
CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE: CURRICULUM STUDIES IN ACTION

RACE & ETHNICITY / PEDAGOGY / FEMINISM / CRIMINAL JUSTICE / SOCIOLOGY
LAW / PSYCHOLOGY / EDUCATION / SOCIAL WORK / THEOLOGY & SPIRITUALITY
SEE YOU AT THE CROSSROADS



HIP HOP SCHOLARSHIP AT THE INTERSECTIONS
DIALECTICAL HARMONY, ETHICS, AESTHETICS, & PANOPLY OF VOICES

Edited by Brad Porfilio, Debangshu Roychoudhury, & Lauren M. Gardner

SensePublishers

**See You at the Crossroads: Hip Hop Scholarship at the
Intersections**

CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE: CURRICULUM STUDIES IN ACTION

Volume 7

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Scope

“Curriculum” is an expansive term; it encompasses vast aspects of teaching and learning. Curriculum can be defined as broadly as, “The content of schooling in all its forms” (English, p. 4), and as narrowly as a lesson plan. Complicating matters is the fact that curricula are often organized to fit particular time frames. The incompatible and overlapping notions that curriculum involves everything that is taught and learned in a particular setting *and* that this learning occurs in a limited time frame reveal the nuanced complexities of curriculum studies.

“Constructing Knowledge” provides a forum for systematic reflection on the substance (subject matter, courses, programs of study), purposes, and practices used for bringing about learning in educational settings. Of concern are such fundamental issues as: What should be studied? Why? By whom? In what ways? And in what settings? Reflection upon such issues involves an inter-play among the major components of education: subject matter, learning, teaching, and the larger social, political, and economic contexts, as well as the immediate instructional situation. Historical and autobiographical analyses are central in understanding the contemporary realities of schooling and envisioning how to (re)shape schools to meet the intellectual and social needs of all societal members. Curriculum is a social construction that results from a set of decisions; it is written and enacted and both facets undergo constant change as contexts evolve.

This series aims to extend the professional conversation about curriculum in contemporary educational settings. Curriculum is a designed experience intended to promote learning. Because it is socially constructed, curriculum is subject to all the pressures and complications of the diverse communities that comprise schools and other social contexts in which citizens gain self-understanding.

See You at the Crossroads: Hip Hop Scholarship at the Intersections

Dialectical Harmony, Ethics, Aesthetics, and Panoply of Voices

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BRAD PORFILIO, DEBANGSHU ROYCHOUDHURY &
LAUREN GARDNER

PREFACE

Hip Hop at the Intersection of Passion, Promise and Possibility

OVERVIEW

It has been over thirty-five years since subjugated African American youth gathered in New York City in response to the unjust social conditions impacting their schools, families, and communities (Chang, 2005; Dimitriadis, 2001). Through various innovative forms of cultural production – such as break dancing, rap narrative, graffiti art, and music production – Hip-Hop artists, activists, youth and scholars have been authentically expressing their concerns and making-meaning of the world (Hill, 2009; Petchauer, 2009). Over the past three decades, Hip-Hop has become a site of contestation with a corporate music industry incredibly adept at redirecting Hip-Hop’s social energies away from critical expressions of struggle, protest, and resistance towards messages of materialism, greed, and individualism (George, 2005; Prier, 2010; Porfilio & Viola, 2012).

While Hip-Hop emerged as an urban American art form and has grappled with the corporate world contaminating its socially generative nature, it has gradually become multicultural, been embraced and recontextualized internationally, and has become a key action site through which Hip-Hop youth (and adults) critique, communicate, and develop their position on issues affecting their personhood and their community (Magubane, 2006; Perrilo, 2012; Porfilio & Carr, 2010; Lozenski, 2012; Porfilio, Roychoudhury, & Gardner, 2013; Porfilio & Viola, 2012). The members of our global culture critique the oppressive absolutism of grand- narratives in a way of becoming the post-modernist of the boom-bap, break and beat-box; suggesting that the Hip-Hop community seeks to become transformative intellectuals – a community of global gad-flies who possess the expressive acumen to critique and transform social inequity (Gardner & Roychoudhury, 2012). Social media has become a key linchpin for global Hip-Hop youth generating alternative activities and practices that will improve the quality of their lives as well as the lives of global citizens across the planet. For instance, global Hip-Hop intellectuals are harnessing various speed technology as a means through which they critique power structures and civic institutions as well as engage in dissent movement to build a socially just world (Porfilio, Gardner & Roychoudhury, 2013).

