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Culturally relevant pedagogy: Utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage

student identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom.

Arcadia University
Ed.D Program in Special Education

Ruth B. Patterson

A DISSERTATION
IN
EDUCATION

Presented to the Faculties of Arcadia University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Education

2014

Dr. Erica Davila

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Dissertation Chair

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to add to the existing literature of knowledge and understanding of how a culturally relevant pedagogy such as Hip Hop can serve as an intrinsic motivation to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students. Critical Race Theory is utilized as the theoretical lens in this study as it challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs. The overarching question guiding this research is centered on "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?"

The study population consists of two African American students and three Latino students enrolled in the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program and one African American JAG specialist. Data collection methods will include a student and staff interview, classroom observations and a multimedia artifact. The study findings will communicate the importance of creating a more favorable environment in urban high schools that offers students the opportunity to claim their voices through the art of storytelling to express the effectiveness of using Hip Hop in the classroom to promote identity, engagement and empowerment.

Keywords: Hip Hop culture; critical pedagogy; critical race theory; Hip Hop pedagogy.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

the late Henry L. Blackwell Sr., Mary C. Blackwell

and my brother the late Henry L. Blackwell Jr. who always encouraged me to go far and to be the best that I can be.

To the Man of my dreams, Mr. Danny O. Patterson

Thank you for your love, patience and support

You challenged and inspired me to do all things through Christ;

I love you with all my heart

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as your reward. It

is the Lord Christ you are serving. – Colossians 3:23–24

First, I would like to thank God for helping me through this process. All the praise and honor belong to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Through the blessings He has bestowed upon my life God has allowed me to complete this dissertation. I am truly blessed to have the opportunity of working with wonderful scholars who assisted me in achieving my dream of earning a doctorate degree. Secondly, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Dr. Erica Davila, my dissertation chair, for encouragement, wisdom, guidance, and support throughout this dissertation process. Your encouragement allowed me to follow my heart in researching a topic that I am very passionate about. Third, I would like express my deep appreciation to my dissertation committee, Dr. George Cross and Dr. Foram Bhukhanwala for your wisdom, knowledge, time and assistance. I would also like to express a special thanks to Dr. Foram Bhukhanwala and Dr. George Cross who assisted me through extra guidance and support during the time of Dr. Davila's sabbatical.

To my loving family, my beautiful daughter Courtney Cole and two handsome sons, Kyle Cole and Kyle Patterson, thank you for your support, encouragement and understanding as I pursued my dream and for that I am eternally grateful. To my two lovely daughter-in laws, LaNeice Cole and Ann Patterson thank you for your prayers. To my handsome grandsons, Kyle and Camron Patterson, and beautiful granddaughter Josephine Vasquez and my new gorgeous and extremely handsome baby grandson Chase Emmanuel Cole, Mom-Mom's attainment of this degree serves as a model for you to achieve greatness in your education and life with excellence.

To my sister Adrienne Ward, thank you for your support, prayers and constantly reminding me that Mommy and Daddy would be proud of me. I would also like to thank my co-hort partners, Mariamu Kamau and Tina O'Pella for your support, encouragement, and being my friends. Last but not least, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and love to all my JAG students and Mr. Keith Benson; your support, love and encouragement made me a better person, educator and counselor. I love you guys and thank God for all of you in my life.

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Chapter One

Introduction to the Study

"People treat Hip Hop like an isolated phenomenon. They don't treat it as a continuum, a history or legacy. And it really is. And like all mediums or movement, it came out of a need".

Mos Def,

The intersection of Hip Hop and pedagogy within the context of school has been demonstrated through the effectiveness of a Hip Hop based curricula which contributes a more favorable learning environment and academic outcomes (Hill, 2009). Scholars of Hip Hop based education have shown how a Hip Hop based curricular should be used as an intervention to scaffold canonical knowledge to increase student engagement and raise social consciousness (Hill, 2009). Rooted in the urban postindustrial experiences of students of color, Hip Hop has been the driving force in the education of these students.

According to Irby & Hall (2011) in the early 1990's, many educators realized the potential Hip Hop had in educating young people. Those educators began tapping into the Hip Hop culture and music which allowed them to understand the values and attitude of their students (Irby & Hall, 2011). The Hip Hop culture consists of five essential elements: (1) Emceeing (delivering rap lyrics over beats and/or music), (2) Deejaying (musical accompaniment or mixing music using two turntables), (3) Break dancing (performing various types of dance moves to Hip Hop music), (4) Graffiti art, and (5) Knowledge (Reese, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to investigate whether utilizing Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy would have a positive affect on African American and Latino students in the

urban classroom. Culturally relevant teaching is defined as pedagogy of opposition and is similar to critical pedagogy which is committed to collective empowerment (Ladson-Billings, 2009). According to Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) culturally relevant pedagogy is a way for schools to acknowledge the students' home-community culture, and become sensitive to the cultural nuances that integrate cultural experiences, values and understanding into the teaching and learning environment.

During the everyday activities and routine of the students at Chase High School the components of the Hip Hop culture can be seen and heard throughout the school environment. With the racial enrollment at Chase High School consisting of 57% African American and 43% Latino students, the goal of this study is to use the transforming power of Hip Hop as a catalyst for change and development of identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students to encourage school retention and graduation.

Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, (2002) contends that through developing creative ways of using the phenomenon of Hip Hop, educators have found many innovative approaches to teaching traditional subject matter which allowed them to connect with their students. According to Akom (2009) Hip Hop is the dominant language of the youth culture, and educators who work with young people need to learn to speak that language. Hip Hop-based education curriculum is a culturally relevant instructional strategy that can be used to positively encourage African American and Latino students to become re-engaged in educational process. According to Ladson-Billings (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy as a vehicle for learning can be utilized to create cultural integrity and academic excellence among African American and Latino students. Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy has the potential to assist students in discovering their identity and empower them to develop into positive producers of their lived experiences as they

become constructors engaged in their education. Colleges, Universities and K-12 schools that use Hip Hop as culturally relevant instruction in the classroom have seen an increased improvement in student identity, engagement and empowerment (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). For example, the University of Arizona was the first university in the country to offer a Hip Hop concentration in the College of Humanities minor in Africana Studies. According to Hill (2009), Hip Hop–based education is beneficial to urban learners who identify with the Hip Hop culture. Youth construct their reality, relationships, and culture as they buy into the Hip Hop texts, culture, and related themes.

Hip Hop in the classroom encourages student engagement, recognizes students' prior knowledge, and promotes student empowerment (Hill, 2009). Akom (2009) contends that the origin of Hip Hop being used as a liberatory practice comes from the long history of Black freedom struggle and the quest for self-determination of oppressed communities worldwide. According to Akom (2009) early Hip Hop artist expressed a deep concern about the educational system, its power, its practices, and its pedagogy in urban areas. Hip Hop artist KRS-One, has criticized the educational system in this country, because of the embedded Eurocentricity in the public school curricula and its impact on African American and Latino students (Akom, 2009). Eurocentric paradigms have historically been deeply entrenched in the curriculum in the United States and provide a narrow view of history, social realities which limit the perspective of the world (Akom, 2009). The lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used to address systemic barriers that impede the success of students of color as it challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs in this study.

Critical Race Theory is an outgrowth of an earlier legal movement called Critical Legal Studies (CLS) (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critical Race Theory as a movement emerged out of a

discontent of collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. The division occurred due to CLS not incorporating strategies for social change of race and racism; therefore Critical Race Theory scholars detached themselves from Critical Legal Studies (Yosso, 2005). Later, Critical Race Theory movement evolved to include women, other people of colors (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The theoretical and analytical framework of Critical Race Theory in education defines the challenges of race and racism, its impact on educational structures, practices, and discourses (Yosso, 2005).

The application of Critical Race Theory in this study opposes and challenges the traditional practices and beliefs that students of color endure in educational institutions. Through the lens of Critical Race Theory, the researcher investigated how Hip Hop challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs in the urban classroom. Hip Hop in education encourages the traditionally disenfranchised students to be engaged and empowered to achieve academic excellence. Students at Chase High School have experienced many types of inequality in their community and school environment. Rap music is the way students process or voice their challenges. Hip Hop is an art form and tool of engagement that is transforming as it allows students to become knowledgeable, comfortable and constructively express themselves. It serves as the language of young people which allow the staff and administration at Chase High School to build rapport and develop strong relationships among students.

The reality of the lives of students at Chase High School consist of growing up in poverty, not graduating from high school, high rates of teen pregnancy, being exposed to violence, and suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. The graduation rate at Chase High School is 49% with 82% of the students qualifying for free lunch and 1.7% are eligible for reduced-cost lunch. The song "Me Against the World" written by Tupac Shakur (2Pac) mirrors

the typical life of the students at Chase High School. In the song rap artist Tupac Shakur (2Pac) tells the story of violence, hardship, and frustration in the African American and Latino community which gives a voice for the struggles of young people.

> Can you picture my prophecy?
> Stress in the city, the cops is hot for me
> The projects is full of bullets, the bodies is droppin
> There ain't no stoppin me
> Constantly movin while makin millions
> Witnessin killings, leavin dead bodies in abandoned buildings
> Can't raise the children cause they're illin
> Addicted to killin and the appeal from the cap peelin
> Without feelin, but will they last or be blasted? (Shakur, 1996)

Hip Hop and rap music proposes many different resources for education through the five elements of the art form. These elements can be used in a number of creative ways to reach the students and it presents an alternative to traditional educational practices and beliefs by reaching African American and Latino students.

Background of the Study

Silent Epidemic: Dropout Crisis

The crisis in public education has grown to enormous proportions. Our nation's schools dropout rate has become a national epidemic and has been referred to as a silent epidemic in a study commissioned by the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006). According to the Gates Foundation study, each year one third of all public high school students drop out and fail to graduate with their class (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006).

A student's decision to drop out of school is usually personal and reflects their unique life circumstances which become a slow process of their disengagement from school (Bridgeland,

Dilulio &Morison, 2006). As students fall behind academically and are challenged with environmental issues, they are more likely to drop out of school. According to the Harvard Civil Rights Project (2002) and Urban Institute (2001) report, there are an alarmingly high percentage of minority students that quit school each year. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2006) African American, Latino, Native American and students from low-income backgrounds are more likely to drop out of school.

There are no single risk factors leading students to drop out of school. Barriers to successfully completing high school such as poor grades, poor attendance, and disengagement are factors that threaten the achievement of a high school diploma. According to Balfanz, (2007) four major high school dropout categories are: (a) Life Events- something that has happened outside of school that has prompted a student to dropout (e.g., teen pregnancy, foster care placement, high school mobility), (b) Fade Outs- prompted by students' frustration and boredom with school among those students who have not repeated or are falling behind, (c) Push Outs-students who are perceived to be difficult or detrimental to the success of the school are subtly or explicitly encouraged to withdraw or transfer which can lead to those students dropping out, (d) Failure to Succeed- having a history of academic failure, absenteeism, or lack of engagement.

Disengagement of students in high school is a gradual process which begins with a poor attendance pattern, which is a key warning sign. The slow process of disengagement is often both academically and socially influenced by the students' perception of expectations of high school and their early school experiences (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006). Dropout rates correlate with the most common indicator of a student's overall engagement in school and a predictor of dropping out is absenteeism. Absenteeism has a great impact on the success of children in school and serves as a determent to student achievement, promotion, graduation and

employment (Lashway, 2003). The Gates Foundation study stated that there are no simple solutions to the dropout crisis, however there are supports that could improve student's chances of staying in school (Bridgeland, Dilulio & Morison, 2006).

The dropout crisis claims more than one million high school students each year in this country, costing the loss of potential earnings and hundreds of billions of dollars in lost revenue, and lower economic activity, which can lead to an increase in social services (Balfanz et al., 2012). The state of America's high schools has intersected with the nation's critical social and economic issues which are central to the long term health of the economy (Balfanz and Legters, 2004). Over the past decade the dropout epidemic in the United States has disproportionately affected low-income, minority, urban, single-parent young people attending large public schools in the urban areas (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006).

According to the 2011 U. S. census 42.5% of the city's residents live below the poverty line. The economic impact of students dropping out of school has an affect on the overall quality of life in their communities in addition to the global dominance as it influences America's ability to sustain itself educationally and socially (Hoyle and Collier, 2006). Greater economic returns will result in better educational outcomes (Balfanz et al., 2012). Furthermore, the school district where this study was conducted is the most dangerous and impoverished city in the richest state in the United States (Vasil, 2014).

Context of the Study

The research study was conducted at Chase High School which is located in the northeastern section of the United States. The median household income is $24,600 and the city per capita is the poorest city in the nation. The city plagued by violence is ranked the most

dangerous in the nation with open drug markets. Chase High School is located in a city that is

ranked first in the U.S. in violent crimes per capita of all cities with more than 50,000 residents

in 2012. Its per capita murder rate was nearly 12 times the national average. At Chase high

school, where the researcher has been working for the last four years, between 2010 and 2014

five students died as a result of gun violence. Chase High School is one of two large

comprehensive high schools that serve students in ninth through twelfth grades in the city.

Students who demonstrate specific barriers to successfully completing their high school

education were recruited for the research. Barriers included educational/academic problems,

socio-economic problems, and personal development problems (Children's Defense Fund, 2005).

In 2011, the State Department of Education decided to initiate a program to address the

dropout crisis which exists at Chase High School. Due to the dropout reality, the Department of

Education and Department of Labor developed a partnership to address ways of increasing

school retention and the graduation rate. The nationally recognized school to career transitional

program of Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program was mandated at Chase High School.

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is a national program designed to help resolve our country's

dropout and transition problems by helping young people who are at risk to overcome barriers to

graduation from high school. JAG delivers consistent and compelling results in helping nearly

three-quarters of a million young people stay in school through graduation pursue postsecondary

quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities.

As JAG counselor at Chase High School, the researcher has the opportunity to counsel

students in the JAG program who have experienced the violence that plagued their community.

Many students who attend Chase High School have survived shootings, struggle with grief, lost

family members and close friends which led to adverse behaviors and disengagement in school.

Violence has an impact on students' emotional, academic and social well-being which also presents psychological and social impairments. The study population consists of Mr. Omari Bradley the JAG Specialist and eight African American and Latino students in the twelfth grade who volunteered to participate in the study.

Statement of the Problem

Prior to the legislation of Brown v. Board of Education that required the same academic standard for all students; African American people were denied the right to pursue the basic tools of equal educational experiences in this country and were seen as a threat if they learned to read (Nicolas et al, 2008). The educational system in this country is a system of indoctrination that reinforced European cultural hegemony and promoted oppression (Nicolas et al.2008). According to American Educational History (2013), Thomas Jefferson advocated a two-track educational system in the United States which consisted of: (1) educating those who will serve the society and (2) educating those who will lead the society. The inequalities in our nation's school systems such as disparate resources and negative teacher expectation still prevail today which have led to student disengagement (Nicolas et al.2008).

According to the American Psychological Association (2012), every child in this country is entitled to a quality education in which they can develop personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. It is estimated that 1.3 million high school students in the United States drop out of school every year and a disproportionate number of those students are African Americans and Latino (American Psychological Association, 2012). Fifty-eight years after Brown v. Board of Education 50% of African American and 40% of Latino student do not graduate or leave high school unprepared to fully participate as a productive member of society (Balfanz and Legters, 2004).

The term "dropout factories" are referred to schools that graduate 60% or less of their students (Balfanz, 2007). These schools are mainly found in 15 states primarily in the North, West, and South portions of the United States (Balfanz and Legters, 2004). Distinguishing factors of these schools are their location in high crime, poverty stricken areas, and high rates of unemployment with student bodies disproportionally consisting of students of color (Balfanz and Legters, 2004). Schools labeled as dropout factories produce 81% of Native Americans, 73% of African Americans, 66% of Latino, and 34% of White students who drop out of school (Balfanz, 2007).

According to the American Psychological Association (2012), there is a strong link between high school dropout rates and poverty. High poverty rates, poor school attendance, poor academic performance, grade retention and disengagement lead students to drop out of school (American Psychological Association, 2012). According to the definition of dropout factories, Chase High School falls into that category with the graduation rate of 48%, resulting in the majority of students in this school being pushed out. Most of the students enrolled at Chase High School are from high poverty areas with extremely high rates of unemployment which allow them to receive free or reduced lunch. In this study the researcher investigated the benefits and value of using a culturally relevant pedagogy such as Hip Hop to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom.

<div align="center">Research Question</div>

The perception, influence and impact that the Hip Hop culture has on African American and Latino students were investigated in promoting identity, engagement in school and empowering them to succeed. The literature review of this study focused on the use of Hip Hop

pedagogy to empower and re-engage students to become the next generation of social justice leaders. This study considered the systematic factors that affect the disengagement of African American and Latino students as the result of the historical and current treatment of those students by the larger society and schools.

Research question:

What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?

Rationale and Significance of the Study

This study challenges the belief that traditional forms of education are the best way of engaging and empowering African American and Latino students in the urban classroom. The study examines the elements and concepts of the Hip Hop culture and building relationships that would advocate the use of the culturally relevant pedagogy to improve student engagement and empowerment which would lead to school retention. Research states that one in five students did not graduate from high school in the 2013 school year (American Psychological Association, 2012). According to the Center for Labor Market Studies (2009), the dropout crisis impacts all Americans particularly African Americans and Latino students. The Center for Labor Market Studies (2009) states that in 2007, 16% of young people between the ages of 16-24 years of age dropped out of high school. The dropout crisis consists of: (1) one in five U.S. men ages 16-24 were dropouts (18.9%), (2) three out of 10 Latinos dropped out of school (27.5%), including recent immigrants, and (3) one of five African Americans dropped out of school (21%) (Center for Labor Market Studies, 2009)

Looking at addressing the dropout crisis, the state Department of Education initiated a plan to focus on the dropout crisis and implemented a program to support at-risk students at Chase High School. The Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), was implemented to help resolve dropout and transition problems at the high school. Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) provide training and support to the at-risk students at Chase High School who face obstacles and barriers to success which hinder them from graduating from high school.

JAG's primary objective is to provide youth with an interesting and personally rewarding relevant learning experience which will encourage them to complete high school with a career plan (Koeninger, n.d). In more than three decades of operation, JAG has delivered consistent, compelling results helping nearly three-quarters of a million young people stay in school through graduation, pursue postsecondary education and secure quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities (Koeninger, n.d).

<p align="center">Purpose of the Study</p>

This research study explores how the use of Hip Hop can make school more relevant, engaging and empowering for African American and Latino students. The Hip Hop culture includes the rhythmic style of rap music, language, clothing and movement which have attributed to modes of self-expression of African Americans (Bambaataa, 1996).

According to Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2000), "Hip Hop can be used as a bridge linking the seemingly vast span between the streets and the world of academics." Hip Hop has a strong influence in the lives of young people, which can be used to enhance the learning process, student achievement, and school attendance (Hill, 2009). Such usage of this strategy allows

teachers to tap into students' lives in ways to promote literacy and social consciousness (Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2002).

 Hip Hop pedagogy offer teachers new ways of teaching culturally diverse students by providing them the opportunity to create more culturally relevant teaching methods, which reflect educating all students (Ladson-Billings, 1994). The researcher chose this faculty participant because he is fully immersed in the Hip Hop culture which provided great insight and he has the desire to use Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling as a bridge between the streets and the world of academics. In using critical race methodology approach, the researcher worked to conduct and present research which is grounded in the lived experiences of the participants.

Conclusion

This research study is developed through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Discussions were made on how the elements of Hip Hop can be used by educators to address the barriers that would impede the success of students of color as it challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs of African American and Latino students.

Chapter one gives an overview of the institutional and attitudinal barriers that interfere with African American and Latino students receiving a quality education. Chapter one also explores the problem of students dropping out of school which has become a national epidemic. A review of the current literature related to the dropout crisis, student engagement, critical race theory, critical pedagogy, and Hip Hop pedagogy will be in chapter two.

Chapter three will address the research design of critical race methodology that was implemented in the study. Chapter four will discuss the results of the investigation. Finally,

Chapter five will conclude a discussion section that will address findings, conclusions, and recommendations of study and of future studies.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

"Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."   Paulo Freire

Each year, approximately 1.1 million high school students in the educational system in the United States drop out of school (Broad Foundation, 2010). No Child Left Behind (NCLB) expanded the federal governments' role in public education through annual testing, annual academic progress, report cards, teacher qualifications, and funding changes. Fourteen years after the passage of NCLB, the United States continue to trail behind South Korea, Finland, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai in China and Canada regarding academic achievement (Broad Foundation, 2010). According to the Harvard Civil Rights Project (2004) at the time of the report, NCLB had minimal accountability measures in place to monitor school completion on the high school level.

Due to the lack of a national uniform measurement of standards for school completion, NCLB, cannot accurately identify the dropout factories nor make them accountable for improving the present dropout crisis (Harvard Civil Rights Project, 2004). As a result of the exploding dropout rate, NCLB has begun to hold school systems accountable for reporting annual academic progress, attendance and graduation rates with financial incentives attached to meeting specific performance goals (Bisinger & Crippin, 2008). As of December 2012, the

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) granted 34 states and the District of Columbia

waivers from certain NCLB requirements which gave them the approval to implement their own

system of school accountability and improvement systems (Alliance for Excellent Education,

2013). Table 1 represents NCLB's guideline for implementing an accountability and

improvement system.

Accountability of the High School Graduation Rate, 2008 Regulations and ESEA Waivers

Table 1	High School Graduation Rate Accountability 2008 Regulations and ESEA Waivers	
Policy	2008 Regulations	2012 ESEA Waivers
Reporting requirements	Four- year adjusted cohort graduation rate is reported for all students and individual	Same
Intervention in Title I- eligible or Title I- receiving high schools with graduation rates of less than 60 %	No such provision	Required
Permissible measure of high school completion	Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate	Use of an adjusted cohort graduation rate is required; other measures can be included with the adjusted cohort rate, including the dropout rate, leaver rate, completer rate, and a combination rates
Extended-year graduation rate (i.e., allow more than four years to graduate	Permitted; ED implementation policy required extended-year rates to be accompanied by more rigorous annual graduation rate targets	Permitted; however, the trigger for priority or focus school identification can remain at 60% even if an extended year rate is used
Inclusion of GEDs for accountability purpose	Not permitted	Permitted
Subgroup accountability	Inventions required if a subgroup misses graduation rate target for two consecutive years	Inventions are not required if a subgroup misses graduation rate targets; subgroup graduation rates are used to drive instruction once they have been triggered, but subgroup graduation rates do not trigger interventions on their own

(Alliance for Excellent Education, 2013).

The state of America's high schools has intersected with the nation's critical social and economic issues which are central to the long term health of the economy (Balfanz and Legters, 2004). The economic impact of students dropping out of school has an effect on the global dominance as it influence America's ability to sustain educational, social and the overall quality of life in their communities (Hoyle and Collier, 2006). Over the past decade the dropout epidemic in the United States has disproportionately affected low-income, minority, urban, single-parent young people attending large public schools in the inner city (Bridgeland, Dilulio & Morison, 2006). According to Darling-Hammond (2007), dropouts presently consist of 50% of the U.S. prison population and earn 50% less money during their lifetime than a college graduate.

Children's Defense Fund (2005) describes four major academic predictors leading students to drop out of high school; (a) school failure, (b) grade retention, (c) high rates of absenteeism, and (d) discipline. There is no single reason students drop out of high school and there is no simple solution to the dropout crisis (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006). The barriers of school completion in our nation's cities are shown through the persistence of rote learning, lack of adequate school resources which also extend to the surrounding communities, ineffective teachers, poor school administration and lack of parental involvement (Children's Defense Fund, 2005).

Improving the education of students can be achieved by utilizing a student-centered curriculum with the integration of the arts across the curriculum, community-based projects, multi-media, and real world experiences to engage and empower students to enter society well prepared. This study investigated the affect and influence that Hip Hop have on identity, engagement and empowerment as the researcher built on the academic predictor of school failure

which led students to drop out of high school. In 2011, the State Department of Education

initiated a plan to address school failure and dropout crisis which exist at Chase High School. A

partnership was developed between the Department of Education and Department of Labor in the

state. As a result of that partnership the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG), a national program

designed to help resolve our country's dropout and transition problems by expanding state

organizations and local programs that help young people who are at risk overcome barriers to

graduation from high school and become college and career ready was implemented. JAG has

delivered consistent, compelling results in helping nearly three-quarters of a million young

people stay in school through graduation, pursue postsecondary education and secure quality

entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities. The JAG program will serve as the

context of the study.

This literature review investigated the role of Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy

have on promoting student identity, engagement and empowerment among African American

and Latino students in the urban classroom. Topics discussed in this literature review focused on

the history of Hip Hop, the African connection, Hip Hop's global appeal, social justice, Hip

Hop's impact in the field of education, Critical Race Theory, and Critical Race Theory in

Education. Arts-based teaching and learning models were discussed as well as Hip Hop's

intrinsic quality of storytelling.

