"WHAT REALLY GOES ON": EXPLORING A UNIVERSITY-BASED CRITICAL HIP-HOP PEDAGOGY TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE

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ABSTRACT

“WHAT REALLY GOES ON”: EXPLORING A UNIVERSITY-BASED CRITICAL HIP-HOP PEDAGOGY TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE

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Recently there has been a call to disrupt the continuous cycle of (re)production from within university-based programs through the development of transformative approaches rooted in the cultural norms of traditionally marginalized populations. This study aimed to explore how one such approach, critical hip-hop pedagogy (CHHP), manifests within the formal university-based teacher education setting. Focusing on one specific course in a prestigious, Northeastern university, this study explores how the course was conceptualized, enacted, experienced and interpreted by both the professor and twelve enrolled teachers in the Spring 2017 semester.

Through qualitative case study methodology the purpose of this study was to: (1) document the ways that one CHHP teacher educator carves out space for his work amidst the politically charged teacher education space; (2) document and analyze the pedagogical moves embedded in the praxis of one teacher educator who teaches a university-based course designed to prepare teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural artifacts and aesthetics to critical educational ends; and (3) document and analyze the ways in
which enrolled pre-service teachers experience, conceptualize, and interpret these practices.

Four key findings are presented: (1) the professor conceptualized and enacted the course as a means of disrupting dominant narratives about acceptable and effective approaches to teaching and learning; (2) his enactments of CHHP embodied hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics through his (re)conceptualization of teacher as MC; (3) the course’s structure through the aesthetics and rules of engagement of the hip-hop cypher provided a variety of ways for students to actively participate in the processes of knowledge production; (4) enrolled teachers reported new understandings of hip-hop as culture, resulting in shifts in perspectives on key issues impacting education and their visions for themselves as educators. Given these findings, this study suggests that the professor’s construction and enactment of the course resulted in an immersive experience in which he taught through a CHHP framework rather than about it, as is often seen in courses claiming similar critical multicultural and culturally relevant approaches, creating a dynamic immersive cultural experience for the enrolled teachers.
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I – INTRODUCTION

Early on in my doctoral studies, I found myself intrigued by the theoretical conceptualizations presented by critical hip-hop pedagogues (CHHP)\(^1\) (e.g. Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Emdin, 2013; Petchauer, 2009). These scholars’ work look to similar arguments presented in the foundations of other critical approaches to multicultural education in the development of practices that centralize culturally-diverse students’ voices and experiences as a means of disrupting and dismantling the status quo (Akom, 2009). Noting hip-hop’s function as a vehicle of self-expression and resistance among urban Black and Latino youth, these pedagogues understand hip-hop to be a means through which to expose and critique social inequities, particularly in relation to access to opportunities within education (Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

Situating CHHP

Students currently in the K-12 public school system have never lived in a world without hip-hop; furthermore, hip-hop culture’s ability to transcend across various racial, ethnic, linguistic and socio-political boundaries has resulted in a large and diverse following. Therefore, critical hip-hop scholars and pedagogues contend that hip-hop has become a dominant language of youth culture worldwide, serving as the means through which some youth come to know and make sense of themselves and their worlds,

\(^1\) Within current literature on hip-hop based practices, numerous nomenclatures are used synonymously and interchangeably (i.e. hip-hop education/pedagogy, hip-hop based education/pedagogy, etc.). I use CHHP similar to those such as Akom (2009) and Alim (2007) to explicitly highlight hip-hop’s roots in politics and resistance and its subsequent potential as a tool for social analysis/critique and the development of critical literacies.
particularly those living in low-income and/or urban environments (Akom, 2009; Baszile, 2009; Dimitriadis, 2001; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). Proponents of CHHP call for a paradigm shift that moves beyond the use of hip-hop artifacts (i.e. rap songs and lyrics) to enhance traditional pedagogical practices and instead utilizes hip-hop aesthetic forms (i.e. sampling, the cypher and battle, autonomy and distance, and kinetic consumption) in the transformation and restructuring of pedagogical practices.

According to CHHP, employing hip-hop as pedagogy requires the centering of students’ voices and culturally-defined experiences so that students become part of the creation of curriculum rather than passive receivers of knowledge (Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Emdin, 2011b; Williams, 2009). Thus, the critical hip-hop pedagogue is one who simultaneously assumes the role of teacher and student, viewing their students as experts whose experiential knowledge is crucial in the development of curricular content and pedagogical practices (Akom, 2009; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Williams, 2009). Engaging students as co-constructors of curriculum has the potential to dismantle existing power dynamics that place teacher as “all-knowing, possessor of knowledge” and thus holds the potential for the creation of educational spaces that prioritize and welcome diverse ways of knowing and being in the world.

Currently, a substantial collection of literature provides examples of various enactments of CHHP in public K-12 and higher education spaces (i.e. Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Baszille, 2009; Emdin, 2013a; Hallman, 2009; Hill, 2009a; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Williams, 2009). Informed by theories of critical and culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Gay, 2000; hooks, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2002).

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2 See Chapter 2 for a deeper exploration of these aesthetic elements and their pedagogical potential.
1995, 2000; Milner, 2010) existing CHHP literature reflects how enactments of pedagogical practices based on students’ realities, in this case hip-hop culture, can produce more favorable learning environments and improve student outcomes. Specifically, through predominantly first-person teacher-researcher accounts of enactments of CHHP within individual classrooms/courses, such research has demonstrated the many ways that incorporation of hip-hop based artifacts, cultural practices, and aesthetics strengthen the classroom community, improve student motivation, increase academic achievement and encourage the development of critical literacies (Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013).

The majority of such research consists of first-person accounts of the experiences of teacher-researchers who entered the work possessing a strong knowledge base of critical multicultural and culturally relevant pedagogy and hip-hop culture. With an increasing number of K-12 teachers from varied cultural backgrounds showing interest in utilizing hip-hop based practices and serving students in a variety of educational settings, the extant CHHP literature serves as a valuable resource and reference point (Irby & Hall, 2013). Yet, the question remains: What is being done in the preparation of educators to teach with a hip-hop sensibility? Understanding teacher preparation for hip-hop teaching may shed light on the potential epistemological and ontological beliefs of the teacher educators as well as the pedagogical moves\(^3\) that support the process of preparing teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural practices, artifacts and aesthetics toward critical educational ends.

\(^3\) For the purposes of this study, I define “pedagogical moves” as the verbal and non-verbal behaviors of structuring, soliciting, responding, and reacting enacted by a teacher/instructor that is used to promote or further the academic agenda in the classroom (Bellack, 1968; Lee et al., 2009)
Theoretical Framework

This study is framed by tenets and elements of CHHP (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Hill, 2009a; Williams, 2009). Many proponents of CHHP look to critical multicultural and culturally relevant pedagogy as theoretical foundations and guides for their research and practice (i.e. Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Emdin, 2011a; Hill, 2009a, 2009b; Irizarry, 2009; Pardue, 2007; Stovall, 2006; Williams, 2009), emphasizing a merger of theory and praxis through the development of practices that explicitly address students’ culturally-defined experiences, issues and concerns (see Figure 1 on p. 4).

Figure 1. Visual representation of the relationship between CHHP, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Critical Multicultural Education

Their action-oriented social justice focus calls for both individual and collective social critique and a deeper understanding of culturally-diverse ways of knowing and
being in the world. Employing a CHHP framework fuses understandings and ways of knowing/being in the world that are specific to hip-hop culture with theories of critical and culturally relevant teaching and learning aimed at student empowerment, youth activism and social justice (Akom, 2009; Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013). Below, I outline the four elements that surface throughout the literature as commonly held stances and tenets across various conceptualizations of the CHHP framework.

**Understanding Hip-Hop as Lived Experience/Identity**

The first tenet of CHHP serves as its foundation, emphasizing the need to recognize hip-hop as lived experience. Hip-hop scholars, historians and pedagogues challenge reductionist rap-centric approaches that relegate hip-hop to consumption during out-of-school and/or leisure time to a more comprehensive representation of hip-hop as a way of coming to know and be in the world (Akom, 2009; Alridge, 2005; Dimitriadis, 2001; Emdin, 2011a, 2011b). In this regard hip-hop pedagogues hold the stance that many of today’s urban youth use hip-hop cultural artifacts and practices to “seek meaning, acceptance and belonging” (Williams, 2009, p. 2) and as such is an invaluable cultural lens through which educators can engage students in an educational process aimed at social justice and the development of a critical consciousness (Emdin, 2011a, 2011b; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2009).
Dialogic Problem-Posing Curriculum

The second tenet of CHHP pulls explicitly from its theoretical grounding in Freirean critical pedagogy. Proponents of CHHP view students’ lived experiences as knowledge and therefore problematize the traditional approach to education that constructs students as empty vessels into which educators must deposit information (Emdin, 2013a; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2009; Williams, 2009). This approach, which Freire (1970) termed the “banking method” ignores and devalues students’ prior experiences, skills and knowledge thus highly limiting their ability to act as agents in the teaching and learning process. To counter this traditional method Freirean critical pedagogy calls for a problem-posing dialogical approach to education in which educators shift their mindsets from depositing knowledge to drawing it out of their students (Freire, 1970). The problem-posing approach to critical praxis consists of five steps: (1) Identify a problem, (2) Analyze the problem, (3) Develop a plan to address the problem, (4) Implement the plan and (5) Evaluate the action through reflection (Freire, 1970). Through engaging in this dialogic process educators and students can begin to disrupt deficit-based ideologies that continuously place culturally diverse students on the margins and transform schools and classrooms into liberatory spaces that view students as co-constructors of their own knowledge (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Shor & Freire, 1987; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002).

Freire (1970) conceptualizes dialogue not as a mere technique but a process that is woven into the historical nature of human existence. Freire explains the potential for transformation and liberation through dialogue stating:
To the extent that we are communicative beings who communicate to each other as we become more able to transform our reality, we are able to know what we know, which is something more than just knowing…Through dialogue, reflecting together on what we know and don’t know, we can then act critically to transform reality. (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 13)

Engagement in this dialogic process requires educators to shift from lecturer to facilitator, centering students’ voices and experiences and disrupting the culture of socialization and domestication inherent in traditional models of schooling (Freire,1970; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002). Through the enactment of dialogic pedagogy both students and educators are able to take more active roles in the teaching and learning process, leading to the liberation of oppressor and oppressed through the shifting dynamics in student-teacher social relations (Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002).

Much of Frière’s (1970, 1973) work served to address issues of illiteracy, which he directly linked to the continuous cycles of oppression. During his time serving as Minister of Education in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Freire enacted cultural literacy circles with the aim of developing a conscientização, or critical consciousness, through dialogue that led to identification of societal issues that impacted participants’ daily lives as well as helping formulate plans of action toward addressing and transcending these issues. Hip-hop scholars, historians and pedagogues linking the bi-directional dialogic processes of Freire’s culture circles to practices within hip-hop culture find that it strongly mirrors practices associated with the hip-hop cypher (Emdin, 2013b; Newman, 2005; Williams, 2009). Cypher participants, usually emcees (rappers) or bboys/girls (dancers), form a circle and take turns showcasing their skills in a freestyle (improvisational) fashion. Each participant is expected to participate in the cypher by contributing something to the “performance” (Emdin, 2013b; Newman, 2005; Williams, 2009). In both Freire’s culture
circles and hip-hop’s cyphers the circle represents a disruption of hierarchical positioning as participants stand equidistant from each other encouraging dialogue/participation as all participants are on equal ground. Additionally, as each participant contributes to the dialogue or performance the piece becomes more dynamic as participants are pushed in their thinking and performers are encouraged to bring forth their best skills in order to enhance the experience (Emdin, 2013b).

The majority of applications of the dialogic process has been applied to the acquisition of literacy skills, as this is often the most conducive space for educators to see opportunities to incorporate associated practices (i.e. Williams’ (2009) Critical Cultural Cyphers and Akom’s (2009) hip-hop Studio). However, the need to address the lack of representation of Black and Latino/a students in STEM-related courses and fields has led to greater focus on how to apply hip-hop-based dialogic practices in these subject-areas (Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

Emdin (2013) draws attention to the science-mindedness that exists within the enactment of hip-hop elements. Of particular importance to him is the emphasis within hip-hop culture on the co-construction of knowledge and co-development of practice, which mirrors exactly Freire’s (1970) call for educators to work in tandem with students in the teaching and learning process. Emdin (2011) applies many of the same practices associated with Freire’s problem-posing model as he maps out strategies for restructuring traditional science classrooms that more effectively engage urban youth identifying with hip-hop culture.

Emdin’s (2011) model of reality pedagogy and Freire’s (1970) problem-posing praxis model (See Figures 2 and 3 on p. 10) each engage students and teachers in a
collaborative dialogic process aimed at bridging students’ out-of-school experiences and identities with their academic experiences and identities and goals. Through these dialogic processes, students and teachers collectively identify issues of importance that impact and/or shape the daily functioning of the classroom, school community or surrounding neighborhood and co-create the subsequent curricular activities, pedagogical practices and/or activities necessary to address the identified issues. At the core of these processes are Freire’s concept of conscientizacao and Emdin’s (2011) conceptualization of cosmopolitanism, or “a way of knowing and being that embraces a belief in human responsibility for each other and of the value of the individual differences” (p. 290). Through engagement in such processes, the goal is for students and educators to develop a sense of shared identity and sense of responsibility in addressing issues that shape the environments and conditions in which teaching and learning take place.
*Figure 2.* Freire's (1970) Problem-Posing Praxis

*Figure 3.* Emdin's (2011) Five C's of Reality Pedagogy
Curriculum as (De)Colonizer

The third major tenet of CHHP also pulls from its roots in critical theories (i.e. Critical Race Theory, critical pedagogy, and critical culturally relevant/responsive pedagogy). These scholars frame discussions of curricular and educational reform efforts in the belief that teaching and learning are political acts and cannot be neutral (Goodwin, 2010; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Scherpf, 2001). To these scholars, the decisions educators make in the development and implementation of their pedagogical practices shed light on their ideological beliefs about the purposes and functions of schools. Specifically, critical pedagogues emphasize the manner in which various institutions of society are structured to (re)produce inequalities through the socialization of citizens under normalized and institutionalized ideas about what is acceptable and preferred in society (Goodwin, 2010; Payne, 2008; Tyack, 1993).

Similarly, acknowledging the quick growth of an increasingly diverse population, proponents of CHHP echo calls for the development and implementation of practices that do more than function as a bridge between home and school that is eventually burned once students assimilate into dominant social norms. Critical hip-hop scholars/pedagogues posit that CHHP provides a counter-curriculum that challenges the myths, presuppositions and supposed wisdoms of the official curriculum (Akom, 2009; Alim & Pennycook, 2007; Emdin, 2010; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). Existing literature on hip-hop pedagogy points to the necessity for educators working with urban youth identifying with hip-hop culture to gain understanding of the often oppositional discourses inherent within hip-hop culture and the inherently deficit-based discourses that frame many practices and policies within traditional public schooling. This understanding
can assist educators to identify sites of possibilities through which to challenge traditional paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of racially, culturally, linguistically, and socioeconomically diverse students (Alim & Pennycook, 2007; Hill, 2009b; Pulido, 2009; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2010).

Urban youth identifying and engaging with hip-hop culture face continuous alienation from and within traditional school environments. Schools often serve as sites for ideological battles in which these students consistently find their out-of-school ways of thinking, communicating, knowing and being labeled as deficient and in need of remediation and correction (Alim & Pennycook, 2007; Emdin, 2010). However, critical hip-hop pedagogues disrupt such deficit-based mindsets through the incorporation of teaching and learning styles that welcome their out-of-school ways of knowing and being to thrive. Their shift from incorporation of hip-hop/urban youth culture as a bridge to the mainstream to an approach that values diverse representations and manifestations of knowledge and skills expands conventional conceptions of “smartness” and “goodness” creating opportunities for a greater number of students to achieve success. Specifically, existing literature reveals how enacting pedagogical practices grounded in hip-hop/urban youth culture enables students and teachers to negotiate and navigate conflicting explicit and implicit messages within society in order to develop positive academic and social identities through the inevitable repositioning that occurs as space is created for diverse voices and perspectives.
Toward a Development of Critical Consciousness

Continuing to look to the aims of other critical pedagogical approaches, proponents of CHHP state one of its primary aims as being the development of a critical consciousness that moves students and educators toward action for change (Akom, 2009; Alim & Pennycook, 2007; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Williams, 2009). Broadly defined, critical consciousness “represents the capacity to critically reflect and act upon one’s social environment” (Diemer, Kauffman, Koenig, Trahan & Hsieh, 2006, p. 445). Hip-hop scholars, historians and pedagogues look to the common practice within hip-hop of explicitly naming the daily injustices faced within traditionally marginalized, underserved and underrepresented low-income urban communities as a point of entry through which to begin critical work with students. Critical hip-hop pedagogues’ exploration of hip-hop cultural language and social interactions, including rap lyrics and music serves as the appropriate starting point to begin naming the daily injustices experienced by urban youth and identify the context-specific problems that impact their students (Au, 2005).

Critical hip-hop pedagogues utilize both non-traditional texts (music videos, films, television series, songs, out-of-school experiences/personal narratives, etc.) and hip-hop aesthetics (sampling, battling, the cypher, schooling, etc.) to facilitate the deconstruction of “the veracity of dominant texts” (Gosa & Fields, 2012, p. 4). Through this process of deconstruction, which is grounded in bi-directional dialogue between student and teacher, the CHHP classroom holds potential as an emancipatory space in which both student and teacher are liberated from traditional standardized, assimilationist approaches (Akom, 2009; Williams, 2009).
Echoing other critical (i.e. Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2003) and culturally relevant (i.e. Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Paris & Alim, 2014) theories for multicultural teacher education/development, proponents of CHHP find it necessary for educators to engage in continuous explicit critical dialogue and reflection about the intersections of race (and its intersections with other identity markers such as class, gender, and sexuality), social injustice, inequity and education. Looking to hip-hop’s roots in politics and resistance as well as its prevalence within youth culture, critical hip-hop scholars and pedagogues posit that teaching though the cultural lens of hip-hop is conducive to the development of effective equity and social justice-oriented pedagogical practices that can begin to disrupt and dismantle existing power dynamics (Akom, 2009; Williams, 2009).

**Background of Problem**

Since the inception of the compulsory American schooling system various laws, mandated policies, curricular designs and education reform agendas enmeshed in deficit-based constructions of difference and diversity have been used to limit access to educational opportunities and resources for those on the margins of society (Anderson, 1988; Kliebard, 2004; Nasaw, 1979). Historically, constructions of race, gender, (dis)ability, and social class have been used to establish a cultural norm rooted in the ideals of a White, middle-/upper-class, male-dominated society (Delpit, 1988; Gay, 2000; Irizarry, 2009; Ogbu, 1992). Within this framing perceived social and cultural differences resulted in the continuous labeling of those who deviate from or are not able to fit within the norm as “socially and/or culturally deprived.”
This construction of difference is a discursive practice that remains central to debates within teacher education concerning how to prepare teachers for diverse populations. Data pointing to the “demographic imperative,” or persistent, and widening, gap between a student body that is increasingly racially/ethnically, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse and a teaching force that remains predominantly White, female, middle-class and English-speaking produces an increased sense of urgency in how to approach teacher education, presenting varied perspectives on the best practices in preparing effective educators for all students (Banks et al, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Lowenstein, 2009; Ukopokodu, 2002; Zeichner, 2003).

The mission and purpose statements of currently available CHHP-focused curricular resources and professional development opportunities explicitly address the issues of cultural mismatch and access to resources and educational opportunities that are sustained and reproduced through traditional forms of schooling that prioritize certain forms of knowledge production, acquisition and expression over others. These teacher development programs and resources answer the call of critical and culturally relevant scholars who push for a social-justice oriented reform effort within formal university-based teacher education (Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013).

For example, curricular materials and resources, such as Rhymes to Re-Education: A Hip Hop Curriculum Resource Guide (2014) produced by Toronto’s Hip Hop Curriculum Project and Do the Knowledge (Irby, 2006) produced by North Philadelphia’s Art Sanctuary, provide standards-based curriculum guides complete with sample lessons and suggested materials (i.e. videos, songs, graphic organizers). Hip-hop based education professional development opportunities are also surfacing across the nation. New York-
based Hip-Hop Re:Education’s Sustain-Ability program offers a variety of curricular and professional development services to help create a critical mass of transformative educators within both public and private K-12 schools as well as universities. Through interactive workshops facilitated by young teaching artists, many of whom are former classroom teachers or worked in schools, and participants/alumna of the organization’s other programs, the Hip-Hop Re:Education employs an interdisciplinary approach to help teachers create an arts-integrated curriculum that can be used to support the mastery of common-core standards. The goal of such programs is to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and tools to continue the work of transforming the school-wide culture and pedagogical practices after the teaching artists leave (Hip Hop Re:Education Project, n.d.).

Across the nation colleges and universities are beginning to host teacher training institutes and workshop series on social-justice oriented pedagogical approaches rooted in youth culture, including hip-hop based education. Two such programs are the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s (UW-Madison) weeklong Hip Hop in the Heartland Teacher Training Institute held every summer since 2007 and the annual Preemptive Education conference at New York University Steinhardt (NYU Steinhardt), which takes place over the course of one weekend at the beginning of each Fall semester. Both of these programs are co-sponsored and co-facilitated by the New York City-based non-profit organization, Urban Word NYC, whose primary goal is to provide free literary arts education and youth development programs through the practice of and engagement with spoken word, creative writing, playwriting, literature, and hip-hop (Urban Word NYC, n.d.). Through their partnerships with Urban Word NYC, UW-Madison and NYU Steinhardt’s annual
programs aim to bring together K-12 educators, university faculty, educational researchers and community-based artists and educators to bridge gaps between theory and practice in the hopes of facilitating the transformation of pedagogical practices utilized with students.

A brief overview of the mission statements and components of the materials and programs discussed above highlight an attempt to provide a knowledge base of hip-hop culture while explicitly naming the systemic social injustices shaping the social and educational landscape in which students live and learn. Additionally, there is a notable effort to ensure that teachers receive adequate models and resources to help cover the mandated standards-based curriculum. However, the majority of the work of preparing teachers to enact CHHP remains situated outside of formal university-based teacher education programs, which historically find themselves at the epicenter of concerns posed by competing agendas that each hold strong implications for what teachers are expected to know and be able to do when entering the classroom.

**The Political Landscape of Teacher Education**

Teacher education has continuously found itself at the center of theoretical, ideological and conceptual debates concerning best practices for the preparation of teachers capable of effectively teaching *all* students. Stakeholders with differing visions, goals and aims for teacher education offer competing and often directly oppositional strategies and approaches to addressing the “what” and “how” of adequately preparing teachers capable of meeting the demands of the 21st century classroom (see Chapter 2). Ongoing highly publicized and politicized debates between advocates of the competing
constituencies have fueled media commentaries and legislative reforms at both the state and national levels that impact the missions, curricular designs and instructional practices implemented within university-based teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Gay, 2005; Zeichner, 2003).

Most notable is the interplay between advocates of the professionalization agenda, which aims to professionalize teaching and teacher education and is linked to the K-12 standards movement and the deregulation agenda, which aims to dismantle teacher education institutions and break up the monopoly of the profession and is often linked to K-12 privatization and marketization reform efforts (Cochran-Smith, 2003a; Zeichner, 2003). The professional and deregulation agendas function in direct contradiction and opposition to each other, however, they both intersect with the standards and accountability movements in particular ways and are shaping the way teacher education reform efforts are being constructed, debated and implemented.

Much of the language in the professionalization and deregulation agendas often allude to aims and missions of critical multicultural and social justice-oriented movements (i.e. “equity,” “pluralism,” and “leaving no child behind”). However, critics note that the use of such buzzwords masks policies, practices and entry pathways that are strikingly different from those presented in critical equity and social justice-oriented approaches and may result in dramatically different outcomes for educational access, distribution of resources, and the life chances of school children who are differently positioned from one another in terms of socioeconomic status, culture, language background and race (Cochran-Smith, 2003a, 2003b; Gay, 2005; Zeichner, 2003). A number of states are implementing confusing and contradictory initiatives that
simultaneously place tighter controls on existing college and university-based teacher education programs while also establishing state-level preferences for alternative entry routes into teaching for those with no formal teacher preparation at all (Cochran-Smith, 2003b).

These initiatives are often created in response to the dominant claim within debates concerning teacher education that colleges of education are continuously failing to prepare teachers for the realities of the 21st century classroom. Driven largely by education outsiders promoting a venture capitalist-based philanthropic approach to education reform, or venture philanthropy, this narrative casts university-/college-based teacher education as a key factor shaping and fueling the broader story that public education is in crisis in need of salvation (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). As a result, recent education-focused philanthropic efforts have shifted away from partnering with and improving college and university-based programs to the funding and development of “educational ventures” aimed at the disruption and dismantling of traditional public teacher education institutions (Zeichner, 2003; Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015).

However, those from within education, who both seek to defend and transform the current teacher education system, find the critique against university-based teacher education unfair and unjustly motivated by those seeking personal, political and financial gain at the expense of historically underserved populations (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). Arguments presented in support of the critique against university-based teacher education often overlook other factors impacting teaching quality and retention, particularly in urban schools, such as conditions of the work environment, inequitable
access to educational opportunities and resources and the overreliance on students’ standardized test scores as a means of measuring teacher effectiveness.

**Situating CHHP within the Teacher Education Debate**

CHHP’s emphasis on understanding students’ lived experiences and culturally-defined frames of reference and utilizing them in the development of social justice-oriented curricular designs and instructional practices, places its proponents among those calling for the transformation of traditional university-based teacher education practices. Those holding this position share the emphasis on equity within the social justice education reform agenda (Zeichner, 2003) and often push for a reframing of discourses concerning the “achievement gap” to one of an “education debt” (Ladson-Billings, 2006), noting the cost of the historical and persistent narrative of difference as deficit that has pushed racially, culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse populations to the margins of society and educational policies, practices and curricular designs.

These factors are often overlooked when addressing necessary improvements to quality teacher education experiences, especially amidst seemingly well-intentioned efforts to improve accreditation standards through greater attention to the development of academic content knowledge and pedagogical/instructional skills (Zeichner, 2003). Transformers’ dissatisfaction with the status quo in traditional teacher education program policies and practices results in a call for the development of stronger relationships and partnerships between colleges of education and the communities in which teachers are preparing to enter. Similarly, proponents of CHHP emphasize the need to disrupt and
transform practices and policies rooted in assimilationist messages and traditional ideologies that frame cultural and social differences as deficits.

Recognizing educational institutions, as primary sites of the “construction, legitimation, and imposition” of dominant narratives and ideologies concerning what is acceptable, truthful, and rewardable, proponents of CHHP view these institutions as key locations within which to engage in ideological battles. It is within the highly charged political field of K-12 schools that traditionally marginalized students often find themselves in daily cultural combat (Alim, 2007). Thus educational institutions, including schools of education, may serve as appropriate locations to engage in processes of identifying, challenging and transforming damaging discourses and pedagogical practices in the development of social justice-oriented curricular designs and instructional practices framed by the lived experiences and realities of historically marginalized populations (i.e. Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Baszille, 2007; Emdin, 2013a).

Statement of the Problem and Rationale

In the face of an increasingly diverse student body, a growing number of educators are beginning to understand and appreciate the value of incorporating critical and culturally relevant approaches that incorporate students’ out-of-school ways of knowing and being in the world. As a result, more teacher education programs have attempted to include courses and curricula that are informed by critical and culturally relevant literature and practices to address issues of diversity, inequality and social justice. However, many continue to fall short of embodying the transformative pedagogical approaches they claim, leaving teachers unsure or unprepared to translate
theory into practice when facing the uncertain circumstances awaiting them in today’s public education system (Gorski, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

Research shedding light on the many ways in which hip-hop can serve as a conduit to the development of a social justice-oriented critical consciousness has resulted in increased interest among teachers from a variety of backgrounds and teaching within a diverse set of educational environments (Irby & Hall, 2010). Subsequently there is a greater demand for the development and inclusion of curricula, professional development and teacher education courses/programs specifically designed for the preparation of teachers to utilize hip-hop for critical educational ends (Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013). However, very little research exists specifically on the pedagogical components of CHHP teacher education, leaving questions concerning the affordances and potential boundaries and limitations of engaging in this work, particularly within formal university-based teacher education settings, which are often at the center of debates on teacher quality and effectiveness.

**Study Purpose and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is three-fold: (1) to document the ways that one CHHP teacher educator conceptualizes and situates his work amidst the politically-charged teacher education space; (2) to document and analyze the pedagogical moves embedded in the praxis of one teacher educator who teaches a university-based course designed to prepare pre-service teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural artifacts and aesthetics to critical educational ends; and (3) to document and analyze the ways in which the enrolled
teachers experience and interpret these practices. The following research questions guided this study:

Research Questions

1. How does one critical hip-hop teacher educator situate his work within the current political and demographic landscape of the university-based teacher education space?

2. What are the pedagogical moves enacted by one university-based teacher educator committed to the preparation of pre-service teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural practices, artifacts and aesthetics toward critical educational ends?

3. How do pre-service teachers conceptualize and interpret the key dilemmas/core issues that inform CHHP-rooted practices within a university-based course aimed specifically at preparing teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural elements and aesthetics toward critical educational ends?

4. How do pre-service teachers enrolled in a university-based course grounded in principles and tenets of CHHP negotiate and navigate potentially conflicting messages at the intersection of diversity, social justice, and education that are shaped by and shaping current discourses concerning what teachers should know and be able to do?
Significance of Study

This study adds to existing research concerning approaches to the transformation and development of teacher education courses and programs better able to prepare teachers for all students. Previous literature at the intersection of social justice, equity and university-based teacher education examine courses aimed at the development of a critical consciousness and disruption of dominant, deficit-based narratives through critical self-reflection and dialogue (i.e. Milner & Smithey, 2003; Porfilio & Malott, 2011; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2005). Similarly, the findings of this study joins the work of those shifting from continued discussion of where teacher education is falling short, providing a new potential framework and model that could work to create more transformative experiences for pre- and in-service teachers.