Over the past decade, Hip-Hop intellectuals, school leaders, schoolteachers, youth activists and artists have also found fissures amid oppressive schooling contexts so

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as to implement Hip-Hop centered pedagogical projects dedicated to making youth fully human (Freire, 2005). For instance, hundreds of thousands of youth across North America been exposed to multimedia presentations, taken part in narrative writing assignments, been involved in collaborative choreography workshops, and been participants in dance performance, which are designed to make them reflect upon and take action on the forces responsible for what causing human suffering and misery. Although hip-hop based education (HHBE) should not be considered a silver bullet holding the potency to position all youth to become reflective change agents, an impressive body of research shows HHBE has engendered democratic relationships between educators and students, has sparked youths' critical consciousness and positioned them as problem solvers in their schools, community, and the wider world, as well as has enhanced students' understanding of traditional and non-traditional academic texts and improved their academic performance (Akom, 2009; Bryan, 2012; Gosa & Fields, 2012; Petchauer, 2009; Sawyer, 2012).

Beside scholarship that focuses on HHBE, researchers across the globe have captured the uniqueness of the aesthetic, the affordances, the ethics, and panoply of voices represented in our culture. This volume seeks to illuminate hip-hop scholarship at the intersections of various fields of study (including but not limited to: sociology, psychology, social work, social justice studies, urban education, pedagogy, criminal justice studies, law, critical race studies, Hip-Hop feminism, theology & spirituality) (Andersen & Hill Collins, 2010; Fernandes, 2011, Porfilio & Viola, 2012, Rabaka, 2011). It is our hope that this volume will expound upon recent Hip-Hop scholarship by presenting snapshots of innovative work within (and at the intersections between) these fields of scholarship, in order to uncover the *dialectical harmony* and solidarity with which Hip Hop scholars, activists, and artists collectively mobilize, stand together, and collaboratively sustain in hopes of realizing social justice and actualizing global liberation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this edited volume is to highlight critical intersections of thought, integral calls to action, and crucial interdisciplinary collaborations that must be acknowledged and mobilized in order to actualize emancipatory messages articulated by creators and agents of counter-hegemonic Hip-Hop culture. Audre Lorde (1984) recognizes an urgent need for the production of new cultural tools, when she states "we can't dismantle Master's house with Master's tools." She also states that modes of oppression and control such as violence, political control, economic control, control of knowledge and information, control of sexuality must not be galvanized as tools towards salvation. Equally important, liberation psychology proclaims that freedom from oppression requires creating new tools for action. Lev Vygotsky conceptualizes tools as things that human beings create to help solve problems and oftentimes use to create systems of symbols, signs, and meanings (1978). Creative human action tools can be leveraged towards achieving the goal of

social transformation. This volume explicates the ways creative human action tools are actualized through Hip Hop cultural production from diverse genres of Hip-Hop scholarship. The contributors will describe how Hip-Hop cultural production actualizes creative human action tools towards emancipatory imagination, creative consciousness, critical consciousness, emancipatory knowledge-building, creative nurturance, and collective identity affirmation.

The contributors employ theory, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research to provide thick descriptions of the social realities (e.g., globalization, migration, poverty, criminalization, and racism) youth are resisting through what we recognize as a decolonial cultural politic. Their collective work describes how youth are employing Hip Hop to resist and transform the historical conditions that are at the roots of their dispossession and suffering. Finally, the contributors theorize how Hip Hop provides a counter space where divergent realities and intersecting identities get negotiated and transformed towards a collective dialectical harmony representative of the global reach of Hip-Hop culture.

SIGNIFICANCE

There is scant research on Hip Hop at the intersections of various fields of scholarship. Furthermore, the voices of artists, activists, and scholars have not been widely included in an equitable manner in genres of Hip-Hop scholarship. We believe that a cross-section of critical literature available in various social science fields can broaden our understanding of Hip-Hop scholarship and provide critical fodder for a unified theoretical basis. Due to this paucity we feel it imperative to highlight Hip Hop as a multi-domain phenomenon whose aesthetic cultural value needs the input and representation from various fields of study in order to be complete. To be sure, we recognize the important publications that broaden our understanding of Hip Hop from a multidisciplinary intersectional perspective towards transformational ends (Collins, 2006; Hadley & Yancy, 2012; Petchauer, 2012; Porfilio & Viola, 2012).