History of Hip Hop

Hip Hop began as a grassroots voice in urban areas and continues to evolve into a cultural

resistance that transforms environmental circumstances such as governmental policies and gang

violence. Hip Hop music is the expression a community oppressed by racism, poverty, mass

incarceration, and police brutality. Dagbovie (2005) states that the Hip Hop culture was forged

from the heels of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements which grew alongside of other

cultural movements for liberation such as the women's rights movement. The broader historical

origins of Hip Hop are a mixture of cultural and ethnic experiences, socio-economic influences

and innovative artistic expression (Prier & Beachum, 2008).

Dyson (2007) noted:

> The origins of rap are Black and Latino. And it wasn't simply a matter of African
> American youth, but black folks throughout the diaspora. DJ Kool Herc come over from
> the Caribbean, transporting with him that booming sound system that was common in
> particular space in West Indian culture. That revolutionized and reshaped the sonic
> landscape in the Bronx, the birthplace of Hip Hop. It was here that the four central
> elements of Hip Hop emerged. (p.72)

Early Hip Hop expressed the people of color's desire to reclaim their history and challenge

the power of despair and economic oppression that plague their communities. According to

Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002), "Hip Hop can be used as a bridge linking the seemingly

vast span between the streets and the world of academics." Hip Hop has a strong influence in the

lives of young people, which can be used to enhance the learning process, student achievement,

and school attendance (Hill, 2009). The use of Hip Hop in the classroom will allow teachers to

tap into students' lives in ways to promote literacy and social consciousness (Morrell and

Duncan-Andrade, 2002).

Akom (2009) contends that the origin of Hip Hop being used as a liberatory practice

come from the long history of Black freedom struggle and the quest for self-determination of

oppressed communities worldwide. Critical pedagogy is an emancipatory pedagogy which seeks to defuse systems of oppression by deconstructing and reconstructing issues in order to develop students to become critical thinkers. The theoretical framework of this is Critical Race Theory.

According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001), Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a movement and a collection of activists and scholars who are interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. CRT is an outgrowth of an earlier legal movement called Critical Legal Studies (CLS) (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Critical Race Theory questions the foundation of the liberal order which includes equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The Critical Legal Studies movement started in the area of law and it has rapidly grown beyond that discipline and has expanded into education which focuses on the effects of race and racism, while simultaneously addressing the hegemonic system of White supremacy (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). CRT in education observes the perspectives, methods, and pedagogy of educators in order to identify, analyze, and transform the structural, cultural, and interpersonal aspects of schools that marginalize African American and Latino students (Williams, 2008).

Low (2010) notes and Dimitriadis (2009) Krims (2000) state that Hip Hop is an international arts movement and culture which was born as a product of social justice action in the Bronx River Projects of South Bronx in the 1970's. This arts movement, which has Caribbean roots, is central to the identity formation of many contemporary youth (Low 2010). The Hip Hop culture has evolved from a creative urban expression to a cultural movement which includes music, art, dance, poetry, fashion and urban consciousness (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011).

The five elements of the Hip Hop culture include: (1) emceeing (delivering rap lyrics over beats and/or music), (2) deejaying (musical accompaniment or mixing music using two turntables), (3) break dancing (performing various types of dance moves to Hip Hop music), (4) graffiti art, and (5) knowledge (Reese, 2000). The definition of Hip Hop has been extended to include (1) verbal language, the flow or freestyle and call and response of the emcees, (2) body language, (3) attitude, and (4) style or fashions (Reese, 2000).

Rap music is an integral component in the larger Hip Hop culture and is characterized as a black cultural expression that prioritizes black voices from margins of urban America which is a form of storytelling and poetry (Tyson, 2002). Hip Hop veteran KRS-One quotes, "Rap is something you do and Hip Hop is something you live". According to Sealey-Ruiz & Greene (2011) rap is an art form that began as a personal narrative telling stories of urban life which is often ignored by the mainstream media. Rap is the verbal and musical domain of Hip Hop which is the expressive form of personal and social perspectives (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011).

Kitwana, (2002) notes that the Hip Hop culture consists of dance, art, fashion, literature, attitudes, values and activism. This genre of music with funky beats resonated at house, and block parties on the streets of Bronx in New York (Reese, 2000). Rap music broke new ground as being the first black musical form that tested the limits of free speech and gave a voice of black consciousness (Low, 2010). According to Dyson (2007), conscious rap is defined as social awareness and consciously rap that is connected to historic patterns of political protest and aligned with progressive forces of social critique.

The explosive values and socially threatening expression of rap entered into mainstream society in different forms (Low, 2010). During the late 1980's the term "gangstra rap" emerged

as a musical subgenre which was coined by music industry record executives because of the glorification of the gang or thug life (Grant, 2002). Gangsta rap engaged and celebrated the conditions and often radical values of the violence of gang member lives which are victimized by poverty primarily in African American dominated urban areas (Quinne, 2005).

This form of "gangsta" rap exalts the trapping of an imagined sex and materialistic so called good life (Low, 2010). The type of rap music that Gangsta Rap portrays is meaningless that emerged to promote negative behavior and often promoted violence (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011). Through rap music the music industry have framed the "authentic" Black Americans as complex, uneducated and lacking creativity, who duck bullets and have at least one term in prison (Bynoe, 2004).

Lyrics of protest, social awareness and personal responsibility can be found among the songs of the following artist: The Roots, Common, Public Enemy, KRS-One, Mos Def and Talib Kweli (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011). Conscious rappers were cited for their socially conscious lyrics and their progressive attitudes towards black on black crimes, prison reform and other issues relating to race, class, gender and hegemonic power relations. The following Rap song entitled "Get By" is an example of a social consciousness.

It's easy to pull a brezzy, smoke trees and stay drunk

Yo, our activism attackin the system, the Blacks and Latinos in prison

Numbers of prison they victim black in the vision

And all they got in rappin to listen to

I let them know we missin you, the love is unconditional

Even when the condition is critical, when the livin is miserable

Your position is pivotal (Greene, 2002)

The lyrics of "Get By" criticized the nature of Gangsta Rap which promotes negative behavior (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011).Underground rap or political rap music is more socially conscious and often advocate for the politicization of African American youth and African American people more generally in Black Nationalist or Afrocentric forms (Low, 2010).

<p align="center">The African Connection</p>

Many of the concepts that comprise the elements of Hip Hop can be traced back to the African and other ancient cultures (Callahan & Grantham, 2012). Emceeing and rapping can be traced to the West African griotic tradition (Keyes, 2002). According to Keyes (2002) the French term "Griot", refers to a male or female trained in the oral traditions of songs, poems, and stories of their local history which were memorized and recalled. Breaking dancing has its roots in the ritual dance from African tradition and is also influenced by Asian and Brazilian martial arts and Latin traditional dance (Callahan & Grantham, 2012).

Alridge (2005) notes the connection of Hip Hop to the Civil Rights Movement and Africa through the early pioneers of Hip Hop, Afrika Bambaataa, DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. According to Perkins (1997) the evolution of black music and the connection of rap to Africa are noted by Afrika Bambaataa:

> Rap in general dates all the way back to the motherland, where tribes would use call and response chants. In the 1930's and 1940's, you had Cab Calloway pioneering his style of jazz rhyming. The sixties you had the love style rapping, with Isaac Hayes, Barry White, and the poetry style of rapping with the Last Poets, the Watts poets and the militant style of rapping with brothers like Malcolm X and Minister Louis Farrakhan. In the 60's you

had "The Name Game" a funny rap by Shirley Ellis, and radio DJs would rhyme and rap

before a song came on (p.2).

Callahan & Grantham (2012), view Hip Hop as a cultural phenomenon for students of many

races, ethnicities, and cultures in the United States and globally.

<center>Hip Hop as an International Phenomenon</center>

Hip Hop has developed as a cultural and artistic international phenomenon and

according to Mahiri and Conner (2003), has a major appeal in the following countries: New

Zealand, Senegal, South Africa, Mexico, Japan, Germany, Russia, France, England, and India.

The global Hip Hop culture has become a phenomenon of epic proportions that has a great affect

in nearly every country on the map (Osumare, 2001).

Alridge and Stewart (2002), states that Hip Hop reflects the social, economic, political,

and cultural realities and conditions of youth around the world. Reese (2000) contends because

of Hip Hop's enormous cross-over appeal, the culture is a potentially great unifier of diverse

populations. According to Osumare (2001) other popular music genres such as punk rock and

heavy metal had similar global appeal as Hip Hop, what separates Hip Hop from the other genres

is that it gives a voice to the voiceless. Osumare (2001) states:

Hip Hop connective marginalities are social resonances between black expressive culture

within its contextual political history and similar dynamics in other nations (p.172)

According to Motley & Henderson (2008) globally Hip Hop differs in various cultures in the

following ways:

(1) Youth in Japan embrace Hip Hop as a means of distinguishing themselves from the mainstream and a way of rebelling against their elders.

(2) In Tanzania, youth reject the stereotype that all individuals who listen to Hip Hop music are "hooligans". Their rap lyrics educate listeners on topics such as AIDS and the safe sex practices and political concerns.

(3) Turkish youth in Germany, also express political concerns and the lack of civil rights in their country.

Global Hip Hop appeal is drawn by the message of resistance to oppression and struggle against racism and discrimination because of being among the marginalized population in their country (Motley & Henderson, 2008). Hip Hop created outside of the United States reflects the local culture, issues and concerns making it a cultural phenomenon that resonates throughout a global community (Motley & Henderson, 2008).

Hip Hop and Social Justice

Historically, laws were created that prohibited Black people from educational, social and political rights which contributed to social alienation (De Gennaro, 2008). According to Stovall (2006), a social justice Hip Hop pedagogy encourage discussion of differences as it relates to personal and social identity which include the basic element and principles which consist of storytelling, dialogue, and active listening. Trapp (2009), states that music serves as a valuable element of social movements. "The push and pull of Hip Hop" as explained by Trapp (2009), has the ability to push political systems and mainstream a culture of change, in addition to pull members into their movement to take action.

In the beginning, Hip Hop exposed America's hypocrisy of its proud democracy by investigating the oppression and lack of equality for African Americans and Latinos (Trapp, 2009). Rap music is the non- traditional form of mass communication and means of social protest which fosters independent thinking and sometimes revolutionary ideas. In a legendary rap the artist Tupac Shakur (2Pac) uses his voice in his song "Words of Wisdom", to proclaim social protest:

> This is definitely, ahhh, words of wisdom!
> AMERIKA, AMERIKA, AMERIKKKA
> I charge you with the crime of rape, murder, and assault
> For suppressing and punishing my people
> I charge you for robbery for robbing me of my history
> I charge you with false imprisonment for keeping me
> Trapped in the projects
> And the jury finds you guilty on all accounts
> And you are to serve the consequences of your evil schemes (Shakur, 1995).

Stewart (2005) argues that both R& B and Hip Hop artist, "have been forced to address worsening social problems, including high unemployment, police brutality, incarceration, inadequate public schools, political apathy, and dysfunctional behaviors that perpetuate oppression" (p.218).

<div align="center">Hip Hop and Arts-Based Education</div>

According to Gullatt (2008), in the late 1800's Horace Mann demanded that visual arts and music be taught to aid the curriculum and enhance learning. Gullatt (2008) cited Bresler (1995) as noting that the root of integrating the arts into the curriculum could also be traced back as far as John Dewey. Integrating arts based approaches into interdisciplinary subjects enable students to claim ownership of their education (Gullatt, 2008). Eisner (1998) cite areas in which

the arts make a contribution in the educational environment: (1) creative thinking; (2) cognitive development; (3) affective and psychomotor skills; (4) learning styles; (5) increasing self-esteem; and (6) literacy and cultural skills. Eisner (1998) state, that curriculum is a mind altering device in which children should not leave school the same way they entered. Rooney (2004) states, that arts-based teaching and learning can be utilized to improving the academic achievement outcomes in community organizations, schools, classrooms, teachers and special population of learners.

Project Zero a community-based educational research group at Harvard University, helped participants reach their social and educational goals. Many community art programs use arts education to teach planning, and self –assessment skills that can be transferred into the workplace (Rooney, 2004). Another community arts program the Grammy Worksite Music Mentoring program assist struggling high school students with mentors who shared their interest in music to engage and develop relationships with students who are at risk of academic and social failure (Rooney, 2004).

The school model representing arts-based education implements an interdisciplinary approach which integrates the arts across all curriculum areas (Rooney, 2004). Arts based teaching and learning can be implemented as a comprehensive school reform. The whole school model implements instruction in music, dance, drama, and visual arts for all students. According to Rooney (2004), arts based school reform model increases and integrate arts education which fosters instructional strategies that engage students through hands on activities and learning opportunities.

On the classroom level, arts-based teaching and learning bring art activities to students in the classroom. Arts-based teaching is collaboration between art educators and classroom teachers. They plan and develop to implement standard – based art education. Rooney (2004), discusses how co-teaching and team teaching between interdisciplinary teachers will provide teachers the opportunity for academics and arts to be linked together in instruction. Explicit instruction between the arts and literacy has assisted with the development of cross-disciplinary thinking skills among students (Rooney, 2004). According to Rooney (2004), pre-service and in-service training in arts –based instruction demonstrates how to facilitate cooperative learning groups, self-directed learning, project-based learning, and self-assessment. Professional development assists cross- disciplinary instructors to learn a common language and strategies for learning and explore the possibilities of co-teaching (Rooney, 2004).

According to Eisner (2002), special population of students who would benefit greatly from arts-based teaching and learning include students who struggle with academics. Schools that participated in arts partnership experienced improved climate and cooperation (Rooney, 2004). Arts-based approaches increase attendance, student engagement, communication, improves classroom climate and parental involvement. Rooney (2004) state, that arts-based activities increased the parent's participation and increased their involvement in their child's education. The parental involvement in arts based teaching and learning allow parents to become more aware of the curriculum guiding the education of their children (Rooney, 2004). As educators search for new and innovative ways to develop critical learning and the introduction of educational relevance, Hip Hop should be considered in the range of those approaches (Stovall, 2006). Hip Hop music and culture as an art based education should be developed as a culturally relevant pedagogical practice in the classroom.

After school programs

Many after school program that are designed to incorporate Hip Hop pedagogy have emerged. According to de Leon (2009), a program called Hip Hop School in Arkansas was developed as an after school activity which teaches the elements of Hip Hop as its curriculum. The Mandela Arts Center in West Oakland, California offers an after school program that focuses on Hip Hop as a subject (de Leon, 2009). The program coordinator Anita de Asis, states that in order to reach almost any demographic of young people, it makes sense to include Hip Hop which is a powerful tool for education (de Leon, 2009). The executive director, James Kass of Youth Speaks an after school program in San Francisco, contends that all children that they work with are not Hip Hop kids, but they all respond to the culture through the styles and language that is created by the Hip Hop culture (de Leon, 2009).

Hip Hop and Education

In the early 1990's Hip Hop was considered as a useful tool in education (Baker, 1990). Hip Hop's educational appeal stems from the idea that music and culture had intrinsic value in education (Rodriguez, 2009). In recent years Hip Hop expressions have been expanded to include the creative activities of spoken word poetry, theater, clothing styles, language, and forms of activism (Chang, 2006). Petchauer (2009) describes three distinct ways Hip Hop has become relevant in the field of education and educational research: (1) An increasing number of teachers are using culturally relevant teaching and critical pedagogy in the urban classroom to educate and empower students, (2) Hip Hop as a creative practice construct messages through the music which creates the formation of identity by which young people see themselves and the

world around them, and (3) Institutions of higher learning around the world are engaging Hip

Hop in research in a rigorous manner through academic courses and conferences.

According to Walker (2006), currently there are 100 institutions that offer Hip Hop courses and

many offer multiple courses in various departments.

Petchauer (2009) describes the following three major strands of scholarly work that are

relevant to the field of education concerning Hip Hop: (a) Hip Hop-based education- studies that

use Hip Hop songs and lyrics, as curricular and pedagogical resources; (b) Hip Hop meaning and

identities-studies focus on how students mobilize texts and how they intersect with identities;

and (c) Hip Hop aesthetic forms-studies that conceptualize the ways of doing or habits of mind

produced by hip hop practices.

The philosophy of Hip Hop education is defined by Runell and Diaz (2007) as:

> A layered approach founded on social justice education, embedded in Hip Hop culture,
>
> relying on critical pedagogy and community activism to teach Hip Hop as a subject, Hip
>
> Hop as pedagogy to teach another subject, and/or Hip Hop as the warm-up hook or bridge
>
> to draw students into the class. (p.15)

Stovall (2006) describes Hip Hop as currently being utilized in the classroom for the

purpose of teaching academic, critical literacy, and citizenship. The educational benefits that Hip

Hop offer center in the curricula and pedagogical practices on the culture, realities, and learning

styles that each student brings into the classroom (Petchauer, 2009). This body of scholarship

allows students to create and engage in literacy practices in an out of school context that includes

ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, speaking, believing, and often writing and

reading (Petchauer, 2009).

Rap Text for Academic and Critical Literacy

Three ethnographic approaches were designed to explore and study the use of rap text in within urban high school settings. In the first study Morrell & Duncan-Andrade (2002) designed the use of rap text to bridge a canonical work of literature in an urban English and language arts classroom. The goals of the unit were (a) to utilize the students' participation with Hip Hop to scaffold their critical and analytical skills, (b) to provide students with confidence and awareness needed to transfer these skills onto canonical text, and (c) to allow students to critique messages of popular culture media. The researcher in this study concluded that students were able to make meaningful connections between rap text and Romantic and Elizabethan poetry as well as make connections between the poems and the larger social context (Petchauer, 2009). In order to make a connection between rap and literary text, Wang (2014) shares the following rap lyrics composed by her student R.C. to reflect his understanding of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet text:

Balcony Rap

Romero Romero where art thou.

Juliet standing on her balcony with a big frown,

wondering where her lover is,

wishing he would come and give her a kiss,

me a capulet and him a montague

why can't there be just us two,

our families are both alike,

why do they always have to fight?

Then Romeo steps in the light,

And starts rapping for Juliets delight,

Juliet Juliet I am right here,

I just heard all u said and it's clear,

it's clear that our love is young and new,

like a flower awaiting bloom,

so come with me and you will see,

that our future is waiting for thee,

forget your name and forget your family,

cause you and me is all we need,

if they catch you Romeo they will murder thee,

you know what Juliet let it be,

cause I need to be with you so bad they can come kill me…..

PeAcE

The second study explored the use of rap lyric similar to the above study. Stovall (2006) facilitated a thematic unit within an urban high school social studies class consisting of 19 African American and Latino students. The study utilized rap lyrics of Hip Hop artist Black Star, OutKast, and Talib Kweli to prompt discussion on social issues relevant to the students' lives. After playing select songs, a discussion was facilitated by Stovall (2006) connected to the issues of a just society, the misrepresentation of the media's portrayal of life style of celebrities, and how schools promote deception. Stovall's (2006) evaluation of the study revealed that the lived realities of the students were centered in the curriculum. The relevant social studies curriculum

created focus on infusing the Hip Hop culture as it can provide the context for students to develop a critical lens as they approach subject matter and its relevance to their lived experiences (Stovall, 2006). Educators were challenged to reflect on the rich, complex and sometimes disturbing history of Hip Hop and its effect on the lives of young people (Dimitriardis, 2009).

Williams (2008) used critical social theory in the third study to analyze a series of Freirean; Hip Hop based discussions with 8 urban high school seniors in the third study. The representation of students in this study was those who identified with the Hip Hop culture. The use of language of critique, transcendence, the development of counter narratives, and critical consciousness are the overall goals for the Williams (2008) study. Students were to define Hip Hop, identify problems in Hip Hop, and develop an action plan in response to the problem (Petchauer, 2009). The discussions in the study were based on such as violence, misogyny, and drugs, which were decided by the students and were not based on any specific rap texts (Petchauer, 2009).

Hip Hop, Meanings, and Identities

This significant strand of scholarly work deals with the active relationship between Hip Hop text and youth in and out of school (Petchauer, 2009). There has been little research in the United States on how youth and young adults use Hip Hop text to shape racial identity. Petchauer (2009) contends that the topic of racial identity receives more attention in global context outside of the United States. Hip Hop practices (Petchauer, 2009), states are contextualized in units of analysis and identified by cultural norms and expectations, artifacts and conventions and community level organization.

Petchauer (2009) cites Marcus (1998) as saying,

> The idea is that any cultural identity or activity is constructed by multiple agents in varying contexts, or places, and that ethnography must be strategically conceived to represent this sort of multiplicity, and to specify both intended and unintended consequences in the network of complex connections within a system of places. (p.52)

According to McLaren (2007) Hip Hop pedagogy combines the understandings, experiences and ways of knowing the world relevant to the Hip Hop culture with critical theories of teaching and learning targeted at empowering and transforming students.

State of Traditional Urban Education

Kozol (2005) detailed in his book, *The Shame of the Nation* that children in this country are not offered the same opportunity of receiving a good education. According to Kozol (2005) inner city schools embrace pedagogy of direct command and absolute teacher control.

Kozol (2005) notes:

> Curriculum materials that are alleged to be aligned with governmentally established goals and standards and particularly suited to what are regarded as "the special needs and learning styles" of low income urban children have been introduced. Relentless emphasis on raising test scores, rigid policies of non-promotion and non-graduation, a new empiricism and the imposition of unusually detailed lists of named and numbered "outcomes". (p.63)

Norguera (2008) contend that in an education system which suffers from chronic failure, learning about the popular culture of the students is a promising practice for creating more liberatory and authentic classrooms.

Norguera (2004) notes:

> In poor communities, the old, persistent problems of overcrowded classrooms, deteriorating facilities, and an insufficient supply of qualified teachers and administrators remain largely unaddressed. (p.176).

According to Prier & Beachum (2008) many urban students come to school ill-equipped, unresponsive, apathetic and defiant which can be linked to a street centered value system.

Hip Hop in the classroom

Educational researchers and scholars have begun to explore Hip Hop as a form of emancipator praxis to empower youth in positive trajectories of hope and possibility (Prier & Beachum 2008). According to Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002), "Hip Hop can be used as a connection which would link the streets and the world of academics." The Hip Hop Education Center (H2ED) was formed to explore the potential of Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy used to address student achievement, attendance and problem behaviors in the classroom.

According to Hill (2009), Hip Hop–based education is beneficial to urban learners who identify with Hip-Hop. Youth construct their reality, relationships, culture, and collectively buy into the Hip-Hop texts, culture, and related themes. Hip Hop in the classroom encourages student engagement, recognizes students' prior knowledge, and promotes student empowerment (Hill, 2009).

Hip Hop has become a cultural and artistic phenomenon affecting youth around the world (Aldridge and Stewart, 2005). Its' strong influence in the lives of youth can be used to enhance the learning process, student achievement, and school attendance among urban learners (Hill, 2009). The use of Hip Hop in the classroom allows teachers to connect with students in ways to promote social consciousness (Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2002). The philosophy of Hip Hop education is described by Runell & Diaz (2007) as:

> A layered approach founded on social justice education which is embedded in the Hip Hop culture, relies on critical pedagogy and community activism to teach Hip hop as subject, hip hop as pedagogy to teach another subject, and hip hop as the warm-up hook or bridge to draw students into the class (p.15)

As teachers incorporate performance poetry in the classroom, Hip Hop can become the link that encourages students to express their frustrations and it also enhances their literary, social and public speaking skills (Squires et al, 2006). Gay (2000) alleged learning becomes more relevant when a culturally relevant pedagogy uses the cultural knowledge as a frame of reference and a student's prior knowledge and experiences through storytelling are utilized.

Storytelling

Pellowski (1991) describes storytelling as the following:

> "Storytelling is the art or craft of narration of stories in verse and /or prose, as performed or led by one person to a live audience; the stories narrated may be spoken, chanted, or sung, with or without musical, pictorial, and other accompaniment and may be learned from oral, printed, or mechanically recorded sources; one of its purpose may be that of entertainment," p.15

Storytelling is a creative demonstration of expressing experiences and the transferring of information. The discovery of one's self happens through oral traditions just as our ancestors have done in ancient times. As we are products of our lived experiences this information is often communicated to and from us through orally sharing information. According to Freire & Macedo (1987) before books and school people read the world and such reading prepares them to read texts of all kinds.

Storytelling or counter-storytelling is a method that allows people or groups to reject institutional stories in favor of their own versions which counter the stories of the oppressor that has been an essential feature in qualitative research (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). In the field of education, storytelling is a unique resource which promotes increased listening, reading and comprehension skills. It provides students with a sense of history, community, the ability to listen and use their imaginations.

Roney (2001) contends that stories which are communicated through storytelling are filled with emotion that generates an affective cognitive response in the listener. This type of learning through storytelling impacts one's knowledge as well as their attitude toward that knowledge and the learning process. Storytelling is a natural and enjoyable way for humans to teach and learn. As students use storytelling they entertain their audience and often teach lessons that provide morals.