Specifically, this study explores how one teacher educator employed practices rooted in hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics to facilitate critical dialogue and reflection with the predominantly White teachers enrolled in his course. In doing so, it builds on existing literature on hip-hop pedagogy, further challenging reductionist rap-centric narratives of hip-hop that denigrate it and those living in communities in which hip-hop serves as a dominant cultural frame of reference. This study also provides insight into how a teacher educator conceptualized and enacted his practices to push his students beyond the what and into the how of CHHP. In doing so, the findings support existing literature emphasizing the need for authentic models of how to implement critical and culturally relevant practices, particularly when they are rooted in cultural practices and aesthetics different than those of the teacher and/or deemed invaluable within educational environments (Gorski, 2010; Irby, Hall & Hill, 201
II - LITERATURE REVIEW

Through this study I aimed to document and analyze the pedagogical components that comprise the praxis of one university-based teacher education course designed with the specific aim of preparing teachers to utilize hip-hop to critical educational ends. Similar to hip-hop culture, critical hip-hop pedagogy (CHHP) resists a singular, simplistic definition (Rose, 1994) and is instead defined by a set of principles and stances intended to frame the process for engaging in the work. To that end, this literature review is designed to describe these foundational principles and stances to create an analytic framework through which to examine the practices of CHHP and situate this study within existing conversations concerning the development of formal teacher education courses and programs for CHHP. Pulling from existing literature on hip-hop culture and aesthetics, the socio-political landscape of teacher education and conceptualizations of critical multicultural teacher education, the aim of this review is to gain insight into the potential affordances and challenges of development and implementation of courses/programs for the preparation of teachers to enact CHHP.

The Road to CHHP

In this section I trace the development of CHHP through an exploration of the key theoretical and methodological shifts within the broader field of hip-hop based education (HHBE). Specifically, I explore the various ways in which hip-hop culture has been integrated into the traditional school environment and its evolution from a framing of teaching with hip-hop artifacts to enhance traditional curricular designs, to the recent call
for a more nuanced conceptualization of teaching with a hip-hop sensibility through
deepen understandings and engagements with hip-hop cultural aesthetics (Hill &
Petchauer, 2013).

Although the three major iterations of the field and practice of HHBE are
presented in a seemingly linear fashion below, with one coming after the other, the
timelines of the various conceptualizations overlap and they continue to exist and evolve
alongside each other. Throughout HHBE literature, practices are often referred to
interchangeably under numerous nomenclatures (e.g. HHBE, HHP or Hip-hop pedagogy,
and CHHP). In this literature review I use HHBE to refer to the broader field of hip-hop
based education that encompasses all approaches to utilizing hip-hop cultural elements,
products and practices in the development of more culturally relevant and sustaining
pedagogical practices. My use of CHHP refers specifically to recent shifts within the field
that look beyond rap-centric practices to the aesthetic elements of hip-hop culture in the
creation of democratic, emancipatory education spaces and the development of a social
justice-oriented critical consciousness among students and teachers (Akom, 2009; Alim,
2007).

Thread One: Historical/Textual Explorations of Hip-Hop’s Educational Potential

While the specific origins of hip-hop culture remain debatable, the widely
accepted narrative places its birth in the Bronx in the late 1970s/early 1980s, initially
rising up as a form of self-expression and resistance for traditionally marginalized Black
and Latino urban youth (Chang, 2005; Rose, 1994). Its ability to capture the experiences
of underrepresented groups through its emphasis on storytelling, raw emotion and embracing of both the pride and pain of those living on the margins propelled it to a position of great cultural and economic value, as a more diverse audience connected with it (Au, 2005). Over the past 40 years, hip-hop’s integration into the mainstream through its commodification in music, fashion, film, and art resulted in it becoming a central feature of urban youth culture and American popular culture more broadly. Throughout this centering of hip-hop from the margins to the airwaves, the educational community has attempted to utilize hip-hop cultural practices and artifacts in various informal and formal contexts (Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

Initial conceptualizations of hip-hop based education (HHBE) primarily focused on providing historical descriptions of the origins of hip-hop and analyses of the educational potential of hip-hop cultural elements (Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Powell, 1991; Smitherman, 1997). Specifically, through this work early HHBE scholars traced hip-hop’s core cultural elements (MCing/Rapping, DJing, Breakdancing, and Graffiti/Visual Art) back to their roots in West African, Afro-Caribbean/West Indian traditions that blended drumming and percussive rhythms with storytelling and singing during celebrations and religious worship (Baker, 1991; Powell, 1991; Rose, 1994).

These early historical and descriptive accounts often used “hip-hop” and “rap” synonymously, noting the musical form’s rise out of street-level movements of resistance and emphasis on self-expression through storytelling as a primary reason for its mass appeal (Powell, 1991; Rose, 1994). Providing deep explorations of the cultural traditions that shed further light on the language patterns and communicative practices inherent within hip-hop, the first wave of HHBE scholarship attempted to: (1) familiarize hip-hop
cultural outsiders with hip-hop’s educational possibilities and (2) provide counter-narratives to dominant discourses which focused primarily on the socially corrosive effects of so-called “gangster rap” (music filled with messages of violence, misogyny/hyper masculinity, promiscuity/hyper sexuality and glorification of drug use/selling) (Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

The music industry’s inclination to spend more of their resources promoting “gangster rap” rather than other subgenres, such as the more politically and socially conscious rap focused on critically interrogating the socio-political landscape of society, has caused a reductionist view of hip-hop culture and low-income Black communities more broadly. While gangstas, hustlers, street crimes and explicit sexual content were components of hip-hop storytelling prior to the record industry’s commercialization and promotion of rap music, the oversimplification and “hyper-gangtsa-rization” of these elements directly coincides with the mainstreaming of hip-hop into the music industry in the 1980s and 1990s (Alridge & Stewart, 2005; Neal, 2012; Rose, 2008). Lack of nuance and complexity in the media-driven constructions of Black gangstas, hustlers and hoes has buried hip-hop under the superficial renderings of these figures, presenting one-dimensional narratives as the most “authentic” representations of life in low-income Black communities to predominantly White youth¹ (Rose, 2008). As a result, conversations on the production, commercialization and consumption of hip-hop are, at the root, about more than just music, serving as vehicles for public discussions about issues of race, class, gender, and the role of black culture in society (Rose, 2008).

¹ Mediamark Research Inc, reported that Whites comprised 70-75% of the hip-hop customer base between 1995 and 2001. As of 2008 this number had remained fairly consistent (Rose, 2008, p. 4)
In the last twenty years, polarized debates in which “hip-hop” is often equated to “Blackness” or “black behavior” utilize one-dimensional narratives presented in some commercialized gangster rap, creating damaging discourses concerning Black youth and the role of African American culture in society. Staunch critics blame hip-hop for many social ills, offering examples of individuals’ actions, song lyrics and visual images in videos as “proof” that “Black behavior creates ghetto conditions” (Rose, 2008). On the other end of the spectrum defenders noting the deep roots of hip-hop in the urban Black experience, retort with claims that the narratives created in commercialized gangster rap are the products of poverty itself (Neal, 2012; Rose, 2008). Lack of attention to the larger social and political context may be attributed to strong media influence in shaping the conversation on hip-hop in a manner that pushes people to the far ends of either the “pro” or “con” positions. As a result, nuanced critical analysis remains on the margins of the conversation creating and sustaining dominant discourses that reinforce historical stereotypes of Black youth (Alridge & Stewart, 2005; Chang, 2007; Rose, 2008).

Although the “historical/textual” thread of early HHBE scholarship remained rap-centric, the deep exploration of the socio political contexts surrounding the birth of hip-hop culture add a layer of complexity and depth to existing debates. These detailed historical accounts of the birth and development of hip-hop highlight the relationship between ongoing systemic and structural issues of racism, long-term economic, social and political disempowerment, and corporate influences and the perceived anger-filled stories of life in low-income urban Black and Latino neighborhoods told through hip-hop songs and imagery (Alridge & Stewart, 2005; Powell, 1991; Rose, 2008).
In doing so, scholars contributing to this thread of HHBE literature provided a strong case for hip-hop’s potential effectiveness as an educational tool and a useful knowledge base for hip-hop cultural outsiders. Their detailed accounts not only provided a deeper understanding of the conditions surrounding the development of hip-hop culture, but also began to explore the processes of knowledge acquisition and oral and written communication skills necessary to support the production and performance of rap music (Paul, 2000; Powell, 1991). However, infusion of hip-hop cultural artifacts and practices in K-12 education remains a widely debated and contested topic in public discourse (Au, 2005; Land & Stovall, 2009). A second thread of HHBE literature arose built on the interest produced by the historical/textual knowledge base providing more concrete conceptualizations of what enacts of HHBE could look like within the traditional K-12 classroom.

**Thread Two: Concrete Conceptualizations of Hip-Hop Based Education**

Drawing from the principles of critical (Freire, 1970) and culturally responsive (e.g. Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994) pedagogical theories a second thread of HHBE scholarship provides concrete curricular and pedagogical strategies that link hip-hop to effective educational praxis. Exploring the specific ways in which hip-hop elements and artifacts (i.e. rap songs and videos, documentaries on hip-hop history and cultural practices, hip-hop magazines and visual art, etc.) can be used as curricular and pedagogical resources within the classroom, this work manifests in two forms of scholarship:
(1) systemic and standards-based hip-hop curricula to support the work of those looking to develop and implement HHBE in their own classrooms (e.g. Irby, 2006; Runnell & Diaz, 2007; Vicente et al., 2014) and

(2) demonstrations of the development and implementation of HHBE in K-12 and higher education classrooms (e.g. Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2004; Hill, 2009a; Stovall, 2006).

**Standards-based curricular materials.** Increased interest in HHBE and hip-hop culture in general led to the production of standards-based curricular materials, most notably of which are Irby’s (2006) Do the Knowledge, and Runnell and Diaz’s (2007) The Hip-Hop Education Guidebook, Vol. 1. As discussed in Chapter I, this work consists of concrete lesson plans along with supplementary materials (song lists and lyrics, videos, documentaries, pictures and graphic organizers) for use by educators looking to incorporate HHBE into their current pedagogical practices. These materials are often produced by educators who also self-identify as, or work in conjunction with, members of the hip-hop community and possess strong knowledge of both hip-hop culture and the critical and culturally relevant pedagogical theories that undergird the work.

The authors of the materials also offer companion professional development opportunities to provide hands-on experiences where teachers, hip-hop artists, community members and students can demonstrate, share and discuss various approaches to the work. For example, Decoteau Irby, author of *Do the Knowledge*, created a workshop called “Schooling Ourselves” based on the curriculum he designed. The workshop was offered in Philadelphia and open to any teachers interested in learning how
to use hip-hop more effectively through close engagement with one of the lessons (Irby & Hall, 2010; Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013).

**Demonstrations of HHBE in action.** Alongside the curricular materials, empirical research providing detailed accounts of the use of hip-hop cultural artifacts and elements within K-12 and public education settings began to arise in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Presented primarily through first-person accounts of teachers whose positions now place them firmly within the academy and utilizing methods associated with qualitative research, this work demonstrates the specific ways in which the cultural art form can be used to create more effective and culturally relevant learning environments for urban youth identifying with hip-hop culture (Irby & Hall, 2010; Hill & Petchauer, 2013). Similar to earlier invocations, this line of scholarship remains very heavily rap-focused, exploring the development and implementation of hip-hop based lessons, units and courses in the facilitation of critical literacy-based instruction (i.e. courses specifically aimed at the development of reading, writing and oral communication skills) (Gosa & Fields, 2012; Hill & Petchauer, 2013).

Seminal pieces of work in this area include that of Ernest Morrell and Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade (2004), Stovall (2006) and Marc Lamont Hill’s (2009a) critical reflexive analyses of their own hip-hop based literacy practices. After noticing the ways in which students enrolled in an urban California high school were able to critically analyze complex and metaphorical lyrics of hip-hop songs, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2004) aimed to design a “culturally and socially relevant” unit in which they paired hip-hop songs/lyrics with canonical poetry texts to facilitate similar critical analysis with poems. Through both written and oral assignments in which students were able to
generate their own interpretations of both the hip-hop and canonical poetry texts, bridging the two around similar themes related to issues of poverty, rage, alienation and joblessness (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2004, p. 264).

Similarly, Hill’s (2009a) yearlong ethnography traces his development and implementation of a Hip-Hop Literature course in a night school program designed for students over the age of 18 seeking to earn their high school diplomas. Ultimately attracting 20 racially/ethnically diverse students, Hill observed and documented the ways in which a rap-centered English course and the physical classroom space itself could serve as a space for complex student identity negotiations. Grounding his work in theories of critical and culturally relevant pedagogies focused on the intersections of popular culture, identity development/performance and schooling/curriculum, this study emphasizes the need for work that “views the classroom as a unique site for contesting, reflecting, or constituting particular identities” (Hill, 2009a, p. 12).

Morrell and Duncan-Andrade’s (2004) and Hill’s (2009a) studies support the incorporation of hip-hop texts, providing insight into how utilization of hip-hop texts center students’ cultures, realities and ways of knowing and being in the world, increasing critical engagement and personal connection to course content. This in turn increases the possibility for the type of critical dialogue, analysis and reflection on the classroom content as well as larger related socio-political issues as the traditionally silenced voices and experiences of Black and Latino urban youth become centered and privileged (Akom, 2009; Gay, 2000; Friere, 1970; Ladson-Billings, 1994).

The first two waves of HHBE scholarship provide useful exemplars, resources and materials for those seeking deeper understandings of both hip-hop culture and critical
and culturally relevant pedagogies. However, scholars both within and outside of the hip-hop community, caution those attempting to enact HHBE as a common pitfall in the use of rap-centric techniques as “pedagogical lures” (Paul, 2000, p. 246). These strategies often effectively increase student interest and engagement, but do little to disrupt dominant discourses of difference that traditionally silence voices of Black and Latino youth, particularly those in urban environments where hip-hop is a dominant cultural lens (Paul, 2000).

In other words, while the use of rap-centric techniques welcomes and engages students’ out-of-school languages, interests and voices, too often the curriculum quickly shifts back into an emphasis on traditional canonical texts and pedagogical practices with no changes in expectations as to how students are asked to present or express newly acquired knowledge. Therefore, students may still receive the message that there is one acceptable method of knowledge production and expression into which they must assimilate (Paul, 2000).

Thread Three: Toward an Explicitly Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy

Current theoretical and methodological shifts in HHBE literature attempts to address and avoid the potential pitfalls noted above through intentional “applications of teaching styles and classroom strategies that enhance both the ‘critical-ness’ and ‘cultural relevance’ of schooling with a social justice perspective” (Gosa & Fields, 2012, p. 4). Drawing on a wider range of academic disciplines, this line of HHBE scholarship aims to push the field forward through explorations of broader, more nuanced investigations of
One salient example of this line of scholarship is Dimitriadis’ (2001) 4-year ethnographic study, exploring the ways in which African American youth at a Midwestern community center constructed and performed their identities through rap texts and other popular cultural forms. Although primarily focused on two male participants, Dimitriadis’ (2001) study provides clear examples of the ways in which urban youth mobilize hip-hop culture in their interpretations and constructions of race, gender, class and place. To the young people in the study, rap texts (songs/lyrics) provided far more than entertainment serving as a means through which they could experience “stability and feelings of invulnerability in the face of intense anxiety” (Dimitriadis, 2001, p. 61).

Making suggestions for pedagogical and curricular practices, Dimitriadis (2001) posits that the complexity of the youths’ interpretations and meaning-making processes “signal that educators should expand their notions of curriculum to include cultural forms and texts made meaningful by students” (Petchauer, 2009, p. 957). However, researchers noting the substantiality of his claims pushed further looking to the need to address the individual and contextual factors (e.g. familial, geographical, historical) that must be taken into consideration in order to adequately assess the unique ways in which youth mobilize these texts in the performance of their identities (Petchauer, 2009).

Answering the call from within the field of HHBE for a focus on the development of more critical transformational processes introduced there has been a shift to an explicitly critical hip-hop pedagogy (CHHP) (Gosa & Fields, 2012). Expanding on the
knowledge base provided by the previous iterations, CHHP scholarship has unearthed the ways in which knowledge of and participation in hip-hop cultural practices can serve as both a form of cultural capital and a resource for racial and generational identity formation (Dimitriadis, 2001; Hill, 2009a). With this in mind, self-proclaimed critical hip-hop pedagogues call for an expansion within the field of HHBE from teaching with hip-hop texts (i.e. rap songs) to teaching with hip-hop sensibilities and aesthetics. Advocates of this shift posit that doing so allows for deeper engagement with the other dimensions of hip-hop culture (DJing, graffiti/visual art, fashion, spoken word/poetry, etc.) to create educational environments that embody more complex and genuine representations of hip-hop culture (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Irizarry, 2009; Williams, 2009).

**New Directions: Teaching with Hip-Hop Aesthetics and Sensibilities**

*Hiphop is the mental activity of oppressed creativity. Hiphop is not a theory and you cannot do Hiphop. Oppressed urban youth living in the ghettos of America are Hiphop. Rap is something you do; Hiphop is something you live*” (KRS-One, 2003, p .211, as cited in Peterson, 2013)

Focusing solely on rap “overlooks the role of knowledge (known colloquially as ‘the fifth element’) and obscures the ways that youth continue to expand the boundaries of hip-hop by crafting new products, texts, and practices that fit within the cultural logic and aesthetics of hip-hop” (Hill & Petchauer, 2013). Hip-hop aesthetics such as sampling (Petchauer, 2012), competitive battling (Emdin, 2013b), and freestyle improvisation/flow (Pennycook, 2007) reflect unique sensibilities and worldviews that are both specific to hip-hop and also applied by adolescents and young adults in everyday life. As the quote
from hip-hop artist and pioneer KRS-One (also commonly referred to as “The Teacher”) suggests, such insights are critical for those interested in restructuring educational spaces in ways that prioritize, welcome and value the cultural orientations and lived realities of traditionally marginalized students.

**Educational Potential of Hip-Hop Aesthetics**

Building directly on the knowledge base provided by previous rap-centric iterations, CHHP scholars look to hip-hop elements such as the *rap cypher or battle* to gain deeper understanding of the broader communicative aspects of hip-hop culture. As discussed in Chapter I, the cypher provides a foundational structure through which to explore hip-hop’s broader aesthetic themes. Explorations of this communal improvisational process in which all participants, usually forming a circle, are expected to contribute to the final product (performance) shed light on its potential effectiveness in the development of skills such as argumentation, active listening, creativity and community (Emdin, 2013b; Irizarry, 2009; Williams, 2007). Often described as the “ultimate brainstorming session” (Irizarry, 2009, p. 493), the structure of cyphers fosters the type of skills valued in conventional educational environments rooted in creative demonstration of mastery and the ability to defend one’s position through strong content knowledge (Emdin, 2013b). These skills are often necessary in comprehensive engagement with academic content, particularly in interrogating science-related topics and in academic (expository) writing across the disciplines.

Hip-hop’s overall emphasis on the power of the word is evident in other aspects of the process of producing rap. In particular, common practices among hip-hop artists
and music producers is that of *sampling* (borrowing melodies, words, ideas, etc. of other artists and songs) and *remixing* (retooling, revising and updating a song) in the composition of songs and albums. These skills most obviously lend themselves to the development of instructional practices aimed at creating strong(er) writers, as the concept of sampling and remixing is not much different than skills required in composing academic pieces similar to this literature review (Peterson, 2013). However, CHHP scholars reach further back, linking these hip-hop aesthetic elements to historical African traditions of *cultural reversioning* and the concept of *nommo*-the power of the word. Cultural reversioning and *nommo* continues to permeate Black art forms that use performance and storytelling to cope with life’s circumstances while simultaneously creating narratives verbally recognizing self-worth and personal attributes (Wilson, 2013).

Organizations such as the HipHop2020 Curriculum Project and the previously discussed Hip Hop Re:Education Project (see Chapter I) provide models for how educators can guide students in utilizing the concept of *nommo* and practices of sampling and remixing to produce counter-narratives and the development of leadership skills which they can apply to various community-based social-justice oriented efforts (Wilson, 2013; Hip-Hop Re:education). The aims of these programs are pulled almost directly from visions for the development of a more democratic public school culture presented by critical theorists in which the primary aims are to:

1) sharpen students’ decision making skills,

2) teach conflict resolution strategies,

3) frame students’ roles in social justice activism and
4) enhance cultural sensibilities and awaken natural leadership competencies (Wilson, 2013).

Inherent within the call for an expansion of HHBE beyond the incorporation of rap is an overall shift from looking to *enhance existing practices* to the *development of new ways of teaching and learning* (Petchauer, 2013). The previously discussed aesthetics provide insight into the communicative and performative aspects of hip-hop that can be used to overhaul current teaching and learning practices. Explorations of additional aesthetic elements such as *autonomy/distance* and *kinetic consumption* unearth processes of categorization, connection and meaning making associated with hip-hop cultural and linguistic practices. Autonomy/distance refers to hip-hop’s resistance of modernist dichotomies, while kinetic consumption refers to the belief that hip-hop is meant to be felt not just seen or heard.

Applying these aesthetic elements to processes of teaching and learning, hip-hop scholars suggest a need for explicit explorations of positionality (of both teacher and student) when analyzing the positive and negative impacts of various discourses and their manifestation in pedagogical practices. Autonomy/distance in particular should push educators to reflect on the ways in which any one instructional practice or activity can have both harmful and negative impacts on students given the explicit and implicit messages students may receive from them (Petchauer, 2013). Formulating lessons, units and instructional practices with kinetic consumption requires that educators view students’ affective responses as valid and crucial ways of knowing. Often verbalized in hip-hop culture through commonly used phrases such as “I feel you,” kinetic consumption can assist teachers in identifying aspects of content, instruction and the
overall classroom/school environment that students are connecting positively (or negatively) with in order to increase their ability to engage deeply and more personally with academic content (Petchauer, 2013).

As previously discussed, at the core of the recent reframing of HHBE from utilizing hip-hop products to teaching and learning through hip-hop aesthetics is a strong commitment to social justice-oriented practices and the dismantling of dominant deficit-based thinking. Advocates of this approach agree with critiques that some of the content (lyrics, images, values and discourses) of hip-hop artifacts are deeply problematic. However, they posit that in looking beyond the content to the aesthetics that inform the processes of production there lie numerous progressive and empowering strands that support the aims of social justice-oriented efforts. While the various iterations of HHBE have provided strong evidence for the benefits of incorporating the cultural elements and aesthetics into the classroom, little information exists on what is being done to prepare educators looking to do this work, particularly within formal university-based teacher education which often has a great impact on how pedagogical theories manifest within K-12 classroom.

Little work exists on the specific methods and approaches aimed at the preparation of the critical hip hop pedagogue. However, the development and preparation of critical multicultural and culturally relevant educators is highly researched and documented (i.e. Gay, hooks, Howard, Freire, Ladson-Billings, Milner, Oakes, Villegas & Lucas, etc.). Deeper understanding of the approaches and strategies for the development of critical multicultural and culturally relevant educators as it is within the dialogue and progressive movements from within these two fields that CHHP is situated.
This literature continuously pulls from work of scholars looking at effective strategies for teacher education of critical and culturally relevant educators and the necessary structural shifts within teacher education programs for the preparation of educators who “teach against the grain” (Cochran-Smith, 1991).

Preparing Teachers to Teach Diverse Student Populations

In this section I first describe the demographic trends and sociopolitical landscape that may cause challenges for some teacher education programs to prepare teachers for culturally diverse student populations. Second, pulling from empirical research on multicultural and culturally relevant teacher education I highlight various theoretical orientations, conceptualizations, designs and implementations of existing teacher preparation of teachers of diverse populations that is being enacted within university-based teacher education courses and programs.

The Demographic Landscape of U.S. Education

Persistent gaps in achievement among and between racially, linguistically and socioeconomically diverse students brings more focused attention to teacher education programs, and an increased sense of urgency to develop effective and comprehensive approaches to prepare teachers for a changing world (Darling-Hammond, 2000, 2006; Gay, 2005). Explicit attention to the challenges of this demographic imperative is critical in order to improving the educational opportunities and outcomes for students who do not fit within the White, patriarchal, middle class norms. Statistical evidence of the demographic imperative highlight three key areas of impact: 1) the increasingly diverse
student population, 2) differences in the lived experiences of students and teachers and 3) the demographic divide or disparities in educational opportunities and outcomes and allocation of resources among student groups who differ from each other racially, culturally, linguistically and socioeconomically (Banks et al, 2005; Cochran-Smith, 2003).

Recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) project that students of color will constitute the majority of the student population, accounting for 56% of the student population as soon as 2024 (Hussar & Bailey, 2014; USDOE, 2016). The national poverty rate for school-age children (ages 5-17) remains around 20%, with recent data showing increases in 41 states between 2000 and 2014 (Kena et al, 2016). The image of the “traditional family” is also shifting with a greater number of students coming from homes headed by single parents, those with different sexual orientations and a wide variety of other family structures. Additionally, across the nation there is an increase in homes in which English is not the primary or dominant language spoken, with some schools reporting up to 100 different languages spoken in the early 2000s (Ukpokodu, 2002). By the 2013-14 school year, 9.3% of public school students were English Language Learners (ELLs) (Kena et al, 2016).

Amidst this changing demographic landscape, the K-12 teacher workforce remains largely racially, culturally, linguistically and socioeconomically homogeneous (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Statistical data shows the teacher workforce is over 80% White, English-speaking, middle-class and from suburban or rural communities (Gay, 2000; Little & Bartlett, 2010; Lowenstein; 2005; Ukpokodu, 2002). Although research
shows evidence that teacher education programs are attempting to diversify their applicant and student pools, projected data suggest the teaching force will remain primarily homogeneous for a long time (Cochran-Smith, 2003a).

The demographic implications for education go beyond gaps in numerical representation between students and teachers. Looking beyond the numbers there are also marked differences in the biographies and lived experiences of many teachers and the diverse students in their classrooms. Teachers coming from middle-class, suburban environments who speak only English and teaching in urban environments serving students who are racially, linguistically and socioeconomically diverse will likely have different cultural frames of reference and perspectives through which to interpret and make sense of the world (Banks et al, 2005). This cultural mismatch can limit these teachers’ capacity to function as role models for many of their students or act as cultural brokers/agents for students capable of assisting students in bridging home-school experiences (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Perhaps most alarmingly, dominant discourses that frame “diversity” as “deficit” often cause White middle-class teachers to view cultural diversity as obstacles to be overcome resulting in lowered expectations or fears about working with different cultural and life experiences, particularly in traditionally underserved areas (Banks et al, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Nieto, 2005). Therefore, teachers need opportunities to develop the necessary cross-cultural competency or sociopolitical awareness required in the construction of culturally affirming and meaningful curriculum, instruction and interactional patterns that are connected to students’ prior experiences and culturally-
specific ways of learning and knowing (Banks et al., 2005; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1999).

**(Re)structuring Teacher Education Programs for Diversity**

In response to the demographic imperative professional organizations and institutions whose primary missions are concerned with the preparation of teachers have taken official action toward the redesigning of teacher education programs, curriculum and practice. In 1972 the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) formed one of the first commissions on multicultural teacher education, making three assertions: (a) cultural diversity is a valuable resource, (b) multicultural education is education that preserves and extends the resource of cultural diversity rather than merely tolerating it or making it “melt away,” and (c) a commitment to cultural pluralism ought to permeate all aspects of teacher preparation programs in this country (Banks et al., 2002; Cochran-Smith, 2003a). In 1976, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) added multicultural education and teaching for diversity to its standards.

Subsequently, all institutions seeking accreditation were required to show evidence that they were planning for the incorporation of multicultural content by 1979 and then provided within all teacher education programs by 1981 (Cochran-Smith, 2003a). A prominent thread throughout multicultural teacher education research focuses on this urgent need to (re)structure university-based programs for the development and implementation of more effective multicultural teacher education courses and programs. Looking to existing research documenting the work of successful educators of diverse
populations (i.e. Ladson-Billings’ *Dreamkeepers*) as well as the damaging discourses and practices impacting the educational experiences of culturally diverse students, scholars contributing to this work identify key components in the transformation of formal teacher education for diversity.

**Critical reflection.** Throughout the literature on the preparation of critical multicultural and culturally relevant educators, the necessity for critical self-reflection remains at the core of the work (Howard, 2003; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Milner, 2003). Howard (2003) argues that the development of culturally relevant teaching strategies is contingent upon critical reflection about race and culture of teachers in relation to their students. Specifically, he addresses the ways that teacher educators can equip preservice teachers with the necessary skills to critically reflect on their own racial and cultural identities and to recognize how these identities coexist with the cultural compositions of their students. Operationalizing *critical reflection* as that which takes place “within moral, political, and ethical contexts of teaching” encompassing “issues pertaining to equity, access and social justice” (Howard, 2003, p. 197), he posits that this degree of reflection reveals one’s positionality allowing for deeper understanding of how their past influences the instructional decision-making processes of their present.

Similarly, Milner (2003) emphasizes the importance of this explicit reflection on race and culture within teacher education programs due to the prevalence of an oppressive colorblind ideology within the increasingly diverse education system that has strong implications for the instructional practices of teachers of all racial and cultural backgrounds. According to Milner (2003) critical reflection can help White teachers who have adopted colorblind ideologies unearth the silencing and alienating impact such
beliefs have on learning among students of color. Further, teachers of color need to reflect on issues of race and contexts to examine the oppressive misconceptions and White supremacist ideologies they often operate through as a result of their own teaching and learning experiences that can often feel even more oppressive and alienating to students who come from similar racial and cultural backgrounds (Emdin, 2016).

Looking to their own experiences as teachers and teacher educators, critical multicultural and culturally relevant scholars acknowledge the personal and institutional barriers that can often cause difficulty in this process. Thus, these scholars provide a number of techniques through which to alleviate the personal strain that is often associated with the process, while pushing for deep critical analysis of the socio-political forces at play (hooks, 1993). Ladson-Billings (2000) suggests the use of autobiography as an approach to fostering this type of deep reflection. This approach allows teachers to critically examine their experiences of difference in and outside of the classroom and to speak as subjects in their own voice. Thus the use of autobiography in teacher education functions as a tool through which to assist teachers in development of a critical consciousness while also serving as a model for the type of student engagement called for within theories of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Communities of learning. Prevalent within the discussion of preparing educators to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse settings is the creation of systems of support for teachers in these settings to facilitate high-quality educational experiences. As previously mentioned, current literature emphasizes multiple approaches, many of which look to the effectiveness of both collective and individual teacher reflection (hooks, 1993; Howard, 2003; Oakes, Franke, Quartz & Rogers, 2002). These scholars highlight the
need for a space where teachers working in, and preparing to work in, culturally diverse environments have the opportunity to come together and grapple with the various techniques for overcoming the context-specific barriers they may face in their work environments. Further, they suggest that providing such space for these “communities of learning” (Oakes et al., 2002) opens up opportunities for theory and practice to intersect and dynamic, transformative pedagogical practices to emerge.