This collaborative project is of importance to scholars, practitioners, researchers, youth, artists, and clergy who are interested in working at the intersections of urban artistic expression, social justice, critical consciousness, Black feminism, therapy, and spirituality. Finally, this project will highlight the importance of research projects that link the production of interdisciplinary scholarship with the cultural activities, everyday practice, and social concerns of global youth in order to ameliorate the social, economic, and political problems that are transcending national boundaries in an age of corporate “globalization.”

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

In addition to the introductory chapter, we have divided eleven chapters into three sections. The first section is organized around the theme “Hip- Hop Education and Critical Pedagogy” and it contains essays that focus on the methodologies of

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pedagogy as well as the ways pedagogy can act as a springboard for social change across the globe. Through empirical research, direct artistic engagement and critical pedagogical praxis, contributors promote empowerment based development. Contributors also show the ways Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE) catalyze civic engagement and democratic participation in schools through the use of democratic aesthetic tools to galvanize social change.

HIP-HOP EDUCATION & CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

In the first chapter, “Hip Hop and Pedagogy, More Than Meets the Eye: What Do We Expect, What Will We Measure?” Raphael Travis Jr. and Alexis Maston illustrate how Hip-Hop culture created an environment conducive to empowerment-based development when guided by the “Individual and Community Empowerment Framework”. The authors begin this chapter by outlining some of the extant literature on Hip-Hop culture in education and documenting the role of social and emotional development in youth development. Next, the authors pinpoint the ways a social-justice informed Empowerment-Based Youth Development model can bridge the gap between understandings of the individual and community as non- separate entities in order to promote the intersectional notion of community identity and engaged citizenship. By taking a mixed methods approach towards analyzing their program, the authors find that rap musical forms of Hip Hop promote expression, collectivity and connectedness. Furthermore, results from qualitative analyses reveal that students relate to the musical narratives, feel that the narratives clarify roles for them and see rap music as engendering a sense of resilience among them. Although results suggested little statistically significant change in perspectives, more nuanced mixed-methods evidence suggests that student transformation occurred across all empowerment dimensions of esteem, resilience, growth, community and change.

In the second chapter, “A Pedagogy of Cultural Sustainability: YEGH3 (Edmonton Hip-Hop History) as a Decentralized model for Hip Hop’s global microhistories” Michael MacDonald builds on his 2012 publication “Hip-Hop Citizens” to advocate for Hip-Hop culture as critically engaged arts pedagogy in order to develop a Hip-Hop pedagogy that emerges from Hip-Hop Kulture. Next, MacDonald outlines specific aspects of the Black Arts movement relevant to Hip- Hop pedagogical aesthetics as a democratic force to “decolonize the imagination”. MacDonald thus creates Hip-Hop Project Based Learning as “an engaged learning environment that would help students gain critical consciousness.” MacDonald concludes that the project based learning achieved at YEGH3 allowed all participants to press deeper into the meanings of Hip Hop and its inherited cultural aesthetic from the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Arts Movement as a uniquely critically-resistant form of pedagogy forging a more democratic society.

In Chapter 3, titled “We Do it for the People: Spoken Word Poets and Hip- Hop Artists as Agents of Social Change”, Crystal Endsley outlines a three pronged approach to creating “artist-agents for social change”. She starts by providing

exemplars of artists who shift between “roles of social change”. Endsley lists superstar Jay-Z as an example of an ally, one who alternates between accepting social responsibility for the conditions that created the same inequity he overcame while simultaneously ignoring responsibility and reciprocity in favor of an individualistic approach towards capitalistic gain. His privilege, power and large fan base allows for a critical questioning of performance from such a wide-spread audience. Endsley continues by suggesting that Carlos Andres Gomez is exemplary of an advocate for social change. She states, his “political power is in his voice and his articulation of the struggle to validate knowledge that is produced from outside of the boundaries of traditional education.” Endsley ends by stating that by far the most risky and demanding orientation towards social justice is that of social agent. She states that unsung heroes, High School teachers, leaders of arts-based organizations occupy this role creating a synergistic artist-agent orientation; in the road of praxis these new roles provide room for creative possibility.

