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BEATS, RHYMES AND LIFE: COUNTERING THE ENACTMENT OF SYSTEMIC WHITENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION - HIP-HOP TOOLS AND PRACTICES

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BEATS, RHYMES AND LIFE: COUNTERING THE ENACTMENT OF SYSTEMIC
WHITENESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION - HIP-HOP TOOLS AND PRACTICES

By

Adam C. Freas

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By

Adam C. Freas

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father who decided to raise this kid in the south and on the west coast, which had profound influence on the way I engage the world. You both have been supportive of anything I pursue and for that I am eternally grateful. My brother who, no matter what struggles he has dealt with, has always showed his love and support for baby bro. To my wife, Tuesday, who has and continues to support me in all my crazy endeavors, while we raise some of the most amazing kids in the world. Miles, Maceo and Xiomara, may this document serve as a reminder to stay true to your passion and understand the importance of seeking humanity amidst any and all challenges you run into. Papa loves you.

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BEATS, RHYMES AND LIFE: COUNTERING THE ENACTMENT OF SYSTEMIC
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Abstract

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2021

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact Hip-Hop culture can have on white faculty who are committed to interrogating their identity and the constructs of whiteness, as it relates to implementing a sustainable process to interrogate race as a critically self-reflective educator and the development of a culturally sustaining practice in urban educational spaces. This qualitative study aimed to capture the experiences of the participants and to inform future efforts that challenge whiteness and identity amongst community college faculty and their role as educators by exposing them to educational tools and practices of Hip-Hop culture.

With an emphasis on whiteness, power and privilege, this study engaged white community college faculty to not only look at themselves as educators but also how their influence impacts students on campus. The study used a cypher method to have participants engage in a series of interviews and workshops. Findings from this study suggest that Hip-Hop Based educational practices can offer tools for educators to engage in identity work and provide an opportunity to engage race, power, and whiteness. The implications from the study offers scholars beginning steps for further study around the relationship between Hip-Hop as a tool to engage white faculty with race and critical self reflection. It also presents implications for educators looking to further explore Hip-Hop Based Education as a tool for culturally responsive education, building community and liberatory practices.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

While explaining the oppressive realities for people of color in America in his iconic text *Fire Next Time* (1963), James Baldwin reflects on whites' inability to break free of this demonstrative power identity, explaining, "They are, in effect, still trapped in a history which they do not understand, and until they understand it, they cannot be released from it" (p. 17). Even today whiteness continues to foster oppressive systems and practices more often than not carried out by individuals identified as white. These acts uphold a larger system resting on over 350 years of white supremacist ideologies (Feagin, 2013). This larger system, which works at keeping whites with social and institutional power over people of color, includes many of the institutions that shape our society, such as government, financial institutions, and higher education (DiAngelo, 2011).

As DiAngelo (2011) explains, humans understand others and the world around them through their socialization into binary social groupings or labels, which is largely influenced by knowing which groups they are not a part of (Delgado & Stefancic, 1997). In the case of whiteness, knowing your placement in this group is commonly defined by what can be categorized as not white. Furthermore, the fluid existence of whiteness historically problematizes defining whiteness (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2017). Whiteness cannot be simply explained as a racial classification but must be connected to its larger pervasive impact. For this study, whiteness will be defined as a tiered personal and social construct of complex contradictions, which contains privileged racial identity while simultaneously operating as a social location and historical systemic oppressive norms that determine power in all cultural, economic and political

structures. (Charbeneau, 2015; Harris, 1993; Leonard, 2009; Wander, Martin & Nakayama, 2004).

In the case of higher education, the presence of whiteness exists in macro and micro forms from state, district, and campus policies, hiring efforts, normed practices in the classroom, and pedagogical approaches, all complicit in upholding white supremacy (Allen, 2001; Iverson, 2007; Leonardo, 2004; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Powell, 2012; Pittman, 2012). This list identifies a common thread that exists throughout higher education, which is the white identity of the actors in each space. With this understanding a layer of this study has explored how identity impacts faculty practices, which influence how they approach their craft as well as treat students who are often from different racial and ethnic backgrounds than the educators. The recruitment of faculty was intentional in recruiting educators who are already invested in student centered practices which includes acknowledging the common thread of whiteness throughout higher education and the participants' connection to standing systems of privilege. No matter where on the spectrum of progressive practices and anti-racism commitment, or how participants see themselves, because there is an identified investment in working on themselves and their craft as educators this allows them to move expeditiously into the practitioner process. However, to find some common ground for the study, it was important that the group explore the importance of focusing on the micro issues of whiteness with additional discourse that examines the implications of how to create a shift on a macro level (DiAngelo, 2011).

Even within higher educational settings such as a space like the community college system, which boasts an often-diverse student body, it maintains a predominantly white teaching and student support population (Rodrigues, 2015). In the name of equity, diversity, and other trendy campus objectives, these issues are softly addressed through one-time workshops, campus

readers, or temporary programming, lacking a consistent tool and practice for long-term critical counter approaches. A common issue in these approaches is that it becomes less about truly engaging topics of race, whiteness and anti-racism, and more about promulgating a safe experience that will assuage whites from challenging growth (Leonardo, 2010). Even spaces of whiteness that aim to be anti-racist fall short due to systemic norms and egos entrenched in whiteness. Looking to whites that navigate and thrive in systems of whiteness to fix this issue seems unlikely. To counter this notion, Rose (2014) uses the disparate writings of Mansbach (2007) to explore the possibilities of hegemonic white masculine minds that purposefully recognize the possibilities of critical self-assessment and identity development through “black cultural productions” (p. 20). In particular, Mansbach (2007) communicates the influence of Hip-Hop on identity as he channels a pseudo fictional identity in his writing, “Angry Black White Boy”, further blurring the complexity of identity exploration in the often contradictory but very real spaces of Hip-Hop and its counter narrative framework.

In this chapter the aim is to provide some background to the larger overarching conversations around whiteness and discourse within the educational context. This assists in creating the pathway towards the specific impact of whiteness on white faculty in spaces of higher education. This study is guided by the impact that whiteness has on community college campuses where the structures, principles, and practices of white supremacist reality have long standing existed. Amidst this exploration, I argue for the usage of Hip-Hop as a tool and pedagogical philosophy that supports the successful development of educators rooted in social justice and equity minded practices. It must also be noted that in this paper white or whiteness will always be presented in lowercase format as an attempt to minimize the importance of the word.

Background of the Study

As whiteness permeates through all fabrics of U.S. society, the response is more than just identifying the subjugating components, but what possibility is there to dismantle such an oppressive fixture? As much as race is a fictional concept, it is very tangible in the lives of those experiencing the power and privilege that comes white supremacy, and much more real and consequential for those outside of whiteness. In the most recent presidential elections, the concepts and issues of race unapologetically resurfaced. Middle class liberal whites were shocked and possibly lulled by the imagination of colorblindness around the appointment of our first black president.

Whiteness is a construct that formed prior to the inception of the United States of America and continues to be a pillar in the country's development which upholds long-standing oppressive structures and foster an identity of domination and privilege (Aveling, 2006; Painter, 2010). One of those marquee spaces of whiteness is the educational institution, which in an age of an increasingly diverse student population extends its oppressive limbs to the students and the communities they come from. In higher education, the increase of a diverse student population is happening much slower than the secondary schooling spaces. However, outside of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, white faculty members predominantly lead most higher education classrooms (Pittman, 2012).

For this study, the campus of focus is a community college that serves a majority of students of color and a faculty that is overwhelmingly white. This polarized racial makeup provides a space that more quickly exposes the need for white faculty engaged in critically reflecting on their whiteness, and how they and the campus can promote, develop and permanently infuse cultural sustaining practices that are entrenched in anti-racism. To achieve

such permanency, which is actually a pathway towards humanization and freedom, by both the oppressor and oppressed, the study must be approached as a constant responsible conquest towards human completion (Friere, 1996).

Theoretical Perspective

Exploring justified beliefs is an important component of this study. It relates to the interest of deconstructing whiteness and its proclivity of a master narrative framed thinking, which historically entailed the muting of marginalized experiences and perspectives. In addition, this study is entrenched in an epistemology shaped by critical white studies and Hip-Hop culture. Advocating the questioning of both, a world that does not accept views from people of color as valid and the upholders of the normality and master narratives. This creates a deficit framework for thinking beyond the parameters of acceptable knowledge (Dillard, 2016; Milner, 2007). Through the introduction of Hip-Hop, which is seen as a complex counter narrative, due to its problematic articulations of reality, includes a transgressive approach to knowledge creation. The important aspect of infusing Hip-Hop culture is how it celebrates consistently violating and challenging the normed understanding of white thinking and knowing.

Theoretical Framework

The guiding framework for this study is white critical studies, which is rooted in critical race theory. In addition, this project is also shaped through the lens of Hip-Hop pedagogy and culture. Critical white studies promotes the examination of whiteness through a critical lens, while also including the examination of white supremacy and white racialized identity (Leonardo, 2004). This approach to exploring and problematizing whiteness operates from the framework provided by Critical Race Theory (CRT). Ladson-Billings (1999) asserts CRT operates as a tool meant to disassemble structures of oppression while remixing human agency

and equitable power relationships. CRT is based in deconstructing the master narrative and giving voice to the oppressed through storytelling and the concept of naming your own reality (Ladson-Billings, 1999) White critical studies challenges the privilege and power of individuals and systems that uphold that master narrative. As racial assumptions consciously or unconsciously inform our everyday actions, they also continue to inform our schools and other public institutions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012).

This study relies on the premise that critical white theory is a means utilized by educational scholars to explore issues like controversies over curriculum, needs for critical reflective practices for white educators, educator preparation, discipline, pedagogical practices, and deficit-based thinking about culturally diverse students, as well as the larger social implications (Howard, 2003; Leonardo, 2004; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Neimonen, 2010). Building on the relationship between power and social roles it is imperative for this study to explore a teacher's identity and its impact on their student's experience (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Howard, 2003). In addition, the study utilized the lens of critical pedagogy to help further examine the reproductive role standard practices play in the students' political and cultural life (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008).

In using this framework, the study explored how Hip-Hop can serve as a tool for teachers aiming to critically reflect on their positionality and uncover how that shapes their perceptions, practices, and relationships with a culturally diverse student population (Howard, 2003; Petchauer, 2011). This process can create opportunities for paradigm shifts in classroom culture by simultaneously furthering critical consciousness and academic skill development (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008) argue that "critical educators should seek to transform identities and empower previously oppressed students," while

promoting critical skills for academic success (p. 48). With the scholarship that exists around Hip-Hop and its application to educational spaces, the relationship between Hip-Hop and identity formation in the school context needs to be explored (Hill, 2009).

Description of the Research Problem

As whiteness operates in a state of constant fluidity, the reshaping of its oppressive dimensions creates a challenge for research. Thus, finding gaps in the research becomes inevitable. Much of the research around whiteness in higher education focuses on the existence, legacy, and ongoing realities of whiteness, white supremacy and its impact on power, privilege and identity (Case, 2012; Leonardo, 2004; Neimonen, 2010). Within the discourse of whiteness in higher education, inquiries exposed several themes such as the existing deficiencies in teacher preparation programs' commitment to thoroughly educate students on issues of whiteness (Bersh, 2009; Matias & Zembylas, 2014; Marx, 2004; Sleeter, 2001). Additionally, various autoethnographic reflections by white educators on the discovery and understanding of their own whiteness and privilege and its impact on their craft (Gallavan, 2005; Kroll, 2008; McIntosh, 1988; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2009). This influences the overall impact whiteness has on colleagues, students, and the larger educational landscape (Fuller, 2016; Wise, 2015). Although some efforts challenge white educator identity, research has shown minimal exploration around white educators' long-term commitment to critically explore their whiteness. In addition, there is also a lack of scholarship around sustainable practices to support long-term investment into critical identity reflection. This study argues that Hip-Hop education can serve as a tool and a practice that critiques identity and power; while offering an on-going investment due to its personal and professional social justice implications and student centered transformative capital.

Transition to Hip-Hop based scholarship where the topic of identity is prominent, focusing on impacts of identity development and agency (Alim, 2011; Dimitriadis, 2001; Emdin, 2010; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Love, 2016; Rodriguez, 2009), as well as the interrogation of the identity of Hip-Hop, which is understood amidst colonialism, racism and national identity (Baldwin, 2004). Similar to the constructs of Critical Race Theory, Hip-Hop scholarship oscillates between critiquing white supremacist frameworks, and its participants, that shape American hegemony and the promotion of counter narratives that offer possibilities of anti-racist realities through the lens of people of color (Baldwin, 2004). In addition, from an educational standpoint, Hip-Hop can serve as a vehicle for educators to critique and reflect on their own identity and practices (Belle, 2016). In relation to this study, there have been some efforts to uncover the conflicts of whiteness, identity and Hip-Hop (Bennet, 2004; Corrado, 2013), with little exploration around whiteness, educator identity and Hip-Hop (Fraley, 2009).

The study focuses on a particular gap in the research around white faculty in higher education and how Hip-Hop can operate as a tool to foster their exploration of white racialized identity. This can reframe how they operate as educators and individuals. There has been budding inquiry around white faculty critiquing and sharing the qualitative experiences of identity exploration (Howard, 2003; Kroll, 2008). Little effort has been made towards educators to maintain the work towards an anti-racist milieu. This study concentrates on the sustained critical reflection of white educators, while attempting to further scholarship on the intersection of Hip-Hop and identity development in a school context (Hill, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

The focus of this study was to challenge white faculty members who are already enacting some aspects of student-centered practices in a community college setting to critically engage

their whiteness and develop a sustainable practice of critical identity work with the use of Hip-Hop based education. Furthermore, the process provided insight into the impact their whiteness has on their practice as an educator and community member on campus and beyond. In this qualitative study, white community college faculty, on a campus with predominantly students of color and low socio-economic status, were tasked to continue working on their development as educators. In this case the study will engage their whiteness and its effect on their practice and campus. Within those often-marginalized communities the global force of Hip-Hop culture was born and continues to live. The underlying operations of Hip-Hop culture are driven by counter narratives and the engagement of larger social issues. Within the process of self-discovery, the participants will be exposed to Hip-Hop Based Educational Practices (Hill, 2009) that continue to challenge their identity and privilege, while exposing them to the wealth of cultural capital that exists within their students.

Research Questions

An integral element of this study was the exploration of whiteness as a construct. This existence of whiteness resides in a longstanding physical, philosophical, theoretical, spiritual and cultural format permeated throughout education. Acknowledging the breadth of whiteness and its constantly moving tentacles of oppression, it becomes important to recognize the long-term implications of counter efforts to dismantle it. To further the efforts of the participant's process of critical self-reflection as an individual and an educator, the project will provide participants with educational practices rooted in Hip-Hop culture and education. This speaks to the root of this study, which is to show how Hip-Hop serves as a resource for white educators that are committed to challenging whiteness, while promoting culturally sustaining practices in their

classroom, on campus, and in the community. As a result, the study focused on the following question:

- Does Hip-Hop based educational tools and practices, which historically challenge white supremacist frameworks and problematize race, invite white educators to implement a sustainable critical reflective practice, while further developing their culturally sustaining approaches? If so, how does this happen?

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is to explore the impact Hip-Hop based education can have on white faculty who are working to understand their whiteness and identity, as it relates to their practice as educators. Uncovering the possibilities of Hip-Hop as a tool to better serve their students and hold themselves accountable towards their anti-racist identity development is uncomfortable. As Leonardo and Porter (2010) explain, “Authentic race discussions are violent to whites for the very reason that such discussions would expose their investment in race, their full endorsement of, rather than, flippant regard for it” (p. 150). The reluctance of whites to counter such long standing complicit life roles of whiteness, support the need for implementing elements of black culture, which can advocate for a “reformulated white conscience” (Rose, 2014, p. 23).