Through her exploration of attempting to create this environment within a university setting, hooks (1993) exposes the fear-based resistance or hesitancy to adjusting teaching practices in the multicultural classroom. The transformative, democratic pedagogical practices that hooks calls for often brings up fear of loss of control within the classroom as it opens doors to critique and less control as to what topics gain entry into the learning environment. However, opening up the learning space in a way that gives all members of the classroom equal voice can provide a more liberating and transformative experience for both teacher and student as all become responsible for the learning that takes place (hooks, 1993). Providing teachers with a similar collaborative environment, in both the pre-service and in-service experiences opens up opportunities for collaboration through the sharing and creation of strategies and approaches and collective reflection on these practices in a supportive environment (Oakes et al., 2002). This can also alleviate feelings of isolation that are often associated with the individualistic, “behind closed doors” approach to teaching that often serves as a barrier for new teachers and those looking to enact more culturally relevant practices.

In their discussion of properly preparing teachers for work in culturally diverse urban environments, Oakes et al (2002) suggest that the use of the aforementioned
communities of learning, can help teachers look beyond traditional university-based and
district-mandated teacher education/professional development experiences to gain
necessary knowledge and skills. This echoes similar messages from other critical
multicultural and culturally relevant scholars who suggest that teachers learn to view
students, parents, colleagues and various community members as experts with whom they
should frequently consult in the process of shaping their pedagogical practices (i.e.

**Holistic cross-curricular approaches.** Literature looking at the larger structural issues
in formal university-based teacher education programs highlight the common practice of
segregating explicit discussions of culture, race and diversity to single courses within
programs. These courses may be optional and not required for completion of degree
programs and send the message that attention to diversity is optional, or only important
once other content-specific skills are mastered (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Ladson-Billings,
2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Additionally, detaching these courses from the rest of the
curriculum makes it difficult for concepts covered within them to be reinforced enough to
make a lasting impact on future practice once teachers enter the classroom (Villegas &
Lucas, 2002).

Instead, proponents of critical multicultural and culturally relevant pedagogical
practices call for a shift in the design of teacher education programs that integrate issues
of cultural relevance and diversity through the entire program. Aligning directly to the
core tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy, Villegas & Lucas (2002) identify six strands
necessary in the development of the culturally relevant educator: 1) socio-cultural
consciousness, 2) affirming attitudes toward students from culturally diverse
backgrounds, 3) commitment and skills to act as agents of change, 4) constructivist views of learning, 5) learning about students and 6) culturally relevant teaching practices. Using these six strands can serve “as an organizing framework” through which to build a vision for a program that infuses attention to diversity throughout the curriculum and gives “conceptual coherence to the preparation of teacher for diversity” (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, p. 30).

Similarly, Cochran-Smith’s (1991) analysis of two student-teaching program designs explores the effectiveness of these commonly used approaches to preparing teachers to “teach against the grain”. The first type of program employs strategies that create *critical dissonance* and aim to create incongruity between university-based constructions of teacher and learning to what the teachers know and learn about in their placement schools. These programs define the problem of student teaching “as its tendency to bolster utilitarian perspectives on teaching and ultimately to perpetuate existing instructional and institutional practices” (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 281). Thus, these programs often emphasize the development of critical perspectives through explicit confrontation of issues of race, class, power, labor and gender through many of the critical reflection practices mentioned in previous sections of this review.

The second type of program is that of *collaborative resonance*, which aim to link what student teachers learn in their university-based experiences with their school-based student teaching experiences. They locate the problem of student teaching “as its failure to provide student teachers with not only the analytical skills need to critique standard procedures and connect theory and practice, but also resources needed to function as reforming teachers” (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 283). These programs require student
teachers to take a more inquiry-based approach to their placements. Students and teachers ask questions about cultures of teaching and learning and student teachers research their own practice to develop more expertise and begin to question taken-for-granted education policies.

Transforming teacher education programs through some of the strategies suggested by Cochran-Smith (1991) and Villegas and Lucas (2002) helps to address some issues that teachers experience as they attempt to take what they have learned back into their K-12 classrooms. Transforming teacher education in this way may encourage pre-service teachers to adopt situated pedagogies that more explicitly address issues of race, class, and gender and create more culturally congruent teaching and learning environments for culturally diverse students (Ladson-Billings, 2000).

Challenges to Incorporating Multiculturalism in Teacher Education Programs

Currently, the majority of teacher education programs report that they have incorporated multicultural education components into their curriculum. However, critical analysis of the existing multicultural education-focused teacher education programs and courses leave critics consistently concluding that little has changed. Researchers engaging in these critical analyses of teacher education programs utilize various frameworks and models of multicultural education such as McLaren’s and Webster’s three theoretical frameworks of multiculturalism (conservative, liberal and critical), Grant and Sleeter’s five approaches for multicultural education (teaching the exceptional
and the culturally different, human relations, single-group studies, multicultural education, and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist), and Banks’ four models of multicultural curriculum and pedagogy (contributions, additive, transformative and social action) to guide their work (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001).

For example, through the content analysis of forty-five syllabi from multicultural education courses, Gorski (2009) attempted to unearth “the ways in which multicultural education is conceptualized in course descriptions, course goals, course objectives, and other conceptual descriptive text” (p. 311). His findings showed that most of the syllabi focused on preparing teachers with cultural sensitivity, tolerance, and multicultural competence but did little to prepare teachers to identify or eliminate educational inequities through the creation of equitable learning environments. These findings were consistent with previous multicultural teacher education scholarship that analyzed the degree of “critical-ness” within various conceptualizations and enactments of multicultural teacher education programs and practices at the beginning of the twenty-first century (e.g. Cochran-Smith, 2003a, 2003b; Gay, 2005; Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

In a follow-up study, Gorski (2010) surveyed 220 multicultural teacher educators on the instructional resources (i.e. books, Web sites, films, conferences, etc) they found influential in the development of their multicultural teacher education philosophies and practices. Findings from this study provided two key insights: 1) multicultural teacher education is influenced by a range of philosophical and theoretical frameworks, including those consistent with more “critical” approaches to multicultural education; and 2) literature centering race and racism is, generally speaking, more influential to the
philosophy and practice of multicultural teacher education than that centering other identities and oppressions (Gorski, 2010, p. 14). This, according to Gorski (2010), provides support for further explorations of the sociopolitical contexts:

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is that, despite speculation otherwise, MTE practitioners do, in fact, engage with critical theoretical and philosophical materials. This, along with similar evidence from previous scholarship (Gordon, 2005; Sleeter, 2008), suggests that the “problem” of the theory-practice inconsistencies might not be located so much in a lack of critical consciousness among MTE practitioners as in the contexts in which they are attempting to deliver MTE. (p. 17)

As Gorski’s (2010) quote suggests, the easy and often-used explanation for the lack of “critical-ness” within multicultural teacher education is commonly rooted in lack of critical consciousness among the teacher educators themselves. While this may be true for some multicultural teacher educators, recent research highlight additional contextual factors such as: the increasingly political nature of teacher education created by competing constituencies presenting (often oppositional) approaches to teacher education reform and the predominance of a White, middle-class, suburban culture among pre-service teachers and teacher educators (Cochran-Smith, 2000, 2003a; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Gay, 2005; Gorski, 2010). The increasingly politically and racially-charged environments in which teacher educators work present a variety of potential challenges to the development and implementation of critical multicultural teacher education courses and curriculum.

**Competing Teacher Education Reform Agendas**

Rising out of general public dissatisfaction with schools, concerns about traditional university-based teacher education programs causes some to question the
ability of such programs to prepare teachers for the pressures and demands of the classroom (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Zeichner, 2003). Additionally, voices from within the teaching and teacher education professions call for a restructuring of traditional teacher education to create a stronger knowledge base, strengthen connections between theory and practice and increase programs’ capacities to support the development of powerful pedagogical practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 166). Currently, three dominant agendas, professionalization, deregulation and social justice are shaping ideological debates about and within traditional university-based teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2003).

**The professionalization agenda.** The professionalization agenda, manifesting through reports and mandated policies from state and national agencies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (NCATF), aims to raise teaching as a profession “through the articulation of a knowledge base for teaching based on educational research and professional judgment” (Zeichner, 2003, p. 498). Advocates of the professionalization agenda argue that the persistent inequities and injustices in education can be remedied through raising standards for teacher education and by greater investment in teaching and public schools (Ball & Forzani, 2009). However, critiques of this approach point to the adverse effect the increase of standards, overemphasis of academic criteria, and potential implicit cultural bias of performance assessments has had on the diversity of the pool of teacher education candidates (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Zeichner, 2003).
The deregulation agenda. A second dominant agenda, deregulation, is often presented in direct opposition to professionalization. Promoted by corporate foundations such as the Fordham, Abell and Gates Foundations among other conservative think tanks, the deregulation agenda is linked to the larger neoliberal and neoconservative agendas to privatize and deregulate K-12 schooling (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Lipman, year). Prioritizing subject-matter knowledge and communication skills proponents of the deregulation agenda seek to break the monopoly of university-based programs through three alternative certification options: “missionary” programs such as Teach for America (TFA), private for-profit alternatives offered by organizations such as Sylvan Learning and Edison and school-based alternative routes in which districts prepare their own teachers (Zeichner, 2003). Critiques of this approach acknowledge the importance of strong subject-matter knowledge. However the deregulation movement is often criticized for the lack of critical analysis of the impact of alternative certification routes such as TFA that often place enthusiastic but underqualified educators in environments with the greatest need (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The social justice agenda. The third of the major teacher education agendas is the social justice agenda. Encouraged by work that centers efforts to prepare teachers for cultural diversity coming out of organizations such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) and the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME). With roots in the social reconstructionist tradition of American education reform, advocates of the social justice agenda “view schooling and teacher education as crucial elements in the making of a more just society” and draw attention to research on culturally relevant and
responsive pedagogical practices that support the need for attention to both teacher attributes and instructional strategies associated with the development of practices for use with students across racial, cultural, and linguistic lines of difference (Zeichner, 2003, p. 507).

While this both/and approach addresses issues of cultural mismatch overlooked by the professionalization and deregulation agendas, a major limitation is the lack of diversity within the teacher educator workforce. Considering that the demographic data of university-based teacher educators mirrors that of the K-12 teacher workforce in that they are predominantly White, female and from middle-class suburban environments and have limited teaching experience with culturally, linguistically and socio-economically diverse students, many teacher education programs do not have the capacity to adequately meet the standards of the social justice agenda (Ladson-Billing, 2005; Zeichner, 2003). Additionally, the social justice movement often finds itself under fire for overemphasizing the classroom-level changes aimed at transforming the beliefs and practices of White teacher candidates without giving enough attention to the broader structural issues that shape the fields of teaching and teacher education (e.g. recruitment and retention, program approval and accreditation, licensure, etc.), which the professionalization and deregulation agendas explicitly address (Zeichner, 2003).

**The Demographic Imperative Revisited**

As previously mentioned, the teacher workforce has remained predominantly White, female, middle-class, English-speaking, and from suburban areas, a trend that is projected to continue for a long time coming based on current enrollment demographic
data. Unsurprisingly, a growing subfield of multicultural teacher education focuses on the tensions that arise when engaging White pre-service educators in multicultural teacher education courses and programs. Acknowledging the reality that historical and current cultures of schooling are rooted in the dominant norms of White, patriarchal, middle-class norms multicultural education research notes the tendency for White teachers to enter multicultural teacher education/professional development spaces with dispositions shaped by dominant discourses such as the “difference as deficit” ideology discussed earlier and the false narrative of meritocracy, or the belief that all one needs to do is work hard and remain dedicated in order to succeed (Gorski, 2010).

Internalization of these dominant discourses make it difficult for White educators to acknowledge their own privilege and/or identify and accept examples of inequities and social injustices as being rooted in racism, classism, sexism, etc. When these views are challenged by multicultural teacher educators a common response is that of participant resistance and hostility (Garmon, 2004; Gorski, 2010; Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001; Ukpokodu, 2002). In response, some multicultural teacher educators may begin to adjust their instructional practices, operationalizing an enactment of a less critical multicultural education that caters to the emotional safety of the White students in their classrooms (Jenks, Lee & Kanpol, 2001; Juárez & Hayes, 2008).

Adding a layer to this conversation, multicultural education scholars are beginning to note the lack of racially and culturally diverse teacher educators or those with direct experience successfully teaching diverse student populations (Gay, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). For example, Ladson-Billings (2005) argues that an unbroken chain has been formed and sustained as:
Our teacher education programs are filled with White, middle-class, monolingual female students who will have the responsibility of teaching in school communities serving students who are culturally, linguistically, ethnically, racially, and economically different from them...However, much of the literature on diversity is silent on cultural homogeneity of the teacher education faculty. Teacher educators are overwhelmingly White (Grant & Gillette, 1987) and their positions as college and university-level faculty place them much farther away from the realities of urban classrooms and communities serving students and families of color. (p. 230).

Therefore, even within teacher education programs proclaiming to provide critical multicultural teacher education courses and instruction there may less internal demand and accountability to fully adequately come through on their commitments.

The overwhelming presence of “whiteness” (and in many institutions, “maleness”) among teacher educators can create work environments in which critical multicultural teacher educators feel unsupported in their efforts to prepare teachers to adequately serve the diverse students filling many of America’s classrooms. These teacher educators are often the sole, or one of a few, advocate in which they must simultaneously carry the entire load of courses dealing with issues of equity and diversity and representing the face of diversity in higher education and becoming the primary support for racially, linguistically and culturally diverse students within the program. With such a heavy load to bare and little support and effort from colleagues the work of creating the type of critical multicultural education experiences for pre-service teachers can become difficult (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Further exploration of the experiences of teacher educators attempting to enact various forms of multicultural teacher education can help to provide further support for the importance of diversifying the teacher educator workforce as a necessary step in the process of closing the previously discussed gap between multicultural teacher education philosophy and practice.
Innovative Practices in the Preparation of Teachers for Diverse Student Populations

The changing demographic and political landscape of education has created a challenging, and often divisive, environment within which teacher educators are expected to do their work. For those whose work is aimed at preparing teachers to teach for equity and social justice the formal (university-based) teacher education space can seem particularly tense amidst debates concerning “the place and character of ethnic, racial, social, cultural and linguistic diversity in teacher education” (Gay, 2005, p. 221). However, out of these competing discourses and agendas advocates for change and the dismantling of the status quo shift the framing of these debates from “politics/discourses of division” to “politics/discourses of hope and opportunity” presenting research that highlights the innovative work some teacher educators are doing challenge dominant discourses and beliefs about teaching culturally diverse students, particularly those in urban and/or low-income areas (Gay, 2005; Nieto, 2005).

Popular Cultural Artifacts as Critical Texts

Beliefs about processes of teaching and learning are often formed based on one’s own lived experiences. Research shows the tendency for pre-service teachers to turn to popular culture to assist in filling cultural knowledge gaps when faced with the racial and cultural differences between themselves and their students (Gay, 2000; Grant, 2002; Porfilio & Malott, 2011; Seale-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). In this regard, popular culture artifacts (film, music, television, etc.) become “critical texts” through which to examine
how America’s beliefs about culturally diverse groups are simultaneously reflected in and shaped by popular visual images (Grant, 2002).

Focusing primarily on the narratives and images created concerning Black males in particular, Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2015) document their use of popular films and documentaries about teachers working with urban youth of color to help pre-service teachers in their respective teacher education courses. Viewing films that depict and discuss race and teaching (i.e. Boyz N the Hood, Dangerous Minds, Freedom Writers and the documentary Beyond the Bricks) to analyze how they influenced teacher candidates’ views of Black male youth, the authors analyzed data collected from classroom observations, pre-service teachers’ journal entries and verbatim comments made in Greene’s course and coded survey data completed during a documentary film series shown during Sealey-Ruiz’s course. Findings supported previous research showing that popular film images have a huge impact on the ways in which preservice teachers interact with and think about students of color. Consistent portrayal of Black male youth as out-of-control gangsters cemented negative images into the teacher candidates’ minds resulting in framing students in similar environments as dangerous and support of existing school policies that often result in damaging outcomes for Black urban youth (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015).

Left to decipher popular visual images on their own, cultural outsiders often misread and misinterpret them, unintentionally reifying stereotypes and deficit-based conceptualizations of various racial and cultural groups (Grant, 2002; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015). Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2015) place the onus on teacher education
programs to facilitate the process of critical dialogue and reflection on the images and narratives presented in popular culture films, music, art, television, and the media stating:

When preservice teachers are allowed to remain uninformed about the cultures of their future students, and the role of race and racism is not discussed constructively in preservice courses, teacher education programs become complicit in producing another generation of teachers who fail to recognize how stereotypes fuel their “understanding” of students of color in general... (p. 57)

Therefore, Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2015) call for the creation of spaces within teacher education in which teacher candidates can engage in critical dialogue about the impacts of “socially constructed, media-driven images” of students of color in the development of racial literacy. Defined as “a skill and practice in which individuals are able to discuss the social construction of race, probe the existence of racism and examine the harmful effects of racial stereotypes (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015, p. 60) racial literacy is a key component in constructive dialogue about race and the development of anti-racist actions in schools.

Providing a model of how to utilize popular cultural artifacts as tools to facilitate critical dialogue and reflection with educators, Porfilio and Malott (2011) documented their use of countercultural formations (focusing primarily on hip-hop and punk rock) in a course with predominantly White pre-service teachers. Deep explorations of socio-political conditions out of which countercultures such as hip-hop and punk rock formed helped Porfilio and Malott’s (2011) students identify damaging practices and discourses that vilify and place blame on culturally diverse populations, particularly those in low-income and urban areas, for the persistent gaps in educational and economic success. Infusion of hip-hop and rock song lyrics into their course on current issues and trends in education opened a space for critical dialogue about the ways in which “alternative
cultural formations” (p. 76) can be utilized to transform teachers’ practice. Similar to findings Sealey-Ruiz and Greene’s (2015) study as well as previously discussed CHHP literature (e.g. Akom, 2009; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Williams, 2009), centering these non-traditional texts encourage pre-service teachers to look beyond the lyrics and see how “the larger macro-level economic and social forces impact developments in schools, in other social contexts, and in their own lived worlds” (Porfilio & Malott, 2011, p. 67).

**Teacher Education and HHBE**

Little work exists on the specific methods and approaches aimed at the preparation of teachers to incorporate hip-hop cultural aesthetics into their pedagogical practices. In preparing this literature review only two studies surfaced with the specific aim of analyzing teacher preparation for the enactment of HHBE/CHHP and both were done under the same lead researchers and outside of formal university-based teacher education spaces (Irby & Hall, 2010; Irby, Hall, & Hill, 2013). However, building on concepts covered in other threads of critical multicultural teacher education scholarship, a few existing studies bring attention to the benefits of incorporating HHBE/CHHP into the teacher education environment. This scholarship points to the ways in which processes of critical reflection and analysis associated with hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics can: 1) challenge previously held perceptions and assumptions about culturally diverse students, particularly those living in urban areas where hip-hop may resonate more heavily with the lived experiences of students and 2) assist educators in bridging
differences in cultural frames of reference and work more effectively with culturally
diverse students (Akom, 2009; Bridges, 2011; Hanley, 2007; Irizarry, 2009).

Hanley (2007) documents the ways in which engaging teachers in a workshop on
integrating musical forms found in the communities of the schools in which they teach
into their curriculum and instructional practices challenged previously held perceptions
and assumptions about the various art forms, particularly hip-hop. Through the course of
the workshop teachers worked with hip-hop artists to create and perform their own hip-
hop rhymes and poetry. Throughout the creative process teachers were forced to critically
reflect on their assumptions about rap/hip-hop, questioning their perceptions about the
students they teach. As they gained deeper understanding of the creative processes,
literacy skills and overall command of language, rhythm, rhyme and complex concepts
necessary in the production and performance of hip-hop rhymes, many of the teachers’
perceptions transformed, recognizing their students as creative intellectuals (Hanley,
2007).

Similar to Hanley’s (2007) workshop, Akom (2009) documents the development
and application of a project to employ a CHHP framework for use within a course
designed to help prospective teachers re-examine their previously held beliefs and
assumptions about hip-hop and its intersections with race, gender, sexuality, etc. to
critically examine their previously-held beliefs and assumptions. Using Freire’s (1970)
problem-posing methodology for critical praxis (See Figure 2 on page 10) as a guide
Akom and his co-facilitators in a popular course offered through the Africana Studies
program, engaged their students in two activities that explored hip-hop’s potential as a
social justice tool and required teachers to identify and name societal and systemic issues
that impact students of color and/or those living in low-income urban areas (Akom, 2009).

The first activity in Akom’s (2009) course consisted of a series of town hall style interviews, performances and debates featuring prominent figures in hip-hop students called *Inside The Hip Hop Studio*. The dialogue created through this series raised students’ awareness of vital concerns of the hip-hop generation while simultaneously challenging their preconceived assumptions about various axes of social difference. The second activity was an asset-based community case study in which students were placed into learning communities consisting of no more than five members and applied the five steps of Freire’s (1970) problem-posing method to use hip-hop to educate the general public on a social and local community issue. The aim of the case study activity were two-fold: 1) provide students with an opportunity to use hip-hop culture to hold a mirror to society and 2) to identify relations among problems, and to re-imagine them into new strategies (Akom, 2009, p. 62).

The activities in Akom’s (2009) course provides an example of how the dialogic, problem-posing components of the CHHP framework can be used to facilitate learning experiences that both challenge prospective teachers’ tacit assumptions about culturally diverse students and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement with the communities in which they work. However, although Akom (2009) states the course was designed for prospective teachers, it’s offering through the Ethnic Studies Department’s Africana Studies program places it outside of the formal teacher education space and there is no attention given to how prospective teachers took up the newly acquired hip-
hop based knowledge and problem-posing skills to reflect on and/or transform their own pedagogical practices.

As previously mentioned, only one study exists to my knowledge that specifically explores the preparation and development of teacher educators seeking to enact CHHP within their classrooms. Noting the increasing interest in gaining a deeper understanding of how to develop and enact critical hip-hop based education, Irby, Hall and Hill (2013) engaged in a collaborative self-study of Irby’s four-workshop series on preparing hip-hop educators. Over the course of the workshop series, the researchers utilized open-ended reflections completed by the participants to inform and transform Irby’s practice so as to design the workshops to meet the specific needs of the teachers in the course. Using the surveys to help him better reflect on his own practice, Irby was able to more adequately address the diverse needs of the workshop participants who needed him to spend less time on justifying the need for and effectiveness of hip hop pedagogy and more opportunities to develop deeper understandings of hip-hop culture and their own identities and lived experiences in relationship to it through dialogue, modeling and critical reflection.

Although Irby, Hall and Hill’s (2013) study remains outside of the formal university-based teacher education setting, it adds a layer to the conversation on preparing White pre- and in-service educators for critical and culturally relevant pedagogy. Some researchers find the overrepresentation of White teacher candidates as resistant and/or deficient learners about issues of diversity in multicultural teacher education has led to a similar homogenized deficit-based discourse as that constructed about culturally and linguistically diverse students. White pre-service educators are often
conceptualized as passive empty vessels who bring little resources into the multicultural teacher education classroom (Lensmire & Snaza, 2010; Lowenstein, 2009).

As a result, some researchers suggest that if teacher educators expect teacher candidates to embrace and enact conceptualizations of culturally diverse students as active learners possessing useful funds of knowledge and resources for learning, then a parallel conception of teacher candidates is needed in multicultural teacher education classrooms (Lowenstein, 2009). Teacher education spaces must serve as models and communities of learning and support in which pre-service teachers can grapple with tensions concerning their perceptions of their own identities and how this relates to their feelings of efficacy in enacting such culturally-specific work as CHHP.

Conclusion

This literature review traced the evolution of the field of HHBE and pedagogical components through the development of hip hop based practices and current focus on the newly arising thread of critical hip-hop pedagogy (CHHP) and emphasis on teaching with hip-hop cultural aesthetics as opposed to hip-hop products. It also briefly looked at the demographic and political landscape of teacher education and the potential challenges facing teacher educators whose work is aimed at the development of critical multicultural teacher educators. Finally, studies showcasing the innovative and exciting work of teacher educators who have found the politically charged and conflicted landscape of teacher education a fertile space for the development of new approaches for the preparation of teachers for a changing world.
From this review, it is clear that CHHP’s roots in both hip-hop culture and critical culturally relevant pedagogies calls attention to *process over product* through its emphasis on critical dialogue and reflection. Specifically, the literature reviewed points to the asset-based discourses and culturally responsive classroom environments that are created in the centering of students’ culturally-defined ways of knowing and being in the world. Additionally, this literature review highlights the need for the enactment of similar critical and culturally relevant approaches within formal university-based programs in order to adequately support and prepare pre- and in-service teachers to develop practices that disrupt traditional approaches and narratives that often denigrate certain cultural differences as deficits.

After reviewing literature surrounding hip-hop culture, multicultural teacher education and the challenges facing teacher educators whose work is situated in the culturally-defined experiences of students on the margins of society, it is apparent that more research is needed on how teacher educators of CHHP conceptualize and make space for their work within the formal teacher education space. Moreover, research is needed that explores the ways in which teachers negotiate newly acquired cultural content knowledge, in this case hip-hop cultural content knowledge, and begin to identify its potential in the process of creating effective, culturally responsive instructional practices for use with their students. This study examines the pedagogical components of a university-based course designed for the preparation and development of educators to enact CHHP to gain more insight into the processes of teaching and learning enacted and experienced in spaces rooted in non-traditional social norms and cultural frames of reference.
The purpose of this case study of one teacher educator who prepares and develops teachers to enact critical hip-hop pedagogy (CHHP) is to examine the ways in which this work is situated, conceptualized and taken up within formal university-based teacher education courses and programs. I sought to understand the ways in which this teacher educator who teaches toward the enactment of CHHP carves out and designs spaces for his work within the socio-political landscape of teacher education as well as how the pre-service teachers enrolled experienced this CHHP-based course. To that end, this inquiry addressed the following questions:

1. How does one critical hip-hop teacher educator situate his work within the current political and demographic landscape of the university-based teacher education space?

2. What are the pedagogical moves enacted by one university-based teacher educator committed to the preparation of pre- and in-service teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural practices, artifacts and aesthetics toward critical educational ends?

3. How do pre- and in-service teachers conceptualize and interpret the key dilemmas/core issues that inform CHHP-rooted practices within a university-based course aimed specifically at preparing teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural elements and aesthetics toward critical educational ends?

4. How do pre-service teachers enrolled in a university-based course grounded in principles and tenets of CHHP negotiate and navigate
potentially conflicting messages at the intersection of diversity, social justice, and education that are shaped by and shaping current discourses concerning what teachers should know and be able to do?

Principles of transformative activist stance (TAS) guided the conceptualization of data collection and analysis of this study. Building on Vygotsky’s cultural-historical activity theory, TAS combines the social justice-oriented goals of existing critical and emancipatory approaches aimed at the creation of equitable futures for historically marginalized populations with a politically non-neutral, transformative agenda for educational research. TAS-based research requires that human beings are viewed as active agents in the creation and transformation of their current and future social worlds such that “researchers and participants act as collaborative change agents, or activists, rather than observers or interpreters of reality” (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d., p. 587). Pulling from a variety of data sources including interviews, observations, and participant produced reflective artifacts and researcher reflection this study aims to present a co-generated vision of what teacher education for CHHP is and ought to be within the socio-political landscape of one university-based program.

This chapter begins with a brief overview of the case study design, including discussion of the researcher’s positionality and commitments as explicit exploration of these elements is central to research with a transformative activist framing (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d.). Next, I describe the proposed research context and participants followed by details of the data collection and analysis process. Finally, the chapter ends with ethical considerations and potential limitations of the study.
Overview of the Research Design

To explore the conceptualization, enactment and uptake of teacher education for CHHP in a university-based teacher education course and program, this study employed a single-case study design of a university-based CHHP teacher education course focusing on two embedded units, the teacher educator and the enrolled pre-service teachers. This design is appropriate for this study as it allows for simultaneous explorations of how teacher education for CHHP was enacted by one teacher educator within a university-based course/program as well as how enrolled pre-service teachers experienced and interpreted it (See Figure 1) (Yin, 2014). In this regard, utilizing a case study design allows for a dialogue between the culturally, socially, and politically-defined perspectives, experiences and visions of the teacher educator and enrolled pre-service teachers of focus (Yin, 2014). This dialogic approach to data collection and analysis (to be explored in greater detail below) encourages the interrogation of the strengths and contradicting socio-historical positions and commitments of each individual participant that is simultaneously shaping and shaped by the collective experiences of the CHHP teacher education course.

Context: University-based teacher education program
Case: CHHP Teacher Education course
Embedded Unit of Analysis:
TE: Teacher Educator
ES: Enrolled Student

Figure 4. Enactment and Uptake of Teacher Education for CHHP (adapted from Allen, 2015)
As previously stated, I used several data-collection techniques (course observations, individual interviews, and reflective activities with enrolled students). In line with a transformative activist stance, the dialectical fusion of the individual and the social, or the “collectivindual practice” (Stetsenko, 2013; Vianna, Hougaard & Stetsenko, 2014) is at the forefront of this study. Therefore, the selected data collection techniques were chosen because they provided multiple opportunities for participants to individually and collectively explore their unique socio-political positions (standpoints) and commitments (endpoints) that were simultaneously shaping and shaped by their perceptions of and experiences within the CHHP teacher education course.

TAS research claims that our socio-historical/political positions and commitments shape individuals’ beliefs and actions, including the ways in which one conducts, reads and interprets research (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d.). Therefore, I find this an appropriate point to discuss my own positionality as it guides the development of the subsequent data collection and analysis methods.

**Researcher Positionality**

Tenets of CHHP frame my assumptions in relation to the production and acquisition of knowledge. Proponents of CHHP find that it is less about giving voice to historically marginalized groups, but co-creating authentic structures and spaces with students that value and prioritize their culturally-specific ways of knowing and being in the world while simultaneously exposing and dismantling oppressive power dynamics and social structures. Conceptualizations of transformative activist-based approaches to
research closely align to my feelings and beliefs about the process and purpose of social science research.

In my first semester as a doctoral student, I was given an assignment in which I was to interview a scholar in the field of education. As my last question I asked my chosen scholar if she had any final words of wisdom to guide me in the rest of my doctoral journey. Her response was a reminder that the biggest shift in pursuing a doctoral degree is that “you go from being a consumer of knowledge to being a producer of knowledge.” Therefore, her first piece of advice was to remain aware of the power that lies within the knowledge production process, explaining that although you may not appear to be in the “front lines of the revolution,” the research we do as scholars and researchers impacts people, and it is important to make sure that we produce knowledge that “focuses on differences instead of deficits” and will expose a narrative that will one day improve other people’s lives. It is this reminder of the privilege and power given to those of us who take on the role of “researcher” that guides the collaborative, reflexive, asset-based, equity and social justice-oriented approach to this study and all of my future endeavors as a researcher and scholar.

