instigators who push these negative

stereotypes onto marginalized youth. Although she acknowledges that negative themes

appear within hip-hop culture, she equates the media to drug dealers pushing the drug of

commercialized music onto young people. "We're pushing the music towards kids…like

we're pushing drugs. In that way I say the media is the instigator." In addition to negative

themes such as violence, misogyny, and drugs that are being pushed through

commercialized hip-hop, Participant2 discussed how the media portrays the image that

oppressed populations are achieving middle class status and living the American dream.

She notes globetrotting fashion forward hip-hop artists such as Kanye West and Nikki

Minaj as being depicted as the status of Black America. However, she calls it a façade

used by the media to give marginalized communities the false sense that they're equal.

Participant2

The struggle is not over. This is façade that we are part of the American dream and we can own houses. That's few, the one percent. They majority [poor people of color] are still struggling, killed, prosecuted, and exploited.

In response to the media's intrusiveness, Participant1 speaks about the value of conscious hip-hop. She credits conscious artists and their music as being the antidote to the commercialized influence. She highlights conscious rappers, such as Jasiri X, who tailor their rhymes to address politics or what's happening amongst oppressed populations. She discussed how local artist "are really helping us be critical about our society and help youth survive the next wave of history, you'll see it is the opposite ...that we are really talking about being proactive and fighting social justice." Even with the hope of conscious hip-hop reversing the negative stigma attached to the culture, Participant2 is realistic and recognizes that the people who have money and the power are comfortable with where hip-hop is. They don't want to shake the industry, or short their pockets.

Similar to Participant2, both South African participants expressed anger and skepticism towards media. However, due to the pervasiveness of American rap in South Africa, their frustrations are not only targeted towards the South African media houses but they are also directed towards the United States media as well. During the interviews, both South African participants spoke about the money that is invested from U.S. music companies into the South African market. They explained that, as in the U.S., radio

airplay and market exposure is determined by the amount of money invested in artists. Therefore, with U.S. companies investing a lot of money into the South African market, U.S. commercialized rap is used to represent the hip-hop youth culture in South Africa.

Although both participants agreed upon the market saturation of U.S. hip-hop, they shared different perspectives about the way the media is influencing marginalized South African communities. Participant4 discussed how U.S. music companies and South African media houses are pushing the agenda of commercialized hip-hop. He discusses brand placement that is prevalent within videos, songs, and marketing campaigns targeted towards marginalized communities. Similar to Participant2, Participant4 also finds solace in local conscious hip-hop. He spoke about how South African conscious hip-hop incorporates messages about pertinent political and societal issues such as HIV/AIDS and politics. When asked what is more popular in South Africa, commercialized or conscious hip-hop, he replied commercialized.

Participant4

> If you can afford advertising, your stuff will be seen more. The bulk of the music
> is commercialized. A youngsters opinion of hip-hop is what they see on TV.
> Media houses are not pushing conscious hip-hop as much…I think when we view
> it from the entertainment side it's also about brand placing, money talks.

Participant4 recognizes the potential impact of the widespread dissemination of conscious hip-hop. He also recognizes that from the media perspective money talks, and commercialized hip-hop brings in the money.

Lastly, Participant3's perception of the media's influence on hip-hop is impacted by his experiences as a member of an oppressed population. Participant3 discusses the fact that the media controls mainstream perceptions of hip-hop culture and marginalized communities. In order to support his argument he provides the example of movie soundtracks and highlights that fact that in movie scenes containing a ghetto, drug or gang theme, there is always a rap track to go along with it. He further argues that this control over the perception of oppressed groups is designed "to drive fear into various communities to keep [them] apart and thus empower the desire of the elite few."

Participant3

> It's the same reason that any movies scene containing a ghetto or drug gang theme will have a rap track to go along wit it. It determines the masses perception of the culture; it is created by the media in this manner. So hip-hop is used for the benefit of stereotyping Black people globally and all that goes with the intention of white supremacy.

In addition to creating and controlling the image of commercial hip-hop, Participant3 also speaks about how media determines the content of the songs, and that many people

who label hip-hop as negative or violent, don't realize it is the "suit and tie guys" who are commercially constructing the content.