Identity and Storytelling

According to Tatum (2007), identity are stories we tell ourselves and the world about who we are and the attempt to act on those stories. Self-perceptions are shaped by the messages received around us and as African American males and females enter into adolescence, those messages in a racial context intensify (Beachum & McCray, 2004). It is also shaped by the social

content in which we learn about ourselves (Tatum, 2007). In the school content Tatum (2007) cites the following questions about identity: (1) How students see themselves reflected in that environment? (2) What stories are told about who they are? (3) What messages are students given in their daily interaction in the classroom and other areas of the school and by whom?

All students come to school with certain characteristics and behaviors that are unique to them which affect their academic achievement (Jones, 2005). Students identify with certain groups such as race, social class, or religion which allow students to experience a sense of belonging (Jones, 2005). Identity plays an important role in the lives of students and it influences engagement. In studying low-income students of color, some researchers and educators have long advocated for incorporating students' cultural identity and "funds of knowledge" that all students bring with them to school every day (Moll & Gonzalez, 2004).

Hip Hop remains the most prominent identifier for today's young people worldwide regardless of race, class and gender (Tanz, 2007). Educators should acknowledge that Hip Hop is the major part of the youth culture that we educate and it serves as the voice for many of today's young people, which is often misunderstood and generally ignored (Elliot, 2000). Tanz (2007) describes the identity of Hip Hop as being,

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

Engagement and Empowerment

Engagement is defined as the effort and interest applied by students in school (Marks, 2000). It is noted by the National Center of Education Statistic (NCES, 2006) that:

> Students who participate actively in school and the classroom, and who identify with school, increase the likelihood of successful academic outcomes. Those who do not, have been referred to as disengaged; this pattern is found disproportionately among minority students and those from low-income homes. (p.8)

Student engagement includes participation in school activities, identification with school, and the acceptance of school value (Morse, Christenson & Lehr, 2004). The four areas of student engagement are: (1) academic engagement, which consist of the time a student put forth effort and interest applied while on task, (2) the cognitive domain consists of the way a student think and process information about academic tasks, (3) the behavioral domain address a student's participation in school including extracurricular activities, and (4) the psychological domain is where a student' sense of identity with school, membership at school, and positive peer relationships are developed (Morse, Christenson & Lehr, 2004).

Student engagement among African Americans and Latino students are influenced by two factors (Ogbu, 2003). The first factor includes a system of historical and current treatment by the larger society of African American and Latino students. The second factor consists of the interpretation and response to that treatment by African American and Latino students. According to Ogbu (2003) whose study focused on disengagement of African American and Latino students, noted that the students cite feelings of mistrust of teachers, peers influences and the feelings of not belonging as reasons that African American and Latino students are

disengaged in educational processes. Stovall (2006) contends that many African American and Latino students are often negatively labeled early in their school tenure and are unable to avoid the preconceived ideas in their educational development.

Disengagement of students in urban schools begins in middle school and is a gradual process (Balfanz, Herzog & Mac Iver, 2007). The slow process of disengagement which is often both academically and socially is influenced by the students' perception of expectations of high school and their early school experiences (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006). According to National Center of Education Statistic (NCES, 2006) disengagement demonstrated in school has been found primarily among African American, Latino and those students from low-income homes. NCES (2006) contends that disengagement in school among African American, Latino and other low income students are often influenced by absenteeism which is the most common indicator. Other warning signs of student disengagement are low academic performance, pregnancy, discipline and behavioral problems.

According to Wagaman (2011), empowerment is the process by which adolescents develop consciousness and skills to envision social change and understand the role that they play in that change. The empowerment of students is defined as the development of the ability, confidence and motivation to succeed academically through school experiences (Cummins, 2001). The disempowerment of students occurs when students do not develop cognitive/academic and social/emotional foundations in school. Banks (2001) insists that the culture and organization of a school should be examined in order to create a school culture that empowers students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Historically, minority students have experienced disempowerment in schools in the same way their communities are disempowered at the hands of the dominate culture (Cummins, 2001). Implementing the following four elements in schools will enhance and contribute to student empowerment (1) the incorporation of the students' culture and language, (2) inclusion of the community in the education of their children, (3) pedagogical assumptions and practices in the classroom, and (4) the assessment of students (Cummins, 2001). In order to have engagement and empowerment in the educational process, the researcher investigated the teaching approach of Critical Pedagogy by Paulo Freire which allows students to become critically conscious.

<div align="center">Critical Pedagogy</div>

Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach which attempts to help students question and challenge domination, beliefs and practices that dominate them and allows students to become critically conscious. Critical pedagogy's origin can be traced back to critical theory, which originated from the Frankfurt School, whose influence is evident in the liberatory works of Freire and other scholars (Kincheloe & Mc Laren, 2007). Freire (1993) maintain that education is the act of depositing, in which the teacher is the depositor and the students are the depositories. The banking concept in education is described as a system where teachers deposit information and knowledge through narration into empty vessels that are known as students (Freire, 1993).

The tenets of the banking system include: (1) the teacher teaches and the students are taught, (2) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing, (3) the teacher thinks about and the students are thought about, (4) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it, and (5) teacher is the subject of the learning process while the students are the object (Freire (1993). The banking education process is designed to prevent students from developing critical thinking skills which would lead them to

challenge the systemic barriers and the hegemonic structure that exist in and out of the school environment. Freire (1993) states that liberatory education is based on the development of critical consciousness, which enables the learner to recognize the connections between their problems and experiences within the social content in which they are connected. Components of critical praxis are listed in Figure 1.
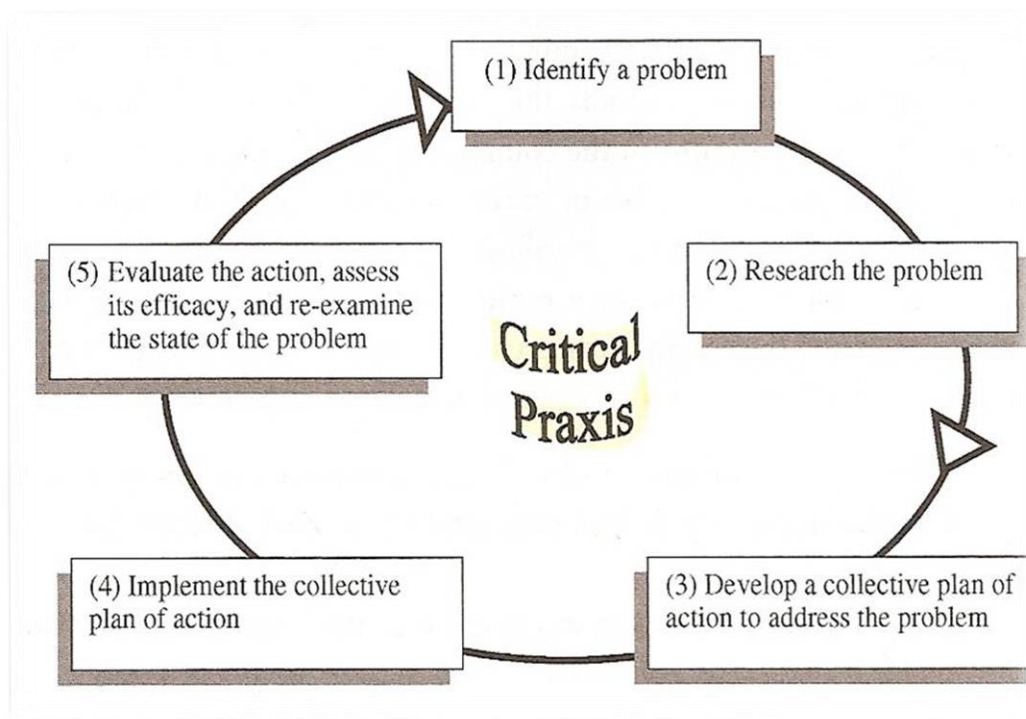
Figure 1: Critical Praxis

Freire (1993) states the following:

> The capability of banking education to minimize or annual the student's creative power and to simulate their credulity serves the interest of the oppressors, who care neither to have the world revealed nor to see it transformed. The oppressors use the idea "humanitarianism" to preserve a profitable situation. Thus they react almost instinctively against any experiment in education which stimulates the critical facilities and is not

content with partial a view of reality but always seeks out the ties which link one point to another and one problem to another. (p.74).

Freire (1993) places great emphasis on dialogue in the popular and informal educational process. Informal education has more dialogue rather than a curricula form which should not involve one person acting on another, but should be built on collaborating with each other. Freire (1993) states, his philosophy began with the interaction between technique, curriculum and human development which intertwined pedagogic, economic and social issues. Culture circles were the basis of the dialogical system of education (Freire, 1993). Culture circles discuss the context of the students' lives together with a coordinator which generated themes that were significant to the students.

Freire (1993) through the pedagogy of the oppressed seeks to revolutionize the curriculum in addition to building the whole teacher-student relationship. Stovall (2006) states, according to Freire (1970), hooks (1994), and Ladson-Billings (1974) teachers (facilitators) are encouraged to develop a pedagogical practice centered on the issues and concerns of students as well as addressing the cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed by socially marginalized groups that are often unrecognized and unacknowledged.

In order to produce a productive environment that is conducive for learning, the following tenets will provide teachers (facilitators) the necessary space for students: (a) students become intellectual leaders in classroom when their educational, economic, social, political and cultural futures are strong, (b) students should be treated as apprentice in the learning community, (c) students' prior knowledge and experiences are legitimized and becomes part of

the curriculum, and (d) teachers and students engage in a collective struggle against the status quo (Stovall, 2006).

<div align="center">Critical Race Theory</div>

The theoretical framework used in this research study is Critical Race Theory (CRT). According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001), CRT is a movement and a collection of activists and scholars who are interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power. CRT is an outgrowth of, Critical Legal Studies (CLS) an earlier legal movement (Ladson-Billings, 1998). CRT questions the foundation of the liberal order which includes equality theory, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

The Critical Legal Studies movement started in the area of law and it has rapidly grown beyond that discipline and has expanded into education which focuses on the effects of race and racism, while simultaneously addressing the hegemonic system of White supremacy (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). CRT was designed to address systemic barriers that is used to impede the success of minority students and challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs.

The major goal of Critical Race Theory is to bring change that will implement social justice with the elimination of racism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Solórzano (1997) identified the five tenets of the CRT that can inform research, pedagogy, curriculum and policy: (1) CRT recognizes that race and racism is prevalent to American life, (2) CRT expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of race neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy, (3) CRT challenges the dominant ideology, (4) CRT is committed to social justice and works towards the elimination of racism and other forms of subordination such as gender, class, and

sexual orientation, (5) CRT recognizes the centrality of experiential knowledge of men of color and women are legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, practicing, and teaching the law as it relates to racial subordination.

<div align="center">Critical Race Theory in Education</div>

Critical Race Theory in education is defined as a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the way race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses (Yosso, 2005). The application of CRT in education was a way of examining the difficulties people of color endured in educational institutions (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Issues in education such as claims of color-blind objectivity, equal opportunity and meritocracy were challenged and confronted through Critical Race Theory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). According to Yosso (2005) the five tents of CRT which inform educational theory, pedagogy, curriculum, policy and research consist of: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches.

Yosso (2005) states,

> CRT in education is a theoretical and analytical framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses. CRT is conceived as a social justice project that works toward the liberatory potential of schooling. This acknowledges the contradictory nature of education, wherein schools most often oppress and marginalize while they maintain the potential to emancipate and empower. Indeed, CRT in education refutes dominant ideology and White privilege. (p.74)

In this research study, the lens of Critical Race Theory in education was used to focus on utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in educating African American and Latino students. A great emphasis in this study is placed on using Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy to acknowledge and integrate African American and Latino culture and cultural experiences in the urban classroom. Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy (CHHP) is one of the ways of examining the relationship between the Hip Hop culture and the evolution and promotion of Hip Hop in the classroom (Akom, 2009).

Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy

Through the reviewing of Paulo Freire's work Akom (2009) fused Hip Hop and critical pedagogy to introduce the framework of CHHP. In the field of academic inquiry, Hip Hop is aesthetic and a weapon in the fight for racial justice and has gone through significant transformation since its emergence (Akom, 2009). Hamilton (2004) contends that CHHP is where theory and practice can come together, and an attempt will be made to develop an innovative approach to use Hip Hop as a method for organizing African American and Latino youth around issues that are important to their survival.

Many Hip Hop artist offer scathing critiques of the ways in which African Americans and Latinos remain mentally incarcerated when they rely on a Eurocentric education system rather than developing a culturally relevant curriculum that reflects their own culture, history, socioeconomic, and spiritual realities (Alridge, 2005). Hip Hop pedagogy according to Low (2010) is the use of culture as a tool in teaching skills such as writing, poetry, grammar, and critical language awareness on the basis of Hip Hop's cultural relevance to contemporary urban youth which is linked to the students' interest and self-esteem.

Summary

Based on the research in this study, the literature review revealed the role of Hip Hop and its potential impact on engaging and empowering students in the urban classroom. Researchers have demonstrated the importance of educators using culturally relevant pedagogy such as Hip Hop to engage and empower African American and Latino students. The research showed the significance of using Hip Hop to encourage and increase engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom. The historical and current treatment of African American and Latino students in school has led to the mistrust of teachers and feelings of not belonging which are reasons that many students are disengaged in educational processes. Many students are often negatively labeled early in their school tenure and are unable to avoid the preconceived ideas in their educational development.

This research will also show how educators across the country are using Hip Hop in the classroom from colleges and universities to K-12 schools to re-engage students. Evidence has shown that using Hip Hop themes connect students and teachers as it is an educational tool that serves as a bridge from the students lived experiences to the classroom. Storytelling, a key component of Critical Race Theory, is a common element in rap music and is used in this study. The use of Hip Hop based storytelling in the classroom would allow students the opportunity to have a voice in telling their own story. This research study focused on whether the culturally relevant pedagogy of Hip Hop would promote identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom.

In Chapter three, the research design and methodology of critical race methodology will be presented along with participant selection, data collection, data analysis, the role of the

researcher and validity and reliability. Chapter four will present the data in relation to the

finding, results of the findings and themes that emerged in this research study. Also in chapter

four the question of "so what?" will be communicated in regard to what I discovered concerning

utilizing Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy in the urban classroom to encourage student

identity, engagement and empowerment. Chapter five discusses the relevance of the finding,

conclusion based on the data, implications for future research and practice, and recommendations

for educators, administration and policy makers regarding employing Hip Hop in the classroom

to encourage urban learners to become more engaged and empowered.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction/Overview

Chase High School is a four year comprehensive public high school that serves students in ninth through twelfth grades. The high school, located in the northeastern section of the United States, is the context and setting of this study. Built in 1891, Chase High School is located in a predominantly Jewish manufacturing and shipping community. By 1964, the neighborhood had changed and transitioned into a working class neighborhood of African Americans and Latinos. As manufacturers left the city in the 1970's, urban decay emerged and the city was plagued with high unemployment. Chase High School is located in a city which is labeled as the poorest city in the country with a dropout rate of 70% and median household income of $24,600.

According to the National Education Association (2014), 60 years after Thurgood Marshall successfully argued the end of school segregation in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education decision; schools in this urban area are still separate and unequal with the double segregation of race and poverty. Over the past two decades there has been a slow but steady increase in the isolation of African American and Latino students in urban areas housed in schools that are literally falling down and crumbling around them (National Education Association, 2014).

Chase High School is housed in an inadequate facility burdened with heating problems in the winter and cooling challenges in the summer as well as an ancient HVAC system which provides bad air quality. During the 2013-2014 school year, the student enrollment at Chase High School was 786 in comparison to student enrollment of 1,560 in the 2003-2004 school

year. Chase High School is ranked as the lowest performing high school in the state and is currently labeled a "School In Need of Improvement" with a graduation rate in 2013 of 49.7%. Suspension rates are high at Chase High School with 30% of the students serving out-of-school suspensions.

Currently, 82% of students qualify for free lunch and 1.7% of the students are eligible for reduced-cost lunch. Chase High School has struggled academically with high dropout rates and continuously low state standardized test scores which add to high absenteeism. Coupled with low academic performance, teacher and student apathy the school has been labeled a "dropout factory", in which led to the entire district being taken over by the State. Dropout factories are schools that have a senior class that is made up of 60% or fewer of the students who entered school as freshmen (Balfanz & Legters, 2004).

Surrounded by drugs, violence and poverty students struggle in their communities with no future outlook to complete their education. The goal and purpose of this study is to investigate how Hip Hop can make school more relevant, engaging and empowering for African American and Latino students in urban areas which will lead to school completion. The researcher is utilizing Critical Race Methodology (CRM) (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), to raise critical consciousness about the social and racial injustice that plague urban learners and to create cultural integrity and academic excellence by employing culturally relevant pedagogy.

Theoretical grounded approach to research which focuses on race and racism in a research process is Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). CRM is defined as the place where theory meets method and it presents the opportunity to conduct and present research which is grounded in the lived experiences and knowledge of people of color

(Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). Critical Race Methodology is the overarching theoretical approach guiding research (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.38). In this research CRT is used as methodology by raising questions pertaining to educational research that silences practical issues and decisions made in research in the area of disparate power relations between the researcher and the participants, decisions about the stories told, and it focuses on strengths instead of weaknesses (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

Solorzano & Yosso (2002) states,

> We define methodology as the overarching theoretical approach guiding the research. For us methodology is the nexus of theory and method in the way praxis is to theory and practice. In other words methodology is the place where theory and method meet. Critical Race Methodology is the approach to research grounded in Critical Race Theory. (p.38)

According to Malagon, Huber & Velez, (2009) Latina/o Critical Race theory (LatCrit) is a branch of Critical Race Theory which is designed to address systemic barriers that is used to impede the success of Latino students and challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs (Malagon, Huber & Velez, 2009). LatCrit is an important theoretical lens as it examines how various multiple forms of oppression such as immigration status, culture, language, and ethnicity shape the experiences of Latinas/os in the educational setting. Within the educational field, CRT and LatCrit expose and challenge the inequalities that the system of racism produces in and out of the classroom (Malagon, Huber & Velez, 2009).

The framework within this methodology is represented by five tenets in this research:

(1) The intersectionality of race and racism with other forms of subordination. Critical Race Theory was utilized in this study to understand how race and racism intersect with the structural and institutional factors such as schools and community impede the educational experiences of African American and Latino students. In the aftermath of the Brown v. Board of Education decision, Chase High School continues to be segregated and is housed in a faculty that is in disrepair. Chase High School situated in a low-income area and is racially segregated with 100% of the student body population of African American and Latino ethnicity.

(2) Challenge the dominant ideology. Challenging race-neutral dominant ideology is the commitment that CRT has as it seeks to discover the contribution of meritocracy and colorblindness in the deficit thinking about people of color. Utilizing CRT in this study, the researcher seeks to develop, create tools that will adequately capture the feelings and lived experiences of the study participants from that socio-economic background at Chase High School.

(3) Committed to social justice. CRT is committed to a social justice agenda. The goal of CRT is to eliminate racism, identify, analyze, and transform the educational structures that maintain subordinate and racial positions in and out of the classroom. During the research process participants are engaged and empowered to respond to the need to replace the system of racism and white supremacy with a system of justice for all people.

(4) The centrality of experiential knowledge. The lived experiences of the students were instrumental in helping the researcher understand how the study participants think and feel about

the role of race and the system of racism have on their everyday lives which affect the way they are systematically educated in school (Solorzano & Yosso 2002).

(5) The transdisciplinary perspectives of CRT offer critical race researchers an array of research methodologies and give them the opportunity to capture and understand the lived experiences (Malagon, Huber & Velez, 2009).

Critical race methodology in education focuses on how students of color respond to their experience in the educational system in the United States (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). When using critical race methodology, we must look at the experiences with and responses to racism, sexism, classism in and out of schools as valid, appropriate, and necessary forms of data (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). The methodology of this study presented and analyzed the participants' lived experiences in their education and fostered a deeper understanding of the effect of how telling their stories will promote identity, engagement and empowerment in the classroom.

In developing a critical race methodology, race and racism must be defined. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) cites Banks (1993) as stating that race in U.S. History was socially constructed and created to differentiate racial groups and to show superiority of the White dominant race over any races. Racism is a system of ignorance, exploitation, and power to oppress people based on ethnicity, culture, mannerism, and color (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

Participant Selection

The students at Chase High School in the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program were considered for the study and were an appropriate fit for this research. JAG program is designed to help students at risk and to resolve the country's dropout and transition problems.

The JAG students are working to overcome barriers to graduation from high school and pursue postsecondary quality entry-level jobs leading to career advancement opportunities. The recruitment process consisted of students enrolled in the Jobs for America's Graduate (JAG) program, which became the dropout prevention program utilized at Chase High School. Jobs for America's Graduate (JAG) program is in its' third year at Chase High School. The JAG specialists are assigned to implement academic, social and leadership competencies to ensure graduation and positive post graduate outcomes for students. The researcher met with staff and students that fit the following entrance criteria:

(a) African American and Latino students who are 18 years old or older

(b) JAG Specialist at Chase High School

(c) Students who are enrolled into to the JAG program and have a history of barriers to success that have hindered their academic achievement.

(d) The student participants that have one or more of the following major predictors of dropping out of school: (1) school failure, (2) grade retention, (3) high rates of absenteeism, and (4) discipline issues.

For the purpose of this study, the faculty participant will be referred to as Mr. Omari Bradley (pseudonym). Mr. Bradley is the JAG specialist at Chase High School. Born in Delaware in the early 80's, Mr. Bradley was raised around the time of the Hip Hop birth and explosion. A graduate of an East Coast University, Mr. Bradley has a Bachelor of Science in History and Master of Education in Social Studies degree. Mr. Bradley has been at Chase High School for four years as the JAG specialist.

His current responsibilities in Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) school to work program consists of the following: (1) teaching 37 JAG core competences, (2) helping students graduate from high school, find a career, enter postsecondary education or the military, and (3) monitoring the job placement status of current JAG students and graduates 12 months after graduation. During this study the JAG program has accomplished a 96% graduation rate among the seniors over the last 3 years. Due to having success in the JAG program with the graduation rate, Mr. Bradley has been also assigned by the school administration to run the College and Career Access Center.

Mr. Bradley, the JAG Specialist brings a wealth of knowledge of the Hip Hop culture which provides great insight and wisdom to what impact and influence Hip Hop has on identity, engagement and empowerment of African American and Latino students. The JAG specialist agreed to assist the researcher in working with student participants in only two sessions due to school obligations. Information was provided to the JAG Specialist about the research project including the purpose of the study and a description of the role of staff and students involvement in the study.

The students that volunteered to participate in the study were two African American males, two Latino males, two Latina females and two African American female students. Eight students volunteered for the study; however three participants did not continue in the study for the following reasons: (1) one participant's family moved to another state, and (2) two other participants were transferred to the alternative school due to behavioral issues. The study now consists of the five participants. These students have experienced barriers and challenges in their educational process such as low academic performance, absenteeism, cultural barriers, lack of motivation, and school disengagement.

During the selection process, the researcher met with students as well as the JAG Specialist to explain the study and their roles in the research project. At the meeting the JAG Specialist and students had the opportunity to ask questions and the researcher was able to clarify any of their uncertainties. The rights, needs, values, and desire of the study participants were respected by the researcher (Creswell, 2003).

Confidentiality of participants was maintained at all times during the study. Interview transcripts, observational field notes and the multimedia artifacts remained confidential and kept in a secure locked file cabinet in the dissertation chair's office. Pseudonyms are used to label and identify data. The consent forms for all participants consist of the following: (1) participation in the study is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw at any time or ask questions at any time, (2) the purpose of the study, and (3) confidentiality of participants is respected and signatures are obtained of the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2003).

The research focuses on the influence and affect that Hip Hop has on participants as they are allowed to tell their own stories. The connection between storytelling and Hip Hop (rap) consist of the artist/storytellers' ability to create a story that will allow the listener to convert the story into a visual in the brain. Storytellers and rap artists have the ability to captivate the listeners' attention as they develop an emotionally charged story which has the power to touch hearts and minds altering perceptions. The format of Storytelling and Hip Hop (rap) comprise of introducing the characters, the current situation and mention their beliefs, ambitions, fears and habits which are the most common things people share in telling their stories.

The researcher chose convenience sampling for the following reasons:

(1) It allows for the study results to be generalized to the desired population,

(2) Subjects are those students that are exposed to the Hip Hop culture and are 18 years and older.

(3) Subjects have barriers to successfully completing high school due to low academic performance, excessive absenteeism and student disengagement.

Chase High School consists of grades nine through twelve and has a student population of 57% African American and 43% Latino. Chase High School was the logical choice for the researcher to conduct the study since the participant volunteers met all necessary requirements.