In reflecting on my own experiences as both a student and a teacher, I recognize the strong role that culture and voice play in the formation of perspectives of schooling and teaching. As such, it is part of my mission in doing this research to contribute to a shift within the field of education that places a greater value on the unique culturally-specific ways of seeing, knowing and being in the world embodied by racially, linguistically, socio-economically and culturally diverse students. The prevalence of deficit-based frameworks within research concerning the culturally, racially,
linguistically and socio-economically diverse students, particularly Black and Latino students living in low-income urban areas, speaks to the ways in which practices of cultural participation employed by those unwilling and/or unable to “fit” within the norm are misunderstood and denigrated within the school system.

As an African American woman I have spent a lot of time reflecting on my own educational experiences and note many instances that, had my parents not understood the education system and had the financial, cultural and social capital to advocate for and guide me through, may have resulted in limited access to some of the educational and social opportunities I have experienced in my lifetime. Thus, in conceptualizing and designing this study I am careful to make sure that I remain aware of the biases and assumptions that I bring with me from my own middle-class upbringing and past experiences teaching within a population similar to those who are often the target population for critical multicultural and culturally relevant practices such as CHHP.

I find that constant critical reflection and dialogue are crucial elements in the process of identifying and naming inherent biases and assumptions that may be impacting the work that we do, be it teaching or research. Thus, at each stage throughout this study I turn to the use of my researcher reflective journal (described in greater detail in the data analysis section of this chapter) as well as critical dialogue with my dissertation committee members, critical friends within both the hip-hop and academic communities and family members who have strong memories of my own educational experiences and culturally-defined upbringing to push me in the processes of data collection, analysis, and most importantly, interpretation/presentation.
Context of the Study

This study explores how teacher educators whose work is aimed at the preparation and development of teachers enact CHHP in their instructional practices. For the purposes of this study I define “university-based teacher education courses/or programs” as those meeting the following criteria:

- The aim of the course and/or program is to equip teachers with the knowledge, skills, behaviors and dispositions necessary to effectively perform the tasks required of a classroom teacher.
- The course and/or program is offered through a school or academic department of education.
- Completion of the course and/or program in which the course is part of a list of requirements or optional electives toward the earning of a degree and/or certification to become a K-12 teacher.

Similarly, a university-based CHHP teacher education (CHHPTE) course/program would not only aim to provide pre- and in-service teachers with the theoretical tenets and educational/instructional components of CHHP, but would provide insight and experience in the development of instructional practices incorporating these tenets and components into their own pedagogical practices.

In my preparation for this study during a preliminary search for participants, it became clear that while a number of teacher educators have offered similar courses, the majority of them are either not currently teaching within a university-based program or did not qualify for full participation in the classroom observation portion of the study as aspects of their current courses do not fit all of the criteria listed above. At the time of the
submission for the proposal of this study only one teacher education course met the full requirement for course observation and engagement with select focal students.

The initial conceptualization of this study was to have multiple CHHP teacher educators to observe and/or interview to help to analyze the various ways in which CHHPTE might be situated and manifested within university-based programs. However, understanding that this is a developing field that is just beginning to reach into the teacher education space, I realized it would be difficult to find participants that met all of the criteria and are available during the time frame of the study. After mulling over the feasibility of the study related to issues of time, resources, and access, I shifted the study from a broader overview of a few teacher educators to a more in-depth case study of one teacher educator, his course and the experiences and interpretations of selected students within that course. The opportunity to spend an entire semester working closely with members of one course rather than presenting brief snapshots of multiple courses provided fruitful data through which to begin a dialogue around the key socio-political issues that informed this study.

The Graduate School of Education

The focal course of this study takes place each Spring semester in the graduate school of education at a private university on the East Coast of the United States. The college of education aims to attract, recruit and retain a diverse student body in their support and development of individuals’ potential contributions to education, health, psychology and leadership. However, the majority of the students and faculty remain predominantly White, and the focal course of this study is taught by one of a few Black
male faculty members at the university. In 2014, a student-produced list of course offerings on race, ethnicity and inter-cultural understandings was released to assist those seeking to structure their studies around issues of equity, social justice and diversity as a response to the growing tension surrounding the shooting and mass incarceration of predominantly urban Black and Latino men and women. While it is possible to search for this list, it is not readily accessible or visible in the college’s online course catalog or registration portal and at the time of the writing of this dissertation is only prominently linked on one program’s page of courses. Therefore, while the college is proving to make efforts to respond to the needs and desires of students in a changing world, it is still possible for issues of diversity, equity and social justice to remain on the margins of students’ studies.

The Teacher Education Programs

Aligning with the college’s commitment to the development of innovative leaders/practitioners and effective service to both urban and suburban communities, the teacher education programs are framed by a philosophy rooted in inquiry, curriculum and social justice. The institution’s pre-service teacher education program design meets accreditation standards set forth by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), which also encompass those of the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). In addition, through the development and implementation of standards specific to the vision and mission of the college, most of the pre-service programs involve an integration of content, pedagogy, methods courses
and multiple intensive student teaching experiences to provide a dynamic and intricate exploration of the teaching profession.

In addition to the programs specifically designed for pre-service educators there are more than twenty programs under the category of “Teacher Education and Teacher Certification”. These programs are open to in-service teachers and educational practitioners seeking graduate level degrees and/or certification in specialized areas. Inherent within the language of the mission statements of these programs is an emphasis on developing educators who are prepared to work with diverse student populations. Words and phrases such as “culturally significant”, “personally relevant”, “individual/individualized”, “driven by the needs of students” appear in a large portion of the program and course descriptions, suggesting that many are informed by student-centered, and potentially, culturally relevant approaches to instruction.

**Focal Course**

The online course catalog briefly and succinctly describes the focal course of this study entitled, “Hip Hop and the Cultural Studies of Urban Science Education” as “a means to interrogate the teaching and learning of science in urban settings through an exploration of the sociopolitical and aesthetic aspects of hip-hop/youth culture.” Expanding on this description, the most recently used course syllabus highlights findings in contemporary educational research that discuss the impacts of social and economic inequities on the educational experiences of students living in low-income urban areas. As previously discussed in chapters one and two, limited access to necessary resources and opportunities combined with standardized instructional, assessment and disciplinary
practices rooted in White, middle-class societal norms often leave those unable or unwilling to “fit” labeled as deficient, delinquent and/or alienated within schools and other social structures (i.e. the criminal justice system). According to this syllabus, the course is intended to provide enrolled students with an opportunity to explore how hip-hop has and continues to serve as a space of solace and belonging for those made to feel as though they do not belong and how its various components, artifacts and aesthetics can be used to develop transformational instructional practices.

Data Sources

The table below shows how each data source was used to answer each of the research questions that frame and guide this study.

Table 1: Research Questions and Their Data Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Instructional Materials/Resources</th>
<th>Participant Word Clouds (Enrolled Students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does one critical hip-hop teacher educator situate his work within the current political and demographic landscape of the university-based teacher education space?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the pedagogical moves enacted by one university-based teacher educator committed to the preparation of pre-service teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural practices, artifacts and aesthetics toward critical educational ends?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do pre-service teachers conceptualize and interpret the key dilemmas/core issues that inform CHHP-rooted practices within a university-based course aimed specifically at preparing teachers to utilize hip-hop cultural elements and aesthetics toward critical educational ends?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do pre-service teachers enrolled in a university-based course grounded in principles and tenets of CHHP negotiate and navigate potentially conflicting messages at the intersection of diversity, social justice, and education that are shaped by and shaping current discourses concerning what teachers should know and be able to do?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants

As previously mentioned, the initial conceptualization of this study included two to three teacher educators whose work is aimed at the preparation of educators to enact CHHP and enrolled students who are participating in a pre-service teacher education program within the university who will help to provide insight into the ways in which the work is experienced and interpreted by those entering the teaching profession. However, during the writing of the proposal of this study, I began looking into potential available and willing teacher educators and quickly realized that the pool was dramatically smaller once the specific criteria for the specific context of this study were applied.

Teacher Educator

Given that this study is concerned with the ways in which CHHP is situated, conceptualized, enacted and interpreted within the university-based teacher education space, a criterion sampling (Creswell, 2007) approach was used to assess the feasibility of finding eligible CHHP teacher educators. I was worried about finding participants as research for the literature review returned very few studies specifically focused on the preparation of teachers to enact CHHP. After speaking with my sponsor and second dissertation committee member (who is also a prominent contributor to the hip-hop education knowledge base and theoretical conceptualizations) Dr. Ray, who leads the focal course described above, remained at the top of the list of people to consider or at the very least talk to.

As previously mentioned, Dr. Ray, is one of a few Black male professors on campus. A majority of his work is rooted in the tenets of CHHP, clearly pulling from his
own K-12 educational experiences in urban public schools and as a Black male and self-identified member of the hip-hop community. Additionally, his work often includes critical reflections of the lessons he learned transitioning into his role as a teacher and then subsequent experiences preparing predominantly White educators in how to more effectively engage with the culturally diverse students in their classrooms through deeper understandings of their out-of-school lived realities and culturally-specific processes of knowledge production and consumption.

After a brief discussion with my sponsor about my research interests, Dr. Ray and I sat down to discuss the particulars of my study. I presented him with a brief abstract of the proposed study and he agreed to participate in any way possible. He also offered the names of five other potential participants. A quick search and review of their web sites and/or bios revealed that only two of the five met both of the criteria required for consideration in participation in this study: (1) teacher educator for the enactment of CHHP, (2) teaching in a university-based teacher education program and/or school of education.

Both of the two other teacher educators are prominent members of the hip-hop education community, well-known for their contributions to the development of the field. I sent an email to both participants briefly explaining the overall aims of the study and providing the same abstract that was presented to Dr. Ray. One of the teacher educators responded within a week stating that he would be willing to participate in the interview portion of the study, but the course he was teaching during the proposed data collection period did not meet the criteria for observation as it was not as heavily focused on CHHP as some of his previous courses and may not provide the type of insight I sought to gain.
At the time of the submission of the proposal, the second professor had yet to respond and efforts to contact her via other modes of communication (i.e. Facebook and through mutual contacts) continued until the data collection officially began in the Spring semester. Ultimately, considering other factors that impacted the implementation of the study, focusing on one professor and his students enabled a deeper analysis and the type of hands-on collaborative research designs that coincide with a transformative activist stance.

**Enrolled Pre- and In-Service Teachers**

Enrolled pre- and in-service teachers were invited from the focal course to provide insight into the ways in which CHHP-rooted pedagogical practices are conceptualized, experienced and interpreted by those taking the course. The aim of this study was to understand how teachers seeking to enact these practices in K-12 settings and currently immersed in the discourses and practices of the formal teacher education space interpret and experience teacher education practices rooted in the tenets of CHHP. Utilizing a variation of the typical case purposive sampling strategy, all students who were enrolled and/or weekly attended the course and volunteered via the process described in the next section were selected. In doing so, I aimed to gain insight into the experiences of the “typical” student for which the course was designed.

Initially it was proposed that the study would only include pre-service teachers to explore their understandings of what teachers should know and be able to do in relationship to this course alongside their other teacher preparation courses and within the broader discourse of the larger teacher education conversation. However, per the
suggestion of the professor, my dissertation committee and critical friends I chose to include in-service teachers as well not initially intending to use the data collected in this study but to have for future analysis. As the collection and preliminary data analysis progressed I soon realized that to separate and exclude the experiences and interpretations of the in-service teachers would reduce the overall aims and intention of the course design itself. In particular, as explored in greater detail in Chapter IV, space to learn from others particularly those already in lead teaching roles or having already worked in schools and an emphasis on collaboration created space for in-service and pre-service teachers to speak across their lines of experience and learn from each other as much as they were learning with each other. Additionally, there were no other distinctions from the professor and TAs that created a divide between the two groups but rather an understanding that each individual, whether they had taught or not, came into the course with valuable perspectives and insights that could be useful as the community of learners worked together to grapple with the various topics, skills and concepts in relationship to each individual’s development as an educator.

Enrolled student recruitment process. Prior to the first observation of the course, I met with Dr. Ray and one of his teaching assistants in his office. They told me that they would give me time at the end of the class to make an announcement about the study and that I was looking for pre- and in-service teachers who would be willing to participate. Dr. Ray also suggested that I make a sign up sheet and allow students to place their names and contact information so that I could reach out to them with further information before they committed to doing the study. Each student was sent an email briefly introducing myself and describing the study as well as the enrolled student
consent form, which included another brief explanation of the study as well as
descriptions of what their participation in the study would look like.

**Enrolled student profiles.** Of the 19 people who signed up for and received an
e-mail, thirteen students ultimately participated in the study. The demographics of the
participating students breaks down as follows: seven pre-service teachers, six in-service
teachers, seven self-identified as White, five self-identified as Black/African American,
one self-identified racially as non-white of Middle-Eastern ethnicity, eleven identified as
female, and two identified as male. All but one of the participants attended K-12
schooling in the United States. The teaching experience among the in-service teachers
varied widely with most teaching all subjects in the elementary grades and two focusing
on a particular subject area with students in sixth-eighth grades. None of the participating
teachers had been teaching for less than three years, with the highest number of years in
the classroom being twenty. All of the in-service teachers had a history of teaching in
urban, predominantly Black and Latino schools, which for the four white teachers and
one of the Black teachers was drastically different than the racial makeup of their own K-
12 schooling.

Six out of the seven pre-service teachers were enrolled in the university’s
teaching residency program, which is an 18-month program in which students participate
in year-long field experiences in local partner schools along with summer institutes and
coursework specific to their specific certification program as well as regular attendance
of educational and community-based events both within the university community and
the communities of their students. After completion of the field work and coursework,
students pledge to teach in similar high-needs schools in the area. The program is guided
by the same three standards as the university’s pre-service program; inquiry, curriculum and social justice under a philosophy of inclusive education and with the aim of preparing beginning teachers with the necessary skills and mindsets to effectively teach all students. Developing a program rooted in the same three standards as the broader teacher education program also creates a sense of uniformity in language and approach throughout the various university programs. The seventh pre-service teacher was not in the residency program, but had participated in one of the other pre-service programs leading to certification.

The majority of the participating enrolled students attended public schools which they described as lacking in diversity, either being predominantly White or Black/African American depending on the demographics of the district where they attended school. In reflecting on their K-12 educational experiences a majority of the students acknowledged in looking back they can now recognize the Eurocentric models employed within their schools. This played a large role in the ways that the CHHP teacher education course was experienced and interpreted, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

All of the teachers had a relatively positive relationship with schools and education in general, with many of them citing this as a primary reason that they chose to enter the teaching profession. For some, such as in-service teachers Christy and Alicia and pre-service teacher Monica, teaching felt like a calling and a natural choice for their career choice. This was usually connected to positive experiences in and perceptions of education and schools and the roles/influences of close family members. Others, like pre-service teachers Skylar and in-service teacher Bethany, shifted to teaching after other
career paths proved to be a poor fit with their personal commitments, motivations and passions.

The journeys into teaching varied slightly between the participants, including an even split between the in-service teachers with three choosing to go to formal teacher education programs in universities and others entering the field through alternative routes such as Teach for America or similar programs outside of university settings. However, a unifying factor was that all of their decisions to enter the profession were deeply connected to their own experiences within educational institutions and their growing understandings of schools as one of the primary spaces of systemic oppression and marginalization of certain populations. Most of the enrolled teachers viewed teaching as a means through which they could make the kind of social changes they wished to see in the world. This focus on teaching for social justice and equity played a large role in the participating teachers’ decisions to join their particular programs, whose mission statements all contain social justice-oriented language, falling in line with the university-wide mission statement. Additionally, all of the participants expressed deep interest in better preparation to work with students of diverse backgrounds, particularly in relationship to working in urban schools serving predominantly Black and Latino populations as many of them sought to work in these traditionally under-served communities.

Similarly, their commitments to social justice and equity led many of the teachers to seek out courses specifically focused on creating more equitable and culturally relevant learning environments. This was particularly important to the in-service teachers, many of whom were already teaching in predominantly Black and Latino urban schools and
were looking for explicit models and tangible tools to take into their classrooms to make immediate changes to their instructional practices. Having come across the professor’s work in other courses, through recommendations from peers/colleagues or during their research on various teacher education institutions and programs, all of the enrolled teachers expressed being drawn to the professor’s approach to critical and culturally relevant education, which led to their participation in the CHHP teacher education course during the Spring 2017 semester.

**Data Collection Process**

Data for this case study was collected through semi-structured interviews (two for each participant, including the professor), classroom observations, informal chats, participant-produced reflective artifacts (pre- and in-service teachers only), and document analysis of instructional materials, student-produced artifacts and resources (i.e. syllabi, handouts, videos, songs, etc.). In order to centralize the socio-historical perspectives, experiences and meaning-making processes of the participants all interviews, observations, chats, and collaborative group discussions occurred when and where the participants’ felt most appropriate, convenient and comfortable. In this section, I lay out the processes of data collection, organization and analysis that employed in the execution of this study.

**Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews with Dr. Ray and participating students from his course were utilized as a method for understanding the emic perspectives on the issues at
the core of the study. As a data collection method, interviews were used to provide insight into the lived experiences that inform and shape the meaning making processes behind behaviors, ideological beliefs, communication patterns, social interactions, instructional practices etc. recorded from other data collection methods (Merriam, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

To create a collaborative, conversational, participant-centered atmosphere during the interviews I employed responsive interviewing (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) techniques. Responsive interviewing emphasizes the importance of trust between interviewer and interviewee and follows a conversational pattern. As such, questions are expected to evolve, change, and arise in response to what the participant says not anticipation of what they may say. Within this variety of qualitative interviewing, the interview protocol must remain flexible, such that the interviewer is able to adjust to the interviewee’s personality and responses. Each of the pre- and in-service teacher interviews covered the same four topics: educational background; journey into teaching and their vision for themselves as educators; motivations to enroll in their given programs and dominant messages about teaching they receive; and expectations, experiences and interpretations of the hip-hop teacher education course. However, the interview protocol included only a few questions in each topic to allow room for the participants to guide and shape the conversation.

This was also the case with interviewing the teacher educator, especially in recognizing that time outside of class was limited due to the high demand with which other students and school/community members had for his time. It became important to pull out the two or three questions that were the most important to hit and then really pull back and allow Dr. Ray’s responses to flow. Through the use of responsive interviewing
my role as researcher was to “gather narratives, descriptions, and interpretations from an
array of conversational partners and put them together in a reasoned way that re-creates a
culture or describes a process or set of events in a way that participants would recognize
as real” (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 7). To increase accuracy in the creation of the
narratives produced from these interviews all were audio-recorded and transcribed
verbatim.

**Teacher educator interviews.** I conducted two semi-structured, audio-taped
interviews with Dr. Ray to gain insight into how he conceptualizes CHHP to inform the
development of his practices for his work within the current political landscape of
university-based teacher education. Each interview took about 30 minutes due to his
schedule. Both times we met during his office hours and students from both of his classes
as well as some of his advisees occasionally walked in to ask questions or schedule other
times when they could meet with him individually. I was particularly struck by how Dr.
Ray managed to provide equal attention and responsiveness to myself and each student
that came in seamlessly shifting between his extremely detailed responses to my
questions and addressing the needs of the various students that entered. Held toward the
end of the data collection timeframe, Dr. Ray’s interviews were guided by observations
of instructional practices and interactions recorded in field notes from the course
observations and enrolled student interviews as well as the four tenets of CHHP. The aim
of these interviews was to gain further insight into the ways in which Dr. Ray’s socio-
historical position(s) and commitments shape and are shaped by his conceptualizations of
hip-hop culture, critical hip-hop pedagogy, and his approach to and experiences with the
work of preparing educators for the enactment of critical hip-hop pedagogy.
Enrolled teacher interviews. Enrolled teachers also participated in two individual interviews. As previously discussed, the interviews followed the same semi-structured responsive format as those with Dr. Ray and were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in presentation of the pre- and in-service teachers’ perspectives and experiences. In this regard, interviews enabled participants to expand on or clarify on comments and behaviors in the classroom observations as well as provide biographical history to give greater insight into their socio-historical positioning within dominant narratives of teaching and learning, socio-political motivations and commitments and experiences with interpretations of CHHP. Additionally, the second interview served as a useful space to explore questions based on themes that emerged from preliminary analysis across the various data sources in attempts to make deeper connections between participants and major concepts presented in existing literature.

Observations

One of the major questions of interest in this study is how the teacher educator of the CHHP course enacts his work in a university-based teacher education space. Classroom observations provided a first-hand experience of this work in the space(s) where it is naturally occurring. In this regard, participant observation can create a collaborative relationship, breaking down the barrier between researcher and participants as the researcher is able to document from within. This approach of learning/understanding by doing connects directly to elements of CHHP that prioritize active participation as a means of producing and acquiring knowledge (Akom, 2009).
Course session observations. Throughout the semester I attended eleven of the one hour and forty minutes long weekly course sessions. The goals of these observations were to: (1) observe the pedagogical moves enacted by the teacher educator in a CHHP teacher education course, (2) observe the communication patterns, social interactions and dominant discourses at play within the CHHP teacher educator course, (3) triangulate interview data and (4) provide a comprehensive description of the teacher educator’s practice and the overall culture of the CHHP teacher education course.

In my observations of the course sessions, I assumed an observer as participant role. All participants in the course were aware that I was there to observe the course for research purposes enabling me to observe and interact with the members of the class as closely as they felt comfortable. Keeping highly detailed field notes I captured as much of the daily functioning of the course, focusing on the following:

- the physical setting: how the physical space was arranged and utilized,
- the participants: who was in the room and how they organized themselves and interacted with each other,
- conversation: who spoke, who did not speak, the norms about conversation, the dominant discourses of the course
- activities and interactions: what was going on, the sequence of activities, how people, concepts and activities were connected
- my own behavior: how my role and presence may have effected the scenes I observe, my thoughts about what was being said and done (this was largely documented via a researcher journal to be discussed in greater detail below)
Initially, I recorded field notes using traditional pen and paper in a notebook during the actual observation. However, after the first two observations I realized that the pace of the class was too fast and amount of content covered in each session was too much to be captured accurately through handwritten field notes. Also, as I became more ingrained in the class culture, it felt more acceptable to keep notes in the same manner that the other students did. In the third observation I switched to taking notes by computer, which enabled me to more fully capture the daily functioning of the classroom sessions.

Additionally, noting the highly oral nature of hip-hop culture and the emphasis on critical dialogue within the CHHP framework (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007) I also audio recorded the class sessions to aid in the collection and analysis of classroom discourse.

**Enrolled Teacher Reflective Word Clouds**

In order to address the emphasis within both CHHP and TAS to recognize students/participants as *active agents*, I incorporated a reflective activity in which participating teachers viewed, reflected on and edited word clouds to visually represent their expectations, experiences and interpretations of CHHP. Word clouds are visual representations of text in which words that are mentioned more frequently are presented more prominently, usually by showing up larger and either in bolded and/or differently colored text than less frequently used words. Often used in the Web 2.0 world to organize keywords and tags associated with online blogs and photo sites to make and track connections between various posts and web sites, their effectiveness in highlighting dominant *and* missing themes among and between participants make it a useful tool in
both the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Cidell, 2010; DePaolo & Wilkinson, 2014).

Utilizing the free word cloud production site, www.wordart.com, I first took chunks of the text from the transcripts of participants’ first interviews making three different word clouds, one for their expectations of the CHHP course (this included discussions of their motivations for enrolling), one for their experiences in the CHHP course (this included any comparisons to experiences in their other teacher education courses and programs) and one for their interpretations/applications of CHHP (this included discussions of their visions for themselves as educators). This site was chosen for its accessibility and ease of use. It was also one of few sites that allowed for the storage and download of clouds as well as editing once clouds were formed. Users have the ability to adjust the size of words making them more or less prominent in the cloud, adding words that they feel are missing, removing words that they feel are superfluous or unrepresentative and changing visual aesthetics such as font, color scheme and shape.

Each participant was asked to look over the original word clouds, reflect on what they saw and how representative (or not) the cloud was of their actual experiences and interpretations and then edit the word clouds while reflecting out loud, either before or after they finished editing, in order to provide context and deeper understanding of how their new clouds reflected their understandings of CHHP and its relationship to broader narratives within teacher education. Additionally, the interactive and critically self-reflective nature of this activity was rooted in processes of creativity and visual representation as well as the infusion of technology that is associated with recent aesthetically-based iterations of hip-hop pedagogy (Petchauer, 2009). In this regard, the
activity served a greater purpose than a simple member check and actually produced new potentially unexplored or unseen areas that I had not thought to include in my original conceptualization of the study.

Recent research find a few limitations and shortcomings to the use of word clouds in qualitative data collection and analysis, which were addressed in the execution of the study. First, words included in the word cloud are often provided with little or no context and can be difficult to flesh out into more concrete findings (Cidell, 2010). To minimize this, participants were allowed to review their previous interview transcripts if requested so they could reflect more deeply on what they said and how/why it was represented in the way that it was in the cloud and whether they felt adjustments were necessary. In addition, each of these second interviews were also audio recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure that the necessary context was available during the analysis and presentation of findings. A second caveat is that although a word may stand out for being used more frequently, this can sometimes distract from themes or ideas that are more relevant or important to the issue of interest in a given study (Cidell, 2010). Given this, it was extremely important to find a web site or program that allowed for the addition or removal of words so that the teachers could sift through these potential distractions and choose what should be present and how prominently. This centered the participants’ voices, perceptions and interpretations over mine as the researcher encouraging a more participant-focused approach to the collection and analysis process and the presentation of findings that were co-generated.
Course Instructional Tools and Materials

The final data collection source consisted of instructional tools and course materials utilized in the development and implementation of the CHHP teacher education course. This included, but was not limited to:

- The course syllabus
- Course Readings (both required and suggested)
- Music videos, songs/lyrics, pictures (artistic renderings as well as photographs), films and/or television shows (both required and suggested)
- Handouts or visual aids used during lectures and in-class activities
- Web sites referred to throughout the course
- Student products (made during in-class activities; does not include course papers)

Reviewing these materials: (1) provided insight into the specific theoretical foundations and hip-hop cultural aesthetics and practices that guided the work of the CHHP teacher educator in this study, (2) triangulated data from the teacher educator interviews and course observations, (3) helped to provide insight into the ways in which the CHHP teacher educator constructed and enacted his pedagogical practices within the specific university-based program in which he works.

Data Analysis

The numerous data sources described above produced a large amount of data to be organized and analyzed. This next section outlines the process of data organization and analysis employed in this study.
Data Organization

To organize such a large amount of data, I initially used a word processing program that allows for the creation of tabbed notebooks. I selected this program because it allowed for the storage of all documents in a single place, rather than multiple folders, but still enabled me to password protect each tab to maintain security and confidentiality of files. At the beginning of the study I started with five tabs: Observations, Observation Memos, Interviews, Interview Memos (Before Transcription), and Interview Memos (After Transcription). Each new page in each tab was titled with an indication of whether it was an observation or interview and its number in the sequence of its particular category. For example, the first observation field note file was titled, Observation 1 – Week 2 to indicate that it was the first observation and occurred during the second week of the course, while the first interview was titled Interview 1.1 to indicate that it was the first person to have an interview and it was their first out of two interviews. Interview and observation memos were titled similarly, with interviews having an additional indication of whether it was from before transcribing (BT) or after transcribing (AT). The date and start time of each observation, interview and writing of each memo were automatically included each time a new page was added under a given tab due to the program settings, another key feature that led to its selection for the study.

As the data collection and analysis process progressed I added additional tabs, including Observation Transcripts, Methods Memos, Data Analysis, and Findings. Very few paper documents and course materials/resources were collected, as a majority of the course materials were electronic and I was encouraged to take photos so that the participants or the professor could keep them. I either added these files to the associated
page within its appropriate tab or saved them in a separate password protected folder depending on its size. Additionally, I added all interview recordings directly to the page of the associated interview and stored all observation interviews in a separate password protected file due to their large size.

**Managing biases and assumptions.** TAS-based research emphasizes the need for the researcher’s deep personal engagement and collaboration with participants as a tool in the development of a collective narrative and transformative vision (Stetsenko, 2014). In doing so, the researcher is able to manage assumptions and biases by exploring and expanding their initial commitments in collaboration with participants (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d.). As previously discussed, the reflective word cloud activity that participants engaged in during the second interview provided an opportunity for me to discuss initial themes and concepts that arose during preliminary analysis and for them to provide feedback as I moved forward in the analysis and writing process.

**Reflective journal.** The call for a non-neutral activist approach to research in which the inevitable impact of the presence of the researcher and the researcher’s socio-historical positions and commitments on the data collection and analysis process requires more than a mere acknowledgment and acceptance of the “disruptive” nature of research (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d.). Researcher reflection is a critical tool in this process as the initial commitments and perspectives that served as the foundation for the study enter a constant state of change throughout the data collection and analysis process. I used a researcher reflective journal to document these shifts. The use of a researcher reflective journal throughout the data collection and analysis process allowed for constant acknowledgement and analysis of how my own personal and political investments are...
simultaneously shaped by and shaping my engagement in and with the processes of data collection and analysis. This practice served a number of important purposes throughout the data analysis process including: (1) a space to check my assumptions, biases and wonderings throughout the data collection and analysis process, (2) track dominant recurrent themes and patterns during each phase of the data analysis process, (3) track my evolution as a researcher throughout each phase of the study. In this regard, the reflective journal served as an integral piece in the data analysis process as it tracked each step I took in the careful, intensive exploration and interpretation of the data.

**Critical dialogue.** Looking to hip-hop culture’s emphasis on dialogue as a means of knowledge and skill production, a third tool that I used to manage biases and assumptions was dialogue with “critical friends” (Kember et al., 1997). Throughout the data collection and analysis process I touched base with peers and friends to get feedback on some of my early interpretations and analyses of data. While the majority of these friends were also in education, either current graduate/doctoral students or recent grades, I also included those outside of academia including some close friends and family members who more closely identified with hip-hop culture.

This was particularly important as my analysis began to reveal parallels between the pedagogical practices employed by Dr. Ray and hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics. While I consider myself a hip-hop appreciator and consumer and have engaged with the culture through consumption of music and attendance in concerts, I in no means self-identify as a member of the hip-hop community. Therefore, it was important to me to hold continuous conversations with members of my own peer/friend group who identify as members of the hip-hop community to gain insight into the
nuances of the culture and help me identify key areas that I may have overlooked otherwise.