Exploring the impacts of Hip-Hop as a tool to engage and challenge educators to confront their whiteness and the white supremacist systems they serve, provides a larger aim on improving how systems of higher education recruit, admit and support low-income students, students of color, and any disproportionately impacted populations. With respect to the current body of research around whiteness in higher education this study emphasizes the need for tools and practices that supports white educators to problematize their whiteness and move towards the development and promotion of an action oriented anti-racist normalcy. The possibilities of such reality are to develop pragmatic norms, which in turn can assist white educators in their

struggle to regain a lost humanity. This transformative commitment can simultaneously serve as a way to create space that acknowledges and welcomes student voices, realities and various forms of capital. The objective of an on-going anti-racist process that simultaneously welcomes the knowledge and experiences of the communities that have been most oppressed by whiteness, serves as a key in creating equitable practices and systems supporting the most historically marginalized.

Description of the Study

This project is a qualitative study aimed at capturing the experiences of the participants and challenges whiteness and identity through the tools and practices of Hip-Hop. Within the qualitative landscape of research methodologies this study will introduce the Cypher as a method and methodology. As a critical methodology, the Cypher builds on the framework of a specific cultural practice of urban youth, which is rooted in sharing experiences and insight related to participants' phenomenological view. Levy, Emdin, and Adapong (2018) posit that this process creates “community building and emotional release” (p. 3). However, the Cypher is not restricted to white hetero normative frameworks. As a method, the Cypher serves a critical framework in gathering data that pushes back on linear forms of thinking and welcomes all input, in a non-linear process for critical analysis. This format also elicits critical reflection by the participants, which can serve as an evaluation that can inform their next steps of action.

With an emphasis on whiteness, power, and privilege, this study will engage white faculty to not only look at themselves as educators, but also how this impacts students and their campus. The participants will take part in a series of workshops initially focused on exploring the concepts of whiteness and identity in education. They will maintain a journal and reflect on their experiences from the workshops. They will also provide feedback and guidance on the

direction of topics that the workshops cover. In these interviews and group sessions, part of their exposure to whiteness and critical identity reflection will be explored through mediums of Hip-Hop culture. This will initiate a connection between Hip-Hop and their identity work and the possibilities it can offer to their pedagogical, philosophical and applicatory approaches in the classroom and campus at large.

It is also important to acknowledge my role as the researcher and the positionality I hold which shapes everything I do. Being a white identified, cis-gendered, heterosexual male, places me in a location which privileges me in ways that can possibly limit my scope as a researcher and I must consistently engage my lens throughout the process. I will return to reflect further on my positionality and how it impacted this study.

Chapter Summary

This study will argue that to achieve and maintain a seismic equity-based shift in our educational landscape, an impactful step towards this reality must begin with white faculty engaging their identity, power and privilege through innovative cultural artifacts like Hip-Hop based pedagogy and practice. In the next chapter, I explore the previous research on white critical studies within education. Showing the breadth of the discourse targeting students and theoretical understandings of the larger white supremacist structures helps further our understanding of whiteness and its systemic and personal power. It also helps in understanding how white educational spaces and the practitioners within continue to minimize the impact of whiteness on themselves, the system and beliefs they uphold, and most importantly the students. The chapter will also provide an introduction into Hip-Hop culture and how it has developed roots in educational discourse and spaces. In the exploration of the Hip-Hop discourse, there will be specific efforts to highlight the conversations around Hip-Hop and identity.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

whiteness, Power, and Privilege

With our society and systems within it, being entrenched in whiteness, the assumption might be that whiteness and the existence of whiteness is easily located, identified and analyzed. The reality is the contrary and in most cases whiteness is rarely raised or tasked with acknowledging or understanding their whiteness, which is directly connected to the invisibility whiteness upholds within systems. It is everywhere and nowhere at the same time, thus creating a burden for researchers to identify this invisible entity that shapes everything that happens within our society. In addition the challenge remains to move beyond a critique and create efforts to deconstruct this oppressive ideology, which is very real and oppressive and much more than just a theoretical concept. The realness can be found in systems such as higher education, where whiteness seemingly goes unscathed, maintaining the beliefs, practices and legacies of oppression that are core elements to its being.

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the current scholarship of whiteness and its existence and its impacts in higher education. The second phase of the review is to explore Hip-Hop culture and its implication in scholarship and higher education, which in the study will be used as a counter tool for the enactment of whiteness and its varying forms. The forms include white privilege, racialized white identity, and white fragility among others. In addition, it will uncover the history and development of Hip-Hop culture and how identity is central to its functioning.

Education and whiteness

W.E.B. Du Bois (1920) wrote, “The discovery of personal whiteness among the world’s peoples is a very modern thing” (p. 15). Du Bois alludes to more than just a shift in historical understandings of identity and the development of race, but the discovery and implementation of the social construct of whiteness. The power dynamic and oppressive structures that have resulted in this identity formation has been seen and felt on a global scale. This dissertation acknowledges that reality, and explores its implication within the educational context of the United States which has been a racialized country from its onset. More specifically, this literature review aims to explore how whiteness and the development of Critical white Studies has manifested within United States higher education.

The United States educational system, which is one of the larger systems in the country, has been complicit in fostering the oppressive frameworks of whiteness through replication of its foundational constructs (Marxum, 2004; Tatum, 1999). Exploring the educational landscape in a racialized society, Leonardo (2013) adds, “race and education are so intertwined, they have become almost synonyms” (p. 152). In an effort to further the discourse on race and racism, voices in the world of legal studies and feminism developed the theory of critical race studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). More specifically, developing an approach that Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, and Galindo (2014) explain as “centralized counter stories from people of color becomes essential for decentralizing white normative discourse” (p. 289). Examinations on the prevalence of racism have traditionally focused on those who have been negatively impacted by its pervasiveness, with little dialogue around those who benefit from it (Giroux, 1997; Manglitz, 2003). Within the development of critical race studies and the scholarship that manifested from its movement, whiteness became increasingly targeted for examination. Critical white studies

was formed by dismantling whiteness. and began with early examination of white privilege.

Manglitz (2003) says it grew and states that “much of the scholarship has, as its focus the goals of uncovering and disrupting the ways that Whiteness has functioned as the norm or background which others are viewed and judged” (p. 120).

whiteness in Higher Education

Within higher education the research on whiteness and critical white studies examines several areas within academia. The general systemic aspects of how societal structures and beliefs influence the educational space are theoretical and practical. In addition, the examination of pedagogy and educational theories within the higher education discourse further the agenda of a heterogeneous white imperialist society and how it engages current college students, in particular future educators in the conversations of race, privilege and identity. Within the field of adult education, the norming of whiteness has sparked an evaluation of its implications on the practical and theoretical systems in place (Manglitz, 2003).

Before further exploration of Critical white Studies and its evolving existence in higher education, it is important to acknowledge a potential issue within the scholarship. In an effort to examine white privilege and create a discourse utilizing similar frameworks of critical race theory, the caution of centering the discussion of whiteness and its white research experts in turn places the voices, issues and efforts of people of color into an obscure space (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013). Another concerned perspective about this reifying of whiteness, Mayo (2004) adds,

The potentially problematic side effect is to imply that whiteness as an area of study is in some way parallel to other identity studies (like African American studies, women’s studies, Latina/o studies, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [lgbt] studies) where “pride” and rediscovery of previously covered over or ignored histories are part of the project. (p. 310)

With intention to avoid placing the white perspective as the lone voice of importance, some scholars refute the idea of working towards a whiteness or critical effort, but instead develop an anti-racist structure that acknowledges all voices. In addition, some of those perspectives call for the eradication of whiteness, which others argue leaves whites in a state of disarray (Aveling, 2006; Giroux, 1997; Mayo, 2003; Roediger, 1994).

One of the important aspects of examining whiteness and its potential direction as a field of study is the conversation around identity. The notion that whiteness is less of an identity and more of social and political practice that restricts anti-racist development and educational praxis (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013). In the examination of Critical white Studies, after highlighting whiteness and its constructs within society, the examination shifts to how faculty, administration or students engage the topic. Furthering the discussion around whiteness and identity, scholars define the constructs of these terms as coexisting. Being that whiteness is a social construct, Mayo (2004) adds, “whiteness is not an identity as we usually understand identity; it is a strategy to maintain white privilege. Further, because whiteness is a strategy to accrue and obscure privilege, it already has too much agency in its own name” (p. 308). While others focus on deconstructing the function of white identity and its role in giving white individuals something to examine while uncovering the power dynamics, privilege and oppressive factors (Giroux, 1997; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Leonardo, 2004).

Pedagogy

In developing a method or practice of teaching whiteness, more specifically a critical study of whiteness, scholars identify key elements of the current white constructs like white supremacy, power dynamics, the western educational system, or the identity of whiteness (Allen, 2004; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Leonardo, 2004; Patterson, 1998). In addition, there is

scholarship analyzing the relationship between white critical studies and other pedagogical frameworks like critical theory (Allen, 2004). Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) see the importance for the pedagogy of whiteness to include some exploration of socioeconomic and political implications that deal with the issues of power (Roediger, 1998). Other scholarship aims at widening the scope to see white supremacy as a global political system and power structure (Leonardo, 2009; Mills, 1997). However, Allen (2004), acknowledging the importance of critical pedagogies focused on examining power, warns of its inability to take on a “race-radical philosophy.” Patterson (1998) highlights the importance of defining whiteness, “several strong features including capitalistic market society structure; belief in progress and science; possession of modern concepts of family and societal group structures based on individualism, competition, social mobility and belief in Eurocentric cultural, philosophical, and economic superiority” (p. 104). These terms assist in further developing a framework to problematize whiteness, which can also create starting points for dialogue around ally and anti-racist praxis.

While part of this pedagogical development is framed in understanding the construction of whiteness, others advocate for the inclusion of operationalized white privilege, where the focus is bringing to surface the specific systems that uphold inequities and privileges afforded only to those in power (Leonardo, 2009; Mitchell & Donahue, 2012). Furthering this discourse of ground floor understanding, Rodriguez (1998) adds, “mapping terrains of whiteness and interrogating the spaces and logic of such terrains has become vital” (p. 32). This is reiterated through the recognized challenge of mapping such a terrain because of the normalizing of whiteness (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995). The normativity of whiteness in our society facilitates its invisibility, which creates challenges for critical self-reflection practices by whites . Engaging how whiteness is operationalized offers a space for educators and students to critically

evaluate this issue. Leonardo and Zembylas (2013) invokes a Foucault (1977) term, “technology”, to uncover how whiteness has built in elements that work to achieve certain goals like allowing whites to deflect the label of racist to persons other than themselves. They add, “The idea of whiteness as technology of affect makes visible alternative ways that educators and students, as critical actors, can be engaged in the production of social and emotional praxis” (p. 150). This focus can shift efforts towards the overarching virulent impact of whiteness. The intention is to not entirely abandon individual accountability but increase the examination of the invested ontology of whiteness.

Identity

Furthering the pedagogical discourse of whiteness there must be a pathway for students, in particular white students, to process and critically reflect on what this means to their own reality (Howard, 2003). Furthermore, it will be instrumental to the pedagogy that educators create spaces that allow for such in depth and challenging reflection. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) expand on this point, regarding the pedagogy, focusing on the importance of observing whites’ reactions to identity crisis, which has historically featured recurring attempts of whites placing themselves as the victim. These experiences, which many whites have little to no previous exposure, can be uncomfortable, which has developed escape reactions commonly expressed as being color-blind or denying the existence of privilege (Bersh, 2009; Gillespie, Ashbaugh, DeFiore, 2002; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1998; Marx, 2004; Puchner & Roseboro, 2011). Advancing this evaluation of whites’ relationship to the concept of whiteness, Allen (2001) adds, “Within the realm of social interaction, whites, whether knowingly or not, act as agents of whiteness in the surveillance of white territories, thus constructing psychosocial spaces of trauma and alienation, such as schools, for people of color” (p. 480). Ellis (2010) carried out a

quantitative study on white students' identity development, using the Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and found that the white student participants had little experience processing their racialized identity and commonly believed they were the recipients of discrimination by students of color.

When further examining identity much of the research contextualizes the discussion through relationships with others. Exploring the dynamics of whiteness identity through the exchange between educator and student, (Matias & Zembylas, 2014) examines "racially diminutive emotions" as a way for white preservice students to mask their racial angst. Puchner and Roseboro (2011) expand on the importance of this dynamic of student teacher relationship by positing that one's defining identity impacts both the teaching and the learning approach. This was further unearthed in several studies, identifying that the students' perception of the instructor would impact how transparent and upfront the students are about taboo subjects like race, privilege and whiteness (Flintoff, Dowling, & Fitzgerald, 2015; Gillespie, Ashbaugh, & DeFiore, 2002; Howard, 2003). Another aspect of this pedagogical construct is how whites engage people of color around these topics. The goals of this method would include a shift in awareness. Leonardo & Zembylas (2013) add:

If Whites are going to experience fundamental change through dialogue with people of color, an affective theory of whiteness encourages them to embrace uncertainty, contradiction, and even discomfort not for its own sadomasochistic sake but out of solidarity with the other. (p. 156)

Albeit the interactions between whites and other whites or people of color offer some insight into the dynamics of whiteness, identity, and power, and this provides a limited view of the larger structural imprints of whiteness and how whites must confront this construct.

Pre-Service Educators

Guiding a study focusing on whiteness in higher education and its implications on faculty, there was little inquiry found regarding white faculty and its impact on their development and practice. The closest example of research on whiteness and its impact on educators can be found in discourse of pre-service educator training. The interest in engaging pre-service teachers in critical white pedagogy can be directly correlated to the fact that in the year 2011, within the United States, students of color made up over 40% of the student population, while white teachers made up 83% of the teaching force (Boser, 2014). The idea of preparing a predominantly white teaching force to critically analyze the constructs of whiteness should aim to prepare them for engaging the topics and dynamics of race “within a diverse cultural context” (Howard, 2003). Leonardo and Zembylas (2013) built this starting point of critical whiteness engagement by educators and its shared importance with students. They add:

The roles of educators and students are key in producing powerful affective connections that create even small cracks in oppressive traditions. This means a forward pull to negate critically the conditions giving rise to unequal situations, and thus it is important for pedagogies of emotion to account for racialized experiences. (p. 156)

Traditionally, teacher prep programs have little commitment to engaging race or whiteness, beyond some attention to the effects on social class (Ellis, 2010). In response to this reality and the student populations that await future teachers, researchers intentionally explore these experiences of race and whiteness to further the need of critical pedagogies (Marx, 2004). The lack of conviction to address such issues within the institution that house these teacher preparation programs may relate to the historical connections to white supremacist ideologies and constructs. This may also be an extension of what Macias et al. (2014) term the “white imagination”, which illuminates how the normed reality of the white population engages or opts out of acknowledging the realities of race, whiteness and racism. This opting out has been found in multiple studies where white students who are being tasked to critically engage whiteness,

choose to ignore the layers of racism or whiteness by giving little effort to problematize their experiences (Buchanan, 2016; Marx, 2004). In addition, when tasked to engage whiteness, white students tap into the previously mentioned technologies of whiteness or the white imagination, which can often be housed in racialized emotions (Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013; Macias et al., 2014; Matias & Zembylas, 2014). The lack of programmatic commitment to prioritizing the examination and impact of whiteness in the program curriculum, paired with students' lack of exposure to the topic, supports the need for further exploration and response to the issue.