HIP-HOP SPIRITUALITY AND IDENTITY

The second section is organized around the title “Hip-Hop Spirituality and Identity”. Contributors examine the ontological realm of Hip Hop and religion and spirituality including the ways the aesthetic, sensual and sensible realms of spirituality and other aesthetic manifestations instantiate through Hip Hop. A common denominator among these chapters is the notion that ontology and aesthetics are covalent and as such represent a powerful tool of re-negotiating hegemony, re-asserting individuality and fashioning identity. The contributors examine the critical junctures, contradictions and contours that shape identity and provide insight as to the multifaceted ways Hip Hop provides a site for exploration of identity through theology, aesthetics, performance and discourse to develop a nuanced understanding of self, and even of the divine, as contextual and intersectional.

In Chapter 4, “Baptized in Dirty Water: An Ontology of Hip Hop’s Socio-Religious Discourse in Tupac’s Black Jezuz” author Daniel White Hodge makes the argument that rap music provides a discursive connective medium that is a fundamental attempt to make the divine more accessible to people who have traditionally been ignored by spiritual institutions. Hodge explores the multifaceted ways by which Hip Hop acts as a discursive liaison between organized religion and the street in the effort to produce a contextualized god. Hodge concludes by suggesting that controversial images of God provide supple ground for theorization and appropriation from people most often marginalized by mainstream religiosity and that Hip-Hop artists devise the conduit through which non-domesticated images of deities can communicate with the social realities of inequity.

Chapter 5 is titled, “You Better Lose Yourself!: Reformulated Praxis Theory, Spirituality, and Hip-Hop Aesthetics” by author Kip Kline. Kline provides an overview of spirituality and Black musical expression and how Hip-Hop aesthetics relate to identity, praxis and power. Kline outlines theoretical understandings of

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power and aesthetics by Carspecken, Foucault and Derrida. Next, Kline outlines the ways oppositional cultural expression manifest in the lives of two full-time artists and how these two stories of individuals offer keen insight into the ways praxis, identity, intersubjectivity and spirituality operate.

Chapter 6, “Fashioning Self, Battling Society: Hip-Hop Graffiti Jackets as a Method of Positive Identity,” offers insight into the idea of Hip-Hop fashion as a site for identity development. The authors Emery Petchauer and Antonio Garrison outline the history of the graffiti jacket tracing its roots from gang culture of the 1970’s to B-boy/girl culture to contemporary uses. The authors analyze one graffiti jacket in order to posit the argument that individuals can use Hip-Hop artistic forms to forge a sense of healthy identity.

In Chapter 7, “I do not need help to define myself: The Self-Location of Somali Immigrant Youth through Discourse and Agency” Chelda Smith and Brian Lozenski perform a critical discourse analysis on Somali women in a Spoken Word program. The authors make the argument that Somali poets utilize discursive spaces as places to “reproduce a transformational black feminist discourse”. By focusing on narrative shifts Lozenski and Smith show the ways Somali female poets are able to shift positions of personhood and in doing so produce “self-authoring and therefore self-determining” in order to counter hegemonic representations of Somali women.

In Chapter 8, “Are we there yet?: The political power of Aboriginal Hip Hop in Australia”, Chiara Minestrelli engages in an examination of the relationship between Rap music and Aboriginal politics in Australia. The author conducts an ethnography of two specific Hip-Hop groups including the The Last Kinection and Yung Warriors by combining theoretical aspects of Hip-Hop studies, post-colonial and cultural studies, together with critical discourse analysis of lyrics in addition to participant observation and interviews. Minestrelli provides a historical overview of Aboriginal Hip Hop and combines this with her ethnography to conclude that political messages in Aboriginal Hip Hop have provided an outlet to relieve tensions of living in a post-colonial society in addition to “carving out dialogic spaces to communicate with multiple audiences”.

