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# The Moving to the Beat Documentary and Hip-Hop Based Curriculum Guide: Youth Reactions and Resistance

Jennifer Wallin-Ruschman  
*Portland State University*

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The Moving to the Beat Documentary and  
Hip-Hop Based Curriculum Guide:  
Youth Reactions and Resistance

by

Jennifer Wallin-Ruschman

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science  
in  
Psychology

Thesis Committee:  
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Portland State University  
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## Abstract

Many of the academic and popular treatments of hip-hop overlook the complexity of the phenomenon. Hip-hop is often portrayed solely as a source of corruption and regressive tendencies or, alternatively, as a sort of savior for otherwise marginalized individuals and source of revolutionary power. This thesis situates hip-hop between these poles and draws out its progressive and regressive aspects for analysis.

Considering its vast global influence and a growing body of academic literature, hip-hop has been notably understudied in the field of psychology. Alternatively, educational theorists and practitioners have realized the power of hip-hop in revisualizing an emancipatory education that fosters critical consciousness. This project goes beyond other hip-hop education projects in that it attends more directly to the psychological phenomenon of identity. As youth develop a strong connection to social and political identity and increase their level of critical consciousness (an additional goal of this and most other hip-hop based curriculums) they are more likely to participate and have the tools to be successful at actions aimed at progressive social change.

This thesis grew out of a larger project titled *Moving to the Beat*, a community-based multi-media endeavor that includes both the *Moving to the Beat* documentary film and curriculum guide. The *Moving to the Beat* curriculum guide strives toward the goals of emancipatory education. The film and the curriculum guide stay near the experience of hip-hop identified youth while attempting to avoid generalizations and stereotypes.

Further, the developments of the film, curriculum guide, and this thesis have been guided

by academic literature from a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, cultural studies, and education.

The thesis focuses on two primary questions: (1) How do youth engage the Moving to the Beat curriculum guide and documentary film? (2) Do the Moving to the Beat materials facilitate the development of critical consciousness and/or social identity in youth? Two primary waves of data collection were conducted to answer these questions. At each location, *Moving to the Beat* was shown and an outside facilitator guided youth through the curriculum discussions and activities that centered on identity. During these workshops, multiple sources of qualitative data were collected, including participant observations, interviews, student produced lyrics, and feedback forms. These sources of data pointed to six primary themes across locations and sources of data: traditional gender roles, “everyone is all equal”, “you doing you”, the new hip-hop generation, development and maturity, and youth resistance. This thesis represents the first assessment of the *Moving to the Beat* documentary and curriculum, the results of which will be used to alter the curriculum guide and prepare it for publication.

## Acknowledgments

First, my sincerest gratitude to Professor Jan Haaken, my advisor, for her constant guidance in this project. She has pushed me to develop as an academic and an activist. I want to thank her for your patience in teaching me the craft of writing and for making space to be a radical. I also wish to thank Professor Eric Mankowski for his guidance in pursuing qualitative methods and his valuable insight. And thanks to Professor Robert Roeser as well for his academic guidance, constant encouragement, and kind words.

Thanks to my loving partner Matt Ruschman, without whom this thesis would not exist. His encouragement and feedback have helped make what once seemed impossible a reality, from listening to my ideas, proofing my work, and the invaluable emotional support.

Many of my student colleagues have contributed to my work as well. Kealani Balfour provided constant support, always taking time to listen and encourage me. Thanks also to Jimena Alvarado, Diana Rempe, and Kara Underwood for their many forms of support in this process. Fawn Nioso assisted as co-observer and helping orchestrate the workshop. Countless individuals in this graduate program have been instrumental in keeping me centered through this process and taking care of me in various ways- a particular thanks goes to the cohort who adopted this ol'third year.

As I searched for places to screen *Moving to the Beat* and test the curriculum I was constantly struck by the level of support of the project by the hip-hop and education communities. Countless people leant time and effort to making sure M2B was shared with youth and I was able to complete my degree. Also, this thesis would have been

impossible without the valuable insight of the youth participants and facilitators, all of whom taught me throughout this process.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis grew out of a larger project titled Moving to the Beat (M2B), a community-based multi-media endeavor that includes both the *Moving to the Beat* documentary film and curriculum guide. Carried out over a period of six years, M2B enlists hip-hop as a medium for dialogue between groups of youth in Sierra Leone and the United States on issues related to activism, identity, and hip-hop. The curriculum guide was developed by a four-person team; Simona Patange, Fawn Nioso, Jan Haaken (the producer of *Moving to the Beat*), and myself. We designed the guide for educational use, primarily at the secondary level, and organized it around four core themes drawn from the documentary: rebellion, the American dream, identity, and activism. The identity segment of the curriculum was the focus of this thesis (see Appendix A).

The thesis focuses on two questions: (1) How do youth engage the M2B curriculum guide and documentary film? (2) Do the M2B materials facilitate the development of critical consciousness and/or social identity in youth? Two waves of data collection were conducted to answer these questions. At each location, *Moving to the Beat* was shown and an outside facilitator guided youth through the curriculum discussions and activities that centered on identity. During these workshops, multiple sources of qualitative data were collected, including participant observations, interviews, student produced lyrics, and feedback forms.

### Rationale for the Study

Considering its vast global influence and a growing body of academic literature, hip-hop has been notably understudied in the field of psychology. The focus on under-represented groups and social justice in community psychology would seem to make this



sub-discipline a particularly hospitable area for the study of hip-hop. Yet here, too, the literature on hip-hop is quite scant. Prier and Beachum (2008) argue that hip-hop has not been adequately studied in the social sciences and that this problem reflects the larger neglect of the concerns of Black youth.

Tyson (2003) conducted a content analysis of journal articles focused on an empirical investigation of some aspect of rap music or hip-hop culture. Tyson found that the majority (67%) of studies involving hip-hop took a mainstream media approach, that is, they focused exclusively on the most problematized versions of rap music (e.g., gangsta rap) and the research questions centered on negative aspects of the music. The finding was strongest in journals related to psychology. This thesis attempted to expand the literature on hip-hop in the field of psychology and to advance a more complex understanding of hip-hop and its progressive potential.

The decision to concentrate on high-school aged youth reflected the age range intended for the M2B curriculum guide and the developmental state most heavily invested in identity construction. Although college has been identified as an important period of identity development (and some material was introduced into college classrooms) I chose to conduct the two waves of data collection with younger adolescents for several reasons. First, college represents a time of transition and increasing exposure to alternative ideologies, making it hard to parse out specific factors shaping identity development. In addition, the social justice agenda of this project, and M2B in general, oriented me to focus on groups with less exposure to the alternative and positive representations of Africa and hip-hop promoted in the film and curriculum. Second, I am interested in a hip-hop identified youth from different race and class backgrounds, high-

school youth are less limited in this regard. This is particularly true working in Portland, Oregon because of the city's relatively small African-American population.

For the development of the M2B guide and conceptualization of this thesis, background knowledge of hip-hop was essential. Hip-Hop cannot be understood as a phenomenon or as an identity without taking into account the history and the social contexts that lead to its development and continual transformation. Forms of adolescent popular culture are often not considered major cultural changes but the global impact of hip-hop culture has been well documented (Rose, 1994/2008; Pardue, 2004; Pennycook, 2007; Mitchell, 2001, and Forman, 2001). Kitwana (2004) goes so far as to label Black individuals born between 1965 and 1984 the "hip-hop generation" (p. 115). *Moving to the Beat* is just one of the myriad films and academic projects that document the global spread of hip-hop. Many of the academic and popular treatments of hip-hop overlook the complexity of the phenomenon. Hip-hop is often portrayed solely as a source of corruption and regressive cultural tendencies or, alternatively, as a sort of salvation and revolutionary power for otherwise marginalized individuals. This thesis situates hip-hop between these poles and draws out its progressive and regressive aspects for analysis.

Educational theorists and practitioners have realized the power of hip-hop in revisualizing an emancipatory education that fosters critical consciousness. Books and journal articles abound on the myriad ways hip-hop is used in educational settings (Dimitriadis, 2001; Hill, 2009; Ibrahim, 2003; Pardue, 2004; Petchauer, 2009; and Stovall, 2006). Teachers who incorporate hip-hop into classroom instruction hope to decrease the conflict between students' racial or ethnic identities and school or academic based identities.

Educational settings that fail to understand the role hip-hop culture plays in youth's lives run the risk of further alienating the youth, pushing aside the knowledge gained by viewing the world through the often critical lens of hip-hop. Carter (2003) has argued that Black youth often feel a pull between exercising dominant forms of cultural capital associated with economic and educational success, on the one hand, and oppressive forces associated with these same models of success on the other. Blackness and belonging to the Black community includes traditions of oppositional culture as well (see Fordham & Ogbu, 1986). Some youth use Black forms of cultural capital to denote entry and acceptance into groups, policing those that do not use Black vernacular and, instead, "talk white." Because the education system values dominant forms of cultural capital, i.e., white middle class values, youth are often forced to choose between acceptance by other Black youth, or acceptance by teachers and a perceived increased chance at academic and economic success. Youth police these boundaries by accusing those that cross it of, "acting white."

One of the primary ways that Black, and to some extent Latino, youth enact their group status is through signifiers of hip-hop culture (e.g., dress, attitude, style of speaking and music choice). This project works at the boundaries of identity, hip-hop, and education to simultaneously gain a better understanding of the intersections of these phenomena and to offer youth a space where they can learn and grow without the conflict felt in traditional educational settings. This thesis represents only the first step in this journey. By integrating hip-hop into educational curriculum M2B hopes to begin to create a learning space that no longer seeks to disconnect youth from their identity.

Not only does integrating hip-hop into the curriculum benefit youth of color identified with the culture, but it also links to facilitating participative pedagogies more generally. Rodríguez (2009) argues that hip-hop's affinity for dialogue and reflection can be a useful resource in the classroom, particularly when utilizing critical pedagogy. Rodríguez (2009) also suggests that curriculum development centered on hip-hop culture is a necessary step in meeting the educational needs of students on the margins. Many educational uses of hip-hop strive towards liberatory education practices. However, these projects have paid scant attention to the psychological implications of hip-hop as an identity among diverse groups of youth.

This thesis goes beyond other hip-hop education projects in that it attends more directly to the psychological phenomenon of identity. Positive identity development is important for youth to navigate the conflicting messages they receive from education and hip-hop. Youth that are firmly rooted in regards to personal, ego, and social identity are better situated to face the challenges of being a young person. The benefits are not only individual, but also social. As youth develop a strong connections to social and political identities and increase their level of critical consciousness (an additional goal of this and most other hip-hop based curriculums) they are more likely to participate and have the tools to be successful at actions aimed at progressive social change.

An additional divergent orientation of this thesis responds to Petchauer (2009) reaction to reviewing the literature on hip-hop based pedagogies. He noted that assessments of hip-hop based pedagogies were concerned with whether or not hip-hop curricula worked. However, in the educational hip-hop literature the question of how and why these pedagogies work has been understudied. The use of qualitative methods in this

thesis allows me to attend more to the how and why of the study of the intersection of hip-hop and education.

The M2B project focuses on youth on the margins. The documentary film was developed to offer a more complex view of Black Africans and African-Americans. Complex readings of youth's life experiences not only offers positive images of marginalized youth but also offers an alternative for adults and more mainstream youth that may not understand hip-hop culture. The curriculum guide is also specifically designed for youth that identify with hip-hop. Although this may sound exclusionary, it is a response to the tendency for education projects to be based in the experience of white, middle class, men. Additionally M2B has sought to integrate the voices of female, as well as male artist. This was done in reaction to the multiple hip-hop based pedagogies that focus exclusively on Black men (see, Prier & Beachum, 2008 and Watts, Abdul-Adil & Pratt, 2002). Yet, I expect that this curriculum guide will also be useful for youth who are not identified with hip-hop and/or who do not identify as Black. The guide probes a series of issues related to identity development and critical consciousness relevant to the development of adolescents more broadly.

Many hip-hop based youth projects have focused exclusively on men or have achieved greater levels of success with male participants (see Watts, Abdul-Adil & Pratt 2002). To counterbalance this, great lengths were taken during the production of the *Moving to the Beat* film and the curriculum guide to include female as well as male voices. The hope is that this translates to an experience that is accessible for female as well as male students and for a wide cross-section of youth.

The M2B curriculum guide strives toward the goals of emancipatory education. In the *Moving to the Beat* film, hip-hop is presented as a complex phenomenon by youth that identify with hip-hop. The curriculum guide was developed to incorporate a high degree of participation, reflection, and dialogue. The film and the curriculum guide stay near the experience of hip-hop identified youth while attempting to avoid generalizations and stereotypes. Identity achievement is intimately connected to higher levels of critical consciousness, as both require a number of the same skills, including: abstract thinking, high levels of cognitive functioning, a high level of morality, and the ability to imagine alternatives to current reality (Dreyer, 1994).

#### The Moving to the Beat Project

The roots of the M2B project are planted in theories of social action research that seek to move knowledge out of the university and into the community. Knowledge is produced to create change and is most effective if academics and community members work together. When the resources and skills of academics are combined with the knowledge and skills of a community, research is more apt to be useful to that community and facilitate progressive social change. The *Moving to the Beat* film and curriculum guide strives to be a collaboration between the community and academia as well as, between academics and activists.

The M2B project began as an international collaboration of women- peace activists and sought to document the aftermath of the Sierra Leonean civil war and the beginning of the post-war healing, focusing on women's role in that process. The curriculum guide, *Speaking Out: Women, War, and the Global Economy* (2005) and its accompanying documentary film, *Diamonds, Guns, and Rice* (2007) connect the personal

and political and the local and global in an engaging discovery of people, place, and politics.

In 2005, during the production of special features of the *Diamonds, Guns, and Rice*, DVD, the crew noticed an interesting phenomenon: an American aesthetic, hip-hop, was providing a space for the voices of the youth in Sierra Leone, much like what hip-hop had done since the late 1970's in many cities in the United States. As politically conscious hip-hop was waning in the United States it was alive and thriving in this small West African country. Sierra Leonean youth were using hip-hop, specifically rap music, to speak out on issues of post-war trauma, the AIDS/HIV epidemic, women's rights, poverty, and political corruption.

The M2B project includes: a feature length documentary film, which has been shown at festivals, conferences, and on television (broadcast through the National Black Programming Consortium/Corporation for Public Broadcasting); a DVD with three special features; an international organization with chapters in Portland, Oregon and Freetown, Sierra Leone; a series of eleven music videos and CD tracks; an interactive website ([www.moving2thebeat.com](http://www.moving2thebeat.com)); and a participatory curriculum guide.

The Portland chapter of M2B has worked on a range of multimedia projects (e.g., video/film, radio, performance art, conferences, and text) focused on generating community dialogue on important social issues and on breaking the boundary between academia and everyday life. Currently the Portland chapter is working on grant writing and fundraising to support the foundation. These community media projects grew out of the action research orientation of the M2B team. We believe, as Kurt Lewin (1975) so famously quipped, that "if you want to understand something, try to change it."

Stereotypical images of violence, drugs, and sexism have dominated Hollywood hip-hop films. Images of this nature reinforce long held stereotypes about men and women in the Black community while glossing over the multiple, complex identities of hip-hop artists.

In the *Moving to the Beat* documentary film, an American hip-hop group, Rebel Soulz, journeys to Freetown with Sierra Leonean American Abdul Fofanah serving as a cross-cultural guide, narrator, and co-director. The film bridges two starkly different worlds as they are united by hip-hop. In the process of collaborating with local artists in Freetown, the American visitors confront their own stereotypes and fantasies of Africa just as they set out to shatter the perception of America as a “second heaven” for the Sierra Leoneans. The hip-hop in *Moving to the Beat* tackles topics ranging from sexism, post-war trauma, rebellion, authenticity, and Black identity to non-violent resistance.

The themes of the *Moving to the Beat* film and curriculum guide arose organically from the youth communities in Sierra Leone and Portland, Oregon. The documentary film has been broadcast through public television in North America and part of Africa to share the experiences these youth and how they are using hip-hop to work towards progressive social change. In addition, the documentary film and the curriculum guide are going to be distributed as a package to classrooms and libraries across the United States as a part of the National Black Programming Consortium’s (NBPC) AfroPop series. The NBPC aims for M2B have guided the design of this thesis. Gaining a deeper understanding of the effects of the film and the curriculum guide on youth is a major goal of this thesis.

Drawing on Paulo Freire’s (2000) concepts of critical consciousness and critical pedagogy, the curriculum guide sought to incorporate elements of hip-hop and reflection



into education. Recognizing and validating the experience of youth may open them to experience the emancipatory capabilities of education as they begin to develop critical consciousness.

The group working on the M2B guide incorporated a degree of fluidity into the lessons so that students could construct the conversation. Preferably, the implementation of the M2B curriculum yields a different experience every time it is taught. This is an essential aspect of the critical pedagogy of Freire (2000) because it counters traditional education by utilizing students' experiential knowledge. The identity portion of the curriculum is assessed in this thesis. The curriculum guide lessons and activities were designed to facilitate discussion of the issues presented in the documentary and to provide students the chance to reflect on these issues in a number of ways (e.g., talking, writing, creating art, etc.). The M2B curriculum strives to challenge students to reflect on their understanding of the multiple, complex, intersecting identities they hold.

#### Testing the M2B curriculum

A variety of participants and settings were involved in the data collection phase of this thesis. The first round of data collection occurred at Revitalize Outer South East (ROSE) Community Development's Summer Arts Academy (SAS). Over two weeks five core youth viewed the film and went through the entire identity portion of the curriculum guide. This was followed by three showings of the *Moving to the Beat* film, twice in college classrooms at Portland State University and once at Teen Night at University Park Community Center (UPCC). Another full workshop at UPCC took place over a three-week period. Ten core youth viewed the film and went through at least half of the identity portion of the curriculum guide.

For this thesis the identity portion of the curriculum was supplemented with a screening of the entire *Moving to the Beat* film and a hip-hop lyrics writing workshop. The workshops lasted from three to four days over a two or three week period. The first activity youth participated in was the creation of a set of hip-hop lyrics detailing their identity. Next, the students reviewed background on the M2B project and learned about the country of Sierra Leone. They then view the *Moving to the Beat* film and discussed their reactions to the film. On the following day students viewed a short clip from the documentary and were asked to reflect on a number of the issues presented in the clip (e.g., what it means to identify with a group or culture and what impact identity has on their levels of privilege or oppression). Students were encouraged to consider the flexibility and conflict involved in identity development, as well as less available aspects of identity. On the final day students watched another clip from the film that dealt with sexism and again they engaged in a period of discussion. Towards the end of each set of workshops students filled out a qualitative feedback form.

I studied the curriculum using four primary forms of data: lyrics produced by youth, participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and an evaluation form. The participant observation included field notes taken during screenings of the film and the implementation of the curriculum guide. These observations and notes constitute the bulk of the data for the thesis. Field notes from observations consisted of a record of youth's responses to the film and curriculum from the point of view of two different observers. Observers also attended to their own personal responses to these events, which are detailed in the field notes. It was the strength of this portion of the data, relative to the others, that lead the analysis to concentrate on the research question that gauges general

reactions, instead of the identity and critical consciousness focus.

In addition to the observations participants produced hip-hop lyrics in the form of a “*Song of Self*.” The Song of Self highlighted important events and/or people in the youth’s life and how these people or events directed the development of their identity. Further, for one of the pilots I interviewed two participants. Interviews were semi-structured and were recorded and later transcribed. Participating youth also filled out a feedback form after the completion of the activities. This form asked them directly about their experiences with the M2B film and curriculum. Additionally, participants had the opportunity to self-identify, including placing themselves in demographic categories and were asked if they identified with hip-hop. This information was gathered to study the M2B curriculum guide in relation to students of differing demographics and levels of engagement with hip-hop culture.

The developments of the film, curriculum guide, and this thesis have been steeped in academic literature from a wide swath of areas, including psychology, cultural studies, and education. The literature that is most central to this analysis are reviewed in the following section. The review includes a section on identity, critical consciousness, hip-hop, and critical education. The methodology used for this thesis is then reviewed, including a section on analysis and interpretation. The results of each of the respective waves of data collection are then reviewed, followed by some overall interpretations and themes from the data. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the process, the results, the limitations of the study, and a review of potential next steps.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The youth and communities to whom the M2B curriculum are directed are embedded in a context of oppression. The social and physical oppression of these youth is apparent in their over-representation in the criminal justice system and higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and low education levels (US Census, 2003 and Bureau of Justice Statistics Correctional Surveys, 1997). I believe the over representation of Black youth (and other groups on the margins) in these statistics is a result of long-term institutionalized racism at the interpersonal and structural levels and that this oppression can affect the psychology of an individual. Belief in institutionalized oppression counters reasoning that blames the victim or attributes such statistics to a culture of poverty and underachievement.

In order to understand the dynamics of oppression, cultural theorists and activists make a key distinction between the oppressors and the oppressed. Oppressors are those people or groups that hold a position of power and use their power in the oppression of other groups. This power is multifaceted and often includes access to a wide variety of resources, privilege, and prestige. Privilege and prestige grant oppressors a level of control over their lives that is generally lacking for the oppressed (Freire, 2000). Oppressive systems and institutions create the context for oppression. The institution of education is a commonly cited oppressive system (see Foucault, 1977) and will be discussed later in this thesis. Although oppression is a highly complex phenomenon that consists of intersecting spheres of power, such as race, class, and gender (see Collins, 1992) the distinction of oppressor and oppressed makes discussing and studying these systems more manageable.

Oppression exists not only at the institutional level but also at the psychological level. A particularly insidious symptom of psychological oppression involves the internalization of stereotypes. According to Ann Cudd (2006), stereotypes are the primary means of internalized oppression. In the minds of oppressors stereotypes function to justify the oppression of some groups by means of dehumanization. Stereotypes also may lead to a process of acceptance of oppression on the part of the oppressed. The internalization of stereotypes leads to a consciousness dependency (i.e., false consciousness). Consciousness dependency is the process by which the oppressed internalize the consciousness of the oppressor (Freire, 2000). The consciousness of the oppressor includes justifications of oppression that work by painting the oppressed as morally corrupt and/or lazy. Dehumanization decreases the levels of cognitive dissonance in the oppressors and if internalized may serve the same role in the oppressed. If the oppressors dehumanizing stereotypes are adopted by the oppressed they may accept their situation and experience increased feelings of self-blame and shame (Cudd, 2006). Self-blame can occur when oppressed social roles are internalized as negative stereotypes that often decrease self-esteem and self-efficacy. The internalized sense of helplessness or worthlessness fosters personal justifications for oppressed situations (e.g., "I am poor because I deserve it"). Individuals and groups that believe they deserve their fate are not likely to engage in actions to counter oppression.

Freire's (1993) concept of critical consciousness is a process of transforming false consciousness. Critical consciousness involves understanding the systematic process of oppression that affects you and everyone that shares your social identity. Overcoming this self-blame can lead to increased actions toward social change. Critical consciousness

involves having a sense of self (identity) and how that self is connected to larger systems of domination. Awareness is coupled with taking action for more equitable distributions of power and resources. The changing self rejects notions of self-blame and creates new ways of knowing (in conjunction with others in oppressed groups) that are not dependent on the oppressor's view of the world (Abdi, 2001).

As I developed my plan for attending to the power dynamics of the research process I was influenced by the work of Lykes' (1989). In her collaborative work with women in Guatemala she warns of the miscommunication and incorrect interpretation that can arise if researchers do not continuously reflect on power imbalances and the impacts they have on projects. Lykes (1989) encourages researchers to not just be aware of their power and position as researchers but also to be aware and respect the power of participants.

As I sought to work within the Black community I made an effort to attend to the affects of the various forms of oppression my participants might encounter and how participating in the M2B project might affect them. Oppression can take an overt, outward form. For example, the female inmates in Fine and Torre's (2006) action research project faced intimidation because of their participation in research. Although highly successful in many respects, Fine and Torre's (2006) action research project reflects the dangers and limitations of such an approach. Because the women worked with are embedded in a highly controlled environment (i.e., prisons) the development of the women's critical consciousness was problematic because they began to have a greater understanding of the injustices inherent in the prison system and other broader institutions of oppression while constrained in their capacities to act on this knowledge.

Although not as highly controlled as prisons, education systems are similarly rule bound and hierarchical institutions. Questioning authority, knowledge, and power are often desirable skills obtained through increased critical consciousness but this may be problematic in many educational settings, especially for adolescents perceived as too rebellious. This is particularly true for Black students who often are labeled as “loud” or “disruptive” by teachers.

The experience of oppression may be more covert and psychological in nature as in Fannon’s (2004) work with the peoples of Algeria and other areas of Africa. The physical and psychological violence these communities suffered at the hands of colonizers and slave traders created a high degree of internalized racism that inhibited capacities to work toward liberation. Freire (2000) speaks of a similar phenomenon, *fear of freedom*, which occurs when the oppressed cannot see (or even imagine) an alternative to their current position. This fear also keeps groups from working towards social justice.

### Adolescence and Identity

The concept of identity has generated a rich history of research in psychology as well as other academic disciplines. Erik Erikson’s pioneering work in the field is still central to many theories of identity (Côté & Levine, 2002; Kroger, 1996; Waterman, 1992, and Marcia, 1980). Erikson expanded on previous work on identity by conceptualizing the individual and the environment as dynamically interacting. According to Erikson the development of a cohesive identity is the key conflict to resolve in adolescence. Youth must undergo a process of progressive identity exploration and eventual resolution of the self in relation to community in order to move forward in development.

The construct of adolescence is a recent phenomenon. The rise of adolescence as a discrete life stage corresponded to a rise in secondary schooling and a desire to decrease the number of youth in the labor market (Kett, 2003). G. Stanley Hall's pioneering work on adolescence coincided with these historical events. Hall (1904) believed that this newly created/extended time between childhood and adulthood should be a period of *moratorium* of commitments or a period of exploration for adolescents, a term he is credited with creating (cited in Kett, 2003). Partly because of its recent theoretical evolution, adolescence is still a poorly defined period. Some institutions treat the adolescent as an adult (e.g., the education and criminal justice system) while others treat the adolescent as a child (e.g., the familial system). Adolescence is generally marked by an extreme immersion in a social group but also as a search for individuality (Erikson, 1968). The search for one's future self or a future possible self is marked as a period of identity exploration and development that is often coupled with mood swings and a distancing from family or assigned position within the community. Adolescent identity development has generally allowed for some forms of rebellion from parental authority and parental ideals. Theorists have historically assumed that available role models, such as teachers or cultural heroes, circumscribed alternative avenues of identity development. Yet, contemporary culture widens this sphere of available options because of the vast array of images distributed through media and the Internet. These advances have prolonged the period of moratorium on commitments in many technologically advanced Western cultures (Kroger, 1996). In addition, the moral dilemmas faced by adolescents are increasingly complex. For example, the Internet and hip-hop have advanced issues of piracy and sampling. Hip-hop's reliance on sampling has challenged claims of ownership



on a broad societal level. These variations in adolescent experience do not devalue the work of Erikson but, rather, open doors for exciting elaborations on his seminal work.

Adolescence is an ideal time to study the construction of identity and to explore alternative narratives for identity formation. The presentation of these alternatives is an important aspect of progressive identity development because it offers youth a vision of identity that is not based on the dominant culture and its stereotypes of group identities (Phinney, 2008). The *Moving to the Beat* film was created with these goals in mind and this thesis followed the same line of reasoning.

Identity rests on the border between the psychological and the social. It is often difficult to parse out the discrete sites where the psychological meets the social. The tendency in the field of psychology to limit the study of identity to individual processes is problematic in that it fails to capture identity as a multi-level phenomenon (Phinney, 2008). Although there is considerable agreement that identity research should involve multidisciplinary and multi-method strategies of inquiry, very little research follows these prescriptions in actuality (Phinney, 2008). This thesis attempts to correct for this tendency and takes a multi-disciplinary and multi-method approach to identity scholarship.

As a cornerstone of this multidisciplinary framework, the following section begins with psychological conceptions of identity as a vital site for anchoring the proposed study. In addition to the psychological literature that informs the study, I review seminal works on identity in related disciplines that inform that theoretical development of this project of inquiry.

The work of Erikson is foundational in much of the academic inquiry on identity. The vast majority of articles and books on identity pay homage to the work of Erikson. The esteem is well deserved, as Erikson's view of identity and its development are in many ways more complex than in much of the subsequent scholarship. Erikson's theory of development is based on proposed stages involving the successful completion of central conflicts. The successful adolescent will have navigated through childhood stages of conflict centered on trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, and industry versus inferiority. Adolescence is a time of negotiation between the fifth stage of conflict--identity versus role confusion. Erikson (1968) theorized that this conflict was one of most challenging in development and that its successful resolution was the key to future success in long-term love relationships and work life.

Erikson's theory is transactional in nature. He was both attentive to the effect the agentic individual had on the environment and on the effect that the active environment had on the individual. Marcia (1980) extended Erikson's work to theorize three specific forms of role confusion: moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. The adolescent period of moratorium on commitments is a necessary and desirable step towards identity achievement. It involves the exploration of different identities and roles outside of those of the immediate family and/or community. This process allows the individual to create an identity that integrates their history, current context, individual abilities, and desires. Problems may arise when this process continues for an extended period of time, delaying future developmental stages and creating stress that stalls identity achievement. Foreclosed identities occur when an adolescent accepts the identity and roles of the

immediate family and/or community without exploration (Kroger, 1996). Diffuse identities are considered the most problematic form of role confusion. Individuals with diffused identities are stuck in a stage of role confusion and are unable to explore alternative avenues of development.

Erikson conceived of identity as constituted of three major parts: the social, the personal, and the ego (Côté & Levine, 2001). Social identity consists of stereotypes, labels, and characteristics attributed to a person based on culturally constructed characteristics, such as race, class, gender, and culture. The social identity, also called collective identity, includes groups to which an individual belongs (e.g., political organizations or religious groups). These group affiliations may be formed on the basis of a persons' social characteristics, such as race or gender, or on less salient aspects of identity. Erikson's definition of personal identity is the mediator between the outward social identity and the internal and unconscious ego identity. The ego identity consists of unconscious identifications that are internalized as parts of the social identity. An achieved ego identity is essential to an achieved identity status as it organizes and makes sense of the divergent social and personal identities (Erikson, 1968).

#### Expansions and Critiques of Erikson's Work

Work by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1986) expanded on the work of Erikson by including group dynamics in the study of social identity. Their work has shown that in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination can be stimulated in the lab with something as rudimentary as whether a person is an art or science student. Identification of an in-group centers on shared experiences, characteristics, and beliefs. In-groups are formed in opposition to characteristics in some identified out-group or other. Tajfel and

Turner (1986) conclude that the in-groups become increasingly similar through increased exposure because of categorization, identification, comparison, and psychological distinctness. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986) a person can belong to an in-group as long as they identify as part of the group (and internalize this identification) and others also identify them as part of the same group.

Erikson further theorized that identity development in adolescence involves finding a healthy balance between being an individual and belonging to a group(s). A common misinterpretation of Erikson's work is the concept of resolution of his stages of conflicts (Kroger, 1993). Rather than resolution of the stage conflict (i.e., identity cohesion versus confusion) the desirable outcome centers on finding a balance between the regressive and the progressive aspects of the conflict. No conflict is ever over or fully resolved but rather dealt with in a healthy way that allows for future stages of development to unfold.

Further expanding on the conceptual framework of Erikson, James Côté and Charles Levine (2002) go beyond Erikson and further divide the experience of identity into the *objective realm* and the *subjective realm* with two identity processes taking place in each area. The processes in the subjective realm include, "a person's subjective experience of his or her mental processes" and "a person's subjective experience of his or her behaviors that culminate in personal and social identity" (p. 134). The objective realm includes "the objective personal and social identity as defined by others who are observers of a person's behavioral repertoire" and "the objective component representing what can be said by others about a person's mental processes" (p. 134). Identity processes are happening at multiple levels within the individual and outside the

individual. This thesis attempted to get at these levels by incorporating an interdisciplinary and multi-method framework of study.

Other extensions of Erikson's work have concentrated on the realm of social or collective identity. Collective identification consists of a number of processes, such as self-categorization, evaluation, importance, attachment, social embeddedness, behavioral involvement, sense of interdependence, content, and meaning (Ashmore, Deaux & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Each of these processes is multifaceted. In order for a person to be a part of a social group they must self-categorize to some level, once categorized a person must evaluate their membership in that group, this process may be public or private in nature. Because people have many identities they are ranked in order of importance. Importance may be explicit or implicit in nature, meaning the level of importance may differ from conscious to unconscious awareness. Membership to a collective group also involves behaviors, such as the amount of time spent in the role, and choice of language. The content and meaning attributed to collective identifications consists of self-attributed characteristics, ideology, and narrative (Ashmore et al., 2004). Self-attributed characteristics might consist of applying common group stereotypes to one's self, while ideology is often thought of as a form of group consciousness. Although narratives have generally been used to study personal aspects of identity their utility in understanding collective identity has also been noted (Ashmore et al., 2004).

Erikson's theory is labeled as sociocultural, implying that context is important to identity development. However, sociocultural identity theory suffers from the normalization of the white, male, middle-class experience (Gilligan, 1982 and Sorell & Montgomery, 2001). Feminist scholars have further critiqued identity theorists for over-

emphasizing the principles of justice and strivings for autonomy, while ignoring the principles of caring and interdependence—principles that are more apt to be normatively central to female development (Gilligan, 1982).