Even when there is dialogue and progress with students' effort to process whiteness, Puchner and Roseboro (2011) points out, "Such a pedagogy accepts that most white students will not, in the space of one course, recognize their own agency in the perpetuation of privilege and racism, but they might recognize white privilege as a larger structural process that inhibits the opportunities of people of color" (p. 377). Too often, programs attempt to address the long standing and complex issues of whiteness in one class, especially if the goal is to help radically shift views. To engage the systemic issues of race, racism and whiteness that have largely been invisible to whites, yet have a significant influence in their power status and the environments they navigate, one can only imagine the required long-term effort for a sustainable change in perspective.

Countering whiteness in Higher Education

In addition to the long-standing structural white supremacy and systemic racism within education, the white critical studies literature review acknowledges the work that needs to be done to further examine whiteness. Its global reach provides context for the extent at which this issue exists. Furthermore, examining its place within the social, psychological and systemic realities within the United States, offers a glimpse at how ingrained the concept of whiteness is

and how it impacts all facets of the country's identity. This awareness supports the foundational research focused on unpacking the layers of whiteness and furthering race dialogue on a macro scale. However, the discourse on critical white studies within education, in particular higher education, has not been as encompassing. Themes targeting whiteness and critical white studies that have gotten some movement include the development of critical white theory pedagogy and college student identity, generally within multicultural education or pre-service teacher programs (Macias et al., 2014). In addition, there has been research highlighting the educational and systemic barriers created by whiteness, but this is generally birthed within the critical race theory movement and the black imagination (hooks, 1995; Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tanden, & Galindo, 2014).

In much of the previously mentioned research a core component in creating white critical studies engages students to critically self-reflect on their identity and its impact on future ways of thinking and practice, in particular that of future teachers. Some of the future implications are to further develop the discourse on supremacy (Leonardo, 2004), theorizing a relationship between ethnicity and identity and developing a new language of ethnicity for whiteness (Giroux, 1997); challenge educational systems to move the needle on whiteness and its impact on campus wide practices (Charbeneau, 2015; Ellis, 2010); or the continuation of disrupting white imagination amongst teacher educators in efforts to dismantle racialized identities and attitudes (Matias et al., 2014).

How can educators reconfigure their practices and address white domination for their students, which is the aimed reality for a percentage of social justice anti-racist educators? Ellis (2010) points out the lack of racial identity development in the community college curriculum and speaks to the shortcomings of institutions' engagement of faculty in examining their own

identity and levels of privilege; which can assist in dismantling oppressive systemic white heteronormativity. In the community college context, this becomes even more important for an extremely diverse student population where the faculty, administration, and overall systemic layout are predominantly white or support white ideologies. In summary, there have been some impactful efforts within the discourse of white critical studies and whiteness, which is a firm starting point as future researchers recognize the breadth of this uncharted territory.

Amidst the process of exploring whiteness and how this plays out within educational spaces, it becomes important to identify ways it is enacted (Charbeneau, 2015). Within this enactment, both blatant and subtle examples, we find foundational elements of identity. Through a process of critical reflection, white educators, and for the purpose of this study white faculty, must task themselves to identify how the construction of whiteness permeates throughout their practice (Howard, 2003). Uncovering their earlier influences on how perceptions were formed relating to people of color. Even with an intentional eye, many of these actions are subtle and beyond their scope of understanding. As a result, this study will tap into Hip-Hop culture, which is built on problematizing race and oppressive realities as a teaching tool that challenges participants to consistently explore their implicit biases, and core identity elements that foster the legacy of systemic whiteness.

Hip-Hop Culture

Amidst social decay and white flight, the south Bronx in New York City became the breeding grounds for a global culture, which was developed by marginalized youth creating agency for voice and change (Chang, 2007; Rose, 1994). The culture of Hip-Hop was born in the early 1970s pulling from Funk, soul and reggae as it formed an outlet for self-actualization and ultimately an unapologetic introduction for the larger world to often marginalized black and

brown realities (Rivera, 2003). Unlike Hollywood's depiction of the Bronx as a "cultural wasteland", this was a burgeoning space of youth driven art and joy within the confines of burning buildings and gang activity (George, 1998). Historical recounts identify DJ Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa as founding pillars and key sparks to what is now seen globally as Hip-Hop culture. Afrika Bambaataa, a former gang leader and founder of the longest standing Hip-Hop institution known as the Zulu Nation, was credited with coining the term Hip-Hop and the identification of its core expressions such as breaking, emceeing, deejaying, and graffiti (Chang, 2006; George, 1998; Love, 2016). Through the growth of Hip-Hop, identity has always been at the forefront of the narratives, whether one was writing on a train (graffiti) or deciding on what vinyl record to spin. A culture that was delineated by poor black and brown communities, who have been confronted with race since the inception of the United States, would ultimately relish in counter narratives and the idea of authenticity and realness as prerequisites for participation (Emdin, 2010).

Hip-Hop is a fundamental source of creativity, voice, and industry for youth that has consistently challenged social norms and expectations, often through uncomfortable narratives (Watkins, 2005). Starting in the borough of the south Bronx, which remains an economically challenged space, the proliferation of Hip-Hop culture can be seen on a global scale shaping and supporting counter language, cultural capital, and political expression. In this evolving and growing cultural force, today's Hip-Hop exists through the lens of the original four elements. Although the execution and geographic placement may look and sound widely different. An example can be found within the musical genre of Hip-Hop, Rap music, which is now a variegated list of sub-classifications, conscious, gangsta, mumble, trap or international rap, that

shapes and communicates many other cultural representations from clothing, marketing, education, and language (Baszile, 2009).

On a more fundamental level, Hip-Hop continues to provide a space for marginalized existence to find solace and refuge. Young disenfranchised people continue to shape the fluid aspects of Hip-Hop, that offer voice and agency beyond the restrictive expectations of mainstream, or white, social and systemic standards (Rodriguez, 2009). In this way Hip-Hop remixes the narrative on Cultural Capital as described by Yosso (2005) who sees the wealth within marginalized communities, “which include aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital” (p. 69). This creates a vehicle for defining self-worth and conjuring self-efficacy in non-traditional terms. With the cultural richness that Hip-Hop offers, educational and mainstream spaces continue to minimize its complexity, acknowledging just the musical genre (Emdin, 2010). In addition, within the simplified view of Hip-Hop as only music, more often than not the focus is on the corporatized versions, which highlight many of American societal issues. Because these narratives are explored in musical form, often performed by people of color, Hip-Hop is commonly targeted for celebrating and perpetuating negativity. Love (2016) expands on Hip-Hop’s complex identity, adding that “hip hop is based in self-determination, resistance, and the long enduring fight for Black freedom, but was also created alongside the seductiveness of the material and psychological conditions of capitalism, sexism, and patriarchy” (p. 415). Yet, Hip-Hop is a cultural space that continues to create discomfort within mainstream contexts, while simultaneously uplifting the voices and promoting self-worth to many who see themselves on the outside.

In exploring Hip-Hop's cultural impact on mainstream spaces there has been a spectrum of noteworthy moments. For example when Kendrick Lamar, an established artist acknowledged

by long-standing artistic systems, received a Pulitzer prize for his album DAMN in 2018. Often these established traditional spaces dismiss Hip-Hop's artistic and cultural worth as a fad or view it as having limited artistic depth. Yet, on the other end staying true with Hip-Hop's unapologetic approach you can find moments where artists like Kanye West calls out former President George Bush on a live television broadcast for his seemingly non-existent commitment to black communities suffering at the hands of the Hurricane Katrina devastation in New Orleans in 2005. As Hip-Hop continues to invade nontransitional spaces, such as television, film, including educational discourse, it provides a glimpse into its ability to stay relevant and instrumental in contributing towards a more equitable and social justice reality.

Hip-Hop Based Education

As Hip-Hop grew over the years it ventured beyond the inner cities and into the suburbs, ultimately permeating throughout the US and global societies. One of the largest consumers of rap music and the cultural imprint provided by Hip-Hop has been young middle class white males (Barnes, 2014; Rose, 2004). This can be attributed to whites long standing infatuation and pillaging of black bodies and culture (Kendi, 2016; Tate, 2003), as well as the influence of record executives intentional development of a black product for white consumers (Barnes, 2014; Kajikawa, 2015; Kitwana, 2005). The continuation of these destructive historical practices morphed into various forms of economic and personal cultural appropriation. This is an important point to grasp as the study later explores how predominantly white educators can engage Hip-Hop as a tool and practice in their personal growth and pedagogical approach.

As the culture of Hip-Hop matured and expanded into having a global imprint, so did the youth. For years one of the largest consumers of Hip-Hop culture and rap music has been white middle class males (Charnas, 2011). It is also important to recognize that many of the

commercial mediums that facilitate the development and distribution of Hip-Hop are in “white-controlled profit driven industries” (p. 192) (Harrison, 2015). Yet, the former Hip-Hop youth ventured into various career paths carrying this cultural identity with them.

One area Hip-Hop was always been welcomed into, albeit an unofficial welcoming, was on school campuses. Initially serving only as a “cultural site” for students (Love, 2016), which acknowledged, shaped and represented their identity. Educators who grew up and identify culturally with Hip-Hop welcome its reach and impact in shaping educational systems. As Hip-Hop grew in academic spaces educators began engaging its application and scholarship, while uncovering methodological and theoretical implications towards more equitable educational environments, commonly in the name of culturally relevant practices (Petchauer, 2009). However, much like the culture as the academics of Hip-Hop get unearthed, it has been under scrutiny from its development (Forman, 2004). This section will explore the various perspectives Hip-Hop scholarship has produced.

Hill and Petchauer (2013) provided an overview of the development of Hip-Hop Based Education (HHBE) (Hill, 2009). The culturally based early works of HHBE are critical and provide an introduction for educators. From the introduction, scholarship then shifts to applicatory examples and pedagogy that support Hip-Hop educational praxis, which leads to specific developments around literacy and other subject specific implementations (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Duncan-Andrade & Morell, 2005; Stovall, 2006). Furthering the iterations of HHBE, some scholarship examines Hip-Hop’s place in critically addressing broader systemic issues like, race, gender, identity, and policy (Dimitriadis, 2001; Hill and Petchauer, 2013; Love, 2012; Love, 2016). This breadth of inquiry demonstrates how Hip Hop intersects with many social issues.

This study will also explore the intersection of whiteness and faculty and engage the counter narratives found in Hip-Hop. This engagement will serve as a tool to consistently critique the participants' identity and privilege, while simultaneously empowering marginalized student narratives and realities. Petchauer (2009) acknowledges three distinct ways in which Hip-Hop is shaping educational spaces by increasing centralization of rap text, identifying the message within the music and culture, and lastly the insertion of Hip-Hop in higher education institutions through course subjects, scholarship and conferences (Baker, 1993). These three areas will be examined in this study with a focus on the educator's identity as community college faculty using Hip-Hop Based Educational texts and practices that counters topics of privilege and problematizing whiteness, and will promote critical self-reflection.

Identity and Hip-Hop

During the 1970s graffiti art evolved into more pronounced bold styles from the previous tagging era, and writers (graffiti artists) experienced "increased visibility, individual identity, and status" (Rose, 1994, p. 902). Like graffiti, many of the cultural developments within Hip-Hop have had explicit connections to the development and validation of identity, which is critical for people of color whose daily experiences in civic spaces conflict with the master narratives and American ideals (Rubin, 2007). Hip-Hop as a cultural tool provides a survival skill that is built into the actualization of identity. Karimi (2006) expands on this notion with the term "sampled consciousness", which was later explored by Love (2016), where young people that identify with Hip-Hop culture capture samples of their experiences and consciously or unconsciously use them to develop their identity and phenomenological view (p. 149). To further unpack this process, in the case of many students of color, these samples can be from spaces that assist in their oppression, which gets filtered through the lens of Hip-Hop. An

example may be the common practice among Hip-Hop participants to process experiences through song references. Petchauer (2012) expands on the notion of sampling by sharing how new college students were tasked with sampling from their urban schooling experience and prompted to process this act for future implications on their educational identity. These examples highlight how identity is fostered when tapping into Hip-Hop sensibilities.

In the exploration of Hip-Hop sensibilities and identity, Love (2016) adds, “hip hop culture is devoted to teaching resistance, knowledge of self, and self-determination because those principals are part of the collective identity of the politics of Black life” (p. 417). Because identity is such a key characteristic of Hip-Hop, this study is advocating for its effectiveness in challenging white educators to problematize their identity. It will also expose them to cultural strengths innate to Hip-Hop culture and commonplace with urban youth. Whiteness shapes many of the spaces that create oppressive experiences for people of color. The focus will be on educational spaces and the role faculty play in fostering this systemic issue. Fraley (2009) adds, “The power and privilege of whiteness resides in its non-naming and in response, Hip-Hop clearly marks whiteness and provides a space to critically interrogate and question its normalcy” (p. 37). Hip-Hop takes on race like many socially taboo subjects, unapologetically, providing the opportunity to move towards liberatory realities (Giroux, 1997; Fraley, 2009).

Conclusion

This study recognizes the difficulty with assisting white faculty to challenge their own racial identity and critically reflect on its impacts on their personal development, practice as educators, and how it has shaped the institutions and policies they work within (Mezirow & Edward, 2011). This study will identify educators who were already indicating some level of investment in student center practices and self-critique. In the exploration of the literature it

became apparent there needed to be some directive on how to move forward because this process of problematizing white racial identity and the privileges connected is a lifelong process. In addition, due to oppressive structures and impacts of whiteness, which constantly evolves to maintain power and privilege, the work to be done must be fluid and long term. The literature also uncovered the issues of re-centering whiteness while working through white identity and developing anti-racist approaches. This drove the study to counter the re-centering of whiteness by exploring the power of Hip-Hop culture and its ability to have a disrupting effect on white racial normativity (Kajikawa, 2015). This would also uncover the many positive implications Hip-Hop can offer anti-racist educational spaces that aim to foster support for marginalized populations and people of color. The literature consistently reiterates that the long-standing issues of whiteness have created extremely complex and oppressive realities for students of color. Outside of some autoethnographies, there is little evidence around white higher education faculty and the intractable issues of white racialized identity. This study aimed to further such discourse while advancing the understanding of Hip-Hop culture's impact as a tool to support and challenge anti-racist educators and promote equitable spaces in higher education.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Lyrics to Go

In the 2018 song “How to Hold a Choppa”, the artist Black Thought ' examines the proximity of the ongoing legacy of system facilitated black death and the urgent role that educational empowerment may play (Trotter, 2018). He shares:

To Bring Truth to the light, Play this only at night
 If it's over your life, It's not only a fight
 My homie called it a plight, and my homie was right
 How to speak truth to power is refuse to cower and teach youth
 The hour of reconin is upon us, theres enemies among us
 Essentially in more than recent memory, they hung us
 Public assembly to watch death become us
 Better believe it but if not, check the numbers

When thinking of how systems within the United States have historically been complicit in the death and or policing of black bodies and folks of color, this verse intentionally elevates the dangers that people of color still navigate within those spaces. This is especially the case in systems such as education that may articulate an intention to provide opportunity for support, personal growth and economic uplift for all.

The line “Refuse to cower and teach youth, the hour of reconin is upon us” can be articulated as a challenge by Black Thought to all educators to engage their practice with a boldness that recognizes the daily systemic obstacles of students of color. These are opportunities where educators can recognize the spectrum of assets their students and communities can offer to inform practice and policy on campus (Matias and Liouis, 2015). In addition, as student's truths continue to be marginalized in spaces of education, the lyrics speak to the urgency of countering long standing white normative systems. There is no room for

waiting or passiveness in implementing any efforts rooted in explicit liberatory and anti-racist objectives.