Educational bureaucracy of implementing and supporting HHCP

Before collecting the data, I made the assumption that educational bureaucracy, system politics, and administrative blockages would emerge as a dominant theme within the data. However, out the four participants, only two mentioned this theme. Ironically, they were both mentioned in the context of South Africa and the United States. Participants4 and Participant2 did not mention educational bureaucracy or politics as an obstacle to systemically implementing hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP). However, Participant2 does discuss how not having enough educators who are from marginalized communities and who look and talk like their students as an obstacle. Even though this obstacle is very important when considering hip-hop education, I did not identify it as a theme because it is an educational, societal, and political structural problem. However, Participant1 and Participant3 identified educational bureaucracy as a major obstacle.

Participant1 acknowledged the lack of administrative support as a perceived obstacle to the systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP) within her school. She discussed how the negative stigma associated with hip-hop scares and prevents administration from allowing teachers to explore this pedagogical practice. Participant1 discussed how many educators do not understand hip-hop culture, as a result they do not see its value or understand its relevance to teaching. She recounted an experience in

which she was called into the principal's office because she was playing a rap about the
United States constitution in her class.

Participant1

 I got called in the office to be questioned why my kids are listening to rap music

in class. I was perplexed. I had forgotten that I was playing music because I had

been playing this same rap about the United States Constitution everyday for a

week. A teacher walking by my classroom heard the rhythm and the beat and

immediately thought it was negative. I was on the offense because I knew I hadn't

done anything wrong…I still won't apologize to this day for the incident.

This story represents the ill-conceived notions about hip-hop held by many administrators
and other teachers. Furthermore, it represents how changing this negative view of hip-hop
is one of the biggest obstacles to systemically implementing HHCP within classrooms.

In addition to the negative stigma of hip-hop being an obstacle, Participant1 also
spoke about the pressures of testing and working in a data driven system. She discussed
how hip-hop centered pedagogy is difficult to test because the knowledge gained does not
present itself in the form of AB or C answers.

Participant1

You can't test all the different learning styles. The expectations are with more and

more of our politicians expecting us to show accountability. I can say I can create

a portfolio. Some of these kids can produce wonderful portfolios, but if it does not have an ABC answer, then it doesn't matter.

As a result of policies and legislations that assess teachers' performances based on students test scores, a pedagogical practice that is difficult to test is not attractive to teachers or administrators regardless of its impact on their students.

Participant3 shared in Participant1's belief that resistance from the administration was a major obstacle, however his resistance was more system wide than school specific. As previously indicated, Participant3 grew up during Apartheid and taught in the classroom during that time. As a result of the strict apartheid regime, his ability to explore alternate pedagogical practices were hindered by the Western Cape's Department of Education's strict curriculum standards. Although he incorporated some aspects of hip-hop into his pedagogy, he was expected to teach the standard content and "not come up with innovative approaches to education." Although this was twenty years ago, Participant3 feels the system is still the same, and efforts to utilize culturally relevant pedagogy are not encouraged within the school environment. Now as a hip-hop educator who brings hip-hop into the schools, Participant3 is still faced with administrative and community opposition.

In addition to administrative challenges, he also faces legal hindrances. A couple of months ago legislation was passed which prohibited NGO's, which Participant3's organization is, to work with schools during school hours. This impacted his ability to go

into schools and deliver HHCP to students. Although some of the schools he worked with prior to the legislations passing still allow him access to their students during school hours. This law has served as an obstacle for him to access new schools and new students. Although Participant3's curriculum is not regularly implemented within schools, his ability to demonstrate the pedagogies educational value and try to get it systemically implemented within schools has been hindered.

Conclusion

The following four themes emerged from the data: (1) the negative stigma of hip-hop, (2) hip-hop not being perceived as a legitimate form of knowledge, (3) the media's use of hip-hop to oppress and construct marginalized experiences, and (4) the educational bureaucracy of implementing and supporting HHCP. These four themes are all obstacles to the systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy. Although each theme is independently significant, they frame a collective obstacle hindering HHCP's implementation. When looked at jointly, these themes represent the reproduction of inequalities and marginalization of people of color and poor people. Throughout the research literature there is a continuous conversation about how marginalized cultures and histories are not seen as legitimate forms of knowledge. The participants discussed how the status quo has re-written the history of marginalized youth and used those re-writes as legitimate knowledge. Additionally, the participants discussed how what is perceived as legitimate knowledge does not address the societal and political struggles that encompass hip-hop culture. It was argued that the knowledge gained through hip-

hop's interpretations and expressions of societal and political inequalities, offered the participants additional knowledge about who they were, and how to navigate society as a member of a marginalized or oppressed community. However, the data shows that those outside of marginalized communities do not understand this additional knowledge and guidance offered through hip-hop. The data also suggests that the additional knowledge is neither seen as legitimate knowledge, nor as knowledge that should be brought into the classroom. This mindset of legitimate knowledge only reflecting dominant culture perpetuates the societal inequalities identified within the themes.