Identity has been conceptualized as a way of negotiating the needs of the individual and the need for community and as carrying some risk of falling too far on one side or the other. Adams and Marshall (1996) have theorized why identity is a central aspect of self. Their work concentrates on five hypothesized functions of identity:

- (a) providing the structure for understanding who one is;
- (b) providing meaning and direction through commitments, values, and goals;
- (c) providing a sense of personal control and free will;
- (d) striving for consistency, coherence, and harmony between values, beliefs, and commitments;
- (e) enabling the recognition of potential through a sense of future, possibilities, and alternative choices. (p. 433)

These five functions provide the basis for understanding the importance of identity in the formation of a holistic, agentic person capable of rebelling and imagining alternatives to the status quo. This agentic function of identity turns the passive identity into an active individual that engages in exploration outside of the immediate family or community and eventually is able to commit to long-term relationships and a career (Côté & Levine, 2002).

### Identity in Cultural Studies and Sociology

Erikson's theory is being revisited because of the vast changes in the socio-cultural context (e.g., globalization and technological/communication advances) that have

occurred over the past few decades. These advances have made the developmental stages initially outlined by Erikson seem increasingly complex and interconnected (Goossens & Phinney, 1996 and Bosma & Kuunen, 2001). The works of Patricia Hill-Collins (1992) and Stuart Hall (1989) have opened the door for a more nuanced understanding of identity development.

Collins (1992) theorizes that all individuals occupy a complicated role in the *matrix of domination*. People may be simultaneously oppressors and oppressed, making an individual more than the sum of their collective social identities. For example, a Black woman does not experience the oppression of a gender and the oppression of race as merely additive but rather as a unique experience of her intersecting aspects of oppression and identity. The majority of identity research, and especially in the field of psychology, has not adequately addressed the interconnected nature of social identities (Phinney, 2008).

Collins (1992) defines intersectionality for Black women as “analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shapes Black women’s experiences and, in turn, are shaped by Black women” (p. 299). This notion of intersectionality guides the methodological strategies of the proposed study in that youth are invited to self-identity along a range of social locations. Some of these locations or positions are dominant over others so that many individuals may be either in the role of oppressor or oppressed. Although race and gender are central to this study, these domains do not encompass the full range of identities and oppressions experienced by youth (age itself is a major contributor to the oppression of students). By understanding multiple

identities one can gain a better understanding of the complexity of oppression and move past the fallacies of the existence of an additive experience of oppression. Knowledge of multiple, interesting identities can also help in understanding that everyone is simultaneously oppressed and oppressor (Collins, 1992).

The identity politics movement of the 1960's and 1970's in the United States conceptualization of identity as phenomenon that was singular in nature and stable in process (Hall, 1989). To be a part of the women's movement was to think of one's self primarily as female while neglecting other aspects of identity (e.g., race, class, or sexuality). A movement or theory that requires the denial of a vital part of identifications or identity narratives could produce high levels of cognitive dissonance, resentment, or ineffective social and political actions. Only when the complexity of identifications is understood and appreciated can the intricacy of social problems be understood and changed.

The ability to navigate the local and the global is presumably a desirable skill in the contemporary world. Global identities are essential because we are intimately connected to global culture, politics, and an increasingly global economy. But it is impossible to know oneself only in this global sense. Personal identity may be connected to the social and ego identity but it is invariably formed in daily, interpersonal interactions (Côté & Levine, 2002 and Hall, 1989). Hall (1989) suggests that the increasingly complex nature of identity by conceptualizing as a *process of identification*. Hall (1989) offers one of the more nuanced and dynamic views of identity. According to Hall, identity is ever-evolving but also provides steady and predictable self-representations in a rapidly changing world. Drawing on Marx and Freud, Hall (1989)



theorizes that identity is not under the conscious or direct control of the individual, but rather is a product of both material conditions and unconscious forces within the individual. What is more, these identity processes are imbedded in a world of symbolic language. Hall (1989) takes his theorizing about identity even farther and draws on the importance of social identities. Hall (1989) synthesis these diverse opinions by stating:

The story of identity is a cover story. A cover story for making you think you are staying in the same place, though with another bit of your mind you do know that you've moved on. What we've learned about the structure of the way in which we identify suggests that identification is not one thing, one moment. We have got to reconceptualize identity as a process of identification, and that is a different matter. It is something that happens over time, that is never absolutely stable, that is subject to the play of history and the play of difference (p. 22)

This conceptualization of identity has informed much of this thesis and is one of the motivating factors in labeling this thesis as a study of identity development. The use of the word development implies a process, not a stagnant entity.

Later Hall (1989) goes on to say that identity is a story to which we naturally try to impose structure. This structure is important, not just for psychological wellbeing, but also for building solidarity. According to Hall (1989) individuals cannot work together to create social change unless they are anchored in a collective identity in the sense of knowing their history and culture.

When one considers the great chimera of choices in identities that circulate in the modern world, it is important to also recognize the limitations of these same choices for

groups that hold little power. It is clear that women, people of color, and lower class individuals face constraints in the development of a wider sphere of social identities. For many of these groups, social identity is assigned based on “otherness.” In addition, the stories of these groups are often filled with suffering, oppression, and trauma. Many of these groups also have rich histories of resistance to such forces but the inclusion of this aspect of collective history is less common.

For groups and individuals on the margins, personal identity is limited by the imposition of social identities imposed by groups with more power, for example a Black social identity is associated with a number of stereotypes about an individual’s personal identity (e.g., violent or athletic). That being said, an individual that has been sorted into the Black collective identity does have a myriad of choices for how they evaluate this identity, how embedded they are in the Black community, how they choose to represent this identity, and where they place it in their hierarchy of identities (Ashmore et al., 2004).

The level to which this prescribed social identity (as constructed by the dominant group) is internalized is based on individual and group levels of critical consciousness. To move beyond the limits placed on this Other identity, individuals must be able to understand the limits (structural and psychological) that are placed on them and to begin to imagine alternatives (Freire, 2000). This process is facilitated when other members of an individual’s group are engaging in the same process. Although individuals and groups may develop an alternative self-conception, they are still placed in the category of other by broader social forces. Creation of identity dissonance is especially problematic if individuals are engaged in a struggle against otherness alone. The importance of the

presence and support of others in the process of dissent has been documented in the psychological literature most famously with experiments by Asch (1955).

### Lawrence Kohlberg and Moral Development

Identity development is only one phenomenon of interest in this thesis. Critical consciousness is connected to identity development through the psychological research on moral development, beginning with Lawrence Kohlberg. Erikson was inspired by the work of Kohlberg and sought to incorporate some of Kohlberg's ideas about moral development into his own theory. Erikson (1968) conceptualized development of moral reasoning as taking place in three stages (i.e., moral, ideological, and ethical) following the three main life stages (childhood, adolescents, and adulthood). The childhood stage of moral reasoning is characterized by a belief in complete authority, the adolescence stage has youth reasoning about multiple sources of authority, the adult stage of ethical awareness is characterized by reasoning that "everyone is responsible for their own actions" (Côté & Levine, 2002, p. 99) and "that everyone has a responsibility to some degree for the entire species" (p. 99). Although associated with adulthood, movement into this stage is, in actuality, quite rare..

Kohlberg's primary area of theorizing centered on levels of moral reasoning and his work elaborates on Erikson. Kohlberg added to Erikson's three stages and concluded that identity development occurred in three main levels, each of which contained two stages. Each stage of moral development represents a qualitative shift in reasoning (Kroger, 1996). Kohlberg's (2008) primary method of data collection was interviews based on presenting moral dilemmas. Kohlberg evaluated responses to vignettes based on the quality of the moral reasoning rather than on correct or incorrect responses to the

dilemma. After interviews Kohlberg would place research participants into one of the types of moral thought based on their reasoning about the dilemma situation. Kohlberg (2008) labeled the participants as one of the following types:

Level I. Pre-Moral Level

Type 1. Punishment and obedience orientation

Type 2. Naïve instrumental hedonism

Level II. Morality of Conventional Role-Conformity

Type 3. Good boy [*sic*] morality of maintaining good relations, approval of others

Type 4. Authority maintaining morality

Level III. Morality of Self-Accepted Moral Principles

Type 5. Morality of contract and of democratically accepted law

Type 6. Morality of individual principles of conscience (p. 12).

Kohlberg (2008) further theorized that the level of moral reasoning is based on motivational and cognitive features. These features are also divided into six types that correspond with a type of moral reasoning. As Kohlberg hypothesized types one and two were most prevalent in children ages seven through ten. Between the ages of 13 and 16 types three and four became most prevalent. Types five and six are rare and never appear before the age of 13, theoretically because children do not possess the cognitive abilities required of this type at younger ages. Although Kohlberg never directly mentioned identity, he did view moral reasoning as a part of ego functioning, which impacts identity development (Kroger, 1996).

Jürgen Habermas (1984) has developed a theory that integrates the process of ego identity formation and moral development while extending the conception of moral reasoning into the area of symbolic mental processes. For Habermas (1984) higher levels of moral consciousness cannot be obtained without being aware of the symbolic world (especially language)—capacities that facilitate higher-order cognitive functioning and communication skills. Habermas (1984) expanded on Kohlberg by placing increased importance on social roles and norms and the role they play in ego identity development and subsequently in the formation of moral consciousness. First, children must become aware of social roles and then they must (if they are to develop an ego identity) begin to question these roles and norms. In the minds of youth, norms and roles are no longer created equal; youth have developed the capacity to judge competing norms. According to Habermas, the key advance occurs when youth are able to reflect on their actions outside of cultural and/or societal norms and move from a role identity rooted in local norms and concrete principles to an ego identity that can be reflected on and adjusted based on overarching, abstract principles, such as justice and/or fairness.

#### Paulo Freire and Critical Consciousness

The development of critical consciousness is essential to progressive identity processes. Freire (2000) theorized that oppression dehumanizes the oppressed and the oppressor. The dehumanization of the oppressed involves a process of portraying them as less than human, whether through stereotyping or various types of abuse. Such forms of “Othering” may be deployed to justify the unequal distribution of resources in the minds of the oppressors. The oppressed are likely to experience a *false consciousness* or

*consciousness dependency*, which involves an understanding of self and the world that is dependent on the consciousness of the oppressors. Consciousness dependency combined with dehumanization leads to internalized oppression that may take the form of *fear of freedom*, self-blame, and/or learned helplessness. Each of these can play a role in the perpetuation of oppression. Individuals that cannot imagine alternatives to oppression may blame themselves, feel that they deserve their oppression, or feel there is nothing they can do to change their oppressive situation and are not likely to initiate or participate in actions directed towards social change.

To overcome barriers and initiate progressive change Freire (2000) hypothesized the process that is now called *critical pedagogy*. Critical pedagogy advances a participatory model of education aimed at increasing literacy and the capacity to question, to seek alternatives to the given social order, and to experience a sense of social agency. In this philosophy of education the students' experience is used as the primary foundation for the curriculum. In addition, the nature of the discussion is a dialogue between student and educator where everyone is both learning and teaching. Originally conceived to teach adults to read in the poorest areas of Brazil, critical pedagogy has been used in a variety of contexts. The development of critical consciousness is the primary aim of critical pedagogy. Critical consciousness allows individuals to understand themselves and their world in relation to broad systems and institutions of oppression, colonization, and/or social injustice. Freire (1993) described critical consciousness as:

The critically transitive consciousness is characterized by depth in the interpretation of problems; by the substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; by the testing of one's "findings" and by openness

to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; by soundness of argumentation; by the practice of dialogue rather than polemics; by receptivity to the new for reasons beyond mere novelty and by the good sense not to reject the old just because it is old—by accepting what is valid in both old and new (p. 18).

The words of Freire reveal the breadth of his principles and the potential difficulties in operationalizing the concept of critical consciousness. As the quote suggests, critical consciousness results in a decrease in consciousness-dependency, self-blame, and learned helplessness. It involves not only understanding one's place in a broad framework of injustice but also beginning to engage in actions to change this system. According to Freire (1993) critical consciousness incorporates a formation of knowledge that involves critical thinking, participation in knowledge production, and an integration of individual and the broader community's concerns. Smith (1976) attempts to code critical consciousness, based on Freire's original term *conscientizacao*, by dividing each of Freire's hypothesized levels of critical consciousness (i.e., magical, naïve, and critical) into naming, reflecting, and acting (see Appendix B). This represents one of the earliest and most thorough operationalizations of critical consciousness.

### Psychological Theory and Critical Consciousness

Elena Mustakova-Possardt (1998) defines critical consciousness as a psychological construct that bridges thought and action. She breaks down critical consciousness into two common psychological phenomena, structural and moral

development. Moral development is envisaged in terms similar to Kohlberg's stages while structural development is envisaged using Piaget's stages. Mustakova-Possardt collected interviews from a total of 28 individuals from a wide variety of social locations in the United States and in Bulgaria. One of the primary motivations of critical consciousness development was "the motive to establish a sense of identity" (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998, p. 17). Social identity appeared to occur via two pathways--one where moral concerns preceded the formation of social identity and another where moral concerns did not exist prior to socialization into group identity. In addition to identity, agency is identified here as a characteristic of critical consciousness development. Of the three levels of critical consciousness identified by Mustakova-Possardt (e.g., pre-, transitional-, and critical consciousness) each is correlated with a developmental pathway. Individuals that maintain a pre-critical consciousness throughout adulthood are likely to have had high levels of moral motivation before the complete development of structural skills. Although it is hypothesized that circumstances may stimulate the development of higher levels of moral reasoning, even late in life, individuals in a transitional stage of critical consciousness are more likely to be in the process of dealing with interpersonal and social conflicts associated with increased levels of critical thinking. Even as individuals are engaging in critically conscious acts, however, they also may be limited in their capacities for action or agency. Individuals that have fully moved into the critically conscious stage experience "an identity characterized by relative unity of self and morality" (Mustakova-Possardt, 1998, p. 22). The concerns for public and private become less dichotomized and individuals act on these concerns. Using Mustakova-Possardt's (1998) framework the connections between identity, agency, moral



development, and critical consciousness becomes even more complex and interdependent.

### Community Psychology and Socio-Political Development

Many hip-hop based pedagogies use rap and other aspects of hip-hop culture to stay near students' experiences but also challenge them to look into broad social systems of oppression. Roderick Watts and colleagues (2002) use rap as a part of their broader goal of socio-political development in working with young African-American men. In their Young Warriors program young men watch rap videos and are led through a dialogue to try and encourage critical thinking. Critical thinking develops as students start to see that self/other blaming and judging behaviors of violence or unemployment are better understood in a historical and cultural context (Watts et al., 2002).

The goal of the intervention is to move youth from "lower" levels of socio-political development (i.e., acritical stage, adaptive stage, and precritical stage) to higher levels (i.e., critical stage and liberation stage) in conjunction with building critical literacy skills. The lowest stage (acritical) is characterized by a lack of knowledge of oppression and highest stage (liberation) is characterized by continual awareness of oppression, involvement in social action, and fewer adaptive behaviors (Watts, Griffith & Abdul-Adil, 1999).

The empirical results of the Young Warriors program show an increase in response to videos that mirror some forms of critical thought or understanding over the ten-week period (Watts et al., 2002). Further, teachers from the school where the program was conducted commented that the attention and engagement level of students during the Young Warriors program was much greater than during other classes. Teachers also

reported that students were discussing themes from Young Warriors outside of the program. But none of the response could be classified as either of the two “highest” levels of sociopolitical development. The quotes that are used to suggest developments are decidedly thin and do not appear to reflect a great deal of insight into that actual phenomenon. In the Young Warriors program students did make the transition from description to critique, but many of the critiques were not at the societal level (i.e., they did not move beyond the individual or immediate community). The use of hip-hop in the Young Warriors program focused exclusively on the regressive aspects of the culture. Although hip-hop has regressive aspects it is a complex phenomenon that also includes a number of progressive aspects as well. The material presented in this thesis has been carefully crafted to reflect progressive themes and critically analyze regressive themes.

### Hip-Hop

The *Moving to the Beat* documentary and curriculum include discussions of the history of hip-hop and the importance of history to critical consciousness. The origins of hip-hop are heavily contested and the source of considerable folklore. Most sources point to the Jamaican immigrant DJ Kool Herc and his massive speaker system, but in reality many people and circumstances created hip-hop (Chang, 2005). The true innovators are the youth of the Bronx in the late 1970’s in response to their disastrous social and economic conditions. Racist and class-based institutions and policies created lives of poverty and injustice for youth living in urban areas (Rose, 1994). Just one generation after their parents’ success in the civil rights movements and a high point of Black resistance, these youth lived in the backlash of oppressive social and economic policies that only worsened with the Reagan years. Youth struggled to make sense of their current

social situation in light of the successes of the civil rights movement. “Urban renewal” destroyed communities, as did the influx of drugs and increasingly lethal weaponry (Rose, 1994). These multiple forms of violence and the responses of youth to the trauma of their communities created the circumstances under which hip-hop was born.

Although decidedly contemporary, hip-hop draws on a rich history of African, African-American, and Caribbean (specifically Jamaica’s reggae music) art and style (Chang, 2005). Hip-hop is not just music or style but a way of life, a way of being, a form of communication, a community, and an identity. Rapping (the vocal aspect of hip-hop music) draws on African and African-American oral traditions of rhyming and chanting and is highly accessible (Rose, 1994). Rhymes are some of the simplest poetic forms available for composing lyrics. Rap music rhymes often incorporate clever word play and encoding of information for specific subsets of youth (often those from a poor, urban, background). This grammatical structure evokes the comforting and rocking motions of childhood—a form that may be particularly consoling for youth who have endured abandonment and deprivation. Although accessible, rapping can also be competitive. Rappers are judged by their ability to create their own style (e.g., smooth or intense) of rapping, their ability to rap to the beat, and their use of intricate word play (e.g., using double meanings and metaphors) (Rose, 1994).

Hip-hop was originally multi-dimensional in nature. It told stories of life in the ghetto, violence, the sex industry, stories of injustice and oppression, and rage at police and the government. This quickly changed as corporations took over the production of music and white youth gained easier access to hip-hop and became the largest consumer group of rap music. Records sales quickly indicated that white youth wanted to hear the

genre of rap that was produced and marketed as *gangsta rap* (Rose, 2008). Mainstream hip-hop's identity began to shift from a music "from the streets for the streets" to a mass-produced, professional music for commercial consumption. Originally one of many genres of rap, *gangsta rap* quickly became the preeminent form of hip-hop music available to mainstream audiences.

The mainstream radio airwaves may be dominated by commercial hip-hop, but a progressive movement of rap music and hip-hop culture is alive and well. The underground scene includes artists such as The Coup, Immortal Technique, and dead prez. Artists of this orientation speak to broad injustice, oppression, and the corporate cooptation of mainstream hip-hop. Progressive artists bring hip-hop back to its roots and again make hip-hop and rap music "the Black CNN" as Chuck D once described it. The political aspect of hip-hop is deeply rooted in Black radical resistance movements. The early political rap group, Public Enemy, was one of the first overtly political mainstream rap groups. They drew on the work of Malcolm X and the nation of Islam in developing a progressive, pro-black stance. Although many of these musicians adopt a radical vision of hip-hop, they carry particular blindspots around sexuality and sexual orientation.

Hip-hop has moved beyond the original four elements (i.e., MCing, DJing, graffiti, and breaking) and extends into theatre, fashion, writing, and filmmaking. Artists from these new aspects of hip-hop often take hip-hop beyond its association with bubble letters and rap music. For these artists, hip-hop is a way of life that may or may not include the original elements.

*Psychology and Hip-Hop Literature*

The literature connecting psychology and hip-hop is quite scant. The majority of literature consists of dissertations or theses. It appears that work is being done in this area but the work is not getting into journals or books. If the search is not limited to psychology, the articles and books dealing with identity and hip-hop are more numerous. How or why is psychology shying away from an aspect of identity that is central to millions of youth?

Roderick Watts and colleagues (1999, 2002, 2003, and 2007) are the leading scholars of hip-hop and critical consciousness in the field of psychology. Their work has been seminal to this thesis. Watts theorizes his concept of sociopolitical development as an expansion of empowerment and critical consciousness. Sociopolitical development “describes a process of growth in a person’s knowledge, analytical skills, emotional faculties, and capacity for action in political and social systems” (Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003, p. 185). Watts calls on community psychologists to move beyond empowerment and towards the more complex phenomenon of sociopolitical development.

Watts theorizes that for African-Americans, sociopolitical development is aided by the development of a racialized cultural identity. This is supported by other identity researchers, mainly Phinney (2008), that connect increased salience of racial or ethnic identity to subsequent developments in psychological well-being, self-esteem, self-evaluation, sense of mastery, and positive interactions with peers and family. Waterman (1992) has connected identity to personal wellbeing in the realms of higher self-esteem, happiness, lower levels of anxiety and depression, more goal setting behaviors, higher

cognitive functioning, internal locus of control, more cooperative and helping behaviors, as well as lower authoritarianism and ethnocentrism. Social identity has been specifically tied to, physical and psychological well-being, academic achievement, stronger interpersonal relations, and increased levels of civic and social engagement (Ashmore et al., 2004).

Individuals that participate in any aspect of the M2B project are challenged to view the good and the bad in hip-hop culture. Viewing hip-hop in a balanced way differs from many presentations of hip-hop that often blindly valorize or demonize the culture without understanding its complex nature and how its progressive and regressive features are imbedded in a history of oppression. The M2B curriculum incorporates a number of other activities in addition to discussions that appear to be absent from Watt's Young Warriors program. Moreover, the two programs share the goal of critical consciousness development and subsequent actions towards social change but diverge in their secondary goals. Whereas Watts and colleagues are more focused on the development of masculinity, the M2B curriculum takes a broader focal point of identity development. Further, M2B has taken great care to incorporate female voices into the film and curriculum so that young women also benefit from the project.

### *Hip-Hop Identity and Interdisciplinary Studies*

The image of the dangerous, tough, hyper-masculine, gangster fits stereotypes white youth have of Black males and allows non-urban, middle class youth voyeuristic pleasure into a dangerous and exotic Black world (Rose, 2008). Stereotype of the bad Black man reaffirm the stereotypes many white youth have been socialized to believe regarding Black men. Because of hip-hop's affinity for *keepin it real* these images of

Black communities are taken as literal truth by intended and unintended audiences of hip-hop (Rose, 2008). While there is some basis for these images, they are constricting and damaging if they are the only available images of African-Americans. M2B developed as a corrective to these over-simplified images of hip-hop and Black culture in popular American media.

Taking up the term “real” is understandable in a psychological sense. Individuals that feel their story is not being told (as did many Black youth before hip-hop) are likely to signify the telling of a story that is near their experience as real. And in that sense hip-hop certainly is real. But the over labeling of hip-hop as “real” has allowed for an over simplification of the phenomenon. The drivers of commercial culture have tapped into the previous feelings of powerlessness and silence on the part of youth on the margins, to create a vast hip-hop empire. When youth choose between identifying with a culture that expresses their experience (although in simplistic and/or stereotypical ways) or a culture based in the white, middle class experience, it is not surprising the majority of Black youth choose the former.

Criticism of a primary identity inevitably arouses defensiveness. Youth, who are still in the process of identity formation, are particularly likely to react defensively to harsh critiques of hip-hop culture (Kroger, 1996). Presenting students with alternative versions of hip-hop provides a context for students to develop, simultaneously recognizing its value and critiquing elements of hip-hop culture. Despite the fact that mainstream hip-hop is more accessible through radio and advertising some hip-hop identified youth are already aware of many progressive, underground artists but the

majority of youth reject the messages presented by these artists and prefer mainstream hip-hop (Hill, 2009; Dimitriadis, 2008; and Newman, 2007).

Hill (2009) reports the complaints of his students regarding his choice of hip-hop music to be used in his “hip-hop lit” class. He uses artists considered to be political or consciousness in nature (e.g., Common). The students often commented on their dislike of this tendency and opted to bring more mainstream artists to class when given the chance. The messages present in mainstream hip-hop (i.e., consumerism, sexism, and homophobia) are typically in direct conflict with the values that are reflected in hip-hop based pedagogies. Instructors have devised multiple ways of dealing with this conflict. Some just use lyrics that reflect more socially desirable values (Hill, 2009). Others use the regressive forms of hip-hop as a space to learn the skills of critical media literacy (Watts et al., 2002).

Insight by Newman (2007) suggests that these strategies will not be effective at addressing the underlying issues of identification. Based on his observations and analysis of written material in an arts classroom in a New York City high-school Newman questions the value of much current hip-hop based pedagogy. Newman suggests that rejection of what he terms *conscious rap* may be “youthful rebellion to the identity politics associated with the civil rights generation” (p. 136). The degree to which youth all over the world are claiming a hip-hop identity resembles the previous generations call to identify around race or gender. Newman (2007) also likens the values present in “hard core rap” to those of libertarianism. For the adolescents in Newman’s study progressive rap was irreconcilable with students’ desires for economic success. Mainstream forms of rap, specifically *gangsta rap*, offer youth directions on how to make it in the



individualistic, consumer culture. This road map includes direction on the meritocratic view of success and failure (i.e., individuals are responsible for themselves) but does not discuss structural barriers to success. To youth that have known only an ineffective/unresponsive educational and economic system this response is entirely understandable but the limited scope of the information presented to youth through this format is problematic.

A central tenant of critical pedagogy is dialogue and decreased power of the teacher. Critical pedagogy calls for every student to become a teacher and the teacher to become a student. If teachers are truly pushing their ideologies onto students it is a failure of hip-hop based pedagogies because it does not develop critical thinking skills or critical consciousness. Practitioners of critically based hip-hop pedagogies must balance between supporting and nurturing students and challenging students to not blindly accept the status quo, while listening and learning from students.

It is also the role of the teacher (or any individual that has developed a critical consciousness) to understand the circumstances that cause students to reject progressive alternatives. First, students may be suffering from a history of mental and physical colonization that impacts their thoughts and behaviors whether they are aware of it or not (i.e., false consciousness). Second, students are in a process of identity formation and may be particularly defensive to ideas that challenge these new identities (Kroger, 1996). Third and more specifically in relation to hip-hop, advertisers (with the help of psychologists) have used the feelings of powerlessness and alienation felt by many youth to create a product and culture that fills that void. Because these processes may be

unconscious the teacher is in a position to shed some light on these issues while also leaving room for students' voices.

The current generation of youth is often portrayed as worse, or more corrupt, than previous generations. Proponents of the corrupt generation view cite statistics on raising rates of teenage pregnancy, drug use, and school dropout rates. Given the pervasiveness of these messages in the media and in academia, researchers should not be surprised when adolescents begin to internalize these characteristics (Tyson, 2003). Hip-hop has been portrayed as a cause of perceived diminishing morality with youth on the margins portrayed as the most corrupt of their generation (Tyson, 2003). Hill (2009) chronicles this phenomenon in his observations of a hip-hop literature class. The students read the text of a song (*Things Done Changed*) by the Notorious BIG that chronicles the rise of violence and drug use in his urban neighborhood. Despite the fact that the song says it takes place in 1993, the youth identify with the change that the Notorious BIG chronicles in the neighborhood. When Hill (the author and instructor) suggests that these changes might be due to structural inequalities or systematic injustices the students promptly repudiate this and suggest that it is the result of the morally corrupt nature of themselves and others in their generation. This is an unfortunate example of the vulnerability of youth to negative media representations but also their attempts at agency. Without the development of a critical consciousness youth may lack skills to take the blame off themselves and place it on broader institutions.

A study by Andreana Clay (2003) observes a group of hip-hop identified youth in a community center. Clay found that the performance of a hip-hop identity through dress, talk, and mannerism was the primary indicator of youth popularity. Clay hypothesizes

that hip-hop serves as a form of *cultural capital* in Black youth culture. Cultural capital refers to one of Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of diverse forms of capital (e.g., social, cultural, and symbolic). Cultural capital is a form of symbolic currency that consists of shared dress, music, speech, attitudes, and/or behaviors that function to build community with a similar in-group while excluding some other out-groups. Because cultural capital is symbolic it is often hidden or appears to be an essence of an individual and/or community. Clay argues that as hip-hop gains ground as an important aspect of cultural capital traditional markers of inclusion in the Black community (i.e., skin color) may become less important. Clay enlists Erving Goffman's concept of *front stage performance* to make sense of this transition.

Front stage performance consists of appearance and manners that allow a person to perform and the audience to recognize the performance. Clay suggests that as a person gains increasing levels of cultural capital and refine their performance through hip-hop these qualities are increasingly viewed as core personality traits by other youth. This is problematic for a couple of reasons. First, essentialism can be dangerous no matter the form. Essentialism has historically been used to justify social inequalities on the basis of some internal, and immutable characteristic. Second, the ability to perform an authentic hip-hop identity requires economic capital.

In Clay's account hip-hop is intimately tied to gender, class, and race. For young women the successful performance of a hip-hop identity was intimately tied to a performance of traditional femininity. For males and females a true hip-hop identity involved a certain style of dress. Although early hip-hop dress involved creativity and homemade clothes, currently, hip-hop fashion functions as another aspect of consumer

culture. The youth at the community center that were able to acquire the most authentic hip-hop clothes (e.g., the newest pair of Nike shoes), which requires considerable resources, were the most accepted by staff and other youth. For the majority Black youth at the center hip-hop was central to a Black identity. Clay's study points to the complexity of a hip-hop identity and how it is intimately connected to broader social identities and the performance of these is governed by the rules of hip-hop culture.

Greg Dimitriadis (2009) conducted an ethnographic study of a community center in a Midwestern town. Frequented by a number of hip-hop identified youth from the surrounding area. Dimitriadis chose this site because of his belief that school is becoming increasingly less important as a site of socialization, while informal spaces and popular culture are filling in this gap. Through this ethnographic study Dimitriadis discovered the multiple ways youth engage with hip-hop. Students use hip-hop and hip-hop related texts to construct a notion of place.

In Dimitriadis' text Tupac Shakur represents a central figure of hip-hop culture. Tupac is credited with this position for a number of reasons. First, Tupac is recognized as beginning the conversational tradition in rap music because of his tendency to speak to his audience as we or us making listeners feel included. Such songs as, *Keep ya Head Up* and *Dear Mama* highlight themes that many urban youth deal with on a regular basis. Tupac differs from other hip-hop artists that cover the realities of urban life by offering critique, hope, and encouragement simultaneously. As a Portland M2B member asserts in *Moving to the Beat*, "Tupac always included you, it was always about us and we." Second, Tupac acquired a larger than life status when he survived five gun shoot wounds. This status is reflected in Dimitriadis' text with the refusal of the youth at the community

center to accept the death of Tupac. To admit that Tupac had, in fact, succumbed to violence was a deep psychological offense to many hip-hop identified youth. As the word was spread that Tupac Shakur had indeed died from the shots fired at him a week prior, the youth refused to accept Tupac's death. This phenomenon occurred all over the world as Tupac fans pieced together coincidences that convinced them that he was in fact, not dead. What about Tupac caused such a stirring, global reaction? It could have been the degree to which these youth had invested identity and emotional energy into him. Tupac represented someone who was once in their position but who had eventually "made it"; he was not supposed to be susceptible to the violence these youth experienced on a regular basis. Maybe Tupac was so deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of hip-hop identified youth that transferring death into life was a way of mythologizing and creating collective memory. Inside of hip-hop culture, youth and academics alike, Tupac is often valorized without critique. Outside of hip-hop culture, Tupac is generally demonized without a deep understanding of what he represented and stood for. But Tupac was neither angel nor demon; he was a profoundly contradictory and complicated individual that in many ways represents the complex and contradictory nature of hip-hop as a whole.

### Education and Critical Consciousness

Education plays a key role in students' lives. The outcomes of formal schooling (whether positive or negative) are debated, but what is agreed upon is education's role in "identity construction and cultural socialization" (Potts, 2003, p. 177). In studying the role of alternative education projects (such as M2B) it is important to understand the current state of education in the United States. The dispute around the role of education

bounces back and forth between its regressive role in perpetuating social inequalities and social control and its potential as a progressive force for social mobility and liberation. Yet, currently, education is not serving the needs of many students. Poor and minority students are particularly disadvantaged with schools that lack funding and curriculums that are far from their students' experiences. School is often viewed as a place of negative socialization into the oppressed (or oppressor) role.

### Education and the Social Reproduction of Oppression

Schools, much like prisons, have developed as a modern institution to discipline the masses (Foucault, 1977). Foucault argues that the education system was specifically designed to keep youth (especially those of a marginalized status) under social control and teach students not to question the status quo. For social reproduction theorists, such as Foucault, education serves the purpose of maintaining inequities in the capitalist society (Potts, 2003).

Freire (2000) coins common education practices, such as lecturing, as *banking education* where students are static, mechanical receptacles waiting to be filled by the teacher's knowledge. This style of education is pervasive in the modern system of schooling but ineffective and inefficient at teaching students to think critically or to challenge the status quo.

Another oppressive aspect of the education system is what Valenzuela (2005) terms *subtractive schooling*. Valenzuela defines subtractive education as "subtracting students culture and language, which is consequential to their achievement and orientations toward school." (p. 83). Valenzuela documents this occurrence in the American Mexican youth in schools in California. A disconnect exists between the

teachers and students in these schools, each expect the other to show caring behavior before they are willing to do so. The teachers and youth are caught in a downward spiral of leveled expectations, each blaming the other for their situation.

Students on the margins are alienated by a curriculum that normalizes the dominant group by promoting their social taste and language while pathologizing minority group culture and language (Florance, 1998). The school has subtracted the students' use of collective achievement strategies and the students no longer enjoy or participate in school because they see such behaviors as betraying their culture and collective identity (Valenzuela, 2005).