HIP-HOP THERAPY AND HIP-HOP PSYCHOLOGY

The third section is organized around the theme “Hip- Hop Therapy and Hip-Hop Psychology”, and focuses on the application of Hip Hop into the fields of psychology, social work and psychiatry. Authors in this section focus on the therapeutic efficacy of Rap music and the contexts in which a Hip Hop based therapy may work. Authors also provide insight into the ways Hip Hop influences human development from a theoretical perspective. Authors push the boundaries of the mainstream clinical scientific cannon by suggesting that clinicians and theoreticians go further in understanding the deep psychological effects of Hip-Hop culture and cultural production. Here authors focus on the epistemology of Hip Hop and how such epistemology can influence healthy human functioning as well as human becoming.

In chapter 9, “From Voiceless to Victorious: Street Sounds and Social Skills for Gang Involved Urban Youth” Jaleel Abdul-Adil focuses on the ways rap music may develop critical consciousness in youth civic engagement organizations. Abdul-Adil provides an overview of the ways youth violence and urban street gangs create acute and complex challenges to positive youth development. The author outlines several micro-genres of Rap music and generally observes the styles of development they promote. Abdul-Adil ends by suggesting that youth civic engagement organizations may play a positive role in the development of empirically sound approaches to the field of Hip Hop in Psychology and Social Work.

Chapter 10, “Exploring the healing powers of hip-hop: Increasing therapeutic efficacy, utilizing the Hip-Hop culture as an alternative platform for expression, connection”, Sidney Dang, Derek Vigon and Jaleel Abdul-Adil overview the deleterious effects of Childhood Averse Experiences and youth trauma. Next, they provide a rare literature review of Hip-Hop therapy/music therapy, examining scant extant literature to provide a complete review on the topic. The authors examine a case study emerging from a model of Hip-Hop based psychotherapy to come to the conclusion that Hip Hop in psychotherapy provides a multifaceted and multi-dimensional approach to reducing pathology in comparison to a more static medical model of therapy.

The final chapter of this volume, “Theorizing Activism: Hip Hop and Human Development – The Eternal Dance between Theory and Practice” Debangshu Roychoudhury, Lauren M. Gardner and Anna Stetsenko posit that Hip Hop provides an alternative onto-epistemology in social-science, one that emerges from a composite between transformative activist stance and creative maladjustment. By positing that Hip-Hop cultural practice is a form of critical praxis, the authors re-affirm the humanity in human development by placing this Hip Hop onto-epistemology at root with transformative activism and in contrast to reductivist and positivistic notions of development. The authors end by suggesting that the endpoint of the Hip Hop onto-epistemology should be creative maladjustment or the use of creative tools to take a stance against contemporary oppression in the process of being and becoming.

CLOSING WITH PANOPLY OF VOICES

We overtly sought to create a text that brought together scholars from various fields that approach Hip Hop in a variety of different ways. Furthermore, we sought chapters that openly addressed the contradictions, complications and co-occurrences inherent in Hip-Hop scholarship. We come to understand that Hip Hop is ontology and an epistemology of understanding knowledge, developing identity, staking personhood, negotiating systems and managing oppression. The authors in this text also showcase the various contexts through which Hip Hop instantiates and re-contextualizes. There are also a variety of methodologies from critical autobiography to critical discourse theory to survey methods and interviews. The panoply of voices each speak from various departure points of the global culture that is Hip Hop and

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provide a panorama of the diaspora. We hope that this refraction offers Hip-Hop scholars a moment of reflection to understand the diversity of our field, where it has been and where it is going.

We hope this text serves as a theoretical point of departure that ontologically disorganizes positivistic and reductivist models of understanding. It is our hope to stand on the shoulders of those whom we inherit from in this organized noise of disorganization. We seek to press the boundaries of the imagination to suggest that Hip Hop is at once individualistic and collective, and that like Blues and Jazz, the *and* not the *or* is the theoretical hinge on which our ontology stands. Ralph Ellison states:

There is in this a cruel contradiction implicit in the art form itself. For true jazz is an art of the individual assertion within and against the group. Each true jazz moment ... springs from a contest in which the artist challenges the rest; each solo flight, or improvisation, represents a definition of his [or her] identity; as individual, as member of the collectivity and as a link in the chain of tradition.

Hip Hop continues the chain of Black aesthetic tradition and instantiates where we, as individuals, communities and an entire culture, take it. If the sample of the vocals here provides any example, it is that the future of Hip-Hop scholarship lies at the intersection between passion, promise and possibility. So, we'll see you at the crossroads...

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