In addition to marginalized knowledge not being perceived as legitimate knowledge, another element of marginalization to emerge from the data was the dominant group's influence over the perception of marginalized and oppressed communities. All participants agreed that dominant groups have influenced the way that marginalized communities are viewed. They discussed how through the creation of consumer-driven rap, characteristics such as violence, misogyny, and illegal activities have become associated with marginalized brown communities. Furthermore, the participants discussed how people outside these communities do not see this image as a way for companies to sell records. Instead, they perceive this as an accurate representation of marginalized communities and hip-hop culture. Although the participants acknowledge that elements of negativity are present within hip-hop culture and among its artists, they also note that the stigma that is being created and distributed by the dominant group devalues hip-hop culture and reinforces the dominant, mainstream culture.

As it pertains to hip-hop centered pedagogy, this image of negativity associated with hip-hop serves as a large obstacle to systemic implementation. As previously discussed, the education systems in both the United States and South Africa are structured based on the ideologies of dominant groups. Therefore, those in the position of implementing education do not recognize hip-hop as having a positive contribution or social value. By not recognizing hip-hop's value socially and educationally, educators are not exploring a method of culturally relevant pedagogy that directly speaks to marginalized students' experience.

The preceding sections address the structural obstacles to the systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy and offered future recommendations to furthering this research. However, what has not been addressed is my own subjectivity relative to this research study. Although I did not grow up in a poor community, I am a Black female who was raised on hip-hop and was exposed to the many different stages and variations of the culture. From my experiences and connections with the culture, I have developed a view of hip-hop that allows me to see beyond the negativity that has defined the art form within the dominant discourse. I have come to appreciate its stories of marginalized communities and overcoming adversity, and even recognize the value in the commercialized rap plagued by violence, misogyny, and illegal activity. I recognize that my experience and view of hip-hop is unique and one that not everyone shares. For many, their only exposure to hip-hop is through commercialized rap. They have not had the opportunity to listen to and dissect the messages of socially- or politically-conscious rappers, or listen to the non-mainstream songs that offer an insight into marginalized

communities. The lack of exposure to the multiple facets of hip-hop leaves many with a narrow understanding of hip-hop culture, and rules out hip-hop as a pedagogical practice for many educators who do not share this same background.

In addition to my view of hip-hop, my professional experiences have also framed my approach to this research. Over the past five years I have worked with marginalized youth in both the United States and South Africa. Through my work I have witnessed a need for a form of pedagogy that engages and connects marginalized students to their curriculum and to their educational experience. Additionally, I have also witnessed marginalized youth's infatuation with hip-hop culture by way of its music, dance, clothing, and other characteristics. Therefore, it is logical to me to merge the two worlds of hip-hop and education, and use hip-hop centered pedagogy as a way of engaging marginalized youth, improving their academic success, and ultimately narrowing the education gap. This research identifies the obstacles that scholars and educators need to overcome in order to best engage marginalized students and implement hip-hop centered pedagogy systemically in their classrooms.

Overall, the themes that emerged from the data are each individual obstacles that hinder the systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP). However, by examining the common thread throughout the four themes, the evidence suggests that HHCP is not being systemically implemented because it prohibits the reproduction of marginalization and inequalities of people of color. The data suggest that by hindering the incorporation of alternate knowledge and marginalized perspectives in the classroom, the

status quo ensures that educational ideologies and perspectives remain that of the dominant culture. In addition to the obstacles that emerged from the data, it is also worth mentioning another obstacle that underpins the themes present in the data; that is the challenge of culturally relevant pedagogy being systemically used. Although the theory and practice of culturally relevant pedagogy has been a focus in the field of education since 1995, its use by educators to impact the education of marginalized students has been minimal. Culturally relevant pedagogy is designed to connect marginalized students to their curriculum, by not utilizing this pedagogy educators are continuing to disengage marginalized students and thwart their academic potential (Delpit, 2012). Since this study positions HHCP as a form of culturally relevant pedagogy, the fact that educators are not turning to this proven practice becomes an obstacle itself.

Through the identification of four individual obstacles and one overarching obstacle, this study identifies the challenges that hip-hop education scholars must first acknowledge, address, and then overcome in order to achieve systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy. In addition to identifying the above obstacles, this study also creates a framework for the future research of hip-hop centered pedagogy. Therefore, using the data collected, the following are my recommendations for furthering the exploration of the obstacles hindering systemic implementation of hip-hop centered pedagogy within South Africa and the United States.