This study will also focus on the system of higher education, where whiteness is part of the core fabric for all aspects of the institution, which include policies, practices, and people (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2017). In this system, whiteness operates as a gatekeeper and intentional disrupter to any inquiries of true understanding of why and how educators and the educational system work (Matias, 2016). Critical Race Theory and whiteness Studies has examined the pervasiveness of whiteness in education, which has provided practitioners and researchers access points to explore its breadth and impact. This study will explore how white community college faculty, who situate themselves in ally work, can explore the connection between their racial consciousness and their academic practice using Hip-Hop culture as a sustainable tool and practice (Haynes, 2017; Patton & Bondi, 2015).

With a campus system that boasts an extremely diverse student body, in both socio-economics and race, the community colleges struggle to match this diversity with their faculty (Wood, Harris & White, 2015). The faculty population tends to have a likeness to their homogenous counterparts in the state university systems. The National Center for Educational Statistics reported that in Fall 2015 77% of full-time faculty were white. In the case of the community college, which boasts a majority of underrepresented students of color, this provides an amplification of the issue. For example, in California the community college reports over 60% part-time and full-time faculty, while over 70% of their student population is non-white (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2017).

There have been macro and micro efforts to rectify the imbalance with very little progress. In California, the Chancellor of the Community College system provides the Equal

Opportunity Employment Report to monitor the employment statistics, which is connected to providing a guideline to improved outcomes in hiring a more diverse faculty pool. In addition, some districts in the state offer a form of faculty diversity-based internships in hopes of cultivating a diverse hiring pool for full time and adjunct faculty positions. With various efforts little has changed in the landscape of faculty diversity in the community college.

With a large white faculty population and an institution that struggles to increase its faculty diversity, many of the practices, pedagogical approaches, and system decisions are made through a lens that is predominantly influenced by whiteness. This has a direct impact on how students of color, are supported, instructed and treated on the community college campuses. While there have been various attempts to improve funding and programming through equity, along with the on-going systemic and individual investments in whiteness, this study will call for a critical change in pedagogical and systemic approaches to serve the diversity of the community college system. In the Haynes (2013 & 2017) study, using their previous findings of an acknowledged relationship between racial consciousness and how white faculty behave and shape their classroom, they indicate that white faculty with higher levels of racial consciousness are more likely to enact approaches that promote equitable outcomes for disproportionately impacted students. This shift focuses on the deleterious impacts of whiteness and demonstrates how Hip-Hop culture can serve as a vehicle towards increasing equity and educational humanity.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) explain that qualitative inquiry as a process provides visibility of worlds by studying things in their natural context through interpretations of meanings people attach to tangible practices and experiences. The goal of my study is to provide visibility of the participants' identity and its impact on their practices as an educator, through one-on-one interviews and group sessions that emphasize topics related to race and Hip-Hop based

education. This will serve as a possible guide towards long-term critical reflection and utilization of culturally sustaining pedagogies. This chapter will also provide an overview to the method, methodology and analysis of the data, which guided the study.

Methodology

In the exploration to find a methodology that assisted this study, a recurring issue was the restraints and limitations of many normed methodologies. It became apparent that in an attempt to offer a democratized methodological process that valued participants' ideas while simultaneously not interfering with the development of critically challenging and elevating the thinking of those taking part in the study, I would be tasked with developing my own critical methodology. In addition, with the emerging intention to develop an approach that aligned with the objectives of this study, it was imperative that any new developments must be in alignment with the studies focus on the intrinsic critical lens of Hip-Hop culture. As a result, this developing methodological approach will be rooted in the frameworks of the Hip-Hop Cypher.

The Cypher is an important space within Hip-Hop culture. It is best described as a gathering of Hip-Hop emcees or dancers, that physically performs in a formed circle and engages in sharing their craft in freestyle format in a collective rhythm (Freas, Limon Guzman, Carnero, & Times, 2018; Nguyen & Ferguson, 2019; Williams 2009). Chris Emdin (2016) builds on this description, adding, "a rap Cypher - a highly codified mode of communication and dialogue that the neoindividuals engage in on street corners and other places within urban neighborhoods" (p. 90). With the introductory description to how a Hip-Hop Cypher looks and operates, it is important to explore the complexities of this Hip-Hop paradigm to help solidify it as sound research design and methodology.

Methodological Approach

In this study, which is committed to critical research, not only must the hypothesis work towards a counter narrative outcome, but also the frameworks driving the study aim to push back against standing norms that are often steeped in the virulent constructs of white supremacy. In utilizing the framework of the Cypher to develop the study's methodology, it was important to acknowledge the explicit commitment to drawing from a youth cultivated process. The components that drive a Hip-Hop Cypher include content spontaneity which promotes a space of discursive sharing. In addition, this rhythmic sharing space is committed to a democratic flow of communication and involvement, which allows for various levels of engagement for participants while simultaneously requiring all to occupy the energy of the exchange; no one voice is privileged over another. The exchange, which is often seamless and not built around traditional norms of academic group sharing, builds on the concepts of Paulo Freire's (2018) "cultural circles" (p. 40). These elicited groups' participants develop topics for engagement and prompt others to be active listeners, while simultaneously tasking them to find an opportunity to share or engage more explicitly in the Cypher. Furthering this connection to the Cypher, Williams (2009), spoke about the "critical cultural Cypher" as a space that cultivated content construction through active participant input which was welcomed in the Cypher, and informed the next steps of the work (p. 9). This speaks to the importance of a methodology that simultaneously welcomes the voice of participants, while honoring that perspective and cultural interests which will drive the study.

In further exploration of the Cypher as a critical methodological guide, it is important to acknowledge its requirement for measured input. The Cypher not only invites individual and collective sharing and communal engagement, but the process cultivates an expectation of self-

analysis (Freas & Limon Guzman, 2019). This self-analysis can highlight strengths, areas of improvement, deficiencies, discomforts and other points of self and collective evaluation. This is key when attempting to capture the experience of participants in a study. The development of community in the Cypher and its engagement in critical self-analysis aims to foster participants in sharing their authentic feelings. The reflections and insight can be key in the discovery of the study's findings, as well as informing the direction of each step in the study.

In alignment with the studies commitment to countering the enactment of whiteness in higher education, all of the above elements worked to solidify the Cypher as a central way to decentralize whiteness. The Cypher method, albeit drawing from Hip-Hop culture, is not distinctly Hip-Hop culture and music. This speaks to its accessibility for anyone to utilize, which may not have any explicit Hip-Hop components, but is simultaneously innately Hip-Hop.

This method expands on prior efforts to promote Hip-Hop Based Education (HHBE) as a tool to equitize the classroom and focus on student empowerment (Allahjah, 2012; Bridges, 2011; Emdin, 2010). More specifically, this study utilized this method to focus on the importance of the practitioners who attempt to utilize HHBE as a tool, working towards a permanent state of critical self-reflection and identity as it pertains to the instruction, the students, and the larger social implications.

Upon further exploration into HHBE it becomes apparent that a majority of the discourse focuses on Hip-Hop used to design curricula based on music and rhymes (Adjapong & Emdin, 2015). Although the benefits are vast that exist within efforts to articulate the application of Hip-Hop elements as learning and teaching tools, it can lack the ability to ensure critical application. This method channels the need for both applicatory use and the importance of critical exploration through identity-based reflection. In addition, it tasks the educator with

acknowledging that content cannot be taught without engaging and working towards understanding the experiences and the worlds that shape the learner (Emdin, 2011; Freire, 2005).

Paulo Freire (2005) expands on this exploration of understanding:

Educators need to know what happens in the world of the children with whom they work. They need to know the universe of their dreams, the language with which they skillfully defend themselves from the aggressiveness of their world, what they know independently of the school, and how they know it. (p. 125)

The group sessions were used as an opportunity to task participants to engage HHBE as a tool and to expand the exploration of the learners' reality. What is accepted as knowledge in the classroom space, while challenging the educators' identity, and the privileges associated, in this context.

The development and application of this method, derives from and continues to be influenced by on-going narratives in Hip-Hop and more specifically the Hip-Hop education community. Hip-Hop from its inception requires authenticity from its practitioners which includes artistic elements of the culture. Within these core elements of the culture which includes rap music, graffiti, Hip-Hop movement and deejaying/beatmaking, there is an expectation of knowledge and respect for the culture and its artistic off shoots that facilitate pedagogical and practical applications in education. The Cypher method embodies these expectations and requires authenticity. In the study practitioners examine their identity in the context of Hip-Hop and its intersection with education, as well as how they fit into the narratives that are explored within the culture.

As Petchauer (2009) posits, Hip-Hop education is an "essential domain of inquiry" in higher education, acknowledging the many ways Hip-Hop exists in the Academe (p. 1). With the expanding field of Hip-Hop Based Education (HHBE) the question is raised, who is qualified to teach it and what are the expected credentials? Does an educator need to know Hip-Hop

culture as a prerequisite of teaching it? Can a white educator who has little to no connection to any communities of color or their artistic aesthetics, which are forms of cultural currency and essential to Hip-Hop culture, use HHBE? I would argue that there is an understandable advantage for those who come from or are closely associated with the culture of Hip-Hop. In addition, I think those who are located further from the culture can still engage HHBE but will need to enact additional conditions to foster this youth driven cultural phenomenon as a tool that has the power to uplift, critique, and identify equity. Examples of concrete conditions exist in a blend of the educators' own engagement around their identity and privileges in this context as well as supporting space where students become the experts. The challenge in implementing the Cypher is tasking any possible facilitators of this practice to have a sense of self, commit to life-long critical reflection (more importantly white folks and anyone shaped by white supremacy), and be willing to welcome discomfort.

Site Selection

The school selected for this study is Todd Shaw Community College located in an urban setting in a large city in northern California. The school's student population is made up of predominantly students of color, which reflects the ethnic makeup of the lower middle socio-economic neighborhoods that are in close proximity to the campus. To understand the school population, one must understand the neighborhood, which is a blend of middle and working class Mexican American and African American families migrating from the San Francisco Bay Area, deep South, and Midwest. It is a tight-knit community with many families attending the same church congregations or sharing the bond of migration. During the late 1970s to early 1980s more families migrated from the Bay Area. During this time many neighborhood businesses closed. Crime and gangs started to prevail during the 1980s and early 1990s. Gang activity,

street crime, violent crime, poverty, poor health, unemployment, homelessness, incarceration, and immigration issues all contribute to the mental health issues seen in students who attend Todd Shaw Community College. The instructional faculty is majority white non-Hispanic and female providing a homogenous pool of participants, which we hope to become early adopters of this process.

This school is ideal because of the surrounding district resources. The school district that houses Todd Shaw Community College currently has several on campus programs targeting students of color and promotes success and culturally sustaining approaches, including several recurring Hip-Hop education programs. We see this as a benefit for the study's participants to develop a long-term practice of critically engaging whiteness through the engagement of Hip-Hop and culturally responsive practices.

Description of Participants

This study aimed to find participants that represent the general population of teachers at the college. Snowball and convenience sampling were used to recruit participants for the study. I recruited potential participants during the campus-wide meetings using emails and through word of mouth. Following the initial outreach in recruitment I followed up with detailed recruitment to answer questions about the study, such as how much time commitment participants can expect, and sharing the general timeline of the process. As a result of the follow up recruitment I was able to confirm 11 participants committing to the study. All participants that agreed to participate communicated an interest in helping their low performing students, in particular their minority students. All participants identified as white, except one who identifies as Indo-European, and all were 25 years of age or older and the oldest was 60 years of age. It was important to have a commitment to seeing academic change, as this study challenged them

to review their own teaching or perceptions of themselves. Participants and researchers reflected on their perceptions and background in relation to their educational work and their identity (McKenzie, 2009).

Data Collection

Data collection happened throughout the study and included one on one interviews, observations, and group sessions, which included researcher notes, and digital audio recordings of the interviews. Polkinghorne (2005) believes that “data gathering in qualitative research is to provide evidence for the experience it is investigating” (p.138). The narratives and experiences shared were used to drive the findings. The objective was to find the meanings behind the conversations and interviews, knowing that the raw text can inform further exploration (Polkinghorne, 2005). In the development of content, it was important to draw on my counseling skills which leads to the process of building rapport and establishing an environment of trust. The data provided direction and feedback on exploring whiteness, its impact on teacher identity and ways which Hip-Hop can inform how they can support and engage students of color. However, it is key to recognize the data derived from the study is impacted by a variety of factors, such as the situational space, participant backgrounds, and motivations (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Arora & Mattis, 2007).

Throughout the Spring 2020 semester, I met with the participating faculty for one-on-one interviews and conducted two group sessions around critical identity reflection, whiteness, and Hip-Hop based academic approaches that support critical personal and professional development. The sessions lasted approximately one to one and a half hours, based on the length of participants’ responses. The interviews were initially held on campus. Unfortunately, in the middle of the semester, the United States was confronted with a growing pandemic known as

COVID-19, which forced the study to pivot to an online platform to conduct interviews and hold group cyphers. It is important to note that this transition to a remote format went beyond adjusting the way we interacted for the study. The pandemic had an immediate impact on the mental and physical health of the participants, their families, and their own teaching. In addition, another impact of COVID-19 was that the group sessions were no longer able to be facilitated in a true Cypher format. As previously mentioned, the Cypher cultivates spontaneous sharing, as well as fostering participants in sharing their authentic feelings in a fluid response to the group conversation, which was hard to implement in a remote format. However, I was still able to activate elements of the Cypher format that offered an expectation of self-analysis and active participant input within the group session that ultimately informed the next steps of the work.

Being the facilitator of the sessions, I was able to use observations from those experiences to curate each interview to get the most from each of the interview questions. This required altering the pace of the interviews and any follow up questions aiming to develop rapport and maximize the depth of each response. With a topic that was challenging for many of the participants it was critical to develop a space and rapport that supported a level of trust and open communication. St. John (2013) sees this as building a partnership that requires researchers to, “understand how to move beyond scripted action through the use of observation, analysis of dialogue, and reflection” (p.102).

To provide some context of the participants and how they saw themselves within the frameworks of identity, they were interviewed individually to gather information about their background, insight on their identity, and their outlook and philosophy of being an educator. In-depth interviews helped provide insight about individual and collective social processes, retrospective influences, and challenge long held beliefs (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). The initial one

on one interviews offered a nuanced layer of data that helped in examining the themes that arose in the group settings. Furthermore, the interviews collectively provided data which assisted in examining the issues in practice (St. John, 2013).

In addition to interviews and group sessions, data was also gathered through observation, which can serve as a key tool in gathering relevant information (Creswell, 2012). The observations from the one-on-one interviews assisted in shaping the guiding topics for the cyphers. The insight gained from the data collection process helped highlight problematic trends and possible directions of further study (St. John, 2013).

Table 1
Interview and Group Cypher Format Chart

When	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
<i>Method</i>	One-On-One Interview	Workshop / Reflection Session	Workshop / Reflection Session
<i>Purpose</i>	Build rapport / explore articles / research	Explore articles / research / critical reflection (personal)	Key Definitions and terms / Complicit with whiteness on campus

At the start of the study, each participant was provided an overview of the purpose of the study, as well as the stages in which the sessions will focus on supporting the purpose.

Participants also signed a consent form, which spelled out the study's purpose and reminded them that the findings of the study would be anonymous and no personal information would be

included. They were also informed that they would be provided with an opportunity to read the findings and provide any feedback on the information presented.