Teachers and the curriculum perpetuate the continual alienation of students by perpetuating a disconnect between students' home and school environments. Diverse students are almost exclusively taught by white teachers, which often leave the teachers estranged from the lives and the culture of the youth in their classrooms (Ornstein & Levine, 1989). Lacking this insight, teachers can develop lower expectations and in the worst cases, no expectations, for students from marginalized groups. Teachers' ability to intervene in this unfortunate situation is limited by systematically enforced curriculum that ignores and even denies the realities of students on the margins.

Potts (2003) asserts that schools are integral to the continuing oppression of Black communities. Social reproduction theory states that schools are an important process in the production of racism because it is where those with power learn to dominate and the marginalized learn they are oppressed and internalize this subjugation (Potts, 2003). The process takes place at a variety of levels. Policies ensure that schools in poor and predominantly black areas are under-funded. Teachers and administrators are more likely

to label African-American students as troublemakers, or place (or track) them in remedial classrooms (Potts, 2003). Biased education systems facilitate oppression at the psychological level by perpetuating the meritocracy myth (causing students to feel that it is their fault they have not succeeded in education) and enabling the asymmetries of Black students in college, professional school, and stable employment in all sectors (Potts, 2003). The internalization of oppression that is facilitated by the school system makes Black youth less likely to see the true sources of their oppression (Prilleltensky, 2008)

### Education and its Emancipatory Possibilities

Freire (2000) and hooks (1994a) argue that literacy is an indispensable precondition to the liberation of oppressed groups. For them genuine literacy is the ability to read and write but also the ability to think about the world in a critical way, thereby developing a critical consciousness. Freire's philosophy of conscientization (i.e., critical consciousness) and hook's similar notion of critical awareness and engagement both involve understanding one's social reality and sources of oppression (Freire, 2000 and hooks, 1994a). As members of the oppressed group develop this ability they will come to realize that others in their group share the same fate; only after this conscientization has taken place will action against oppression begin (Freire, 2000). Freire and hooks believe that education is the ideal location to develop the skill of conscientization because it is a part of cultural literacy. A number of alternative theories and pedagogies have developed to deal with this divide. Critical pedagogy, critical race pedagogy, and critical feminist theories of education have all developed to fulfill the requirements of their respective marginalized groups in education (Lynn, Benigno, Williams, Park & Mitchell, 2006).



Critical feminist pedagogies take the work of critical theorists and apply it directly toward women in the classroom where women are listened to and their experiences are authenticated. Critical race pedagogies work with race and the way race interacts with other oppressions in the classroom. Culturally responsive/relevant pedagogies often fall under the heading of critical race pedagogies (Lynn et al., 2006). Alone these pedagogies run the risk of becoming one-dimensional and not acknowledging the intersecting identities of students when used in concert they provide an avenue for responding to the multifaceted needs of marginalized students.

### *Culturally Responsive Critical Pedagogies*

Students in urban areas have been of particular focus for many critical pedagogy practitioners because of the high number of poor, Working-class, and ethnically diverse students. Urban schools are often poorly funded and suffer from high teacher turnover and prison like conditions (e.g., metal detectors, law enforcement, and drug dogs) (Lynn et al., 2006). In this setting it is particularly important to validate the voices of disenfranchised students. By giving students a say in curriculum and school policy students (and teachers/administrators) begin a process of humanization (Freire, 2000).

Critical pedagogy teaching strategies require a gradual transition and tremendous effort on the part of student and teacher to unlearn what they have been taught is a desirable classroom environment (hooks, 1994a). Culturally responsive/culturally relevant pedagogies are other terms used for the methodologies that use students' experiences and culture in the classroom. African-Americans have a rich history of alternative pedagogies, including the Freedom Schools of the Civil-Rights Movement. Although these historic liberation education programs took place in the rural South (some

of these Southern Freedom Schools have recently been revived) but the most recent liberation education programs have followed Black youth to urban areas (Ginwright, 2004).

### *Hip-Hop and Critical Pedagogy*

Unlike psychology, the field of education has taken up extensive research around hip-hop. Education and hip-hop have interacted in complex ways since hip-hop's beginnings in the late 1970's. Hip-Hop music has generally disparaged formal schooling. This is not surprising considering disconnects between a non-white racial/ethnic identity and/or a lower class identity and an academic identity (Valenzuela, 2005).

Education based in dialogue, trust, and respect can be used to build critical consciousness as the corner stone of a liberatory praxis. Education projects based in critical pedagogy not only foster literacy and other academic skills but also foster cultural and political literacy through teaching students how to "read the world" in addition to reading the word (Freire, 1970). Theorists of this orientation believe that education that is participatory and close to students' experience both enhances traditional educational outcomes, and bolsters critical consciousness. Further, Kroger (1996) and Dreyer (1994) suggests that education of this orientation provides students with the tools for identity achievement. Phinney (1989) highlights that one of the initial steps in racial identity development may involve the formation of an "oppositional identity". Oppositional identity becomes a way to detach from dominant white culture by dissociating with all things that are perceived to be associated with it, including, school success (see Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

The majority of hip-hop pedagogies have focused on the interpretation and translations of hip-hop text (Petchauer, 2009). In addition to the previously mentioned work by Watts and colleagues, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) use hip-hop based texts to develop students' analytic and traditional literary skills. Their project found that utilizing hip-hop based texts motivates students to produce their own text and the literary skills learned in analyzing hip-hop texts can be applied to other more traditional English texts. Stovall (2006) incorporates hip-hop into a high-school social studies curriculum to bridge the school curriculum with students' experience. Although labeled as a social studies curriculum, Stovall's (2006) project seemed to solely engage in developing student critical literacy skills.

It is important to understand the two-way affect the person and the environment play on critical consciousness and identity development. Working towards critical consciousness is futile without also providing a space for students that is outside the normal hostile education system. An example of hostility is not allowing students to speak in their first or most comfortable language (e.g., Black Stylized English or Spanish) or implicitly and explicitly supporting stereotypes' of certain social identities. Conversely, providing a more progressive learning environment is useless unless schoolwork also supports a students' critical consciousness development. Although not directly addressed in this study, increasing critical consciousness and providing alternative-learning environments hopefully has a positive effect on students' academic identities, which aids in academic success and continuation in school.

The use of hip-hop in educational settings is not new. The explosion and spread of hip-hop in the 1980's was followed by an expansion of hip-hop based pedagogies. Many

of the early (and current) hip-hop educational projects took place outside of the schools. Community centers, summer camps, and after school programs have integrated hip-hop into their curricula to draw in more youth, to teach traditional/critical literacy skills, and to prepare students for possible careers in the hip-hop industry. The use of hip-hop inside the formal classroom has taken longer to catch on but is nonetheless on the rise. College hip-hop courses now exist on campuses across the United States. These courses range from hip-hop history, to hip-hop literature, and to hip-hop arts production. Increases in more formal hip-hop education are apparent in the Portland area. Portland State University has recently offered a hip-hop literature class, Portland public schools previously offered a week long summer camp dedicated to hip-hop, and a new Portland charter school (the REAL Prep Academy) is colloquially known as the “hip-hop high-school” and is scheduled to open in Fall of 2011. Hip-hop curricula are currently being implemented in settings encompassing a wide range of ages and cultural groups.

Petchauer (2009) states that hip-hop based pedagogies have paid little attention to the actual educational outcomes of hip-hop education projects. There seem to be no long-term studies that show the connection between hip-hop based pedagogies and, for example, increased grade point averages. Although studies have shown that the skills learned in hip-hop centered classes can carry over to more traditional disciplines (see Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002) research moving beyond this claim is lacking.

The hip-hop projects that have been undertaken by academics with an intention to publish findings represent a small fraction of the hip-hop based curricula that are currently being implemented. Still fewer are standardized or formally evaluated. A number of hip-hop based curriculums are available on the Internet, including, blogs that

exist as places for educators that use hip-hop to exchange stories and ideas. Although not empirically tested, these hip-hop education projects could provide valuable information. In fact, the creators of the M2B curriculum guide were inspired by some of these readily available sources.

Given the vast literature on hip-hop and education and the separate literature on the importance of identity and critical consciousness, it seems vital that both bodies of research be bridged and expanded to better understand the utility of projects involving these phenomenon and the impacts they may (or may not) possess. Dreyer (1994) suggests four areas where identity-enhancing curriculum effectively promote development:

- 1) exploration, responsible choice, and self-determination by students.
- 2) role-playing and social interaction across generations
- 3) the student's understanding of time and how the past is related to the present
- 4) self-acceptance and positive feedback from teachers and counselors (p. 129-136).

These recommendations are strikingly similar to the core aspects of a critical pedagogy approach. This combined with the natural fit between hip-hop and critical pedagogy (see Pardue, 2004) and the importance of hip-hop to many youth's identity (see Haaken, Wallin-Ruschman, & Patange, in press) mark this project as an important step in bridging these divergent fields. In the following section the methods used to collect and analyze data for this thesis will be reviewed.

## METHODS

This thesis is part of a broader social action research agenda. The M2B project was conceived as a way of effecting social change and this study of the curriculum is guided by the same objective. Further, the concentration on critical consciousness is another area traditionally taken up by action researchers (Brydon-Miller, 2001). The research also is rooted in qualitative methodology. The nature of the phenomena of interest is multidimensional and context specific, making qualitative research methods particularly applicable. This study is primarily situated in a constructivist interpretive paradigm that strives for trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Within this paradigm, knowledge is co-constructed by the researcher and participant, and reality is a multiple and intersecting phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Thematic analysis at the latent level was used to construct meaning from the data. I chose this route for analysis as it allowed me to:

go beyond the semantic content of the data, and start(s) to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations- and ideologies-that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

Given the subversive aims of hip-hop, this focus on latent meaning seemed essential to understanding the phenomena.

The primary objective of this thesis is to assess the responses of youth to the M2B film and curriculum guide. Exploratory analysis was an important aspect of understanding the M2B project and its effect on youth because the curriculum and film have not been previously empirically evaluated. The broader M2B project and this thesis

are also both grounded in theories of identity and critical consciousness development.

These dual commitments meant a double focus for my research questions and analysis.

The focus of the first research question, how do youth engage the M2B curriculum guide and documentary film, highlights my commitment to understanding general reactions to the M2B materials. The second research question, do the M2B materials facilitate the development of critical consciousness and/or social identity in youth, reflects my grounding in the identity and critical consciousness literature—theories that informed the development of the curriculum and film. Data sets in this study include 1) preliminary fieldwork, 2) participant observations, 3) interviews, 4) participant lyrics, and 5) feedback forms. Data was gathered over a one-year period at two primary community sites. The data sources gave different types and levels of insight into my two research questions. The participant observation consisted of the primary source of data for my first research question with the other sources of data providing additional evidence for the themes that emerged from the observation field notes. The preliminary findings, observations, interviews, and lyrics contributed more equally to the second research question. These methods were reconfigured based on my experience in the field. Throughout the pilots I began to understand that the complex world of signifiers that embody hip-hop culture and identity would be best captured and represented from a more ethnographic approach and field notes became a primary source of data. This approach to studying identity and hip-hop culture has also been used by Clay (2006), Rodriguez (2006), Dimitriadis (2003), and Williams (2007).

In this section, I review the paradigms used in framing this thesis as well as the M2B project. I then describe my history as a qualitative researcher and my background in

the subject matter studied. I review each specific form of data I collected (i.e., participant observations, interviews, lyrics, and feedback forms). Finally, I discuss the ethical consideration of this thesis project and conclude by reviewing the settings and the process of gaining access to these locations.

### Preliminary Field Work: Groundwork before the Study

The *Moving to the Beat* documentary team was made up of primarily Black men but the M2B curriculum guide team was primarily white women. I realize that the way I see the world (especially hip-hop culture) is not the same as others that do not share my social location. I locate myself in hip-hop culture strictly as a fan. I do not actively participate in the culture (outside of my scholarly work). I do not identify with hip-hop in general, although I do identify with many of the progressive and radical themes in politically conscious hip-hop.

To orient myself further with hip-hop and the M2B project I began attending meetings with the M2B production team—a group facilitated by Professor Jan Haaken and consisting of eight African-American hip-hop and video activists. The group meetings helped me keep the focus of the M2B project at the forefront of my mind. Further, the meetings allowed the curriculum development team to explore ideas with the film production team. This was important because the production team was closer to the experience of the youth we were aiming at (i.e., Black and hip-hop identified) than the curriculum development team. The M2B team was awarded a grant from The National Black Programming Consortium because of its portrayal of Black life and identity. I attempted to carry this spirit of representation into curriculum and thesis development.

As a white woman, studying the Black male dominated culture of hip-hop, I am



continuously confronted with my social location. As I prepared for this thesis I read a number of accounts of the history of hip-hop, watched hip-hop related films and continued listening to hip-hop music. In the area of personal and academic growth the writings of Black Feminist scholars, such as bell hooks (1992; 1994a; 1994b and 2008) and Patricia Hill Collins (1992) have provided invaluable insight and direction. Despite these preparations I try to constantly be aware of how my life experiences, gender, and race affect how I interact with my phenomenon of interest and research participants. Further, as a white researcher that enjoys but does not strongly identify with hip-hop culture, I am in a problematic position. I may seek to meet youth in a learning environment that better fits their needs and experiences but by using hip-hop as a tool, I may perpetuate the problem of its domestication and subsequent sterilization. The *Moving to the Beat* documentary suggests that the use of hip-hop music by advertisers and those outside its community has the effect of weakening the culture or movement. By using action research, critical pedagogy and qualitative methodologies I hope to avoid these tendencies while remaining cognizant of power dynamics attendant to any program of inquiry.

The method of participant observation, interviewing and analysis involve interpreting experiences and material through the researcher's many lenses. Self-reflexivity can add to the trustworthiness of findings, which is one of the primary markers of good qualitative research (Stiles, 1993). To obtain trustworthiness I engaged in a number of suggested measures, including, self-reflexivity, openness regarding possible personal biases and research orientation, prolonged engagement with the material during and after data collection and a process of peer debriefing. I have documented much of

this process in this thesis so readers can follow all the steps I pursue in data collection and analysis.

Reflection is a key aspect of Freire's theory and is already integrated into the curriculum guide and serves well as a means of data collection. Following each session of participant observation, interviewing and analysis, I kept a research journal that chronicled my reactions to the material and the overall experience. Further, this notebook served as a place for me to record my developing understanding of the data. Field notes, journals and transcripts were reviewed multiple times during data collection and analysis. In addition, I met and debriefed with peers and research advisor similarly trained in qualitative research methods to discuss my frustration with implementing the project as well as my developing ideas and quandaries involving my analysis as a part of an ongoing Social Action Research seminar.

Every act I observed and recorded was filtered through my own experiences and biases. Despite striving for objectivity, researchers inevitably bring subjectivity into their programs of inquiry (Fine & Vanderslice, 1992). It is important, therefore, to acknowledge and confront my experiences and biases that may impact this thesis. My interest in education is personal as well as academic. Growing up in a small rural area of Kentucky, education was a primary means of identity and eventually what I considered escape. Education allowed me to move to a more populated, diverse area and deeply shaped my growing critical consciousness.

In laying the groundwork for the formal data collection of the thesis, I interviewed hip-hop identified youth and conducted participant observation in a high-school classroom that used pedagogies grounded in hip-hop culture. The classrooms I observed

were demographically diverse, although the majority of the students were African-American. I observed two English classes and a public speaking course at the only predominantly Black high school in Portland, Oregon. The same teacher instructed all of these classes and attempted to integrate hip-hop into the curriculum. Overall, students seemed to be highly engaged when hip-hop music was playing but not when hip-hop was being discussed. I also noticed a tendency for youth to be most engaged when other students were presenting or speaking, as opposed to the teacher. Of the three classes I observed the course in public speaking was the most hip-hop based as well as the smallest course. The atmosphere in this class was much more community oriented and the engagement level appeared to be much higher at all points in the class. The atmosphere of the class was very informal with students often joking among themselves and with the teacher. When students presented they were met with support as well constructive criticism from other students. The rapport between students and teacher was such that the students would state if they were bored or were less engaged.

Along with these early observations, I interviewed two youth. These interviews were important in framing the research questions and developing my skills as a qualitative researcher. All interviewees were referred to me by a teacher who selected them based on their identification with hip-hop culture. Through these experiences I realized that hip-hop curriculum and hip-hop identities are complex in ways that require similarly complex methods. It is important to capture a range of expressive responses.

These exploratory observations and interviews led me to rethink my planned methods of data collection. Because identity is a personal subject and often unconscious in the sense of not being entirely available to awareness, I became aware that I needed to

be more creative in eliciting responses from youth. For this thesis, I chose to use multiple forms of data collection (i.e., observation, interviews, and written reflections) and to analyze the overlap in these divergent forms of information (i.e., triangulation) in an attempt to produce insight that is more comprehensive than what I was able to obtain in my preliminary research. My methodological strategy expanded to include an ethnographic approach.

### Ethics, Confidentiality, and Informed Consent

Because I worked with individuals under the age of 18, parental consent was built into the informed consent process. For the first location the parental consent forms (see Appendix C) were sent home as a part of the other documents for the summer program. Parents or guardians signed and returned the consent forms along with the other documents required for the program. Youth that did not return this paperwork were sent home with the paperwork on the first day. Through this process most youth had a signed parental consent document. After I realized another wave was necessary, I resubmitted the project to the IRB with the minor changes to the youth and parent form that dealt with the change in settings- these changes were accepted.

The second location did not have a structure for sending IRB forms home before the first day of the workshop but I did include the IRB form when sending materials out as part of the promotion for the event. No student showed up on the first day with signed parental IRB forms. In response, I sent IRB forms home with students for the first two weeks of the workshop- none of these were returned. After interviewing youth I presented them with another copy of the parental consent form and informed them of the importance of returning the form. I conferred with the director of the program they

attended and he agreed to remind the students to bring the form back and to hold any returned forms until I could pick them up but interviewees did not return the forms.

During each respective wave I explained the M2B project and the process of data collection to the youth. I also told youth how this research was part of my thesis but important and part of a larger, worldwide project. Once participants had a chance to ask questions and understand the research, I gave each student the informed consent document (see Appendix D) and obtained signed consent forms from all of the participants. Although this informed consent form dealt with the issues of audio recording, as well as the use of direct quotes, I also obtained verbal consent before audio recording the interviews. In addition, quotations from the interviews and observations were identified using pseudonyms to help ensure the participants' confidentiality.

### Curriculum Study Settings

The process of finding locations and conducting workshops for this thesis occurred from January 2010 to February 2011. Throughout this year I was involved in an ongoing process of negotiation and networking. I initially thought the curriculum would function best outside of the classroom. This view was based in my literature review results, which suggested that classrooms are alienating spaces that often do not value students' experiences or voice. Further, as identified in the literature review, it takes time to unlearn traditional classroom dynamics of active teacher and passive student. Because student participation and questioning are central to the success of this curriculum I shied away from looking at classrooms as a possible site of implementation. In the following sections I detail the events and processes that lead to the two ultimate locations.

*Finding the First Location*

I began my search for possible locations in January of 2010. I initially contacted critical educators and local hip-hop artists in the Portland area with whom I already had connections. These connections lead me to the director of the Elemental Summer Camp, which had occurred in Portland for the past few years and was, to my knowledge, the only summer program in the city that focused on hip-hop. Elemental brought artists from all elements of hip-hop culture (e.g., MCing, DJing, break dancing, and graffiti) together with hip-hop identified youth. The director felt the M2B activities would be an exciting way to expand the camp outside of its singular art education focus. At the second meeting with the director in March of 2010 she informed me that she was moving on to other projects and that Elemental was in danger of not being held that summer. A few weeks later I received an email confirming the situation, but also including contacts to community organizations from which Elemental had recruited youth in the past. At the director's suggestion I contacted the community organizations.

Of the emails and phone calls I made, one seemed most promising. The director of ROSE Community Development's Summer Arts Academy seemed interested in the project. I met with the director, we discussed what Summer Arts Academy entailed, and how M2B would fit in to the program. Summer Arts Academy was in its first year and seemed like a small-scale version of Elemental and a good fit for the M2B activities. The director assumed responsibility for recruiting youth and we worked together to find a facilitator for the activities.

*Summer Arts Academy*

A portion of the data for this thesis was collected at ROSE Community Development's Summer Arts Academy. ROSE works in the realm of economic and community support and provides affordable housing and other services to low-income individuals and families. The particular aspect of ROSE I worked with was the Resident Assets program, which provides services to families with youth that live in ROSE communities. Resident Assets is funded through grants, individual, and business donations. This thesis worked with the Summer Arts Academy portion of the Resident Assets program, which provides opportunities for youth to spend four, four-hour days over two weeks in June working with hip-hop artists to learn skills and create works of art ranging from photography to dance. Last year's theme for the Summer Arts Academy was "Create, Experience, and Share Your World." The youth at ROSE are diverse in regard to race and gender. Because of the nature of services offered by ROSE the youth that participate in camp were relatively homogeneous in class identity. More specific information about this wave is addressed in the results section.

*Finding the Second Location*

The Summer Arts Academy was attended regularly by five youth. Along with not having the expected minimum of 15 youth, many of the ROSE youth were under the ideal age-- half of the youth were in middle-school. Further, half of the core group did not identify strongly with hip-hop culture. After the limited results of this first wave of data gathering, I began searching for another location. This negotiation process was lengthy. From July 2010 to September 2010 I sent emails, made phone calls and attended meetings with possible community partners.

In October 2010 I finally connected (with the help of thesis chair Jan Haaken) with the director of a new Portland Public Schools Charter focused on recording arts, specifically hip-hop. Although this charter school was not opening for another year they had access to youth to pilot curriculums, but no physical space. The lack of physical space led to an additional community partner, the coordinator of teen activities at the Portland Parks and Recreation site UPCC. The three of us planned an initial UPCC workshop during the three days preceding Thanksgiving, when most Portland Public Schools (PPS) were not in session. We worked together to recruit youth and facilitators in a short period, about three weeks. Regrettably, two events prevented the success of the workshop. First, the day before the workshop was due to begin it was brought to my attention that some of the youth that had committed to attending the workshop would not be available. Second, on the first day of the workshop a severe winter storm was predicted for the Portland metro area. Throughout the day youth called saying they would not be able to attend because of complications due to the winter weather advisory.

Following this series of events, I met separately with both community partners to plan another wave. Together we brainstormed the best time to conduct the workshop and other avenues for recruiting youth. I had better expectations for success in the next wave because it would benefit from three months of planning and recruitment, something lacking in other settings. I spent the December 2010 developing promotional materials. In January 2011 I started with an email to the connections I had made in Portland that worked with youth in educational settings and members of the hip-hop community. This email included a promotional flier, informational mailer, letter to teachers and parental IRB as attachments and a short description of the project. This was followed by phone



calls to some of these individuals. I also sent out emails to organization (e.g., schools, nonprofits, and community centers) that I had no direct connection with but found contact information for on the Internet. This was followed by another round of phone calls. Throughout this process I met with the individuals that returned my phone calls or emails. Overall, I met or had phone conversations with about a half dozen people in schools and other community organizations.

In January of 2011 the teen activities director at UPCC went on medical leave and the charter school director was overrun with preparations for opening the school. Although I was still able to use the space at UPCC the recruitment and execution of the workshop became my sole responsibility. Along with recruiting youth I had to find a facilitator for the activities.

### *University Park Community Center*

UPCC is a community center under the Portland Parks and Recreation organizational umbrella and serves the “fifth quadrant” of Portland-- North Portland. Although North Portland is unique because of physical location, it is also demographically distinctive. North Portland is and has historically had a much higher percentage of Black residents than other neighborhoods in the city.

UPCC provides a number of services to the community; it boasts a computer lab, weight room, fitness center, a teen room complete with video games and a basketball gym. After visiting UPCC a handful of times, including visiting for a teen night, I discovered that the basketball gym is the biggest draw for most adolescents. The majority of youth attending the gym were Black, many were male and usually involved in some sort of active play, most often basketball. On any given afternoon or evening a handful of

girls would also be at the center, often sitting on the bleachers watching the boys play ball. The teen center seemed to be a popular destination as well, although it was often populated by more elementary and middle-school aged youth. Unlike ROSE, I do not have a good picture of the class statistics of these youth. More specific information about this location is addressed in the results section

### Additional Screenings of *Moving to the Beat*

Although it was not the main focus of analysis, I also collected observations from three additional screenings of the *Moving to the Beat* film. Two of these screenings occurred in Professor Jan Haaken's college classroom as a part of a course on Gender and Violence. The other screening occurred at a teen night at UPCC. The limited data from these screenings is used to comment on the findings from the two full waves (i.e., the coding scheme from the pilots is applied to this data).

### Participant Observation

Participant observation is conceptualized as a method of data collection that allows the researcher to use her/his knowledge and experience in the setting to aid in the collection and analysis of events (Kidder & Fine, 1997). Given the importance of the researcher's lens, it is essential to recognize the position and experiences that affect the process of data collection and analysis.

I did not facilitate the curriculum guide lessons for a variety of reasons. First, it was important to have someone who is near the youth's experience facilitate the lessons. Because the guide focuses on hip-hop identified youth, specifically on African and African-American youth, the model facilitator would fit these descriptions and have extensive experience working with youth. The curriculum is designed to be used with

teachers in classrooms or other educational settings. Second, switching from the role of participant to facilitator could jeopardize any rapport I had established with the youth. Because adolescents are in a position that often is ambivalent in relation to authority, I felt that my observations and interviews would be more informative if I avoided the authority role of the teacher and, rather, participated in an observational role. However, this was not always possible as facilitators often showed up late and in one case had an emergency and was not able to attend. I was forced into the role of facilitator on the first day of the second wave, which offered some unforeseen benefits-as discussed in the results section- but also colored the data that I collected.

During my observations I took extensive field notes. After each of the sessions I immediately recorded what I observed and my reactions to the events. The record follows the principles laid out by Spradley (1980) and includes a condensed account, expanded account, and fieldwork journal. The condensed account includes the notes taken during observation and verbatim quotations from participants. The expanded account was recorded after each observation period and included events, interactions, and descriptions of the physical setting and arrangement of space. The physical environment is an important aspect of the phenomenon and structures the action. For example, classrooms sat up in a circle open the space to allow for discussion among students, as well as with the teacher who literally becomes part of the class. Traditional rows of chairs, conversely, dictate students attentiveness to the teacher and hinders discussion among students.

The journal was used to record personal reactions and thoughts about my experiences and early interpretations of the material. Because I could not possibly record all of the interactions, another observer supplemented my data collection with additional

field notes and typed expanded accounts. The additional observer was an advanced undergraduate student who also is familiar with both hip-hop and the M2B project. I provided readings on participant observation training and we met to review the methodological strategy before carrying out our observations. These meetings included discussion about the focus of the observations, our role as participant versus our role as observer, the role that personal responses played in shading observational data and the need to record these reactions.

The field notes primarily focused on in-class discussion. Because reflections and dialogue are important aspects of a Freirean model of education and critical consciousness development, they were a fundamental focus of our observations. Verbal interactions between facilitators and youth, as well as among youth, were analyzed for themes that represent identity and/or critical consciousness, as well as other emergent themes.

Documenting discussion was a key aspect of the observations. Because the curriculum is grounded in Freirean methods, discussion is thought to be a key site of learning and growth. Yet, the latent level of analysis goes beyond what is spoken. Along with recording the verbal reactions of participants, both observers attended to the bodily reactions of youth. For example, we noted if youth were shifting uncomfortably or nodding in agreement. This analysis of bodily reactions allows for a broad picture of the reactions to the M2B activities. Further, during the screening of the *Moving to the Beat* film, bodily reactions proved invaluable as discussion was at a minimum.

## Interviews

Interviews were chosen as a method of data collection because of their fit with the qualitative research questions posed in this thesis. Semi-structured interviews are considered ideal for phenomena that are personal and/or complex (see Smith, 1995), such as identity and critical consciousness. Interviews also allow participants to have a one on one conversation with the researcher that is less directly affected by group dynamics. Further, interviews allow the researcher to probe topics that participants might not want to discuss in a group setting.

I was not able to obtain interviews for the Summer Arts Academy workshop but two students were interviewed following the UPCC workshop. These students represented a “survivor sample” in that they were the only youth available on the finals days of the curriculum and to which I had access after the completion of the M2B activities. The time that had been scheduled for interviews was the final thirty minutes of the last day. At this time only three students remained, two of which attended an organization where I had strong connections. I choose to postpone the interviews on the final evening and extend the valuable conversation around identity we were having with the facilitator. Interviews were subsequently held over the next three weeks at an evening school program the youth attended. In addition to the youth previously mentioned, I was able to interview another participant who only attended the first day of the M2B workshop.

Interviews were audio taped and later transcribed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to probe interesting and emergent points (Smith, 1995). Each interview lasted from forty-five minutes to one hour and was focused on the M2B documentary,

identity, and hip-hop. The interview guide can be found in Appendix E. Questions for the interviews were primarily drawn from observations over the past week, early areas of inquiry and questions that had already been asked in the larger group session. Carrying out the interviews a few weeks after the end of the activities allowed me to bring some preliminary interpretations and questions that arose in the early portions of data analysis into the interviews.

### Participant Lyrics

Before beginning the M2B activities youth were prompted to produce rap lyrics, a “Song of Self.” The lyrics were to be a narrative of important life events and how these events impacted the youth’s identity and process of identification (see Appendix F). After the completion of M2B activities youth were again encouraged to produce another set of lyrics, “Song of Self-The Remix.” The design allowed for comparison between the two sets of lyrics.

The use of rap lyrics as a source of data is congruent with the project’s focus on critical pedagogy. Lyrics are important aspects of hip-hop culture and are written to follow a steady beat and often involve rhyming. This form of data stays close to students’ experiences while providing a creative pre- and post- measure of youths’ identity formulation. Reflection is also an important aspect of critical pedagogy because it is an essential aspect of the development of critical consciousness. These two written reflection activities allowed youth to reflect on their life and identity in a more personal way and with less time constraints than in a large group discussion, while also producing data for analysis in the thesis. This aspect of data collection could also be considered an intervention. The exercise potentially contributed to critical consciousness and identity

development through reflection.

The narrative nature of these lyrics is ideally suited to the study of identity (Roberts & Rosenwald, 2001). The study of identity development requires a retelling of past and a making sense of the previous experiences with the present. Roberts and Rosenwald (2001) state:

narrative methods are ideally suited to represent internalization.

It is their essence to bring the context into the main action, the past and future into the present. Central events, as it were, irradiated by the ambient situation; “before” and “after” give meaning to and gain meaning from, the here and now (p. 96).

The prompt for the production of the lyrics is designed to connect past, present and possible future in the youths’ current understanding of self and identity. The process of identification and the “binding together of past, present, and future” depends on an individual’s recognition of the present is influenced by the past, a process that generally occurs in adolescence (McAdams, 1985, p. 8).

I expected the second set of lyrics to include more references to social identity categories than the first set of lyrics. I predicted that these references would be increasingly positive in nature (e.g., ideas of Black pride or recognizing that females can be good hip-hop artists). In addition, I anticipated the second set of lyrics to include more expressions of critical consciousness.

Given the unexpected outcome of the lyric-writing exercise an additional form of data was collected at both locations. This data consisted of an activity conceptualized by Kuhn and McPartland in 1954 which prompts participants to write down the statement “I

am” a number of times and then respond to each prompt. This activity was included in the directions of the curriculum as an option to facilitate discussion if students were disengaged. I chose to include this as an additional form of data that I integrated into the analysis of the lyrics.

### Feedback Forms

A final form of data consisted of a simple feedback form (see Appendix G). On the final day of the activities youth were asked to respond to a number of qualitative questions about their experiences. These forms are a more straightforward evaluation of the curriculum in that I asked youth directly what they thought about the M2B activities and how/if they were affected. The youth completed these forms, although many responses are thin. Some students even made up their own likert type scale (i.e., they wrote in a number and circled it) instead of writing a qualitative response to the questions, suggesting they are more accustomed to being given a scale to rate their experiences and feelings, as opposed to be asked to write out a response.

### Analysis and Interpretation

The dual focus of this thesis called for a complex analysis plan. The process needed to attend to the themes that emerged as I studied youth’s general responses to the curriculum but also provide a framework for the theoretical understanding of identity and critical consciousness in the data. In this section, I review the process of analysis and interpretation for each form of collected data (i.e., observations, participant lyrics, feedback form, and interviews). I conclude the section with discussions of the process of triangulating these multiple sources of data.

The observations were the richest source of data from both of the settings. Given



the richness of this source of data relative to the others, I coded it first and the themes that developed through the observation analysis were applied to the additional data sources. More themes emerged from the additional sources of data and I included them in the final coding scheme. Before beginning the coding process I re-read all the field notes from both observers and used Microsoft Word to code in a fashion similar to traditional paper and pencil or manual coding. I highlighted text according to each code and produced documents that grouped codes together. Each successive round of coding was done in a new word document so I could easily review and trace my steps in producing the final thematic scheme. I kept the document containing the original field notes open during coding so that I could review the context in which specific instances occurred.

The first round of coding involved highlighting very general categories within all of the observations (i.e., identity, critical consciousness and general reactions) I then copied and pasted quotes from each broad category into another document so they could be grouped together. I did this to aid in the distinctive mindset necessary for understanding the two different research questions. As I completed this process, early interpretations of the data came to mind and I recorded these in a separate document. At this point I reviewed the text within each broad section looking for more specific codes. These resulted in a multitude of codes, which I highlighted appropriately in the original text and then grouped together in another Word document.