The first recommendation that I propose is to examine how the reproduction of marginalization through the cooptation of "legitimate" knowledge in communities of

color is being perpetuated within education systems. Although there is a lot of research on the racial and economic achievement gaps in both South Africa and the United States, the proposed research focuses more on specific structures and policies that are aiding the reproduction of dominant culture within marginalized schools. The second recommendation that I propose is an exploration of how marginalized communities can take control and restructure the way they are perceived by dominant culture by inserting their voice into national or cross-community dialogues through popular music and media. Although this exploration falls outside the realm of education, it is imperative that marginalized groups take control and redesign how dominant groups perceive them, in order for hip-hop to be considered as a legitimate form of knowledge and systemically incorporated in the classroom.

Although the first two recommendations focused on addressing the overarching obstacles of the marginalization of marginalized populations and cultures, the following two recommendations focus more on overcoming specific obstacles to implementing hip-hop centered pedagogy (HHCP). The third recommendation that I propose is to conduct a similar case study identifying obstacles of HHCP implementation in each country individually. Although South Africa and the United States have a parallel history of oppression, their governments and institutional structures reflect differences in the amount of time each country has been out of a system of legal segregation. There is a 32 year time difference between when the United States ended legal segregation and when South Africa did. This difference of time has allowed the United States to become further removed from the overtly legitimized mindsets and structures of segregation, and has

resulted in more autonomy amongst school districts, schools, and educators. South

Africa, on the other hand, is still structurally similar to the environment of apartheid.

Although the South African constitution reflects a new democracy, according to

Participant3 the education system still operates under the strict curriculum standards of

apartheid. The curriculum restrictions do not give schools and teachers the opportunities

to try innovative and alternate methods of educating. As a result of the structural

differences, a single country case study would allow researchers to identify obstacles

specific to HHCP in the context of each country. The fourth and final recommendation

for future research is to conduct a study that examines the obstacles from a multi-level

perspective. By examining the obstacles hindering HHCP's implementation from a state

or provincial level, district level, school level, and teacher level, researchers can gain a

holistic view of the obstacles, and then begin to compose a strategic implementation plan

to combats the obstacles from each level of input.

Appendices

Hate it or Love it, The Game ft. 50 Cent

[50 Cent]

Ya, let's take em back

Uh huh

Comin up I was confused my momma kissin a girl

Confusion occurs comin up in the cold world

Daddy ain't around probably out commitin felonies

My favorite rapper used to sing ch-check out my melody

I wanna live good, so shit I sell dope for a fo-finger ring

One of them gold ropes

NaNa told me if I pass could get a sheep skin coat

If I can move a few packs and get the hat, now that'd be dope

Tossed and turned in my sleep that night

Woke up the next morning niggas done stole my bike

Different day same shit, ain't nothing good in the hood

I'd run away from this bitch and never come back if I could

[Chorus (50 then Game):]

Hate it or love it the underdog's on top

And I'm gonna shine homie until my heart stop

Go head' envy me

I'm raps MVP

And I ain't goin nowhere so you can get to know me

Hate it or love it the underdog's on top

And I'm gonna shine homie until my heart stop

Go head' envy me

I'm raps MVP

And I ain't goin nowhere so you can get to know me

[Game]

On the grill of my lowrider

Guns on both sides right above the gold wires

I'll fo-five em

Kill a nigga on my song but really do it

Thats the true meaning of a ~ghostwriter~

10 g'z will take ya daughter out of Air Forces

Believe you me homie i know all bout losses

I'm from Compton where the wrong colors be cautious

One phone call will have ya body dumped in Marcy

I stay strapped like car seats

Been bangin since my lil nigga Rob got killed for his Barkley's

That's 10 years I told Pooh in 95' I'd kill you if you try me for my Air Max 95s

Told Banks when i met him imma ride

And if I gotta die rather homicide

I ain't have 50 Cent when my Grandmomma died

Now i'm goin back to Cali with my Jacob on

See how time fly?