Data Analysis

This study sees the importance of learning from the participants shared narratives, which will guide the study and provide insight into the individual experience and larger thinking within the participants' local context (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Each interview was audio recorded onto my phone, which was then transferred to a password secured laptop and deleted from the phone. The recordings were then transcribed by a transcription service. The process included reviewing the recorded transcripts and notes from the one-on-one and group interviews. A second review of the data assisted in gaining a larger understanding of additional issues affecting the collective in the process. Overall, the data analysis provided insight into how Hip-Hop can serve as a tool that fosters a long-term process of critical reflection and culturally sustaining practices in the classroom.

The data analysis began with a line-by-line open coding of the transcripts, using a thematic analysis to identify emerging patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2012). After grouping the codes into emerging categories, the reexamination of the codes and categories helped identify themes. The process was circular and honored the Cypher concept. I developed a process that included reviewing transcripts and notes, coding, and grouping of the codes, which helped identify themes and then returned to the transcripts and started again until nothing new developed. The themes that emerged are explored in depth in chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

As a qualitative researcher, I believe that each participant's reality is socially constructed. I need to be intentional in acknowledging the participants' perceptions are their reality, their

truth (Creswell & Miller, 2000). With that lens guiding the study, it was important that as the facilitator I recognize my own influence on the findings. Using interviews and observations as an attempt to triangulate the findings included a commitment to improve the trustworthiness of the data (Mathison, 1988). In addition, it was important to assert the subjectivity of the claims I make regarding the data collected and acknowledge that “all human behavior is time- and context-bound” (Lincoln & Guba, 1986, p. 75). How to make sense of the data, what data were highlighted, and what ultimately was included in the study is a heavy responsibility borne by qualitative researchers. It was essential that not only I record and transcribe recordings verbatim, but that I also employed a coding strategy that allowed me to identify themes and hear participants’ voices. Furthermore, it was important that I stayed entrenched in the framework of the Cypher, giving voice to the participant’s feedback, which ultimately guides the study even though [explain the impact of the pandemic]. To be sure that participants’ voices were at the forefront, I used member checking, which provided participants the opportunity to provide feedback about the findings (Creswell, 2013; Hallett, 2012). However, Hallett (2012) warns that amid the researcher’s commitment to trustworthiness, member checking needs to include critical reflection by the researcher to avoid any potential harm to the participants during this process. Aiming for a level of rigor acceptable for a study of this type, I recruited a peer auditor, who was familiar with this discourse to provide feedback on the study, content, and proposed findings and outcomes (Creswell, 2013).

Research Positionality and Context

A major characteristic of this study is the researcher’s positionality. As research is shaped by the insight of the participants, it is important to point out that researchers are also part of this dialogic experience (England, 1995). With race and privilege being such an influential

component in society, it is critical that as the lead researcher, I consistently remained mindful of my role as a white, cisgender, heterosexual, male scholar. Milner (2007) expands on the importance of understanding positionality and its impact on people of color, adding, “when researchers are not mindful of the enormous role of their own and others' racialized positionality and cultural ways of knowing, the results can be dangerous to communities and individuals of color” (p. 388). Because this study revolved around the deconstruction of whiteness, the larger implications aim to address supporting students and educators of color. Being that I am a white heterosexual male, I must acknowledge these constructs and how they influence the way I interpret and develop the study. Other contextual factors consist of the time frame of the study, participants, and location.

Delimitations

A study of this magnitude needs to be long term because it challenges ones identity. The participants and the researcher both bring personal biases that creates limitations on the study. Especially with a homogenous participant group the study got to commit. With the narrow focus on white identified participants, it was imperative for the study to recruit a diverse list of participants within the umbrella of the white identity. Lastly, although whiteness is a global structure and permeates our society, the location of this study limits the larger regional and cultural perspectives that could be captured if participants varied in background and regional influence.

Chapter Summary

This study was focused on discovering and uncovering data that included topics such as race, identity, privilege, and Hip-Hop. The modes of inquiry relied on participants' willingness to engage in a process of discussing race, culture, and privilege, which included self-examination

and challenging those constructs. In addition, the data gathering included engagement of Hip-Hop tools and practices. In completing the one-on-one and group sessions, it became apparent that the nature of the questions and topic of race and privilege offered some challenges for participants, and this had the greatest impact on the study's outcomes (Howard, 2003). In sharing the studies design, the chapter concluded with an explanation of how researcher positionality was taken into consideration. Finally, delimitations of the study were discussed. Chapter Four leads with a restatement of purpose followed by an exploration of the emerging themes.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

In exploring the data gathered for this study, it is important to reaffirm the original commitment to the Cypher as a way of engaging, cultivating, and assessing meaning. While the work was limited due to COVID-19, there are still ways the Cypher framework can shape how the study made sense of the data. In addition, as a researcher who is also an artist, it is critical to recognize the duality of roles and how one is in no way more important than the other, even in a space of academic scholarship. It is almost more important to uplift the lens of Hip-Hop in this moment, being that it functions, which Love (2017) explains, as a space that “critiques systemic oppression and the visceral representation that blames and shames black folks for America’s social and economic decay” (p. 542). This explanation is critical within the Cypher methodology and was integral in assisting the narrative inquiry throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study. The primary intent of this study was to engage white faculty around their understanding of their whiteness and its impact on their practice as educators, and how Hip-Hop based education can serve as a multi layered tool to sustain the critique of their identities and privileges – while also building agency for their minoritized students. This intent can be further understood through the following question: does Hip-Hop based educational tools and practices, which historically challenge white supremacist ideologies and problematize race, invite white educators to implement a sustainable critical reflective practice, while further developing their culturally sustaining approaches? If so, how does this happen?

The data collection process included scheduling interviews and group sessions, but was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This required me to shift my approach to the project. Despite dealing with these unique circumstances, I was ultimately able to conduct one on one

interviews and group sessions and this became meaningful points of data collection process. An additional challenge was implementing the Cypher format of the discussion, which relies on a shared energy and space that impacts the flow and extemporaneous nature of the Cypher.

Interviews and groups sessions averaged around an hour, however there were a few that were much shorter than most.

The Participants

The participants were 11 full time community college faculty members from a public community college, which serves over 20,000 students. Faculty participants came from a variety of academic disciplines: math, English writing, sociology, early childhood education, history, ESL, art, and library technology. Their ages ranged from 35 years to 58 years of age. The racial identity of participants ranged from white to Indo-European. All participants held a graduate degree. In addition, to protect confidentiality all participants are identified by pseudonyms using the names of white identified rap artists.

Table 2
Participants' Age Range, Educational Level, Content Area, Self-Identified Race

Participants	Age	Educational Level	Content Area	Self-Identified Race
Blondie	46	Master's Degree	English	White
Bhad Babie	45	Master's Degree	English	White
Paul Wall	46	Doctorate	Math	White
Lady Sovereign	47	Master's Degree	Library	White
Iggy Azalea	47	Master's Degree	Library	White
Dessa	47	Master's Degree	Art	White

(Table 2 Continued)

Ke\$ha	47	Doctorate	History	White
Post Malone	58	Doctorate	Early Childhood Education	Indo-European
Eminem	58	Doctorate	Math	White
Lil Dickey	47	Master's Degree	Sociology	White

Exploration of Emerging Themes - B.A.R.S. – Bias/ Barriers, Access, Reflection, and Safety

After analyzing the data, I identified the following themes: (a) bias/barriers: the challenge of countering the whiteness in traditional teaching (b) access: limited use or access to student culture capital (c) reflection: identifying and sustaining critical self-reflection and (d) safety: Hip-Hop at a distance - safety through the lens of whiteness. The themes are organized into the acronym BARS which is a double entendre that relates to the study in two ways. On one hand BARS refers to the term often used to describe impactful lyrics that are written or freestyles by an emcee in rap music. The other reference is the more tangible and virulent description of the term, which speaks to bars that imprison individuals. Both meanings are important in this study because the lines shared by participants are extremely important and impactful in further exploration of race, whiteness, and Hip-Hop Based Education and the impact on developing critical educational frameworks, while simultaneously speaking to the limitations and restrictions educators face as they are tethered to the oppressive identity of whiteness.

In the identification of these themes, nuanced elements of each theme emerged offering insight into the theme as well as possible directions for next steps. Within the identification of

themes there are a cluster of patterns. I used Naiman's (2016) framing as "associative patterns" (p. 89) to identify the patterns that existed within the themes.

Bias / Barriers - The Challenge of Countering the Whiteness in Traditional Teaching

Discovering the pervasiveness of whiteness and one's location and complicity within it is an ongoing journey. White educators who are interested in student-centered approaches which equitize student success and social justice frameworks, bring this virulent element connected to their identity into the classroom. A large part of the work for these educators in regard to social justice and equity is to counter the profound negative impact that whiteness has on students, the classroom, and ultimately themselves.

As faculty prepare to engage the impact of their identity it becomes apparent that there is not only a level of self-reflection required, but also a willingness to be vulnerable to others. One participant, Bahd Babie, expanded on this notion:

With my students. I'm just kind of like, okay, how are they going to perceive me? What stories are they telling themselves about me based on race? What stories am I telling myself about them based on race? How can I break through that and make sure that I understand them and we can connect? I think I'm just kind of more aware of it and I talk about it with them perhaps more. I'm just like, I'm teaching African American literature and I definitely on day one, I'm just like, okay, we need to talk about the fact that I'm white and how my perspective is. Colors the way that I see things and how is that going to affect this and how do we want to run class based on that?

The lens we use as educators dictates the classroom space and decides whether we will maintain long standing norms that are oppressive to most students, in particularly students of color. With intentional efforts aiming to disrupt the status quo, responses from the participants highlighted how this work needs to go beyond creative ways of introducing content for the students to grapple with. Even in an attempt to provide course content that aims to enact critical discourse and engagement, the onus of the work often ends up on the students. Macklemore speaks to their efforts to complicate the classroom space where whiteness can be engaged and critiqued:

I'm teaching language, so now I'm more aware of the complications of who I am as a white male, white cisgender male in front of them. That comes with a lot of benefits that make it easy. I try and choose kind of complicated issues where the students will even confront me a little bit with my whiteness. I would bring it up in class often as jokes, but to let them know whether they do or not, that they can bring it up in a way, or bring up whiteness in a way; because some students are aware of it and can bring it up in different ways. Now I do try and make a purposeful effort to racialize the classroom a little bit. I'm making more of an effort.

Engaging one's race can often be a challenging bridge to cross for white educators. In most cases white people grow up with minimal exposure to conversations or opportunities to become familiar with the complexities and profound social impacts of race, whiteness, and where they fit in it (Sue, 2016). This can often translate to uneasiness, even with the interest of white educators hoping to address race and their identity in the classroom space. For example, the previous quote where Macklemore described his attempt to implement course content and lesson plans that includes assignments engaging race, offered an example of the discomfort and opportunities for growth that can exist in this work. Other participants shared a more fluid approach hoping for some small talk or humor to ignite some conversations around race. Ke\$ha spoke to their interest in addressing whiteness and race and how they hope it will be addressed in the classroom space:

It's there; it's woven into me and what I do. I've got to be honest. I do, and this is why I think a video or a statement, like, what I would do in class would be helpful because you can't pull off the same things in text. I don't do videos of myself for just privacy issue. I have my own stuff. So anyway, I don't mean to digress, but I do think I approach things differently online than I do in the classroom. In the classroom, I right away talk about what I was hired here for Asian Seven US history, whereas in the US history... I don't know. I think because I was hired, honestly, because I was hired for Asian Sev, I had to address it immediately and I used kind of humor, and I'll I introduce myself and I go, "Ke\$ha, a famous Chinese last name" or whatever. It kind of like breaks the ice and then we are talking about race. At least I hope that it does. I hope that it does, because it's like me, and 70% Asian students, and of course, like part of what I'm doing in there is like, I shouldn't be... I feel it.

The work of disrupting the classroom with an intentional engagement of race and more specifically whiteness, can be looked at through the approaches and applications that participants attempt. However, the responses also brought to light the importance of understanding the blueprints that each participant gathered in their own educational experience. Below are two excerpts that speak to the importance of understanding our own training and exposure as well as the larger system which is steeped in whiteness. Blondie shared:

I think my awareness of the historic and current kind of oppressive nature of whiteness informs my teaching a lot, because I think a lot about language, about what we read about what I think is good writing, about grammar, about storytelling, all those kinds of things. I realized that everything that I thought you were supposed to teach as a writing teacher is just completely informed by that. It's very focused on getting you to read, write, think in a very white-centric way in probably ways I'm not even aware of that is about it. I've thought through some of them and some of them I haven't even thought so.

Furthering this idea, Macklemore added:

And being in a certain type of educational system and having mostly all white teachers in high school. And then when I went to college, it was a pretty traditional like university Canadian university. Just having that in the air or kind of in the water, I feel like, yes, in the beginning when I was teaching, I sort of assumed that I was supposed to be the authority and be like talking at students and I didn't... Before I really knew what teaching was about, I just figured that's the way it was done, because most of my experience in school was lecture based. I think that's a white thing. Yeah, I know that's a white thing now. That's just how schools are and that... If I think about it in term racial terms or terms of, like, if I'm thinking about inequality and who takes up more space and who talks more, yeah, I think that's just the way higher education has been.

Iggy Azalea expanded on this discovery of their own training as an educator and how their identity exploration has not only helped evolve the critique of their work, but an on-going commitment to this work. Azalea states:

The more I've learned about equity and just culturally relevant teaching and learning, I don't think of myself as an authority anymore. I just actively resist that notion. I definitely want to make sure the students learn something, but I think they also have something to teach me and I think their job is to learn about themselves. That gives me greater joy than if they are learning about like a database or something that they could probably teach themselves anyway, or if they learn about the world. But anyway, I think that my sort of idea of teaching has evolved to where it used to be like, you lecture and you maybe get

the student, make them do something, and then I'm the authority. I think that's how whiteness has affected me, and it's something I've had to actively resist, I guess.

Another aspect that was uncovered in the exploration of countering whiteness in educational spaces with participants is the social and educational histories that students bring with them. Their educational experiences were often shaped by a system of whiteness, which inflict microaggressions and the devaluing of the vulnerable as an extension of a larger social and economic reality (Kirkland & Malone, 2017). Amidst this history and on-going oppressive milieu, some participants articulated a struggle in their attempts to present curriculum with representation. Dessa elaborated on their attempts in offering culturally responsive education that includes representation:

Well, I think that sometimes I feel like I don't match my message, you know what I mean? Like I don't... I'm a messenger trying to give them information and maybe about their own culture or about... With art, for instance, there is not a lot of broad knowledge about art, so they are not going to know very much about even the rock stars of art. They just don't know them, you know, Picasso or Michelangelo. It's like the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, that's like... If I asked them to name artists, I get the turtle names and they could not identify their artwork. Donatello, they would never be able to identify that. So I'm starting from a place where I want to let them know about some Charles White or Kerry James Marshall, you know, the people who have had careers in cultural production, in fine arts in their culture forever, but they are not aware of them. It's hard to... I think that sometimes they are not... They don't know... I don't come in a package that they trust right away, so I have to do a lot of things to help them trust this packaging that I'm in.