**Analytic Procedure**

I engaged in an iterative process similar to that of Creswell’s (2013) data analysis spiral. Utilizing Creswell’s (2013) data analysis spiral as a guide encouraged multiple deep, personal engagements with the data while centering the voices and experiences of the participants. Using this method enabled me to explore the nuances of how CHHP is enacted, experienced, and interpreted within the specific context of this study, and how the participants positioned the dominant messages of the course within the broader teacher education space. The imagery of a spiral provided by Creswell’s (2013) representation of the qualitative data analysis process is symbolic of the non-linear fashion in which dominant themes, ideas and narratives surfaced throughout the data collection and analysis process. In the sections below I describe the four-step process that I utilized in the analysis of the data for this dissertation.

**Step one: initial engagements and reflective memos.** Immediately following the completion of each course observation and individual interview I wrote a memo reflecting on initial reactions and thoughts including general descriptions of activities or information covered, key takeaways, connections to literature that stand out and any lingering questions or wonderings I walked away with. For individual interviews I also included descriptions of the participants’ engagement with and overall affect during the interview process, dominant themes from the interview and any connections to previous interviews and class observations. Upon completing the transcription of each interview a
second after transcribing memo was written to capture any new and/or deeper insights
and clarity (or wonderings and questions) that arose from listening to the interview.
Again, dominant themes and their connection across the other participants, data sources
and literature were noted and the initial identification of notable quotes began, which
continued throughout the entire data collection process. These initial themes were
instrumental in creating the preliminary conceptualizations of what the findings for the
study.

Step two: coding. After completing data collection, I printed and bound all
observation field notes and memos, interview transcripts and memos, and student-
produced word clouds into three books: one for course observations and memos, one for
participants’ first interviews and one for participants’ second interviews and word clouds.
Utilizing the themes identified throughout the data collection process and recorded in
memos and reflective journaling (i.e. self-reflection, church, emotion, dialogue,
community, movement, celebration, identity, etc.) as well as tenets of CHHP (i.e.
dialogic/problem-posing, hip-hop as lived experience, curriculum as (de)colonizer,
critical consciousness) (Akom, 2009) and hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics
prevalent within extant literature (i.e. cypher, battle, freestyle/improvisation, vocal
aesthetics) (Emdin, 2013b, Pennycook, 2007; Petchauer, 2012; Williams, 2007). In
addition, language from major teacher education reform agendas (Zeichner, 2003) and
national accreditation policies and mandates that have large impacts on dominant
discourses within teacher education (i.e. culturally relevant, multicultural education,
urban education, critical reflection, etc.) served as guides in the exploration of how the
course operates within the broader teacher education space. From this list, I created an initial coding guide to begin coding the data.

When specifically analyzing the interview transcripts from Dr. Ray and the enrolled teachers their discussions of their own K-12 and teaching experiences, motivations and commitments, and interpretations/applications of CHHP provided the basis for the coding scheme to capture various segments of the transcripts. I captured these broader topics using color coding by highlighting relevant portions of text to help me quickly and easily identify chunks of related text across the participants and begin to build a holistic narrative. For example, any time a participant presented biographical information (including K-12 experiences, as students and teachers) I highlighted the text in blue, when they discussed dominant messages of teaching and learning I highlighted the text in pink and when they mentioned specific interpretations and applications of hip-hop culture and/or hip-hop pedagogy I highlighted the text in orange. I used the same process to identify related chunks of text in the field notes using the following categories: Instructional Practices (Blue), Student Behavior/Participation (Pink), Hip-Hop History/Context (Orange), Education/Socio-Political History/Context (Green). In both the interview transcripts and observation field notes I used yellow to highlight or draw a box around particularly notable quotes or examples of emerging themes and ideas.

**Step three: findings outlines.** Through the processes of organization and coding described above, I reviewed and analyzed each piece of data at least three times. Utilizing the color-coding and larger chunked pieces of similarly coded data enabled me to identify connections between the collected data and the four research questions. I constructed detailed outlines of these early findings with the research question at the top, placing
relevant chunks of text from the observation field notes, interview transcripts, and memos. I broke each outline down into two to three sub-categories or findings under which had relevant quotes or observations to provide examples and explanations of what the sub-category meant or how it manifested in the context of the course.

For example, the initial outline for question two, which explores Dr. Ray’s pedagogical moves, included the following sub-categories: Engaging Students in Cultural Practices and Creative Processes; Personal Anecdotes/Storytelling; and Hip-Hop Cultural Artifacts as Texts. I constructed short narratives under each of these categories that detailed the manifestation in the classroom (largely through observation field notes, transcripts and memos), the enrolled teachers’ reported experiences and interpretations (largely through quotes pulled from interview data), and connections to literature (pulled from the literature review and additional research done throughout the data collection process).

In the construction of these detailed outlines I began to recognize areas in which the sub-categories could be condensed or re-organized to create more comprehensive and nuanced discussions of how this particular CHHP course was being conceptualized, enacted, experienced and interpreted within the university and the broader teacher education discourses. A key example of this process came as I worked on the aforementioned outline related to the second research question. In pulling quotes and examples from the various data sources I realized that all of these components came together under the professor’s conceptualization and enactment of teaching as emceeing. This became the new overarching theme and subsequently a key section of the first
findings chapter. This also linked back directly to a key theme noted in early reflections from the observation memos and my researcher reflections.

This process worked well in addressing the first two questions because they were largely related to the daily function of the class and Dr. Ray’s specific conceptualizations and manifestations of CHHP. However, in analyzing for the “collectivindual” (Stetsenko, 2013; Vianna, Hougaard & Stetsenko, 2014) experiences and interpretations of the enrolled teachers it first required that I construct individual narratives or profiles of each participant in order to see themes across and between them. So I returned back to the individual interviews for the teachers focusing primarily on their discussions of their educational histories, motivations for enrolling in their particular programs and participating in the course, and their expectations of the course. In constructing these profiles, which were largely done using direct quotes from their interviews in order to privilege their language over mine, I was able to see the clear connections in their shared motivations and commitments to social justice and visions of teaching and education as a primary tool to make the change they wished to see in the world. Additionally, it was through these profiles that I began to see clearly the dominant narratives that informed their experiences and understandings of hip-hop pedagogy and its relationship to the development of new understandings and shifts of their own beliefs about what teachers should know and be able to do.

**Step four: theoretical connections.** Having more concrete profiles and narrative descriptions that directly aligned with the questions guiding this study, I shifted to locating the participants’ conceptualizations and interpretations theoretically. I had already utilized major critical multicultural and culturally relevant theorists in the field of
teacher education (i.e. Cochran-Smith, Gay, Ladson-Billings, Villegas & Lucas, etc.) as well as theories presented by prominent hip-hop scholars contributing to the conceptualization to the recent iteration of CHHP as teaching through hip-hop aesthetics and practices rather than solely the inclusion of artifacts (i.e. Akom, Emdin, Petchauer, Schloss, etc). These theorists helped to identify the core tenets in which to frame the professor’s conceptualization, positioning and enactment of CHHP within the formal teacher education landscape, producing categories such as: disruption, healing, co-constructing knowledge, communities of learners, engaging the mind-body-spirit, valuing cultural differences, and critical self-reflection/authenticity. These concepts were prevalent in the individual interviews from both the teacher educator and the enrolled teachers, particularly in their second interviews when constructing their word clouds, as well as the field notes and transcripts from the course observations.

Presentation of Findings

The final phase of the analysis is the construction and presentation of the findings. In the following chapters, findings are presented to first provide an understanding of the broader context in which the study is framed and then zoom in to each of the embedded units of analysis. The first chapter of the findings, Chapter IV, focuses on answering the first two research questions, discussing Dr. Ray’s positioning and enactment of the CHHP teacher education course (CHHPTE) as a social justice-oriented drop in the sea of change rooted in the lived realities of urban/hip-hop youth within the university and broader teacher education landscape. The first half of the chapter opens with findings pertaining to question one, specifically discussing the ways in which Dr. Ray situates the
course and how his own personal identity development impacted his motivations behind, commitment to and unique enactment of the course within the university space.

The second half of Chapter IV addresses the second research question and outlines Dr. Ray’s pedagogical practices through his approach to the CHHP course through a reality pedagogy lens and the subsequent (re)construction of the role of the teacher/teacher educator as emcee (MC). The intention of this chapter is to explore the nuances of how CHHP is enacted and experienced by this particular teacher educator, bringing readers into the physical space of the course and providing analyses of the daily functioning of the course and how the pedagogical moves enacted by Dr. Ray operate in relationship to the tenets of CHHP outlined in Chapter I, hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics and other critical multicultural practices outlined in Chapter II and the broader teacher education space. Within this chapter, I utilize quotes and detailed descriptions of Dr. Ray’s pedagogical practices as well as similar practices employed by hip-hop emcees, to help build the connection between Dr. Ray’s pedagogical practices and the performativity of the hip-hop MC. However, it is important to note that no words exist to fully capture the performativity of Dr. Ray’s pedagogical practices.

Chapter V focuses on the final two questions of this study through discussion of the enrolled teachers’ experiences, interpretations and uptake of CHHP through their participation in the course. Specifically, this chapter discusses how the processes of “un-norming” they experienced in the course helped them to navigate and negotiate dominant messages about teaching and learning and the subsequent new perspectives and understandings they developed throughout the semester. Where Chapter IV looks to the performance styles of hip-hop emcees, Chapter V is framed by the structure and rules of
engagement of the hip-hop cypher to provide a more nuanced understanding of the specific ways in which the students experienced the course that in many ways served as a manifestation of the cypher within the university walls.

Heavily guided by their individual interviews, quotes and products from the word cloud activity and observed behaviors/participation in the course, this chapter includes verbatim quotes from interviews to centralize the participants’ voices and experiences and emphasize CHHP and hip-hop’s focus on collaboration, voice, and sharing. Additionally, a large portion of this chapter focuses on connecting the students’ experiences within the CHHP course to those in their other courses and within their own K-12 classrooms (as teachers and students) in order to explore the way their interpretations were simultaneously shaped by and shaped their perceptions of other classes and how it helped them to navigate and negotiate some of the dominant messages they received in these spaces.

Ethical Considerations

Aligned with a transformative activist stance, I understand that the act of conducting research is inevitably disruptive given that is simultaneously a personal, political and conceptual endeavor (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d.). However, although the acknowledgement and exploration of my own positions and commitments may render my work “non-neutral” the collective and collaborative processes of data collection, analysis and presentation aimed to manage and mitigate as much bias and judgment from the work as possible. This study is not designed to critique the effectiveness of the work and value of the experiences, but rather to present an image of the manifestations of one example of
CHHP teacher educator and his course and perceptions of how a small subset of individuals conceptualize, enact, interpret and engage with the work.

**Limitations**

Case study research allows for close examination of a phenomenon within a bounded context. However, as with most case studies, generalizability of findings to other contexts are a difficult, and usually impossible, task (Merriam, 2009). This is a particularly difficult task with small studies such as this that focus on the experiences of one teacher educator and a subset of his enrolled students within one university-based course. However, the purpose of this study was not to present a model of CHHP teacher education to be copied and implemented in other programs or to evaluate its effectiveness as a transformational approach. Rather the primary aim of this study is to gain deeper insight into the epistemological and ontological beliefs that shape and are shaped through the engagement in CHHP teacher education.

Choosing to focus on only one educator and course allowed for deeper engagement with participants and the production of thicker, richer descriptions. However, it also limited the variety of social identities of participants, particularly that of the teacher educator which was limited to that of a Black, male, who self-identifies as a member of the hip-hop community. Additionally, given that participation of the focal students enrolled in the course was completely voluntary, achieving diversity in terms of gender, race, socio-economic background, language, and identification and prior experience with or appreciation of hip-hop culture was a challenge. Therefore, it is possible that important nuances in how the course was conceptualized, enacted,
experienced and interpreted were overlooked or underexplored because of their lack of representation in the participant pool and subsequent data.

A final limitation comes in a common critique of qualitative research that relies heavily on interviews and other forms of data collection comprised of observations and participants’ self-reported accounts. Transformative activist research acknowledges that the presence of the researcher disrupts the status quo at the research site, potentially shaping what can and will be seen (Vianna & Stetsenko, n.d.). Specifically, in this study, I assured enrolled students that their individual responses and comments within interviews and focus groups were not shared with the professor and had no bearing on their grades in the course. However, knowing that the purpose of my study was to gain insight into how the work of this particular course is interpreted and experienced there was the potential that responses reflected the beliefs, perceptions and feelings of Dr. Ray even if they did not reflect the personal feelings, beliefs and behaviors of the enrolled students.

As noted throughout the description of data collection and analysis, I attempted to compensate for this potential limitation through the triangulation of data across various collection methods, including artifacts produced during the second interview and behavior documented in classroom observations, researcher reflective journal and critical conversations with my dissertation committee and critical friends circle throughout the data collection process. However, the scope of this study relied heavily on self-reported accounts of how teachers interpreted CHHP through their experience in the course, which was led by a professor whom all reported they loved and admired for his social justice-oriented approach and energetic and engaging delivery style. As a result, it is impossible
to be sure that the responses were representative of the teachers’ *own* beliefs and interpretations or if they, fearing that it would hold negative repercussions for Dr. Ray and the future of the course, wanted to ensure to present a favorable account of their experiences.

This chapter detailed the conceptualization and development of this study, including the context, description of participants and my own researcher positionality. Additionally, I described the processes of data collection, organization, analysis and subsequent presentation of data within the following chapters. Finally, this chapter closed with a brief discussion of the ethical considerations and limitations of this study. In the next chapter, I present Dr. Ray’s conceptualization and enactment of the CHHP teacher education course.
IV – TEACHING IN THE KEY OF LIFE

In this chapter I present two findings of this study in order to explore how Dr. Ray conceptualized, positioned and executed the critical hip-hop teacher education (CHHPTE) course within the university’s school of education as well as the broader discourses concerning what teachers should know and be able to do. First, guided by his aim to challenge and transform traditional approaches to teaching and learning, Dr. Ray positions and enacts the CHHPTE course as a space of ideological disruption through authentic self-expression. Second, he employs pedagogical practices that are manifestations of dominant hip-hop cultural aesthetics and practices embodying a (re)conceptualizing of teacher/teacher educator as emcee (MC). In presenting these findings I posit that Dr. Ray teaches through a CHHP framework rather than about it, as is often seen among teacher education programs and courses claiming to prepare teachers for the enactment of critical and culturally relevant pedagogies (Gorski, 2009). Specifically, through his centralizing of authenticity and knowledge of self, his development and enactment of the CHHPTE course was rooted in the lived realities of urban hip-hop youth in an attempt to provide teachers with models and tangible tools to help translate theory into practice.

A Site of Disruptive Healing

It gave me a chance to say to the institution, without having to explicitly say it, that topics of instruction and approaches to instruction that are not valued by you have value and the only way to be able to do that without having to say it every time is to have a course just on the books just like everything else. – Dr. Ray, personal communication, April 24, 2017
Through analysis of transcripts and field notes from Dr. Ray’s individual interviews and course observations it became clear that he conceptualized and positioned the CHHPTE course as a site of disruptive healing within the university setting. As expressed in the epigraph above, pulled from his first individual interview, Dr. Ray views the course’s presence on the university’s course list as symbolic representation of his aim to disrupt some of the dominant messages to the student body and broader university community about what types of knowledge and approaches to instruction are deemed as valuable. In this section I discuss the various ways in which Dr. Ray’s emphasis on authenticity and the lived realities of urban/hip-hop youth bridges his theoretical foundations to his enacted pedagogical practices.

**Drops in the Sea of Change**

In the third week of the course Dr. Ray shared personal narratives about the evolution of his social interactions within the university, including using a pound (fist bump) to greet students, faculty members, and university staff and referring to students’ work as “dope” (terminology used among the urban/hip-hop community to describe something that is cool, nice or awesome) during dissertation proposal hearings and final defense presentations. Although at first met with uncertainty and nervous laughter Dr. Ray noticed that slowly the members of the university community began to adjust to these expressions of his hybridized hip-hop and academic identity. According to Dr. Ray, over time members of the university community became exponentially better at and more comfortable with giving the pound and he noticed dope became a part of the lexicon within conversations with students and some of the other faculty members.
In sharing these narratives, Dr. Ray aimed to illustrate how through multiple small interactions he, unintentionally at the time, recalibrated some of the norms within the institution, exemplifying a saying he heard repeatedly throughout his childhood: “Little drops of water make an ocean.” Expanding on this mantra and applying his own hip-hop mentality, he takes an incremental approach to social change stating the goal is not always a complete overhaul of a system but perhaps “to change the rules of engagement little by little until you can’t imagine what the original one was—that’s what hip-hop does” (course lecture, October 19th, 2017). Guided by his mother’s quote, Dr. Ray’s conceptualization of the CHHPTE course, and his presence as a Black man identifying with hip-hop culture, as drops of water in the sea of change that is slowly rising within the university, and potentially, the broader teacher education landscape.

Through his approaches to communication he aimed to shift perceptions of acceptable forms of communication within the university. Similarly, within the CHHPTE course he challenges the effectiveness of dominant theoretical frameworks often utilized among progressive educators. During my second observation, Dr. Ray opened the class by discussing school desegregation and the unintended consequences of the *Brown v Board of Education* decision, noting that the decision integrated the schools but did not integrate the curriculum. When later asked by a student whether it was possible to adequately adapt the traditionally dominant curricular approaches and theories from scholars such as Dewey, Vygotsky, etc. to fit the culturally-specific needs of urban and hip-hop youth, Dr. Ray responded with the following:

Adaptation is attainable, but I would rather something created by someone who can see me. Who are those people? Emcees (rappers/hip-hop artists). I would rather use a Jay-Z or Nas theoretical framework because they see me.
Examining interview and observation data revealed other instances in which he aimed to expand teachers’ perceptions of hip-hop as culture and a way of knowing and being in the world and its subsequent potential role in processes of teaching and learning.

Observing the course throughout the semester and reviewing the subsequent field notes and transcripts his student-driven approach to CHHPTE relied strongly on hip-hop culture’s emphasis on dialogue and physical expression. While this often resulted in deep conversations and enthusiastic debates, it challenged perceptions of how a university-based course could and should look and sound. In the particular semester that I observed the course Dr. Ray took his approach to the furthest extreme up until that point choosing not to pass out a syllabus. Instead he used his knowledge of the evolution of urban education and hip-hop culture, his personal experiences as both a student and teacher in urban schools and his experiences and interactions with key stakeholders within the world of teacher education/academia, enrolled teachers’ questions and concerns (posed during class as well as in his office hours) and current evens within education, politics and hip-hop culture to guide his discussions from week to week.

This often resulted in last minute changes to the topics of discussion of the class or for certain topics to remain on the table for weeks longer than originally planned. For example, in week eight the class fell on International Women’s Day, and Dr. Ray devoted an entire class session to exploring dominant narratives concerning gender roles that impact expressions of self within hip-hop and their parallels within urban classrooms. The choice to cover this topic was also made in direct response to numerous comments from women in the course that issues of sexuality and gender were inadequately covered in the course up until that point. Finally, in week eleven, Dr. Ray handed the class over to
the teaching assistants who facilitated a critical analysis of some of rapper Kendrick Lamar’s songs asking the teachers to identify dominant themes and some potential ways to incorporate the songs into classroom instruction as critical texts. Two weeks later another entire class session was devoted to Kendrick Lamar to analyze the implications for identity and pedagogy in the album that was released over the weekend and which all of the students, now more widely familiar with his work, listened to and were coming into his office and writing to him about.

In abandoning the syllabus and shifting away from an assignment-focused approach, Dr. Ray was able to remain more responsive to issues that were currently at play within the hip-hop and educational spheres while simultaneously pushing back on conventional constructions of how a teacher educator should structure their course. This caused many of the enrolled teachers to have to change their approach as students and learn, as one teacher communicated in her individual interview, “how to be in this class”, which is explored in greater detail in the next chapter focusing on teachers’ interpretations of and experiences within the course. However, guided by hip-hop culture’s emphasis on authenticity and knowledge of self, Dr. Ray remains committed to creating a course that encourages critical self-analysis and authentic self-expression.

**Aligning Theory and Practice through Authentic Self-Expression**

Echoing findings among other critical and culturally relevant scholars, in his second interview he expressed his belief that too often higher education, whose institutions house many a social justice warrior, remains “behind the eight ball” of “what it should look like to teach.” The misalignment between mission statements and
objectives of many university-based teacher education programs and courses claiming to be social justice-oriented and the pedagogical practices employed within them is documented as one of the primary contributing factors in the lack of preparedness expressed by educators who leave them (i.e. Gorski, 2009; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). In his own analysis of the key dilemmas within higher/teacher education, Dr. Ray parallels this phenomenon to the core message expressed within a hip-hop song performed by rapper Beanie Sigel, *Feel It in the Air*, in which one line states “Man I read between the lines, your handshake ain’t matching your smile.”

Dr. Ray referred to this particular lyric twice throughout the data collection period. The first, was during my second course observation in which he noted that urban/hip-hop youth can see and feel inauthenticity even when it is masked as well-intentioned care. The second time was during our final individual interview in which he discussed the (over)emphasis on the development of teachers’ theoretical knowledge base without attention to their personal experiences and belief systems that often greatly impact their ability to translate theory into effective practice because of the over-intellectualization of dominant approaches to teaching and learning within university-based teacher education spaces.

Analyzing the interview and observation data, Dr. Ray’s centralizing of authenticity in the development and implementation of the CHHPTE course is linked to another one of his favorite quotes: “Ethics is closer to wisdom than cognition”. As explained by Dr. Ray, when operating from this belief teacher education programs need to develop more opportunities for pre- and in-service teachers to come to know *themselves* “and to anchor themselves in their ethics so that they’re moving with wisdom
when they enter into critical moments” (Dr. Ray, Individual Interview, November 1st, 2017). In enacting the CHHPTE course through a lens of authenticity and lived realities, he feels as though it comes closest to providing an experience where students can freely interrogate who they are and why they do the work of teaching, even when they openly disagree with his content and pedagogical approaches as it “signifies to me that we’ve got them there because now they’re thinking about what it is that they believe in, which is the goal of the work” (Dr. Ray, Individual Interview, November 1st, 2017).

Dr. Ray constructs the CHHPTE course as a space of ideological disruption and theory/practice alignment through authentic self-expression for the students, and it served a similar purpose for him on a personal level as evidenced by this statement from his first interview: “[Hip-Hop] can’t be a piece of my work and my thoughts and my being and then feel like I have to compartmentalize it.” He connected this to W.E.B. DuBois’ concept of double consciousness in which Black people are often expected to, or feel the need to, separate and compartmentalize various culturally and racially-defined aspects of their personality in order to survive and succeed in a society rooted in White cultural norms. Referencing the image of a once popular meme of a polar bear shedding its white fur revealing that it is actually a brown bear, Dr. Ray conceptualized the CHHTPE course as a space within the university where he could resist against this notion of separation and compartmentalization of selves, stating that, “Part of doing this course here and the way I do it is to not have there be a need for it, at least for an hour or two hours a week.”

attention to authenticity and lived realities directly informed the pedagogical practices employed within the course, as Dr. Ray approached the CHHPTE course through a Reality Pedagogy lens (Emdin, 2011a; Emdin, 2013a). The next section explores this lens
in greater detail, including its connection to and roots in hip-hop cultural aesthetics and practices and the subsequent (re)construction of the teacher/teacher educator as emcee (MC).

**Teacher Educator as Emcee (MC)**

During my ninth observation of the CHHPTE course, Dr. Ray extended a previous week’s discussion on the pedagogical aspects of his framing of hip-hop pedagogy through a reality pedagogy lens by examining how the hip-hop emcee can serve as an exemplar for effective teaching. According to Dr. Ray, when teaching through a reality pedagogy framework, teachers must immerse themselves deeply into the specific cultural and emotional experiences of their students such that “it becomes second nature to find ways to develop students’ interest in, and natural affinity for” academic content (Emdin, 2011b). Often used synonymously with “rapper,” some extend the role of the emcee as one who not only writes and performs raps but also focuses on physically and emotionally moving the crowd as the master of content (lyrics and/or choreography) and ceremony, leading to the common shortening of the word emcee to the letters MC (Emdin, 2013a). In (re)constructing the teacher as MC during his lecture in week twelve, Dr. Ray broke down the role of the effective MC/urban educator into the same three components: Moving the Crowd (physically and emotionally), Master of Content and Master of Ceremony.

Analysis of field notes, transcripts and memos from observations and interviews reveal how in many ways Dr. Ray’s pedagogical practices served as models of each of the three components; engaging pre- and in-service teachers in hip-hop cultural practices
(Moving the Crowd physically and emotionally), utilizing hip-hop cultural artifacts as critical texts (Master of Content) and fostering a high-energy classroom climate that privileged celebration and active participation (Master of Ceremony). In this section, I present various pedagogical moves and instructional practices enacted by Dr. Ray, drawing parallels to similar practices within hip-hop and urban cultures and, in particular, the performativity of the hip-hop MC.

**Moving the Crowd**

Using the hip-hop MC as an exemplar for effective teaching, Dr. Ray’s conceptualization of an effective urban classroom is one in which learning is not a static activity. When explaining this stance to the enrolled teachers he stated:

> If you’re talkin’ about urban education now then you’re talkin’ abut urban youth in the hip-hop generation. Movement is inherently a piece of [their] cultural expression so in a 40-minute class if the people aren’t moving physically then you’re not doing your job, and if they’re not moving emotionally then you’re not doing your job.

As this statement suggests, Dr. Ray conceptualizes the hip-hop educator as one who creates a classroom space that embodies the cultural practices and experiences of the students they teach. Throughout the course he modeled this by engaging teachers in related hip-hop cultural practices and explicitly connecting this to their own learning and development as effective hip-hop educators.

**Moving the crowd physically: finding the rhythm in class.** Embodying hip-hop culture’s practice of expression through rhythm and creative processes, Dr. Ray began each class with a cypher in which all those present stood up and created a circle around the room, each person attempting to remain equidistant from the person on either side.
The professor or a student volunteer started the cypher by creating the initial beat that set the general rhythm and pace for the following participants to weave and layer in their contributions. This was usually done by banging on the table (with hands, fists or another items such as water bottles and books), beat boxing (creating percussive sounds using the lips, tongue and vocal chords), or hand claps and stomping of feet. Going around the circle in the pre-determined direction, each participant added their own sound creating a collective layered rhythm, or beat.

A newly added component to the opening ritual this semester was the physical activity/exercise immediately following the cypher, led by one of the enrolled students. These activities looked to hip-hop culture’s engagement of the body and expression through physical movement such as is seen in the practice of break dancing. Although the teachers awkwardly and reluctantly participated in the physical activity and there was no clear sign that that the student leading it ever communicated with him prior to class to ensure cohesion with the day’s topic, Dr. Ray always found a way to connect it to either the history and development of hip-hop culture and/or the process of becoming an effective hip-hop educator. For example, in week five when the student leading the physical activity chose to use the song *Pon de River*, a song from the Jamaican dancehall genre, as the background music for the activity. Dr. Ray immediately connected this to the lesson in which he discussed how the roots of hip-hop culture lie in the Jamaican dancehall movement, which was started as the Rastafarian's resistance to the dominance and oppression of British culture and further exemplified people of color's genetic predisposition to respond to rhythm through movement, both of which are commonly identified as the roots of hip-hop culture (Chang, 2005).
Throughout the semester, Dr. Ray emphasized the way in which the evolution and growth students experienced through continued engagement in the cypher and the various physical activities directly mirrored the evolution and growth that teachers experience as they find their rhythm in the classroom, particularly for those attempting to teach against the grain, stating:

Because if you go into a traditional school your lesson plan your script is gonna give you false rhythm, meaning it's constructed to make you feel as though you have a rhythm, but in reality it's gonna inhibit you from getting to the freedom of catching your own vibe. So what I always say to aspiring educators is like how do you create spaces where you're welcoming the initial chaos so that you can together, with your students, co-construct the rhythm of the classroom? (Dr. Ray, lecture)

A prime example of this evolution came in week twelve during an exercise-based activity that required students to work in pairs, taking turns jumping over their partners who lay on the floor and which began with a lot of instructions as to how each person should move and engage their bodies. Although all of the desks and chairs were pushed to the back and sides of the room many of the students found it difficult to safely complete the task while also staying on beat with the hip-hop song that was playing in the background. However, as the time went on each pair found their rhythm with some improvising dance moves and adding extra hops and turns in between.

Opening each course session with the cypher and the subsequent physical activity served a dual purpose. First, it functioned in a similar fashion as the traditional “do now,” providing a consistent means of opening the space for learning and setting the tone for the day’s work. Second, it served as a space where many of the concepts discussed throughout the course physically came to life, providing opportunities for enrolled teachers to experience first-hand hip-hop rooted practices of improvisation, collective
composition, rhythmic development (literally speaking in terms of the incorporation of beats and music and figuratively in the sense of finding their rhythm and balance in their classroom structure and instruction) and movement in relationship to teaching and learning.

**Moving the crowd emotionally and spiritually.** In addition to moving the crowd physically Dr. Ray stressed that the effective MC/urban educator must also move the crowd emotionally stating, “If the students are not moving emotionally you ain’t MCing.” However, he cautioned that students are not simply going to be moved emotionally because you tell them to be, and one must learn specific strategies that will aid in this process. In particular, Dr. Ray’s approaches to emotionally moving his students is guided by examples from the energetic performances of Black Pentecostal preachers and the historical practice of personal storytelling among African/Black people, both of which are also prominent within hip-hop performances and artifacts (Emdin, 2016; Smith & Jackson, 2012).