Table 2					
Subject Characteristics					
Student	**Age**	**Ethnicity**	**Living Situation**	**Place of Residence**	**Gender**
Student 1	18	African American	Lives with Father and Sister	Paterson	M
Student 2	18	Latina	Lives Mother, Sisters and Brothers	Paterson	F
Student 3	18	Latina	Mother, Sisters and Brothers	Paterson	F
Student 4	18	African American	Grandmother and Father	Paterson	F
Student 5	18	Latino	Father, Mother and Brother	Paterson	M

Data Collection

Before beginning the students' and staff onsite interviews, the researcher secured permission from the JAG Specialist to conduct the study in his classroom and to have access to the students. In answering the research question in this study of "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment

among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?" the researcher collected data through three primary sources (1) observations, (2) interviews and (3) artifacts.

Observations

Multimedia
Artifact

Interviews
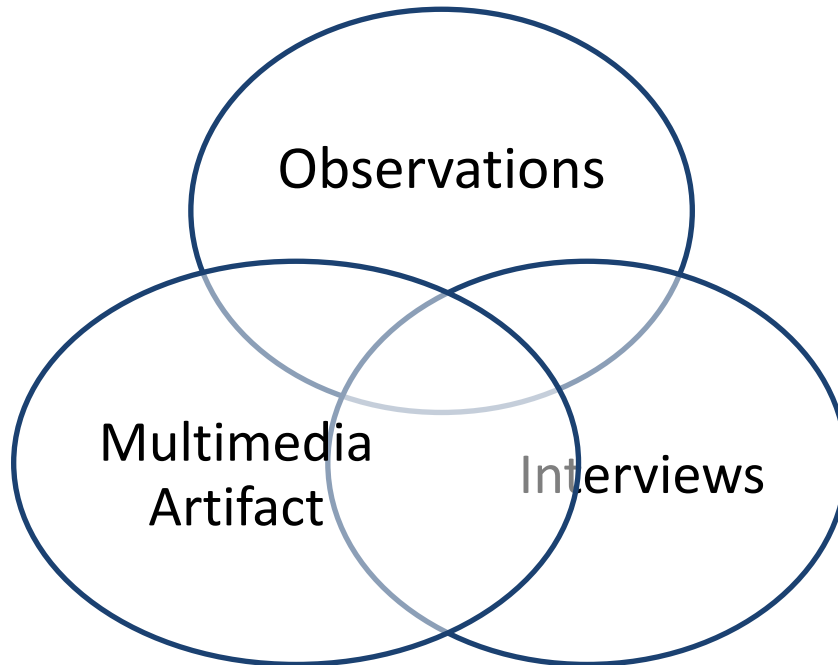
Figure 2: Triangulation diagram

Observations

Students possess little voice in respect to the value and system that govern their education and classes. In K-12 classrooms, students are not given the opportunity to have their voice heard and are objects in the educational process. According to Freire (1993) education is more than a banking concept system where teachers deposit information and knowledge through narration into students who are considered empty vessels. The banking educational process Freire (1993) states is designed to prevent students from becoming critical thinkers, in hopes that would keep them from challenging system barriers and hegemonic structure that exist in education.

The observations took place during four class sessions for fifty-one minutes each day from 12:51pm to 1:42pm over the following selected days: (1) October 7, 2013, (2) October 21, 2013, (3) November 4, 2013, and (4) November 18, 2013.The JAG classroom was the site of the observations which allowed the researcher to observe the JAG students' interactions, engagement, empowerment and their desire to address systemic barriers that impede their educational success as they challenge traditional educational practices and beliefs.

The JAG Specialist plays an essential role in the research study as he is fully emerged in the Hip Hop culture. Different genres of music were played in the classroom which exposes students to all types of music. As music plays a big part in the classroom culture and environment, I observed how the used of music helped calm down the students as they entered the classroom. During the first two observations, the researcher paid close attention to the level of engagement of the students' participation and their display of critical thinking skills when discussing race, racism and employment. Throughout the observations, the researcher discerned the students' obvious understanding of the impact and perception of Hip Hop on their lived cultural experiences and the influence of race and racism in their school, community and state.

In each observation, students were allowed to voice and express their opinions which added very lively discussions which the researcher was able to enter and exit the dialogue without any disruptions. As the result of the students expressing their thoughts, ideas and opinions, the relationship, interaction and trust built with their teacher which existed throughout the entire school. During the last observation session the researcher discern the students' level of comfort and their willingness to participate in sharing their stories by expressing their hope, fears and desires.

The researcher also had the opportunity share the information and importance of the study and why I decided to research the influence and value that using Hip hop in the classroom would enhance the learning and teaching environment. Some of the interview questions were designed through the researcher observations of the students in the JAG program.

Interviews

Open-ended interview questions were designed to capture the participants' lived experiences, perception and understanding of the Hip Hop culture on their lives, community and education. The interview questions were designed for the researcher to get a better understanding of the participants' perception of the influence and impact of the Hip Hop culture on their lives and education. Interviews were audiotaped with permission of the study participants and JAG specialist to ensure that the information would be accurate. Interviews allowed the student participants to use their own voices in telling stories.

During the interviewing sessions, staff and student participants were asked a series of ten questions concerning their perceptions about the Hip Hop culture in education, its influence, value and how it can be utilized in the classroom to tell stories of their lived experiences to become more engaged. Each student participant participated in an individual interview which consisted of a 15-20 minute session. The faculty participants' individual consisted of a 20-30 minutes session. All interview sessions were audio taped in the researcher's office and JAG classroom, which provides a safe and secure environment where participants felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. They had the flexibility to share what they wanted and when they wanted to share their thoughts and opinions. The participants discussed the positive and negative appeal that Hip Hop has in their school and community. The guided interview ensures

that the same questions and information was given to all interviewees. The participants'

interview responses were audiotaped, transcribed and coded.

Artifact

The final project of the study was a video media production which showed the impact of

using storytelling in the urban classroom. The video produced was used to serve the following

purposes: (1) participants voicing their knowledge, opinions and lived experiences, and (2)

collaborative method to build social consciousness and analysis of the problem among the

participants as a storytelling community.

The fifty-one minute facilitated group sessions with the student participants took place

once a week for ten weeks in the JAG classroom. The sessions were fully engaged which created

open and honest discussions as the student participants had the opportunity to explore critically

analyzed life issues and their own individual struggles. During the first session Mr. Bradley

assisted the researcher with introducing the study and giving more information to the research

participants. The participants had the opportunity to explore their own realities, self-concept,

attitudes, behaviors and emotional state of living in serious or crisis situations.

As the sessions continued, the participants were encouraged to articulate their lived

experiences and discussed ways in which they coped with crisis situations. The students at Chase

High School find themselves in many unfortunate circumstances due to living in communities

that are plagued by poverty, violence, drugs and gang activities. Many of the students have

experienced anger, hostility, depression and other post-traumatic symptoms due to their everyday

experiences in their communities. In addressing some of the lived experiences of the student

participants, the researcher wanted to create a space where meaningful dialogue about economic, education, community and segregation could be discussed.

It was suggested by several participants that the group listen to various Rap songs to see the similarities to their lives. The group agreed on the song "Traumatized" by Rap artist Meek Mill. The Rap artist Meek Mill grew up in an urban city that was also plagued with drugs, poverty and violence. In the song, Mill described a life with the endless cycle of violence that exposed him to extreme anger which led to nightmares. Mill shares the following in the song "Traumatized":

> "When I find the one that killed my daddy know I'mma ride
>
> Hope you hear me, I'mma kill you
>
> To let you know I don't feel you
>
> You ripped my family apart and made my momma cry
>
> So when I see you it's gon' be homicide
>
> Cuz I was only a toddler, you left me traumatized"

Meek Mill dealt with his trauma through music. He chose the genre of Rap to tell his story and to express his inner most feelings. Rap music is a setting where it is acceptable for African American and Latino youth to express their feelings of pain, sadness and anger. After the participants worked through their experiences which are common among urban youth as told by the Rap artist, the participants decided to focus on the positive impact Hip Hop plays in the urban classroom.

In addressing the research question of "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?" the participants decided to approach the

question positively focusing on their school environment. Chase High School has struggled academically with high dropout rates and continuously low state standardized test scores which add to high absenteeism. Coupled with low academic performance, teacher and student apathy the school has been labeled a "dropout factory".

For many years Chase High School was the shining star of the city. The school excelled academically, won many sports championships and was the high school that everyone wanted to attend. Today many parents refuse to send their child or children to Chase High School, which has caused an additional decrease in enrollment. Figure 3 represents how the data was collected in this research study.
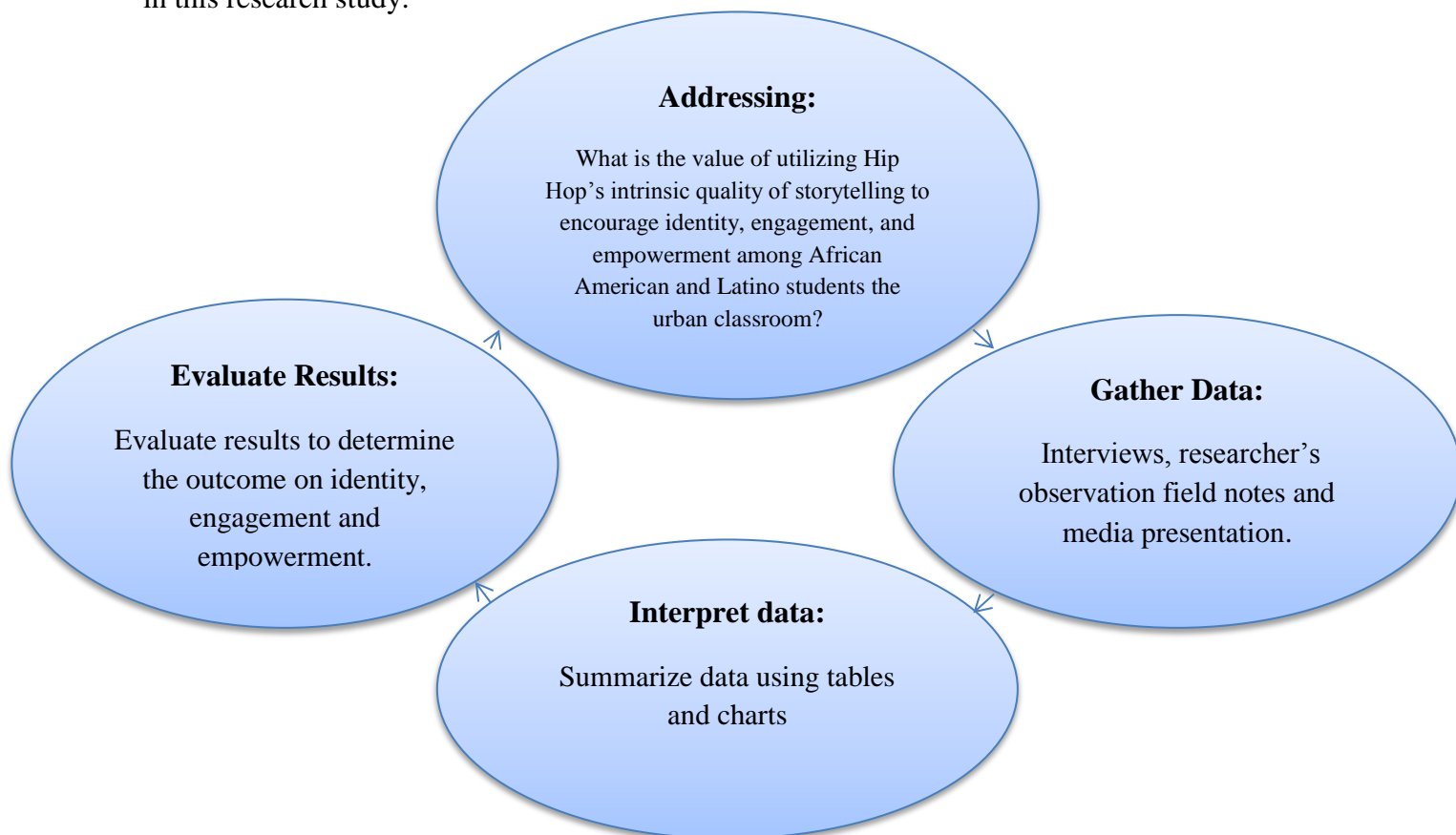
Figure 3: Data collection in addressing research question

Data Analysis

A qualitative method of coding was utilized in this study to analyze the interviews, observational field notes and multimedia artifact used in this study to collect the data. The most common way to organize and analyze qualitative data is coding (Saldana, 2009). According to Saldana (2009), coding allowed the researcher to "notice relevant phenomena; collecting examples of phenomena; and analyzing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures" (p.144). The research question in this study was used to identify and label ways of organizing and coding the collected data. The transcript of each participant's interview was reviewed separately and assigned a code.

The researcher began to develop the following codes: (1) context/setting codes which presented a general description of the research site and the participants, (2) situation codes included the participants' interpretation and description of the setting, (3) activity codes identifies the behavior and activities that occurred during the study, (4) strategy codes described the methods the researcher and participants used to accomplish study goals, and (5) relationship codes indicated the formal and informal relationships and patterns of behaviors between study participants.

The researcher developed the above categories as the patterns emerged and placed the information from the transcripts into the appropriate category. Next, the observation field notes were reviewed and assigned codes. Lastly, the video artifact was examined by the researcher and assigned the appropriate codes. The information collected from the interviews was placed in the categories created. Individual review of interview transcripts, observation field notes, and

multimedia artifact allowed the researcher to look for consistency and triangulation (Fowler, 2004).

Major themes in this study were identified by the research question and data sources.

Table 3	Coding Themes Developed from Research Questions
Research Question	Coding Themes
What is the impact on African American and Latino students participating in Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote identity, engagement and empowerment in an urban classroom?	- Engage - Empower - Voice - Freedom - Motivation

Roles of the Researcher

This study was designed to add to the existing literature on ways of educating, engaging and empowering African American and Latino youth by utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy to support and encourage students to complete high school. As the researcher, I assumed the role of facilitator of the sessions as the student participants define their challenges and barriers clearly and support them in working toward finding effective solutions using the process of Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote identity, engagement, empowerment and success. As a facilitator, the researcher met with the student participants to discuss the value and influence of utilizing Hip Hop in the classroom to share their lived experiences. Students engaged in a

process called "wounded healing" as they began telling their personal stories. Hill (2009) shares wounded healing as:

"not only the therapeutic dimensions of personal and collective storytelling, but also as critical engagement with majoritarian narratives that exposes and produces new possibilities" p. 65.

The researcher facilitated all the sessions in the JAG classroom as it served as a safe haven where students spoke respectfully in their own language and felt comfortable in intimately involving their voices while sharing their stories with each other. Through their personal and collective storytelling sessions, participants expressed their common concerns with the school and discussed positive outcomes. The sessions created a comfortable and social space for students to have the freedom to voice their own opinions. A family-like storytelling community developed as the participants expressed themselves through writing the poem "Where I'm from" and the final project of a media/video and song production expressing their feeling and experiences of being a student at Chase High School.

<div align="center">Role of the JAG Specialist</div>

Mr. Bradley, the JAG Specialist, and the researcher worked together for the last four years and have developed an excellent working relationship over that period of time prior to the study. The JAG specialist co-facilitated two sessions during the study with the student participants and the researcher. In the first session, the participants expressed concerns about having the sessions videotaped. Mr. Bradley and the researcher reassured the participants that if they did not want the sessions to be videotaped they would not be taped. Therefore the sessions were not videotaped at the request of the participants. As the comfort level of the participants

increased, they became very transparent and they began telling their stories. Mr. Bradley began

sharing his own story of being an African American male in a predominantly White private

school. After Mr. Bradley shared his lived experience, the participants began to express their

own lived experiences in school and outside of school in their community.

Mr. Bradley emphasized his views of the perception, affect and influence of Hip Hop

music and the culture that he has observed among African American and Latino students at

Chase High School. As he shared his views on the Hip Hop culture, Mr. Bradley explained the

profound affect that he observes it has on his students in his classroom. Mr. Bradley helped the

researcher lay the foundation for the process called "wounded healing", which facilitated the

participants telling their personal stories.

According to Hill (2009), the wounded healing process is to participate in a storytelling

community in which participants share and expose their wounds and tend to the wounds of

others. Story circles were developed and emerged as a part of the wounded healing process. In

the wounded healing process, participants began to negotiate their various personal struggles

with their barriers to successfully completing school in a reflective, collective and productive

way. With the help of Mr. Bradley, the participants openly expressed themselves and freely

began telling their stories that challenged assumptions and various forms of pain, suffering and

injustice that plagued them and their community.

Validity and Reliability

According to Guion, Diehl, & Mc Donald (2002).validity in qualitative research is

referred to as whether the study findings are accurately true in reflecting the situation and

reliable in the sense of the research findings supporting the evidence. Qualitative researchers use

the method of triangulation to check and establish validity in their studies (Guion, Diehl, & Mc

Donald, 2002). In analyzing the different sources of information in this study, the researcher

utilized data triangulation to establish the validity of the study. Triangulation is used in this study

to deepen the understanding of the concerns and maximize the confidence in the findings of the

study. The three sources of data allowed the researcher to cross reference the finding to ensure

validity and to avoid any analytical mistakes (Patton, 2003). In order to guarantee the integrity of

the results of the finding from the interviews, researcher field notes and media presentation of the

three forms of data were compared and checked against each other. The researcher attempted to

prevent errors and biases by using three data sources. Reliability in qualitative research

examines the stability or consistency of the responses. To enhance reliability in this study

materials which included observational field notes, transcripts of the interviews, artifacts such as

(cultural autobiographies, poetic work of participants) and video have all been combined to form

a record of the research.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This chapter provided an introduction and overview of the context and setting of the

study. The researcher gave a brief review of the theoretical framework, Critical Race Theory,

Latin Race Theory (LatCrit), Critical Race Methodology were highlighted. The framework

within Critical Race methodology was represented by the following five tenets in this research:

(1) the intercentricity of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the

commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization

of interdisciplinary approaches.

The criteria of selecting the participants for the study, which included students who were

18years old, enrolled in the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program, who had a history of

barriers to success, which hindered academic achievement was highlighted. The methods of data collection, data analysis, role of the researcher, and role of the JAG Specialist were also discussed. The issues of validity and reliability were addressed in this chapter. Chapter four will present the data in relation to the finding, results of the findings and themes that emerged in this research study.

Chapter four also communicates the "so what?" of the study in regard to what was discovered concerning utilizing Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy in the urban classroom to encourage student identity, engagement and empowerment. Chapter five will discuss the finding, conclusion based on the data, implications for future research and practice, and recommendations for educators, administration and policy makers regarding employing Hip Hop to encourage urban learners to become more engaged and empowered in the urban classroom.

Chapter Four

Finding, Results and Themes

The question guiding this qualitative research study was "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?" According to Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011), culturally relevant pedagogy in our nation's classrooms is essential for schools to acknowledge the culture of students as it integrates the cultural experiences, values and knowledge into the teaching and learning environment. In the urban school setting, Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy allows teachers to develop a connection between the student's home, culture and school. Brown-Jeffy & Cooper (2011) describes the five principles of culturally relevant pedagogy in Figure 4.
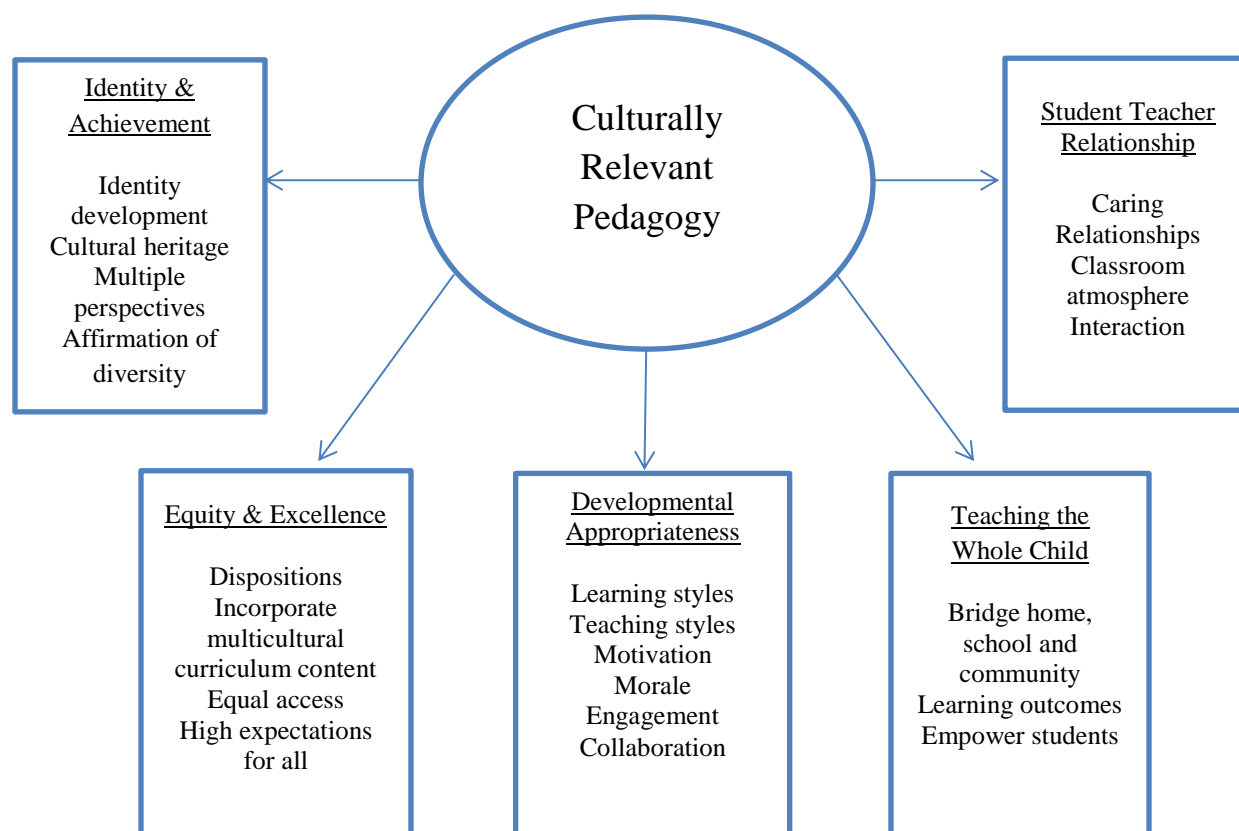
Figure 4: Five principles of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy.

Culturally relevant pedagogy includes the students' knowledge of their identity, how they

perceive themselves, how the world receives them and create a viable transition between school

and home (Boutte & Hill, 2006).

Critical Race Theory was the theoretical lens used in this study. According to Yosso

(2005) the five tenets of CRT which inform educational theory, pedagogy, curriculum, policy

and research consist of the following: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism; (2) the challenge

to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential

knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. Hip Hop as a culturally

relevant pedagogy has the power to transform the education of African American and Latino

students (Hill, 2009).

Findings

 The research sought to answer the following research question:

What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity,

engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban

classroom?

Through the researcher's observations and participant interviews it was clear that Mr.

Bradley's class was designed to address critical thinking, public speaking, writing and study

skills, teamwork and leadership. Through the theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory

participants became constructors of their own knowledge. One of the key components of Critical

Race Theory is storytelling or counter-storytelling which has been an essential feature in

educational research (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). According to Delgado (1998), storytelling

or counter-storytelling is a method that allows people or groups to reject institutional stories in favor of their own versions which counter the stories of the oppressor.

Storytelling is an ancient art form that sparks new insight, knowledge and emotions. In the essence of sharing stories, storytellers also share and interpret experiences. In this study participants had the opportunity to discover themselves through storytelling and oral traditions just as their ancestors had. People are products of their lived experiences and this information is often communicated to and from through orally sharing information. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), storytelling is an essential feature in educational research and is the method that allows people or groups to reject institutional stories in favor of their own versions which counter the stories of the oppressor. Storytelling promotes increased listening, reading and comprehension skills in the field of education and provides a sense of history and community as a unique resource.

Stories that are communicated through storytelling are filled with emotion that generates an affective cognitive response in the listener. This type of learning through storytelling positively affects one's knowledge as well as their attitude toward that knowledge and the learning process. Storytelling is a natural and enjoyable way for humans to teach and learn. Boutte & Hill (2006) cite Boykin (1983) as he identified the following nine dimensions of African American culture which positively affect student achievement: (1) spirituality- a belief in a power greater than themselves, (2) harmony- integrating the parts of life into a harmonious whole, (3) movement- the interweaving of rhythm, movement, music and dance, (4) verve-propensity for high levels of stimulation which is lively and energetic, (5) affect-emphasis on emotions and feelings with a sensitivity to emotional cues, (6) communalism-social orientation and connectedness, (7) expressive individualism-a personal expression that can be manifested by

a walk or a jazz musician's rendition, (8) oral tradition-information learned and transmitted in a

metaphorically colorful speech, (i.e. of metaphorically colorful speech/rap)

Almost every subject I love at the high Math, English every day of my life

Stay focus and go through the motion

Close to the end celebrate the promotion,

JROTC another big part of the high family,

Auto tech another part of the tree,

Practice every day to be the best you can be,

CHS ain't no place for stress

Make sure you come prepare,

Make sure you get your rest,

2014 yeah we up next,

We all gonna success because we learn from the best.