During the coding process I re-read my literature review to reorient myself with the information. After this process was completed I carefully attended to my codes list and begin preliminary development of a higher order thematic scheme. Observations from each theme were collated together in a new Word Document as suggested by Braun

and Clarke (2006) (see Appendix H). After searching for themes in the observation coding I then moved to coding the other forms of data. Because the other forms of data were so thin or unrepresentative compared to observations I used the codes from the observation findings to code the sources of data but I was open to new codes that developed from interaction with the other forms of data.

I transcribed the interviews verbatim and included references to coughs, laughing, sighs, and particularly long pauses. Based on the advice of Smith and Osborn (2007) I worked with one interview at a time. Transcripts were read a number of times for additional codes. I felt uncomfortable attributing too much analytic weight to the interviews because only youth from UPCC were interviewed and I was not able to choose youth to interview randomly or purposefully. Only a subset of youth was available to be interviewed. For these reasons I applied the codes from the observations to the interviews, although I attended to other codes I interpreted from this form of data.

For the feedback form, I typed responses into a Word document by question and coded them in a fashion similar to the interviews. For the lyrics and *I am* activity, I combined all the available lyrics into one document and coded them. As I did this I highlighted aspects that did not fit with the original codes and created new codes accordingly.

For the beginning of the analysis I considered Summer Arts Academy and UPCC to be different sources of data. I worked with the data from UPCC first as I perceived it to be richer than the data from Summer Arts Academy because the youth were more engaged and there were more youth involved.

The final order of analysis started with re-reading all the data for UPCC. I then

began a second round of coding all of the data from UPCC with the final lists of codes.

After completing this process with the data from UPCC I started over with the data from Summer Arts Academy (i.e., I started fresh with a new coding scheme). I went through the same process for the ROSE setting.

### Triangulation

I used Triangulation to gain a complex understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Triangulation was built into the analysis in that the themes from the observations were looked for in the other sources of data (i.e., interview, observation, and feedback forms). Special attention was paid to those themes that appeared in multiple sources of data. Generally, themes that appear in multiple forms of data are assumed to have higher levels of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability, which are often considered the counterparts to validity and reliability in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Triangulation also offers a way to understand how different forms of data draw out different information from the participants and setting. Some forms of data are more or less based in the conscious awareness of the participants. Further, some sources of data depend less on investigator interpretation than others and some forms of data attend more to group dynamics than others. Although special attention was paid to themes that appeared in multiple sources of data, this does not discount interpretations that arose from only one data source. I chose to use multiple sources of data because it allows me to attend to responses from a variety of levels and settings. Given the personal nature of the topics being discussed, conscious awareness and group dynamics could have played a strong role in the various forms of data.

Depending on the source of the data, reactions may be more or less influenced by group dynamics or more or less conscious to the participants. These effects are considered when interpreting the data. In other words, the presence of themes in only one form of data is expected in some instances and is another advantage of using multiple sources of data. Themes of this nature will be used in analysis but interpreted with special attention to the particular strengths of that data source.

As recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) after completing this final thematic scheme the entire data set was reviewed “to ascertain whether the themes ‘work’ in relation to the data set” (p. 91). I was satisfied at this point that the themes sufficiently captured both the breadth and depth of the data. I also reviewed the data I obtained from additional screenings of *Moving to the Beat* in light of this final thematic scheme. In the next section, I will review the data I collected for this thesis, offering a thick description of the Summer Arts Academy and UPCC settings. After I introduce the data I speak to the themes I developed, integrating relevant literature and examples into my analysis.

## RESULTS

In this section I address three areas of findings. The first centers on the Summer Arts Academy setting and the second on the UPCC setting. In each of these sections, I separately address each individual source of data. I conclude each section with some themes that represent the overall findings from that location. The third section reviews the overall findings from these locations and draws on others sources of data (i.e., additional screenings, preliminary interviews, and relevant literature) to support these arguments.

The first two sections are primarily descriptive in nature, chronicling the events of each respective location and offering a thick description of the proceedings. Occasionally in these first two sections, I interpret some specific isolated events but the majority of the analytic work occurs in the final section. It is in the final section that I begin to make meaning of the data. I concentrate on drawing out themes that spanned the multiple sources of data and multiple waves. I have chosen this order so that the reader is thoroughly introduced to the data before I begin to interpret the findings.

As discussed in the methods sections, this thesis involved multiple modifications and adjustments. Due to these complications the focus shifted from mainly looking at critical consciousness and identity development to primarily attending to youth's responses to the film and curriculum. This decision was made for two reasons. First, little data was available to speak to the development of youth's identity and critical consciousness as a result of exposure to the M2B materials. Instead, I attend to how youth speak about their identity more generally. Second, youth had many unexpected

reactions to the film and curriculum that called for a deeper analysis. Much of the richest data speaks to the youth's reactions more broadly.

### Summer Arts Academy

The Summer Arts Academy a program of ROSE community development took place over four, approximately three-hour days. Approximately one hour of each day was committed to the M2B activities and the remaining time was spent learning, producing and performing creative activities with volunteer artists. On the first day participants were introduced to the M2B project, completed the informed consent process and were prompted to write their "Song of Self." On the second day youth viewed the entire *Moving to the Beat* documentary and engaged in a short discussion about the film. On the third and fourth day, students went through the identity portion of the curriculum. In addition, on the fourth and final day youth filled out a short feedback form.

### *Description of Participants*

On the first day of the Summer Arts Academy there were nine older participants (i.e., middle-school or high-school age). Of these youth, five attended all four of the M2B sessions. I use pseudonyms to identify all thesis participants. These five youth included three Mexican-American brothers, Enrique (twelve), Rodolfo (fifteen), and Raul (sixteen) as well as two Ukrainian-American sisters, Lavinia (thirteen), and Lyubov (sixteen). Additionally, on the first day the eldest Ukrainian sister (twenty-six), two younger boys (both around thirteen), and an African-American female (fifteen) attended the entire session.

*Description of Setting and Facilitator*

The majority of the M2B workshop was held in a small multiuse space. The space was situated within a housing complex and all of the core youth lived in the building where the workshop space was housed. A kitchenette sat in the back of the room, a small television in the front and two round tables in the center. Each day began with youth of all ages gathering into the nicely air conditioned room for a provided bag lunch. After about twenty minutes, the younger group split off for their activities and I was left in the space with the two sets of siblings and facilitator. One of the sessions started inside but was later moved outside. The outside space was relatively quiet and consisted of a table on a slab of concrete directly next to the building. A small playground was located next to this space.

The primary facilitator, John (pseudonym) was a black male hip-hop artist. He performed regularly in the local music scene and frequently rapped for us during the M2B sessions. He was also enrolled in Portland State University's School of Education. He was a strong facilitator, asking challenging questions of the students but was also supportive. John opened up to the students, sharing aspects of his life on a regular basis. His commitment to both progressive hip-hop and education was evident in his interactions with the youth.

At times, John would be running late or on one occasion missed the entire session. On these days another staff from the Summer Arts Academy stepped in. The alternative facilitator, Paul was a white male who also had some training in teaching. He was not as skilled a facilitator as John and I found him borderline offensive on a couple of occasions. He often made stereotypical statements about the two cultural groups the

sibling sets were from and tried to imply their connection to these cultural groups, which the Mexican brothers strongly resisted.

The atmosphere of the first day set the tone for the entire workshop. During the informal period when youth ate lunch, there was very little discussion, mostly a few whispers among sibling groups. After the young kids separated from the older youth different adults tried to engage the youth in conversation (myself included) but no one was successful. When asked who listened to hip-hop, about half the group raised their hands but no one would name any of their favorite artists, although one of the older brothers said he liked Chicano and Latino rap. When John arrived he introduced himself as a rap artist, which prompted the youth to ask him to rap. He obliged and the youth seemed more interested than before, but not exactly engaged. When he asked what artists the students listened to one of the older brothers commented, Mr. Criminal and Immortal Technique. Although these artists could both be categorized as Chicano rappers, Immortal Technique is often considered a conscious rapper and Mr. Criminal is not.

Despite his best attempts, John was generally unable to engage the youth in discussion. He tried to prompt the youth to produce their “Song of Self”, but they resisted. He attempted to get the youth to do an oral freestyle of their lyrics, which was also a failure. He then tried to get the youth to try beatboxing. From the brothers reactions it seemed that one of them might have some beatboxing skills, but they would not contribute. Eventually some of the youth did produce some of their own lyrics, which are detailed in the “Song of Self” section below.

John concluded the first session by asking the youth what he could do differently to make the activities more interesting and was met by the response “make them fun.” He



offered to bring in equipment so the youth could make their own beats, Enrique seemed slightly interested in this, but he was the only one. The facilitator then offered to make the youth CD's of beats so that they could write their own lyrics, which got a somewhat more positive reaction from many of the participants. This concluded the first day of the M2B activities at ROSE. The second day consisted of watching the *Moving to the Beat* film which is detailed in the following section.

### *Responses to the Moving to the Beat Film*

I was in charge of facilitating the introduction of the film to the youth. On this second day of activities only five youth returned-- the three Mexican brothers and two Ukrainian sisters. I talked to the youth about the M2B project and Sierra Leone. I ended up cutting my introduction short because the youth were laughing at random intervals. Throughout the film the laughter continued, most notably when the guards were beating the fans back at the concert, every time Colossus appeared on screen (an overweight member of the Rebel Soulz group), when the blind youth talked about hip-hop, when the kids were dancing and singing in the United States, the discussion about the waterbed and when the youth in Africa were talking about combating AIDS and increasing condom use with their music. This laughter may have resulted more from the context of the film screening and discussion rather than the actual content of the film and discussion. By this I mean, youth may have felt uncomfortable with the small number of participants that showed up for the activities, which resulted in the uncomfortable laughter.

Following the film screening Paul conducted the class discussion (John was not coming today). The facilitator asked the youth if any of the scenes made them feel uncomfortable, saying the condom scene made him a little uncomfortable. One

participant responded “no it’s just a condom” but did go on to say “what if a little kid heard that or something.” Enrique then goes on to talk about how he knows that AIDS is a problem in the United States but that it is an even bigger issue in Africa. The facilitator then asked what the youth thought about Africa and one of the sisters responded “it looked weird” and she “wouldn’t want to go there.” Enrique later talked about how America was a good place because other countries don’t have access to clean drinking water.

The facilitator then switched the discussion to concentrate on the scene in the film about the American Dream. In this scene the Sierra Leonean-Americans in the documentary reflect on the fantasies they held of America before moving to the United States. One youth reflects that when in Sierra Leone he heard his mother, whom had already migrated to America, had a waterbed. He shares how he thought a water bed was “this lavish thing that you just swam in” but also goes on to say that when he got to the United States he saw his mother struggling to make ends meet, “three jobs with three boys.”

The facilitator seemed to have assumed the youth would have identified with the scene given their first and second generation immigrant status, but they did not, or would not acknowledge it in this setting. Paul pushed the youth to talk about where they were from but they held fast that America was home and that they thought America was all good and had more opportunities than other countries. I was not surprised by youth’s resistance to this discussion, especially after the facilitator quizzed the Mexican brothers on whether they were all really born in the United States. I think this discussion would

have been very different if it had been facilitated by someone with whom the youth were more able to identify with or felt more comfortable.

Although she had previously claimed that she did not listen to that much hip-hop, Lavinia commented that the “hip-hop in the movie was different than the hip-hop on the radio”, going on to say that she was glad she did not have to “go through things in the film.” When asked about their favorite parts of the film Enrique commented he enjoyed the part about HIV/AIDS education. Raul said he enjoyed the rapping and Rodolfo responded by rejecting the question and the film saying “what was it about?” The sisters responded that they enjoyed the dancing and the rapping. When asked what they would change about the movie the brothers commented “it was too long”, “there was too much talking” and “there was no action.” The participants then rated the film a five (out of ten) and said they would not recommend it to their friends. It is hard to know if the youth may have enjoyed the film in a less inhibiting setting (e.g., more youth, a better facilitator, or a formal classroom setting).

### *Responses to the Curriculum*

At the beginning of the third day of the workshop and the first day of the curriculum activities, John was running late. The lunch period before the activities was quiet as usual. A screening of the film clip focused on identity followed lunch. This time youth’s only reaction to the film was, again, to laugh every time Colossus (the overweight rapper) appeared on the screen. After watching the clip we moved to a table outside for the discussion.

The facilitator began the discussion saying “I know identity is boring to talk about but it is useful if you want to learn about hip-hop and write lyrics.” When asked “what is

identity” Enrique responded by saying “keeping a secret in another life...like Spiderman”, Rodolfo added to this definition by talking more about another superhero. Paul then directed the conversation to different names and different genders, stressing the possible differences between the groups of siblings. When asked how the groups might differ one of the sisters said we “do different things” to which one of the brothers added “girls play dress-up and boys play video games.” The facilitator continued to talk about identity and how the groups differ when John arrived. The youth are very quiet at this time. Paul then talked about family being a part of identity to which one of the brothers responded “family is family” but this topic did get the youth talking more freely.

The conversation then switched as Paul asked the youth who they admired or what they wanted to do when they “grow up.” Two of the brothers’ responded “prosoccer [*sic*] players” and Raul said he wanted to be an artist, specifically drawing. But neither of the sisters would give a response to the question, although Lavina said she “doesn’t really admire anybody.”

There was more silence and so I jumped in and prompted the youth to do the I am activity. I instructed the youth to write down or imagine five to ten responses to the question “I am.” After some probing from the facilitator many of the youth came up with responses, including:

Enrique: I was born in Portland, I am Hispanic, I am a boy, and I am smart

Raul: I am an artist and I am shy

Lybov: I am Russian, I was born in the Ukraine, and I am a student at Marshall

Lavinia: I was born in Russia

Rodolfo: I am weird and I like boxing

After this activity conversation seemed to flow openly for a while, at least among the males. Rodolfo was much more talkative than previously, telling stories about getting in trouble at the mall. John responded to this by making sure that Rodolfo knew his rights, saying “you know they can’t do anything unless you break a rule.” Although Rodolfo never acknowledged his treatment at the mall as discrimination the facilitator seemed concerned it might be. John then tried to get the “ladies” involved by asking them about their home life (something they responded to relatively strongly in an early discussion). They talk relatively openly for a while about their “chaotic” home.

A friend of John’s arrived and the two of them go on to dominate the conversation as they talked about their pasts, talking about race, culture, and family. The two oldest boys seemed relatively engaged, nodding their heads and making eye contact but the girls still seemed bored, staring off into space. After their conversation the youth, again, are silent so the facilitator calls for a break. During this time the brothers, assisted and encouraged by John, did flips off the wall while the girls sat at the table and talked.

After the break the conversation turned to hip-hop. The facilitator gave an overview of the history of hip-hop and most of the youth seemed relatively engaged, although it is hard to know if this is because of the subject matter or the break. The youth then transitioned back inside to join the younger kids and see a local artist and radio host do a DJing demonstration.

The DJ asked the students if they liked hip-hop and no one responded. After naming off some older artists the youth were not familiar with she asked if anyone wanted to come up and try out her equipment. The first two volunteers were two older Black youth (one male and one female) who had just arrived. After they had their turn

Raul volunteered but did not seem to be enjoying himself (i.e., no hint of a smile on his face) but he did appear to be trying to do it correctly. The DJ then encouraged some women to try but they would not. A young boy tried, followed by Enrique and another of the younger boys. The session ended with Rodolfo volunteering, he seemed to be enjoying himself and was good at scratching and blending songs, two basic DJing skills.

The forth day of the activities began with me passing out the evaluation forms to the youth. There was some protesting and one of the brothers asked me “did I ace the test” as he returned his form. I set up the Television to watch the Lady Bee clip for the day’s activity. There was much protesting, such as “uhhhhhh we aren’t watching the movie again...”

At this point John introduced the equipment he brought for the youth to try making beats. The boys huddled in the front and seemed engaged while the girls sat behind them and stared into space. Once the facilitator set up he asked for volunteers but no one responded. The brothers then nominated Raul, who proceeded to bang out some beats. He could not quite get the timing the facilitator asked of him and the other brothers began to heckle him. Enrique said, “its easy bro” to which Raul responded “well you’re the smart one.” Enrique then tried and got the timing on his first try. Rodolfo then tried as his other two brothers laughed at his attempt. As John fixed his beat Rodolfo commented “that was so bad I messed it up” but the facilitator responded, “no it’s actually cool.”

John realized the girls were not participating and encouraged the boys to make room for them in the front. As the girls moved closer the facilitator said to the girls “I am about to command someone to put their hands on the keys” both responded to this by participating in the activity but not willingly. They each banged on the keyboard with no

intention of putting any real effort into the activity. Their resistance to not participate in the activity was denied so they apparently passively resisted by not trying at the activity. John then worked on fixing the girls beats. During this time the youth appeared bored and spoke softly in sibling groups. Raul began to make some beatboxing noises, despite his denial of being able to beatbox earlier in the week. The facilitator noticed the boredom and called for a break. The second half of class proceeded in a similar way but the youth took turns recording their voices instead of making beats.

When time was almost up John switched over to talk about the Lady Bee interview. He did not allow time to show the clip but gave a brief synopsis of the incident in the film. As John spoke about Lady Bee the younger kids returned to the room and the conversation was cut very short. The facilitator asked if Lady Bee was cut off because she was a woman Lavinia responded with a strong “yes” (one of the only times she spoke without further probing). Rodolfo then commented “no” because she was “awful.” The overall director of the Summer Arts Academy was in the room and asked “what about you girls” to which they responded “we can do a lot of stuff, everything.” The boys then went on to dominate the conversation. Enrique switched the subject to sports, specifically boy and girl soccer teams. Rodolfo told a story of having to play soccer with a girl and how he “took it easy on her” because he felt like he had to. The facilitator directed the conversation back to the girls, “would you want the boys to take it easy on you?” To which Lavina only said, “I don’t play soccer” while Lyubov said “yes go easy.” I then jumped into the conversation and switched the conversation to school. Rodolfo then said that he thought girls were smarter than boys because boys just “play around.”

The session was short on time so John wrapped up the discussion on identity by asking the youth to say one thing about themselves that makes them different, the youth responded: Lavinia- my name, Lyubov- my language, Rodolfo- the color of my skin, Enrique- Mexican and Raul would not respond. John talked a little more about hip-hop and dismissed the youth. In this group, differing immigrant statuses were highly salient. The singling out of an immigrant group by one of the facilitators may have enacted what youth commonly experience—that acknowledging differences makes youth vulnerable to scapegoating or racism.

*“Song of Self”*

Although youth would not write lyrics the first few times they were prompted, after a number of other activities many of the youth did eventually writing something or perform their lyrics aloud. The youth left very quickly after the workshop was over and I was not able to get physical copies of their lyrics but I had notes from their performances. Two of the younger boys performed lyrics that sort of followed the prompt Enrique said “I like to go to Mickey D’s and play call of duty” while another said his name and “I skate.” Two of the older youth, Rodolfo and the Black female wrote lyrics about their experiences at Summer Arts Academy. Rodolfo wrote “we are here at Reedway learning how to rap.” When the older, Black female participant performed her lyrics they were the most developed of the group and talked about how she felt old because of the middle-school aged youth and that time had been moving very slowly that day. The eldest Ukrainian sister also produced some thoughtful lyrics about working all night and not having time to sleep because of her job at a hospital. Overall, the youth did not use the prompt to produce their lyrics and instead produced lyrics on a wide swath of subjects.



Further, many of the lyrics were only one or two lines in length and few youth seemed to have put much thought or effort into their production. Given these limitations, I contribute a limited amount of analytic weight to this source of data.

### *Feedback Forms*

Despite the lack of participation by youth they provided contradictory responses on the feedback form. When asked about their favorite part of the M2B activities most of the youth responded “everything.” When asked what their least favorite part of the activities were one youth again responded “everything” while two youth wrote “the discussion.”

When asked how interesting the activities were three youth responded in the positive while one wrote “not that interesting” and yet another created his own likert-type scale and gave the M2B activities a four out of ten. Youth were also asked what they would change about the activities, only one had a suggestion responding “do more activities instead of sitting.”

When asked if they learned anything new from M2B one youth responded “lots of stuff about hip-hop” indicating they did have some positive take away from the experience. The youth were divided when it came to recommending M2B to a friend, two said yes, one said yes and gave a specific name and the other two responded no saying “no because they only like action movies” and “no cause its boring.”

Youth’s responses on the feedback form indicated a high degree of variability both between and within individuals. Youth’s association of the form with a “test” may have increased their incidence of positive responses. Yet, youth conferred with each other when filling out the forms so the negative learning orientation of some youth could have

decreased the number of positive responses. Like with the lyrics, given these limitations I contributed a limited amount of analytic weight to this source of data and primarily relied on observations when developing themes.

### *Interviews*

I was not able to conduct interviews with the participants of the Summer Arts Academy. On the last day the majority of the time was taken up by other activities. I asked some of the youth if they would stay and talk to me afterwards, they agreed but disappeared shortly after I spoke with them. I did not have any opportunities to reconnect with the youth after the workshop.

### *Summer Arts Academy Finding*

The ROSE youth seemed to be inhibited by the anxiety provoked by the small size of the group. Throughout the sessions I sensed that some youth would have participated more, particularly Enrique, had some of the other youth not been there. The sibling dynamic shaded much of the experience at the Summer Arts Academy. Enrique was often volunteered by his brothers to participate and was chastised for being “the smart one.” Enrique succeeded at education and enjoyed learning. While his brothers might secretly be jealous of his success they also denied their desire to learn and would not commit to their own skills. They painted education as “uncool”, keeping them from the possible benefits of valuing education. With this protective reaction they did not have to worry about the feelings of failure and rejection but they are also not set up to take advantage of any of the positives education and learning might offer. Further, as Enrique’s brothers paint his desire to learn as “uncool” he downplays his curiosity, wanting to be seen as cool by his older brothers. This same dynamic did not appear to be

present with the sisters, although the younger sister volunteered information more freely throughout the sessions. I also believe that the older brothers' attitudes toward learning may have inhibited the sisters' participation as well. Although I never had the chance to interview the participants to get at what might be behind these attitudes the internalized anti-school/learning attitude is one that is all too common in second generation Latin American immigrant youth (and youth on the margins more broadly) (see Valenzuela, 2005). School achievement and joy of learning are seen as a way of identifying with the oppressor and denying one's marginalized group identity. As with the boys' attitudes towards education, the participants occasional refusal to put in an effort on activities may have served as a protective function in case of the youth's failure at the activity.

There was also a strong gender dynamic at the Summer Arts Academy. Although no one participant was particularly talkative, the boys dominated the conversation. The girls often only responded after extensive probing (except when discussing the Lady Bee scene and family). Further, when there was an interactive activity, like playing with turntables or making beats with a computer, the boys were always the first to try their hand (although they often volunteered each other). The girls often only participated once the facilitator left them no option. When they did try or join in the activity they often resisted. For example, when John convinced them to tryout the beat making equipment they just banged on the keyboard, quite deliberately not putting effort into the activity. Like the older boys orientation to learning, by not putting in any effort into the activity the sisters avoided any risk to their self esteem but also missed out on an opportunity to try something new and expand their skill set.

This group was also interesting because some of them claimed to listen to progressive hip-hop but did not seem to carry any progressive themes into conversations on hip-hop. In fact, the opposite was often the case. For example, after showing the film one of the facilitators asked the youth what their favorite part of the film was. One of the older Mexican brothers responded, “the war” but then went on to deny this response, saying “I didn’t hear the question.” I was not convinced that he did not mean what he said initially. Violence is often glorified in regressive forms of hip-hop, and the boys seemed to carry this same attitude of glorification.

Following the screening of the film, Paul asked the youth what music they listened to. This was the third or fourth time this question had been asked but the youth gave their most specific response, one of the older brothers brought up the song *Dance with the Devil*. The facilitator was not familiar with the song and pushed the participants to talk about the song. The participant would only say that it was a story that ended in a shooting. The facilitator responded to this by asking if the story was real, to which all three brothers responded with a strong yes. At this point one of the brothers said he was uncomfortable and asked if “we could talk about something else.”

I watched this interaction closely as I am familiar with the song and could understand the youth’s reaction. The song is hard to listen to but tells a powerful and vivid narrative. The story follows a boy who is being initiated into a gang and must participate in a gang rape of a woman who at the end of the story is killed. The song reveals that the woman was the boy’s mother and the boy then jumps off a building, killing himself. The artist, Immortal Technique, places himself into the story, saying he was there.

By placing himself in the story Immortal Technique adds legitimacy to the song and because of his reputation as being “real” and having “street cred [*sic*]” the youth interpret this as meaning the story is real. Apparently by their uncomfortable reaction they interpret the story as literally real, whereas in an interview with Gerardo Garcia Immortal Technique talks about the story more as an allegory (2005). He says it is a sort of urban legend that he has placed himself in, but that it is not about rape but “it was really about how we are killing ourselves and destroying the most valuable resource that the Latino/Black community has, our women” (Garcia, 2005). The song in no way glorifies what happens, as some rap songs do. Instead, the song is a warning. I feel that if the youth had understood the depth of this song they would have been less uncomfortable about bringing it up. This conversation seemed to be a warning for those using progressive hip-hop in educational or activists setting. Facilitators should be prepared to understand the strategies hip-hop artists may use to communicate their message and help students to understand the strategies and the powerful messages within.

#### University Park Community Center Setting

The University Park Community Center (UPCC) setting differed from the Summer Arts Academy in that the curriculum activities were not a subset of a larger camp. Instead, youth came to UPCC for the sole purpose of participating in the M2B activities. Further, I was responsible for more of the logistics at UPCC. At the Summer Arts Academy the director of the camp took care of recruiting youth, finding space, getting equipment and food-- I was in charge of these aspects at UPCC. Overall, more youth attended this setting and the youth were more closely aligned with the demographic the curriculum and film are targeted towards.

*Description of Participants*

The participants at UPCC varied from day to day. Many of the youth were from the nearby Boys and Girls Club. Three youth that attended were from the Leadership and Entrepreneurship Public Charter High School (LEP). These youth attended evening classes at LEP and were able to attend the M2B activities in place of their usual night class. The one participant that attended all aspects of the workshop was a Sophomore male of mixed race who attended LEP-- Sam. Of the other LEP participants, both Black females, one Junior attended the first sessions only-- Shayla. Another sophomore attended the end of the first session and the entire last session-- Aaliyah. Morgan, another Black female, accompanied Aaliyah to both the sessions she attended.

The group from the nearby Boys and Girls club included four Black (one identified as mixed, including Black) males all in eighth or ninth grade. They attended the first half of the first and last sessions, as well as the entirety of the second session. These boys all played basketball together. I often refer to them collectively as the basketball boys. The group consisted of the youngest and most outspoken member Jacob, as well as Colby, Antwan and Nate. This group was often accompanied by Nesha, an eighth grade girl of mixed race (i.e., African-American, White, Mexican, and Native American). In addition to these participants, a group of about seven males and females of mixed race (all of whom identified as at least partially as African-American) attended the beginning of the first and last sessions. Due to their limited participation this last group played a limited role in the data and results.

After the first day of the workshop, I reviewed the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix I) youth had filled out. The participants ranged in age from twelve to

eighteen, although most of the older youth were in the group that attended very little of the workshop. I was surprised by the results of the main group of boys given that two that completed the questionnaire said that hip-hop was not important in their lives and that they did not participate in hip-hop culture. This was surprising because the group of boys enacted hip-hop culture in many ways including, dress, speech, and rapping aloud. The girls that filled out the demographic sheet were more likely to say that hip-hop was important to them and that they engaged in the culture. This finding was counter to much of the literature on hip-hop which suggest it is more central to Black males than Black females. Representative responses from the women included “music keeps me focus”, “by listening to music”, “listen and make beats”, and “fashion, dancing, the way you talk and stuff.” The boys and girls worked in groups which they segregated along gender lines and looked at each other’s responses and talked as they completed the activities and assignments.

#### *Description of Setting and Facilitator*

The space for the activities was a multiuse room surrounded by windows on two sides. A kitchen sat in one part of the room as well as some padded chairs. A fireplace jutted into the space and awkwardly divided the room. The other side of the room consisted of tables and chairs, which I sat up, in a sort of U-shape. The relatively large television was at the front of this part of the room.

The scheduled facilitator for the first workshop, a local hip-hop artist with experience conducting lyrics writing workshops, was unable to attend the session due to a sudden family emergency. I was required to facilitate this aspect of the curriculum. This first session consisted of a lot of talking and laughing, youth filling out demographic

worksheets, and writing lyrics. I did not feel comfortable or able to facilitate a lyrics writing workshop so the youth were left to write on their own, although I did respond to questions. The rest of the session consisted of a screening of *Moving to the Beat* and a brief discussion.

A local university professor facilitated the next two days of the curriculum, which consisted of the identity activities and discussions. The facilitator was a Black male who had recently written a book on Black masculinities and sports and taught a course on Hip-Hop culture. He was an engaging facilitator who challenged youth's thinking and often "caught" the youth if they contradicted themselves or used poor logic. During each of these sessions, at least one youth commented that the discussion was "hard." On the third day of the workshops, the second session with this facilitator, the basketball boys left at the moment the facilitator arrived. Aaliyah commented during this last session that the discussion was "hard" but in a subsequent interview she stated that she liked the facilitator.

The atmosphere of the workshops varied greatly from day to day. The beginning of the first and last days saw the greatest number of kids (around fifteen) and the highest energy level. These were the times when students ate pizza and engaged in relatively informal conversation, although during these times I asked students to complete some activities, such as writing lyrics, filling out demographic questionnaires and completing evaluation forms. This energy could be contrasted most starkly with the energy during the full second session. This session included the first half of the curriculum guide activities and was facilitated by the university professor. At the beginning of the session there were only two youth, although four more youth showed up later. This is in contrast to the



approximately fifteen youth that were present at the beginning of the first and last sessions.

The second session was exclusively attended by the group of four basketball boys, as well as Sam and Nesha. There was little informal visiting during this session. The little discussion that occurred (mostly a product of the facilitators probing) was vague and bordered on defensive. Youth gave vague responses to questions that were asked of them and, generally, would not give any information without further probing. The specifics of youth's reactions to the curriculum are addressed in the section on responses to the curriculum. It is hard to know if youth's responses in this session connected primarily to the small group size, as I predicted was the case at ROSE, or if the youth responded poorly to the activities and/or facilitator.

The informal period preceding the organized activities on the first and the third day was highly gendered. Youth segregated themselves by gender, with the boys sitting at the table and the girls sitting to the side of the room in the padded chairs. These gendered groups talked mostly among themselves. The boys were far more active and loud. When prompted to produce the "Song of Self", the boys preferred to rap the lyrics aloud, while the girls wrote quietly. Also during this time the boys sort of battled with through their lyrics, vying for attention. One male would rap some lyrics and when finished would receive a few positive responses from the other males presumably encouraging the next male to rap aloud and receive the praise of the others.

Males enacted a dominant role in the workshop space, being loud and boisterous, making jokes about one facilitator's breasts and telling the additional observer "hey, your

kinda cute.” These comments may have represented the male youth’s efforts to communicate anxieties and defenses associated with masculinity (Haaken, in press).

With the exception of the last session (where only one male was present for the majority of the time), female participants often remained timid, speaking quietly and cautiously when probed by the facilitator. This was consistent throughout multiple data sources and across locations, and is addressed more fully later in this section.

### *Responses to the Moving to the Beat Film*

When the film was shown to the group of youth at UPCC the response was relatively negative. Although youth initially became quiet when the film was started (as compared to when I was trying to engage them in activities) their attention waxed and waned throughout the screening. Youth seemed most engaged when Rebel Soulz were speaking or rapping as well as when images of Portland (e.g., when they saw the MAX) were shown. During these times youth quieted down and often bobbed their head to the beat of Rebel Soulz music. Youth became increasingly disengaged (e.g., moving around, talking and using their cell phones) when images of Africa were shown. The negative responses to the images of Sierra Leone were not always subtle. Youth often laughed when the Africans in the film were speaking and seemed to be making fun of the Sierra Leoneans’ accents. Further, as the American hip-hop group Rebel Soulz was speaking about their desire to return to Africa one of the male participants said, “why would you wanna go back there?”.

Youth slowly began to leave the room after about twenty minutes of the film. Youth reacted with laughter during the performance of the song about AIDS, the laughter was particularly loud when the images of the condom were shown. Although youth had

been slowly trickling out as the film was playing when Mackie performed her song, “Mama Africa is Dying”, most the remaining youth got up and left the room seeming frustrated by this performance. By this point two youth from the beginning, Sam and Shayla, remained in the room and two other youth, Morgan and Aaliyah, arrived towards the end of the film screening but stayed as others left, although they whispered to each other throughout much of the film.

During the discussion following the film, most youth did not seem interested in talking, Shayla being the exception. She said that she was surprised by the popularity of hip-hop in Sierra Leone. Further, she talked about the difference between the African hip-hop represented in the film and much of mainstream American hip-hop saying, that African hip-hop is “their story” but American hip-hop is all “ass, money and drugs” adding “that’s why they say hip-hop is dead.” When asked if they identified with anyone in the film, no youth responded.

### *Responses to the Curriculum*

The second and the third sessions were devoted to the M2B curriculum guide discussion and activities. The atmosphere for the first day of curriculum activities was very different than the week before. Youth were generally not interested in engaging in the discussion, they avoided eye contact, spoke softly, made only general statements, and often just responded with “I don’t know.” Once the facilitator was able to coax some responses out of the participants regarding identity, they began by talking about identity primarily as activities youth engage in, such as “playing basketball”, hanging with friends and “playing XBOX”.