Although he admits that he had a complex and often troubled relationship with the church growing up, Dr. Ray noticed points of convergence between the worlds of the Black church and hip-hop culture, particularly in the ways that the performances of both the Black preacher and the MC mirror each other. Bridging the three fields, education, religion/church, and hip-hop, Dr. Ray’s recent research led him to explore how the performances of the black preacher potentially translate into effective pedagogy in engaging urban and hip-hop youth:
…there is a skillset of being able to tap into someone's emotions or someone's soul and knowing that once that's triggered, because pedagogically it's never focused on, but if you trigger that note there's certain vibrations sent through the being that opens them up to learn and that creates a connection between teacher and learner. My goal now is to tap into that as much as I can and then tryin’ to think about how that happens (Dr. Ray, individual interview, April 24th, 2017)

As this comment from Dr. Ray suggests, others exploring the performance techniques of the emotionally-charged enactments of Black Pentecostalism also note clear parallels to the methods employed by the hip-hop MC that engage the crowd emotionally (i.e. call-and-response, using the volume of their voice to elicit certain response, moving around and “working the room” and making references to contemporary issues) (Emdin, 2016; Smith & Jackson, 2012). Utilizing these tactics enlivens their sermons/performances, engaging the audience by tapping into the emotional and spiritual vibrations of the human experience. Similarly, examining observation field notes and transcripts, many of these components are present in Dr. Ray’s instructional delivery, triggering the same emotional and spiritual responses, resulting in a lively learning environment that welcomes laughter, shouts of approval or disapproval, clapping and other verbal and non-verbal forms of emotional expression. The result was an active learning environment that not only welcomed but required students’ participation, vulnerability and on-the-spot feedback (via the aforementioned verbal and non-verbal emotional responses) to help students meaningfully engage with and connect to the material.

**Storytelling.** Throughout the semester, nothing that Dr. Ray did got evoked a greater emotional response or feedback from the enrolled teachers than the use of storytelling as a pedagogical tool. He utilized storytelling by sharing personal anecdotes seamlessly weaving them into the perfect places in each lecture. In week ten during the
lecture on the specific ways some of the major concepts of hip-hop education manifest into pedagogical practices he noted: “Stories are dope. Personal anecdotes are doper.” Noting the power of story, Dr. Ray opened himself up and shared personal narratives of finding his rhythm as an educator. Here he echoes other hip-hop artists, educators and scholars turning to the use of story, metaphor and analogy to add complexity and humanity to lessons.

Analysis of observation and interview data revealed that Dr. Ray’s anecdotes fell into three categories: personal anecdotes about being a student in urban K-12 schools, personal anecdotes about working and teaching in schools (both in urban K-12 schools and higher education), and metaphors and analogies related to social interaction and development used to explain a natural phenomenon, cultural development or human interaction. These stories and anecdotes were educational, entertaining and engaging due to the passionate energy with which Dr. Ray told them, and, served three other important roles:

1. They demonstrated Dr. Ray’s understandings of hip-hop culture, the lived realities of urban youth and his vision for effective hip-hop education, including the potential pitfalls and barriers and how to overcome them,

2. Humanized the teaching and learning process through stories of real-life experiences and,

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2 In the initial data analysis there was a fourth category of stories/anecdotes involving detailed descriptions of major events in hip-hop music and culture. However, for the purposes of this analysis I chose to group those stories in with the discussion of hip-hop artifacts as critical texts in the section below. See the section on coding and organizing data in Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion on how and why such decisions were made.
3. Provided explicit models for how to utilize personal anecdotes, metaphors and analogies in lessons and the impact that they can have on student engagement and learning.

Specifically, Dr. Ray views their inclusion in one’s instructional delivery as a means through which educators can construct narratives about their humanity and forge connections with students.

**Master of Content: Beyond Beats and Rhymes**

The third component in Dr. Ray’s conceptualization and enactment of teacher as MC is that one must demonstrate that they are a *master of content*:

> You can’t say I’m gonna get the kids to be emotionally moved and I’m gonna get the kids to be physically moved and you don’t know what you’re talkin’ about. Right? An MC cannot go on stage and not know their verse before they go perform. (Dr. Ray, class lecture, April 12th)

Throughout the course Dr. Ray demonstrated his expertise on how to incorporate hip-hop cultural artifacts to promote critical dialogue. In doing so, he further demonstrated his belief that when educating, or learning to effectively educate, traditionally marginalized populations the most effective and engaging texts are those created by members of their culture who acknowledge and validate their ways of engaging with the world. Echoing other hip-hop scholars and pedagogues, Dr. Ray looked to hip-hop’s roots in social commentary and critique to facilitate conversation on dominant narratives and practices concerning urban youth and education and their intersections with gender, race, class, etc.

For example, in week seven, Dr. Ray played two videos by deceased rap icon and activist, Tupac Shakur to facilitate a discussion on gender dynamics and how relationships between men and women manifest within hip-hop culture and the parallels
in urban classrooms. A second example occurred during week 13 when Dr. Ray walked the class through rapper Kendrick Lamar’s entire career, focusing on his most recent release *Damn* to analyze and discuss multiple identities and how this pushes back on the dominant narrative that “Blackness is relegated to a single identity, always.” According to Dr. Ray on each of Lamar’s studio releases he transitions through various identities using associated visuals, language, rhyme schemes/patterns and beats to tell the desired story. On his first album, *Section 80*, he was K.Dot with more of a street vibe, the second, *G.O.O.D. Kid M.A.A.D. City*, brought the world Kendrick, *To Pimp a Butterfly* tapped into Black-Lives Matter Kendrick taking a more radical social justice and political activist stance, and on *Damn* he is both King Kendrick and Kung Fu Kendrick, which comes through more clearly in the visuals created for the album (i.e. videos and live performances featuring influences from Kung Fu films). Taking the class through these various identity transformations and focusing on particular songs and lyrics from *Damn*, Dr. Ray engaged the students in a dialogue around how Kendrick’s approach holds implications for pedagogy and the need for teachers to foster the development of spaces in which young people’s multiple identities are allowed to co-exist.

To Dr. Ray it is not enough to *include* the culturally relevant artifacts, but a hip-hop educator must know how to tap into and learn to understand the dominant themes and narratives in the sub-texts of cultural texts. In this regard, Dr. Ray utilized the artifacts to educate the enrolled teachers on dominant frameworks and narratives within hip-hop culture *as well as* model how to effectively incorporate hip-hop cultural texts to increase engagement and foster critical dialogue. As he said in our first interview:
I just want folks to be more critical, you know, so if you hear hip-hop, see hip-hop, expressions of hip-hop...there's a different point like oh man there's an identity thing goin' on here, oh wait there's a cultural thing goin' on here, there might be a pedagogical thing to apply here or oh wait I can incorporate a bit of history here ...they get enough that they are reminded of a new entry point into their view of the world and that's the goal you know?

Thus, in engaging the teachers in critical analyses of hip-hop artists, lyrics and songs his goal was to help the teachers look beyond the beats (music) and rhymes (lyrics) to see the pedagogical potential of these texts to build their own connections to the texts and culture while also learning ways to use them as tools in the transformation of their instructional practice.

**Master of Ceremony**

The final component of Dr. Ray’s conceptualization of teacher/teacher educator as was embodied by the enactments of the other three components and requires that the educator be a *master of ceremony*:

> It's a ritual! It's an event. It's not master of gatherings. It's not a master of people gettin’ together. Master of ceremony, which means that every class got to be an event (*hanging on table while saying this for emphasis*). (Dr. Ray, Course Lecture, Week 12).

According to Dr. Ray, as the master of ceremony the role of the educator is to ensure that the class functions as a space in which students *want* and *look forward* to attending and participating by ensuring that the students’ culturally-defined ways of participating are encouraged and welcomed. When applied specifically to urban/hip-hop youth Dr. Ray stresses the inclusion of moments of joy and celebration, which are often viewed as distracting or problematic in more traditional approaches to instruction, as an effective means of fostering a joyous and celebratory environment:
I'm not tryin’ to say this class is the most lit class ever but you know I feel like it's a pretty lit class right, but when we're here every class has certain rituals. We come and cypher, we get down and we move, and I don't know about y'all but I feel when I'm comin’ to teach hip-hop class we are going to engage in a ceremonial somethin'. It's either the conversation's goin’ to be lit or the dancin’ goin' to be lit or the-after, y'all know we got after parties in here. Sometimes cats is still here talkin’ [after class] right? Because the class becomes an event.

The term “lit”, as it is used in Dr. Ray’s comment above, refers to a party or event that is “exciting, fun, or pumped up” (Urban Dictionary, n.d.). Therefore, within this comment Dr. Ray describes the way the course’s structure, through the other components (cypher and physical movement, deep conversation that evokes spiritual/emotional connections and reactions, etc) creates an exciting and lively event that not only the students look forward to but him as well. Additionally, the fact that students want to stay after, which he talks about using similar party-related vernacular of “after parties”, signifies to him that the CHHPTE course and physical classroom space is one that students feel proud and excited to be a part of.

This notion of “celebration and joy as resistance” was a larger topic of conversation in week six of the course, which began with Dr. Ray video calling into the first few minutes of the class along with some guests from Jamaica, where he was working on a project similar to the work he does with urban/hip-hop youth in the United States. The guests discussed hip-hop’s historical connection and roots in Jamaican genres of music such as dancehall and reggae, which as discussed earlier were also birthed out of the lived realities of oppressed and marginalized populations. During this conversation the guests and Dr. Ray presented the power of improvisation and the imperative to celebrate amongst black and oppressed peoples with one guest saying: “….what we do as black people in the midst of oppression is to celebrate in spite of the ways our bodies
have been repressed and oppressed” and Dr. Ray expanding on this saying “celebration is anchor of pedagogy, if you are in a classroom space that doesn’t create a party you are in a space that is triggering trauma”.

**Conclusion**

This chapter explored how the CHHPTE course was situated and enacted within the university and the broader teacher education landscape by discussing two major findings. First, Dr. Ray conceptualized the course as one of many drops in a sea of change, situating it among other social justice-oriented courses. Second, his instructional practices were rooted in a reality pedagogy lens, resulting in a (re)conceptualization of teacher/teacher educator as emcee (MC). Looking to hip-hop culture’s emphasis on authenticity and understanding individual’s lived realities, Dr. Ray’s approach to the CHHPTE course heavily involved the infusion of personal anecdotes and the critical analysis of and engagement with hip-hop cultural artifacts, aesthetics and practices. In doing so, he aimed to humanize the teaching and learning process, bringing theory off of the page and providing useful models and tangible tools reflective of the lived realities of urban/hip-hop youth in a way that often challenged what a teacher education course could and should look and sound like. As he said during week ten of the course, “…perfect teaching, effective teaching, hip-hop based teaching in particular has to be reflective of reality.” Through his focus on authenticity and lived realities his enactment of the CHHPTE course aligns with the recent iteration of CHHP, which understands hip-hop as lived reality urging for a broader view of hip-hop as culture with strong pedagogical potential.
While this chapter included some brief discussion of the enrolled teachers’ participation in and reception of some of the activities and materials in the course, the next chapter dives deeper into their interpretations and applications of the content and practices of the CHHPTE course. Utilizing participant-created and edited visual representations of their experiences, interpretations and applications, Chapter V will discuss the various ways in which the pre- and in-service teachers’ interpretations of CHHP expanded beyond reductionist understandings of hip-hop culture and how they used this to navigate messages about what it means to teach and be a teacher. Specifically, the processes of “un-norming” through disruption that were briefly touched on here are fleshed out, exploring the way their experiences and interpretations were shaped by and shaped their perceptions and experiences in other classes and teaching experiences and how it helped them to negotiate some of the other dominant messages they received in these spaces.
The purpose of this study was to explore how hip-hop teacher education manifests within a formal university-based setting. While the previous chapter focused primarily on why and how the professor enacts the course in the university focusing on the principles and conceptualizations of hip-hop pedagogy that guide his construction of the course this chapter flips the lens and explores how the enrolled pre- and in-service teachers experienced, engaged with and interpreted the practices. Analysis of data from interviews, course observations, and artifacts produced by the enrolled teachers produced two key findings that guide this discussion. First, the dialogic structure of the course fostered communication practices and a communal experience similar to those witnessed in the hip-hop cypher. Second, the participating teachers reported shifts in their understandings of hip-hop culture and ability to apply this lens to key issues and core dilemmas impacting education, resulting in new visions for themselves as educators.

Class Cyphers

Examination and analysis of interview and observation data made it clear that the component of the course that most resonated with students was the in class dialogue. All thirteen of the participating teachers reported the fact that there is so much opportunity to hear people share their experiences, be it Dr. Ray, the teaching assistants or their fellow classmates, as the most useful aspect of the course. In this section I discuss the two most commonly mentioned experiences and interpretations of the class discussions: the emphasis on the collective over the individual and the emotionally-charged climate. The data presented in this section are framed through the aesthetics and rules of engagement
of the hip-hop cypher. In a cypher all participants, usually forming a circle to stress that anyone can take the helm at any time, take turns jumping in and out of the circle contributing to the final piece. In this regard the cypher serves as a space of creation and community through the development of a product that is a “hybrid of a collection of participants’ perspectives” (Irizarry, 2009, p. 492). While the physical space of the classroom prohibited the formation of a circle given the large number of attendees each week, similar aesthetics and rules of engagement were documented in the observation and interview data concerning the structure and outcomes of the class discussions, or what I refer to as class cyphers. Through the exploration of the parallels between the hip-hop cypher and the culture and structure of the course, as experienced by the enrolled teachers, I posit that the immersive approach employed in the CHHPTE course challenged their pre-conceptions about

**Get in Where You Fit In**

When asked about the most useful components of the CHHPTE course during the first interview, all thirteen participants mentioned the fusion of multiple perspectives that occurred in each class session. Specifically, students found that weekly engagement in the class discussions fostered a sense of community in which each member’s individual contributions helped push thinking to enable deeper exploration of the nuances within the hip-hop cultural concepts. As one student put it during her first interview:
Something that I didn’t expect going in that’s been great is having Dr. Ray’s voice but also [the teaching assistants’] input and that’s just been cool to see the dynamic there because Dr. Ray has all the crazy awesome knowledge to give but at the same time you get to see the interplay between other academics and that’s been really interesting to see...and like people in the class who have like incredible questions or push back and it’s cool to watch the conversation. (Bethany, in-service teacher)

Bethany’s comment sheds light on the first major link the class cyphers had to the structure of hip-hop cyphers in that both stressed the collective over the individual. In this regard, the structure through which Dr. Ray facilitated each class discussion was guided by the following key aspect of the hip-hop cypher: any participant at any moment can take the helm (Emdin, 2013), even if it meant producing a bit of tension.

Disagreement and tension were not considered problematic in the course. Looking back to the previous chapter, Dr. Ray welcomes disagreement and push back viewing them as signs that students are becoming more confident and comfortable in their beliefs and ideas. Throughout the semester he often utilized points of tension as opportunities to push deeper into the nuances of a given topic. A notable example of this occurred during my second observation. Dr. Ray was leading a discussion on the need to recalibrate societal norms to push back on damaging, deficit-based narratives that have historically been used to not only oppress certain populations but framed in such a way that they become complicit in the perpetuation of their oppression. At one point, Dr. Ray brings up the need to “play the game while changing it,” a student jumps in asking: So ok wait like changing the rules of engagement for the game, but is that really changing the foundation of the game which says that I have to make myself better off of the backs of the people who have less, which is what America? always has been?
The student, finding that Dr. Ray’s incremental approach to recalibrating the norms in a space might eventually result in the reproduction of systems of inequality only with the currently oppressed taking the role of oppressor pushes back again asking, *isn’t this the antithesis to the idea of education as equalizer?* Numerous students jumped in, some expressing their own concerns about Dr. Ray’s argument, such as Sarah (one of the participating teachers) who expressed concerns about the incremental approach stating, *we need big shifts and we don’t have time to wait a couple hundred years to make these little changes.* Others were more firmly situated with Dr. Ray, such as the student who says, *you can’t tear down the master’s house with his own tools but it’s a different toolset completely* to which Dr. Ray adds on, *master did not construct hip-hop so we’ve got our own tools to tear the [house] up but then it’ll mean we’ll have to construct new spaces to be able to get power.* The debate continued all the way until the end of class with the initial dissenter remaining focused on the dangers of re-distributing power.

These types of exchanges happened often in the class, forming an atmosphere that embodied the battle component of a cypher in which one or more participants rap *against* each other with the winner judged on both skill and content, often decided by how well they incorporate the topic and engage/move the crowd. Additionally, in a cypher, participants often use the last line said by the person who went before them as the first line in their freestyle (improvised rap) encouraging active listening and mastery of content in order to effectively and accurately build on the performance. Hip-hop scholars and educators guided by the rules of engagement in the cypher find this the most translatable to the classroom in terms of building argumentation skills and fostering critical dialogue (Emdin, 2013; Williams, 2008).
The participating students viewed the class cyphers as spaces to build knowledge together, learning from the perspectives, examples and questions of their peers just as much as Dr. Ray and the rest of the teaching team. According to many of the participating students, this was one of the aspects that made the class stand out from all others, even those focused on similar culturally relevant approaches:

I feel like we’ve kind of built a space, and I think Dr. Ray contributed to it but, I don’t think he did it all on his own. The students who are in that class help as well, and we’ve created a space where people can express opinions and learn. (Sarah, pre-service teacher)

This sense of community learning was not confined to the classroom either. The teachers kept the conversation going via popular social media platforms, like Twitter, posting comments and quotes from the class using a searchable hashtag that made it possible for others (including the public at large if the poster’s account was not private) to engage with the dialogue and also for the teachers to revisit throughout the semester. For example, participating teacher, Megan, referred to her Twitter feed during her first interview to aid in her discussion of key takeaways and memorable class sessions. Additionally, the teachers expanded the classroom community by bringing guests (coworkers, classmates from their other classes, friends, and even students) to join in the conversation. The class attendees fluctuated so much throughout the semester that at times it was unclear who was actually enrolled and who was just an occasional attendee. This again, channels the structure of a cypher which are often open-invitation and word spreads about the most popular ones via social media and word of mouth.

It is important to note that not all students orally contributed to the course, remaining silent during most of the whole group discussions. Silence in courses guided by conversations about race, diversity, and social inequality is often read as discomfort,
disagreement or resistance, resulting in professors pulling back fearing that students may become resistant or unreceptive (Gorski, 2010; Lowenstein, 2005). Dr. Ray, although admittedly bothered at times by the silence, has learned over time to simply push through it, stating in his first interview:

I’ve learned to read it. Like not all silence is discomfort, not all silence is violence, some silence is just “I’m thinking,” and I’ve learned to read the faces of the students. There’s probably one or two that I’ve read sometimes, you know, they wanna say something…and I’m like “It’s okay you can be quiet you’ll be alright,” and there’s some folks who are just deeply pondering and some folks who are making connections, but I’ve learned to read my students really, really well.

Here, as with the motivations that drive students to take the course and guide his thinking about approaching topics from a variety of angles, Dr. Ray expresses his understanding that there are also a variety of reasons that impact how, why and when a student engages vocally in the class, if at all, which was supported by responses from participating students in their individual interviews.

When talking with in-service teacher Alicia and pre-service teacher Monica (two of the four Black participants), the topic of silence came up after Monica shared that she doesn’t speak up much in the class, an observation I had already made in my own notes and memos. Alicia, who earlier in her individual interview stated that hip-hop culture “was just in [her]” having grown up in an urban environment where hip-hop was the dominant lens, added on explaining why she did not speak very much in the class either:

In [the CHHPTE class] in particular I don’t feel like I need to say too much. A lot of the things I’m feeling are already said whereas in my other courses I’m like y’all didn’t talk about the Black kids, y’all didn’t talk about the poor people so let me talk about it for you.

Alicia experiences the course as a space where she does not have to do the heavy lifting in ensuring that the topics that are often overlooked by her predominantly White
classmates and professors in her other courses are covered. This is often a burden placed on students of color who find themselves the one of a few, if not the only, person of color in courses, including the professor, making it easy for topics specific to the lived realities of low-income, Black and Latino populations untouched or inadequately covered. However, the CHHPTE course’s framing through a hip-hop cultural lens inherently incorporated such topics, naturally building them in, leaving Alicia feeling free to sit quietly and soak in the information.

Other students provided additional reasons for not participating such as lack of confidence speaking up on specific hip-hop artists and practices and feeling more comfortable in general speaking in smaller groups than in whole group settings. For example, some students communicated discomfort with the structure, such as pre-service teacher Jasmine, who felt it just wasn’t in her nature to jump into conversations and not wanting to share incorrect hip-hop knowledge. She, along with a few other participating teachers found the conversations were too dominated by those more comfortable with the get in where you fit in approach, leading to an imbalance of Dr. Ray’s voice to students’. However, most of the other participants walked away with deeper understandings of how opening up the discussion in a way that encourages students to jump in where and how they feel comfortable not only built their knowledge and argumentation skills but also built confidence in speaking up and against oppressive authority figures and systems.

Regardless of students’ underlying reasons, silence, along with other non-verbal cues such as clapping and snapping, were considered acceptable ways to engage in the conversation. Once again this connects back to the traditional rules of engagement in the hip-hop cypher in which some participants assume the roles of audience members or
hype people, whose claps, snaps, cheers, and general presence each time the cypher meets serve as valuable contributions to the performance, motivating and encouraging the rappers to continue, with the potential that over time they too may become comfortable enough to contribute a freestyle in the future (Emdin, 2013).

The data above provides a snapshot of the communal nature of the CHHPTE course’s daily functioning through a deeper exploration of the weekly class discussions, or class cyphers. Rooted in the rules of engagement of the hip-hop cypher, the structure of the discussions stressed the collective perspectives and contributions of the group to develop deeper understandings of hip-hop culture and its potential as a pedagogical tool. Once again, this provided the enrolled teachers with the opportunity to learn through hip-hop pedagogy rather than about it, providing models through an immersive experience.

**It’s a Vibe**

In addition to the emphasis on collective voices, the CHHPTE course’s class cyphers embodied the highly energetic, fast-paced, celebratory and lively atmosphere, or vibe, of the hip-hop cypher. The room was often filled with music, laughter, loud expressions of agreement or disagreement, as well as non-verbal cues such as clapping and snapping. This created a culture and environment within the university that made it stand out among other courses in the school of education and higher education more broadly:
What I think is unique in this class is the culture of the two hours itself and I think that's very difficult to describe to someone who hasn't been to it...and that in some ways they would think that Professor so and so from [any university] could produce the same thing and that's possible but would not even be close to the class that we're experiencing if those feelings and actions and discussion and interaction wasn't present (Christy, in-service teacher)

The culture of the class, just the atmosphere of the class, just the non-traditional learning, how noise is embraced, how it’s like an organized chaos in there and how [Dr. Ray] challenges you to think. (Damon, pre-service teacher)

This “organized chaos” that Christy and Damon describe above harkens back to the hip-hop cypher, which as mentioned earlier has such a fluid flow to the way participants jump in and out, and where the more passionate and creative you are, the more engaged the audience becomes in what you are doing.

From the outside, cyphers can look pretty chaotic, with the screams and shouts heard from them often mistaken for those typical of a playground fight. In structuring the course through similar rules of engagement as the cypher (privileging jumping in the conversation over hand raising, welcoming joy and laughter and physical movement/expression, infusing music and video as critical text, privileging dialogue and debate over pre-prepared lectures and rigid assignments, etc) resulted in a scene that looked and sounded more like a party than a traditional university-based teacher education course. When transcribing observation recordings many times dialogue was drowned out by laughter, clapping and other audible displays of excitement, agreement, disagreement, joy, and celebration.

This (re)construction of the classroom/learning environment as a space that encouraged outward displays of emotion, both physically and verbally, pushed some students out of their comfort zones, leading to critical self-reflections on their own K-12 experiences:
It's made me recognize the way that my schooling has really been geared towards my strengths as sort of like a White student and how this class opens up to a much larger group of people to show their strengths, to what they can bring to a room, which I, at this point, cannot...other people are way more comfortable with their bodies, they're way more comfortable with singing and making music, contributing on the spot, there's a lot more back and forth in the class that I haven't felt in a lot of my classes. (Megan, pre-service teacher)

By experiencing the discomfort of having to adapt to a learning environment rooted in the norms of a different culture, Megan experienced first-hand what many Black and Latino students experience when entering schools operating from the norms of dominant (read White, middle class members of) society. All of the participants, except for one, had K-12 schooling in the United States, the majority of which were public schools. The immersive experience of this course challenged all of their pre-conceptions of what typical learning environments should look and sound like, particularly within the walls of their prestigious university. For some, like Megan, their experience in the CHHPTE course exposed the ways that they had not only become complicit in the continued oppression and marginalization of urban, predominantly Black and Latino youth, but also themselves as educators, as their own experiences in the K-12 system taught them to disengage their emotions from the teaching and learning process. Analysis of interview and observation data revealed how the opportunity to emotionally engage with material fostered a deep, long-lasting connection with both the course and Dr. Ray.

Prior to the start of the tenth class session I sat in my normal seat at the table with the two course teaching assistants and prepared my materials for observation and began speaking with a student who graduated from the university the previous spring. During our conversation I asked what motivated him to continue coming to the class given that he no longer attended the university, worked a full-time job and the course was so late at
night. He responded with a laugh saying that he comes to the class for “chuch” (church) and that it serves as a weekly boost or a reminder about what the real fight is and why it is important for him to continue to do the work that he does and fight as hard as he does in his job.

To this visiting student, this class served as a space of spiritual revival and emotional support, a commonly shared sentiment that surfaced across a number of participants. Phrases such as church/teacher church, preach/preaching, revive, spiritual, emotional, etc. surfaced in more than half of the participating teachers’ interviews, sharing sentiments such as pre-service teacher Monica:

I would say when we go to church we go to, to feel something, to get something out of it, and Dr. Ray does that for a lot of us in a lot of different ways and spaces. We leave feeling complete. There's so many times where I feel like I'm feeling whole and church does that for so many people. I know for me church grounds me and makes me feel like "ok I can do this". (Monica, pre-service teacher)

According to the enrolled students, Dr. Ray’s deliberate discussion and enactment of practices aimed at evoking spiritual and emotional responses fostered a more personal connection to the concepts and practices explored throughout the course. They were not only leaving the space with deeper understandings of hip-hop culture and pedagogical tools for their classrooms, but also deeper understandings of themselves and emotional support to get through the arduous task of continuing to engage in the work of teaching.

Their responses also supported Dr. Ray’s claims that tapping into emotional and spiritual vibrations creates stronger connections between teacher and learner. Looking deeper at many of the teachers’ interview data, including those above, Dr. Ray was directly mentioned as a primary factor in their overall attraction to and experience of the course. In-service teacher Ian, was initially skeptical of the hip-hop education approach,
but after hearing Dr. Ray speak at a university-housed event found Dr. Ray so “engaging, funny, verbally dexterous, smart and full of love” that he felt he had to take his class. Additionally, many of the enrolled teachers described or related their experiences to those they had in their own churches, places of worship or other emotionally-charged environments:

It's multi-modal too. We're listening to music, we're talking, we're standing. Which is church. I'm not just sitting there listening to the preacher, we have praise and worship, we're clapping and we're singing. I be clapping in class sometimes. We have those opportunities. (Alicia, in-service teacher)

Echoing findings in prominent literature about enactments of critical and culturally relevant practices within K-12 settings, the fact that Dr. Ray’s approach mirrored and incorporated similar experiences in the teachers’ personal lives increased their sense of connection to the material and investment in the course. In turn this deepened their commitment to their self-reported social justice-oriented visions for themselves as educators, which was particularly prevalent among the responses from in-service teachers whose daily work within the current climate of their schools often left them feeling overwhelmed, tired or defeated and in need of a recharge or refocusing toward their visions.

This section explored how the course’s roots in hip-hop culture, fostered an emotionally-charged vibe, described and experienced as “organized chaos.” Along with the previous section, the experiences discussed were immersive, emphasizing hip-hop cultural aesthetics and rules of engagement over artifacts. This further aligns the course with the most recent iteration of CHHP, aiming to provide teachers with first-hand experiences that promote the development of new understandings through critical dialogue and self-reflection (Akom, 2009; Petchauer, 2009).
New Understandings, Shifting Perspectives

As many of the practices enacted within the CHHPTE course find their roots in broader critical multicultural and culturally relevant pedagogical theories, there were certainly concepts and ideas with which the students were already familiar. The equity and social justice-oriented language utilized in this course were echoed throughout their respective programs and teacher education courses outside of this one. However, when comparing this class to others within their programs, the teachers reported that the CHHPTE course served as one of the few spaces in which the professor “practiced what he preached,” (to use the words of pre-service teacher, Skylar), bringing the theories and research to life. Analysis of interview and observation data revealed that this immersive and experiential learning process led the enrolled teachers to deeper understandings of hip-hop as culture and its relationship to and with education for as well as new visions for themselves as educators. Focusing primarily on data from individual interviews with the enrolled teachers, including the participant-produced and revised word maps (See Chapter III), this section discusses their self-reported interpretations and applications of CHHP to gain deeper insight into these new understandings and shifting perspectives.

Early on in the interview process, it became clear that few of the teachers had prior engagements with hip-hop, other than occasionally listening to rap music on the radio and/or with friends or relatives who engaged more deeply with the music and/or culture. With the exception of pre-service teacher, Damon, and in-service teacher, Alicia, the rest of the participating teachers described their previous experiences with hip-hop as limited to none, with all of them admitting that prior to taking the class they would have described it as a musical genre but not a culture.
In fact, even during the initial interview, which occurred about a month into the semester, three out of the thirteen participating teachers shared that coming into the class, their main goals were to learn more hip-hop songs and artists to better connect with their students. This echoes sentiments that undergirded earlier iterations of hip-hop pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy which prioritize representation, and often result in the use of cultural artifacts and experiences as a hook to engage students and lead them right back to the traditional Eurocentric practices and expectations for engagement in the teaching and learning process. However, through the immersive structure of the CHHPTE course and the critical dialogue the teachers began to understand it less in terms of the what of hip-hop (artists, music, etc) and more in terms of the how of hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics and teaching and the why in exploring the broader social implications that inform the key issues and core dilemmas at the root of CHHP’s significance in today’s public schools.

For example, pre-service teacher Sarah, who came to the course seeking to learn new artists and music to better connect with her students used the social justice-oriented language associated with CHHP, much of which seemed directly pulled from a combination of the professor’s writings and class quotes. However, when asked later in the interview to explain how she would describe the course to a classmate or peer, she focused heavily on the artists and songs that she was learning about as a result of the course signaling that she was personally still interpreting it in ways similar to the hip-hop as hook or bridge characteristic of practices associated with the strand of hip-hop pedagogy commonly referred to as hip-hop based pedagogy or HHBE. A month later, when engaging in the visual activity and analyzing/editing the word cloud produced from
the interview transcript from her first interview, she once again focused on music
however this time her discussion was much more nuanced in terms of her newly-acquired
understandings of the cultural aspects of participating in something centered around
music:

    When I talk about music, I know this makes me a nerd, but I think about choral
    music because I’ve sung in a lot of church choirs and it’s about being a part of a
    whole and I’d never really connected that with teaching. It’s one of my favorite
    things to do and so the fact that I can bring those two things together makes me
    really happy. It should be, the kids should of course be the center and it should be
    the kids talking and having a voice...