(9) social time perspective-time is viewed as an event rather than the clock. The nine dimensions

of African American culture which positively affect student achievement are directly connected

to educators building on the strengths to empower students through the implication of culturally

relevant pedagogy.

Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling was used in this study to shed light on the

participants as they create their own stories based on the perceptions, influence and positive

affect of Hip Hop in the context of their school environment. In the Hip Hop culture, rap is an example of the use of storytelling and is the best known feature of the culture as it remained steadfast to its origins of social protest. Early Hip Hop artists used storytelling to share their own story of personal resilience and oppression, which usually mirror the overall theme of perseverance that dominates the African American and Latino experience in this country (Dagbovie, 2005). The status quo was challenged in this study through storytelling which allowed the participants to construct their own reality.

As the participants begin creating their stories, it is the researcher's hope that they begin to see the storytelling process as an artistic endeavor that weaves together the written, oral and visual of their stories. The researcher investigated the effect on African American and Latino students as they presented their Hip Hop- based story, which gave them the opportunity to create a forum where their voices were heard by collaborating together to produce a multimedia presentation about their school. With rap's great popularity and influence on students, the question of "How?" educators can utilize rap in the form of storytelling to engage and empower African American and Latino students in the urban classroom was addressed.

According to Daisy & Jose-Kampfner (2002), due to the positive affect and influence that Hip Hop has on young people, using Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling allows students to change and challenge social contracts. Hip Hop has a strong influence in the lives of youth, which can be used to enhance the learning process, student achievement, and school attendance (Hill, 2009). The use of Hip Hop in the classroom will allow teachers to tap into students' lives in ways to promote literacy and social consciousness (Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2002).

Presented in Figure 5 are the advantages of using Hip Hop as a Culturally Pedagogy.

Lack of self esteem / Racial Identity / No sense of belonging / Lack of culturally rlelevant approach in schools

- Lack of self esteem
- Racial Identity
- No sense of belonging
- Lack of culturally rlelevant approach in schools

Framing Social/ Emotional Issues

School Critical Features

- Positive nurturing community philosophy
- Social/Emotional programming (i.e. Pride, live performing arts presentations and a sense of belonging)

Change in Student Expectation and Behavior

Improved Student Outcomes

- Relate and respond to cultural relevant approaches in education
- Higher level of sucess

- Positive academic, social, emotional and behavioral outcomes

Figure 5: Hip Hop as a Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

According to Petchauer (2009), Hip Hop has become relevant in the field of education and research in the following three ways:

(1) An increasing number of teachers are using culturally relevant teaching and critical pedagogy in the urban high school curricula that teaches academic skills and empower students while educating them about aspects of their lives.

(2) Hip Hop as a creative practice constructs messages through the music, which is woven into the process of identity formation by which young people see themselves and the world around them.

(3) Institutions of higher learning around the world, particularly in North America, are engaging Hip Hop in research, in a rigorous manner through academic courses and conferences.

Hip Hop has a strong influence in the lives of young people which can be used to enhance the learning process and academic achievement. The use of Hip Hop in the classroom at Chase High School allowed the researcher to tap into students' lives and storytelling allowed the participants to express how they understood the influence and affect of the Hip Hop culture in their lives. Storytelling provided a forum for participants at Chase High School to voice their knowledge, opinions and lived experiences. All the participants explained that they were fully engaged in the class because the subject discussed was socially and culturally relevant.

During observations the students participated and were actively engaged and felt empowered in the discussions about Hip Hop issues and themes. The course objective in Mr. Bradley's class consisted of students gaining the tools necessary to address academic skills, self-efficacy and leadership skills through dialogue and critical writing. Students that participated were motivated and actively engaged in the sessions because the subject matter was culturally and socially relevant. The style of teaching that Mr. Bradley incorporates in the classroom draws his students into actual discussion due to his animated delivery and storytelling skills. Mr. Bradley uses an engaged pedagogy approach as he shares personal stories about his life to activate his student's imagination and creativity.

According to Brown (2006) the type of students and faculty interaction of incorporating students' personal lives into the classroom and creating learning environments is referred to as engaged pedagogy. Therefore, utilizing the popular culture of Hip Hop, the teacher

acknowledges the connection between school and everyday life increases student identity, engagement and empowerment.

Identified as a casual Hip Hop fan, Mr. Omari Bradley, the JAG Specialist is an African American and listens to what would be characterized as Hip Hop. His knowledge of Hip Hop allows him to connect with his students as it becomes a window into the world of his students. Although eight students volunteered to participate in the study only five continued in the study. There were two African American students which were comprised of one male and one female, three Latino students, one Latino male and two females that participated in the study. All of the students that the researcher interviewed were part of the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program as described in an earlier chapter of this study.

The five students who continued participating in the study have experienced the following barriers to success, low academic performance, high absenteeism, lack of motivation, and school disengagement.

Table 4   Demographic Information Concerning Research Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Age
Andre	M	African American	18
Regina	F	Latina	18
Renata	F	Latina	18
Abby	F	African American	18
Pedro	M	Latino	18

The interview questions related to the participants' perception of the influence and affect that the Hip Hop culture has on their lives and education. The study participant' names (pseudonyms) include Andre, Pedro, Renata, Abby, and Regina. Student interviews were scheduled during JAG class times and took place in the guidance office and JAG classroom. All the students were eager and happy to participate in the study. The interviews began with the focus on the research question:

> What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?

To answer the research question of "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?" the focus of the researcher was to empower the next generation of leaders and visionary activist through written, oral and visual storytelling. The researcher also challenged the student participants to find, develop, publicly present and apply their voices to create social change in their school and community. The researcher is pursuing to shift the perception of the participants by combating the lack of identity, disengagement and disempowerment to develop the power of their voice.

Results

Mr. Bradley the JAG Specialist defines Hip Hop as the following:

> Hip Hop is a way of life. It usually gets categorized as music but it's the way someone conducts themselves, what they are interested in and things they do. It's the way people express themselves with freedom of expression. For better or worse the influence of Hip

Hop that I see in my students are the way they dress, songs they know, dances they do and the way they conduct themselves. As their teacher unfortunately, I see young people being led down negative path in terms of what is seen in Hip Hop videos. Those videos show violence, life is a party and hedonistic activities but obviously that's not all what Hip Hop is. This genre of music is popular with young people and it promotes largely negative images that influence behaviors which make students think it's acceptable. The things my students say and do are clearly some derivatives from the images that are associated with Hip Hop music and largely right now are negative. As negative as I believe that Hip Hop is, there is something that can be incorporated in the classroom.

Mr. Bradley noted that he believes that Hip Hop can be meaningful and transformative when incorporated in the classroom and the researcher agrees that an in-depth understanding of the students' cultural background could positively affect student achievement.

When discussing the connection between Hip Hop and the classroom, Mr. Bradley asserted,

Connecting Hip Hop in the classroom tend to get the students' attention and give me the opportunity to talk about images they see as being fact or fiction. I do believe that Hip Hop makes a point of connection that makes teaching a whole lot easier. When asked if Hip Hop in the classroom empower his students, Mr. Bradley replied, I believe it could if the message is a positive message. I also believe that progress in academics as the result of listening to positive rap is not necessarily true. Using Hip Hop in the classroom, not just the music genre but as contributing in literature, if done correctly can promote positive energy from the students. Moreover, I do believe Hip Hop could be included academically and will be beneficial when it is substantial and comprehensive.

As stated earlier in the dimension of African American culture, oral tradition and literature are the preference for oral modes of communication where speaking and listening are treated as performances with graphic forms of spoken word. Mr. Bradley utilizes the fund of knowledge of his students' culture and community as he enhances their learning experience.

When motivating your students to stay in school, what is the impact of utilizing Hip Hop in your classroom? Mr. Bradley stated:

> As far as Hip Hop motivating students to stay in school, Mr. Bradley commented that there are many reasons that would lead a student to not learn or to walk away from school. Some students feel like they need to leave school because they don't feel connected to the school culture. However, the use of Hip Hop inside of school can bridges gaps and with the bridging of those gaps, students are less inclined to walk away. Giving students the opportunity to express themselves is very important. Students having the opportunity to express themselves and having a voice is missing in this age of education due to education reform, teaching to the test, and making sure student master lessons. It's important that students are allowed to speak and have their opinions heard. Storytelling activity will allow students to have their voices heard.

Mr. Bradley gives his students the opportunity to discuss their counter-stories of the negative images of African American and Latino in addition to the stereotypes as portrayed in society, media, and in the curriculum.

When asked if Hip Hop is included in his classes, Mr. Bradley shared that as much as he hates Hip Hop music, he does include it in his class; he listens to it and his daughter listens to it. Mr. Bradley states, "I used it to bridge the streets to the world of academic". "Hip Hop can be useful inside the classroom if the atmosphere in the school environment allows it to thrive

consistently and not just an isolated unit doing Black History month". Mr. Bradley states that the Hip Hop culture and school culture are completely opposites; however there are some commonalities such as having students to exhibit free thinking creative expression. Students are creative beings and they find ways inside the school structure to express their individuality.

Mr. Bradley states that there is a direct connection to creative expression and movement in the African American and Latino culture. According to Boutte & Hill (2006), integrating the cultural strengths of students should be part of the nucleus of curriculum and instruction to bridge school and students cultures.

Student 1: Andre

A senior at Chase High School, Andre is an 18 year old African American young man. He was born in Miami, Florida and has 2 brothers and 4 sisters. The first ten years of Andre's life his family moved up and down the east coast, which did not affect him because he loved to see new places. He now lives in the poorest and most dangerous city in the nation with his father and sister who is a student at the local Community College. After being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) while in North Carolina, Andre's mother placed him in therapy. he was put on medication, and into the Big Brother program.

Shortly after moving to New Jersey, Andre's mother moved out of the home and returned to North Carolina to wait for his brother to get out of a half-way house. Andre has very little contact with his mother. He considers himself the golden child in his family because he does things differently than his other siblings. Andre shared the relationship with his grandparents as awesome and strained. He stated that his relationship with his grandmothers was special and awesome but the relationship was nonexistent with his grandfathers. He has no connection with

either of his grandfathers. Andre stated that his life in high school has shaped him into the individual he is today as well as building his self-confidence. Andre entered into the JAG program last year and has developed into one of the program's strongest leaders.

In the following poem "Where I'm from", Andre has given a voice to express his life and who he is and what shaped his life. (Lyon, 1999).

I am from wooden chairs that rocks back and forth,

From Coco puffs eaten and G-Shock watches worn on the wrist

I am from cold marble floors hard and stable

It sounds of crackle

I am from the sun bake palm trees,

Tall trees

That develops coconuts

I am from the Afro-Americanized and kind caring people

From Juan and Cassandra

And Desiree

I'm from the up raising to be independent and having a respectful attitude

From being mature and being told you can do it

From you can do anything when you put your mind to it

I'm from annual teachings of Christian religion,

Soon to be cleansed of the wrongs I did

I'm from Florida and the Bahamas

Lobster and crab

From the father who taught himself how to be a man

My brother who was sent off to prison

Family pictures taken in the sunny days of summer

I am from strong willed personality and uplifting walks through my neighborhoods

Andre discusses his perception of the Hip Hop culture. He stated:

> Hip Hop empowers and makes dreams come true. It's a revolution of innovative beats
>
> that inspires people when they are going through tough time. Hip Hop is very
>
> inspirational and sometime over the top. Hip Hop could be positive for people from all
>
> culture.

The influence of the Hip Hop culture is very evident in the lives of young people. Andre asserted,

> The evidence of the influence of Hip Hop that I have experienced personally is one of my
>
> classmates; he's currently a senior. He did a little Hip Hop piece in our last school play
>
> that I thought was very inspirational. I see Hip Hop as a mover that pushes people to do
>
> things that they normally would not do.

Andre shares how he feels Hip Hop in the classroom would empower students in the classroom. Andre stated,

> Hip Hop in the classroom helps me to focus when working on getting my work done and
>
> stimulates my mind. Public speaking is one area that I think Hip Hop can play an
>
> important role.

When asked what impact does Hip Hop have in the classroom and could it motivate student to stay in school, Andre shared,

> I definitely think that Hip Hop would bring about a positive change inside and outside of
>
> the classroom. I also think that it could keep you on track.

Student 2: Regina

Regina is an 18 year-old Latina female in the Eleventh grade. She was born in Paterson, New Jersey and is the second oldest in a family of seven children. Regina was raised by her aunt with 17 children in the house where it was a great living place. When she turned 11 years old she went to live with her mother for 7 years. Regina was over joyed to be reunited with her sisters and brothers. Living with her mother was wonderful for her and she describes her as her role model and a wonderful mother. Regina has been doing very well since she moved back with her mother and she loves being with her sister and brothers.

Her mother has been a driving force behind Regina staying in school and has always encouraged her to follow her dream. She is a very quiet young lady with great insight. Regina's home life with her mother is very challenging. She states that her mother struggles in taking care of the family by herself while going to college. Education is very important to Regina and she feels that every child is entitled to a quality education. Regina loves to read, sew and listen to music. She states that her favorite past time is hanging out with her friends and family. Her future endeavors are to graduate high school and attend Rowan University.

She wants to pursue a degree in the medical and fashion fields. It is her dream to become a world known nurse and fashion designer. It is also her desire to get scholarships to finance her college education to help her mother.

Regina voiced her identity through the poem: "Where I'm from" (Lyon, 1999).

I am from rice and beans

From Sazon and Sofrito

I am from crazy and funny

Loving, Caring

It loud and nosey

I am from the daisy

The beautiful innocence

Standing small

I'm from the family dinners and long black locks

From Jeanette and Leonard

 and Dawn

I'm from I tried to come and maybe next week

From pretty and smart

I'm from Jesus Christ

I'm from Puerto Rico and South Carolina

Plantains and Roast Pork

From the baby my mother lost at birth

The house my Aunt opened up to me

In a box

I am from a family of seven with love and respect

Regina discusses her life growing up in the inner city and understanding the Hip Hop culture and its influence. She asserted,

> Hip Hop is more than music; it's our styles fashion and culture. The influence of Hip
>
> Hop, Regina explains has promoted negative behavior among her peers. I see Hip Hop
>
> from a positive perspective which has influenced me in my life. Hip Hop in the classroom
>
> can also give students a positive perspective of themselves. Hip Hop can play apositive
>
> role in young persons' lives, it can also have a negative impact on them as well.

The impact of positive rap can be used in bridging the gap that exists between the culture of the students and the culture that exists in school. Regina states,

> The impact of Hip Hop could influence students to stay in school and that listening to the positive rap music during class can enhance their concentration. As far as the Hip Hop culture serving as a bridge between students and teachers or the streets and the academic world, I think that a good relationship can develop between teachers and students when the teacher begins to understand the world in which the student lives.

Student 3: Renata

Renata, an 18 year-old Latina female, was born during a very bad blizzard in January of 1996 in Paterson. She lives with her mother and 6 siblings, which consists of 3 brothers and 2 sisters. Renata stated that her family was happy until she reached the age of 5 years-old. At that time her father left the family and her parents divorced. During that time her family really struggled and life was extremely hard. Her mother tried very hard to make things work. She met a young man and fell in love with him. After realizing how he was comfortable being around her 6 children, Renata's mother and the young man ended up dating and later married.

Renata's step-father helped her and the family the best he could. He was very involved in her life for 11 years. Sadly, on August 16, 2012, Renata's step father passed away. During their time together Renata stated how much she loved and appreciated him for being such a positive influence in her life. Renata said, "He always motivated me to go to school even though he never attended school himself". "Because of him, I worked hard in school and became an honor student in elementary school", Renata said. During her time in elementary school, Renata states that she has won numerous awards in school.

As she transitioned into high school, Renata shares that academically she began falling behind in her classes and considered dropping out of school. As she reflected on her talks with her step father, she realizes that she had to begin to take school seriously. Renata was interviewed to gain entrance into the JAG program. Along with barely passing her classes, her home life produced various environmental barriers leading to dropping out of school. During high school she became involved in the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) and the Junior Reserved Officer Training Corp (JROTC) programs. Renata explained how JAG and JROTC programs taught her how to become a better citizen and leader.

The JROTC instructors are great teachers who take the time to interact with her during and after class. The instructors are working on getting her into West Virginia University her dream college. In June 2014, Renata states that she is excited to be leaving high school and entering college in August 2014. Renata is extremely appreciative of her parents, JROTC instructor, JAG Specialist and JAG Counselor. She stated, thanks to the JAG and JROTC programs for helping her to stay in school so sher could achieve her dream.

Renata is telling her story and it is communicated through the poem: "Where I'm From" (Lyon, 1999).

I am from cooking pots

From Goya and Topical

I am from the hotness in the kitchen

Hot steam, boiled water

It smelled delicious

I am from the sun flower the lovely flower

Standing nice and tall

I'm from the holiday celebration and long lashes

From Wanda and Albert and Adela

I'm from the love and intelligence

From adorable and sweet

I'm from Lordes

Catholic

I'm from N.J. and Puerto Rico

Rice and Beans

From the day my Mom's water broke, while she walked half way to the hospital

The day my uncle first held me in his hands

In a photobook in the closet

I am from a family of seven with love from my home.

Renata explains her definition of the Hip Hop culture and how she perceives the influence, she stated,

> Hip Hop is a way of telling a story, the music and beats together form a rap of their story. I see Hip Hop's influence as a forward movement of the struggles in the lives of the Hip Hop artist. In my life Hip Hop plays a positive role. The song "I Believe In Him" by Thorndale inspires me because I strive to be the best that I can be. I am striving to graduate from high school and achieve all of my dreams. Hip Hop in the classroom has a great influence on students in different ways. The basic beats and rhymes help students to connect poems in Language Arts classes and concentrate more.

 Hip Hop can be seen as a great motivational tool that can be used in the classroom. What is your opinion of that statement? Renata shares,

The Hip Hop culture has a strong influence on my peers, but as for myself I motivate myself to come to school and do my work. The music motivates and energizes students in the classroom. Many teachers play music in their classrooms which help students in getting their work done.

Renata asserted that storytelling will offer students the opportunity to tell their story and connect the streets to the world of academics. She states,

Storytelling helps people to share their struggles with others. I am the type of person who does not feel comfortable in sharing how I feel. I would enjoy using storytelling in the classroom to have my voice heard in and outside of the classroom. Hip Hop is a great way to connect students and teachers in education.

Student 4: Abby

Abby describes herself as an intelligent African American young lady. She was born in Jersey City, New Jersey in 1995 and is the oldest of three children. Abby comes from a road that was not really traveled much in her family. At a very young age Abby was exposed to homelessness and hunger not knowing where her next meal was coming from. Abby was bounced from home to home and school to school.

During the summer before her 9th grade year in high school, Abby moved into a stable home environment for the first time in her life. Being raised by a single parent, Abby has experienced the reality of what happens when you do not have a high school diploma and that having a minimum wage job is not enough. Now she lives in a stable home and does not worry about moving and when she wakes in the morning she is appreciative and feels very secure. Having these experiences has inspired her to go as far in life as she can. Abby works extremely

hard in school and is always successful. She shared her thoughts of dropping out of school but

instead she has turned her struggles into triumphs. Abby was interviewed and was accepted into

the JAG program in September

Abby enjoy being around her family, friends and boyfriend. She lives with her

grandmother and father. Although Abby has been educated in nine different schools, her

educational goal is to major in Criminal Justice and later become a Lawyer.

Abby expressed her story through: "Where I'm from" (Lyon, 1999).

I am from dirty laundry

From purple polo's and khaki pants

I am from the rude and lazy home

Do this do that

It sounding screeching

I am from bamboo plant

The bamboo

Growing and still growing

I'm from coffee drinking and heart shaped birthmarks

From Joyce, Tiarra and Jaisa

I'm from the lazy and judgmental

From beautiful and very intelligent

I'm from Jesus Christ

Baptist

I'm from Stratford, N.J. and North Carolina

Sweet potato pie and collard greens

From the day I was born and able to come home and my Dad brought me home to my
grandma

The first time I began to walk with my great-grandmother

In a photo album in an attic

I am from a road that wasn't traveled much in my family

While Abby enjoys all music, she finds Hip Hop one of the genres of music she really enjoys. She discussed her interpretation of the Hip Hop culture. She shared,

Hip Hop is storytelling, music, actions and things we do. The influence of Hip Hop that I see among my peers is both negative and positive in the way we dress, live their life, and the language used.

When asked would Hip Hop in the classroom be an effective to motivate students, Abby replied,

Using Hip Hop in the classroom would help empower students by helping them to take ownership of their education. When students have the opportunity to write their own stories they are less likely to be judged and criticized. Hip Hop can help motivate students to stay in school.

Abby voiced her shares her opinion of using storytelling and could it allow students to tell their story and have their voices heard,

In my opinion storytelling allows students to share what they have been exposed to like stuff that happens at home instead of keeping it bottled up inside. Having a Hip Hop based lesson in our English class would bring something different that is new and fun that would engage us while keeping our attention. I think that the Hip Hop culture would bridge students and teachers together in the classroom as it will give them some insight to who we are as people.

Student 5: Pedro

Pedro is an 18 year old in the twelfth grade. He was born and raised in the Dominican Republic with his mother, father and brother. He grew up in a loving but strict family. From his early experience in school, Pedro struggled academically. Although school is hard for him he was never retained. His mother also helped him with his school and homework. Every summer she would prepare him and his brother for the next school year by placing him in summer programs geared towards education. Pedro, his mother and brother, moved from the Dominican Republic to the United States and settled in Florida. Pedro's' father remained in the Dominican Republic and life became very difficult for him and his family. He states that having to deal with a new life style, new school, new language and his father not with the family was extremely hard.

While in Florida his challenges in education continued to grow. School was very unpleasant for him due to having to learn English in a school that did not have Spanish teachers, experienced racism and was bullied by students. School administration contacted his mother requesting that Pedro be evaluated for special services because of his learning difficulties. Pedro, his mother and brother, moved to New York where his father joined them. He enjoyed New York because it afforded him and his family more opportunities. The family moved into a Latino community where he felt more secure and his knowledge began to increase. He had great teachers and met two special people; one was a young man who became his best friend and a young lady who became his first girlfriend.

After several months in New York, the family decided to move to Paterson, N.J. School became more challenging for Pedro who began to hate school and was considering dropping out

of high school. Pedro was interviewed to be accepted into the Jobs for America's Graduates program last year and this year is his second year as a JAG student. Pedro has emerged as a leader and is very determined to get his high school diploma.

Pedro articulated his life story through the poem: "Where I'm From" (Lyon, 1999).

I am from the kitchen

From Adobo and Tropical

I am from a loud home

Music and dancing

It sounds beautiful

I am from green bananas

the guandules guisades

tasteful

I'm from the family dinners and long curly hair

From Wilber and Esmeralda

and Antonio

I'm from the intelligence

And observant

From always behavior yourself

And respect your elders

I'm from a Christian family

I believe

I'm from the Dominican Republic

Mangos and Rice and Beans

From the father who saved me when I almost drowned

a grandmother who changed my diapers

In a photo album in my mothers' bedroom

I am from a loving and intelligent family

Pedro describes the Hip Hop culture that he has experienced as,

> The Hip Hop culture is a new generation as it reflect the way we speak, our
> clothes, and the way we talk. It's more than music and it's basically the way we live. The
> influence of Hip Hop on students can be positive and negative. Hip Hop plays both a
> positive and negative role. The positives of Hip Hop are the rap songs that reflect how
> they worked hard and got rich. The negatives are always talking about money and other
> material processions. The Hip Hop culture influences the way we act, dress and relate to
> one another.

Pedro asserts that he believes that Hip Hop can have an impact in the classroom in the following
ways,

> Hip Hop empowers and encourages me to do my best and go to class every day. Hip Hop
> would decrease the rate of students dropping out of school because of the interesting
> topics discussed in class and students may become more passionate about their education.

Pedro shares how he feels about storytelling and how it can be utilized to open the eyes of people
as it bridges the gap between students and teachers,

> Storytelling is a good way of having my voice and opinions heard in and out of the
> classroom. Understanding the Hip Hop culture allows students to become the teacher at
> times. It can help in connecting to teacher and students in developing a relationship.