Even the process of trying non-traditional approaches or doing things differently than that of the past can bring up other elements embedded in the privileges of whiteness. In recognizing this, it raises the point of not perpetuating the practice of placing the issue and workload at the feet of the vulnerable. Part of this work, as Iggy Azaela spoke to one's self-work, is a type of checks and balances, adding "when teaching, especially as a white educator, it's important to put oneself in... It's important for me to put myself in my identities to recognize them, to recognize those identities from the beginning in some way." Having the willingness and interest to try new

ways of teaching which aim to break tradition and standards comes with a level of privilege as a white faculty member. Blondie shared their own thinking around being intentional in her work to disrupt whiteness, which must include not overlooking the privilege to even attempt this work:

Why does race matter, because as white faculty, we kind of already have the legitimacy. Obviously, male faculty, more than female faculty, but I always think about doing some of these things, like oh, let's de-center the classroom and let's not have... We don't want a... I'm not talking to you specifically, but just generally to say, okay, I'm not going to be in the front of the class. There is no front, and just try to do something different in the classroom than the traditional kind of structure. That is very much a privilege of white people to be able to do that, because the second a person of color, particularly, I would argue an African-American, not black, but African-American professor does that suddenly, it's like, oh, what is that person even doing? And are they even teaching and what's happening in that classroom and that sort of thing. So I just think that's really important that we as white faculty that we acknowledge that because it matters, right?

In building out the study, a step in exploring how Hip-Hop can serve as a tool in countering the enactment of whiteness in higher education is to understand how white faculty were working towards frameworks of equity and ultimately anti-racism. This data offers some light into the individual challenges and systemic obstacles that exist in the work. As mentioned earlier, accessing, activating, and centering the students voice, cultural capital, and community history is critical.

Access: Limited Use or Access to Student Cultural Capital

As a group the participants had a common interest in elevating the students' voices which was articulated through attempts in creating community, presenting themselves as transparent and accessible, as well as various iterations of culturally relevant teaching. Participants shared how they wanted to acknowledge students' voices and the topics they find to be important.

Blondie spoke on how they work to connect student interests to the curriculum:

I feel like I'm always trying to boost or amplify things that they are doing and they are bringing and they are referring to. In any way that I can because things just come out in conversations and in talking and so if it's something that I kind of know about, I can be like, oh no, oh really, can you say more about that? Or if it's something that I don't know, I can kind of like, wait, talk more about that. Kind of constantly being like, oh, that's

cool, that's interesting. That's exactly like what we are talking about already. I don't know. I feel like that's one thing that I do. In terms of instruction; trying to connect what we are doing in the classroom to what they are already doing.

The ability to be aware of what students are going through or the worlds they travel and connect the content that one is teaching can be a powerful and challenging skill. This awareness challenges educators to access the conversations and realities of their students, in particular ones who come from communities the teacher does not. Big Body Bes, shares their work towards bridging that gap in hopes of accessing the students narratives, adding:

For me, as a big white male, that comes into classroom teaching one of the scariest subjects for most of my students, I have to make myself vulnerable. I have to present myself in a way that makes them be able to trust me and be able to share their voice in a way. This semester I employed the technique that I got from (a colleague) about long introduction and introduced myself and I showed my vulnerabilities of my past, being lied to and being brought up in just a white society that I've been lied to for my whole life about. Showing those vulnerabilities in a little bit and in a way, and I did bring in some kind of hip hop rhythm into my thing, so there is little proudness there for you. But that vulnerability, I think really.

Bahd Babie shared how in working to access students' voice and story it is important to get out of their way. They add:

That's why I try to take my role out of it a little bit and to try to open it up more to the students to kind of think through like, well, what do you think is good communicate best? Who do you want to talk to in this? Well, how would you talk to that person? How would you communicate with them? What does make effective evidence for that person? What's going to sell them on this argument? It's up to you to... I can ask some good questions I think, but I need to take some of my whiteness out of it.

One pattern that arose in this theme was how participants felt like they would benefit to have some knowledge of the students' culture. This highlighted the power dynamic where instructors felt the discomfort in trying to explore students' cultural capital. The role of the instructor is often framed as being the holder of knowledge, which in the approach of culturally responsive teaching, it can be an attempt to balance out the power. Macklemore expanded on this:

In my class, obviously, it's impossible to know everyone's language and cultural background. So I think that's similar in most teachers' situation. You can't know... There is no way I'm going to be up to speed on hip hop on any cultural background, but I can bring in my own and I... Like those five artists that you listed or four, they are magnificent in their own right, obviously. You don't even need to know what the students, what their preferences are, but just by comparing them with what you are instructing, it raises the level of what they are doing outside of class in their culture and puts it at the same level of what you are instructing, and it doesn't lower what you are instructing. So that's a way where... It lets me be lazy in that I don't have to keep studying languages, but I can let them bring their culture into the classroom and use it as a cross comparison that they have a quick understanding about.

The participants spoke to their interest in accessing students' stories, cultures, and realities. However, a pattern within this theme is how responses often directly or indirectly communicated a limitation on how far they wanted to know and value the student's culture. Emdin (2016) speaks to the distance educators must go to truly invest in activating students cultural capital, stating "To be in touch with the community, one has to enter into the physical places where the students live, and work to be invited into the emotion-laden spaces the youth inhabit" (p. 37).

Reflection: Expanding and Sustaining Critical Self-Reflection

One consistent idea that surfaced in the data analysis was reflecting and analyzing one's own progress in the work. In this context, "the work" refers to everything from development as an educator, effectiveness in reaching and teaching students - in particular students of color, as well as progress in one's own work regarding racial consciousness. This ranged from exploring and understanding one's own racial identity to work as educators that specifically included race.

Throughout the interviews the responses included elements of self-reflection and critical engagement. These responses allowed participants to articulate their interest in becoming a better educator or ultimately being more effective in serving. The reflections spoke to how the work happens in a myriad of ways, from individual work and habit development, to finding peers

or resources that offered some feeling of doing important work. This become present when utilizing the support of a partner or loved one or finding colleagues and workshops that facilitate learning and challenge the lens of how one sees their teaching, students, and the world.

The different ways that white faculty explored self-reflection varied. There were those that intentionally engaged race and those that did not articulate it to being central or important to that process. Macklemore spoke to their self-work, which included accessing resources to inform the process, as well as how it might translate in the classroom. They add:

I think I do engage in critical reflection. I try to, for example, with our equity efforts and data, I've had my desegregated data done a couple of times. I look at who I'm impacting positively and negatively in my classrooms and try and attend to that and in my instruction. I do a lot of reading on identity and power and instruction, critical pedagogy. So, I try to make my pedagogy as critical as possible. I am pretty reflective. This semester, my goal is to do notes after my classes. I haven't been diligent, but I've done it a couple of times. That's just something that I want to have as a practice, so I can reflect at the end of the semester and actually have my notes to go back on and to constantly try to improve. I'm definitely not at a space where I can dial it in. I don't think that space should exist, so I'm looking for different ways, different texts, how to interact with students and get them to push themselves a little more.

Participant Paul Wall spoke to the challenge of the process, but began highlighting the larger implications of committing to critical self-reflection:

I think recognizing the fact that my racial identity is responsible for the structure of the system and knowing that I have kind of a duty to reverse what my ancestors created. I think that impacts how I go about things. I have a duty to connect to students that look different from me in their skin color, in their abilities, their disabilities, in their gender. I have a duty to do that. I think it compass from a point of everybody being equal, regardless of experience, regardless of genetics, regardless of background..... Well, sometimes I have to take a break from it, but the consistency is just continuing to do work here and there with talking to people, doing Teachers for Equity, doing reading and being mindful of just the students each time change in each kind of classroom and just to respect whatever dynamic is upfront in a particular class. And in a semester, the different classes there, each class is different. I could be teaching two sections of the same course, yet the classes look completely different, even the material covered could be different. The introspection part, I think what I would like to do a little bit more is to do a little bit more journaling to help with that rather than keeping it internal. That's just something for me to grow on.

Paul brought up an important layer to critical self-reflection, in that to make progress towards some semblance of anti-racism or developing into a more impactful educator, one must have a sense of the larger issues and the systemic layers. A key practice is developing action steps that facilitate a continuation of the process of critical self-reflection. Often developing your own steps begins with accessing conversations and training that present variations of process. Iggy Azalea, expounded on this idea, sharing how campus professional development helped her to develop actionable practices:

I think one, through professional development, definitely. So through a lot of the things, I've learned here at the college and most of it is equity related. I think about like how... and like teachers for equity, for sure, because I was really new, and I did teachers for equity. Since then, I learned a lot through that, but since then, I think in my professional life, I think about... I definitely engage in critical self-reflection. I'm not good at doing this every time, but I think about in meetings, okay, how much am I talking? Who is not being heard? Who is not getting a chance to talk because I like to talk? I just try to be aware of the space I'm taking up. And then that also makes me aware of the space that others are taking up as well, so that I try not to judge them and go back to critical self-reflection. But yeah, I would say it's a big part of my life really. I try to be self-aware. And then I can tell when I'm, you know... Of course, there are times when it's not happening, but I try to catch myself.

The challenge in solely relying on professional development is that it can be inconsistent, which allows individuals to be selective in their commitment to the work and can erase any accountability that is required to critically examine oneself. Post Malone illustrated that even when ongoing engagement can be found, it may only prompt present surface level elements, which can limit an individual's progress towards any goal or shift. They added:

Well, being involved in professional development on this campus gives me the opportunity to be enriched daily. I certainly look to my own continuous improvement as a model to accentuating that out in the classrooms. I also teach in a master's doctoral program, which requires me to continue to sharpen my sword, stay current to that. Much of that actually gets infused into the community college classroom for the mere sake that I want to assist or heightened their ongoing awareness to the fact that there are current trends out there that we can't control, but based on that, how can you contribute to your own sphere of influence to create community to make change?

In this work, it becomes apparent through the responses that because of the on-going nature and required depth of the process, tools are essential for the journey. Because this can be a very personal process individuals have the option to move at the pace of their choosing. From the findings one possible perspective is that true progress requires one's willingness to look at themselves critically, examine their own status amidst the educational and social environments they travel, and continually pursue tools that support progress.

Safety: Hip-Hop at a Distance: Safety Through the Lens of whiteness

Hip-Hop culture, which is rooted in the African diaspora, and was cultivated, crafted, and debuted to the world by black and brown youth in the south Bronx continues to have a global impact in both small and large settings (George, 2005; Petchauer, 2012; Peterson, 2016). As profound and expansive of an impact this culture has had, it falls into the ongoing legacy of black culture being used for white consumption. Brooklyn born artist, Yasin Bey also known as Mos Def speaks to this in his song “Hip-Hop”, which is from his debut solo album, *Black on Both Sides*. Bey emphatically chants “Invisible man got the whole world watching” referencing the iconic Ralph Ellison text and the continued marginalization of black people, who simultaneously supply cultural staples such as Hip-Hop culture (Smith, 1999, Track 2). The culture that continues to have a global impact while being used for white consumption at the disposal and disconnect of historically marginalized people’s well-being. Even as Hip-Hop continues to be a source for people of the African diaspora to articulate many of the oppressive realities faced, the corporatizing of the culture and art continues its curation and appropriation for white consumption. This is important to emphasize as the last theme highlights many white educators’ relationship to Hip-Hop.

As participants spoke to their exposure to Hip-Hop, two patterns emerged. Most participants had a fond and happy connection or experience, no matter big or small. The other patterned demonstrated that participant's experiences with Hip-Hop were in the past, as in childhood or college, and were mostly from an outside of the culture vantage point.

As participants engaged in conversations around Hip-Hop culture, which in most cases they understood as rap music, it was much more positive than negative or critical in any sense. It was more often thought of through a nostalgic and optimistic lens.. Blondie spoke to their limited experience with it, but also how it seemed to have some very positive elements:

I define hip hop culture; fun, everything seems like always fun, positive, aspirational. Everything is about building up, but not just oneself, others. Building everyone up, everyone gets built up through this. The only thing I would say hip hop culture has, there is an aesthetic, a very defining aesthetic and it's definitely about... but without as much of the in-group, it definitely defines. There is a defining of aesthetic and way of being and there can be some kind of in-group, out-group, but not nearly... That line is not nearly as rigid as other I would say to like cultural groups, other culture. You know what I mean? It's interesting. It's always willing to be blurred and it's almost like it's something that doesn't want to be defined, which is pretty cool.

How participants accessed Hip-Hop was another layer of this conversation, which could have parallels in how educators access knowledge about their students. Iggy Azalea spoke to their knowledge of Hip-Hop as well as access points, adding:

I would say pretty solid. I would say I am more familiar with older stuff based on my generation. Like old school rap and hip hop is just really dear to my heart; like even Run DMC of course, but also A Tribe Called Quest. I heard a song... I was into some restaurant and I heard a song, a newer song and the guy singing sounded like Q-tip. I was like, "Oh, this sounds like Q-Tip." It's not QTIP, but it sounds like Q-Tip, but I thought about Q-tip for a minute. But then I actually try to listen to 102.5, the hip hop station, which I think is kind of the best one in Sacramento. I just try to know what the hell is going on with music. My sister does too, so like a while ago... We verge... The stuff that we like verges more on the pop side of.. I just discovered Lizzo, for example, and I'm just like, this so great. But I try to know who people are and even if it's like based on the radio mostly. And even if it's someone who I don't want to listen to for long periods of time I try to know.

The depth of exposure varied with participants. Many spoke to the breadth of Hip-Hop being found globally, while others offered their nuanced experience with music and specifically rap music, as Dessa shared, “My taste in music is always underground music. So even if I do [a] verse myself in hip hop, I'm always going for [a] some small act. I buy mix tapes off the street. I go to small shows.” And like our students Hip-Hop is not monolithic. Accessing underground music can often speak to an individual’s interest in not accepting the commercial or corporatized versions of music or the messaging associated. This was further explored by Macklemore as they spoke to their exposure to Hip-Hop and the counter messaging that addressed race and its implications in current social situations:

Well, if I think back... In Junior High I listened to Public Enemy and Ice Tea and I don't know why it resonated with me, but it did. Like fear of a black planet. Maybe it was my brothers kind of accessing it on a more of a subconscious level at that time, I think. Seeing the pushback in the eighties against Public Enemy, Ice Tea and Ice Cube and Too Live Crew, didn't make sense to me. I was fascinated about why Canada didn't care and would sell it, but it was banned in the USA and why there was such... It introduced me to the problems of racial inequality and the black experience in the US.....it was great and offensive and a nice escape for me. But then like Ice Tea, getting into a cop killer and that around... I think it was around the beating of Rodney King, maybe before, maybe right after. But he had some really violent songs that made me question what I was listening to, but it made me really aware of the struggle between police and black communities. And then, yeah, it's a shitty... As living here is just this same story. His message is till really relevant.

However other participants spoke to their access to Hip-Hop being solely through a commercial outlet, which speaks to experiencing cultures from a solely surface experience. Ke\$ha adds:

In terms of exposure to music, yeah, there is a ton of hip hop in the eighties and it was super popular. So I listened to a lot of hip hop. Hip hop was pretty around, played the radio, in fact. And then once the labels were on things, we knew what we needed to buy. Our tapes and our CDs told us what to buy. I grew up when I grew up, so there is that like old school, and I know it's not the oldest school, but that kind of hip hop.

Participant responses highlighted that their exposure to Hip-Hop was not just from a physical or social distance to the culture, but also in relation to time. As such there was little to no

acknowledgment of any current artists or specific cultural elements. This may add to the perspective that discussing things from a distance whether it is physical location or time related offers a level of safety and ability to not fully invest in the reality and experiences of that culture.

Participant responses revealed that Hip-Hop culture was mainly understood as music, with little articulation of the larger culture. However, a consistent response was to the importance of how the music spoke to their students. Blondie shared how music plays a part in their students' lives, "I think for some students it is life; music is their life. I think for other students that might have less. I think it all depends on how much they identify with it and not just the music, but just the whole way of being." Furthering this point, Bhad Babie speaks to how this connection can be translated into discipline specific tools that elevate their learning and content production:

Some of my students are super into music. I've had quite a few students who make music. That's an amazing... Those turn out to be the most amazing writers. The students who actually write their own music are powerful. I think for those who are really into hip hop, it gives them a love of language and an ability to play with language, which I think is really powerful.