[Chorus - 50 Cent]

From the beginnin to the end

Losers lose, winners win

This is real we ain't got to pretend

The cold world that we in

Is full of pressure and pain

Enough of me nigga now listen to Game

[Game]

Used to see 5-0 throw the crack by the bench

Now i'm fuckin with ~5-0~ it's all startin to make ~sense~

My moms happy she ain't gotta pay the rent

And she got a red bow on that brand new Benz

Waitin on Sha Money to land sittin in the Range

Thinkin how they spend 30 million dollars on airplanes

When there's kids starvin

Pac is gone and Brendas still throwin babies in the garbage

I wanna know what's goin on like i hear Marvin

No school books they use that wood to build coffins

Whenever I'm in the booth and i get exhausted

I think what if Marie Banker got that abortion

I love ya Ma'

[Chorus X2]

Appendix 2:

The Commonalities of Political and Social Oppression

The United States	South Africa

• **1896-1964- Institutionalized Segregation**
• **White > Blacks**
• **1964 Civil Rights Act signed into law**
    - Prohibited   discrimination in public places, provided for the integration of schools and other public facilities, and made employment discrimination illegal.
• **No Child Left Behind Legislation 2001**
    - equal education for all U.S. learners
    - Based on four principals
      1. holding schools accountable for results.
      2. Giving states and districts flexibility on how they spend federal money
      3. Using scientific research to guide classroom practice
      4. involving parents by giving them information and choices about their children's education.
	• **1948-1994 Apartheid**
	• **White> Coloured> Black**
	• **Repeal of the Bantu Homelands Citizen Act**
	    - The act called for All Africans to become citizens of their tribal homelands. They were to be regarded as aliens in South Africa
	• **South African Education Reform 1994**
	    - illegal to discriminate unfairly against learners who wanted to be admitted,
	    - schools became self-governed and set entrance qualifications and school fees.

(Florida Department of Education 2005; United Nations 2012; Ourdocuments.gov 2012)

Appendix 3:

Distance Rate Time

8th Grade Algebraic Functions 4.2 Solve multistep problems involving rate, average speed, distance, and time or a direct variation.

Chorus (x2) 'Cause in an instant we'll learn about the distance $D = R \times T$ with the quickness You can get this, it's just distance, $D = R \times T$

Verse 1: D is for distance, R is for rate

T is for time, Imma say it one more time

The D is for the distance, R is for the rate, T is for the time

All you gotta do is plug it in, plug it in

What's given to you in the problem?

Just take your time, think about it, never quit

Check out the problem

 And see what's given to you, that it's relevant

A car drives at 60 mph for 3 hours on a trip to a lake

Okay, we have a rate, and we know how long it takes

Just multi-multi ply-ply, times by the rate 60 times 3, that gives you 180

Just cancel out the hours

And the miles are the units, you see...see?

 I told you how it's done I bet you never thought math could be fun But we've only just begun

Verse 2: I bet you didn't know that you could calculate the rate

Yup yup, that's just $R = D$ over T, distance over time

You'll get it every time

The problem's like a lock

And the key is in your mind

Just think and you will find

There's a formula for time, $T = D$ over R

And now let's calculate the speed of a car

But first remember that speed and rate are

The same thing If D is 100 miles and T is 2 hours

Then R is 50 miles per hour If D is 100 miles and T is 2 hours

Then R is 50 miles per hour

All we did was divide

 And if you R put distance over time

All we did was divide

And if you want R put distance over time

Chorus (x2)

Chorus (x2)

References

Beachum, F. D., & McCray, C. (2011). In Goodman G. S. (Ed.), *Cultural collision and collusion*. New York: Peter Lang.

Biggs D. Cynthia. (2011). Sung solecisms. *Scholar- Practioner Quarterly, 5*(1), p.39-p.51.

Bishop, E. (2010). An ethic of engagement: Qualitative learning in the 21st century. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 3*(2), p.47-p.58.

Borrero, N. (2011). Entering teaching for and with love: Visions of pre-service urban teachers. *Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research, 7*, p18-26.

Brown, B. (2010). hip-hop as a resource for understanding the urban context. *Cultural Studies of Science Education, 5*, p.521-p.524. doi:10.1007/s1142-010-9269-3

Bui, Y.N. (2009). How to Write a Masters Thesis. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications

Clark, M. K. (2007). *South africa-hip-hop revolution.* Retrieved 1/23, 2011, from www.globalenvision.org/library/33/1682

Cohen, D. (2008). The of Role Rap/Hip Hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in South African youth. Retrieved from http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/6628/The_role_of_rap_-_Final_Edit__2__BB.pdf?sequence=1

de Beer, M. (2010). The Collaboration Recommendations for Culturally Relevant Teaching and Development in Higher Education. Retrieved from.http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/events/nqfconf/abstracts/book.pdf#page=32

Diaz, Fergus, & Noguera, M., Fergus, E., Noguera, P. Re-Imagining Teaching and
Learning: A Snapshot of Hip-hop Education. (2011). Retrieved from
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/hiphopeducation/snapshot-of-hiphop-education

Delpit, L. (2006). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*. New York,
NYC: The New Press.