Themes

Themes and categories emerged during the study through the conceptual framework of

Critical Race Theory (CRT) in education. The role of freedom, voice and empowerment were

the three themes that emerged from the data and were analyzed. The connection of Critical Race

Theory, freedom, voice and empowerment in the classroom confronted the systemic barriers that

impede the success of African American and Latino students and challenges traditional

educational practices and beliefs. The themes that emerged from the data are presented in Figure
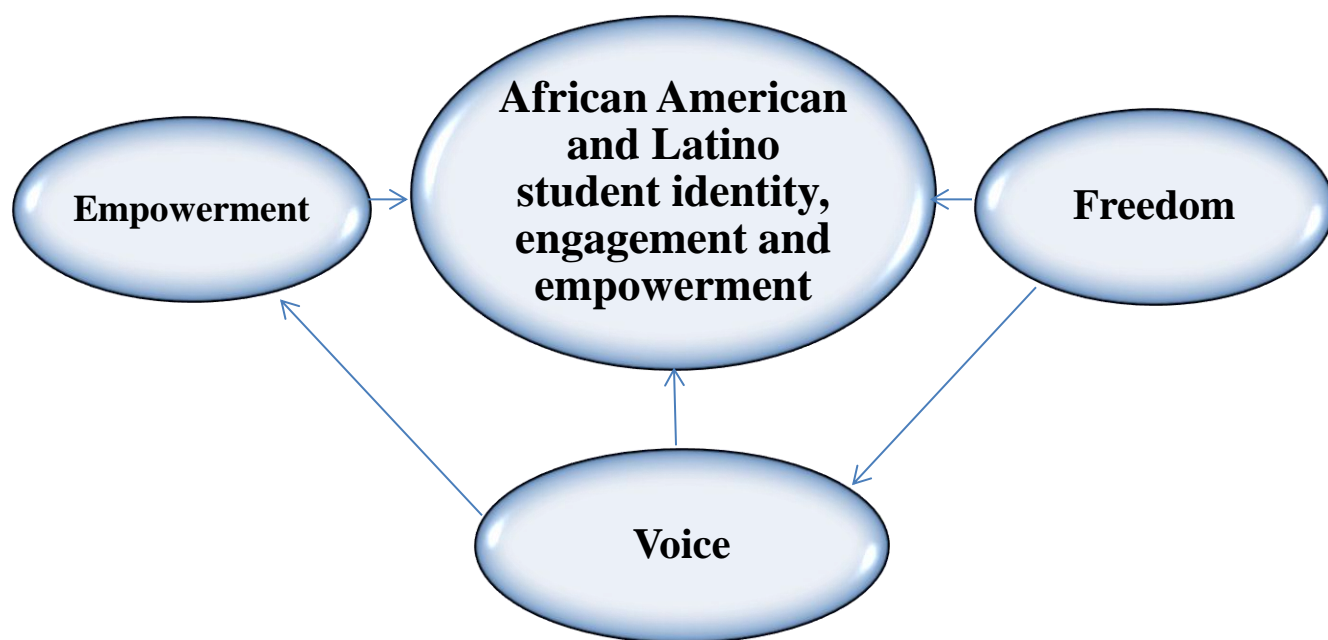
6.

Figure 6: Themes

Through the staff and student participant interviews, class observations and course

documents, it is clear that Mr. Bradley's class was designed to create a culture and climate that is

conducive to learning and a place where students were able to share their own personal

experiences and were able to express themselves through telling their stories. This study was

designed to give an understanding of the cultural norms and reflection of the African American and Latino experience. The objective of utilizing storytelling was for students to voice their concerns in school and community. Discussions of the participants' cultures assisted them in exploring their self-knowledge, personal history which includes the development of their identity, culture, beliefs, faith and perspectives on education. Critical thinking and writing skills were essential elements that were stressed as participants began creating the storytelling projects. Based on participant interviews, observations, course documents and artifact, Mr. Bradley's class adheres to one of the tenets of Critical Race Theory which focuses on the pedagogical approaches of interdisciplinary learning.

During the classroom observations, discussions on storytelling were focused on as an oral tradition that teaches belief, knowledge, wisdom and values. Student participants brought their lived experience into the classroom and created a space that would critically examine the challenges in their lives and the greater social structure that would influence them. In addition, students discussed the role that the Hip Hop culture has in school, their lives and communities. In the interviews, all participants discussed issues related to their perception of the Hip Hop culture, the influence and affect that Hip Hop has on their identity, engagement, and empowerment.

The issues discussed in Mr. Bradley's class were pertaining to the elements of Hip Hop and how it was the early expression of people of color in reclaiming their history and the challenges they faced, the power of despair, and economic oppression that plagues their communities. Mr. Bradley stated that he wanted the students to understand the difference between Hip Hop in the 1970's and the influence of today. Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy would accomplish Mr. Bradley's goal of teaching the beginning of Hip Hop and its influence.

Freedom

Students need to experience the freedom in the classroom to enjoy learning and teachers should also experience that same freedom to enjoy teaching. The connection of Critical Race Theory and freedom in the classroom confront the systemic barriers that impede the success of minority students and challenges traditional educational practices and beliefs. Having culturally relevant pedagogy such as Hip Hop in the classroom will create an environment that would give students the freedom to express their hopes, dreams and desires.

Hip Hop's educational appeal stems from the idea that music and culture had intrinsic value in education (Rodriguez, 2009). In recent years, Hip Hop expressions have been expanded to include the creative activities of spoken word poetry, theater, clothing styles, language, and forms of activism (Chang, 2006). One of the most serious problems in school is the freedom of students to enjoy learning and growing academically. The Hip Hop culture is defined as giving students the freedom to express themselves creativity. The aspect of freedom in the classroom relates to the tenet of CRT that recognizes the centrality of experiential knowledge of African American and Latino students as being legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding as it relates to racial subordination.

Study participants expressed their definition of the Hip Hop culture as:

"The Hip Hop culture is the expression of love, togetherness, passion, and strength through the arts whether it's rapping, singing or dancing".

"Hip Hop culture is a new generation that reflects the way we speak, the clothes we wear, and the slang words we use".

"Hip Hop empowers, makes dreams come true, is inspirational and change cultures".

"The Hip Hop culture is much more than just music. It's our fashion, style and culture.

Voice

In many classrooms throughout our country, student voices are very often not heard. Students are not given the opportunity to have their voices heard and are objects in the educational process. In some classrooms teachers monopolize the conversation and knowledge come solely from the teacher. Freire (1993) maintains that education is more than a banking concept system where teachers deposit information and knowledge through narration into students who are considered empty vessels.

The banking educational process is designed to prevent students from becoming critical thinkers, in hopes that would keep them from challenging system barriers and hegemonic structures that exist in education (Freire 1993).One major component of Critical Race theory is storytelling or counter-storytelling. According to Delgado & Stefancic (2001), storytelling or counter storytelling is a method of telling a story based on lived experiences and a tool for challenging stories of dominant discourse of those in power.

The shared voices of the study participants are grounded in the real life experiences which are presented through storytelling.

Andre used his voice to express his life with his family. Although he lives in the most dangerous and poorest city in the United States and have met with many challenges he continues to move forward. He stated that his life in high school has shaped him and helped in building his self-confidence.

Renata's story consists of a loving home filled with struggles and an extremely hard life. Her stepfather was a steady and strong influence in her life until his death. Renata's relationship with her stepfather inspired her so much she began to do well in school in which she made Honor Roll and won numerous awards. Her story reflected her cultural background and family.

Regina describes how she felt with living with her mother, sisters and brother after the first 11 years of her life. She discussed how her mother is her role model and the education is very important to her. Her cultural background and spiritually is an important part of her life.

Abby's story shares her plight and exposure with homelessness, hunger and being bounced around from home to home. Although she thought of dropping out of school she turned her struggles into triumphs. Her storytelling poem reflects her home as being rude, lazy and judgmental but she maintains her educational goal of becoming a Lawyer.

Pedro had many challenges in his family and school. Moving from the Dominion Republic to the United States and leaving his father behind proved to be extremely hard for the family. The most challenging aspect of his new life in a new country was the language barrier.

Empowerment

Cummins (2001) defines the empowerment of students as the development of the ability, confidence and motivation to succeed academically through school experiences. Historically, Cummins (2001) contends that minority students have experienced disempowerment in schools in the same way their communities are disempowered at the hands of the dominate culture. One major goal of Critical Race Theory is to bring change that would implement social justice with the elimination of racism (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004). Racism is disruptive and it disempowers people by devaluing their identity.

The five tenets of Critical Race Theory are identified as: (1) recognizing that race and racism is prevalent to American life, (2) express skepticism toward dominant legal claims of race neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness and meritocracy, (3) challenge the dominant ideology, (4) commitment to social justice and works towards the elimination of racism, (5) recognize experiential knowledge of men of color and women.

Implementation of the following four elements in schools will enhance and contribute to student empowerment;

(1) The incorporation of the students' culture and language,

(2) Inclusion of the community in the education of their children,

(3) Pedagogical assumptions and practices in the classroom, and

(4) The assessment of students (Cummins, 2001).

In this study, participants describe how Hip Hop empowers them in the classroom

"Hip Hop plays a major part and empowers in the accomplishment of my educational goals".

"It sets a foundation which strengthens me in the areas of math, english and reading and gives me more of a cultural look at everything".

"It empowers me to think and act differently and encourages me to go to school every day and do my best".

"Hip Hop in education empowers students to write stories about themselves as a counter story of what other people are saying about them".

Through analyzing the student and staff interviews, classroom observations, and multimedia artifact, the role of freedom, student voice, and empowerment, emerged as themes of this qualitative study. Mr. Bradley, Andre, Regina, Renata, Abby, and Pedro, through telling their stories and in their own voices, assisted the researcher in presenting the data.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discussed what the value of utilizing Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy to encourage, motivate, engage and empower African American and Latino students in the urban classroom. When teaching African American and Latino students' an understanding of their cultural backgrounds would ensure academic and social achievement in urban classrooms. Hip Hop culture plays a major part in engaging and empowering students in accomplishing their educational goals. According to Boutte & Hill (2006), culture is defined as the sum total of who we are.

Culturally relevant pedagogy can be used as a bridge in connecting the students' cultures and strengths to achieve academic success. The following nine cultural dimensions of African American culture was discussed in reference to using culturally relevant instruction: (1) spirituality- a belief in a power greater than themselves, (2) harmony- integrating the parts of life into a harmonious whole, (3) movement- the interweaving of rhythm, movement, music and dance, (4) verve-propensity for high levels of stimulation which is lively and energetic, (5) affect-emphasis on emotions and feelings with a sensitivity to emotional cues, (6) communalism- social orientation and connectedness, (7) expressive individualism-a personal expression that can be manifested by a walk or a jazz musician's rendition, (8) oral tradition-information learned and

transmitted in a metaphorically colorful speech, and (9) social time perspective-time is viewed as an event rather than the clock. These nine dimensions positively affect student achievement and can be directly connected to educators building on the strengths to empower students through the implication of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the theoretical framework used in this research study. According to Yosso (2005) the five tents of CRT which inform educational theory, pedagogy, curriculum, policy and research consist of: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. The use of the Critical Race Theory element of storytelling and the use of participants' voices were presented.

Large amount of data presented in this chapter was in the form of quotes and poems by the participants. The following quotes by the participants shared the freedom they experience to creativity express themselves:

The Hip Hop culture is the expression of love, togetherness, passion, and strength through the arts whether it's rapping, singing or dancing".

"Hip Hop culture is a new generation that reflects the way we speak, the clothes we wear, and the slang words we use".

"Hip Hop empowers, makes dreams come true, is inspirational and bring change the culture".

"It empowers me to think and act differently and encourages me to go to school every day and do my best".

Chapter five will discuss conclusions, implications and recommendations and the relevance of the findings and the conclusions based on the data.

Chapter Five

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter contains the relevance of the findings associated, conclusions, implications and recommendations based on data in this qualitative study. The conclusion and the implications of the findings are based on the data. Recommendations were made at the end of the chapter for further research on Hip Hop in the classroom and its value on identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students. Although Hip Hop includes five elements, the primary focus in this study was a form of storytelling. Rap music is an integral component of the Hip Hop culture which is characterized as a black cultural expression that prioritizes black voices of urban America which is a form of storytelling and poetry (Tyson, 2002). Rap is the verbal and musical area of Hip Hop which represents personal and social perspectives (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011).

The key element of Hip Hop in the form of storytelling was used in this study which allowed the participants to express themselves based on their lived experiences. Storytelling or counter-storytelling, a key component of Critical Race Theory as cited by Delgado & Stefancic (2001), allows people or groups to reject institutional stories in favor of their own versions which counter the stories of the oppressor that has been an essential feature in qualitative research. Storytelling provides students the unique resource to tell their own stories which promotes increased listening, reading and comprehension skills and provide a sense of history, community, and the ability to listen and use their imaginations.

Relevance of the Findings

Based on the findings of this study Hip Hop is an international cultural and artistic movement which affects the lives of young people around the world. It has a strong influence that can be used to enhance the learning process, student achievement, and school attendance among African American and Latino students. Hip Hop in the classroom allows teachers to connect with students in ways that would promote great excitement in addition to encouraging engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students.

The participant's interviews provided valuable information on the perception, influence and value that the Hip Hop culture have on them and their peers. The majority of participants agreed that the Hip Hop culture empowers is influential and inspirational in the lives of young people causing it to be an extremely powerful educational and motivational tool in the classroom. Participants also stated that Hip Hop sometimes plays a positive and negative role in the lives of their peers.

The JAG Specialist interviewed in this study defined Hip Hop as a "way of life," an "expression of freedom," and a "way for one to expresses what they are going through." He noted the presence of Hip Hop in his classroom can be seen in the way students dress, the songs they know and the way they conduct themselves. The classroom setting of the study at Chase High School was very welcoming with an atmosphere that was conducive to learning. The climate of the classroom was very inviting and the students showed an attitude of great anticipation.

There was an expression of pride in the JAG program and a sense of unity emerged during the interviews with the students and JAG specialist. Mr. Bradley's classroom provides a safe and caring environment where students feel comfortable and have the freedom to express

themselves and discuss any type of controversial issues, such as "How to conduct yourself when stopped by the police". The relationship of trust and caring that was developed between the JAG specialist and his students was clearly evident. Mr. Bradley indicated during the interview that he was personally invested in the culture of his students.

In addition is the fact that Mr. Bradley is an African American male fully immersed in the Hip Hop culture and provides insight into the impact that storytelling will have on student identity, engagement and empowerment in the classroom. The researcher concluded that many African American and Latino males are often seen in a negative light; it is refreshing to have an African American male such as Mr. Bradley that has developed a strong presence and identity at Chase High School.

According to Solórzano & Yosso (2002) counter story-telling is a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told. Counter stories shared at Chase High School help promote social justice by putting a human face to the lived experience of the participants giving them a sense of social, political and cultural cohesion. The storytelling sessions were healing and story circles were very therapeutic which encouraged participants to analyze situations, events and relationships and putting them into their proper perspective.

Hip Hop is transformative and life changing which extends beyond music and it enters into many other life realms. Hip Hop teaches students how to live; it's not a way of life, it is life. Sharing stories are the main goal of story circles which allow participants to come together to share experiences and build relationships. During the story circle sessions the participants listened to each other, identified common ground and shared their lived experiences.

After meeting together the main topic the participants all agreed on was telling the true story about their time, connection and experience as students at Chase High School. In this study the

role of freedom, voice and empowerment emerged as three important themes throughout the research. The answer to the question, "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?" led to the transformation in the following areas:

1. An explosion of various forms of creativity happened as the participants felt the freedom to express their voices using the mediums of counter-storytelling, rap and poetry.

2. Participants were open and honest about expressing their hopes, dreams and felt empowered in the classroom.

3. Storytelling enabled the participants to affect the larger population of Chase high school and the community, giving them the opportunity to tell their stories and have their voices heard.

4. Using the medium of storytelling gave the participants the forum to tell their stories.

5. The transformation in the story circles developed a community of storytellers that evolved into a collaboration allowing participants to tell their stories which develops a video which expressed their feeling highlighting events and life at Chase high school.

The study participants created a video entitled Chase high JAG presents Chase high school anthem to address the research question of "What is the value of utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom?" As the result of their collaboration in the storytelling community the participants wrote rap lyrics, organized and developed a three minute Hip Hop rap song and video based on the counter stories about their opinion and impressions of

their lives at Chase High School. The video is designed to showcase their freedom to create

voice and empowerment. The participants were empowered and felt the freedom to express their

voice in a collective manner by creating the following lyrics describing the thoughts and

opinions of their experiences at Chase High School:

<u>Chase High School Anthem</u>

Shout out to the class of 2014 man

Big goal and big dreams are all we got

Ha, Ha, Ha, Yeah

CHS purple and gold but the panther stay black

2014 is the year it's a wrap, we focused on college to gain more knowledge

Get a good job couple dollars in the pocket,

Good education shoot off like a rocket,

Understand the legacy cause ain't no way to stop it,

A whole lot of talent in the high just watch it,

We rap, we sing, we dance, then throw our hands and

Scream real hard loud because we can,

The life at the high there is no comparison,

Its' been a long journey now we're close to the end,

Basketball games with a whole lot of fans,

Football games ain't no room in the stands,

Every day I live life good with a plan,

Every day I pray to God that they get a chance

Yeah Yeah

Chorus: 2X

Oh how much I love the high, it's something that I can't deny,

The way you makes me feel

It's so right……

It's so right….

It's so right, It's so right, It's so right…….

Verse 2

Almost every subject I love at the high Math, English every day of my life

Stay focus and go through the motion

Close to the end celebrate the promotion,

JROTC another big part of the high family,

Auto tech another part of the tree,

Practice every day to be the best you can be,

CHS ain't no place for stress

Make sure you come prepare,

Make sure you get your rest,

2014 yeah we up next,

We all gonna success because we learn from the best,

Yeah

Chorus: 2X

Oh how much I love the high, it's something that I can't deny,

The way you makes me feel

It's so right…

It's so right….

It's so right, It's so right, It's so right…….

According to Freire (1993), liberatory education is based on the development of critical consciousness enables the learner to recognize the connections between their problems and experiences within the social content in which they are connected. As the students shared their feeling and concerns about their school environment, their hopes, dreams and prayers were communicated through a counter-story approach of the everyday activities and environment of Chase High School inspired the composing of their storytelling rap.

Conclusion

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) a qualitative approach emphasizes a holistic description of the situation. Students are engaged in the classroom when they are learning what is relevant and challenging to them in a holistic way. The qualitative research used in this study strove to understand the social phenomena of dropping out of school from the perspectives of the participants involved and to transform or change social conditions, which exist in the classroom (Glesne, 2006). Every twenty-six seconds a student decides to drop out of school, which is usually personal and reflect disengagement from school.

The slow process of disengagement is frequently both academically and socially influenced by the students' perception, expectations of high school and early school experiences (Bridgeland, Dilulio &Morison, 2006). There are an alarmingly high percentage of African American and Latino students that drop out of school every year. This study investigates the importance of utilizing the youth driven culture of Hip Hop to encourage student identity, engagement, and empowerment in the urban classroom and to encourage African American students to remain in school until graduation.

Another key conclusion in this study is that the Hip Hop culture has a definite influence and impact on the students at Chase High School. Both Abby and Renata explained that they were engaged and empowered in the class because of being able to express themselves through sharing stories based on their real life experiences. During his interview, Andre stated that Hip Hop empower and inspire young people to make their dreams come true. As a result of this study, it is also evident that Mr. Bradley is aware that the Hip Hop culture is very influential on his students in the areas of identity, engagement and empowerment in the classroom. Mr. Bradley provides a safe and secure classroom environment for his students to express themselves

and to feel empowered. Because Hip Hop has become relevant in the field of education, an increasing number of teachers are using it as a culturally relevant teaching strategy in the urban classroom to educate and empower their students (Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2002).

The elements of the Hip-Hop culture can be used as a valuable resource to reach, appreciate the culture and attitude of African American and Latino students in the urban classroom. Hip Hop offers students the opportunity to create and engage in literacy practices that include ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, speaking and writing (Petchauer, 2009). Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy positively encourage, create cultural integrity and academic achievement among African American and Latino students. The intersection of Hip Hop and education in the urban setting can contribute a favorable learning environment and create positive academic outcomes (Hill, 2009).

Developing creative ways of using Hip Hop in the curriculum allow educators the opportunity to connect with their students. Hip Hop serves as the bridge that exists between students and teacher and is multigenerational. According to Prier & Beachum (2008), by educators exploring the use of Hip Hop as a form of emancipator praxis, it empowers young people into a positive trajectory of hope and possibility.

The use of the elements of the Hip Hop culture in the urban classroom create the reality, relationship, and culture which are constructed by young people to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment in school. Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy allows teachers to use their student's cultural and prior knowledge in the classroom to connect in ways to promote engagement in the urban classroom.

Conclusion based on the study findings are presented in Figure 7.
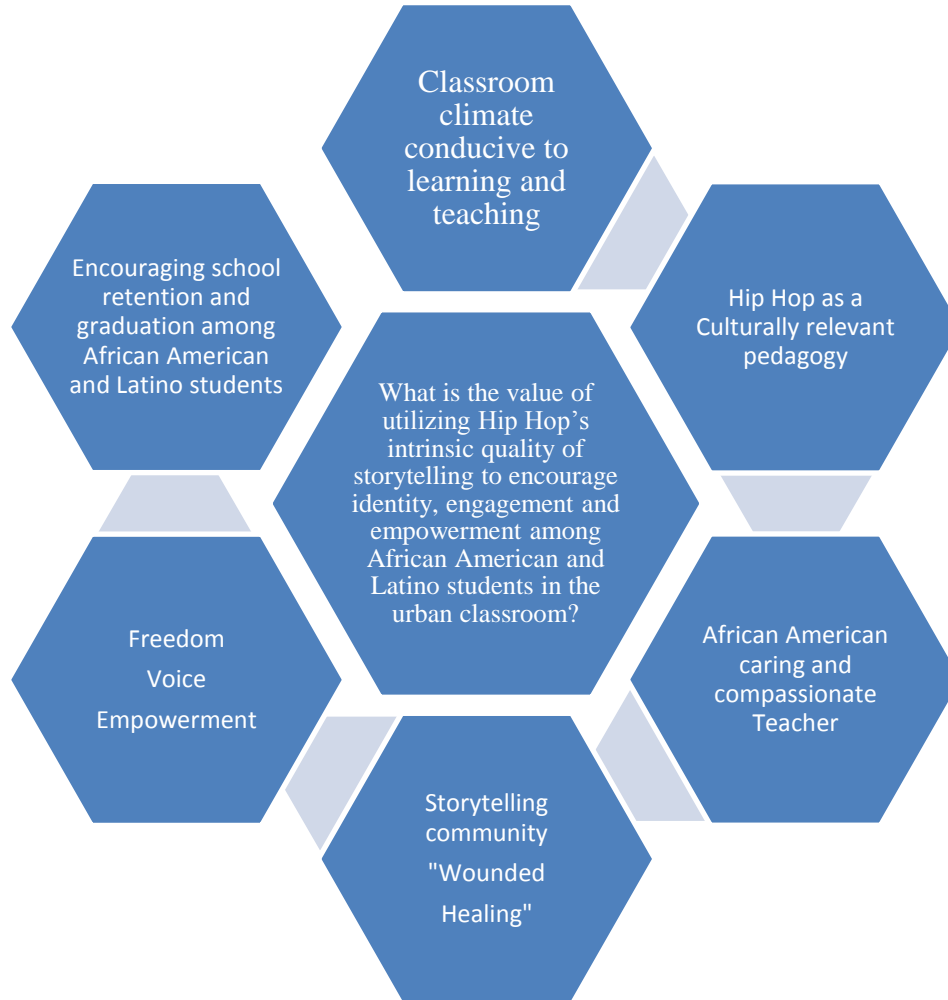
Figure 7: Conclusion based on the study findings

Implications for Practice

The implications of this study would impact elementary and secondary schools across the

nation in addressing the issue of student identity, engagement and empowerment. The Hip Hop

culture is a way of life and is very influential among African American and Latino students at

Chase High School. The participants perceive Hip Hop as empowering, inspirational and

motivating in the classroom. The study finding communicates the importance of Hip Hop as a

culturally relevant pedagogy to educate and empower students in the urban areas and also its effect on the lives of young people from all other cultures and ethnicities. Hip Hop in education as it serves as a bridge between students and teachers developing a strong secure relationship inside and outside of the classroom.

The academic outcomes of using Hip Hop in the classroom has shown enhanced academic achievement as it uses the multiple learning styles of African American and Latino students in urban schools. Hip Hop as a creative practice constructs messages through the music which creates the formation of identity by which young people see themselves and the world around them. It also provides a space and forum for participants to express themselves through storytelling, rap and poetry in the classroom. For example the participants in this study created a storytelling rap describing their thoughts, hopes, dreams and aspirations.