The facilitator tried to get the youth to talk about norms and stereotypes and how people that are perceived as different are treated. The youth resisted this exercise saying things like “everyone is not the same” and people are “cool in their way.” Nesha, the only female participant, did admit that she did not treat everyone the same and was “really prejudice.” The facilitator tried to have a critical conversation around this issue but no one else was willing to talk. The participants seemed to be indirectly evoking the “everyone is all equal” motif that was common throughout many of the data sources for this thesis and is addressed later in this section.

The facilitator then moved the conversation back towards hip-hop. Youth seemed more engaged when debating the progressive and regressive aspects of hip-hop. Youth were well versed in the hip-hop debate, meaning they could name the regressive (e.g., gangs, violence, sex, drugs, and money) and the progressive (e.g., expressing yourself or telling a story or history) aspects of hip-hop. Yet, the vast majority of participants did not know the basic history of where hip-hop came from, their knowledge went only as far back as “Biggie and Tupac” which is the early to mid-1990’s. Youth had no knowledge of how hip-hop arose from the Bronx in the late 1970’s as a form of social resistance (except for the participant Shayla).

The conversation then shifted back to identity. Youth continued to talk about identity as activities but youth also begin to talk about the importance of relationships in identity formation. One of the basketball boys mentioned his mom, which ignited snickering from the other boys. The boys also mentioned girls while Nesha mentioned family members. At this point the conversation around identity shifted again and youth began to discuss personal characteristics as playing a role in identity, with youth

mentioning nice, good and “not a follower” as personal markers of identity. As was common throughout the M2B activities youth continued to express the importance of “being myself.” Again, the facilitator tried to engage the group in a conversation about norms and stereotypes but the youth’s resistance became more concrete. They seemed visibly frustrated, complaining that they were being asked the same question multiple times and saying “this is hard.”

The intensity level rose as the facilitator brought up sexuality, specifically asking the basketball boys if a gay male could hang out in their group. The boys initially answered “no” but then switched to “yes” as they realized the contradiction with their earlier statements about everyone being cool and equal. They seemed uncomfortable, shifting in their chairs and avoiding eye contact. One got up to go to the restroom. Given the previous conversation about everyone being different and that being ok, the facilitator asked, if being gay was “normal” to which Nate responded “ok he got us” which was followed by uncomfortable laughter from the boys. The question was asked of Nesha who responded that the person was “unique.” The conversation then goes back to the basketball boys with one saying “he’s not normal in our group but he’s normal in his group” as if trying to reconcile his previous comments about everyone being normal to his negative reaction to the suggestion of a gay youth joining their group. The facilitator then shifted to a different topic but discussion ended at this point.

The facilitator then decided to have youth do the “I am” activity before they left. This activity was included in the directions for the curriculum as a prompt if youth were not engaging in discussion. I added this after the success of the activity in the Summer Arts Academy setting. The participants were instructed to write down the phrase “I am”

seven times and then to provide a response for each of these prompts. All of the attending youth completed this activity and the responses mirrored the discussion. The most common response were personal characteristics, such as creative, outspoken, hard working, friendly, “sometimes funny”, athletic, smart, loyal, independent, and amazing. Some youth also included activity related responses like, “a volleyball player”, basketball, and football. Two youth also included the response hip-hop and one youth put down that they were mixed, referring to race. The last two are interesting as twice during the discussion youth said something about “I am hip-hop” (also a line from a rapper in the film) but upon further probing would not elucidate their response. Also, the mention of a youth being “mixed” in the activity is the only such mention of race throughout the entire discussion.

The next day of activities was very different than the previous week. Although Nesha and the basketball boys were present at the beginning of the session, they all left when the facilitator arrived. Many other, mostly older, youth had already left after they came in and ate all of the food. One of the basketball boys did tell me he had to leave early, which spread as everyone began to tell me they had to leave at 5:45 (the session was supposed to go from five to seven). The facilitator arrived at 5:20 and this group left. It is hard to know if the group left because of the facilitator, the small group size or because they did not want to go through more discussion around identity and hip-hop.

The only youth left at this time were Sam, who rarely said anything throughout the activities, Morgan and Aaliyah. After the facilitator arrived, the session began by showing the clip from *Moving to the Beat* where the Sierra Leonean female hip-hop artist, Lady Bee, is forced to end her performance after a “technical problem” that seemed

to be fixed as she was being interviewed. Aaliyah did the majority of the talking in the session, with Morgan jumping in occasionally. There was agreement that Lady Bee was kicked off the stage because she is a woman. Aaliyah talked about how the American hip-hop artist Nikki Ménage, faces discrimination because “when she’s bossy they call her a B [*sic*] but when guys are they says he’s a Boss”. They seemed to be speaking of the frustration they felt at the constrictions placed on females enacting dominant behaviors. The women expressed frustration with the attitudes the men in the film held in relation to the female artists, saying the men “were kinda being assholes.” The older, female participants this week seemed more willing to discuss norms and stereotypes than the previous weeks participants.

The facilitator then transitioned to talk about stereotypes in hip-hop. The group came up with a number of common stereotypes including, black people, “always using the n-word”, violence, aggression, and sex. The facilitator then asked who gets hurt and who benefits from these stereotypes. There was some engagement in this discussion, with Sam commenting that record producers churn out the same stuff and Aaliyah stating that artist get hurt because they get judged. Aaliyah then asked the facilitator his opinion on the matter. He talked about females being hurt, among other things and the conversation moved towards gender, asking specifically “how is gender part of identity.”

Youth saw gender as influencing identity through personality. Females were talked about as being emotional and having “features,” meaning breasts as Morgan implied with her hand motioning over that region of her body. Morgan then stated that males and females rap about different things, again evoking a very traditional gender framework, “guys take out their anger in their raps and girls talk about their emotions.”

The facilitator challenged these gendered assumptions by asking if girls got angry and if boys had emotions, the youth agreed that this was true but stated that males “get on a females’ level for being emotional.”

After this conversation the facilitator asked, again, what role gender plays in identity. Now the youth said that gender does not play a role in identity but also that it “depends on the person.” Again, youth invoked the individuality motif. The facilitator then asked why identity is important, to which the youth responded “so people know who you are and how different you are.” Again, identity was seen as something that separates you from the crowd, any aspects of identity that could tie youth to a group were generally denied. At this point Aaliyah commented, “this is so hard.” The facilitator then tried to get at identity through a different angle asking, “if hip-hop was a person, what would it be like?”. Youth responded with the beats, something different, “swag [*sic*] or how you carry yourself”, “dress like urban clothes”, reputation and “you doing you.” Identity was tied to uniqueness and individuality, even if it was expressed through dress or *swag*.

The group then began to talk about hip-hop more generally. From this point on the conversation seemed more fluid and for the first time all evening Morgan removed the hood she had been using to shield her face. In a way, the youth created this transition to hip-hop by bringing up the point that Ice-T (an older hip-hop artist) had accused Soldier Boy (a relatively new hip-hop artist) of destroying hip-hop. Again, the conversation turned to the history of hip-hop and, again, youth showed that they had little knowledge of the subject. But at this time, with these youth, the conversation seemed animated. As the facilitator described how rap artists got the idea of flow from graffiti artists Aaliyah commented “that’s tight.” Aaliyah even commented that “no one knows



the history of hip-hop and where it comes from all they know is that's tight." She goes on to mention Young Money (an example of a mainstream rap artist) as an example of the small piece of hip-hop culture most youth are exposed to. Here Aaliyah expressed much of what the data from this project suggests, youth have little knowledge of the history of hip-hop and often associated hip-hop to just mean, rap artists, leaving out the other varied art forms in the culture. Interestingly, the youth went on to comment on what could be considered a generation gap in hip-hop fans.

A conversation began about the rapper Jay-Z (a popular rapper with a career spanning from the mid-1990's to present). Although generally not considered a conscious rapper, in fact in *Moving to the Beat* Jay-Z is referred to as representing a regressive current in hip-hop, but the youth talked about how Jay-Z knows the history of hip-hop and "be rappin some real stuff." However, the youth also acknowledged that they "don't even know what he be sayin" and in fact did not like Jay-Z. The youth instead spoke highly of a recently popular female rapper, Nikki Ménage. They acknowledged that she raps about "nonsense stuff" but they "like her because of her swag." The facilitator used this time to ask the student about some other, older, prominent female artists. The youth were vaguely familiar with the names but did not seem excited by any of them and were more aware of Queen Latifah as a movie star as opposed to an influential female voice in early hip-hop.

### *"Song of Self"*

Youth were prompted to create two sets of "Song of Self" lyrics, one during the informal period preceding the screening of the film on the first day and again during the

period before the facilitator arrived on the third and final day. Students did not complete any lyrics for the second prompting so I only discuss the lyrics from the first session.

With the exception of the interviews, this source of data contained the most mentions of race. During the time youth were supposed to be writing their lyrics the boys rapped aloud and mentioned being Black and dark skinned. A couple of boys were overheard discussing the Black Panthers and were seen raising a fist, although only slightly.

Some students wrote down their lyrics, while some chose to only rap them aloud. I put on the title screen of the *Moving to the Beat* film so youth would have a beat to inspire their lyrics. When I probed the students who were not writing, all of which were male, to record their lyrics one complained “its hard when I write it.” Jacob, the youngest of this group of boys, asked if he could use profanity in his lyrics and responded happily when I said I did not care.

Despite the differing orientations of the male and female youth during the writing of the lyrics (boys more competitive and girls more supportive) the actual written lyrics I received were almost unanimously competitive in nature. And despite the prompt students were given, few lyrics dealt directly with identity issues. The identity issues that did come up included, race, which was mentioned once in the written lyrics, with one youth writing “not pale.” Gender was a more common response with one youth mentioning they were male and another saying “female dress male.”

Activities were another common theme. One male participant wrote “I cold at basketball” while a female youth wrote her rap about straightening her hair. This hair rap

also included the attention and battling nature that was representative of many of the lyrics, this female youth wrote:

\_\_\_\_\_ is my name  
and straighten my hair  
my plates is so hot  
that when I walk  
into a room  
all people's mouths drop

In this same session, a male youth produces lyrics in a similarly exhibitionistic and aggressive tone:

I don't rap I spit flames. Im ahead  
of my game. Put these dudes to shame.  
wear the snap to the back, stay  
ready to attack, I eating wack rappers  
like a snack.

Of the seven sets of written lyrics everyone utilized this competition motif and/or spoke about drawing attention to them selves. In the most developed set of lyrics Shayla wrote:

Cash rule er'thing around  
me.  
My swag stay fresh not dougie  
Like the California swag team  
While you pullin out 20's im pullin  
out 100's

While you tryin to get her I already

her number

Let me tell you about me

only 17 with 300\$ nikes

Female dress male don't give a f

Cuz im be myself.

While the first line of this rap is taken directly from a rap song from the Wu-Tang Clan in the early 1990's the rest of the rap appears to be Shayla's own words. For the most part these lyrics evoked the common hip-hop imagery of money and battling, Shayla begins her lyrics by acknowledging the power of commercial culture. Although it is unclear if she is critiquing or enacting this aspect of hip-hop, raising the issue of how difficult it is to assess critical consciousness.

Although there were some mentions of identity that matched how youth talked about identity in other portions of the data set (e. g. activities, like basketball, being a part of identity), overall the use of the written lyrics seemed to evoke the more regressive aspects of hip-hop as opposed to the other M2B activities. Despite the verbal and written prompts to produce lyrics that reflected the youth's identities, they produced lyrics that reflected common motifs in mainstream hip-hop. This could represent their identifications with hip-hop, but this seems unlikely given the lack of evidence in other data sources.

### *Feedback Forms*

The themes that emerged from the evaluation forms conflicted with some of the themes from the observations. Two participants wrote that they enjoyed learning about

Africa, specifically when responding to the question “what was your favorite part of the M2B activities?”, they wrote “when he explained what happened to his country” and “learning how slon (*Sierra Leonean*) kids. How they make music.” The youth seemed to be saying they particularly enjoyed learning about Africa, which is in stark contrast to the way many youth reacted to Africa when it was presented in the film. Other responses to this question evoked gender in very different ways with one youth saying “when the girls were dancing” and another “I like the fact how the girls stuck up for themselves no matter what and they didn’t let anyone stop them from what they liked to do.” This same participant also responded “I like the fact on how everyone raps about their lives and what they go through”. These differing gendered responses reflect the conflicting gender roles and stereotypes enacted throughout the M2B activities.

The rest of the responses on the feedback forms were vague. On some questions, youth created their own likert-type scale by circling a number or writing 1-10 and then circling the number. Using this makeshift quantitative data it appears youth were more satisfied with the curriculum than the observations revealed and were more satisfied than the participants from the Summer Arts Academy setting. Further, four of the five participants that filled out an evaluation form stated they would recommend the workshop to a friend (the other responded “IDK” meaning I don’t know). Although I am weary of any judgments based on this, because so few youth completed a feedback form, it appears that youth chose to represent their M2B experience as being an overall positive one, a finding that was replicated in the interview data.

*Interviews*

Two participants were interviewed from the UPCC location. As discussed in the methods section I interviewed the youth that were available to me. The participants represented two of the oldest and most talkative participants. Shayla, a black female who attended only the first session, was interviewed for forty-five minutes. Aaliyah, also a black female, attended the end of the first session as well as the entire third session and was also interviewed for forty-five minutes. I pursued some paths to try and interview other participants (particularly the youth that attended all three sessions) but nothing worked out.

Despite their relatively limited participation in the M2B project Shayla and Aaliyah provided invaluable insight into the M2B activities (e.g., what worked, what did not and what could be done differently next time). They also helped elucidate some of my understanding around the way youth understood their identity and how they use and understood hip-hop culture.

In both of the interviews, the participants expressed sympathy with Lady Bee's experience (i.e., getting kicked off the stage) and believed she was kicked off because she was a woman. Aaliyah connected through the personal experience of being discriminated against on the basketball court –something she also brought up during the workshops– saying “I got treated differently, like you can't play basketball cause you're a girl, like with the boys.” Shayla responded at a personal and a structural level. Personally she talked about how she would go through the same thing if she wanted to be a rap artist. But Shayla added a strong structural critique of the situation, saying:

Yeah, It really brings out how, how men is trying to

control the world and...ya know, who's better or who  
can be on top is going on in the world of politics and  
in the rap industry. It's everywhere and it's the same effect  
as with the blacks and the whites, that's the same effect  
because the whites look like, trying to act like they better  
than the blacks.

Shayla seemed to have a more developed critical consciousness than many of the other participants, which seemed to contribute to her stated enjoyment of the film, but also to her not coming back to subsequent sessions. She said that the other kids, who she repeatedly referred to as immature, ruined the experience for her. Shayla is also the only participant who talked openly about race relations. For example, she talked about her divergent experiences in a white majority and then a Black majority high-school. She was also very insightful into how hip-hop could be used to communicate the Black experience to dominate groups, stating:

that's what hip hop was, a voice, promoting the change  
in the black community. Promoting like the whites wouldn't  
listen to the black people if they stood on the stage and start  
talking... cause they think they're uneducated but if we  
rap about it the white people will listen to us, 'oh he said that  
that's really what's going on, like that's what they thinking,  
that's why they hate the police.' Like you will find out why  
we start selling drugs, why we start shootin at the police,  
why we beat up the white kids and why we have such an

anger towards our fellow men that aren't our color.

Conversations about race relations were completely lacking from other M2B discussions. Again, Aaliyah and Shayla offer some insight to a potential cause of this. Race is a sensitive and difficult issue to talk about but doing so through hip-hop is seen as more acceptable than doing so in conversation. If individuals do not have the language to discuss race and the consciousness to reflect on the role it plays in their (and others) lives, even bringing of the subject of race in conversation may feel racist.

Both participants were asked to talk about what makes up their identity and both responded by talking about their personalities. Personality was seen as something that makes you unique. Being true to yourself and being an individual were seen as very important by both women. When probed about how categories like race and gender might play a role, participants responded quite similarly. Aaliyah said that race was an identifying marker, "it's just like an ID." Shayla said that "skin color" could be used to differentiate people "oh I know her cause she has black skin color, this [Shayla] because she has a black skin color but there could be a white [Shayla]." Again Shayla's response was more thoughtful. When I initially asked the question I included race, gender, class, and sexuality. Shayla identifies as gay and responded strongly to the sexuality probe saying:

I don't like how they put you in categories, like, oh you like girls you're gay. No, I'm me, I like girls cause I like girls, if I wanted to like guys I wouldn't be gay.... I think it makes up your identity, to make you, you. To make you the person you really wanna be not what people want you to be, or



people think you should be.

In this quote Shayla expresses resistance to some categories of oppression, mainly sexuality. In her lyrics she also speaks about resistance to gender categories. Yet, her discussions of race did not reflect this same theme. In addition, the tendency to express the importance of individuality over and above sociopolitical identities was a common theme throughout all of my thesis research with high-school aged youth. Because these findings were so unexpected I attend to them more fully at the end of the results section.

#### *University Park Community Center Findings*

Overall, the data gathered from UPCC was much richer than that from the Summer Arts Academy and thus has played a more substantial role in the final analysis. The group at UPCC was more hip-hop identified and all identified at least partially as Black, so they fit the target group for M2B more closely. Further, although they occasionally resisted, the UPCC youth were more engaged in the discussion than the youth at the Summer Arts Academy. The major downside of this location was that the youth varied from day to day, with only one youth attending all three sessions. Although it was interesting that many of the same issues came up on multiple days with different groups of youth. Because of the centrality of this data to the final analysis the findings are detailed in the overall results section.

#### *Additional Data Sources*

In addition to the data from the settings detailed above three other sources of data informed this thesis. After finding the themes in the primary data sources I looked to see if they appeared in these other sources which include, two additional screenings of the *Moving to the Beat* film and two preliminary interviews with hip-hop identified youth.

One screening occurred at UPCC during a teen night before the actual curriculum activities. The screening was attended by approximately twelve youth, although all but three left during the showing to go to the gym to play basketball. The three youth that remained were all older females who had strong ties to UPCC and seemed to have a relatively developed level of critical consciousness. The film was also shown in university classrooms as a part of a Gender and Violence course. Finally, the preliminary interviews were done for a qualitative methods course and involved speaking to high-school aged youth whom a teacher recognized as hip-hop identified. I spent about thirty minutes with each youth asking them about hip-hop, identity, and education.

The interviews conducted both prior and as part of this thesis shared many common themes. The same was true of the screening at UPCC as a part of teen night. The screenings in university classrooms were very different and offered a glimpsed into what the M2B activities might have look like had they been conducted with university students and seemed to show that this might be a valid area for M2B to expand.

### Overall Findings

Despite the differences in the Summer Arts Academy and UPCC data many of the same themes emerged from the analysis process. In this section I address a variety of themes that appeared in the qualitative data sources. In each theme I briefly review the data supporting the theme and as well as draw on literature that speaks to each theme.

#### *Traditional Gender Roles*

One of the most common occurrences across data sources and settings was the enactment of traditional gender roles and gender segregation. Throughout both of the settings males and females tended to separate themselves into gendered groups and these

groups behaved in distinctively gendered ways. The boys talked more often and engaged in more activities. Girls tended to speak less and softly, and to orient their comments to me (one of the only adult females in the room) as opposed to the male facilitators. When it was time to write the rap lyrics the boys preferred to rap them aloud as they occupied the table in the center of the room while the girls wrote quietly in the corner. During breaks the girls talked softly while the boys were more active for example, doing flips off the wall. At both settings the youth named off stereotypical gender roles, often stating them as fact, as opposed to challenging them (e.g., girls are emotional and play dress up and boys get angry and play video games).

Hip-hop served as an additional way in which the participants enacted highly gendered roles. Females often talked about hip-hop in relation to dancing, hair, and fashion while males generally talked about rapping and rap artists. When females did talk about rap artists they often spoke of female artists. These female hip-hop artists seemed to serve an important role for female participants. One of the only times that females did challenge traditional gender roles was when talking about female hip-hop artists, whether it was Lady Bee from the *Moving to the Beat* or the mainstream artist Nicki Minaj. Females unanimously rejected the treatment of Lady Bee portrayed in the film. In fact, many female participants responded strongly to this aspect of the film. Females often said that they felt bad for Lady Bee. Although participants rejected the idea that females could not be good rap artists, only one participant clearly tied this to a structural argument concerning sexism more broadly. The female artists in the film and the Lady Bee activity seemed essential to female students positive responses and participation in the M2B activities.

Henry, West and Jackson (2010) have addressed the conflicting connection between hip-hop and Black womanhood in their literature review. They suggest that hip-hop simultaneously exploits and empowers Black women. However, they theorize that to utilize the progressive aspects of hip-hop, females must possess a combination of psychological strengths, such as self-esteem and critical consciousness and have access to social resources, such as strong relationships and role models- particularly other women of color. In her observations at a community center that served as a gathering place for hip-hop identified youth, Clay (2006) also found that hip-hop elicited traditional gender performances from males and females.

In the data for this thesis all of the females appeared to have some understanding of the conflicting messages in hip-hop but not specifically in relation to gender. The female participants generally did not speak of the progressive and regressive aspects of hip-hop in gendered ways, except when probed by the facilitator or Lady Bee film clip. This could be tied to participants' lack of knowledge of the history of hip-hop, their tendency to accept and promote gendered stereotypes and their propensity to gravitate towards artists they acknowledged as regressive and rejected those seen as progressive. Given that Henry and colleagues (2010) were looking at college students and found various levels of internal and external resources, it was no surprise that the young sample from this thesis was limited in abilities and resources.

The aspects of the curriculum that were focused on gender were the most well received by female participants, but also often poorly received by male participants. During these times male participants were less likely to talk and at the Summer Arts Academy the males actively tried to change the subject.

The youth connected gender to identity in complex and unexpected ways. Both male and female participants brought up gender in the lyrics but when asked about the connection between gender and identity youth seemed less ready to acknowledge this association. Gender was seen as influencing identity through personality. Even with the older females these influences were talked about in a stereotypical and often shallow ways (e.g., girls being emotional and having breasts). Overall, gender was not understood as a social or political identity but instead as something innate which had an effect on personality. That is at least how the youth choose to connect gender and identity. Youth's reactions to the treatment of Lady Bee might indicate an unspoken acknowledgment of gender discrimination. The two older females I interviewed did acknowledge the existence of discrimination based on gender but interestingly when asked how gender might connect to identity, they denied the connection.

*"Everyone is all Equal"*

"Everyone is all equal" was almost a unanimous response from youth whom I asked specifically about race or gender being a part of identity. I asked the question in different ways, I asked it of male and female Black youth with varying levels of acknowledged awareness of racism but the answer was always some version of the above. Youth could name off the stereotypes of women, they could name off the stereotypes of hip-hop often associated with Black people, some even had a relatively advanced understanding of racism, yet the youth denied any connection between race and identity and often denied the existence of stereotypes.

I saw this response in the discussions when the facilitator at UPCC tried to get the youth to talk about norms and stereotypes and how people perceived as different are

treated. The youth resisted this exercise saying things like “everyone is not the same” and people are “cool in their way.” The same motif was evident in the interviews I conducted as part of the this thesis and as part of preliminary research for the project. In all interviews youth brought up the “everyone is all equal” theme in oneway or another. Shayla mentioned it in when asked about how gender and race related to identity. Aaliyah talked about it when asked about why another youth said “why would you wanna go back there [Africa]” while watching *Moving to the Beat*. When asked what she meant by “everyone is all equal” Aaliyah replied, “everyone is all equal like I don’t think anyone should be judged or anything about their race or their gender, ya know.” Despite these claims when the students produced their “Song of Self” lyrics they were generally boastful. Youth used the common hip-hop motif of battling and competition in their lyrics, apparently forgetting their claims that everyone is “cool in their own way.”

An unexpected response youth had to the curriculum seemed to be the enactment of a *color-blind ideology*, as is present in political and media discourses. Rodriquez (2006) defines color-blind ideology as “the assertion of essential sameness between racial and ethnic groups despite unequal social locations and distinctive histories” (p. 645). In academia this ideology is often associated with whiteness, as a way for whites to deny the privileges they are granted based on their race. This is an important area in which to understand how this ideology operates but my research suggests that youth of color are also using this ideology. Rodriquez’s (2006) work looks at how white rap artist use claimed color-blindness to remove race from the highly racialized art form of hip-hop, stating that the ideology “draws on abstract, liberal notions of equality (‘equal opportunity for all’)” and that it reduces “race to little more than an ‘innocuous cultural

signifier” (p. 646). Rodriguez’s work does not offer any hint to why this ideology might be operating so strongly in youth of color.

This endorsement of a color-blind ideology could be the result messages youth receive from the education system. The youth could be reacting to this terrain that carries histories of racism. As hip-hop has become increasingly sterilized and under the control of whites it may have lost much of its original raced character it also may be more difficult for youth to claim hip-hop as a liberatory tool. As an artist in *Moving to the Beat* puts it “when commercial culture adopts it (hip-hop) it’s dead.” Perhaps he is correct. Youth that are disconnected from the history of hip-hop may have no way of reclaiming this aspect of the early culture.

Freire (2000) would likely predict that youth are experiencing a level of false consciousness that has been developed from teachers and proponents of color-blind ideology in the media and community. Finally, youth may be reacting to the civil rights generations treatment of race, a theme reviewed more substantially later. Without more information it is hard to know which or what combinations of these is driving this view in youth. In the academic literature Shonekan (2010) expresses a similar sentiment, “when an economic power base sees revolution rise in any form, it finds a way of removing the wind from its sail or the poison from its bite” (p. 15).

There could also be a developmental aspect to this color-blind orientation. According to Habermas (1984) moral and ego development proceed from awareness of social roles to questioning of those roles. Habermas (1984) goes on to claim that when youth are able to reflect on actions outside of cultural and societal norms they can move from a role identity to an ego identity. Transition to ego identity is connected to increased

moral reasoning and critical consciousness. Using this framework the youth in this project seem to be claiming to have moved to a state of ego identity but it seems unlikely they have in fact made this transition for a number of reasons. First, the youth appeared to still adhere to various stereotypical identity roles in a variety of ways. For example, they accepted many traditional gender roles and some had rejected education and learning a common aspect of oppositional culture practiced by youth on the margins. Second, on occasion the older youth did acknowledge these roles, they often named stereotypes about hip-hop and gender. In regard to hip-hop some youth were able to offer some critique of these stereotypes but the same was not true of the named gender norms. Finally, youth seemed more comfortable denying the existence of social roles and stereotypes than challenging them. As discussed above, youth's approach to the problem mirrored a color-blind ideology approach to racism. They seemed to believe that by ignoring the problem or denying its existence it would go away and that this approach was preferable to challenging the issues. Nowhere was the orientation more common than in the ways youth responded (or did not respond) to race.

Youth's responses to race were complex and unexpected. During informal conversations and during the production of the "Song of Self," youth talked openly about race and some connected it to their identity. But discussions of race were absent from the rest of the data set, except for some discussion in the interviews. This difference in the mention of race lead me to believe that youth either held off on discussing race during the curriculum activities because of my presence as a white researcher or the informal references to race were enacted as something you do within hip-hop culture more broadly. Shayla was an interesting contradiction in this regard, she talked openly with me



about the animosity that many Blacks felt towards whites but her response to my inquiry about race being related to identity mirrored the other youth's color-blind orientation.

This indicated to me that she may have been developmentally more advanced than some of the other youth and had a more developed critical consciousness. But even Shayla, the self-identified granddaughter of a Black Panther, denied the significance of race on her identity.

The other youth resisted the probes to discuss any sort of stereotype or norm but the mention of race seemed especially forbidden, although this seemed to be a stronger trend at the UPCC as opposed to the Summer Arts Academy. At Summer Arts Academy the youth seemed more open to talking about their race and ethnicity, often bringing up their Mexican or Ukrainian heritage. Because race was lacking from the group discussion I saw the interviews as a time to ask participants about this. I began this part of the interview asking youth about their identity. When I began this research I assumed that one of the responses to this question would be about race, especially when talking with youth of color. Yet, by this point in the project I knew youth were not likely to bring race up on their own. In both interviews I further probed youth "does race or gender play a role in your identity?" Aaliyah responded to this question:

yeah, because how would you identify yourself just  
by saying my name is Aaliyah .... She looks tall,  
light skinned girl with long hair, ya know, its  
just like... an ID like it has all your information  
on it.

while Shayla responded:

...not really cause I feel like everybody's equal, rather you Black, white, Mexican, anything, your equal, your just a different shade, everybody is American if you want to put it like that... Everyone is equal to me its not like gender... that's what is stirrin up a lot of arguments in the world politics. If you look at the president, like there's no females, it's the first time we got a black president, now we are trying to get a female president. 'Well if you guys weren't so gender orientated we would probably would have a female president cause you guys think women can't do nothing.' Women can do that so I don't think that... if you're a male or female makes up your identity. Or if your Black or white, it doesn't make your identity, it makes you, you. To specify you, "oh I know her cause she has black skin color.' They identify you... but for your self identification I don't think, gender or skin color matter.

Youth's responses to this probe both evoked the imagery of race as being truly no more than skin deep, with race just being useful as a way to identify someone, imitating what Rodriquez (2006) called reducing "race to little more than an 'innocuous cultural signifier'" (p. 646). Shayla's response included more depth on the matter, for her to tie identity to race was discriminatory. For Shayla it is the focus people place on social categories, like race and gender, which has kept females and historically Blacks out of the political arena. Again, despite her relatively developed knowledge of racism, she seems

to evoke a color-blind ideology. If we all just looked past race and gender, like she does, the problem of discrimination would disappear. Everyone would be equal. When speaking about the effect of sexuality on identity, something Shayla took much more personally than race or gender, she again stated she just wanted to be able to be her “own person” and be attracted to girls, rejecting the idea of being put in boxes.

Tajfel and Turner’s theory of social identity seems incompatible with the stated experiences of many of these youth. When asked what drew them to the groups they hung out with youth responded with things like “we all play basketball” or when asked what they talked about with their friends they said things like we talk about how our families are crazy. During discussions and interviews youth rejected the notion that they might divide themselves based on a social construct like race or gender, despite the fact they were highly gender segregated throughout the M2B activities.

### *“You Doing You”*

The level at which youth rejected belonging to a group was striking. Instead, youth choose to stress their individuality on multiple occasions. Between the two settings and the multiple sources of data youth tended to talk about their identity in three primary ways, as personality, as activities and as relationships. As discussed in the above section youth denied and did not discuss identity as including social and political categories. The exception to this was that at ROSE where youth brought up these categories more often but it was generally more oriented towards being affected by the cultures (Mexico and Ukraine) as opposed to an integrated part of identity. The downplay of individuality at Summer Arts Academy, compared to UPCC, could be connected to the cultures of the

youth and their parents. All of these youth were first or second generation migrants from cultures often associated with a more communal orientation than the United States.

At UPCC, although youth named a variety of personal characteristics as important to their identity one came up repeatedly individuality. Multiple youth at several key points (e.g., in the discussions, in the lyrics and in the interviews) stressed the important of “being you” and “being true to yourself.” This was generally seen as the most important aspect of a person and was used to judge others. This same theme was present in the preliminary interviews I conducted with hip-hop identified youth. This orientation towards identity being synonymous with individuality may have driven students rejection of sociopolitical categories that would have grouped them together with others on the basis of such characteristics. Youth claimed to be generally preoccupied with differentiating themselves from others, as opposed to developing group bonds or solidarity. Yet, some youth did mention that their families and friends were part of their identity. But even these people were often mentioned as someone that helped make the youth a unique individual. In a similar vein, when youth mentioned activities as part of their identity, basketball as an example, they did not talk about the team they belonged to but rather just the activity. This was perhaps most starkly demonstrated when multiple participants completed the I am activity by writing “I am basketball” as opposed to a responses, such as “I am a member of a basketball team.”

Erikson (1968) acknowledged that the identity development in adolescence involved a dual process of extreme group immersion but also a search for individuality. The UPCC youth seemed much more engaged, or at least willing to talk about, their individuality as opposed to group membership. The facilitator at UPCC was able to get

the youth to admit to creating in-group boundaries by asking participants if a gay youth could join their group. Although the boys reacted negatively to this, they expressed a desire to reconcile this feeling of in-group exclusivity.

Erikson's three-part identity model also speaks to the role of conflict and unconscious forces in shaping identity. In his model identity is made up of ego, personal, and social forces. Similar to the previous interpretations based on the model from Habermas it appears that these youth are not very developmentally advanced and do not have a developed ego identity. In Erikson's scheme ego identity consists of unconscious identifications that are internalized as parts of the social identity. Youth at UPCC seemed to have almost wholly internalized their social identities as they rejected, sometimes defensively, any suggestions of the role it might play in their overall identity formation. Although this orientation to individuality may be seen as preferable to a complete merger of the self with a group ideal the complete denial of these aspects of self is also unhealthy. By connecting their identity to race youth not only have an opportunity to see that barriers can be attributed to this social category but also should not be internalized as self-blame. Further, by relating to, other minorities' youth open the opportunity to connect to a community with a strong history of resistances to these barriers. This connection offers a way to overcome barriers that centers on the outside of the individual and stands to benefit all members of the group.

These general, psychological theories of identity may not adequately describe the role that hip-hop plays in identity. Scholars of hip-hop identity have suggested that youth's rejection of race based identity and conscious hip-hop artists may stem from a generational conflict and resistance to the identity politics of the civil rights generation.