To expand on how this can activate students, Lil Dickey admitted that this has created an opportunity for students to shift into the role of the educator for the instructor and the class.

They added:

As instructors, we are in positions of power, teaching in rooms where many of your students again have a diverse cultural backgrounds, students of color, many in poverty. There is a power dynamic there. One of the things I was reflecting on was when I was teaching about race, one of the questions I... or not when I was teaching, a class on race. So it was a race class, but I brought in lyrics to hip hop. Again, I was telling Adam that I listen to some hip hop, but it's not a huge part of my musical repertoire. So one of the questions I asked was, is there a difference between hip hop and rap? Symbolically, do people associate that as different things because one of the articles I read or that Adam had me read mentioned sort of the conflict and tensions and the messaging. It was really interesting because there was sort of a debate that arose about that. But in many cases it was cool because students were teaching me. They were kind of empowered to talk about the history of hip hop, their connection to music, how they saw this delineation or didn't

see it....It was an interesting moment of class because of I was kind of out of my depth and I was just trying to sort of guide the conversation, but for the most part, I think it really gave a lot of students a mantle to, again, sort of embrace their knowledge and to have an opportunity to teach me something and just kind of flipping the script a little bit.

Thematic Conclusion

This section features a list of evidence that offers insight which speaks directly to the guiding questions for the study. The content captured brought about themes that corresponded with the theoretical foundation that drives the study. The themes that arose from the study gave light into how white faculty experience their approach as an educator that is invested in student centered and social justice teaching. In addition, it also gave insight into how these educators attempt to access their self-work, which includes furthering their education around race, social justice and equity. Furthermore, the evidence uncovered what level of exposure and understanding of Hip-Hop culture and its impact on their students. In the data collection process, although I did not experience explicit resistance; however, I infer that the indication of participating in the study. However, the questions in the interview may have provided some discomfort, which could have impacted the depth of their responses. In addition, this may uncover a discomfort in lack of expertise or exposure of Hip-Hop. With that said, participants' responses helped identify some key elements of how white educators, who in this case are committed to a student-centered lens, struggle to create a race conscious classroom which includes critiquing their own identity and role in the space. Furthermore, the analysis of the data brought about the B.A.R.S. (Bias/Barriers, Access, Reflection, and Safety) theme, which offered some movement in addressing the research question which drives the study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Build a home, teach a class, start a revolution,” words eloquently spit by Jay Electronica (Green, Smith, Allah, & Cole, 2010), the talented emcee hailing from New Orleans, as part of his guest feature verse on the Talib Kweli and Hi-Tek song, *Just Begun* (Track 12). It is possible that Jay Electronica did not realize that this line encapsulates implications for future community and personal development frameworks, educational theory, and in this case, aligns with the study’s themes. The tools from this powerful quote in conjunction with the study’s findings, can offer guided efforts of profound impact, whether they be application-based pursuits or further research relating to Hip-Hop, whiteness, and education. To break the verse down further, the ability to secure a racial consciousness about your own identity, is the home that one builds internally rooting our progress towards anti-racist practices. As an educator, teaching a class is more than an act of sharing information; it is also learning and critically engaging the space of learning. To spark the cultivation of one’s knowledge of self being rooted in anti-racist objectives can have a direct influence on how one will approach teaching others. In addition, sharing one’s gift and knowledge (albeit in a class or in the community, using racially conscious and culturally sustaining frameworks such as Hip-Hop based education), an individual prompts a catalyst of personal, collective, and anti-racist revolutions. The study attempted to explore all of the elements provided by Jay Electronica, with a goal of creating a sustained revolutionary push towards countering the enactment of whiteness, specifically within higher education. Before pushing into the possibilities that grew from this journey, it is important to restate the purpose and offer some introductory steps on its significance.

Outro

This study is focused on exploring how the three critically important social topics, whiteness, education and hip-hop intersect to inform the ways that white educators may develop a process of critical self-reflection, exploration of anti-racist practices, as well as culturally sustaining approaches in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact Hip-Hop based education (HHBE) can have on white faculty who are working to understand their whiteness and identity, as it relates to their practice as educators. Although Hip-Hop based education is recognized as a valid approach to engaging and elevating the impact of students learning, it also embodies possibilities that impact educational spaces, in particular around instructional faculty, race and their identity (Rawls, 2017; Wade, 2018). This understanding of Hip-Hop based education prompts a return to the driving question of the study: Does Hip-Hop based educational tools and practices, which historically challenge white supremacist frameworks and problematize race, invite white educators to implement a sustainable critical reflective practice, while further developing their culturally sustaining approaches? If so, how does this happen?

An analysis of the data provided several emerging themes, which provide introductory layers related to the purpose of the study. This chapter will include a discussion of the initial findings and themes that emerged from the data, followed by the implications of these themes. In addition, it will also include recommendations that can be offered to further the exploration of this topic, as well as a potential framework that has developed from the study. Lastly, I include suggested areas to further the research.

Discussion of Themes

I identified four themes that emerged from the data; these themes were (a) Bias/Barriers: The challenge of countering the whiteness in traditional teaching (b) Access: Limited use or access to student culture capital (c) Reflection: Identifying and Sustaining Critical self-reflection and (d) Safety: Hip-Hop at a distance - safety through the lens of whiteness. For ease of understanding, I encapsulated these themes into an acronym, BARS. This chapter explores what can be drawn from those themes and describes implications for educational practices moving forward.

Bias/Barriers: The Challenge of Countering whiteness in Traditional Teaching

A theme found in almost every participant response was the challenge of pushing back on the enactment of whiteness in the classroom or beyond. The findings highlighted the perspectives of the participants, while uncovering similar experiences shaping the participants approach as educators. Participants spoke to their struggle of engaging race in the classroom. These experiences had participants questioning the nuances of their own identity, which simultaneously sparked inner doubt about their ability to discuss race in public. This was elevated as participants articulated a worry of how they might be perceived by students of color. Furthermore, the responses gave insight into how such feelings directly impacted each educator's willingness to approach any subjects of race, often upholding a color-blind culture in their classroom.

Further exploration of the data uncovered how educational norms within higher education, in particularly for faculty, reinforce whiteness (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2017). These norms continue the traditions in how students often experience K-12 as well as higher education. The norms uphold perceptions that are guided into maintaining white centric norms

that will shape how most students will and always have experienced the classroom. The participants shared their struggle in maintaining an intentionality aiming at resisting and dismantling those norms, which can impact how they may be perceived by colleagues and students in this effort. Also highlighted within this struggle was a discomfort with pushing back on the norms. An offshoot of this inability to counter norms and engage race was how this unintentionally puts the weight of discussing race solely on the students. Hanna (2019) speaks to the need of creating an anti-racist classroom, adding “constant reflexivity about how our raced and gendered embodied presence, regardless of our best intentions and our aligned identities, might impact the people who congregate with us in learning and vice versa” (p. 235).

Another interesting layer within the exploration of white faculty engaging race in their class is the question of how white faculty can develop a race conscious pedagogical approach, while not recentering whiteness. Scholars speak to the need of developing anti-racist pedagogies that simultaneously critique and dismantle whiteness while not centering it (Aveling, 2006; Giroux, 1997; Mayo, 2003; Roediger, 1994). One attempt to decenter whiteness, is to decenter one’s self, which can intentionally and unintentionally become a sort of opt out. Participants spoke to the interest in getting the students to engage and discuss topics of race, which provided an approach that decenters the instructor. Yet, without intentional self-reflection, this can also serve as a way to avoid discussing or exploring one’s own comfort or discomfort in maintaining an ongoing race conscious practice and dialogue.

Access: Limited Use or Access to Student Cultural Capital

The classroom is a platform that can be used in transformational ways. Most participants spoke to their passion and interest in working to develop a transformational classroom, whether it be through culturally relevant curriculum or cultivating a classroom environment that valued

student voice. Within these responses, a pattern arose where even with the interest in hearing the students voice, there still seemed to be some level of disconnect. The transformational approaches adopted by the participants often came from the lens of an outsider, which welcomed student stories and perspectives solely from an observational role. Similar to conversations of race, this predominantly puts the labor of engaging race and reality on the student whereas exploring the possibility of developing a collaborative framework would prompt the educator to learn about students' realities and cultures beyond the student sharing. This work includes community conversations as well as individual research and experience beyond the classroom and campus.

Rarely did participants speak to how they had to learn more about students' identity, culture, and interests or how their identity and the privileges attached may have limited that access. Application of how participants prompted student voice and centered student interests, predominantly focused on what the instructor felt was the best approach. This maintained the hierarchy of power in the classroom, with little to no student input on how to best activate the student's cultural capital or voice. Participant responses hinted at the importance of creating space for students to feel agency and how empowering them to bring their authentic selves is critical; however (tell us more). To be connected to the student reality, both physically and emotionally, one must enter the physical spaces beyond the classroom where students exist (Emdin, 2016).

While the participants articulated an intention to welcome student cultural capital into a classroom space, the data brought to light a few common occurrences such as a lack of knowledge of and connection to one's own culture as a white educator, a lack of knowledge of proximity to the students' culture, and the combination creating an environment that will devalue

and disallow any true presence or authentically welcoming of student culture and identity. Furthermore, those who are trying to understand, to push into consciousness, are still trapped by white privilege that is so enmeshed in ones lived experiences. Stating or working to prove that one cares will not automatically push against the educational boundaries to welcome in the language, the identities, and the cultural capital the student flourish in. When educators focus on culturally engaging educational spaces, such as “essentializing Hip-Hop” (Ibrahim, 2016) in our practices, we offer ways to honor, acknowledge, and welcome the student’s local identities (p. 2).

Reflection: Identifying and Sustaining Critical Self-Reflection

Me, Myself, and I, was a song from Long Island artists, De La Soul, which spoke to the importance of being able to reflect on who you are, finding comfort in that identity, which ultimately welcomes critique and explores how it lives within the surrounding standards, expectations, and cultures. The third theme of this study, which offers elements of the themes in the De La Soul song, examines the activation and impact of critical self-reflection. Participants all spoke to employing some aspect of self-reflection which came in various formats and shaped the participants differently.

The importance of this theme was highlighted by Utt and Tochluk (2020) as they posit, “Whites must turn your racialized focus away from students and explore the impact their racial identities have on their craft” (p. 125). This point clearly states the importance of white educators critically examining the impact of their identity on the classroom and how the work of engaging race must start with the individual practitioner. This study uncovered how participants access resources in various ways to engage in critical self-reflection. The resources ran the spectrum of books, lectures, campus collectives, affinity groups, and professional development.

Having a breadth of access points for [what] can be important to beginning the journey, but according to the findings, this work require a consistent pattern of self-reflection that examines the contours of one's own racial privilege. Some participants discussed the idea that critical reflection is about one's own growth as an educator or an individual without centering a commitment to racial consciousness. The data affirm that even in the best intention to engage the work of critical personal development the focus can often be guided by the comfort of the individual rather than pursuing the challenging terrain of interrogating ones racialized identity. “[It] is important to note that such a comfort is predicated on the discomfort of those most marginalized” (Matias, 2016, p. 161).

Because most white educators enter education with minimal exposure to racial groups other than their own, it is critical for them to engage in race conscious self-reflection work (McDonough, 2009). Multiple participants brought to light the effort to examine their own identity was connected to the process to uncovering other aspects of their development as an educator. These explanations included things like, how does their identity connect to the systems and policies on campus, how are these policies impacting our minoritized students, or what are their perceptions of and assumptions about students from racial groups different from their own. Sustaining this work allows for a further reach of personal and professional exploration and a deeper dive into locating the problematic reach of whiteness in the classroom and beyond. In this particular exploration it means unearthing the links between racial consciousness and its connection to how white educators operate in the classroom (Haynes, 2017). Lastly, as the self-work continues, the data showed the importance of participants locating and employing action steps to develop ways in implementing and sustaining the work in the classroom. This could be a seen as an access point for Hip-Hop based education, being that it offers step by step

application, while simultaneously tasking the practitioner to insert their own identity with transparency into community.

Safety: Hip-Hop at a Distance - Safety Through the Lens of whiteness

The final theme that surfaced in the data highlighted the exposure, experience and feelings each participant had for Hip-Hop culture, rap music, and Hip-Hop based educational practices. Although most participants had little exposure to or experience in the implementation of Hip-Hop based education, they all had some level of exposure to Hip-Hop culture. This exposure was predominantly through rap music.

A majority of the participant responses regarding feelings towards rap music was relatively positive. In the exploration of their feelings towards Hip-Hop in general and more specifically toward rap music, participants indicated that their most impactful experience occurred during a developmental time of their upbringing either in high school or college. Furthermore, outside of one participant, the majority of responses spoke about their Hip-Hop exposure experience as a self-identified outsider. Being an outsider to the culture of Hip-Hop was articulated through minimal relationship to the practitioners or communities that centered the culture or art form. Most participant saw Hip-Hop as a something positive, with a vantage point of safety. This vantage point of safety can be further understood through the outsider positioning, which allows passive interaction and does not require in depth critical understanding of the complexities within Hip-Hop and its founding communities. The participants spoke about Hip-Hop, having minimal exposure to it and limited understanding of the complexities of it, however they still chose to identify it as positive art form for all. Because Hip-Hop comes from the African Diaspora and continues to serve as a voice for the historically marginalized and oppressed, it can be seen as an access point for white people to experience culture and narratives

of black and brown communities (Sule, 2015). In connection to this understanding about Hip-Hop, it can be said that how one feels about Hip-Hop can be a correlation to how one feels about black and brown folks. This assertion offers possible insight into why white educators who have little exposure to Hip-Hop. Love (2016) explains that the complex personhood of Hip-Hop culture as “a culture rooted in the ideas of determination, resistance, and the long enduring fight for Black freedom, but existing alongside the seductiveness of the material and psychological conditions of capitalism, sexism, and patriarchy” (p. 415). This may further add to the idea that the idea of safety in relation to [what] is connected to not having to know fully about Hip-Hop or the complexities it offers to the world and most importantly the often-unheard narratives of our most marginalized students and their communities.

With a variation in access points to Hip-Hop, participants spoke about which aspects resonated with them. Hip-Hop brought a level of authenticity and rebelliousness they were not used to hearing within their cultural milieu, and it offered a glance into a world unfamiliar to them. Participants identified the willingness to challenge authority, the unapologetic engagement around racial and social topics, and the volume and anger at which these messages presented themselves sparked curiosity and an interest to go further into the dissonance the messaging created, albeit from a distance. The interesting piece to this, which fits the previous mention that most whites had minimal exposure to people of racial groups other than their own, is that only one participant saw this as an access point to further explore and build bridges with new communities.

In discussing how Hip-Hop has existed in the participants’ classroom spaces, it was important to note that the few moments that Hip-Hop did enter the space, it was generally initiated by students rather than by the participants themselves. Welcoming these student voices

also opened up the opportunity to discover students who are artists. One participant added, “its like you have your own educator/expert in the room who may be able to expedite getting the class to deeper levels of the conversation around the music and culture.” Speaking to this position as an artist and expert, Petchauer (2012) expands on the roles that students can take within Hip-Hop, which can ultimately add to the breadth of our classroom conversations: “Beyond the four clear roles (B-Boy/Bgirl, Deejay, Emcee, and Grafitti Artist) in hip hop, students can affiliate and participate in it through other active ways” (p. 149). This highlights this study’s findings that suggest educators are able to appreciate Hip-Hop from a distance in ways that do not personally challenge their own thinking, identity, racial consciousness or ways of being in the world. This distance reinforces the expectation that the student will be expected to provide the labor to further the classes engagement around critical social topics such as race, oppression, or other racially conscious ideas.