Utilizing the research question as a guide, the researcher found that the participants in this study were able to perceive themselves as having the freedom to voice their views and were empowered through their stories. Through the participants' sharing of the stories about their lives and their feeling about the of Hip Hop culture, helped the researcher to understand how the participants perceived their identity, engagement and empowerment in the classroom. The participants worked together in a storytelling community setting with the task of using their voice to create a counter-story of their feeling about their high school environment.

The participants who are products of that environment, desire the opportunity to address their stories by using a counter-narrative displaying their lived experiences in their school. Another implication of this study is that Hip Hop in education can impact not only K-12 educational institutions but also college and universities as they address the issue of identity,

engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students. The importance of creating an environment where the popular culture can be expressed will assist students with engagement and empowerment was articulated in this study.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study is to add to the existing literature of knowledge and understanding of how a culturally relevant pedagogy of Hip Hop can serve as an intrinsic motivator to encourage identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom. This study investigated the perception, influence and impact that Hip Hop has on students through storytelling to encouraging students to stay engaged and empowered in school.

The following recommendations are made as a result of this study:

Recommendations of Research Study

1. Hip Hop culture influence the way students live, dress, express themselves and is the dominant language of young people. The evidence is seen every day at Chase high school.

2. Hip Hop as a culturally relevant pedagogy can be used in the classroom to obtain students' attention and has the potential to encourage engagement, recognize students' prior knowledge and promote empowerment.

3. Hip Hop in schools is beneficial due to the attraction it has on young people who identify and construct their reality, relationships and culture from it.

Recommendation for Future Studies

This study examined the impact and influence of the Hip Hop culture on student identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom. Further study could be advanced in the following areas:

1. To examine the different perceptions of the Hip Hop culture and influence between urban and suburban African American and Latino students.

2. A study examining the effect of Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage student identity, engagement and empowerment on middle school students.

3. A study of the impact of Hip Hop on same gender African American and Latino students to determine if a relationship exists between student identity, engagement and empowerment and graduation rates

4. A study to examine the impact of the Hip Hop culture on other ethnicities and cultures globally.

5. A study to investigate how White teachers perceive and determine the level of relevance that Hip Hop have on their African American and Latino students.

The study of Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage student identity, engagement and empowerment in the classroom has provided a valuable insight and information of the lived experience of students in the urban environment. The finding in this study can lead to utilizing culturally relevant pedagogy in our nation's classrooms and to acknowledge the culture of students to integrate cultural experiences and value to the learning environment.

The following student quotes explains how integrating cultural experiences has impact their education and add value to the learning and teaching environment:

- Abby shares, "Using the elements of Hip Hop in the classroom help empower students by helping them to take ownership of their education".

  "Having a Hip Hop based lesson in our English class would bring something different that is new and fun that would engage us while keeping our attention".

  "The Hip Hop culture would bridge students and teachers together in the classroom as it will give them some insight to who we are".

- Pedro assert, "Hip Hop empowers and encourages me to do my best and go to class every day".
  "Hip Hop would decrease the rate of students dropping out of school because of the interesting topics discussed in class and students may become more passionate about their education".

- Andre contends, "public speaking is one area that I think Hip Hop can play an important role".

- Regina shares, "Hip Hop is more than music; it's our style fashion and culture".
  In regard to integrating cultural experiences in the learning environment Regina states, "I think good relationships can be developed between teachers and students when the teacher begins to understand the world in which the student lives".

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Appendix A

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms were identified by the researcher as important to the understanding of the investigation.

Arts Based Education is an arts-based approach by integrating the arts in education across the curriculum to create a creative style of teaching and learning.

Civil Rights Movement is the movement in the United States during the time period of 1955-1968 when African Americans fought for equal rights and freedom from oppression.

Critical Pedagogy is described as an "educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students to develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action (Freire, 1993).

Critical Race Theory is the radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship among race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy is an alternative instructional strategy which uses the combination of Paulo Freire's problem-posing method, youth participatory action research, and case study methodology (Akom, 2009).

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy is to incorporate the culture of the student into the academic and social context of schools in ways that facilitate and support academic learning and cultural identity, and promote personal, human, and social development (Howard & Lewis, 2011).

Disengagement occurs when a student portrays a negative attitude towards school and academically, cognitively, psychologically and behaviorally withdraws from school in a significant way.

Engagement is defined as the effort and interest applied by students in school (Marks, 2000).

Elements of Hip Hop includes five elements: (1) emceeing (delivering rap lyrics over beats and/or music), (2) delaying (musical accompaniment or mixing music using two turntables), (3) break dancing (performing various types of dance moves to Hip Hop music), (4) graffiti art, and (5) knowledge (Reese, 2000).

Hip Hop Education uses hip hop in educate, empower, and activate students to become the next generation of social justice leaders by giving them a voice to inspire positive change in their lives and community.

Hip Hop Culture is the culture of African Americans and Latinos young people born between 1965 to 1984 which consists of dance, art, fashion, literature, attitudes, values and activism (Kiana, 2002).

Hip Hop Heads is defined as someone who lives for all or most aspect of the Hip Hop culture. A Hip hop head is usually more interested in underground rap rather than mainstream or commercial rap.

Minority Students/Students of Color is students that are non-white of African, Latin, Asian or Native American descent.

Rap Music is an integral component in the larger Hip Hop culture and is characterized as a black

cultural expression that prioritizes black voices from margins of urban America which is a form

of storytelling and poetry (Tyson, 2002).

Social Justice is creating a society that is based on full and equal participation of all cultures. The

goal of social justice education is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is

mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society that is equitable

and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure (Adams, Bell & Griffin,

1997).

Appendix B

Informed Consent

1. Letter of Informed Consent Faculty Participant

2. Informed Consent Form Faculty Participant

3. Letter of Informed Consent Student Participant

4. Informed Consent Form Student Participant

Appendix C

Letter of informed Faculty Participant

September 30, 2013

Dear Faculty Participant:

Thank you for considering participating in a research study titled "Culturally relevant pedagogy: Utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote student identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban high school classroom". This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in special education from Arcadia University. The information gathered in this study should be beneficial to middle and high school officials who are responsible for improving curriculum and instruction to decease the student dropout rate.

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this research is to examine whether the use of culturally relevant pedagogy, such as Hip Hop, will promote student identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students. Engagement is defined as the amount of interest and effort students expend in school (Marks, 2000). The researcher will use a critical ethnographic design to examine the studies constructs.

The following research questions will guide this qualitative study:

What is the impact on African American and Latino students participating in Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote identity, engagement and empowerment in an urban classroom?

Before you participate in this study, read the following statement to ensure how your rights will be protected:

<u>Participation</u>

Participation in this study is voluntary; therefore you can withdraw at any time. Before the culmination of the study, if you do not want your data provided to be used, inform me and I will honor your request. For any questions or concerns about your participation in this research, please contact me at home (267) 474-4657, or email at rbpatterson@camden.k12.nj.us.

<u>Confidentiality</u>

As a participant in this research your name and answers will remain confidential and your identity will not be published. My dissertation chair and I will be the only ones who will have access to any identifiable data. All materials identifying specific students and faculty will be locked and destroyed three years after the completion of this study. Data collected from faculty will be coded for qualitative analysis and summarized for reporting.

Participation in research will involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. The researchers will ask you and the other people in the focus group to use only first names during the group session. They will also ask group members not to tell anyone outside the group what any particular person said in the group. However, the researchers cannot guarantee that everyone will keep the discussion private. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study.

<u>Risk and benefits</u>

The risk of your participation is minimal. The information gathered will be a benefit to K-12

officials responsible for devising and improving curriculum and instruction that would improve

and increase school completion among African American and Latino students.

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However,

the information that you provide may add to the body of knowledge to help education

professionals better understand how to redesign public schools to improve curriculum and

instruction and increase graduation the rate.

<u>Costs to study participants</u>

There will be no cost to you as the result of taking part in this study.

<u>Compensation</u>

At the end of the study, the facility participants will receive a $20.00 pre-paid Visa gift card in

appreciation for your participation. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the

information below. The researcher will not provide any compensation to students participants.

You will be given a copy of the document and your written consent for your future reference.

Thank you for your time attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth B. Patterson
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D

Consent Form for Faculty Participant

Dear Faculty Participant: Date: September 30, 2013

My name is Ruth B. Patterson and I am a doctoral student at Arcadia University, Department of Education. You are invited to participant in a study I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation in topic of student identity, engagement and empowerment. I am interested in learning about the effects that a cultural relevant pedagogy such as Hip Hop will have in the classroom and what impact would Hip Hop as a critical pedagogy have on identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino students in the urban classroom.

The title of my study is "Culturally relevant pedagogy: Utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom". This study is important because it adds to the existing literature of knowledge and an understanding of how the culturally relevant pedagogy of Hip Hop can make a contribution in promoting identity, engagement, and empowerment among African American and Latino students toward school completion. The information gathered in this study will be beneficial to middle and high school officials who are responsible for improving curriculum and instruction to decease the student dropout rate.

I am asking for your participation because I believe that you can provide valuable insight from a teacher's perspective.

This project will take 2 months to complete. Participation is voluntary and will include the following components:

a. A 15-20 min. individual interview: The interview will be conducted at a place and time that will be convenient to you. At the time of the interview, if allowed I will audiotape the interview to ensure that the information is accurate. If you feel uncomfortable about being audiotaped, I will just take notes during the interview.

b. 4 classroom observations: For the observations, I will sit in the back of the classroom to observe student engagement and their empowerment the classroom while taking notes.

As the researcher, it will be my responsible to keep the result from the interviews and observations confidential. As a participant in this research your name and answers will remain confidential and your identity will not be published. The risk of your participation in this study is minimal. Participation in this study is voluntary; therefore you can withdraw at any time. If you chose to withdraw, all information collected from you will be destroyed.

This study will begin September, 2013 and end November, 2013. At the end of the study, the facility participants will receive a $20.00 pre-paid Visa gift card in appreciation for your participation.

Your relationship with the school or School District, or Arcadia University will not be affected by your participation or non-participation in this study. If you have any questions or concerns about the study you can e-mail me at: rpatterson_01@arcadia.edu or you may call the supervisor of the project, Dr. Erica Davila at (215) 572-2938. This study has been approved by the school district superintendent and Arcadia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) reserves the right to examine and evaluate the data and

research protocols of this project to ensure that this research continues to protect your rights and minimize any risks. If you wish any additional information regarding your rights in this study you may contact the Office for the Committee for Protection of Research subjects at (267) 620-4111.

To keep for your records, enclosed is a copy of this consent form. Please sign one copy and mail it back in the stamped envelope provided if you decide to participate. Your signature below will indicate that you have read the information and have decided to participate in the study. Please sign the activities you agree to participate in and give permission to allow me to audiotape the interview. If at any time you decide to withdraw from participating in the study, you may do so.

I am looking forward to working with you and learn from this study in hopes that it will contribute to the field of education, particularly in reference to cultural relevant pedagogy such as Hip Hop.

This study has been explained to me; I have read the consent form and have been given a copy of this consent form. I agree to take part in:

One individual interview   _____
                                                                    Signature

General classroom observations   _____
                                                                    Signature

I allow for the interview to be audio taped   _____
                                                                    Signature

Date_____

Appendix E

Letter of informed Student Participant

Dear Student: September 30, 2013

Thank you for considering participating in a research study Utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote student identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban high school classroom. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in special education from Arcadia University. The information gathered in this study should be beneficial to middle and high school officials who are responsible for improving curriculum and instruction to increase school completion.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to examine whether the use of culturally relevant pedagogy, such as Hip Hop, will promote identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban high school classroom.

Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary; therefore you can withdraw at any time. Before the culmination of the study, if you do not want your data provided to be used, inform me and I will honor your request. For any questions or concerns about your participation in this research, please contact me at home (267) 474-4657, or email at rbpatterson@camden.k12.nj.us.

<u>Confidentiality</u>

As a participant in this research your name and answers will remain confidential and your

identity will not be published. My dissertation chair and I will be the only ones who will have

access to any identifiable data. All materials identifying specific students and faculty will be

locked and destroyed three years after the completion of this study. Data collected from faculty

will be coded for qualitative analysis and summarized for reporting.

Participation in research will involve a loss of privacy; however, your records will be handled as

confidentially as possible. The researchers will ask you and the other people in the focus group

to use only first names during the group session. They will also ask group members not to tell

anyone outside the group what any particular person said in the group. However, the researchers

cannot guarantee that everyone will keep the discussion private. No individual identities will be

used in any reports or publications that may result from this study.

<u>Risk and benefits</u>

The risk of your participation is minimal. The information gathered will be a benefit to k-12

officials responsible for devising and improving curriculum and instruction that would improve

and increase school completion among African American and Latino students.

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However,

the information that you provide may add to the body of knowledge to help education

professionals better understand how to redesign public schools to improve curriculum and

instruction and increase graduation the rate.

<u>Costs to study participants</u>

There will be no cost to you as the result of taking part in this study.

<u>Compensation</u>

There will be no compensation for participating in the study. If you choose to participate in this study, please complete the information below. The researcher will not provide any compensation to students participants.

You will be given a copy of the document and your written consent for your future reference. Thank you for your time attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth B. Patterson

Doctoral Candidate

Appendix F

Consent Form for Student Participants

Dear Student Participant: September 30, 2013

Hello, my name is Mrs. Ruth B. Patterson and I am a student at Arcadia University doing my

research study at your school. In this study, I am trying to learn the effect and influence that Hip

Hop in the form of storytelling would have in your classroom among you and your peers. I am

also interested in learning what would be the impact of using Hip Hop in the classroom on

promoting identity, engagement and empowerment among African American and Latino

students.

I would like for you to participate in this study to share your thoughts and opinions about how

the use of Hip Hop would assist you in becoming more engaged and empowered in your

classroom. If you are interested in participating in the study, I will schedule a meeting with you

to discuss what your role will be in the research. At that time you will have the opportunity to

ask any questions and I will clarify any of your concerns. At the meeting there will be a sign up

sheet that will be passed around the class, if you are interested in being a part of the study sign

the sheet to participate.

After you have signed up to be a part of the study, I will schedule a 30-40 minute individual

interview with you which will be given at a place and time during the school day. During the

interview, if any questions make you feel uncomfortable, you do not have to answer them. Also

during the interview, if you will allow me I would like to use an audiotape recorder to make sure that I get your answers correct. However, if using a tape recorder makes you uncomfortable I will not use it and take notes as we talk.

I will come into your classroom 4 times to observe you, during that time I will be in the back of the classroom to take notes and will be careful not to distract or disturb the class activities. Participation in the study is completely voluntary and participants must be 18 years old and enrolled in the JAG program. You may withdraw from participation at any time. Your permission to participate or refusal to participate will not affect your grade or your relationship with your teacher or school. Your name will be kept confidential as well as all information you share with me. Feel free to ask me any questions about the study at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study you can e-mail me at: rpatterson_01@arcadia.edu or you may call the supervisor of the project, Dr. Erica Davila at (215) 572-2938. This study has been approved by the school district superintendent and Arcadia University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The University Institutional Review Board (IRB) reserves the right to examine and evaluate the data and research protocols of this project to ensure that this research continues to protect your rights and minimize any risks. If you wish any additional information regarding your rights in this study you may contact the Office for the Committee for Protection of Research subjects at (267) 620-4111.

Please sign below if you are interested and agree to participate in the study as well as give your permission to be audiotaped during the interview.

I would like to participate in the interview: _____

                                                   Signature

I give my permission to have my interview audiotaped: _____

                                                   Signature

Date: _____

Appendix G

Forms

1. Data Codes

2. On –Site Observation

3. Interview Protocol

4. Teacher interview

5. Students interview

Appendix H

Data Codes

F   Faculty

S1   Student Participant 1

S2   Student Participant 2

S3   Student Participant 3

S4   Student Participant 4

S5   Student Participant 5

I   Interview

FO1   Field observation 1

FO2   Field observation 2

FO3   Field observation 3

FO4   Field observation 4

Mmart   Multimedia artifact

Appendix I

Class Observations

Dates: October 7, 2013, October 21, 2013, November 4, 2013, November 18, 2013

Beginning Time: 12:51   **Ending Time:** 1:42

Setting: College and Career Access Center/JAG Classroom

Participants: Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) students and Specialist/Teacher

Researcher's Observation Field Notes

- **FO1**
  - The observation took place at Chase High School's College and Career Access Center/JAG room.
  - The students eagerly entered the classroom
  - The JAG specialist began the class by introducing himself, the mission and vision of the JAG program.
  - The classroom was well organized with College and Career Readiness motivational posters on colorful bulletin boards throughout the classroom. There were 15 students, 7 boys and 8 girls in the class. The classroom was very orderly and conducive to learning.
  - The JAG specialist explained to the students that the JAG program prepares students for college employment, college or the military. The specialist continued to share with the students that it is his job to make sure they are college, career

and employment ready. As being a part of the JAG program he will be responsible for them for 12 months after they graduate.

o The students who were assigned to the JAG class last year shared with the new students what they learned as being a part of JAG and how it changed their lives.

o All types of music play a big part in the classroom culture and environment

o The JAG specialist has music playing as the students enter into the classroom and all through the class period.

o I observed that the used of music helped calm down the students as they entered the classroom and set a positive mood as the students settled into the classroom

- **FO2**

o As the students entered the classroom, I observed them take their seats and began writing the information on the board into their notebooks.

o At the beginning of my first class observation the class expectations was explained to the students by the JAG specialist and the students adhered to the classroom rules and expectations.

o The Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) curriculum consist of six main competencies which are organized into the following categories: job attainment, career development, job survival, basic skills, leadership and self- development and personal skills.

o The JAG specialist began this class with his pre-class activity which gave the students information on what he would be teaching that day. The students were fully engaged in the class.

- o They were given information on a class assignment that would require them to introduce themselves as a potential employee to any adult in the building.

- o This activity is called GNAP a process that help prepare students for job interviews. The students' assignment is to introduce themselves to the staff making a strong, professional "first impression". The G stands for Greeting, the N stands for name, the A stands for association (who they represent) and the P stands for purpose (why are they standing in front of you). All are elements of the assignment were introduction and what they were expected to master.

- o The students were given a chart to have the adults sign and give a comment on how they did and what they can do better. Towards the end of the class period the students began practicing on each other.

- **FO3**

  - o Students entered the classroom they took their seats and began to write the pre-class information in their notebooks.

  - o The JAG specialist prompted class discussions by asking probing questions like: "Do you care about others think of you?" and "When was the last time you said 'Thank You' or apologized to someone outside of your immediate family?" Some students insist were disgruntled and ask "What does this have to do with getting a job?", most students have begun to see the connection between being employable, and their personal and social behaviors.

  - o After the students completed copying the pre-class information, the JAG specialist began his lesson on given a step-by-step tutorial on how to approach

potential employers when seeking employment and how to complete job applications.

- o Each student was given "live" applications from local businesses that were currently hiring. This gave students ample opportunity to practice filling out applications and could serve as the first step toward landing a job with that business. Following the filling out of job applications each student paired up with a classmate to practice their GNAP activity.

- o After the students practiced with each other they began to practice with JAG specialist and myself. Student then were allowed to go into the Guidance office to begin their GNAP activity with the Guidance staff.

- **FO4**

  - o After the students finished their pre-class activity, I had the opportunity to share with the students the information about my study. I talked about my study and the reason I decided to research "What is the impact on African American and Latino students participate in Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to encourage student identity, engagement and empowerment in an urban classroom".

  - o I shared with the students that my study researched the importance of completing school and using Hip Hop-based storytelling to engage and empower students in the urban classroom. Together we discuss what the influence and impact does the Hip Hop culture have on their education, community and world. I explained that they would have to be 18 years old to volunteer to participate in the study.

  - o I began with assigning the students to create their own cultural autobiography. This activity will help them to get in touch with themselves and the family

background. I want the students to understand how important the storytelling process is as they talked to their family about their cultural background.

o Each JAG student 18 years old was invited to participate in the study. There are 15 students in the JAG program who meet the age requirement.

Appendix J

Faculty Interview Transcript

Date: January 13, 2014

Participant: Mr. Omari Bradley, JAG Specialist/Teacher

Location: College and Career Access Center/JAG Classroom

Q: What is your definition of the hip-hop culture?

F: I think hip-hop is more of a way of life. It usually gets categorized as just music but I think it really is the way someone kind of conducts them and things that they're interested in and things that they do. I think largely it's about the ways people express themselves and there really isn't a situation where something can define that this is hip-hop and this is not hip-hop. I think its freedom of expression generally could be described as hip-hop remains very, very broad

Q: What is the evidence of the influence of the hip-hop culture do you see in the students that you teach?

F: The way they dress, the songs that they know, the dances that they do, the songs they remember, and also for better or worse, the way they conduct themselves. A lot of things that they're interested in or talk about, part of this are due to them being adolescents and teenagers, but definitely they're influenced by the music and things that they see in "hip-hop videos." It can be good and also can be bad but they are embodiments of what hip-hop would be.

Q: Do you feel that the influence plays a negative or positive role in their lives?

F: Unfortunately, the overall negative because the music that's, we're going back to those folks only in music room, the things that they listen to and things that they see around the department are largely things that would lead young people down negative path in terms of sexualized, violent thing in their live is a party and hedonistic but obviously is not all what hip-hop is. It just happens to be the genres that's popular and which is promoting and in that regard, it's been largely negative here but I think obviously will be influenced by what is the students choose to listen to and what it is they can sing. If they're listening to songs that kind of promote those things and the images that go along with those songs, that's a behavior they all sort of carry around with them and thinks it is acceptable. Whereas if you listen to some other things, it wouldn't necessarily be the same, the result may not necessarily look the same. The way they speak and things that they say, the things they say to each other clearly do have some derivatives from the images that they're seeing associated with the hip-hop music and largely right now, it's negative.

Q: What influence does hip-hop have in the classroom that will persuade your students to become more engaged?

F: I think as negative as I believe that hip-hop generally is known to large of our students, it's something you have to sort of incorporate, and you can't shy away from. Even if you bring it up your mention and it talked about how destructive it is, you can't avoid it but in finding ways to incorporate it, you tend to get their attention and you're in the point of connectivity where you're not just some old, out-of-touch teacher but you're actually someone who is adept to where it is that they're are consuming and even if you admit that you don't like it, the fact that you're aware of it, I know students appreciate that. My students have and I guess in their regard I'm getting

some points because I'm not accepting the things that they're because I don't enjoy all the things they like, I guess in some regards I can understand what is \ but the fact that I do try to make an attempt to connect with them and understand what is it they're listening to and talk about it and talk about the things that they see and the images that they see, I do believe that it makes another point of connection and those connection points they make teaching a whole lot easier.

Q: Would using hip-hop in the classroom empower your students to think and feel differently about their education?

F: I believe it could but I believe before somebody takes any action, there's a message that they've chosen to either accept or disregard and the more positive messages that someone is taking in, chances are, the likelihood that they will accept those positive messages will rise and to the extent that the culture that they're accepting is positive whether it's hip-hop or any other form of artistic expression, if that's positive, I think it will clearly benefit other areas in their lives, academics being one of them. I think if they just listen to positive rap, would that make a difference? I don't necessarily believe so but all the things that go along with being around positive things, your perception, the way you view acceptable behavior, the way you relate to one another, your general approach to life, if that's all positive, I think you'll see positive progress in the academics as well but I don't think isolated, if kids just listen to more positive music would it make so much difference in their academic performance, I don't necessarily agree with that.

Q: Using hip-hop in the classroom not just the music genre but like in literature and other aspects of being able to share that connection with your students, would you think that would kind of fit

their changes in their education, in their family and community? Not just the music aspect of it but the whole cultural aspect of it.

F: I believe there's potential there but when I've seen institutes where like artists have written books, literature is an academic pursuit, I find that largely it's really dumb down and kind of leads to the myth that these artists want to promote. Whether it's the rap song or in text or literature, the messaging is what's important and the things that students are consuming is what's important, whether it's positive or negative.

I believe that if it was done correctly, it was done deliberately to emote positive energy from the student, then definitely I believe that it can work but not sort of passive or objective like here's this artist writing about his life, I think there really need to be a lot more substance to this. I think of adolescents that we talk about in terms of how we should conduct ourselves and how we should relate to one another, if we sort of add some elements of artist that they're familiar with, I believe it could make difference especially maybe in younger grades. Largely, I really believe that by the time someone's in high school, 10th to 12th grade, more or less, they are who they are. We're just kind of refining it along the way but I do believe that hip-hop could be included academically to where it will be beneficial but not just as an isolated thing like this person wrote a book or this person on the screen telling you about how you should study or how he studied in school. It really needs to be something substantial and comprehensive.

Q: Do you think that using hip-hop as a critical pedagogy would have impact your students and motivate them to stay in school?

F: Say that again?

Q: Do you think using hip-hop as a critical pedagogy would impact your students and motivate them to stay in school?