Even more striking in Sarah’s response, is the way that she is connecting themes learned
in the hip-hop-rooted CHHPTE course with her own personal experiences. This is a key
component of Dr. Ray’s and others’ approach to CHHP, in the emphasis of the need for
teachers to engage with hip-hop pedagogy authentically. This type of growth was seen
across all ten of the participating teachers who completed the second round of interviews
and did the visual activity. Through the immersive experiences discussed in the previous
section (Class Cyphers), they not only began to understand hip-hop as a culture, but also
to see how it served as a mirror to society and themselves (Akom, 2009; Baszile, 2009;
Williams, 2009).

    The CHHPTE course’s framing through a hip-hop cultural lens and its emphasis
on authenticity and knowledge of self, encouraged the enrolled teachers to explore pieces
of themselves that they didn't previously find valuable in the education space. The
teachers reported feeling as though it encouraged, and often required, them to dig deeper
into themselves, their commitments and motivations as the theories came off of the page.
In the visual activity all ten participants mentioned words reflective of this self-work (i.e.
self-reflection, inner visions, authenticity, wholeness, personal development, etc.), citing it as a key component in the development of effective culturally relevant practices.

Specifically, almost all of the students reported similar moments of self-awareness, expressing how the course opened their eyes to their own privilege and biases in ways that other courses had not, such as pre-service teachers Chloe and Jasmine:

I feel like it's for us to examine ourselves and...examine ways that we may be biased or privileged and how those things work, in ways that we may not be conscious of, work to devalue certain groups and being able to reflect on that and recognizing the impact that that can have as you enter a classroom so I think at least for me those were the biggest things that came out of the class so far. Thinking about myself, my ideas, thinking about ways that I do or don't value certain people and their beliefs and practice. (Jasmine, pre-service teacher)

I think it's a really important class for a teacher in order to recognize their own privileges as well as how to actually have practices that are reflective and not so responsive to the structures around us. I feel like a lot of teaching has become just these are the structures so I have to teach this way. Thinking about all of the wiggle room we do have around those structures and how you can teach in ways that are more reflective of culture and less responsive to structures that feel debilitating. (Chloe, pre-service teacher)

In this regard, for the enrolled teachers, the course was about much more than hip-hop.

The ability to engage in critical dialogue rooted in the cultural norms and frames of reference much different than those dominant within the culture of schooling, and society at large, pushed many of the teachers to consider their own positionalities and how their prior experiences shaped and informed their perceptions of and engagement with students of diverse cultural backgrounds.

Specifically, the non-traditional learning experiences, and the emotionally-charged and energized atmosphere of the classroom, provoked many of the teachers to reflect on their own teaching practices and visions for themselves as educators moving
forward. This was especially prevalent among the in-service teachers, who although were not observed in their classrooms given the scope of this study, shared numerous examples of how the course motivated them to either begin incorporating new practices in their classrooms or raised tensions from the critical analysis and reflection on their past and present practices. In-service teachers Christy and Andrea began using the cyphers in their classrooms, motivated by their own reactions and connections to course material. Their approaches were slightly different, Christy enacted a more literal form of the cypher similar to what Dr. Ray used to open the class, while Andrea used the same structure as the class discussion cyphers to engage students in a dialogue on various history topics like the Civil War and the constitutional amendments. Both saw and felt the difference it made with their students’ engagement with and connections they made to the material, which Andrea linked directly to the filtering through a cultural frame of reference that students felt personally connected to:

In teaching children, we make it so difficult. We make it so hard, but [Dr. Ray] made it really seamless and easy. So that particular shaping of a context of [the students’ culture] and translating that into education is necessary. (Andrea, in-service teacher)

Understanding the role of culture in education and how it both shapes and is shaped by the ways in which people engage in society was one of the key components in the students’ reflections and shifting perspectives on culturally relevant pedagogy through the CHHP lens.

Some of the shifts that occurred produced tensions for the teachers. One example of this came as the teachers began to identify the different ways that they had contributed to acts of cultural violence against their students. For example, in-service teacher Bethany shared reflections on how she previously viewed the charter schools she worked with,
serving a low-income predominantly Black community, as a positive force within her students’ community. However, engagement in the weekly critical dialogues raised tensions as she began to realize some of the ways she may be complicit in the devaluing of her students and their cultural expressions. Thinking back to the lesson in the third week of the course in which the class deconstructed the ways damaging narratives are constructed and perpetuated utilizing hip-hop duo Dead Prez’s song “Wolves,” in-service teacher, Bethany, raised some of her conflicting emotions:

[My students’ parents] chose to exit the public school system and come to this high-performing charter school for some reason, whatever that was for them. I think about the ways that I see students treated at my school and I wonder if these students’ parents knew the philosophy behind this school, would they still put their students there, like what is this doing for their kids? Sure they can pass a state test…but how set up are these kids for feeling really good about themselves and empowered and important and valued in what they bring to the classroom? So I felt like there was this applicable metaphor to my own experience in teaching at the school where I teach.

The Dead Prez song that sparked Bethany’s reflection, tells the story of arctic wolves who lick themselves to death after pricking their tongues on the blade of a blood-soaked knife as they try to satiate extreme hunger, building metaphors to the ways in which people living in low-income areas engage in similar destructive practices in the pursuit of better financial and living situations. This song produced similar reflections as Bethany’s among the other participating teachers, revealing more clearly to them how schools use damaging narratives rooted in messages of cultural difference as deficit but masked as messages of kindness and care and progressive education to convince parents and students that the traditional Eurocentric practices they enact are what they asked for when asking for higher quality schools in their neighborhoods. For Bethany, and many others,
this conversation served as a foundation in the transformation of their perspectives and visions for themselves as educators.

Coming face-to-face with the potentially damaging nature of their own individual practices and perspectives also caused some tension and occasional disagreement from the teachers. Twenty-year veteran teacher, Ian, shared the following tensions he had after the class session where Dr. Ray first introduced the idea of celebration as a key element in effective pedagogy:

I feel like [the classroom] should be joyful but I don’t think a party is what my classroom is going to be. I feel like I want children to…to feel joy but in a different way than you feel it in a party. In a way it’s the same thing. It’s challenging to think that maybe what you’ve been doing for 20 years has maybe been heading off in the wrong direction. Maybe when you hold the class to a standard and dominate the space and make them do the academic work that you might be doing violence. That’s challenging to think about and it’s healthy to think about that, to push yourself to think about that.

There are still some clear remnants of potentially deficit-based thinking in Ian’s interpretation, particularly in his implication that in Dr. Ray calling for a party-like atmosphere he was also suggesting an abandonment of academic work. However, the fact that even though Ian is uncertain of how to incorporate this aspect he can recognize that not doing it is an act of violence and ultimately hurting students and that the course is “pushing himself” to think about the consequences of not doing so shows that he is beginning to gain the type of self-awareness necessary to begin the process of transformation.

Critical self-reflection is a key component of the critical and culturally relevant practices that provide much of the theoretical foundation for CHHP and Dr. Ray’s pedagogical approaches (Howard, 2003). While this was but one semester in a single course, the critical dialogue and immersive experience in a new cultural frame of
reference pushed teachers to at least attempt to look at some of the dominant messages and practices through a different lens. Although many were driven to course due to their perception that it would provide them with opportunities to examine hip-hop music, they left with more nuanced understandings of culture and new frames of reference from which to build their future approaches to instruction. Whether they fully adopt CHHP’s specific use of hip-hop, all students walked away with similar feelings as Ian, who stated: *I’m going to take elements of [hip-hop pedagogy] onwards, the progressive elements of it, the loving elements of it, the respect.*

**Conclusion**

Throughout the semester the enrolled teachers acquired new understandings of hip-hop as culture, learning to apply a hip-hop cultural lens to critically analyze key issues and create new rhythms through collective critical dialogue and analyses. While their initial expectations of the course were deeply rooted in rap-centric models of hip-hop pedagogy, the immersive experience employed by Dr. Ray pushed them towards nuanced explorations of hip-hop as culture, exposing broader themes of communal engagement, passionate, high-energy learning experiences, and the importance of welcoming and valuing students’ cultural frames of reference. Specifically, the course’s framing in the aesthetics and rules of engagement of hip-hop practices, such as the cypher, created more opportunities for teachers to engage with the course content in a variety of ways that produced deeper personal connections and critical self-reflection on their own conceptualizations of effective teaching and learning.
Teacher education reformers noting the lack of attention to issues Given the rapidly changing demographics of the public students, there is an increased sense of urgency among education reformers to address the persistent schools has left many educators unprepared to effectively engage the culturally diverse students in their classrooms. In response, various accreditation mandates encouraged university-based teacher education programs to focus attention on issues pertaining to the role of culture in processes of teaching and learning. Recent data finds a dramatic increase in programs featuring mission statements and course catalogs boasting commitments to issues of diversity and social justice-oriented aims and goals for students, including courses on critical multicultural and culturally relevant approaches. However, the curricular designs and instructional practices employed in these programs and courses remain steeped in traditional approaches to teaching and learning resulting in a continuous release of unprepared teachers entering classrooms and employing ineffective practices (Gay, 2000; Gorski, 2010; Juárez & Hayes, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Nieto, 2000). This cycle is viewed as extremely detrimental, producing debates over the future of university-based programs in the preparation of teachers, with some even questioning whether the needs of the 21st century require alternative routes altogether (Cochran-Smith, 2000).

Recently there has been a call to disrupt the continuous cycle of (re)production from within university-based programs through the development of transformative approaches more firmly situated in the cultural norms of traditionally marginalized populations. This study aimed to explore how one such approach, critical hip-hop
pedagogy, manifests within the formal university-based teacher education setting.

Focusing on one specific course in a prestigious, Northeastern university, I set out to explore how the course was conceptualized, enacted, experienced and interpreted by both the professor and the enrolled teachers. The following four key findings were presented: (1) the professor conceptualized and enacted the course as a means of disrupting dominant narratives about acceptable and effective approaches to teaching and learning; (2) his enactments of CHHP embodied hip-hop cultural practices and aesthetics through his (re)conceptualization of teacher as MC; (3) the course’s structure through the aesthetics and rules of engagement of the hip-hop cypher provided a variety of ways for students to actively participate in the processes of knowledge production; (4) enrolled teachers reported new understandings of hip-hop as culture, resulting in shifts in perspectives on key issues impacting education and their visions for themselves as educators. Given these findings, I posit that Dr. Ray’s construction and enactment of the course resulted in an immersive experience in which he taught through a CHHP framework rather than about it, as is often seen in courses claiming similar critical multicultural and culturally relevant approaches, creating a dynamic immersive cultural experience for the enrolled teachers (Gorski, 2010).

Informed by the findings, I present three implications for teacher education, particularly in relationship to addressing the need to better prepare teachers to enact social justice and equity-oriented practices. The majority of this chapter focuses on exploring these broader implications, extending on existing research concerning the preparation of teacher educators for all students. The chapter closes with a section discussing my lingering questions and suggestions for future research. While much of the
concepts and language discussed in this study are not new, as Dr. Ray’s conceptualization and approach pulled heavily from CHHP’s roots in critical and culturally relevant pedagogical theories (i.e. Freire, 1986; Ladson-Billings, 1995), his personal framing through his own hip-hop identity and the lived realities of urban hip-hop youth revealed new opportunities to bridge theory and practice. Through this study, university-based teacher education programs and professors may be able to gain insight into how incorporating courses like the CHHPTE course can better equip teachers with tools to translate theory into practice.

**Remixing Teacher Education**

To review, Dr. Ray’s conceptualization and enactment of the CHHPTE course was informed by his personal experiences as both a student and teacher in communities where hip-hop serves as the dominant frame of reference. He emphasized authenticity and collective dialogue to engage enrolled teachers in critical analysis of hip-hop culture in relationship to education and society at large. Throughout the semester his observed pedagogical practices embodied the aesthetics and performativity associated with hip-hop emcees (MC) and other key members of urban communities, such as church pastors/preachers, engaging teachers intellectually, physically and emotionally/spiritually in critical dialogue and analysis of hip-hop culture, dominant norms and narratives impacting teaching and learning and the enrolled teachers’ identities and roles as educators. In doing so, Dr. Ray fostered the development of an *active* learning environment that challenged traditional approaches to instruction within university-based
teacher education courses, encouraging the enrolled teachers to question their own preconceived notions of how to effectively enact critical and culturally relevant pedagogy.

This study supports existing research presenting university-based teacher education as a “value-added” endeavor (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2010). For many of the enrolled students, the most powerful component of the course was the fact that it was held within the walls of a university and served as one of the few spaces in which they could experience the type of critical and culturally relevant dialogic pedagogy they read about in their other courses and which was prevalent within the language of the mission statements that drew them to the university and their selected programs. In this regard, Dr. Ray’s course answers the call for transformational student-driven, culturally relevant learning experiences to address the unmet needs and desired learning experiences as expressed by teachers entering/working in culturally, socially and linguistically diverse classrooms.

Further, analysis of this study’s findings draws attention to continued tensions at the intersection of policy, practice, and power impacting dominant narratives about effective and valuable approaches to teacher education. If the aim of university-based courses and programs is to prepare effective educators for the cultural diversity of today’s public school classrooms there must be a re-imagining, or remixing, of what effective professional preparation and practice for teachers is within these racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse contexts (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gay, 2005). Specifically, within the politically-charged climate of the teacher education landscape, transformative teacher educators and curriculum/course developers must conceptualize their roles as activists and advocates, combining “moral convictions and
courage, critical analyses, and political activism with high-quality curriculum and instruction” (Gay, 2005, p. 224).

This research speaks to the need for teacher education for the enactment of culturally relevant social justice and equity-oriented pedagogy to disrupt and act in opposition to the “overwhelming presence of Whiteness” within university-based programs (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Sleeter, 200). Even with the employment of recruitment and retention efforts aiming to increase racial and cultural diversity among university-based teacher education faculty and student bodies, pre-service teacher education remains stuck in narratives of meritocracy and White supremacy (Ladson-Billings; 2005; Zeichner & Pena-Sandoval, 2015). More specifically, contentious political debates often arise concerning where to place courses such as the CHHPTE course within university-based programs of study as well as who should/can teach them and how they should be taught. As a result, these courses are often watered down to make them more palatable for the predominantly White student body, relegated to the margins of the program of study as electives or optional courses and/or the topics are woven into other courses limiting the depth in which they can be explored and reflected upon by pre- and in-service teachers (Gay, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

In this section I discuss three broader implications for university-based teacher education based on the findings reviewed above. First, Dr. Ray’s immersive approach to the CHHPTE course supports the need for the introduction of new cultural frames of reference during the teacher education process. Second, the findings from this study hold implications for the use of authentic and immersive models as effective tools for helping teachers bridge theory and practice. Finally, the third implication speaks specifically to
Dr. Ray’s decision to hold the course *within* a university and the power of disrupting from within.

**New Cultural Frame of Reference**

A first implication of this study sheds light on the need for a new cultural frame of reference when developing courses and programs aimed at preparing teachers for *all* students. Dr. Ray’s approach to the CHHPTE course builds on existing theories of culturally relevant pedagogy that acknowledge the danger of a “culturally-free” curriculum (Emdin, 2011a; Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Nieto, 2005). Additionally, his emphasis on the critical analysis through dialogue reflects CHHP’s roots in Freirean critical pedagogy and its focus on engaging in such dialogue and analysis *in schools* in the development of a more critical consciousness (Akom, 2009; Emdin, 2011b; Williams, 2007). However, he shares views of other CHHP scholars and pedagogues who find these theories often manifest in reductive antiquated race-based views of “culture” that ignore important nuances that could provide useful tools to educators seeking to provide more effective instruction for identifying with cultural frames of reference that privilege different ways of producing and sharing knowledge (Akom, 2009; Emdin, 2011a).

Although many schools of education are incorporating programs and courses that touch on these critical and culturally relevant approaches due to accreditation mandates (Cochran-Smith, 2003a; Zeichner, 2003), teachers are still leaving feeling as though their programs did little to prepare them for the realities they face in their schools and classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2000). If university teacher education programs want to keep up with the needs of the new rising majority, there needs to be greater attention to
the dominant cultural frames of reference through which today’s youth are developing their identities, engaging with the world and interpreting their daily lived realities. This is particularly salient when addressing the continued educational inequities experienced by youth in low-income, urban, predominantly Black and Latino communities. These communities and populations are consistently the most affected by the damaging narratives and practices that critical and culturally relevant approaches aim to disrupt and transform (Duncan-Andrade, 2007; Emdin, 2011a, 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2000). CHHP scholars and pedagogues suggest teacher educators incorporate the culturally-specific language, communication patterns and rules of engagement that reflect the lived realities of students living in these communities, which is primarily framed within hip-hop cultural norms (Alridge, 2005; Baszile, 2009; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Williams, 2007).

A common critique of hip-hop rooted approaches to teaching and learning caution against the use of blanket statements that on the surface imply that all Black and Latino youth living in low-income, urban environments. However, after collecting and analyzing the data in this study, I argue that this critique results from the continued reductionist framing of hip-hop in terms of its most prominent artifact, rap music. Looking to Dr. Ray’s explicit framing of hip-hop as culture, I suggest that teacher educators look beyond the beats and rhymes to begin to understand the pedagogical potential of hip-hop culture’s aesthetic elements, which are rooted in “the long history of Black freedom struggle and the quest for social-determination for oppressed communities around the world” (Akom, 2009, p. 3).

Hip-hop cultural artifacts, aesthetics and practices are built on a foundation of resistance through critical interrogation of the systems of oppression centering issues of
race, class, gender, space and place. At the outset of the semester, Dr. Ray abandoned the syllabus, instead turning to hip-hop music, the performativity of hip-hop emcees (which were also influenced by and influencing other key cultural spaces such as the Black church) and the rules of engagement of the hip-hop cypher, privileging hip-hop cultural styles of communication, participation and knowledge production. In this regard, Dr. Ray and other proponents of this aesthetic-rooted iteration of hip-hop pedagogy emphasize *process over product*, asking teachers to critically interrogate the explicit and implicit messages about valuable topics, experiences and forms of self-expression and how expanding these views could work to improve learning for *all* students, promoting the development of a critical consciousness across racial and cultural lines.

Through their participation in the CHHPTE course, the enrolled teachers were pushed out of their own Eurocentric expectations of how a graduate-level, university-based teacher education course should look and sound. This not only encouraged new ways of being in the space and new visions for themselves as educators, but also challenged their reductive, rap-centric views of hip-hop culture, helping the teachers build more robust understandings of how to incorporate it to extend on their existing understandings of what it means to be “critical” and “culturally relevant.” In this regard, this study supports Akom’s (2009) claims that by implementing approaches such as CHHP, it is possible to change tacit beliefs, understandings, and world views used to relegate certain populations’ cultural expressions and practices to the margins of society and which are often perpetuated by institutions of higher learning.

Building on this, I suggest that in order for teacher educators of critical and culturally relevant courses to help students develop transformational approaches to
teaching and learning, they themselves must enact transformational approaches. Theories of critical and culturally relevant pedagogy encourage teachers to understand the lived realities and cultural understandings of their students in attempts to build more culturally responsive pedagogical practices. Based on analysis of data in this study, I argue that waiting until teachers enter their student-teaching experiences, or worse, their own classrooms, before guiding them through critical explorations of the various processes of how to do this is too late. As Emdin (2011b) states:

> When we propose cultural relevance or critical pedagogy to teachers and do not provide them with tools to develop a true picture of the realities of [traditionally marginalized populations], it is equivalent to providing them with a boat without a paddle. They enter the waters of theory, swim in the seas of cultural relevance, but make no progress in providing youth they advocate for a means to new possibilities in the classroom. (p. 286)

Therefore, teachers need opportunities to deeply engage with and interrogate the nuances of their students’ dominant cultural frames of reference before entering the classroom.

Doing so will help them to identify new tools and take on new perspectives that can help bridge theory and practice in order to better serve students.

**Models Matter**

A second implication of the study comes from analysis of the immersive learning experiences recorded in observation and interview data. Given his personal identification with hip-hop culture, Dr. Ray not only taught about hip-hop culture and its potential as a teaching tool, but taught through it. Through his reconceptualization of the teacher as emcee his pedagogical practices embodied hip-hop cultural practices and rules of engagement, providing students with opportunities to experience the how of CHHP while learning the what of hip-hop culture and building strong understandings of the why when
considering the importance of implementing such nuanced approaches to critical culturally relevant practices. As a result, students reported greater understandings of how to bridge theory and practice and shifts in their visions for themselves as educators.

These findings hold implications for teacher education, presenting a counter-narrative to those within existing research that points to the prevalence of reductive practices within culturally relevant and multicultural teacher education (MTE) courses. Such research exploring the conceptualizations and enactments of such courses find that many fall short of embodying the critical multicultural/culturally relevant practices and philosophies claimed on syllabi, in mission statements or implied through the assigned readings (Gorski, 2010). As explored above, many multicultural teacher educators, acting either *reactively* based on student responses (often in the form of resistance and silence) or *proactively* (perceiving their students as lacking prior knowledge on the nuances of pertinent societal issues) make adjustments in either content or delivery styles to make their courses more palatable for the predominantly White students filling their classes (Gorski, 2010; Lowenstein, 2005). In doing so, they apply similar views of White pre-/in-service teachers through the same deficit lens that they are attempting to teach them *not* to use in their own classrooms (Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013; Lowenstein, 2009).

If the aim of these courses is to disrupt deficit-based ideologies that perpetuate reductionist practices, then teacher educators have to break the cycle by modeling how to utilize students’ experiential knowledge and cultural differences as entry points rather than barriers. Given the opportunity to *experience* the type of practices discussed in prominent social justice-oriented critical and culturally relevant literature, educators may feel better prepared to incorporate them into their own practices. Providing pre- and in-
service teachers with dynamic, comprehensive models of culturally relevant instructional practices may help them to not only see their potential but their necessity in developing transformational practices to improve the learning environment for all. These first-hand experiences might serve as useful references for teachers to reflect on when faced with the challenges of effectively enacting transformative critical and culturally relevant practices within the politically-charged and increasingly culturally diverse environments of today’s public schools.

Furthermore, given the increased interest in more nuanced critical and culturally relevant approaches that move beyond raced-based discussions of culture, such as CHHP, more teachers entering teacher education programs are actively seeking opportunities to go beyond discussions justifying the use of these practices through theoretical explorations (Emdin, 2016; Irby & Hall, 2010; Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013). When looking over student feedback teacher educators, both within and outside of traditional university-based programs, find that their students are coming to these courses to get beyond the “why” and into the “how” that they were unable to conceptualize through their own individual reading of the existing literature (Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013). Similarly, the findings of this study suggest that the enrolled teachers walked away with more concrete examples of how to translate the theoretical components of CHHP into practice, with many expanding beyond the rap-centric visions with which they entered and with a greater sense of urgency to act. As reported in Chapter V, all but one of the in-service teachers immediately incorporated some of the specific strategies and approaches in their own classrooms, often coming back to debrief with Dr. Ray and/or one of the teaching assistants to figure out how to continue to improve their approaches.
Therefore, I suggest that teacher education programs aiming to produce teachers prepared and motivated to *enact* practices they need to *see* and *actively* experience and engage with it from the perspective of a learner in order to fully understand the potential for transformational learning experiences with their own students. Dr. Ray’s enactment of hip-hop culture as praxis pushed many of the participating enrolled teachers out of their comfort zone. Whether their general feelings about the hip-hop-rooted approach were positive or negative, weekly participation in the course led to reflections on their own K-12 and prior teaching experiences. In most cases, the participating teachers reported that the discomfort they felt adjusting to the structures and delivery style of the course helped them to gain deeper insight into how uncomfortable students who find themselves forced to adjust who they are to fit into the dominant culture of schools.

In this regard, Dr. Ray’s enactment of the course created a culturally immersive experience that created *critical dissonance* (Cochran-Smith, 1991) between what they conceptualized as critical and culturally relevant practices prior to taking the course and the more nuanced understandings they gained throughout the semester. In her discussion of student-teaching programs aimed at preparing educators who teach against the grain, Cochran-Smith (1991) defines critical dissonance as “incongruity on a critical perspective” (p. 281). These programs are designed to disrupt the potentially conservative impacts of pre-service teachers’ experiences within schools through the simultaneous participation in courses and activities aimed at the development of more critical perspectives on issues of race, class, power, and gender (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Similarly, Dr. Ray’s course served as a critical space for the enrolled teachers who found themselves questioning some of the messages and approaches used in their other courses,
many of which they previously viewed as being one of the more critical courses on
campus, but began to notice areas where the curriculum and instructional approaches fell
short of fully embodying these critical and culturally relevant aims (Gorksi, 2010).

Echoing existing literature on the need to transform teacher education courses and
programs, the students found the ability to apply what they were learning in the CHHPTE
course to their other courses, school observations and teaching experiences useful in
developing their visions for critical culturally relevant teaching (Cochran-Smith, 1991;
Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Teachers need opportunities to discuss and interrogate the
potentially deficit-based narratives that are constructed and reinforced in schools that
they experience on a daily basis within the educational spaces they inhabit each day (be it
their other graduate school courses or the schools in which they teach/observe) (Villegas
& Lucas, 2002). Offering courses like the CHHPTE course, which is rooted in the lived
realities of the students most affected by these damaging narratives, enables the teachers
to examine the systemic structures that enable the production of such narratives through
new lenses increasing the opportunities for fresh perspectives on previously unforeseen
points of disruption. However, given hip-hop culture’s continued battle with educational
institutions (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Au, 2005), professors attempting to engage with
this work from within university-based programs may find themselves facing a similar
uphill battle.

Disrupting from Within

The final implication gleaned from the data presented and analyzed in this study
point to the potential barriers and affordances of disrupting from within. As illustrated in
the discussion of findings, Dr. Ray conceptualized both his presence at the university, and enactments of his hybridized hip-hop and academic identity and the CHHPTE course from within the institution as drops of water in the sea of change that he envisions slowly rising within the university and broader teacher education landscape. However, given that the same Eurocentric narratives and practices that produce barriers to the enactment of comprehensive critical and culturally relevant practices are also at play, and often produced from, higher institutions of learning, professors attempting to enact this work from within these institutions often find themselves facing deep-seated structural barriers.

Dr. Ray’s personal identification as a member of the hip-hop community was undoubtedly a factor in his comfort level with immersing the class so deeply in hip-hop culture, adding to existing HHBE and CHHP exploring nuanced, immersive enactments by cultural insiders (i.e. Akom, 2009; Hill, 2009; Williams, 2009). However, the pool of university-based programs’ faculty mirror that of the K-12 teacher pool, with people of color comprising less than 20% of the faculty since the 1980s (Allison, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Griffin, Ward, & Phillips, 2014; Zeichner, 2003). Additionally, while many teacher educators have K-12 experience, few have first-hand experience implementing effective practices in the culturally diverse, low-income schools and communities necessary to prepare teachers for today (Zeichner, 2003). As a result, teacher educators of color equipped with the necessary cultural and teaching experiences, such as Dr. Ray, often find the responsibility of organizing and covering courses dealing with issues of social justice and equity as well as supporting and counseling students of color on their shoulders (Ladson-Billings, 2005).
The dearth of faculty of color and/or those with adequate experience teaching in low-income urban environments, combined with a politically-charged teacher education landscape, places stakeholders of various reform agendas at odds, many times in the same department (Gay, 2005). This often results in contentious environments for teacher educators attempting to enact critical and culturally relevant courses, particularly for those of color and women (Allison, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Factors such as perceived biases during recruitment and hiring processes, accent discrimination, undervaluation of their research interests and a plethora of other issues at the departmental, institutional and national levels result in contentious work environment for many of these faculty of color. Faculty of color spend much of their time negotiating and navigating issues of racism identity and oppression, dealing with microaggressions (and some that are not so subtle) from both fellow faculty members and students questioning their academic intelligence, credibility and effectiveness as educators.

Consistently working under these conditions leave many faculty of color feeling isolated, unsupported and marginalized, making it difficult for them to feel free enacting their authentic identities within an environment that already views them as “less than” or “insufficient” in many ways (Allison, 2008; Griffin, Ward & Phillips, 2014; Whitfield-Harris & Lockhart, 2016). Given these pervasive and persistent structural barriers, Dr. Ray’s immersive approach that challenges dominant approaches utilized within the university as well as preconceived expectations from the enrolled students, exemplifies what feminist and womanist scholars refer to as an ethic of risk. Driven by a need for action, educators operating from an ethic of risk possess a moral fortitude and vision that
enables them to persevere in what can sometimes feel like a futile pursuit of social justice (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002; Welch, 1990).

**An ethic of risk.** In examining black women authors such as Toni Morrison and Mildred Taylor, White feminist theologian, Sharon Welch (1990) argued that these authors convey an ethic of risk in their portrayal of the struggle for social justice and equality as an intergenerational struggle. Inherent within the descriptions of the struggles of these authors’ characters (i.e. Morrison’s Pecola Breedlove in The Bluest Eye and the various community members in Taylor’s children’s books) is the maturity to understand that “ideals are far from realization and not easily won, that partial change occurs only through hard work and persistent struggles of generations” (Welch, 1990, p. 58). A defining characteristic of an ethic of risk is the commitment to care and act even when there is no guarantee that one will see the fruits of their labor in their lifetime, or ever.

Examining the pedagogy of Black womanist teachers, Black feminist scholar Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2002) noted a similar sense of moral fortitude and interdependence among educators operating with an ethic of risk. Womanist engagement with oppressive realities occurs in spite of an educator's recognition that social injustice is deep-seated and not easily dismantled. Analysis of observation and interview data revealed many instances where Dr. Ray explicitly expressed similar motivations in his commitment to fight for social justice for urban/hip-hop youth from within the institution. Through his enactment of the CHHPTE course, Dr. Ray displayed not only his understanding of the depth of the realities of the oppressive system within which he operates, but also that his commitment to social justice “rests on a concept of self that is part of rather than apart from other people” (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 81).
Therefore, I suggest that teacher educators seeking to enact effective and comprehensive critical and culturally relevant education look to educators informed by an ethic of risk who “see their action as a humble, yet essential contribution to an extensive, collaborative, and enduring project of social change” (Beaubeuf-Lafontant, 2002, p. 83). As a result, they often structure pedagogical practices and classroom environments that directly respond to the needs of their students, a characteristic also seen in the emphasis on student involvement in the co-construction of classroom and instructional practices within CHHP and one that Dr. Ray expressed numerous times. Specifically, when operating with an ethic of risk educators often frame their work as a mission and those who take on this work as having the spiritual resources, and, I add, cultural understandings, to undertake said mission (Beaubeuf-Lafontant, 2002).