A consistent finding throughout this process was that youth were disconnected from the roots of hip-hop. Like in *Moving to the Beat* when the band Rebel Soulz traveled to Sierra Leone to simultaneously reacquaint themselves with their roots but also educate Africans about the history of hip-hop, the M2B activities served to educate the next generation of youth in Portland about the roots of hip-hop. The space created at both settings served as a place for, what seemed, a rare chance at cross generation communication. The facilitators came in with a strong knowledge of the history of hip-hop and its roots but were somewhat disconnected from the hip-hop that the youth identified with. Alternatively, the youth had a strong knowledge of current hip-hop, including the debate on its regressive and progressive aspects but had almost no historical knowledge. The facilitators realized this disconnect and spent a lot of discussion time on reviewing the roots and basic tenants of hip-hop. Although this was originally not the plan for the curriculum, I made an incorrect assumption youth would be more knowledgeable about hip-hop history, it was a necessary step. The progressive aspects of hip-hop are tied to the culture's roots and to utilize these aspects a knowledge of this history is essential. Also, this aspect of the discussion also served a role in identity development. Dreyer (1994) theorized that identity-enhancing curriculum should serve the function of connecting past and present and as a site of cross-generation communication, which the M2B activities did.

Youth's reactions varied during the discussion of hip-hop, sometimes they seemed engaged and at others times not. Youth also seemed more talkative when the current state of hip-hop was being discussed, they were extremely well versed on the

debate around current hip-hop, they mentioned regressive aspects (e.g., gangs, violence, sex, drugs, and money) but also progressive functions (e.g., expressing yourself and telling a story of history). As previously mentioned, despite this knowledge youth tended to gravitate towards more regressive artists, often acknowledging their “faults” but stating they liked them anyway because of their “swag” or how they carried themselves. The importance of swag was noted in how youth talked about and judged other youth as well as hip-hop artists. The role of swag in hip-hop culture was also noted by Clay (2003) in her research on hip-hop culture.

There were some positive responses to learning about the history. During the discussion one student commented “that’s tight” when she learned about the historical connection between graffiti and rap artist. Further, on feedback forms from both locations at least one student commented that they learned about hip-hop. This also came up in both interviews as the participants talked about how they learned more about where hip-hop came from because of the M2B activities. There was one exception to this lack of knowledge about hip-hop’s history, Shayla. She had a strong idea of where hip-hop came from and claimed to not listen to many of the current mainstream artists because of their regressive tendencies, instead she gravitated to older artist like Tupac. When I asked how Shayla acquired this knowledge she stated her mom was a hip-hop fan and had taught her about the history, but also that she had done research on the matter.

Although I was surprised by the level of disconnect between hip-hop identified youth and their knowledge of hip-hop history, others were not surprised. As I spoke with one of the facilitators after a session he lamented that he saw the same thing in his college level hip-hop class. Interestingly, I rarely had an issue finding facilitators for the

workshops. Overall, the hip-hop community was very interested in having the opportunity to work with youth and pass on their knowledge and it seemed that there was a general lack of opportunities for this in Portland.

It is hard to imagine how hip-hop can function as an identity if it is disconnected from history. Marcia (1980) comments that the process of moratorium adolescents go through allows them to create an identity that integrates history, current context and individual abilities. In relation to hip-hop the youth in this study seem to have been successful at negotiating the last two aspects of this but the lack of history might be a major barrier. They were aware of the current context of hip-hop (i.e., the debate over the progressive and regressive aspects of hip-hop). Overall the youth were also connected to themselves as individuals as I have addressed under the theme “you doing you.” Yet, youth were disconnected from the history of the art form they claimed as central to organizing aspects of their identity.

The youth’s responses to the mention of more progressive and underground artists mirrored many other studies of hip-hop: youth preferred to talk about mainstream artists. Newman (2007) suggests that the rejection of more progressive hip-hop may represent a broader rejection of the principles represented by the civil rights generation. Newman suggest that youth reject these values connected to justice and fairness and instead are more oriented towards a capitalistic version of individual economic success, with images of Jay-Z, Puff Daddy and other successful hip-hop entrepreneurs offering youth an apparent path towards economic success.

Although hip-hop began by rebelling against regressive economic forces, the new generation of youth may be rebelling against the original hip-hop generation by accepting



these same forces as the key to improving their economic situation. With the social gains of the civil rights era and the rise of the first Black president youth may truly feel at least socially, race does not matter. They may only see the economic disadvantages often tied to race. Unlike social inequality, economic inequality is more easily subsumed under the label of meritocracy. Without the vocabulary to talk about issues of class and how they intersect with race it is no wonder youth may be adhering to American Dream ideology. American Dream ideology also fits nicely with their orientation to color-blind ideology as they both downplay structural barriers to success.

Although the American Dream is addressed in *Moving to the Beat* (and in the curriculum although that portion was not the focus of this thesis) youth shied away from talking about this aspect of the film. It was addressed somewhat at the Summer Arts Academy but the youth rejected any critique of this American ideology which highlights meritocracy, individualism and autonomy.

Rebellion (also addressed in the M2B curriculum but was not the focus of this study) has always been integral to hip-hop, but its focus seems to be shifting. Rose (1994) suggested that hip-hop was originally a forum for the youth of the day to rebel against the depressed economic situation, the aspects of equality and freedom the civil rights generation failed to correct. Hip-hop identified youth in this study seemed to be rebelling against the values of generations past. Youth's orientation towards hip-hop was illustrated by an interaction at UPCC between the facilitator, Morgan and Aaliyah. The youth identified Jay-Z as the only rapper that they saw as knowledgeable about hip-hop's past and that talks about "real stuff." This was surprising given the fact that Jay-Z is rarely mentioned as a progressive force in hip-hop. The youth also perceived Jay-Z to be

old-school. Although he has had a long career, many older hip-hop fans reach much farther back in hip-hop history to label someone as old school. Finally, despite the positives the youth identified, they stated they did not like Jay-Z.

I believe that this conversation about Jay-Z represents a generation gap in hip-hop fans. What is expected of hip-hop is distinctive for different generations. Further, if the new generation loses sight of the roots of hip-hop and dislikes artists that still represent this (even one as tame as Jay-Z) the barriers to using hip-hop as a progressive force seem harder to overcome. Through their choice of hip-hop artists, youth are re-creating their stated commitments to individuality and “swag” over and above others aspects of identity and hip-hop. The youth were aware of the progressive and regressive aspects of each artist but non-the less preferred the more regressive artist.

In this thesis youth seemed to be using hip-hop in ways that mirrored Clay’s (2003) ethnographic study of hip-hop identified youth. In both situations, youth seemed to be primarily using hip-hop as a form of cultural capital. It functioned as a way of creating an in-group but this process was not obvious. As recognized by Clay, cultural capital is generally symbolic and hidden so it can appear as an essence, like a personality of the all important “swag.” As youth perfect their performance of culture it appears more an more an integral aspects of personality and not a social or cultural marker. Given that youth I interviewed have grown up in a world where hip-hop was truly all encompassing and the hip-hop they were exposed to was primarily regressive in nature, this transition becomes increasingly understandable. Yet, this transition is not without problems, as essentialism- the practice of attributing universal, unchanging, often biological, characteristics to a socially constructed entity- can be dangerous. Essentialism has

historically been used as a tool to justify hierarchical power relations and enforce oppression. Further, by disconnecting from the rich traditions of resistance in hip-hop culture, solidarity building and social change efforts may suffer. Clay hypothesized that as hip-hop gained currency, other markers Blackness (i.e., skin color) might become less important and this research seems to support this assertion.

Losing connections to other markers of Blackness, such as a rich history of resistance to oppression, could be problematic for these youth on the margins. Subsuming hip-hop as a primary identity is particularly problematic if youth do not have the tools to wade through the complexities and contradictions of hip-hop. Also, as youth become increasingly disconnected from hip-hop's roots and underground current of the art they risk being primarily influence by regressive forms of the culture. Shonekan (2010) powerfully illustrates the limits of mainstream hip-hop:

The same hegemonic forces that drove colonialism and segregation have imposed heavily on the music industry, sapping creative forms like hip-hop of their potential to be creative and inspire social consciousness...

The hegemonic nature of pop culture ensures that it strangles local creativity of indigenous popular forms (p. 15).

As expressed in *Moving to the Beat*, for hip-hop to be progressive it must be rooted in history, critique of regressive forms and appreciation of current political and conscious forms.

When participants were asked about other youth's negative responses to the film they brought up the theme of maturity. The youth leaving the screening, the negative reactions to Africa and the talking over the facilitator were all tied to the other participants' lack of maturity. But the interviewed youth were not the only ones to police other youth. During the M2B activities some older youth tried to quiet other youth down.

There were some divergent findings between the UPCC and the Summer Arts Academy settings in regard to age and participation. At Summer Arts Academy the younger participants were more likely to engage in discussion while at UPCC the older youth that stayed were most engaged in the activities and discussion. But the overall discussion at UPCC had much more depth and got closer to discussing the topics the curriculum was designed around.

Interestingly, many of the younger participants brought up deviance on multiple occasions. They were concerned with whether they could put curse words into the lyrics and responded negatively to the smoking in the background of *Moving to the Beat*. The younger participants seem preoccupied with these stereotypical representations of deviance. The concerns with deviance also centered on protecting younger kids. For example, there were concerns over young children watching *Moving to the Beat* because of the scene with the condom. Further, participants seemed to feel that children needed to be protected from the cussing in rap lyrics. This orientation towards deviance, denying and presenting a "good boy" demeanor seems to fit nicely with Kohlberg's (2008) level II of moral development "morality of role-conformity" (p.12). The youth's ages also match those projected for this stage (13-16).

When *Moving to the Beat* was shown in college classrooms the discussion was quite different. Students were more likely to engage in a critical discussion of hip-hop as a possible agent of social change, evoking many of the progressive and regressive aspects mentioned by the high-school and middle-school youth but integrating them into a framework of change. The college students also showed a much deeper understanding of hip-hop's history. As would be expected from the participants in an upper level psychology class they were more attuned to the psychological aspects presented in the film such as identity and internalized oppression.

Interestingly one area of conversation was often similar in the university classrooms. Women, particularly women of color, responded strongly to the Lady Bee scene. In fact, other themes that were brought up by Black women in these sessions mirrored much of what the older female participants said in the UPCC wave suggesting, that social and political identity may be at work in addition to age and maturity. It is hard to say how much of the broader differences between the screening were attributed to the differences in maturity levels as opposed to differences in exposure because of class and education advantages experienced by the university students.

At UPCC, maturity seemed to be related to differing levels of critical consciousness as would be expected. The theory used to develop this thesis suggests that critical consciousness is tied to other development stages and that it unlikely to occur in young adolescents (Mustakova-Possardy, 1998). The M2B program was designed with older adolescents in mind but I was unable to recruit exclusively from this group. Although promotional materials stated M2B was directed at high-school aged youth, middle-school age youth also attended often as friends or siblings of the older youth. Of

the UPCC group that did not come from LEP it was the younger youth that stayed for more of the M2B activities. The connection between age and critical consciousness was not surprising but M2B may have different things to offer a variety of age groups.

One of the most striking differences among the different age groups was their divergent responses to Africa. The younger adolescents were disengaged when Africa was shown on the screen and laughed at the Sierra Leonean's accents. At one point a youth said "why would you wanna go back there" referring to Rebel Soulz journey back to Sierra Leone. When asked why the other participants would say this, the two interviewees both evoked the theme of maturity.

During both screenings of *Moving to the Beat* at UPCC youth got up and left the movie, particularly during parts that dealt with Africa. The group at the Summer Arts Academy did not leave the screening but they expressed their dislike of the film, complained about having to re-watch clips throughout the workshop, and often laughed at the Africans in the film. Throughout all three screenings the youth that responded most positively to the film were those that seemed open to learning and had a more developed critical consciousness. The M2B activities did not appear to be able to stimulate these activities in youth that did not already possess them. There was also a strong group dynamic in play. Most of the adults involved in the project, as well as one of the most attuned older participants, noticed that some youth appeared to be enjoying the film and the activities at one time or another but other youth in the group would notice and tease the youth- who would subsequently stop showing signs of engagement. This finding contradicts students stated belief in the importance of individuality and "you doing you." When asked to comment on this behavior Shayla attributed it to the other participants

lack of maturity but also commented that there was a perception among youth that “learning was for squares.”

### *Youth Resistance*

Participants at both locations resisted the activities and the discussion in creative and unexpected ways. Youth’s reactions seemed to be primarily to the material, as opposed to the facilitator, as they occurred across settings. Youth often rejected activities and questions that had them engage in deep thinking by either not participating in the activities or commenting about how hard they were.

As a researcher interested in social change and critical consciousness I have mixed reactions to youth’s expressions of resistance. On the one hand I was glad they were being agentic and using their power of participation and questioning of authority--all factors critical for progressive social change. Yet I was unconvinced that these actions sprang from an emancipatory place and instead could more accurately be represented as youthful rebellion against any sort of organized activity, particularly one involving learning.

Although I sought to create an environment that countered the traditional educational experience of youth, in an effort to oppose the oppressive histories of these institutions, I seem to have been unsuccessful. After having read the work of Dimitradis (2001) and others who highlight the increasing importance of popular culture and informal spaces in youth identity development I was focused on finding a location to test M2B outside of the classroom but conducting these workshops in the community had its disadvantages. For example, it was difficult to recruit youth and offer something more enticing than the other activities they could engage in outside of the school hours. In

addition, conducting these activities outside of the classroom meant that there was not a community already intact. This lack of community meant that youth with no prior connection were brought together to discuss deep, complex and emotional issues and after the activities were over there was no way to follow up with youth. Adding to these disadvantages I failed at my initial goal of creating an experience separate from the education system because youth still associated the activities with school, most notably demonstrated when one of the Summer Arts Academy participants handed back his feedback form asking “did I pass the test?” The oppositional identity (see Phinny, 1989) youth had built up in response to dominant culture, including school success and learning, carried over into their M2B participation.

Youth may also have reacted to the activities because they felt an incompatibility between school and hip-hop. Pulido (2009) suggests that youth see differences in the knowledge they gain in school (used for success in majority dominant institutions) and from hip-hop (used for cultural capital and critical consciousness development). One of the youth interviewed in the preliminary research for this thesis mirrored this sentiment; she felt that hip-hop and education were incompatible. Youth might have viewed the curriculum guide as an attempt at colonizing hip-hop and thus reacted by protecting this terrain.

The youth that I perceived to have the highest levels of critical consciousness resisted the activities less, but still did engage in some acts of resistance including, flipping the questions back on the facilitator. But these youth’s resistance did seem to come more from a place of critical questioning of authority.



In this section I have reviewed the results from this thesis study and brought in relevant literature to interpret these findings. In the final section I discuss the implications of this study for on the future development of the M2B project as well as some recommendations for progressive hip-hop based pedagogies more generally. I will also review some of the barriers and limitations of this study.

## DISCUSSION

This study has been designed with a number of goals in mind. First, the thesis grew out of a practical need to understand and assess the *Moving to the Beat* documentary and curriculum guide. The documentary was produced with the specific objective of increasing critical consciousness and facilitating progressive identity development among marginalized youth. The National Black Programming Consortium funded and agreed to disseminate the *Moving to the Beat* documentary because it contributed to the understanding of Black identity. This thesis represents the first assessment of the *Moving to the Beat* documentary and curriculum guide, the results of which will be used to revise the guide and prepare it for publication.

In addition, this thesis bridges gaps in the academic literature, particularly in its contribution to the under-theorized intersection of hip-hop based critical pedagogies and identity development. Hip-hop based pedagogies are becoming increasingly popular but research that attempts to understand if, and especially how, they work is lacking. In the results section I have suggested ways that the findings may be applicable to other such programs. Given the limited scope of this research I cannot make programmatic recommendations. However there are insights that emerged from the study that hold import for educators enlisting hip-hop based curricula in the classroom.

## Recommended Changes to the M2B Curriculum

The results of this study suggest that the *Moving to the Beat* curriculum would benefit from modifications if it is to be maximally effective with youth. The original version of the curriculum includes a small unit on the history of hip-hop focused on teachers and facilitators that might not know that history. Through this thesis research it

became apparent that most youth are not connected to the roots of hip-hop so a section on the history of hip-hop that addresses youth needs to be developed for the curriculum to be maximally effective. It is important that projects based on the progressive aspects of hip-hop are rooted in this history.

Based on the observations and feedback from youth who participated in the thesis study, it seems that breaks in the pacing of the curriculum would enhance its effectiveness, whether in including activities that involve movement or at engaging in hip-hop skills (e.g., students practice beatboxing skills). Further, the screening of the film could be divided into segments viewed over a series of days so that youth are not sitting for a long period. Showing the film in smaller segments also offers youth the opportunity to seek clarification and ask questions before they have viewed the entire documentary.

Although this study only offers information in regard to the identify portion of the curriculum it is apparent that this portion would benefit from considerable revisions. The ways that youth in this study conceptualize their identities do not align closely with the questions included in this study in pursuing responses to the curriculum in the area of critical consciousness as a component of a progressive social identity. Participants' propensity to deny the role of race in the formation of their social identity, focusing instead on individual personality traits, needs to be addressed in revisiting this thematic material in the classroom. Further, youth rejected so strongly to reading the essay on identity that it was left out of both data collection waves. Although youth did not carry out the homework assignment included in the curriculum, they did respond positively to the concept, which centered on creating a hip-hop album cover that incorporated their own conception of hip-hop identities.

Participants' responses also suggest that that they did not comprehend the full meaning of the hip-hop lyrics and language included in the documentary. A section of the curriculum that addresses the power of language would be a useful accompaniment to the curriculum as it is focused primarily on rap music and encourages youth to write their own lyrics. This section could attend to the role of metaphor in language and in hip-hop lyrics particularly. Through a deeper understanding of metaphor youth would be more prepared to interpret the complexity of hip-hop lyrics, as well as to further the development of critical consciousness.

Future M2B projects could consider the advice of Henry and colleagues (2010) and enlist a Black female facilitator for at least part of the activities. Female participants seemed to be more engaged with the M2B materials but at times the male facilitators failed to fully draw out the female participants' experiences. Further, the female youth tended to be more reticent, often directing their comments to me as observer instead of to the male facilitator. Using facilitators of mixed genders could provide a positive role model for all youth and help youth of both genders feel more comfortable. Also, it is worth considering how to keep males from inhibiting both open conversation about sexism and female participation in general. Perhaps groups could be divided along gender lines for a portion of the class and then come back together to share and learn from one another.

The M2B activities need to be tested in a high-school classroom. It is hard to know how the responses might be different in this environment. The results indicate that M2B, as currently formatted, is associated with school. Some of the benefits of doing the curriculum outside of the classroom are lost because of this association. The M2B

activities may be more successful in a college classroom but may be important to integrate into secondary-level educational settings. Youth outside of the college environment are less likely to be introduced to alternative ways of thinking about gender, race and hip-hop.

Based on the thesis findings, there is reason to believe that the M2B curriculum could be carried out in community settings if the settings provided opportunities to bring different ages of hip-hop identified youth of color together. More time, staff, and financial resources than were available for this study would need to be available to test the potential of community or other informal settings. The adoption of the curriculum outside of a structured classroom setting also would need to include creative activities in addition to M2B. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, before the M2B curriculum is initiated, a trusting and supportive social setting would need to be in place to facilitate open communication.

The next steps for the development of the curriculum involve incorporating what was learned from this thesis, including adding the sections on hip-hop history and editing the section on identity. The findings from this thesis will also be used in finalizing the other sections of the curriculum. I anticipate that these sections will be tested in a high-school classroom. When it is near completion the curriculum will be presented to a curriculum development expert for further revisions. Finally, a team of graphic designers will format the guide for publication on the M2B website and print edition.

### Recommendations for Hip-Hop Based Pedagogies

All of the recommendations for the M2B curriculum could apply to other hip-hop based education projects. The themes that emerged from the written lyrics could serve as

a warning to those trying to use hip-hop in progressive ways. For example, despite the participant Shayla's vast knowledge of the history of hip-hop and the critiques she offered on the current state of hip-hop, she still produced lyrics that would fit into any mainstream rap song. Youth may be able to critique the regressive aspects of hip-hop but it appears they may struggle in converting this into actually using hip-hop in progressive ways. Those choosing to use hip-hop based pedagogies face the challenge of validating youth's experiences and their preferences for hip-hop, but also challenging them to think about their music choices.

The results from this thesis and my preliminary observations in a classroom using hip-hop indicate that youth seem to enjoy hip-hop music when it is playing but lose interest during discussions. Using hip-hop in a learning environment is not a panacea for students that have developed an oppositional stance toward education. This oppositional stance needs to be addressed if hip-hop based pedagogies are to have maximal positive effects on youth and their community. Further, students may resist the incorporation of hip-hop into projects as they see hip-hop as a site of youthful rebellion, which they desire to protect. Incorporating hip-hop into projects of this nature has the potential of further colonizing the art form. This area of possible tension should be discussed when using hip-hop in educational settings.

#### Limitations of this Thesis

Because this thesis does not take a grounded theory approach to qualitative analysis, it relies on previously articulated theories as conceptual lenses. Many of the primary theories used in the analysis are quite old (e.g., Erikson and Freire). It is possible

that these theories are outdated in that they do not allow for the complexities and contradictions inherent to the lives of contemporary youth. It is possible that the relatively recent advances in technology and communication (e.g., the internet) have changed the process of identification and critical consciousness development of contemporary youth.

Another limitation of this study is in the lack of resources for carrying it out and the limited time frame. The size of this project was restricted to what one person could accomplish in a few months without funding. These constraints limited the amount of data that could be collected and analyzed. Ideally, every participant would have been interviewed before and after the M2B activities. Further, it would be ideal to spend more time in the community before and after implementing the M2B activities. Even though this project was not ideal from the beginning the process of conducting applied research in the community meant that many more concessions and changes were made along the way.

The process of finding community partners to test the curriculum was time consuming. Further, neither location was ideal but, instead, represented the organizations' willingness to work with me and test the curriculum. The process of finding community partners, negotiating among multiple stakeholders, and dealing with changes and unexpected events have not been addressed in this thesis but had a substantial effect on my learning as a community researcher. The process was difficult, stressful and trying throughout but the lessons gained will have a lasting impact on the way I conduct research and interact with communities. If the research had gone as planned I would

have had better data to analyze for this thesis but I would not have gained other invaluable lessons through this process that will have a more powerful effect on my development as a scholar. Despite the difficulties I was often amazed and overwhelmed by the support of community members who offered to help with the project. On countless occasions I was helped along in this process by individuals I had just met who were committed to making education more accessible to youth on the margins and who also were concerned about helping me complete my educational requirements. The energy of adults in Portland that work with (or want to work with) hip-hop identified youth is immense. Despite the efforts of these adults, it now appears that I should have been more directly involved in recruiting youth.

Throughout this process I also underestimated the evocative nature of the topics I chose to study. The youth did not possess, or at least seemed not to possess, the skills and language to talk about race. Without this knowledge and language, students may have felt that bringing up race was, in fact, racist. Future iterations of the M2B project should include mechanisms to help students feel more comfortable talking about race. Maybe the identity section could be presented in two parts, once at the beginning of the curriculum to orient students to the concept and again after students have engaged in discussions around rebellion, activism, and the history of civil rights and hip-hop. After these critical investigations, which include discussions of race, students might be better prepared to consider race as part of their identity.



## Future Research

This thesis produced a range of rich findings, but these findings may be idiosyncratic to the settings. The results are very dependent on the characteristics of the youth that attend the workshops and the specific nature of the settings. In order to understand the impact of hip-hop based pedagogies and M2B more specifically, future research might explore the effects of M2B on youth from different geographical locations, as well as of different class and sexual identities. Ideally, future research would be more participatory, involving hip-hop identified youth from the design to the analysis stage. Including youth in all stages of a study could maximize the emancipatory goals of this and other critical pedagogical studies.

Resting at the border of emancipatory research and education, this thesis faced a specific set of challenges. The conflicted emotional reactions of participants to the material evoked for me a strong ambivalent response. As an ally of their rebellious impulses and resistance to authority, I also sought their cooperation and compliance in carrying out this project. Resistance to authority and the project itself could be the result of a developed critical consciousness and the desire to not have hip-hop be further appropriated by those with power. Yet, these reactions were also frustrating and confusing. It was hard to parse out the sources of students' resistance. As a researcher and occasional facilitator I was engaged in a struggle with the youth throughout that itself was open to multiple interpretations.

These feelings of ambivalence and confusion may be what stay with me from this project. As I pursue a career in implementing these same emancipatory tactics into classroom and research settings I will be constantly faced with this dilemma. Learning to carry and make sense of this impasse, to the extent possible, will help prepare me for future situations of this nature.

Throughout this project, I have attempted to build on a marginalized approach within the broader discipline of psychology. As a social action research study, the investigation of the hip-hop curriculum had an eye toward social justice. Since the group in this project consists largely of youth on the margins, my identification with the group extends to my own position within the field of psychology. Through expanding disciplinary and methodological approaches to complex phenomena such as identity and critical consciousness, psychological research may reach broader audiences as well.

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## Appendix A

## ~Identity~

**Introduction:**

The goal of this section is to introduce students to the concept of identity, how it varies, and how it plays a role in peoples lives. Identity is personal, social, and political in nature. Identity can be a social category like a person's gender or race, but it also includes psychological dimensions of the person. While some identities are chosen and others are more apt to be socially assigned, often there is a combination of choice and cultural control over the process.

Historical change affects the kinds of identities available to people, however, and which identities are thought to be positive versus negative. Changes over time arise when groups come together to claim new identities or to redefine their self-concept(s) in some way. Psychologists have emphasized the role of group belonging, or in-groups, in developing a sense of personal identity.

In this section students are asked to critically engage with their multiple identities and groups to which they do and do not belong. Because it is impossible to predict what identities will be most important to the students in your class this outline is just a starting point; the discussion, activities, and assignments should be guided by the students' interests and experiences. Students and teachers are further challenged to ask what aspects of their identities grant them privilege or oppression.

*The objectives of this section include:*

1. Understanding the concept of identity and the role it plays in people's lives.
2. Developing respect for the identities of others that do not belong to our "in-group".
3. Acknowledging the positive and negative aspects of multiple, intersecting identities.
4. Understanding the progressive and regressive aspects of a hip-hop identity.

**DAY ONE:** 45 minutes

Materials: *Moving to the Beat* DVD, board or large sheet of paper and markers (optional), in class activity handout and homework handout

**Watch Moving to the Beat:** 5 minutes

Scenes: 11:45-14:20 [Hip-hop as an identity and a bridge]

**Film Response Discussion:** 10 minutes, Choose 2-4

(Optional: Record responses)

- What does it mean to identify with someone or something?
- What else do you identify with? Why?
- How would you define identity?
- What makes up your identity/ies?
- Are some parts more important than others? Which? Why is that?
- Did you choose your identities?
- What parts of your identities are personal? What parts are social? What parts are political?

**In Class Activity:** 20 minutes

Psychology and Identity:

Have students read the *psychology and identity* handout.

Many of the words could be challenging so be sure to be available to respond to any questions.

If time allows have students respond to the following discussion questions or come up with their own:

*Reflection Questions:*

What is a norm?

What norms can you think of that shape identity formation?

How might these be the same or different in American or Sierra Leonean cultures?

What about mainstream American culture and hip-hop culture?

Do you feel any conflict over your identities or identifications?

Are your identities or identifications dynamic? Rigid? Open? Closed?

Unconscious?

Is it possible to over identify with someone or something?

How can we respect those with different identities?

Alternatively students may wish to write a reflection inspired by the handout instead of having a class discussion.

**Optional Discussion Activity:**

If students are not engaging in discussion it might be useful to do an identity warm up activity. This could look like the twenty statements test created by Manford Kuhn and Thomas McPartland in 1954. In this activity the statement "I am \_\_\_\_\_" is written 20 times and the student is challenged to fill in the 20 blanks. This activity could be done with fewer statements and it could also be done as a question (i.e., "Who am I"). This activity should not be the limits of the

dialogue on identity but is a good starting place if students are hesitant to join in discussion

**HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT:** 10 minutes to assign

To further explore the concept of identity students are going to create works of art to reflect their identity. Students can think of these works of art as the cover image to their own hip-hop album, with the song they produced in the first class serving as their first track. As the teacher, be sure to bring in and present examples of album covers that represent aspects of identity. Have students create an acknowledgments section for their album cover. In the acknowledgments students can explain the image and how it represents their identity. Students could also use this section to “acknowledge” people, places, events, or phenomenon that are important to their identity. Because CD covers are very small encourage students to imagine they are creating a cover for a record. And if they scoff remind them of the centrality of records to hip-hop.

*Option 1: Photos*

If the students have access to cameras and a way to present pictures, they may take pictures of events, monuments, places, people, or objects that they view as reflective or representative of their identity.

*Option 2: Magazines and Internet*

Alternatively, students may also create a collage that reflects their identity. Images for the collage may come from magazines, printed from the Internet, or pictures the students already owns (as long as they have permission to use them).

*Option 3: Draw or Paint*

Students may also draw or paint their album covers.

**DAY TWO:** 45 minutes

Materials: Completed homework assignments, *Moving to the Beat* DVD, large board or paper and markers (optional), and *Lady Bee's Performance* handouts.

**Share Homework Assignment:** 15 minutes

Each student presents their album cover and acknowledgments to the class.

**Reflection Questions:** 15 minutes, Choose 3-6

(Optional: Record Responses)

- Who or what defines/shapes your identity?



- Who shares your identity/identities?
- In what ways is your identity local, national, regional, and global?
- How has your identity changed overtime?
- Why is your identity important?
- Is hip-hop an identity?
  - If so, what does it mean?
  - If not, why?

**In class activity:** 15 minutes

Watch lady Bee's performance [29:18-32:02] at the concert, give students the in class activity handout and discuss the following questions:

Record response on board or paper (optional). Choose 2-5

- Why do you think she was cut off?
- What is her explanation?
- Do you agree with her?
- Have you ever experienced something like this?
- What attitudes did the Sierra Leonean men have of women in hip-hop artists? What attitudes did the women have of men? How did the women see themselves?
- What are common stereotypes or phobias in hip-hop music? Where do these come from? Who is hurt/benefits from stereotypes?
- How does gender play a role in identity?

**Optional Homework Assignment:**

Have students respond to one or more of the reflection question in a journal that they keep throughout the curriculum guide.

## Identity

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### In class activity: Psychological Perspectives on Identity

For over a century, psychologists have studied identity development and debated over the best ways to understand how humans draw on relations with others to form their self-concepts. Some psychologists emphasize the role of imitation and how humans

pattern themselves after valued role models, such as parents, teachers, or cultural figures. Other psychologists suggest that identities develop as ways of expressing group membership. Gender identity, for example, involves knowing how to act feminine or masculine in ways that conform to societal norms and role expectations. All human societies produce norms that shape identity formation, although they vary considerably in the range and flexibility of those norms.

The Moving to the Beat project builds on cultural and psychological theories that attend to the more active, fluctuating, and culturally variable aspects of human identity. Many of these theories also focus on conflict as a driving force in identity development. Humans do not simply copy others but rather struggle over aspects of others that are incorporated into images of the self. In working with gender, race, and generational aspects of hip-hop, we drew on structures that stress the historically fluid (as opposed to fixed) and multilayered aspects of hip-hop identities as well as how such emerging identities can be a source of conflict and ambivalence (holding negative and positive feelings at the same time, such as love and hate or attraction and disgust) for both youth and their elders in that they reveal a break from valued attachments in the past. From a psychological perspective, the rejection of old identities and the formation of new ones may generate feelings of guilt and loss, as well as pleasure in breaking free of binding attachments.

Psychologists generally agree that healthy identities are based on flexibility and openness to change, as well as on abilities to see aspects of one's self in others. Rigid or inflexible identities are less flexible and may contribute to feelings of fear and anxiety, particularly when confronted by people who seem different. Since hip-hop is often associated with masculine identity, we were interested in how female artists and activists used this cultural world to broaden categories of the "feminine." As women were entering the field of hip-hop performance, we sought to understand how these artists/activists were taking up the aggressive style of this cultural language, as well as the multiple expressions of masculinities produced through hip-hop.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, and approach to psychology that stresses states of mind outside of awareness, some parts of identity remain unconscious (pushed out of mind) because they do not conform to the "ego ideal" or to social norms. The development of female identity, for example, may involve pushing out of awareness (or repressing) thoughts and feelings that are implied in the society as masculine (for example, aggressiveness or toughness). In the course of male development, boys may push out of mind aspects of themselves that they experience as feminine, such as fear or feelings of vulnerability. These unconscious aspects of identity, or forbidden images of the self, may emerge in a disguised forms, whether in hating particular groups that express these

forbidden images or in using drugs or alcohol to “allow” expressions of identity that do not conform to the conscious ideal of the self.

People vary in whether they feel conflict with their assigned social identities, just as societies vary in how restrictive or repressive they are in supporting a range of identities. Similarly, there may be more or less inflexible forms of hip-hop identity. Hip-hop may be the basis of a inflexible group identity (that excludes some individuals because they don’t belong to the in-group)—or it may be flexible and broad enough to allow for a wide range of capacities to think, feel, move, and relate to others.

**Reflection Questions:**

What is a norm?

What norms can you think of that influence how people develop their identities?

How might these norms be the same or different in American or Sierra Leonean cultures?

How are norms different in mainstream American culture and hip-hop culture?

What parts of your identity are you more comfortable with? What parts are you more uncomfortable with?