Dror, C. (2008). *The role of rap/ hip-hop music in the meaning and maintenance of
identity in south african youth.* (Master of Arts, University of witswatersrand
Johannesburg). , p.1-p.91.

Dyson, M. E. (1996). *Between god and gangsta rap*. New York: Oxford University Press.

English Blog (2010). Kwaito Music in South Africa blog. Retrieved from
http://www.southafrica.com/blog/kwaito-music-in-south-africa

Fine, M. (1991). *Framing dropouts*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Fleisch, B. (2008). Primary Education in Crisis: Why South African Children
Underachieve in Reading and Mathematics. Cape Town: Juta & Co.

Fisk, E., Ladd, H. (2004). Elusive Equity: Education Reform in Post-Apartheid South
Africa. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institute

Flyvbjerg, Bent. (2004).Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Journal of
Qualitative Research Practice. Seale, C., Gubrium, J. Silverman, D., Qualitative
Research Practice (420-434). Thousand Oaks, Ca: Sage Publisher*

Gay, G. (2000) Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice
(Multicultural Education Series. New York, NY: Teachers College

Gerad, A. (2011) Apartheid Transition: Assessing a Black Township Education in
     South   Africa's Disparate Social System. Retrieved from
     http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/cgi/

Gore, T. (1987). Raising Kids in a X-rates society. Nashville: Parthenon Press

Hill, Clara: Knox, Participant1: Thompson, Barbara J: Williams, Elizabeth Nutt: Hess,
     Shirley A. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: An update. *Journal of
     Counseling of Psychology, 52*(2), p.1-27. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.52.2.196

Hill, M. L. (2009). *Beats, rhymes and classrooms life: hip-hop pedagogy and the politics
     of identity*. New York: Teachers College.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American
     children.*San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally
     Relevane Pedagogy. *Theory into Practive* 34 Retrieved from
     http://aer.sagepub.com/content/32/3/465.short

Library of Congress (2012, May 16). "Without an even hand" Brown vs. Board at fifty.
     Retrieved from http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/brown-segregation.html

Miles, M., Huberman, M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook.
      London: Sage Publications Inc.

McWhorter (2003). How Hip Hop Holds Blacks Back. Retrieved from http://www.city-
     journal.org/html/13_3_how_hip_hop.html

Osumare, H. (2001). Beat streets in the global hood: Connective marginalities in the
hip-hop globe. *Journal of American & Comparative Cultures, 2*(1&2), p.171-p.181.

Parmar, P., Bain B. (2006). "Spoken Word and Hip Hop: The Power of Urban Art and Culture" (three-part series). In Kincheloe, J.L. and Hayes, K. *City K*ids. New York: Peter Lang Publishing

Petchauer, E. (2009). Framing and Reviewing hip-hop Educational Research. *Review o f Educational Research, 79,* 946- 978. doi:10.3102/0034654308330967

Rose, T. (2008). Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop--- and Why it Matters. New York, NY: Basic Books

Sayed Y & Soudien C 2003. (Re)framing education exclusion and inclusion discourses: Limits and possibilities", *IDS Bulletin,* **34**(1), 9-28.

TheGrio (2010, June 19). LA Teacher Makes Alegbra Cool with Hip-hop Beat. Retrieved from http://thegrio.com/2010/06/19/la-teacher-makes-algebra-cool-with-a-hip-hop-beat/

Sturgeon J., K, Getz, T., Zietsman, C. Apartheid Story. Retrieved from http://oralhistoryeducation.com/aparthied-stories

Williams, T. C. (2007, May 28). Black Culture Beyond Hip-Hop. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/27/AR2007052700926.html

Van Deer Berg, S.,. (2010). *Teacher pay in South Africa.* (Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers No. 26). Stellenbosch, South Africa: Bureau of Economic Research at Stellenbosch University. . (Teacher)

Ryan N. Glover grew up in Montclair, NJ. After attending Montclair High School Ryan went on to graduate from Spelman College with a BA in English and minor in Writing. Ryan worked for several years in the non-profit sector as a youth programming director before making the decision to pursue a Masters in Comparative and International Education at Lehigh University. While at Lehigh, Ryan's research interests included multi-cultural education, HIV/AIDS education, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Currently Ryan is teaching first and second grade, and is continuing her work in multi-cultural and culturally relevant pedagogy.