**Applying a CHHPTE approach.** Guided by Dr. Ray’s example, university-based teacher educators should explore areas in which they can adjust their current pedagogical practices to root them in the lived realities and cultural understandings of actual students in classrooms awaiting pre-service teachers in their upcoming field experiences and/or in-service teachers’ current students. If teacher educators continue to rely solely on peer-reviewed, academic texts they will continue to provide strong theoretical foundations without any opportunities to help facilitate critical dialogue around examples rooted in current realities. Doing so also sends explicit and implicit messages that valuable sources of knowledge and skills in the development of enrolled teachers’ philosophies about teaching and visions for themselves as educators, making it difficult for teachers to see value in the dominant cultural texts through which their students may come to know and be in the world (Baszile, 2007; Emdin, 2016).
However, as explored above and in Chapter II, the two-tiered cycle of the demographic imperative results in a teacher educator work force that is predominantly White and far-removed from the daily realities facing students and teachers in underserved and underrepresented communities (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Thus, echoing the call for the transformation of the structure of pre-service teacher education programs, I suggest that schools of education build stronger connections between communities, schools (teachers, administrators and students), and the teacher education faculty and enrolled teachers to encourage the development of collaborative learning experiences informed by the current realities facing students and teachers in today’s public schools (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Gay, 2005).

If schools of education want to better prepare enrolled teachers for culturally-diverse student bodies, they must actively listen to and incorporate diverse perspectives, especially those of the administrators, teachers and, most importantly, students in the schools they hope to send teachers into. In doing so they can develop relevant, responsive and comprehensive models of preparation that consider both the cultural and political aspects of teaching by utilizing the expertise of school administrators, faculty and students to provide key insights into previously unexplored and unvalued experiences and texts. Moreover, this approach allows schools of education to model the type of collaborative processes prevalent within existing critical and culturally relevant literature, providing enrolled pre- and in-service teachers with concrete examples and potentially transformational immersive experiences to refer back to upon entering their own classrooms.
Suggestions for Future Research

This study provided insight into the affordances and barriers of enacting a course rooted in the dominant cultural lens of traditionally marginalized populations. However, given that this was only a small snapshot of there are two key areas of focus that might help to present a more holistic and nuanced understanding of how such courses can impact the effectiveness of the learning experiences within university-based programs.

First, noting that factors such as gender, sexuality and location play a major role in how hip-hop identities are negotiated and enacted, one area of further research is to explore how CHHPTE is enacted, experienced and interpreted in various settings and with professors of different racial, ethnic, and gender identities. In particular, although great attention is given to systemic racial discrimination within the lyrics and images of many American hip-hop songs, these songs are sometimes filled with misogynistic, sexually violent language and imagery as was explored in the Tupac lesson briefly discussed in Chapter IV. These songs contribute to the production and persistence of narratives that confine women to being defined through the male gaze.

For this reason, women who identify as members of the hip-hop community often express the tensions they feel participating in and defending a culture that simultaneously fights for social justice and has a history of celebrating the denigration of women. Exploring the potential differences in both construction and enactment of the course could hold even more insight into the potential of CHHPTE as a transformative tool in the preparation of effective social justice-oriented educators. Given that women have made considerable contributions to discourses about hip-hop culture, with women around the world finding it useful in addressing “their subaltern realities as marginalized women
of color” (Hobson & Bartlow, 2008, p. 5). In this regard, exploring the enactments of CHHPTE in courses led by professors of different gender identities and sexual orientations could present insight into the potential nuances of the lived realities of these populations that may have been overlooked or inadequately covered given the CHHPTE course of focus was constructed and enacted by a professor identifying as a straight, cis-male.

Additionally, many of the participating teachers expressed that the immersive experience in the course motivated them to take action, with the majority of the in-service teachers attempting to incorporate some of the ideas into their instructional practices as they were taking the course. A potential second area of further research involves a longitudinal study following a group of teachers back into their classrooms the year after taking the course to see how they incorporate the skills and concepts learned in the CHHPTE course into their instructional practices, if at all, and the ways in which their students experience and interpret them. While this study provided strong evidence that participation in the course results in shifts in mindsets essential to the enactment of more critical praxis, existing research highlights how teachers can often resort back to traditional approaches when attempting to translate theory into practice (Emdin, 2011a). Extending research into the enrolled teachers’ classrooms could shed light on the longevity of these newly acquired visions and mindsets as well as the factors that serve as supports and barriers. Gaining this insight would give university-based faculty and programs more specific ways to bolster the effectiveness of their courses and curricula.
Reflection on Study

The title of this dissertation is “What Really Goes On: Exploring a University-Based Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy Teacher Education Course,” based on the song *What Really Goes On* by hip-hop rap group, A Tribe Called Quest. Initially, I selected this title because the statement *what really goes on* spoke to the most frequently asked questions that arose as I read through literature on hip-hop pedagogy and when I engaged in dialogue with those unfamiliar with the approach: What does that involve? What does it look like? How do/will people respond to it? Who is this approach for? Who can/should do this work? In doing so, I set out to present data and analysis that would provide a glimpse or snapshot of how CHHP is enacted, experienced and interpreted within one university-based setting. While I feel as though the data and analysis provided in this dissertation provide such a snapshot *pedagogically*, in reflecting on my choices I recognize that it is impossible to assume that this study presents a complete picture of the internal and external forces at play.

Although I explored and discussed the university’s mission statement and general emphasis on social justice and equity-oriented practices, the choice to focus primarily on what went on in the CHHPTE classroom may have limited my ability to see how the course, and Dr. Ray, are perceived and received at the institutional level. In Chapter III I briefly mentioned that while Dr. Ray’s other course focusing on urban and multicultural education is listed as a requirement for the pre-service teachers in his department, the CHHPTE course remains an elective. While this may speak to Dr. Ray’s desire to keep the space open and available to all, it also begs questions as to the degree to which courses rooted so deeply in the cultural frames of reference of traditionally marginalized
populations are valued and supported within the university. If I were to do the study again, I would attempt to speak to department/program chairs, other faculty members within the university mentioned by the enrolled teachers for their similar approaches and course content. In doing so I could explore the broader culture of the university, including the supports, barriers and resources that exist for professors attempting to enact courses such as Dr. Ray’s in this particular university and provide insight for those seeking to do the same in similar environments.

Additionally, while I chose to focus only on one teacher educator in order to deeply explore his conceptualization and enactment of CHHPTE, I made the opposite choice in presenting data from twelve enrolled students. Seeking to ensure that I had a robust amount of data and wanting to include as many perspectives and experiences as possible in order to present the experiences and interpretations of the “typical” student, I included all volunteers. However, focusing on only a few students (no more than four) may have given me the opportunity to spend more time exploring the nuances of their experiences. Specifically, where the students spoke about the differences in their experiences and behaviors in their other courses it was very difficult to find time to include this in the data collection process with so many interviews to manage. I also felt that attempting to do so with one or two students amongst the twelve would provide tangential data that I feared would distract me during the data analysis process and thus made the choice to only do this on one occasion where I attended one session of Dr. Ray’s other course in which three of the participants were also enrolled or sitting in.

Finally, it is important to note that the aim of this study is not evaluative and in no way is intended to explore the effectiveness of CHHPTE or Dr. Ray’s approach
specifically. As I discussed in Chapters II and III, tenets of CHHP frame my own assumptions of knowledge production and acquisition. In the conceptualization, enactment and presentation of this study I situate myself among those calling for new directions in teacher education and the transformation of approaches to teaching and learning that challenge dominant narratives concerning teaching and learning. However, the intention of this study is merely to fill in gaps within existing literature that result in lingering questions as to how to prepare teachers to do this work (Irby, Hall & Hill, 2013). In focusing on one teacher educator in one university and the personal accounts of twelve of his students in a single semester, it is impossible to evaluate the course, nor was it the intention given the questions that guided the study. However, as discussed in the previous section, further research is suggested to explore how teachers incorporate the new perspectives and tools gained in their instructional practices after taking the course, if at all.

### Final Thoughts

This study provided a snapshot of one enactment of CHHP teacher education in a university-based teacher education program, and was driven by my belief that new directions are needed to revitalize teaching and learning for today’s increasingly diverse youth population. Noting the growing body of research highlighting CHHP as a fresh approach, rooted in a cultural frame of reference that serves as the dominant language and lens of today’s youth, it seemed like a potentially fruitful, yet unexplored, area with potential to transform dominant approaches within teacher education. Additionally, given the role that institutions of higher learning play in perpetuating practices and narratives that contribute to the continued marginalization of certain populations, I found it critical
to explore the enactment of an approach aimed at the disruption of such practices and narratives from within.

Throughout my time in the CHHPTE course I was struck by the amount of passion that was evoked from the depth and energy of the conversations each week. Guided by hip-hop’s emphasis on critical self-analysis and authenticity and his own commitment to transforming narratives impacting the educational experiences of traditionally marginalized populations, Dr. Ray pushed the teachers to dig into the nuances of hip-hop culture to unearth new pedagogical tools and critical understandings of their socio-political positions in society (Akom, 2009; Baszile, 2009; Emdin, 2011b). The CHHPTE course challenged the enrolled teachers, bringing them face-to-face with uncomfortable revelations about their own privileges and biases and the impact these have on the ways in which they view and engage with their students.

While the CHHPTE course was strongly influenced by the practices and artifacts of hip-hop culture, to both Dr. Ray and the enrolled teachers it was much bigger than hip-hop. The immersive experience of the course awakened new sensibilities and revitalized the teachers’ passions and commitments to enacting critical and culturally relevant practices aimed at equity and social justice. Thus, I suggest university-based teacher education programs and educators seeking to equip teachers with the necessary tools with which to enact transformational pedagogical practices need to provide them with equally transformational experiences within their teacher education courses. Doing so, will provide the enrolled pre- and in-service teachers with new cultural frames of reference, welcoming new perspectives rooted in the realities of their future students and opening new possibilities for the disruption of the status quo.
CODA

My commitment to and advocacy for the inclusion of courses rooted in critical and culturally relevant approaches, such as Dr. Ray’s CHHPTE course, is undoubtedly evident within the narrative presented in this case study. Frequent reflection via dialogue with critical friends, informal chats with participants, and memo writing/journaling in my researcher reflection journal and field notes helped me to manage any underlying biases and assumptions. However, my commitments to the transformation and development of teacher education for social justice and equity heavily informed the data collection and analysis process, and firmly situates this study in the realm of advocacy research (Cameron et al, 1993; Gilbert 1997; Howe & Moses, 1999; Lubienski, Weitzel & Lubienski, 2009).

Common critiques of advocacy research, or those studies on and for social issues/subjects that are of great concern to the researcher, focus on the impact one’s commitments have on the researcher’s objectivity and the potential for misrepresentation or manipulation of data to fit one’s moral-political perspective (Gilbert, 1997; Howe & Moses, 1999). Many argue that educational research is always advocacy research “inasmuch as it unavoidably advances some moral-political perspective,” and often directly impacts the educational experiences and opportunities of “vulnerable student populations” (Howe & Moses, 1999). As a result, there is a moral and ethical responsibility to remain transparent about what the intentions behind the work are and how the researcher navigated and negotiated methodological dilemmas that arose in the collection, analysis and, most importantly, presentation of data.
While I do not consider myself a hip-hop cultural insider in that I do not actively participate in the creative and communicative cultural practices, I am a long-time lover and consumer of the musical genre. Connecting with everything from the lyrical cadence to the musicality and syncopation of the drum and bass-heavy beats to the clever word play and passionate storytelling, I found that many of the songs spoke directly to certain experiences as a Black person in America that I often had trouble communicating. I do, however, consider myself an insider in the world of critical and culturally relevant pedagogical practices and as such experienced a few methodological dilemmas in the decision-making process of how to adequately and honestly represent the data without crossing any moral and ethical boundaries. In the following sections I briefly discuss some of the methodological dilemmas I encountered in the process of doing this study.

**The Confidentiality Dilemma**

Critical Hip-Hop Pedagogy (CHHP) “identifies research as a significant site of struggle between Western research and decolonizing frameworks that reflect the inherent ability of people of color to accurately assess our own strengths and needs, and our right to act upon them in this world” (Akom, 2009; p. 55). Aligned with this emphasis on social justice and action in both research and practice, this case study provides a glimpse of the potentially transformational experiences that are possible when one’s identity becomes their practice. To me, the power in Dr. Ray’s approach was in his unapologetic and explicit presentation of his hybridized identities and the depth to which who he was informed his practice. Thinking back to Chapter IV, the CHHPTE course of focus in this study came to be as a result of Dr. Ray’s decision to no long separate his personal self
and private interests from his professional/academic self and work. Given this, a major
dilemma that arose throughout the conceptualization, analysis and writing process was
whether to keep his identity confidential, and how to do so while still acknowledging the
role his personal identity played in the development of the course.

In making this decision, I thought back to my initial motivations for doing this
study. It was not my intent to highlight specific teacher educators, but rather to explore
how university-based CHHPTE manifests in practice. To gain insight into how Dr. Ray’s
practices manifested did not require knowing specifically who he is but did require deep
exploration of his personal and theoretical beliefs, socio-political commitments and
cultural understandings that guide his work. Adequate representation of this information
called for the divulgence of a few details about his past experiences both inside and
outside of the university. However, I ultimately chose to de-center Dr. Ray as much as
possible so as not to detract from the main story and keep the focus on the approach and
not the pedagogue.

**The Race and Racism Dilemma**

Although not explicitly centered as a dominant theme in the analysis of the
CHHPTE course, race and racism had a strong presence throughout the data collection
and analysis process. Existing research on educating predominantly White student bodies
on topics of culture and diversity often frame White students as “resistant,” “defensive,”
and/or “defiant” as they are asked to look at the harsh realities of an unjust and
inequitable society (Gorski, 2008; Lowenstein, 2005). However, I quickly noted that
tensions arose for all students as they adjusted to a course framed in cultural norms
different than those rooted in the Eurocentric ideals that governed the majority of their K-12 experiences.

Regardless of whether students identified as part of the hip-hop community or not, the course required a re-conceptualization of what it meant to be a student in a graduate-level university-based course. There were important moments such as African-American student, Alicia’s, reflection on not feeling the need to have to speak up and cover issues of race and diversity like she normally did in her other courses and Megan’s revelations about the ways in which schooling had always privileged the norms most closely associated with her White, middle-class upbringing, which are both discussed in Chapter V. Yet overall, there were powerful transformations in students’ conceptualizations of valuable approaches to and processes of teaching and learning, which were not clearly categorized along racial and/or cultural lines. In making the choice not to explicitly center race and racism, I am not implying that there were not nuanced differences in how the White and Black students interpreted and experienced the course. However, my choice to focus on the broader themes of ideological transformation was made to address the need for research that moves beyond “addressing the attitudes and lack of knowledge of White pre-service students” into what it takes to prepare “excellent multicultural and culturally responsive teachers” (Sleeter, 2001, p. 94).

The Gender Dilemma

Similarly, in presenting the data I chose not to emphasize and critique the perceived male dominance in the course. During the semester that I spent in the CHHPTE
course Dr. Ray selected two male teaching assistants, who occasionally led the class, and were deeply involved in the planning of each session. There was also a concerted effort to include perspectives, experiences and explicit discussions of issues of sexuality and gender in the course, particularly in the last half of the semester as many women began to speak out about the lack of such discussions and limited space to bring them up. This was not surprising given the course’s roots in a genre that has a history of prioritizing the contributions of men, even amid constant reminders of the major cultural contributions of female artists, DeeJays, hip-hop historians and scholars (Hobson & Bartlow, 2008).

Even given this, there was a very powerful and necessary story in the fact that a Black man was teaching a course so heavily rooted in norms of hip-hop masculinity, which are usually denigrated and de-valued within educational spaces. I conducted this research in a society where as a Black woman I look in the media and see the dehumanization of Black men constantly. The fear I live with about my Black male family members and friends impacts me on a daily basis as I worry about whether they will be unjustly targeted out of a deep-seeded fear of Black masculinity. Additionally, educational research is replete with statistics about “educational genocide” (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015) of Black boys due to their over-representation in special education and remedial classes, higher rates of suspension and expulsion, and over-population in juvenile detention centers and prisons.

Although the higher education profession remains heavily male, particularly in the higher ranking positions, Black males remain underrepresented in the professoriate, reflecting the aforementioned academic and social barriers and issues in the recruitment and retention efforts (Allison, 2008; Griffin, Ward & Phillips, 2013). Many of the Black
males who do enter the professoriate working in predominantly White institutions (PWIs) often find themselves facing “Black misandry,” which is defined as “exaggerated pathological aversion toward Black men created and reinforced in societal, institution, and individual ideologies, practices, and behaviors” and “exists to justify and reproduce subordination and oppression of Black men” (Smith, Yosso et al., 2007 as quoted in Griffin, Ward & Phillips, 2013, p. 1356). Similar to the Black misogyny experienced by Black female faculty in PWIs, Black misandry ideology often results in racial battle fatigue, fuels imposter syndrome and inhibits the development of a campus community (Griffin, Ward & Phillips, 2013).

As a Black man leading a course of predominantly White students, Dr. Ray did not tone down his discussions of race and racism to make it more palatable for certain audiences, he did not pick songs or other hip-hop artifacts that sugar-coated the harsh realities of life on the margins of a society that both uses urban/Black/hip-hop culture for entertainment and financial gain and then denigrates and de-values it in the same breath, and he did not shy away from the intense conversations in which students often pushed back against his hip-hop cultural frames of reference or pedagogical approaches. I absolutely agree that this raises powerful and important questions as to the hierarchical distributions of power across gender lines, begging the question of what the responses by students and fellow faculty members would be were Dr. Ray a Black woman, and ranking at the top of my list for suggestions for further research (see Chapter VI). However, in the face of long-standing criminalization, denigration, dehumanization, and de-valuing of Black men, particularly in the field of education, Dr. Ray’s story presents a powerful counter-narrative about Black masculinity in educational spaces.
REFERENCES


Appendix A - First Round Teacher Educator Interview Protocol

Interviewee: ______________________________________
Interviewer: _____________________________________________________
Interview Number: ______
Interview Location: _______________________________________________
Date: ____________________________________
Start Time: __________________________ End time: ________________

1. A number of definitions and conceptualizations of “hip-hop based education” and “critical hip-hop pedagogy” exist within the literature. How do you define and/or conceptualize these terms? Are they interchangeable?

2. A lot of the literature discusses a need to understand hip-hop as “lived experience”. What does this mean to you in the context of this course and the pedagogical practices you employ?
   a. Given that a majority of the students enrolled in your course do not identify with hip-hop as their lived experiences, what about their experiences tend to be helpful in their understanding hip-hop’s educational potential? What about their experiences tends to be a hindrance in their understanding?

3. What do you think is the biggest misconception about hip-hop based education/critical hip-hop pedagogy?
   a. How do you combat or challenge this misconception within your work both inside and outside of the classroom?

4. Similarly, there are various perspectives on the aims/goals and responsibilities of formal university-based teacher education/preparation. What do you think the primary aims and goals of university-based teacher education/preparation should be?

5. Tell me about the development of <name of course>. Why did you choose to teach this course within the university space? Within this particular university space?
   a. In your experience what usually motivates students to enroll in this course?
6. How do you prepare for each class session?

7. Describe a class session (or more than one) that sticks out as going exceptionally well. What makes this session/these sessions stick out for you?

8. What do you want enrolled students to walk away with after taking your course?
   a. Can you think of one or more students who exemplify and/or embody this vision?
Appendix B - Enrolled Student Interview Protocol

Interviewee: ______________________________________
Interviewer: _____________________________________________________
Interview Number: ______
Interview Location: _______________________________________________
Date: ____________________________________
Start Time: __________________________ End time: ________________

Pre-Service Teacher Background
1. Describe your K-12 educational experience.
   a. Describe the cultures and environments of the schools you attended.
   b. Who were some of your most memorable teachers/what were some of
      your most memorable classes and why?
   c. How might your teachers and/or peers describe you socially? as a student?

2. Tell me about your journey to becoming a teacher. What led you to pursue
   teaching as a career?
   a. How did you choose this particular institution and pre-service teacher
      education program?

Navigating Messages
3. A large debate within teacher education and general education reform concerns
   what “effective” teachers need to know and be able to do. How do you think your
   program and/or institution defines and measures “effective” teaching? [PROMPT:
   What should “effective” teachers know and be able to do?]
   a. How do you define and measure “effective” teaching?

4. In what ways do you think your program is structured to prepare you to work with
   diverse student populations?

5. What key social issues and core dilemmas do you think are currently having the
   greatest impact on public K-12 teaching and learning?
   a. How are these issues manifesting within and/or impacting the courses and
      experiences within your pre-service program?
**Course Expectations**

6. Discuss your decision to take this course. How does it fit within your course of study in the pre-service program and your vision for yourself as an educator?

7. Prior to taking this course, what understandings and/or experiences did you have of/with hip-hop and hip-hop culture?
   a. What messages about hip-hop and hip-hop culture are projected in society? How, if at all, did this inform your decision to take this course?

8. Based on what you knew about the course and/or hip-hop culture what did you expect and/or want to learn throughout the semester?

**Course Experiences**

9. What course structures/materials/components have you found most useful in your conceptualization of hip-hop pedagogy?
   a. How, if at all has this impacted your perception/definition of “effective teaching”?

10. At this point in the course how would you define/describe hip-hop based education and/or critical hip-hop pedagogy?

11. What do you think are the key takeaways, aims/goals and core issues that guide the development and implementation of critical hip-hop based pedagogical practices?
   a. How has this manifested within your experiences in this course?
Appendix C - Enrolled Student Visual Activity Protocol

Enrolled Student Follow-Up Interview/Visual Activity

Interviewee: ______________________________________  Interview Number: ______

Interviewer: _____________________________________________________

Interview Location: _______________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________

Start Time: __________________________ End time: ________________

Before each interview responses from questions pertaining to students’ expectations, experiences and interpretations of the course and hip-hop pedagogy are copied and pasted into the word cloud text box to make three separate clouds to represent each of the three categories. Once the initial word clouds are made the researcher adjusts so that commonly used words (i.e. is, are, be, the, etc) are removed or made smaller. The clouds are then saved for review by the participant in the interview.

Directions: So I have taken your responses from your previous interview and made three separate word clouds, one for your expectations and prior knowledge of the course/material, one for your overall experience of the course/material and one for your interpretation of hip-hop pedagogy. We are going to look at these three clouds, discuss what you notice about them and then make some adjustments so that they are more representative of your expectations, experiences and interpretations now.

Questions to aid in reflection:
1. What do you notice in each of the original clouds? What sticks out to you and why?
2. What do your original clouds reflect about your personal experiences and understandings prior to taking the course?
3. Describe the changes that you are making. Which words did you add? Which words did you erase? Which words did you make bigger? Which words did you make smaller? What do these changes reflect about your experiences in the course and understandings of hip-hop pedagogy? Why did you make these changes?
4. How are the new charts reflective of your visions of your beliefs about what it means to teach/be a teacher? How are they reflective of your personal visions for yourself as an educator?
Appendix D – Samples of Products from Visual Reflective Activity

PRE-REFLECTION/UN-EDITED
Appendix E - Enrolled Pre- and In-service Teacher Letter of Consent

Protocol Title: “What Really Goes On”: Exploring a University-Based Critical Hip-Hop Teacher Education Course

Principal Investigator: Courtney Rose, Teachers College, cer2163@tc.columbia.edu

INTRODUCTION
You are being invited to participate in this research study called “‘What Really Goes On’: Exploring a University-Based Critical Hip-Hop Teacher Education Course.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you are a pre-service teacher currently enrolled in a university-based course aimed at preparing teachers to enact critical hip-hop pedagogy in a K-12 classroom. Approximately 6-10 people will participate in this portion of the study and it will take no more than 6 hours of your time outside of the regularly scheduled course time across the semester to complete.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?
This study is being done to gain deeper understanding of how teacher education for the enactment of critical hip-hop pedagogues is conceptualized, enacted, experienced and taken up within a university-based teacher education environment.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an individual interview with the principal researcher. This interview will not last more than 60 minutes, but can be broken up across multiple interviews given your schedule and availability. During the interview you will be asked to discuss and reflect on your general experiences in the course, including the course/instructional materials, various activities, and key issues/themes/concepts that inform the course. With your permission this interview will be audio-recorded. After the study is completed and the final writing of findings is written, the audio-recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate. Again, you will be given a pseudonym or false name in order to keep your identity confidential and the recording will be stored in a password protected file.
Additionally, throughout the semester, you will be asked to participate in 2-3 focus groups run by the principal investigator to engage in a collective discussion/reflection with other participating pre-service teachers enrolled in your course classroom. Again, this session will be audio-recorded with the permission of participants, and I will be taking detailed notes throughout the entire meeting. As with the interviews audio recordings will be stored in password protected files, and no one will listen to them other than the principal investigator. Additionally, everyone will be asked not to share what is discussed in the focus groups outside of the session. Each session will take 60-90 minutes based on the schedule selected by all participants.
The focus groups will take place at Teachers College, the time and specific location to be selected based on group response to a Doodle poll. Your individual interview will be held when and where is most convenient for you. In addition to the above, the principal researcher will observe course sessions throughout the semester. The purpose of these
observations will be to document and gain insight into the daily structure and functioning of the course and to provide context for the responses in individual interviews and focus group sessions. There will be no video or audio recording during these interviews but the researcher will take detailed hand-written field notes during this time similar to that of the focus group.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. However, there are some risks to consider. You might feel embarrassed to discuss problems, tensions or feelings of confusion and/or discomfort that you experienced in the course of study or while teaching. However, you do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don’t want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty. You might feel concerned that things you say might get back to your professor. Please be assured that no information shared during your interview, focus group, or on your feedback forms will be shared with the professor of the course. Additionally, the principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and in a personal file drawer.

WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of teacher education to better understand the best way to train teachers to effectively teach culturally diverse student populations.

WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?
You will not be paid to participate, but there are no costs to you for taking part in this study. Snacks and light refreshments will be provided during the focus group and individual interviews (depending time on location).

WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?
The study is over when you have completed the interview, focus groups, and the course is completed. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven’t finished.

PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY
The investigator will keep all written materials in an unmarked file drawer in a locked apartment where she lives alone. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored in password-protected files on a computer that is also password protected. What is on the audio-recordings will be transcribed and the audio-recording will then be deleted at the completion of the study. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.
HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?
This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator. The results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING
Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don’t wish to be recorded, you will not be able to participate in this research study.

____ I give my consent to be recorded ________________________________
Signature

____ I do not consent to be recorded ________________________________
Signature

WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY
___ I consent to allow written materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College _______________________
Signature

___ I do not consent to allow written, materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University _______________________________
Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT
The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes ________________________ No ________________________
Initial  ____________________ Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes ________________________ No ________________________
Initial  ____________________ Initial

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?
If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Courtney Rose, at 954-608-1082 or at cer2163@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Oyler at co74@tc.columbia.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.

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**PARTICIPANT’S RIGHTS**

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future student status or grades.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

Signature: ___________________________
Appendix F - Teacher Educator Letter of Consent

Protocol Title: “What Really Goes On”: Exploring a University-Based Critical Hip-Hop Teacher Education Course

Principal Investigator: Courtney Rose, Teachers College, cer2163@tc.columbia.edu

INTRODUCTION
You are being invited to participate in this research study called “‘What Really Goes On’: Exploring a University-Based Critical Hip-Hop Teacher Education Course.” You may qualify to take part in this research study because you are currently teaching a university-based course that is aimed at the preparation of teachers to enact critical hip-hop pedagogy within K-12 classrooms. The study will be a case study of one teacher and 6-10 of pre-service teachers enrolled in the course and will require no more than 2 hours of your time outside of the regularly scheduled course time throughout the semester.

WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?
This study is being done to gain deeper understanding of how teacher education for the enactment of critical hip-hop pedagogues is conceptualized, enacted, experienced and taken up within a university-based teacher education environment.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by the principal investigator. During the interview you will be asked to discuss how the course was initially conceptualized and developed, manifestations of CHHP, and your overall aims and goals for enrolled students. This interview will take no longer than one hour and can be split into more than one session given your overall availability and schedule. It will also be audio-recorded to allow for accuracy and thick, rich descriptions in the analysis and presentation of findings. All audio recordings will be stored in a password protected file on a password protected computer. After the study is completed and the final write up of findings is done the audio recording will be deleted. You will be given a pseudonym or false name in order to keep your identity confidential.
In addition to the above, the principal researcher will observe course sessions throughout the semester. The purpose of these observations will be to document and gain insight into the daily structure and functioning of the course and to provide context for the individual interviews held with the teacher educator and participating enrolled pre-service teachers. These observations will not be audio or video recorded, but the principal researcher will take detailed hand-written field notes.

WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
This is a minimal risk study, which means the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examinations or tests. The principal investigator is taking precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from
discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and a file drawer in her locked apartment where she lives alone.

**WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**
There is no direct benefit to you for participating in this study. Participation may benefit the field of teacher education to better understand the best way to train teachers to effectively teach diverse student populations.

**WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?**
There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

**WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?**
The study is over when you have completed the interview(s), and all classroom observations are complete. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven’t finished.

**PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY**
The investigator will keep all written materials in an unmarked file drawer in a locked apartment where she lives alone. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored in password protected files on a computer that is also password protected. What is on the audio-recording will be transcribed and the audio-recording will then be deleted at the completion of the study. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. Regulations require that research data be kept for at least three years.

**HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?**
This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator. The results of this study may be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published.

**CONSENT FOR AUDIO RECORDING**
Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don’t wish to be recorded, you will still be able to participate in this study.

I give my consent to be recorded ____________________________

Signature

I do not consent to be recorded ____________________________

Signature
WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY

___ I consent to allow written and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College _________________________ Signature

___ I do not consent to allow written and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University _________________________ Signature

OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes ________________________   No_______________________ Initial                                                  Initial

I give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes ________________________   No_______________________ Initial                                                  Initial

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?

If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Courtney Rose, at 954-608-1082 or at cer2163@tc.columbia.edu. You can also contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Celia Oyler at co74@tc.columbia.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email IRB@tc.edu. Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120th Street, New York, NY 1002.

The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.
PARTICIPANT’S RIGHTS

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future: employment.

- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.

- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.

- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.

- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

My signature means that I agree to participate in this study

Print name: ________________________________ Date: ____________________

Signature: ________________________________