How do the groups that you belong to help you to feel good about your identity?

What is important in being able to feel some connection with people who have different identities? How are people able to relate to those who seem different?

## Identity

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### Homework Assignment: Art and Identity

Using images from the Internet, magazines, photos, or art you create you are going to make a collage that reflects aspects of your identity. These images may include, events, people, monuments, places, or anything else that you feel represents some aspect of your identity. You are designing this collage to be the cover of your new hip-hop album. Be sure to create an acknowledgments section to accompany your album cover. The acknowledgment section should explain the collage and how it relates to your identity, as well as serving as a space for any “shout-out” to people, places, events, or phenomenon that have shaped your identity over time.

Because CD’s are small we will be creating an album cover the size of a record case. Don’t laugh, records are very important to hip-hop music and culture!

#### *Option 1: Photos*

If you have access to cameras and a way to present pictures you should take pictures of events, monuments, places, people, or anything else that you see is part of your identity or reflects your identity.

#### *Option 2: Magazine and Internet*

Alternatively, you may also create a collage that reflects your identity. Images for the collage may come from magazine, printed from the Internet, or pictures you already own.

#### *Option 3: Draw or Paint*

For a third option you could create a collage by producing the images by drawing and/or painting.

## Identity

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In Class Activity

Watch lady Bee's performance at the concert, and as a class discuss the following questions:

What is lady Bee's explanation for why she was cut off?

Do you agree with her?

Have you ever experienced discrimination like this? If so, where and in what situation?

What views do the Sierra Leonean men have of women in hip-hop artists?

What views do the Sierra Leonean women have of men in their community? How do the women see themselves?

What are common stereotypes in hip-hop music? Where do these come from? Who is hurt/benefits from stereotypes?

## Appendix B

Smith's Conscientization Coding Categories OutlineMagical Consciousness

- A. Naming
  - a. Problem Denial
    - i. Overt denial
    - ii. Problem avoidance
  - b. Survival Problems
    - i. Poor physical state/health
    - ii. Poverty
    - iii. Lack of work
    - iv. Insufficient work
    - v. Money as end in itself
- B. Reflecting
  - a. Simplistic Causal Relationships
    - i. Blames physical state/health
    - ii. Blames objects over people
  - b. Facts Attributed to Superior Powers
    - i. Uncontrollable factors: God/Fate/luck/Age/etc.
    - ii. Fear of oppressor
    - iii. Oppressor as inevitable winner
    - iv. Empathy for oppressor
- C. Acting
  - a. Fatalism
    - i. Resignation
    - ii. Acceptance
  - b. Passively Playing Host to Oppressor
    - i. Waiting for "good:" luck/patron
    - ii. Dependence on oppressor

Naïve Consciousness

- A. Naming
  - a. Oppressed Deviates from Ideal Expectations
    - i. Oppressed not like oppressor/oppressed not meet oppressor's expectations
    - ii. Horizontal aggressiveness/intrapunitiveness
- B. Reflecting
  - a. Blames Oppressed
    - i. Accepts oppressor's expectations (education as end in itself)
    - ii. Self-peer deprecation
    - iii. Blames ancestors
    - iv. Self-pity
  - b. Understands How Individual Oppressor Violates Norms
    - i. Sees intentionality by oppressor

- ii. Sees relationships between oppressor/oppressor's agents
- iii. Generalizes from one individual oppressor to another.

#### C. Acting

- a. Actively Playing Host to Oppressor (Collusion)
  - i. Models oppressor's behavior (education, dress, habits)
  - ii. Misdirected aggression (horizontal aggression/intrapunitiveness)
  - iii. Paternalistic towards peers
  - iv. Meets oppressors expectations
- b. Defending
  - i. Gregariousness
  - ii. Makes system work
  - iii. Avoids oppressor
  - iv. Opposes individual oppressor
  - v. Change environment

### Critical Consciousness

#### A. Naming

- a. Rejection of Oppressor Groups/Self-Peer Affirmation
  - i. Rejects oppressors groups
  - ii. Seeks to maintain ethnicity
  - iii. Seeks to affirm uniqueness
- b. Transforms System
  - i. Procedures—People
  - ii. Rejects oppressive system

#### B. Reflecting

- a. Understands/Rejects Oppressors' Ideology and Their Collusion
  - i. Sympathy/understanding peers
  - ii. Self-critical/sees contradiction between actions and critical goals
  - iii. Rejects horizontal aggression/affirms self
  - iv. Sees oppressor as weak/victim of system
  - v. Rejects oppressor/oppressor's ideology
  - vi. Generalizes from one oppressive group to another
- b. Understands How System Works
  - i. Sees systems as cause
  - ii. Sees contradictions between rhetoric/results
  - iii. Macro-socio-economic analysis
  - iv. Generalizes from one oppressive system to another

#### C. Acting

- a. Self-Actualization
  - i. Sees appropriate role models
  - ii. Personal/ethnic self-esteem
  - iii. Self-growth /transforming learning
  - iv. Subject/author
  - v. Faith in peers/peer learning
  - vi. Boldness/risk-taking/unorthodox solutions



- vii. Reliance on community resources/participation
- viii. Opposes oppressor groups
- b. Transforming System
  - i. Dialogue-polemics
  - ii. Comradeship
  - iii. Scientific approach
  - iv. Change norms/laws/procedures

Smith, W. A. (1976). *The meaning of conscientizacao: The goal of Paulo Freire's pedagogy*. Amherst, Mass: Center for International Education, University of Massachusetts, p. 72-74.

## Appendix C

Parental Consent Form for Summer Arts Academy

## The Moving to the Beat Project

Your child has been invited to take part in a study by professor Jan Haaken, PhD and graduate student researcher Jennifer Wallin-Ruschman from Portland State University. As part of the community psychology program at PSU, professor Haaken's work focuses on media and education. This study is interested in how youth react to the Moving to the Beat project. Moving to the Beat includes an educational film and classroom activities based on the film. The study is part of Jennifer Wallin-Ruschman's Masters thesis and Professor Haaken will supervise. The youth were selected as potential participants because they may attend the ROSE summer arts academy.

Youth that take part in the study will view the *Moving to the Beat* film and participate in the Moving to the Beat activities. Two Portland State University (PSU) researchers will observe these activities to better understand them. Youth will be asked to write down their thoughts and may talk about their experience with the PSU student researchers. This discussion will be audio taped. Names will not be connected to any of the collected information.

Although it is very unlikely, there is a small chance that some youth may experience discomfort for example, as youth in the *Moving to the Beat* film discuss what it felt like to live in a war zone. Youth will have the chance to discuss their feelings during the activities but may also choose not to share their thoughts and feelings. They also will have the opportunity to discuss their reactions with a staff person experienced and trained to work with youth.

The information we collect in this study will help us to understand the educational materials and themes related to social identity among youth. This information also will be the basis of a graduate student thesis project, and potentially papers published through academic journals. Youth will be asked for permission to be quoted directly. Direct quotes will not be associated with anyone's real name.

The film *Moving to the Beat* has been shown to hundreds of youth with very positive responses. *Moving to the Beat* has been shown on television stations across the country as part of the National Black Programming Consortiums *Afropop* series. Direct benefits to children include increased levels of positive social identity, which have been tied to higher capacities for managing group life and empathy for others.

Your child's participation is voluntary. If you do not wish for your child to participate it will not affect your relationship with ROSE community development, the summer arts academy, Portland State University, or the researchers.

If you have concerns or problems about your child's participation in this study or their rights as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Review Committee, Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, PO Box 751, Portland OR, 97207, (503) 725-3423, [hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu](mailto:hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu). If you have questions about the study itself, contact Dr. Janice Haaken at the Psychology Department, 317 Cramer Hall, Portland State University, P.O. Box 751 Portland, OR 97207-0751, (503) 725-3967.

Your signature means that you have read and understand the above information and do permit your child to take part in the study. Please sign both copies of this form, keeping one for your records and returning one to ROSE Summer Arts Academy.

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Signature

Date

Name of Child(ren):

## Appendix D

Participant Consent Form for Summer Arts Academy

The Moving to the Beat Project needs you. Researchers from Portland State University want to improve educational opportunities for youth.

- What's Involved?** You will be watching a documentary film called *Moving to the Beat* and participating in accompanying activities and discussions. The movie looks at hip-hop artists in the United State and Sierra Leone and how hip-hop is important to their lives. You will be writing some song lyrics/spoken word poems about yourself, your identity, and your life history. In addition, you may be asked some questions about your response to the activities and/or your written material.
- Why?** Because we want to make Moving to the Beat as interesting as possible, and your feedback is helpful. Also, we are interested in you and things like, what makes you, you? How has your life history affected you? Do you think Moving to the Beat is interesting?
- Where and When?** At the summer arts academy for about an hour each day. Another additional 30 minutes of your time could be used for a discussion with the researchers about your experience. This would take place during or immediately following the summer arts academy. This discussion will be audio taped.
- Who gets to see this stuff?** Only the researchers will know what you wrote in your reflections and how you answered the questions. We will not tell your parents/guardian how you answered or what you wrote. Information you give us will be used for a Masters thesis project, papers, and presentations. This information will not be connected to your name. If you give us permission we may use some quotes from your lyrics or discussion.
- How am I protected?** Unless you give us permission to quote you, we will take all precautions to protect your confidentiality. But because researchers are only human, there is a small risk that confidentiality could be broken in some way. We will do everything we can to prevent this from happening. For example, the information will be coded (so no one knows your name but us) and the recorded discussions will be stored in secure, password protected locations.

**Here's the bad news:** There is a possibility that some of the presented material may bring up uncomfortable feelings or memories. It is your choice whether or not to talk about any reactions you have to the material. And remember, you can stop being a participant at any point. Also there will be someone with experience and training in working with youth who you can talk to if you want.

**Here's the good news!** Being in the study is voluntary. If you don't want to answer you don't have to. If you decide this is not for you, you don't have to participate- even after you have started. Just tell us and you will not participate in any other activities and we will throw away any information we already have. Also this information will help people working with youth, education, and hip-hop understand what works and why.

**What's the catch? By law, we MUST report:**  
Any information that makes us think you have been or will be physically or sexually abused. Any information that makes us think you might seriously hurt someone else. Any information that makes us think you might seriously hurt yourself.

**Questions?** Ask now or call (503) 725-3967 to speak to Jan Haaken, principle investigator for the study. Or write Psychology Department, 317 Cramer Hall, Portland State University P.O. Box 751  
Portland, OR 97207-0751.

**Participant's Statement:**

I have read this form or it has been read to me. I understand what it says. My questions have been answered, and I'm not being forced to sign the form. A copy of this form will be given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

In addition to participation I also agree for any quotes from my participation to be used in presentation, papers, or thesis projects.

---

Signature

---

Date

If you have any problems or concerns regarding participation in this study, please contact:

Office of Research and Sponsored Projects

PO Box 751

Portland OR, 97207

(503) 725-3423. [hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu](mailto:hsrrc@lists.pdx.edu)

Appendix E

Interview Script

1. When we watched the entire Moving to the Beat film women responded strongly to the Lady Bee's story. Why do you think that was?
2. During the screening of the film another participant said "why would you wanna to go back their" referring to Africa. What is your reaction to their statement?
3. There were a number of the point in the film where people laughed and/or left the screening, why do you think this was?
4. Did you have a favorite part of the Moving to the Beat film or activities? A least favorite part? What would you change about the film or activities?
5. Did you find parts of the film or activities shocking, surprising or just really different? Did we talk about anything you will keep thinking about?
7. What makes up your identity?
8. What or who has influence your identity?
9. Think About yourself in ten years, what are you doing?
10. In what ways are you involved in hip-hop culture?
11. Have you ever looked up anything up something you heard in a rap song but didn't understand?
12. Is there anything else you want to talk about or ask me?

## Appendix F

Lyric PromptsPrompt #1  
Song of Self

We are going to be talking a lot about identity in the next couple weeks. In preparation for this we want you to think about your life history or your life story and how it impacts who you are. Some thoughts to consider include:

1. What important events have made me the person I am?
2. What important people have influenced me and made me the person I am?
3. What plays the biggest role in making me, me?

Considering these questions and anything else you come up with and write a set of rap lyrics. Remember, unless you choose to share, the PSU students will be the only people that see your lyrics.

Please complete your lyrics by the end of the day and return them to the PSU students. We will make a copy and give the original back to you to keep (if you want).

Prompt #2  
Song of Self Remix

At the beginning of the Summer Arts Academy you wrote some really great lyrics about your life story and your identity. We want to give you another chance to write some more rap lyrics. Just like before, some thoughts to consider include:

1. What important events have made me the person I am?
2. What important people have influenced me and made me the person I am?
3. What plays the biggest role in making me, me?

Consider these questions and anything else you come up with to create your lyrics. These may be similar or really different than the first or lyrics you wrote, and that is ok. Remember, unless you choose to share, the PSU student will be the only people that see your lyrics.

Please complete you lyrics before the end of the day and return them to a PSU student. We will make a copy and give the original back to you to keep (if you want).



Appendix G

Participant Feedback Form

1. What was your favorite part of the M2B activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What was your least favorite part of the M2B activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How interesting was the *Moving to the Beat* documentary film and or activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How much did you take part in the M2B activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What would you change about the M2B activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Did you learn anything new from the *Moving to the Beat* documentary or activities?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
7. Would you recommend the *Moving to the Beat* documentary or activities to a friend?

## Appendix H

Portion of Collated Data by Theme1. Traditional Gender Roles*a. Summer Arts Academy Observations*

The discussion moves to different names and different genders. The Russian sisters also say that they ‘do different things’ responding to the question asked about how the two groups (Russian sisters and Mexican brothers) might differ. One of the brothers says ‘girls play dress-up and boys play video games’.

This initiates a break of sorts where the girls sit in their same seats being quite, the boys play on the playground equipment,... Enrique is doing a flop on the wall assisted by the facilitator and his brother.

Rodolfo ask, is it (hip-hop) to hard for them? John says no, Enrique says no ‘as long as they’ but never finishes this thought so people can hear. The others then respond no to the question..

Enrique then talks about how there are different boys and girls soccer teams. Rodolfo then tells a story about how he was playing soccer with a girl and he ‘took it easy on her’. He says he feels he has to go easy on them in soccer. John ask the girls if they want the boys to go easy on them in soccer. One says, I don’t play soccer and the other says, yes go easy. I then ask if the same holds true for things in school like spelling bees, or math? Rodolfo says no, I get F’s. Lavinia says, it depends. Rodolfo says, I think girls are smarter, boys’ play around a flip.

The boys are huddled around in the front, with the two girls sitting behind them

The girls finally move closer to the key board. John then says ‘I am about to command someone to put their hands on the keys’. Lavinia tries and bangs on the keyboard for a while, the laughs anxiously and then ‘gives up’ in which case Lyubov gets up bangs on the keys for a minute. *Both make a truly horrible sound.*

The facilitator ask if the kids think that she was cut off because she (Lady Bee) was female. Lavinia responds with a resounding Yes, probably the strongest response she has had to anything over the past two weeks. Rodolfo comments, no because she was awful.

*b. University Park Community Center Observations*

I had previously asked them if they liked hip-hop, the girls asked if I mean dancing to, and I said yes dancing, art, speech, dress. They replied, “hair, too.”

Some of the boys made up freestyle raps to do out loud, most dealing with insults instead of identity issues....the n-word was common during this time of discussion.

The boys are loud and talkative

There is a natural gender divide. With the exception of the two early participants, the girls sit in the comfortable chairs on the side of the long table in the side room and the boys sit around the long table

The girls on the side are only visible to this observer through a clear fireplace. They ask if dancing is going to be a part of the workshop. The boys are still talking, unsure if they are paying attention...The girls mention hip hop dancing in particular

The girls on the side of the room are not talking as loud, some look like they are writing.

One older boy left the room then came back into the room and approached another older boy who was sitting down. They talk to each other and act like they are going to fight, the one sitting down leans away, while the one standing places a hand on his shoulder and lifts his fist in the air towards the boy sitting. The atmosphere doesn't change, and both boys are smiling. They seem to be playing and joking around. The boy standing up punches the one sitting in the shoulder

The girl does not grab food, but Sam does. She sits with her arms folded, she appears reserved by her body language, and she is playing with her hair.

Nesha was quieter than the boys, looking at the female observers more than the boys, playing with her hair constantly, and biting her nails. The boys were looking at the male facilitator and listening to him speak. The facilitator only had to ask them to please pay attention and not have side conversations a few times.

Sports were important to all the boys' identity. There was a spike in energy when they would talk about sports.

There is a natural gender divide. Not much talking in-between them

The facilitator ask why lady bee was cut off and Nesha responds (strongly) because she was a girl. Facilitator then ask if this would happen in the states, which turns into a conversation about the rapper Nikki Minage, The girls talks about how she is bossy but gets called a "B" meaning bitch and then the comment that a guy that acted the same way would be a boss. They also comment that Lady Bee was cut off because she was a women.

The facilitator then moves to the question about Sierra Leonean men's' attitudes towards women. Morgan comments that they gave no respect to the ladies like they should, much

as men can do women can do, she comments that some girls have good flow. The facilitator then broaches the topic of women's attitudes towards men the girls say that they were a little more cocky but they were just trying to get respect.

Morgan talks about how girls are more emotional And guys gotta be tough. Girls have breast (embarrassment shows at this point).

Aaliyah comments that they rap about different things, girls about emotions and boys about anger. Facilitator questions these assumptions, 'girls don't get angry, boys don't have emotions, I'm pretty sure I'm a boy and I have emotions'. Aaliyah says something to the extent that when a boy has emotions he "gets on a girls level"

Facilitator ask again about gender and identity. Now Aaliyah says all the same, it doesn't play a role. Morgan comments that it depends on the person. Facilitator ask 'why is identity important'? Aaliyah says 'so people know who you are' Morgan says 'how different you are'.

When asked why they thought Lady Bee was cut off from performing responses were 'its because she was a girl' and they thought this because the music was playing while they were interviewing her so obviously they fixed the music. When asked if this happens in the U.S. One girl says yes and mentions Nikki Ménage, how 'when she's bossy they call her a B but when guys are they says he's a Boss' and that even Nikki Ménage, who is liked, doesn't get the "same respect." Sam says that maybe its because she's a women and possibly it would be different if she was a guy.

Facilitator asks if they have ever experiences anything like that. The first response is a quick and short no. One response is a yes and related to basketball; They don't think I can play but I'd beat them, "looks can be deceiving

The question what did the men hip hop artists think about the women hip hop artists was posed. 'Wasn't really bad but was negative', "some of those girls would kill them boys in rap battles", were some of the responses. One says they guys in the film "were kinds being assholes".

How did the women hip hop artists think about the men hip hop artists? The girls said that "they were trying to prove that they could rap", 'the women was a little more cocky', but that they were like that because they wanted respect. The participants said that the women saw themselves as rappers and wanted the respect as rappers.

The next question asked is how does gender plays a role into identity. One girl says personality and that "girls have more features", making a hand gesture implying breasts, "that boys are tough" and "girls are emotional". One girl says that they rap about different things, "Guys take out their anger in their raps and girls talk about their emotions". The Facilitator challenges these distinctions asking what happens if a guy raps

about emotions? One participant says 'he gets on a female level for being emotional' and that 'girls can get angry too and they get on a guys level'. Another participant says that gender doesn't really play a role and that it 'depends on the person' who they are and how they are.

*c. University Park Community Center Feedback Forms*

What was your favorite part of the M2B activities?

- i. When the girls were dancing
- ii. I like the fact how the girls stuck up for themselves no matter what and they didn't let anyone stop them from what they liked to do. Also I like the fact on how everyone raps about their lives and what they go through.

*d. Shayla Interview*

J. A lot off, females respond really strongly to that aspect of the film, um, I was just wondering like if you responded to that part or if that part really brought up anything for you.

S. Yeah, It really brings out how, how men is trying to control the world and how they tryin to control everything and not let other aspects that, the men and women, umm, ummm, uh, fight between, ya know, whose better or who can be on top is going on in the world of politics and in the rap industry. Its everywhere and it's the same effect as, as with the black and the whites, that's the same effect because the whites look like, trying to act like they better than the black, so the men tryin to act like they better than the women. So havin her booed off the stage was really uh,uh,uh hard, it touched me because its like, if I wanna to do rap, how would I get on there if I'm not talkin, promotin or promotional and I wanna talk promotional the guys aren't talking about it so they're really not gonna listen to the girls if they talkin about it. So when she got booed off the stage it really, ya know, showed that there, there, theres a bigger problem than just music.

...its crazy, like, when you have this much influence on the world you should start lookin at yourself, like am I gonna talk about this and this all my life or can I talk about something and this and I already got all these kids attention so they'll listen to me, there's so many kids that idolize Nickii Minage, she could be so much bigger. She could be an Aretha Franklin or a Maya Angelou, when people start a loving them and then they start hitting these powerful points and people listen to them. Cause there's kids these days that still quote Maya Angelou's to this day, she has, ya know, she hasn't really been out in the scene like that but they take her Phenomenal Women poem and everybody goes by that, a lot of females go by that.

*e. Aaliyah Interview*

J. What it was about that that you responded to or just talk a little about that part of the film.

A. Ummmmm, pretty much like (pause) with her talkin and sayin like if it was a guy she felt like they would have had tried to fix the technical difficulties or whatever...umm (pause) she sounded kinda hurt and disappointed so like it kinda like really reached out to me like (pause) pretty much...that pretty much that

J. do you think, that did it reach it out to you because you have been disappointed like that or really felt bad for her or what do you think it was?

A. uhhhh, I don't know, maybe, maybe cause I was really interested into the movie but also like I did say I've been treated that way like boys and girls get treated different from each other, like I got treated differently like, you cant play basketball cause you're a girl, like with the boys

J...what was your favorite part?

A My favorite part, ummmm (pause) I, uhhh (pause) I liked the part with Lady Bee and I also liked the part when um the guy were rappin about their lives, like the HIV and AIDS sort of rap, like I like that part because like (pause) like they expressin their feelings like how they were expressin themselves, like basically sayin like its no joke like theres disease around like letting everybody know. And umm lady bee like, her trying to stick up for herself and also I liked the part when the guys were like, like the girls and guys were goin at it like the boys was like, the girls cant do what guys can do, they cant rap, the girls was like yes we can and some of the girls were better than the guys, like it shouldn't be like that it should just be all equal like, to me I think the boys are afraid.

## 2. "Everyone is all Equal"

### *a. University Park Community Center Observations*

The Facilitator then ask, where is the violence from? The girls comments that it is from peoples lives, movies, other songs....Facilitator then ask why it comes from movies highlighting the fact that the people that make movies are not hip-hop artist.... Facilitator then ask who gets hurt by these stereotypes. One of the girls comments that rappers do because they get judged. He then ask about the benefits and Sam comments that music producers churn out the same stuff. Facilitator then ask why they are called stereotypes and goes on the tell them why (record players)....After some more conversation the girls 'flip the script (my words)' and ask the facilitator do you think they get hurt? He says yes and talks about the use of the n-word and calling women "b's" and the commodification of women, Aaliyah comments, yeah that is true...wardrobe.....

### *b. Shayla Interview*

S...I don't think, it's not really cause I feel like everybody's equal, rather you black, white, Mexican, anything, your equal, your just a different shade, everybody is American if you want to put it like that, everybody is American they just talk different. He talks with a little English accent, he, he, he, talks with his words a little different. Everyone is equal to me so its not like gender, that, that, if people, that's what is stirrin up a lot of arguments in the world politics. If you look at the president, like there's no females, it's the first time we got a black president, now we are trying to get a female president, well if you guys weren't so gender orientation we would probably would have a female president cause you guys think women cant do nothin, women can do that so I don't think that women, men and women or if you're a male or female makes up your, your identity. Or if your black or white, it doesn't make your identity, it makes you, you. To specify you, "oh I know her cause she has black skin color, this Shayla because she has a black skin color" but their could be a white Shayla but that's how, ya know, they identify you as the "eyes or I's? identify you but for your self identification I don't think, gender or skin color matter.

S....I can hang out with white people, with Russians and Mexicans and not care, I feel like their regular people but then there's some people that feel like "oh I can't handle black people cause their just ignorant." Mmm, no maybe the black person you was with was ignorant but not all black people are ignorant. Because there are ignorant white people to, they just want to say that blacks are because that's what they gave us our name for, but that's not.

*c. Aaliyah Interview*

A...., me personally I wouldn't have felt that way, like (pause) Africa's not bad its just like (pause) everybody is all equal and ummm, I don't know, there's like nothing bad, like maybe they like it there, ya know, theres nothing wrong.

J. What do you mean by everyone was all equal?

A. Everyone is all equal like I don't think anyone should be judged or anything about their race or (pause) or their (pause) gender ya know? (Pause)

3. "You Doing You"

*a. Summer Arts Academy Observations*

John asks to wrap up on identity, by saying one thing about your self that makes you different. Lavinia says, my name, Lyubov says language, Rodolfo says the color of my skin, and Enrique says Mexican,

*b. University Park Community Center Observations*

Facilitator ask, what is identity and Nesha responds, what you are.

Facilitator then ask what role does identity play, Sam (pause) I don't know.

Facilitator what makes Sam, Sam? Sam says I do a lot of stuff...ummm...art

Jacob talks about basketball, friends, hanging out, and Xbox in relation to his identity.

Facilitator ask, Are different identities ok?

Nesha, well yeah.

Facilitator , People can generally do what they want?

Consensus from group seems to be yes.

One of the basketball boys comments that it's good because if everyone wasn't different it would be boring. He then says he is himself and is not a follower.

Nesha respond that she is social and play volleyball and likes art.

Jacob and Nate respond that no one is normal. Nate says, gotta be the way you are.

Overall the basketball boys respond that there is no such thing as normal.

Facilitator, what is a normal young man or young women? Colby, men act mature.

Nesha, women be nice and behave in front of others.

Facilitator How come you all won't acknowledge that there are norms?

Jacob again comments, everyone is not the same.

Antwan comments that he feels happy after he create a rhyme...when asked why, he says because attention, because everyone listens to is

Facilitator ask, what are you connected to? Nate says, his mom without hesitation and the other boys seem to snicker a bit. Jacob says his Xbox. Sam says he makes stuff, like mask and his Xbox, Antwan says basketball and girls, Colby says coaches and food, Nate also says basketball and track and field, Nesha says art, volleyball

The conversation then moves into what is normal and drifts towards being gay ...it is clear that the basketball boys do not want gay boys hanging out with the. They used the term "gay-gay" as if to differentiate between calling someone gay as an insult? When asked the boys agree that a gay boy is not normal. Nesha aggress that gay girls are not normal but seems more accepting.... Facilitator continues to point out contradictions in what youth are saying, you said different was good and everyone was normal but now gay is not ok? Nate says 'its not normal in OUR group.'



The next question asked is what is identity. Responses were “what you do” and “what you like”. The facilitator quickly went to the next question when people were not answering the first in detail.

The conversation started again with a more specific questions aimed directly at the participants. “What makes you?” Sam replied “I do a lot of different stuff” then went on to site making masks and other creative outlets. Antwan said ‘hanging with friends’ and ‘playing sports’. When the facilitator asks if those things were to go away what would happen to your identity there was a ‘uh’ or a snicker and some laughter. At this point one of the participants is jittery. Jacob says ‘playing Xbox’ and ‘playing basketball’.

A conversation that took place is the following; ‘is it okay to have another identity or different identities?’, ‘ya, cause that’s THEIR identity’, ‘everyone is not the same’.

Nesha admitted that she does not treat all people the same and even states she is really “prejudice”. She also says “I think everyone does(is)” and it is because “they’re not like me”. While she is saying these things she is still slouched in her seat and not making much eye contact with everyone. Though she is speaking with animation and a louder voice. When asked if it is good to have multiple identities she agrees and says that everyone would be boring if they were the same.

Basketball players were seen as cool, but chess players were seen as cool “in their way”.

Sports were important to all the boys’ identity. There was a spike in energy when they would talk about sports. When asked about people answers were ‘mom’ and ‘girls’. Nesha said that Art, volleyball, and family (certain family members) were close to her and part of her identity. Sam said that the stuff he makes is important to him and part of his identity, as well as Xbox, music, and the beats he makes.

Nate said that Identity is how you are seen. Colby said that his identity consists of ‘nice’, ‘good friends’, ‘not a follower’, and ‘being myself’. At this point the definitions of identity moved from concrete ideas towards characteristics and personality traits. Nesha identified as social and nice.

Another question what is normal came up. Participants stated that there is no normal and that everyone is not the same.

The facilitator brought up sexuality and asked if someone was gay would you allow them to hang out with you in your basketball group. The immediate answers were no, and then they quickly switched to yes. The facilitator responded to their no’s and the girl participant brought up ‘what if they were bisexual’. The boys all looked down, little eye contact, and said not hey wouldn’t hang out with them. The facilitator asked is being gay part of being a normal boy and Nate said “ok he got us”. There was low laughter.... The other participants say that “he’s not normal in our group but he’s normal in his group (the gay group)”. During this conversation one boy left to the restroom.

Nesha comments that she thinks of identity as personality.

The facilitator ask, Why is identity important? Sam says it makes you unique and who you are, without identity you wouldn't be like anyone else.

Facilitator if hip-hop was a person what would it be like? Swag (they defined it as how you carry yourself), urban clothes, air-force ones, reputation, the way you talk, the way the music is.

Another participant says that gender doesn't really play a role and that it 'depends on the person' who they are and how they are.

Participants say that you have an identity so people 'know who you are, what you're about, and where you come from' as well as 'how different you are'. No one has an answer when ask how hip hop artists rep where they are from. But once the facilitator says area codes they say 'oh' 'yeah'.

Is hip hop an identity? There was a quick agreement in the room about hip hop being an identity. When asked what is a hip hop identity there is more hesitance and less immediate response. One participant comments that this is hard. 'the beats', 'something different', 'as a person', 'swag' or how you carry yourself your confidence, dress, 'urban clothes', 'reputation', 'you doing you'

*c. University Park Community Center I am activity*

- i. I am creative  
I am outspoken  
I am social  
I am artistic  
I am a volleyball player  
I am a hard working  
I am loyal
- ii. I am nice  
I am friendly  
I am basketball  
I am football  
I am baseball  
I am smart  
I am mixed
- iii. I am friendly  
I am a sportsman  
I am a lady's man

I am sometimes funny  
 I am sometimes artistic  
 I am hip-hop  
 I am Basketball

iv. I am athletic  
 I am smart  
 I am popular  
 I am amazing  
 I am magnificent  
 I am independent  
 I am bless

v. I am basketball  
 I am smart  
 I am special  
 I am hip-hop  
 I am athletic  
 I am funny  
 I am creative

*c. Shayla Interview*

S...and a lot of them are followers. Maybe one of them wanted to but sense his whole group didn't they, uh, no, but I wasn't, I never was a type of person to follow, so that's why I didn't have that, ya know, view.

S...And it was like, you know, just cause your friend left and he's about to go play basketball, sit here and listen. Cause some of my friends was texting me like, "come on, come on, you gonna come here" but I'm like no, I'm at, I'm doing stuff, so its like they don't, they don't know and they're not open minded they need to be more outgoing.

J....what makes up your identity?

S. Um, my identity. I personally just say, I'm myself, you, you, you would see me and there's a crowd and I wouldn't follow that crowd, I would turn, like ok your going over there to do that, lets go see what they doin. No, I was always the type of person, they start fighten and I go the opposite direction, everyone else want to go watch. So I define myself as being independent, being my own person, making my own decisions, and just being me, and not nobody else, not trying to be nobody else, tryin to make a way for myself because bein somebody, you know you can always be encouraged by somebody and look up to somebody but you don't have to be them, you cant be your own way of them. So that's what I, I look at. .... I always encouraged being independent, be yourself. .. J. did anyone else, like help encourage that in you?

S. Umm, my brothers, my brother is the same exact way. Both my older brothers, I have three, one's younger and the other two older, they, especially my oldest one, he's always, "I don't care what they doin".

J. Umm, do you feel like, social and political categories like, race, class, gender, sexuality, or those things play a role in your identity?

S. Yeah, it makes you who you are. If you like girls, you like girls, if you don't you don't. It, it, it doesn't put you, I don't like how they put you in categories, like, oh you like girls your gay. No, I'm me, I like girls cause I like girls, if I wanted to like guys I wouldn't be gay. Now, ok your not callin them nothing, cause they like guys, cause that's what every bodies mind is set on is "like guys, like guys" that's what every bodies promoting but if they like girls, ya know, is, if its not something they do expect. No, its something I wanna do, its me, so, its all based on what you do, so I, I think it makes up your identity, to make you, you. To make you the person you really wanna be not what people want you to be, or people think you should be.

J. Would you say those things are more important to how you think about yourself or how other people think about you?

S. I think its more important to yourself, cause if your not happy with yourself, you cant expect anybody to be happy with you. I fell like, if you like girls and, and ever bodies tellin you not to like girls, and you, "ok, I'm gonna start datin guys", your not gonna be happy with datin guys because, your so prone to want to like girls, but everyone is telling you not to, your gonna, your doing it for them and I think doing it for people is wrong. Like, ok, you doing your at your job and you doing it for you boss, that's different, but, um the, um, you personally if they say, like girls, I mean like guys and you like girls, do you. Do what you want to do and make yourself be happy cause there's, ya know, ultimate happy is when your self happy and when your happy with yourself and when you believe in yourself, that's how I look at it.

*d. Aaliyah Interview:*

J.....what makes up you identity? In your own words.