F: No, it's difficult because there are lots of reasons that lead someone to not learn, to walk from school and a lot of it is not simply just academics. If somebody who is really having deep problems in school, the way they don't feel like they're getting anything or sometimes life experiences, like they have somebody pregnant for instance and they had to go work, then I don't think using all the hip-hop in the world would necessarily stop those sorts of decisions. Whereas some students feel like they need to leave school because they don't feel like they're connected to the school culture, I think that can make some sense. I think largely whether you use hip-hop or not, at some point schools are the way that they are and at some point, you have to master algebraic equations and geometry and quadratic formulas and things like that, maybe in that regard, maybe hip-hop would, I don't see where that would help there but I think definitely like I said before definitely would a steady [inaudible 00:10:34] use of hip-hop inside schools bridges gaps and that bridging of gaps, people are less inclined to kind of walk away from but to the extent that people leave school solely for academic reasons, I think it would help but in those other instances where the kids aren't really being supported from home or deal with those "real life issues," I don't see where that sort of things help. I don't think anything the school can do unless you incorporate social services inside the building, I don't see where schools can do anything with those sorts of dropouts.

Q: Hip-hop is a way of giving those without a voice the opportunity to express themselves. What do you think about that?

F: I agree. I agree that expression is very important. That's part of our humanity and us being individuals and being empowered is actually being able to speak and contribute and somebody expresses themselves I think can be categorized as hip-hop but the students need to feel free to express themselves, to have a voice, to be included in the process and unfortunately, that's something that's sort of lacking in this age of education, a lot of it is, because of reforms, teachers have to get across the testing material and make sure kids master X, Y, Z in their daily course of the school day, it's very common that students don't get the chance to voice anything at all but that's just necessary just for their own development and for teachers to learn some things about who we're serving. That's very important to allow students, their voice, to speak of and speak out about things that they see and things that their concerned with.

Q: Would hip-hop based storytelling activity allow your students' voices to be heard in your classroom and beyond?

F: Yes and it's important to stress that hip-hop is not only is a type of music but more of the freeness in expression. Some students that we teach don't like rap but they only listen to rap but I will not say that they're detached necessarily from hip-hop. This is just that manifestation of hip-hop they aren't necessarily into. The only opportunity that gives students a voice where they're teaching, when they're getting their message out is always a plus for the school, for the classroom and for the students themselves.

Q: Do you include hip-hop in your classes?

F: Yes.

Q: If so, why?

F: I often talk about how much I hate it. I'm not saying I hate them, something about the music I do. I listen to it. I listen to it sometimes. I have a daughter who listens to it and I'm 33 so I'm not too old or over the hill. A lot of times I bring it up, I mention that I explicitly say I hate it and I talk about how all the negative elements to it, but usually when I say that the students retort, "Oh, you listen to it too!" and "Oh, well how you know about it then?" and all sorts of stuff and right there is just another bridging of something we can talk about as something else, that shows that we're connected. Whether I agree with what they listen to or not, it's something else, just another element in the relationship that me and the students can have and point of commonality which is important and makes the teaching of subject matter a lot so much easier.

Q: How might the hip-hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

F: It can but a lot of times the things that we want students to get and want students to understand unfortunately are a lot more about conformity and structure and really hip-hop seems to be a lot more freeing and free-minded and a lot more abstract and fluid. In some regard, hip-hop culture and school culture are complete opposites, but there are some commonalities where as teachers or as educators, we should want our students to exhibit more free thinking and creativity and expression. Hip-hop can definitely prove useful inside the classroom if the atmosphere in the school environment allowed it to thrive consistently, not just isolated unit maybe doing a black history, but overall the way the school conducts itself as a space where students are free to express themselves and to be who they are. [Some of structure 00:15:47] the way schools operate take that away inherently like wearing a school uniform where students are kind of confined to the way that they dress, it might take some element of hip-hop away just simply before they walk into the door but students being the creative beings that they are, they still find ways to jazz up

their school uniforms and that's an expression of hip-hop. If you can find ways besides inside the

structures of school and all of positive aspects of conformity that we try to teach in school and at

the same time encourage our students to be creative, then it can be very, very useful.

Appendix K

Student 1 Interview Transcript

Date: December 12, 2013

Participant: Andre- Student Participant 1

Location: Guidance Suite/JAG Counselor's Office

Q: What is your definition of the hip-hop culture?

S1: My definition of hip-hop culture is hip-hop empowers and makes dreams come true. It also changes cultures as well. Hip-hop is a revolution of innovative beats that people hear and it could be really inspiring to those who are going through tough times. Hip-hop, what I think of hip-hop is very inspirational and over-the-top. It's not only just ... hip-hop is just a bad vibe, talking about drugs. Hip-hop could be positive to anyone whether it is any culture. Hip-hop is pretty good. There's nothing to worry about.

Q: What is the evidence of the influence that you see in the hip-hop culture on yourself and your peers?

S1: Evidence that I've seen on hip-hop, me personally, what I experienced, one of my classmates he's currently a senior. He did a little hip-hop piece for our play last year and I thought it was very inspirational. It says the art of seniors that were still here and juniors that were currently being seniors.

Q: What influence do you see it in your peers?

S1: What I see in my peers, well, not only does hip-hop ... One of the influences that hip-hop I've seen ... I say hip-hop is a mover. It pushes people to do things that they normally would not do.

Q: Do you feel ... Well, you answered question 3. Do you feel that the influence plays a positive or a negative role in your life?

S1: I say it plays a very positive play in my life.

Q: What influence do you think hip-hop has in the classroom and how would it empower you to be successful in your education?

S1: The influence that hip-hop has on the classroom is that, it keeps me focused because when I'm getting my work done, say I'm doing Math class and I'm listening to hip-hop. I have a stimulated mind so that could be good influence having in class. I never really thought about that. Say my education, I mean it could definitely get you public speaking because hip-hop players are, seniors, whatever, they got to go on stage. They got to face the booze and take the positive and the negative all at the same time so that could definitely boost up my education on public speaking. That's a good one right there.

Q: Would using hip-hop in the classroom empower you to think and feel differently about your education and will it help you to want to bring about a change for yourself, your family and community?

S1: I'd definitely think it would be bring a change. If you do your research, no, dig into your history, definitely it would be a good deal to have a positive impact inside the class and outside of class.

Q: Do you think using hip-hop in the education would impact you and your peers enough to stay motivated to stay in school?

S1: Hip-hop in general? It could help a little push, a little bit ... It wouldn't do that much of a pusher but it would definitely keep you somewhere on the track. Stand towards this small goal, somewhere is a big goal maybe...

Q: If they use it in education ... If so ... If your teacher incorporated that in your language class or literacy classes or your Math classes, do you think that you would want to come to school and stay in school enough to graduate?

S1: That would keep a lot of students in the class especially if they're listening to the all generations' music. It would keep their class focused and the students from bullying others and listening to that hip-hop song. That would be good.

Q: Would that be a positive song or negative songs?

S1: Most likely you got to use positive songs.

Q: Storytelling in a way of giving people without a voice the opportunity to express themselves, how can this be used, telling your lived experience, how could storytelling, how can you use that to explain your experiences in life?

S1: Say as though I want to be an activist or anything for that art. I want to write a positive one not doing crazy stuff. Hip-hop can ... How it projects our voice is in a heavenly serious tone, and that can definitely project to those that are in a business world that normally don't listen to hip-hop. It can change the way others think especially ... Say a third world country like that, it can

change the way they think, like, "I heard this" and the way he's talking. The way he's moving along with the rhymes and its positive too and its [inaudible 00:06:08]. It tells about politics. It's definitely good to project our voice.

Q: Would a hip-hop-based storytelling activity allow your voice to be heard in your classroom and beyond?

S1: It would definitely be heard because a lot of students love to hear other students view hip-hop. Normally saying, this is like, hip-hop is more there. Students are more concentrated, like, "Okay, I like the way this is going."

Q: When you say hip-hop, you mean rap?

S1: Yeah.

Q: The rap portion.

S1: Yeah, mostly the rap portion.

Q: Should hip-hop-based lesson be included in your classes at your school, and would it encourage you to be more engaged?

S1: I think hip-hop-based lessons, it should be in our school but only to the extra-curricular, and not so much as the vocational because the vocational is mostly ... it's already fun, so why incorporate there?

Q: Can the hip-hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

S1: Most definitely. It can make the teachers and students come along together greatly. Like Mr. Bradley for example, he says hip-hop is slavery. If he took a quick second to see what we listen to, he might like it, but the other hip-hop are rather beats or anything like that. We can come together as a teacher and student not as more of as a teacher but we can be like a family basically in that way.

Appendix L

Date: December 12, 2013

Participant: Regina- Student Participant 2

Location: Guidance Suite/JAG Counselor's Office

Q: What is your definition of the Hip Hop culture?

S2: My definition of the Hip Hop culture is it's much more than just music. It's about our styles, where it starts from. Our fashion, our style, the culture and how Hip Hop started.

Q: What is the evidence of the influence of the Hip Hop culture do you see in yourself and in your peers? What is some of the influences?

S2: Some of the influence I see in my peers is what some of the negative Hip Hop music that is out, they show negative behavior. What I see in myself is when I want to go listen to Hip Hop music, I have a good perspective.

Q: Do you feel that the influence plays a negative or a positive role in your life?

S2: I feel the music play a positive role in my life.

Q: What influence do you think Hip Hop has in the classroom? How could it improve or empower you to be successful in your education?

S2: I feel as though Hip Hop in school is that we listen to positive Hip Hop, we'll have more positive perspective on how Hip Hop started. What was the second part?

Q: The second part was does it empower you to be successful in school?

S2: If I listen to it, probably not because it might have a negative impact on me.

Q: Would using Hip Hop in the classroom empower you to feel and think differently about your education? Would it help you to want to do something to affect a positive change in your life?

S2: It would affect me to make a positive change in my life.

Q: Would it empower you to think or feel differently about your education? If you it where you could write poetry or make a journal on how you feel about your life experiences. Would that help you if you could use a Hip Hop base that you can make a poem or a rhyme or rap out of how you feel?

S2: Yes.

Q: Do you think using Hip Hop in education would impact you and your peers enough to stay motivated to stay in school?

S2: Yes, because nowadays students come to school, be bored, just do work, go straight to classes, we have no breaks or nothing. When we sit and listen to music while in class we get our lesson done faster. We'll probably be ahead of most other students.

Q: How do you feel that music helps in the class? Like when you come in, I notice in the classroom you go in Mr. Bradley, your teacher always has music playing. Does that help you?

S2: Um hmm (affirmative). When I listen to music it makes me concentrate on my work. It really helps my ideas flow.

Q: Does it give you peace?

S2: Um hmm (affirmative)

Q: Storytelling is a way of giving people without a voice the opportunity to express themselves. How can you express yourself using storytelling to tell your life story?

S2: I could turn it into a mini-movie. I could write an autobiography. I could write a poem about it.

Q: Would a Hip Hop based storytelling activity allow your voice to be heard in the classroom and beyond?

S2: Yes.

Q: Yeah. Because we do it in the classroom and then you don't know. You can put it out in a blog or share it on a website. Don't we have a Facebook?

S2: I think so.

Q: Should Hip Hop based lessons are included in your classes at school? Would it encourage you to be more engaged in school if you had something like that?

S2: It would encourage me to be more engaged in school. I do think it should be in our school so they can know the true meaning of Hip Hop instead of what we listen to today.

Q: Can the Hip Hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

S2: I think so because some teachers might act like they don't listen to it at all, but deep down inside the probably really do listen to it. They'll be like teacher and student, but on the same level. Instead of just the kids think that the teachers all they care about is us getting our education. The students might think the teachers just being hard on them, but they have an understanding of them.

Q: Do you think the students would think the teachers care about them because they care about them as a person?

S2: Um hmm (affirmative)

Appendix M

Date: December 17, 2013

Participant: Renata- Student Participant 3

Location: Guidance Suite/JAG Counselor's Office

Q: What is your definition of the Hip-Hop culture?

S3: My definition of Hip-Hop is a way for someone to tell the story, music or in the beat or instrumental, putting it together to make a song or a rap out of it.

Q: What is the evidence of the influence of the Hip-Hop culture do you see in yourself and in your peers?

S3: After I listen to a song from an artist that's talking about their positive life or negative life, I see that my peers and I look up them. If I want to say I want to be like them, I want to move forward like they did. They had struggles in their lives and they faced it. I want to do the same.

Q: do you feel that influence plays a negative or a positive role in your life?

S3: In my life, I see it as a positive. The song, I Believe in Him by Thorndale, I know I can be what I want to be. When I first heard it I was small. I thought I could be whatever I want to be, so far I'm doing what I wanted to be, graduating high school, more positives in the future. I'm achieving my dream so far.

Q: What influence do you think Hip-Hop has in the classroom and how would it empower you to be successful in your education?

S3: Hip-Hop in the classroom, well I really don't know but Hip-Hop in the classroom that's what people listen to now. Well, some people listen to others, but Hip-Hop has influenced others and the classroom would be different. I really don't know how to explain it, but I think it's all over and once you're walking around and you hear people singing or rapping a Hip-Hop song around and that's almost you need boys around for, singing Hip-Hop in the class.

Q: Would that help you with your language arts or writing poetry?

S3: Yes, I think would it help with the language. Hip-Hop is basically rhymes with, it's like you're writing poetry and that's helping out with your English. That would be helping out a lot.

Q: Would using Hip-Hop in the classroom empower you to think differently about your education and to do something positive that would effect a change in your life, your family or community?

S3: Yes, like I said, that's all I can. It made a positive influence into all. I'm coming to school, but I know I want to be something, so I can be what I want to be. I have influence myself to be able to come to school, motivate myself to do my work and stuff like that to be what I want to be. That's what I do now and it got me so far.

Q: Do you think using Hip-Hop in education would impact you and your peers enough to be motivated to come to school if you had that in the classroom?

S3: I think so because most people walk in the classroom, the kids like to be motivated and music really motivates them, gets them energized and stuff like that. If you walk into a really old, boring classroom, they'd probably be like I don't want to do things and they just want to fall

asleep. By having Hip-Hop in the class, they're listening to the music and getting their class work done because they're entertaining my music and the Hip-Hop they listen to. They're more likely to be successful in what they do.

Q: Storytelling is a way of giving people without a voice the opportunity to express themselves. How could this be used to express your life's experience?

S3: Well, there are some people that are not heard and people don't hear their voice, they don't know about the situation. Doing the storytelling, people would know if they're going through a struggle, that's the reason why they don't speak or whatever. They have a regular or normal life that they have friends and stuff like that they would be able to speak to and then during the storytelling, you get to know people more than just walking around and judging others without knowing.

Q: Would a Hip-Hop based storytelling activity allows your voice to be heard in the classroom and beyond, if we had that type of activity?

S3: Yes, I think so. Yes because I'm not the person that would be just walking around, talk to any person. Having a storytelling, people learned about my life probably would be "Oh, she's not the type of person I thought she was" or something like that and my voice would be heard more than in the classroom, outside of the classroom.

Q: Should Hip-Hop based lessons are included in your classes at your school? Would it encourage you to be more engaged in your classes?

S3: I think so. I think walking into a boring, old class would probably make me sleepy and stuff just doing my work. Walk into a class that's putting on music like the Hip-Hop, I like to listen to music while doing my work and it motivates me to do my work and I'll finish it in, I'll say five minutes, because I'm into the music and I'm not really disturbed by all my surroundings.

Q: Can the Hip-Hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

S3: It probably can because some of the Hip-Hop music is nothing old, but more of it comes from the other culture and the Hip-Hop known from other people's lives. The students and teachers, the students like the Hip-Hop and listening to other people's life. The teachers; it's good to have that bridge to connect to each other, be like yes that's how my life was and we can make it into a story. All the students would listen to it; they'd be like "Oh, so they had this type of life that we probably had the same way" and have a little connection with them. They could speak to each other even more.

Appendix N

Date: December 17, 2013

Participant: Abby- Student Participant 4

Location: Guidance Suite/JAG Counselor's Office

Q: What is your definition of the Hip-Hop culture?

S4: My definition of the hip-hop culture is storytelling, music and our actions and the things we do.

Q: What is the influence of the hip-hop culture and evidence that you see within yourself and your peers?

S4: The influence is both positive and negative; slang, the way we dress and some things we say.

Q: Do you feel that the influence is positive or negative?

S4: The way people tell how they live their life. You come to school, already have a pre-judgment about you that you're sitting there like, people put their lives to risk and not just what you've already seen, the negative that you already see about this.

Q: What influence do you think hip-hop have in the classroom and how could it empower you to be successful about your education?

S4: In the classroom, I guess that some teachers, they think they see students cutting class and not come to school at all, they think it's because they want to be in the streets and stuff. If you

ask people inside the classroom, and they go write down their lives telling their story and you'll understand why.

Q: Will using hip-hop in a classroom empower you to think differently and feel differently about your education and you do something positively about it to make a change in yourself, community?

S4: Yes, because I think, people will sit down and write their stories about themselves, and others can understand why would say or do certain things they do, besides just what they see. Instead of being judged and criticized.

Q: Do you think using hip-hop in education will impact you and your peers enough to become motivated to stay in school?

S4: Yeah, but you got to understand though, you're going to have to keep having that same judgment about it, like they're not going to be or they can't go places.

Q: I noticed in your classroom, when you come in, a lot of times, there is music playing, and how do you feel about the setting or the tone of your class when the music is playing?

S4: Sometimes the music is playing like earphones. Some people work better with earphones in instead of the outside distraction, but when it's outside music playing out loud, that's not really good.

Q: Story telling is a way of giving people without a voice the opportunity to express themselves. Do you think using story telling could help you to express your life experiences?

S4: Yeah.

Q: How?

S4: Like things you've been exposed to, stuff that happened at home. Some people, they can't say do that in the classroom but they relate to them, and just talk about it or whatever, instead of keeping it all bottled up and stuff.

Q: Would a hip-hop based story telling activity allow your voice to be heard in your classroom and beyond?

S4: Yes.

Q: If we use storytelling, would that help you to be able to tell your story so that you can express how you feel?

S4: Yeah, you bet. I'm thinking other than what's going on up here.

Q: Or, educate them about your environment...

S4: Lifestyle and environment.

Q: here in your school right?

S4: Mm-hmm. (Affirmative)

Q: Should hip-hop based lessons be included in your classes at your school? Would it encourage you to be more engaged in class?

S4: Yeah.

Q: Like in your English classes and other classes

S4: It's going to be something different. Not something that you know you have to do it because it's required by the state. It's not just playing but you could still learn and have fun with it, instead of just, like a test every some few weeks and read a boring story, like I said.

Q: Can the hip-hop culture serve as a bridge between the students and the teachers?

S4: Yes. Some teachers, they think ... they're outside the city. What they hear about us, they already think that about us automatically. We have stuff like that; we can prove them differently and have their mindset changed.

Appendix O

Date: January 13, 2014

Participant: Pedro- Student Participant 5

Location: Guidance Suite/JAG Counselor's Office

Q: What is your definition of the Hip Hop culture?

S5: Hip Hop culture is a new generation that we reflect to it the way that we speak, our clothes, the way that we talk, slang words to use. It's more than music. It's basically the way that we live.

Q: What evidence of the influence of the Hip Hop culture do you see in yourself and in your peers?

S5: I see in myself and my peers, the way that we use the words and the way that we put our clothes. Basically, more in the way that we talk. I can hear if there's a new song that came out, I see some students talking the way that I see and hear on the music.

Q: Do you feel that influence plays a negative or positive role?

S5: It plays both negative and positive. It's positive because they talk how they were poor and then they got rich. Basically, they went from bad to better. They started, some of them. It's bad because we're young and sometimes we don't know what step we have to take to get there. They just talk about money and properties that they own, but they actually have to pass through all of these stages to get there. We don't know that yet.

Q: What influence do you think Hip Hop would have in the classroom and how would it empower you to be successful in your education?

S5: It would empower me because the videos that I see, they have a lot of stuff. I want the things that they have too. It would encourage me to go to class every day and hopefully do best on my future to get the stuff that they have.

Q: Would using Hip Hop in the classroom empower you to think and act differently?

S5: I think it would empower me to think differently. What can I say? Probably it would affect my family too.

Q: Would it make you feel or think differently about your education?

S5: Probably yes.

Q: Do you think using Hip Hop in education will impact you and your peers enough to be motivated to stay in school?

S5: Of course. I think that's a great idea. Cut the rates of dropping out. That class would be more interesting. You'd be passionate to go to class every day.

Q: That would be something that you guys would like if you had it. You have a little bit in your language arts class or...

S5: Yeah.

Q: Storytelling is a way of giving people without a voice the opportunity to express them. How can this be expressed? How can you express that using storytelling about your life's experiences? Would storytelling be a good way of expressing yourself?

S5: Yes, Storytelling would be a good example, how can I tell my story and let people know what I've been through and how to get where I am right now.

Q: Would a Hip Hop based storytelling activity allow your voice to be heard in your classroom and beyond?

S5: Of course. I think it do show people how I feel.

Q: Should Hip Hop based lessons are included in your classes at school and would it encourage you to be more engaged in school?

S5: Yes, of course. It would be more interesting in classroom and it won't be that boring to go to class.

Q: Can the Hip Hop culture serve as a bridge between students and the teachers so that you can relate better to each other?

S5: Yes. Some teachers, we can't make that connection. Sometimes it's hard to be their friend and ask them for some type of information that you want to know. It's good using Hip Hop culture to serve the bridge between the teachers and the students.

Appendix P

Interview Questions

1. Faculty Participant Interview Questions

2. Student Participant Interview Questions

Appendix Q

Teacher Interview Questions

"Culturally relevant pedagogy: Utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote

identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom".

1. What is your definition of the Hip Hop culture?

2. What is the evidence of the influence of the Hip Hop culture do you see in the students

   that you teach?

3. Do you feel that the influence play a positive or negative role in their lives?

4. What influence does Hip Hop have in the classroom that would persuade your students to

   become engaged?

5. Would using Hip Hop in your classroom empower your students to feel and think

   differently about their education and to do something differently that would effect a

   change for themselves, their family and community?

6. Do you think using Hip Hop as a critical pedagogy will impact your students and motivate them to stay in school?

7. Hip Hop is a way of giving those without a voice the opportunity to express themselves. What do you think about that?

8. Would a Hip Hop based storytelling activity allow your students voice to be heard in your classroom? Explain why

9. Do you include Hip Hop in your classes? If so why?

10. How might the Hip Hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

Appendix R

Student Interview Questions

"Culturally relevant pedagogy: Utilizing Hip Hop's intrinsic quality of storytelling to promote

identity, engagement and empowerment in the urban classroom".

1. What is your definition of the Hip Hop culture?

2. What is the evidence of the influence of the Hip Hop culture do you see in yourself and

   your peers?

3. Do you feel that the influence plays a positive or negative role in your life?

4. What influence do you think Hip Hop have in the classroom and how would it empower

   you to be successful in your education?

5. Would using Hip Hop in your classroom empower you to feel and think differently about

   your education and to do something differently that would effect a change for yourself,

   family and community?

6. Do you think using Hip Hop in education will impact you and your peer enough to become motivated to stay in school?

7. Storytelling is a way of giving people without a voice the opportunity to express themselves. How can that be use express your lived experiences?

8. Would a Hip Hop based storytelling activity allow your voice to be heard in your classroom and beyond? Explain why

9. Should Hip Hop based lessons be included in your classes at your school? Would it encourage you to be more engaged?

10. Can the Hip Hop culture serve as a bridge between students and teachers?

Appendix S

<u>Hip Hop Storytelling Rap</u>

Shout out to the class of 2014 man

Big goal and big dreams are all we got

Ha, Ha, Ha, Yeah

CHS purple and gold but the panther stay black

2014 is the year it's a wrap, we focused on college to gain more knowledge

Get a good job couple dollars in the pocket,

Good education shoot off like a rocket,

Understand the legacy cause ain't no way to stop it,

A whole lot of talent in the high just watch it,

We rap, we sing, we dance, then throw our hands and

Scream real hard loud because we can,

The life at the high there is no comparison,

Its' been a long journey now we're close to the end,

Basketball games with a whole lot of fans,

Football games ain't no room in the stands,

Every day I live life good with a plan,

Every day I pray to God that they get a chance

Yeah Yeah

Chorus: 2X

Oh how much I love the high, it's something that I can't deny,

The way you makes me feel

It's so right……

It's so right….

It's so right, It's so right, It's so right…….

Verse 2

Almost every subject I love at the high Math, English every day of my life

Stay focus and go through the motion

Close to the end celebrate the promotion,

JROTC another big part of the high family,

Auto tech another part of the tree,

Practice every day to be the best you can be,

CHS ain't no place for stress

Make sure you come prepare,

Make sure you get your rest,

2014 yeah we up next,

We all gonna success because we learn from the best,

Yeah

Chorus: 2X

Oh how much I love the high, it's something that I can't deny,

The way you makes me feel

It's so right…

It's so right….

It's so right, It's so right, It's so right…….