A. what makes up your identity is you, um, what you do and pretty much that's it, like your personality, that's what it is basically, just being yourself, like how they were talking about swag, like your identity is your swag, its your personality, its where you come from, its what you (pause) I don't know...what makes up my identity, to me personally, its my personality. Like, without my personality I wouldn't be me and on top of that, like, the background, where I come from, I wouldn't be me, I wouldn't be Aaliyah, I would probably be like, I don't know. I don't know what I'd be but I wouldn't be me right now

J. do you think most the people you hangout with are pretty similar to you or pretty different?

A. pretty different.....

J. um do you feel like your gender or your race or your class or any of those other things make up part of your identity?

A. (pause) mmhmm, yeah, because (pause) like how would you identify yourself just by saying my name is Aaliyah and like how would you identify yourself, like.... She looks tall, light skinned girl with long hair, ya know, its just like ??? It's just like an ID like it has all your information on it.

J....What do you mean by strong?

A. ...Like I have a very strong personality, like for me I am very independent I don't like any help what-so-ever like I could always do it by myself but I really cant like I had to learn that the hard way because in middle school, like, I was struggling in my classes because I was going through all this at home stuff and it was just, but why? And then, um, (pause), uh, the school specialist, I think that's what he was called, he like sends people home when they get referrals or whatever, ummm, he like sat me down and was like you have to get help, like you can't do everything by yourself. I was like yes I can, I'm gonna move out (in a different/strong voice) when I'm 16 and blahblahblah and he was like, no, you know you need help and I knew it to but I just didn't want anyone to help me and I was always like I'm gonna make my own money I'm gonna get my own place, gonna get my own car, I don't need anybody. So.

#### 4. The New Hip-Hop Generation

##### *a. Summer Arts Academy Observations*

John asked how many people listened to hip-hop and a little over half the youth raised their hand. Chris asked for specific examples and one of the older Mexican brothers said Mr. Criminal and Immortal Technique

Enrique then shares 'I like to go to Mickey D's and play call of duty'. Rodolfo shares, his lyrics are not really about anything apparently related to his experience but sound like true hip-hop lyrics, he says something about Mercedes' and the eighties.

John offers to burn CD's for the youth with instrumental beats to help them write at home. This is probably the most positive reaction all day although it is really just a couple other people nodding.

One of the Mexican brothers initially said it was cool but then retargeted the statement saying he had not heard the question. *I didn't really believe his excuse.* The facilitator

then asked the youth what hip-hop music they listened to or liked. The song 'Dance with the Devil' came up. It was apparent that I was the only adult in the room that was familiar with this song. The facilitator pushed the youth to talk about the song they said it was a story and it was different than the hip-hop in the documentary. The youth said a little bit about the song about how it was a story and that it ended in the shooting. The facilitator asked if the song was real and the three youth responded with a strong yes. They said because at the end of the song Immortal Technique says the song is based on him so they believed it was 'real'. One of the older youth was very uncomfortable and asked if we could talk about something else.

The younger Russian sisters said that hip-hop on the radio is different than hip-hop in the movie.

*b. University Park Community Center Observations:*

A difference between American hip hop and African hip hop is talked about. 'their story' versus 'ass, money, and drugs'. One says "that's why they say hip hop is dead". When asked if they identified with any part of the film no one answers. One girl says that she did research on it before coming and didn't know before the research that hip hop was so big in Africa.

The participants show interest when they are asked if anyone beat box's. Two or three raise their hands. One boy left, but he said goodbye to the facilitator. There is a humorous atmosphere. There is a lot of laughing and talking about lyrics and writing. Some boys at the table decide to spit the lyrics instead of writing them down. They take turns saying lines. Responses when one finishes circulate around 'oooooh' and 'I like that'. The same boy who asked people to be quiet is taking his turn to spit lines more than others. When asked to write it down he says, "its hard when I write it".

When I asked if hip-hop was the same in Sierra Leone as here, Shayla said no they were not rapping about money and asses and stuff. I asked if people thought there was a scene like that in Portland. They said no.

The facilitator ask what they know about Hip-Hop and the answer is not much. He gives a brief overview of its history

Facilitator ask is hip-hop all good? Groups shakes head and or says no. Colby comments that the gang and shooting stuff in hip-hop is bad. Sam says it is good because it is something creative. Nesha comments that it can have positive messages

Someone then ask, what about Biggie and Tupac and songs like 'hit em up'.

The facilitator ask about graffiti, Jacob responded sometimes it's tight. Facilitator then ask it there is any graffiti around. Colby says, more gang graffiti and not much art.

None of the students knew where hip hop came from and how it originated. As the facilitator explained their faces did not show excitement or visible interest. When the participants did speak it was with low and soft voices. This observer was shocked by the level of energy and noise difference from the week before.

Hip hop identity was then discussed and what the good and bad aspects of that identity were. Jacob said that it is good when they are 'on the top' and 'the best' but bad when they 'suck'.

Colby answered the question, after clarifying what it was, by saying that good aspects of hip hop identity was when they 'teach how to be good' and tell that persons history, while the bad aspects were when they were gang related. Sam said he thought the hip hop identity was overall good 'I think its fine' and sited the creativity behind it. Nesha emphasized the positive message versus bad message.

The facilitator mentioned expression and how that relates to hip hop. One question was asked by a participant, 'so when they are cussing they are expressing?' and brought up Tupac and Biggy. He pointed out that there was a difference between rappers "bashing" on people and expression or helping people.

The class started defining what hip hop consisted of. The participants only came up with money but as the facilitator named off the other aspects all of the youth could identify them as part of hip hop. Such as graffiti, dancing (bboy and bgirl), rapping(mc), "telling a story", producing beats. Music was seen as moving them, their body moved to the music. Nate's facial expression when talking about dancing and music, how the head would bob, was engaged and smiling. Graffiti was seen as two different things, gangsta vs. art. The boys on the end of the table were talking about how the writing of names could be used as gangsta graffiti and art depending on the context. A store was mentioned for art, while a building was mentioned for gangsta names.

Facilitator then moves to talk about stereotypes and in hip-hop ...one of the girls comments that obviously boys don't think that girls can rap. They then say I don't know but then go on to name some stereotypes like black people, rhymes have to make sense, facilitator ask if that is really a stereotype. One of the girls goes on to talk about the use of the "n-word" and violence. Sam adds that it is always seen as aggressive. Morgan then comments, sex.

The facilitator then goes on to talk about KRS-one and no one knows who he is

Facilitator, is hip-hop an identity? Girls show signs of strong agreement. Morgan says like style and Sam says like a rap station,

Aaliyah, Ice T said that Soulja Boy destroyed HH (this made me and most others laugh). facilitator, do you agree? Girls, yes soulja boy is a grown man talkin about high school stuff. Facilitator then beings to ask the students about the elements of hip-hop. Girls say, flow and voice. Which the facilitator corrects them, MCing. Facilitator goes into a lesson

on the elements of hip-hop, including how it is an innovative process and if it does its job it will get rid of itself. He talk about hip-hop as a form of knowledge...He then ask about other elements and the girls say instruments, the facilitator gives them prompts trying to get the correct term from them and Sam finally says, DJs. Girls then comment, fashion. Facilitator says yes and graffiti and talks...Facilitator lectures more on graffiti artists and the beginnings of hip-hop. He then talks about how the artists tried to immediate the flow of the graffiti artists and K comments "that's tight"....

Facilitator ask What do most kids say hip-hop is? Prompting, violence sex? Not connected to....Girls comments bad language and "no one knows the history of hip-hop and where it comes from all they know is that's tight and young money (an example of a hip-hop artists).... facilitator so they only know artist. Alliyah comments, the artists are not teaching the history . Aaliyah talks about the rapper Jay-Z as the only person that knows about the hip-hop's past and where it came from. "Hip-hop makes me think about Jay Z, even though I don't like him." Facilitator ask why, because he is weak....but he be rappin real stuff I don't even know about....

Facilitator ask if they know what Jay-Z song 'death to auto tune' means, and they don't. Facilitator ask if I like Jay Z, I comment yes but he is not my favorite. He ask who is my favorite so I reply Immortal Technique...This is continued by a conversation about rap groups like dead prez and The Coup. None of the youth in the room know any of these underground hip-hop groups.

The facilitator then ask if they know about Queen Latifa, they do and are able to recite some of her lyrics....Ladies first...he also ask about Lauryn Hill who they also know. MC Lyte, they "don't know so much about her."

Stereotypes of hip hop comes up in discussion and participants start saying answers quickly. "boys don't think girls can rap", "black people", "rhymes have to make sense", "always use the N word", killing, violence, guns, sex, always aggressive. The facilitator mentions how artists play with stereotypes and some of the participants are nodding their head in agreement and saying 'yeah'. One participant mentions that people get stereotypes from movies, their lives, or hear them from someone else.

Rappers, producers, and people who listen to them all are names as those who get hurt and who benefit from these stereotypes of hip hop. Then one participant turns the question onto the facilitator asking 'do you think other people get hurt?' The facilitator answers question with women get hurt by it, people emulate what is said in the music. And the participant agrees then mentions how wardrobe is also changed, such as the skinny jeans.

Is hip hop an identity? There was a quick agreement in the room about hip hop being an identity. When asked what is a hip hop identity there is more hesitance and less immediate response. One participant comments that this is hard. 'the beats', 'something different', 'as a person', 'swag' or how you carry yourself your confidence, dress, 'urban



clothes', 'reputation', 'you doing you', and 'the way the music is' were all responses to the question. After these responses one participant mention 'my head hurts'. An example of Ice T stating that soldier boy is destroying hip hop was brought into the discussion by one of the participants.

The facilitator asks what the elements of hip hop are. Flow is mentioned and is broken down to MC or the rapper. One girl asks "can't it be singing?". Hip hop is defined as always 'onto the next' and innovation, or always changing. Other elements are mentioned such as fashion, knowledge, DJ's, graffiti. One participant says 'not trying to be racists but don't Latino's graffiti and it's not really hip hop'. The facilitator then talks about the history of graffiti and how flow is to imitate the graffiti traveling on the trains as a message. The participants listened carefully and responded with surprise such as 'that's tight'. Dancing and beat boxing is also brought up as an element of hip hop. Hip hop is then defined as 'expressing yourself'

Facilitator asks what a young kid, about seven would think about hip hop. After discussion everyone agreed that "bad language" would be the only thing communicated to a child. When asked what about their age, would they know what hip hop really is. One girl said "they wouldn't" because "nobody really knows the history of it" and "they only know the artists and the artists aren't teaching them about it".

When asked if any artists know about the history of hip hop Jay-Z comes up as someone who does know the history of hip hop because he 'talks about it in his songs'. But one participant says 'I don't even like him though'. One participant says she doesn't like him because he's old and 'Jay-Z be rappin' some real stuff and I don't even know what he be sayin'. Some artists are bounced back and forth between facilitator and participants. The Participants don't seem to know the artists the facilitators are mentioning such as immortal technique and dead prez. When asked why like Nikki Menaje one girl says she raps about "nonsense stuff" but she "like her because of her swag".

Queen Latifah and Lauryn Hill are brought up and both girl participants recognize them as good hip hop artists though one says she is more familiar with Queen Latifah's movies. MC Lyte is known as a rapper but participants say 'I don't really know a lot about her'.

*c. University Park Community Center Lyrics*

i. \_\_\_\_\_ is my name  
And straighten my hair  
My plates is so hot  
That \_\_\_\_\_ I walk  
Into a room  
All people's mouths drop

ii. My name is Jacob I cold at Basketball just like Dennis Rodman

iii. My name is \_\_\_\_ it rrymis with young niggy  
When Im done with this rap you goin know me

iv. Bla Bla Bla BLA BLA  
Nate is my name  
13 is the age  
male, not pale  
and legal into this state.

v. My name is Antwan you can  
call me \_\_\_\_ so drop the beat then  
yall with see This rap ain't  
whap.

vi. I don't rap I spit flames. Im ahead  
of my game. Put these dudes to shame.  
Wear the snap to the back, stay  
Ready to attack, I eating wack rappers  
Like a snack.

vii. Cash rule er'thang around  
me.  
My swag stay fresh not dougie  
Like the California swag team  
While you pullin out 20's im pullin  
Out 100's  
While you tryin get her I already  
Her number  
Let me tell you bout me.  
Only 17 with 300\$ nikes  
Female dress male dont give a f  
Cuz im be myself

*d. UPCC Feedback Forms*

Did you learn anything new from the Moving to the Beat documentary and activities?

i. I learned that hip-hop was more than music

*e. Shayla Interview*

J. ...what your favorite part of the film was, like if any part related to you.

S. Ummm, the, my favorite part was when the guys were like, we were tryin hard to get to the United States and now we're trying hard to get to back to Africa. Like, the he, he was really tryin to get back to his hometown and how they show the different, like how they rapped, I liked the part that how they said that Africans are actually still doing the promoting of world peace, and listen to us and stuff. So I was like maybe I should start listening to African music cause that is still keepin hip hop there. And the people stop on lookin African because I know some Africans that's trying to talk about guns and all this and they sounded retarded but then you have this other group that's talk about save us, and listen our music, you start feelin it, it don't matter what type of song it is, it always, you get the beat to that. So that was really my favorite part of the movie when they was trying to get back to Africa and they succeeded.

J. .... so getting back to the film, just one more question about the film, was their any part you found really shocking or surprising or that you have been thinking about these few weeks later, kinda stayed in your head?

S. Umm, just the main part about hip hop and how they used hip hop as talking, how they, they, used it to talk to the people, that really struck me cause it was like I realized that hip hop from the east coast when it first started, it was, people used to stop, when they say, people used to stop fighting and, and, they are and would, "you think you better than me, rap" lets go, and they used to play the boom boxes and everybody would rap against each other. That, that, that changed my whole outlook cause it was like, instead of fighting we can just have rap battles. And when they was talking about that, that really stood out to me cause its like nobody does that no more, like "ok, you gotta problem with me, well I'm gonna meet you at your mommas house and shot it up" and that's not what hip hop is. So when they were talking about how hip hop died and how strong it used to be in the United states and how it looks now, like you got to see how bad it got really and really went down.

J. You have a really strong knowledge of the history of hip hop that I feel like a lot of people your age don't have, so I was just wondering how you gained all that knowledge?

S, Ummm, just, listening, instead of just listening to the beats and listening, and just over passin it, just ok, the chorus come on, alright I'm just gonna rap the chorus now the words to the song, I used to sit and listen to it. Like that people were like, why don't you like this song by Nicki Minage, she's not talking about anything, she's oh ah, at, ath (just making noises)... Why does that matter, it doesn't, the, the point of people, how they rap now a says is like, I don't want to listen to you. And then when I was like, what music will I listen to my mom would play songs of, what she used to listen to as a kid and stuff, I was like, woow, their talkin about something, mom "this is, turn this up I like this" .... And sit there and bounce my head to it but I would actually listen to his word and when the song was over, I'd be like, mom "he said this and that and look how that rhymed and he was just talkin about", ya know, makin money, but, doin it in a way were he actually said how he's making it and why he has to take that route cause he got into some trouble with messin with the wrong people and know he's fighten the law and the white people

are lookin at him, like he's bad because he did some bad things in his past and he can't change so he gotta make money this way, because he has kids to support. Now that was actually a story, he's telling a story, Tupac was very, my mom was a Tupac fan so I listen to a lot of Tupac and, I, I, didn't know what Nas was until his song kept my, I didn't and really listened to Nas until he came out with that song "I can, I know I can"... Yeah, it was really, like, wow, "be what you wanna be, work hard at it" ya know, and he actually taught about people who was, ya know, they crackin and she's starts smellin like, like all this other stuff and no one ever really talks about that no more. Oh that crackhead is just a crackhead, no there is a reason she is a crackhead, she used to be this beautiful women and then, she did something and turned her whole like around, now that's hip hop to me, promoting and telling people you can change, there's always a chance, keep your head up, and all that, now that, that's really what stood out to me. I like the old school music better than, so I actually listen to the words..... But Tupac was always the person who wanted to learn, so it was like he added what he learned into his rap music,

J. Can you say what you mean by promotional?

S. Promotional meaning like, he's promoting change. Trying to get kids to, to, ok instead of pickin up the gun to go beef with them just stun on em, go do this and do that and look good and now, he was talking about your clothes lookin grimy now you got a fresh pair of kicks on and new jeans why he got the same stuff from last year, now you just look at him like, ha I'm better than you. But instead of tryin to fight'im just improving, make yourself better... He was tryin to promote him and do better and that, that, that's what hip hop was, a voice, promoting the change in the black community, promoting like the whites wouldn't listen to the black people if they stood on the stage and start talking, but if, uh, cause they think they're uneducated but if we rap about it the white people will listen to us "oh he said that that's really what's going on, like that's what they thinking, that's why they hate the police" like you will find out why we, why we start selling drugs, why we start shootin at the police, why we beat up the white kids, and why we have such an anger towards our fellow men that aren't our color. That, that, the that's what I mean by promotional, it actually explains why we get our things, and the reason behind it.

J. In what was do you participate in hip hop culture?

S. Uhh, I'm more of just the, just the tell them if its good or not, uh, ummm, I always tell them to always talk about to always have a story, and uhh, I like doing the beat making and to hip hop culture I don't really do the rappin cause, I mean I do poetry to, and that to me, that is hip-hop that itself. I always do poetry and you get this one word and you start your poem and go through your whole poem telling about that one word you started with, so I always promote people like, write man, just write something.....and I, I, I always tell people to, write, write, write, write, cause writing is way better than just freestyling. You can have talent by writing and you can be talented by freestylin but, its, more talent comes from writing

*f. Aaliyah Interview:*

J...so one of the last questions about the film, did you find any of the parts like shocking or they just really surprised you?

A. ummmmmmm (pause) yeah because.... I've always thought like Africa was this place like, like, you all these sick people or whatever and, um, it's really not like that. Like, You really cant, like, you, you ever hear you can't judge a book by its cover, you can't judge people by what they look like, pretty much that's what I learned. When I, not when I read the book but when I seen the movie I was like seein what they go through anddddd what they rap about, like why just they rap its like them, that's their life and that's what they like, and what really surprised me was like they know the artists that we know, they be talking about Tupac, and I was like what ??background noise?? I don't know, it was crazy....., it brought out a lot, like, history and things like that were this music come from, like how he was talkin about it came from, the um, the b-boy and DJ and all and all that.

J. ...are or are not involved in hip-hop culture.

A. hmmm the way I would say I'm involved is because I listen to it a lot and also, like, I kinda dress like it, like, you know what they see on music videos or whatever 'oh that's cute I'm gonna have to get that', ya know. That's pretty much it just listening to it.

J. cool, so do you have any particular favorite artists in general?

A. um, I like *Nicki Minaj*,

J. yeah you said that....

A. And, ummm, *Keyshia Cole* like she is really one of my favorites because, ummm, what she writes about is, I don't know, it really doesn't relate to me but like it makes you feel better, I don't know,

J do you know how it makes you feel better? Or have a guess.

A. ummm, I don't know because basically she like sings about what she goes through or what her friends went through or whatever and she's basically telling you to like leave it alone and just like be a stronger person and let it go. Pretty much that's it. ....hip-hop I don't only think hip-hop is, ummmm, important, I think all music is important because, like, music is everywhere like even if we didn't have music like the clock would be music, like, when it ticks, and like if you dropped something like that all would be music but if we really didn't have music like that it would be dead silence and I don't think anybody would really have personality if music didn't come out, so. (Long pause), pretty much. umm, I think people see it as, being helpful and I don't know, like, they like it, they like listening to it, and maybe they feel the same way, like me, like it helps them

calm down or concentrate, like some people gotta listen to music to do a test or read or, ya know

J. Why do you listen to hip-hop as opposed to other things?

A. because I like hip-hop and like it sounds better in my ears and I can relate to it more, pretty much, and like, the artists like I know them, like, not know them but like, (pause), like, (pause), I grew up listening to it so its attached to me.

J. Yeah, umm so you talked about how music can calm you down or other things do you think music can be used to create change in the world?

A. yeah. Like, ummmm, ?what's his name? (pause), ummmm, I mean like how we were talking about Jay Z, like, ummm, he was trying to change the world with hip-hop and he's like trying to get it back to real music, like how he says its not real music now, but, I mean I don't know what real music is because I wasn't born then, but, ummm, (pause) I don't know, (pause). Like, (pause). I'm tryin to think, (long pause). Mmmmmmm

## 5. Development and Maturity

### *a. Summer Arts Academy Observations*

The laughing continued through different points of the movie, usually lead by the oldest brother but everyone else joined him at different times. Some times when the youth laughed in the movie included:

The guards beating the fans back at the concert

Every time Colossus appears on screen.

The blind youth talking about hip-hop

The kids dancing and singing (in US with Abdul)

The waterbed discussion

Ciiz on the plane

Condom/AIDS discussion

The only responses youth had that wasn't laughter during the movie was some whispering during the song 'mama Africa'.

### *b. University Park Community Center Observations*

I then attempted to start with the workshop. This was not very effective some youth shwwshed others as I tried to talk...the younger youth were particularly rowdy.

The youngest wanted to know if he could put curse words in his, I said I didn't care.

Beginning of film everyone is still talking amongst themselves. When they show clips of Africa a boy jokes about another boy looking like one of the men in the clips. Scattered laughter. When the max came on in the film, they noticed, with a positive inflection. There is joking about the narrator's accent and the people's accents in the film.

When the Bobos start to performing in the film there is laughing around the room and the room grows loud again

When the Rebel Soulz group starts talking about going back to Africa and clips are shown there is comment 'why would you wanna go back there?'

A clip of a guy pulling out a condom in a music video is shown and even though the clip was only a few seconds long the room starts snickering again and becomes loud.

Laughing mainly occurred at some of the accents, when the youth recognized some kids in the film, when colossus was on screen. There is also a lot of texting during the film. Youth slowly begin to leave during the film. By the end only two original and two new youth remain. Other notable comments include, on youth asking, "why would you want to go back to that place?" (Africa).

*e. Shayla Interview*

J. ....I was really kinda stirred by that ["why would you want to go back to that place?"], and I was like why would he say that? I was wonderin why you think he said that and what your opinions were about the film and going back to Africa.

S. Well, when I was little I always thought Africa was this run down place, like, ok, we came from this so, came from this place, ya know, where wasn't really big money wise but rich in soil rich in land and rich in, uh, uh, the materials for the world and stuff, so its like, I always thought Africa was just this planet that they used, it wasn't nothing, it was just low lives and I mean black people live there. So that's BS. So when, when, when I hear people say, why would you go back to Africa its probably because they're mislead of the aspects of Africa. They don't know the beauty of it, they don't know how strong of a family it is.

J. Cool. Do you fell like , do you often see images, positive images of Africa, or is that pretty rare?

S. It's rare to see. When I see positives of Africa I go "whoa" if I see somethin bad, I'm more likely, oh that's just another picture, oh, ok. Like I don't even like see, like on, on, on the commercials where they starvin kids they always show Africa kids. Why? Theres poverty in the United States there's poverty in Europe but you guys only show Africa. But if there's positives in Africa to. There's buildings, there's all these things make things seem just like its dirt, no, ya know, no land just trees and lions. And if you go to

far you gonna step on something and get diseased or somethin. So, in the, in the, how I look at Africa is just

J. Yeah, why do you think that is?

S. Ummm, I really think, I think the reason why they, from my outlook, I think the reason why they promoted it as bad is because black people were really hurt from when they got took from slavery and brought to the United States. So I think they tryin to downplay Africa so people will feel like we saved you guys, we saved you. This is not really what it is and we saved you and that's why a lot of kids are going, "well I'm not goin to Africa" the, this is that over there. You might catch AIDS and you do this and that. You can go down south and you might get AIDS to, just as well as if you went to Africa, same thing. But I think, to me, they down play Africa so, so black people wouldn't be so bad they got taken from the land, that's just my personal outlook on it. t belittled in the United States.

J. Did you have a least favorite part of the film or the activities in general?

S. Ummmm, the film, no, I liked the whole film, it was just, I'm more of a discovery watcher and I like to learn stuff. So the learning was really my, my, my favorite thing. So the film was, nothing was wrong, I didn't really like the kids that was there. Cause they didn't respect it, they didn't take heed it, they was just there for whatever the teacher said, they didn't come. Like I came they said we get credit for it, but, ok we get credit but I'm gonna actually learn why I'm getting credit. And, and the kids they ruined it for, uh, for the people that actually sat there and listened. But the whole thing was good, like, it was put together well, and even with the emergency that happened, uh, it still, ya know, went on, quite ???

J. Well thanks, I appreciate that, ummm, why do you think those other kids did leave and or act that way?

S. Because they don't know, they, their, their blocked from knowing, they don't want to learn, they just want to, if you had a video talking about pussy and, and guys smoken that blunt and that guy playing basketball and, and he got a baby mama but he's makin it. They probably would listen, they would probably sit there and listen. But when its talkin about somethin, they're not really taught on a daily basis or heard of on a daily basis or if they listen to music that doesn't really talk about the music they're gonna be prone to, oh F that, and a lot of them are followers. Maybe one of them wanted to but sense his whole group didn't they, uh, no, but I wasn't, I never was a type of person to follow, so that's why I didn't have that, ya know, view.

J. I think I did see some people that were interested but when one person left they were like....



S. Cause there was a few of them that started kinda rappin he was kinda feelin it, and they friend started laughin so he kinda, so he feel like he was belittled, calmed himself down and stuff. And it was like, you know, just cause your friend left and he's about to go play basketball, sit here and listen. Cause some of my friends was texting me like, "come on, come on, you gonna come here" but I'm like no, I'm at, I'm doing stuff, so its like they don't, they don't know and they're not open minded they need to be more outgoing and listen to what is really going on in the world instead of what's told in songs cause that's not really going on, that's why hip hop is dead.

J. I have a couple questions around that, cause that really interesting, one is like why do you think they're close minded, like do you think they are kind of defensive about learning this stuff, its almost like they don't want to learn it, they're scared of it, like, do you have any insight into that?

S. Um, well why they're scared of it, probably cause, people want them to be, they don't, they don't probably, they're view on Africa probably is poor, nothing there. So I'm not gonna listen to where the poor people are, not gonna be a poor person, that's probably why. Ummm, I don't I don't really, uhhh, uhhh, know what's really going on in their heads cause I never really was the type of kid like that, who, uh, to want to learn, I was always learn this, look how amazing this can be, ya know. So its like, to heat other kids, its like they're not mature enough, they haven't hit their maturity levels and some kids hit a mature level and still want to smoke and go party instead of sitting down their, ok get your work done, and then go out and party and look how stress free you gonna be cause now you got your work done and you got your school and you not gonna stress out and you went to that party and didn't do your work and know your in class, "oh, man, I don't want to do this, f this" cause you didn't do it at home and listen and study. So, I don't, I just wish they start being growing up and seeing the world is not, what the music promotes it to be now a days.

#### *f. Aaliyah Interview*

J. when we were watching the film a lot of people laughed during a lot of parts and I was just wondering why you think people were laughing?

A. because they have a lot of immaturity they really don't know what's going on like, if that was me a couple years ago I probably would have laughed to but now that I am older and really know like how the real world is and how people go threw on their daily lives like, um like, how we think its funny but that's really their lives that's how they live. And it was kinda funny like, whose the lady name? ummm, when she kicked here boot up...

J. so, one last questions about the film but a lot of people left in the middle of the film so, why do you think that was?

A. because to them it was boring, like I see, I heard people talking and I was like, its boring or whatever they only really came for the food, and I stayed....well I'm not gonna lie like the first time I came I was like this is boring, I'm not going back or whatever., um but the next week I didn't come because I actually came to school to get some work done but the next week I came and like I really learned something, like to me all of the people that left they should take it back because you actually really learned stuff, like its not only about music but its about everything like....a lot of kids like middle schoolers and high schoolers should watch that film because its really good and you learn a lot even though people don't think that you will learn from music but like watchin that film,

## 6. Youth Resistance

### *a. Summer Arts Academy Observations*

About half of the youth (mostly the males) seemed to listen to hip-hop on a regular basis but wouldn't name any of their favorite artists. One of the older Mexican brothers expressed his interest in Chicano and Latino rap

The youth remain quiet despite John's best attempts at engaging them in discussion.

The youth are not writing as John gives them different prompts and instructions to produce their own lyrics. John changes focuses thinking that a freestyle rap session may be a better idea. He ask if any of the youth know how to beat box. No one responds although I get the feeling one of the Mexican brothers may have some experience from the other brothers responses to these questions

After completing this verse made up of everyone's one line John tries to get the class to come up with a chorus as a group. The youth are still not really into the activity so John tries to find another instrumental beat on the phone he has attached to speakers. No matter the beat the youth don't like it and after going threw about ten they end up on the one they started on. John prompts that the chorus could include something about the neighborhood sense they all share it.

I get the feeling that Enrique might have participated even more had his older brothers not been there. Rodolfo also kept volunteering Enrique for things (and telling me that Enrique liked school, he went to lane middle school incidentally)

John then ask if they would be interested in learning to beat box. He starts an impromptu lesson on beatboxing but not matter what he...do no one will join in. Enrique starts to participate a little bit but no one else does and he stops after a short while.

He asked if anyone had any other places that they of as home. Everyone responded that Portland was there home. He then went on to ask the three brothers if they had been born in America and they all said yes. He then went on to ask if their parents talked about

anywhere else besides America and they said yes Mexico, but it was apparent they did not think of it as home. All the youth also responded that they thought America was all good and had more opportunities.

Enrique says he (Rodolfo) thinks it's dumb to be intelligent,

I have the youth fill out the evaluation forms. There is some protesting as they ask 'did I ace the test' when I get their papers back. John arrives and sets up his recording equipment to let the youth 'put down some beats' and record themselves. I get the movie ready to show the clip from Lady Bee, there is much more protesting, uhhh we aren't watching the movies again...

The brothers start to heckle as one of them struggles with the timing Enrique says, 'its easy bro' to which the brother retorts 'well you're the smart one', Enrique tries it and gets the timing on his first try. Rodolfo starts talking about the new step-up 3D movie he then adds a to the beat and struggles and the oldest brother laughs at him. John 'fixes' his beat. Rodolfo 'that was so bad I messed it up' John 'no its cool actually'

Enrique is starring outside and ask why the little kids get to do 'whatever they want'

#### *b. University Park Community Center Observations*

I then attempted to start with the workshop. This was not very effective some youth shwwshed others as I tried to talk...the younger youth were particularly rowdy

When asked to write it down he says, "its hard when I write it".

There are some participants not participating but instead looking at their cell phones. At 5:29pm the conversation at the long table moved from rapping to talking about going home.

One girl was stretching, yawning, and still writing lyrics down. She could also periodically check her phone throughout the film. Many of the participants in the room are checking their cell phones. Some snickering and playing in chairs. A girl says to someone across the room 'I like your hair'. Someone tells her to pay attention to the film and she snaps back in defense 'I was giving a compliment'.

When there is an interview about emulating American hip hop one boy puts on his hood to cover is head then leans his head back on the table

They sit down. When the song Momma Africa is being sung, many boys get up and leave which triggers more people to leave.

The facilitator engages them in discussion "who is your favorite hip-hop artist?" They won't give a straight answer.

Jacob says, this is hard (responding to the facilitator constantly challenging the students and pointing out their inconsistencies)..... Jacob, again, this is hard.

The first question posed was about which hip hop artists they listened to. Both boys said that they didn't have a favorite. The facilitator started naming off artists. Jacob right away responded to Kanye and said that he liked him, he paired this comment with a point to his chest. Antwan stayed iffy about all the artists until the facilitator said someone he didn't like.

Youth seem reluctant to say anything specific about their interests unless prodded further by the facilitator. Reluctant is defined in this observation as not speaking, speaking quietly, making general statements such as 'everything' or 'I don't know' and lack of eye contact.

All of the participants seemed to be frustrated with the questions expressing that they seemed like the same question or that they were hard questions. They would jerk their heads back, stare, or say 'I just told you'. Participants seemed uncomfortable with the prodding of their identity.

Another question what is normal came up. Participants stated that there is no normal and that everyone is not the same. They all said the same phrases, less eye contact then when they were talking about basketball and conversation was free. Jacob said almost under his breath that it was a 'hard question' and said "this is hard".

One boy says jokingly "I am Hip Hop" the facilitator asks what does that mean? And the boy responds quickly with "I don't know".

The youngest, Jacob, announces he must leave at 5:45 and then another announces he is going to leave with him... Suddenly everyone (except the LEP students) needs to leave at 5:45.... The group of non-LEP students is getting anxious as the facilitator arrives they make a b-line for the door and only the three students remain.

Sam says when asked how she [Lady Bee] felt says he doesn't know...and then "I wasn't there"

Sam is spending most of his time drawing/doodling and Morgan is picking at a bottle. Morgan also sort of covers her face with her hood of her jacket

The girls 'flip the script (my words)' and ask the facilitator do you think they get hurt?

Aaliyah comments this is so HARD, a lot of thinking.

One girl asks 'why do we have to do all these reflections'.

The two girls say that they both need to go to the restroom and end up leaving

*c. University Park Community Center Feedback Forms*

The documentary was interesting but boring at the same time.

What was your least favorite part of the M2B activities?

- i. The class is too long
- ii. When people were talking

Appendix I

Demographic Questionnaire

Name:

Age:

How do you define yourself in the following categories:

Gender:

Race and/or Ethnicity:

Did you or your parents immigrate to America from another country? Yes No  
If so, what country?

Is hip-hop an important aspect of your life? Yes No

In what ways do you participate in hip-hop culture?