Finally, it becomes apparent that as white educators push to further their racial consciousness and reimagine how their practice as educators can be steeped in anti-racist frameworks and liberatory ideologies, the work must be supported. In addition, in committing to a process of anti-racist education, it provides a framework ripe for the discovery and implementation of a tool like Hip-Hop, can facilitate the critical learning and identity exploration; consistently centering race and critical self-reflection.

Implications for Scholars and Professionals

In exploring how white educators counter the enactment of whiteness in higher education through their own practice and identity examination, it becomes apparent that there is a need for support to foster this work. In that work there exists a challenge to not recenter whiteness while working to counter its existence in educational spaces (Leonardo, 2013). The findings indicate

that one tool to include in this fight to counter whiteness is Hip-Hop Based Education. Amidst the data gathering phase of the study, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted and limited the possibilities of exploration. These constraints of the pandemic reshaped the study to be a beginning step in the larger push in understanding the impact Hip-Hop based education and pedagogy can have in making an anti-racist educational system a reality.

One conclusion of this study is that Hip-Hop's presence, which is often an unfiltered voice for marginalized populations (Love, 2018), along with the possibilities of the Hip-Hop based education (Akom, 2009; Alim, 2007; Emdin, 2010; Evans, 2019; Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Petchauer, 2012; Rawls & Petchauer, 2020; Stocall, 2006), and Hip-Hop's willingness to consistently center issues of race and injustice (Kajikawal, 2015; Kitwana, 2005; Love, 2016; Nelson, 1998; Rose, 1994) has the ability to spark critical classroom conversations around race, whiteness, power, and privilege (Karvalis, 2018; Kruse, 2020; Sule, 2015). The need for a tool that amplifies marginalized voices and realities for white educators can be found in the themes emerging within the study's findings. Although the themes can be analyzed individually, there is also an interconnectedness that exists between the themes prompting the development of the acronym B.A.R.S. For example, the need for critical self-reflection has implications on how educators can engage topics of race and identity, as well as the ability to empower student voice and tap into their cultural capital. The themes can be used as discussion points and developed into trainings which would again explore the individual and collective impact of the themes.

In the need to sustain the practice of critical self-reflection, the study findings promote white educators to explore the use of Hip-Hop based education as a platform to critically analyze their location in the HHBE conversation. This process intentionally centers such topics as their student's cultural capital, and the larger social constructs of race, power, and privilege. This

study supports the idea that engaging in critically race conscious self-reflection can become even more powerful if part of that exploration happens in community with students. This, in turn, requires the educator to take risks, become vulnerable, and co-construct experiences with students. The findings affirm the need for sustainable race conscious critical self-reflection, which is an essential part of moving out of our comfort zones and into honest, in-depth, work. The idea of comfort in this context refers to the ways in which the findings in this study highlighted participants' minimal engagement of race when sharing experiences of critical self-reflection. The process of creating sustainable race conscious critical self-reflection must begin with participants further understanding around what we are conditioned to see with race and other socially constructed identities (McDonough, 2009). For white educators who want to develop a practice of race conscious critical self-reflection, layers of this exploration must include how we consistently engage race in all aspects of life as well as with whom we are willing to engage in discussions of race. As participant Bhad Babie noted:

My interactions with people of other races outside of school are less... I guess I'm less conscious in terms of like really thinking through like, okay, how has race playing into this right now? I'm not actually like coming up with a lesson plan for my interactions with friends and neighbors. We are on different terms because usually it's going to be terms of friendship and equal terms rather than a power dynamic of like, I'm a teacher, you are a student, but it's like, okay, a friendship term, which is different. So I don't think... I would say with friends from other racial groups, I don't talk that much with them directly about how race is playing into our friendship dynamics. I think that's pretty rare that I... We will talk about issues about race, but not about our personal dynamics, which is where I'm a little more open to doing that with students, just being aware of that and calling out like what I see, but with friendships, I don't know that I've done that.”

This comment shows that even though the classroom may be a space to pursue further discussions of race, that cannot be the only place. Is this agreement to discuss race in the classroom a result of the comfort within the existing power dynamic, which the educator is generally in control of? Understanding the reality that the power dynamic and control of the

classroom space predominantly belongs to the teacher's; it would be critical to have a tool that empowers the students' voices and centers them as the expert on their terms. This forecasting would support the importance of implementing the tools of Hip-Hop based educational, which Evans (2019) suggests "provides a classroom ethos supportive of expression related to contemporary black youth subjectivity", as well as a mechanism that acknowledges students cultural capital, and welcomes a multi-modal culture that counters traditional one-dimensional instruction (Emdin, 2011) (p.20). The chance to have authentic conversations around race, while attempting to expand the possibility of who is being identified as the expert in the room is important work to further the movement towards a race conscious educational space.

The comfort with or positive outlook toward Hip-Hop cultural was at odds with the distance from Hip-Hop culture experienced by participants. This distance mirrored the relationship that these participants have with their students of color. As the findings uncover, participants held a positive outlook and communicated hope for their students' success, yet a simultaneously upheld a distance and lack of action towards further engagement with the students' culture, language, and reality. Participants spoke to the possibilities of connecting with students through the content, Dessa added:

I think that so much, at least my view of "my subject" is that it's a vehicle for expression. I'm not interested in it being... They might come into my room thinking that art is about beauty, and I disagree with that. I think art is about communication and it's about communicating something about the human experience. The human experience is broad and a lot of it is ugly and painful, and so I want to give them license to that part, the whole spectrum of human emotion, but if they come in thinking it has to be about something pretty or good or life affirming, that's a lot to help them undo. It's not that I want them to make "this subject" about pain, but I want them to know that... I am trying to teach them, there is a lot of critical thinking, more critical thinking than people realize.

Even in this narrative, it can be assessed as another effort to connect with students, while simultaneously not infusing their voice and reality into the process.

Hip-Hop the Gateway Tool

This study sought to understand how Hip-Hop might serve as a gateway towards furthering conversations of race and simultaneously cultivating a classroom space for critical conversations between students and teachers around identity, social justice, and culture. The findings showed that white educators, no matter how distant from the culture of Hip-Hop, knew some of its history with respect to challenging the status quo, confronting race and racism, and consistently creating a state of disruption. Furthermore, to take on the responsibility of teaching with Hip-Hop based educational practices, the participants demonstrate the need for white educators to disrupt their own biases and assumptions about Hip-Hop and their students. Without this self-work, educators who say they are student-centered, which may include an interest in activating the students' voice, simultaneously miss the opportunity of fully understanding the importance putting value on the students input and narrative. The findings also reaffirmed the elements of whiteness that participants carried with them, which focused on the course content over classroom and student culture, and a lack of critical curiosity and caring on the student's terms.

This prompted another area of the findings that participants, who want to do this race conscious critical self-reflection work must go beyond the comfort of our classroom and campus. The participants found that in maintaining a commitment to the standard of traditional teaching, they sustain systemic white supremacy that impedes their ability to welcome, elevate and celebrate students' cultural capital. To make this shift in classroom philosophy and approach educators will be required going beyond the comfort zone of their classroom, their culture and privilege, and their campus.

For practitioners looking to further their efforts in this work, one step is to explore how they will determine the difference between their perspective and understanding of Hip-Hop. Instead of engaging Hip-hop solely in a performative manner, what are ways educators can challenge themselves to expand their knowledge and exposure to the culture and the educational tools? Given that Hip-Hop is a youth driven culture, educators' knowledge and familiarity with Hip-Hop will often differ from current students. Investigating Hip-Hop culture can be one way for educators to bridge generational gaps and elevate a perspective of students' knowledge (Rawls & Petchauer, 2020). Developing a sense of community and respect for one another's knowledge may set the tone for deeper conversations around race, social issues, the promotion of equity.

When presented with different examples of Hip-Hop based education, mainly through articles, current research and discussion, participants in this study began seeing some of the ways hip-hop based education can assist in reimagining the classroom and their process as educators. However, being experts of their own content, most of responses to utilizing Hip-Hop were limited to self-assessment of the content and how they may develop their own versions of Hip-Hop Based Education. Paul Wall elaborated:

We do some things where we take like a piece of poetry or we take a piece of... In one book, they used a Gettysburg address, and then you take the words of the Gettysburg address and you randomly select the words and then you do some things statistically. I think it would be powerful to change that and do like a Tupac song or something and then that would be a good discussion as well. It could be that... I think it just kind of motivated my head to kind of think about that.

Although this is a great starting point, it is important to recognize one's lack of expertise in the cultural or musical layers of Hip-Hop, can serve as a window into welcoming student voice and expertise. This speaks to a key element, critical to the implementation of HHBE,

how one might activate students' narratives, insight or direction, while also simultaneously being their authentic and transparent selves as educators and individual beyond that role.

Recommendations

White faculty must engage their identity and how that engagement/exploration impacts their practice and begins a push towards centering topics such as whiteness, race, and privilege. The introduction of Hip-Hop based education into this process of exploration will prompt educators to reflect on their exposure to and understanding of their students' realities and cultures, as well as how to support on-going sustainable critical self-reflection. However, it became apparent that for participants in this study, Hip-Hop culture, rap music, and Hip-Hop based education is a distant and somewhat unfamiliar topic. This study can be seen as a first step, offering insight into existing impact Hip-Hop can have in the work white educators are doing to simultaneously counter the enactment of whiteness and better serve their students.

The global pandemic that began in 2020 affected the original data collection strategy for this study which may have, in turn, influenced the findings. The original idea was to collect data in person through interviews and the Cypher. In the response to the pandemic by shifting data collection to a remote format, even with researching various online rap Cypher formats, it was not feasible to implement and fully explore the Cypher as methodology. With this shift, it erased the opportunity to expose participants to a breadth of Hip-Hop cultural elements such as the Cypher, which emphasis modes of communication and elements of freestyling. Future scholarship should explore using this method, as it works to counter traditional sharing processes that reinforce singular power dynamics and creates a space for possibilities of authentic expression and liberation (Johnson, 2011).

In addition, although the participants agreed to take part in the study, like others around the globe, they were responding to the pandemic in their professional and personal lives. For these participants, this included adjusting their teaching (moving from face-to-face teaching to fully on-line teaching) during the semester and finding some safety and normalcy within the changing landscape COVID-19 had created. The impact of the pandemic on data collection suggests the need for a longer study, which should include extended data gathering points individually, as well as in community cyphers. This way participants would have the opportunity to further examine their identity and explore Hip-Hop culture and HHBE in relation to their practice as an educator committed to anti-racism and critical self-reflection, both individually and in a community. Due to the complexity of addressing and dismantling anti-racism through critical self-reflection, one possible area for further study could include a longitudinal study with faculty that are willing to explore and implement a version of Hip-Hop based education. This would allow in-depth analysis over time to provide a more in-depth exploration of how the implementation of hip-hop based education might work in supporting a commitment of critical self-reflection around race, whiteness, and how it can impact white educators' professional practice and personal development.

The findings in this study revealed the participants' lack of Hip-Hop knowledge, exposure, and connection and included various ways participants experienced this profound black cultural art. Similar to their experience of being white and not growing up with discussions of race, Hip-Hop music was also a distant experience for many of the participants. These things not being central in their upbringings and cultural experiences speaks to the lack of exposure, understanding, and limited perspective on Hip-Hop. Similarly important is that this study be repeated when it is possible to collect data in person. The revised study could add to the current

findings and the collective work to dismantle misconceptions about Hip-Hop culture and its potential to bridge cultural and generational gaps with students. Within this expansion of the current study, further data collection can be done to examine how participants are impacted by the exposure of Hip-Hop Based Education, but more importantly if there is any expanded engagement addressing race, social justice and identity. This can also offer further exploration between the participants and how the culture can serve as a tool for further commitment to anti-racist practices and culturally responsive classroom spaces. The study recognizes that as white faculty look to further their critical self-reflection and anti-racist work, there still lives a distance between their work and how they see Hip-Hop as a tool with educational value. Furthermore, understanding that most white faculty are outsiders to the culture, how can educators, campuses and systems elevate and activate Hip-Hop educators, as Keith Jr. (2019) calls “educational emcees”, to provide guidelines and mentorship in furthering the work (p. 147). Hip-Hop Ed should be about to creating space for critical engagement with Hip-Hop and cultural artifacts while simultaneously giving room for students furthering the examination and construction of their identities (Kelly, 2018).

To further the scope of this study, one step would be to expand the pool of educator types, as this just spent time with classroom faculty. What other layers of this conversation can be unearthed when including counseling faculty, campus staff, and administrators. For example, academic counseling is a specialization that centers the importance of being one’s authentic self and engaging students or clients that may be at their most vulnerable point, is ripe for conversations around whiteness, critical self-reflection, race, and Hip-Hop. The pervasiveness of whiteness is not limited to the classroom, as it can be found throughout the campus and beyond the campus walls, which shows the vastness of the issue and spaces for further exploration of

Hip-Hop as a tool in countering the enactment of whiteness. As the study was able to include gender diversity and educators from a breadth of subjects, the engagement with other constituencies on campus would possibly add to the understanding and impact that Hip-Hop Based Education can have working on countering the enactment of whiteness campus wide. In addition, the make-up of participants can range by school level, such as elementary, secondary, and the university.

Avoiding Performativity

Most of the participants communicated some version of reluctance or worry in implementing Hip-Hop Based Education, being that this was a cultural milue they felt to be foreign in many ways and how it might be perceived of someone of their positionality bringing this into a classroom space. It is important to recognize that engaging Hip-Hop in educational spaces can support decentering whiteness, which to happen must include the intentional work around race and identity (Kruse, 2020). Furthermore, part of this work involves interrogating ourselves and whiteness in the work, which Hess (2018) adds, develops “an ethical practice for engaging with hip hop that centers race, racism, and Whiteness (p.7)” Another key component of this process is inviting in community and campus experts that can foster the implementation and sustainability of Hip-Hop Based Education in the educational space. This further decenters whiteness, by tasking educators to gain further knowledge about their students’ communities, and realities (Kruse, 2020). There are many more ways to further cultivate a Hip-Hop educational space, that do not require white educators to operate in a performative manner, which as previously shared task the educator to work on themselves, while learning, connecting, and engaging community.

Conclusion/Final Thoughts

As this study is being concluded, simultaneously there is a national discourse being driven by conservative voices attacking critical race theory (CRT). Critical race theory, which was developed by a collective of activists and scholars, including key names such as Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and others, examines the relationship between race, racism, and power through an wide lens that includes economics, history, context, and various system level implications (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). In relation to this study, Ladson-Billings and Tate (2016) further explore critical race theory in an educational perspective that attempts to understand school inequity through the examination of the intersection of race and property. This is important to recognize, as this study in essence is examining race on a micro level that has macro implications. In addition, as participants already spoke to the struggles of furthering their commitment to developing a lens and practice of equity and anti-racism in a white-centric space that historically deters critical race engagement. In addition, if this anti-CRT trend gains traction and implementation, it prompts a further call for tools like Hip-Hop Based Education to cultivate opportunities to engage power, privilege and race. Hip-Hop is the pin that bursts the bubble of safety to provide a racialized lens.

To that point this study's focus involved exploring the impact of implementing hip-hop based education and the centering of Hip-Hop culture Hip-Hop can have on white faculty who are working to understand their whiteness and identity, as it relates to their practice as educators. As the research shows, Hip-Hop intentionally stands in opposition to colonial education, which is steeped in white supremacy, has the ability to task educators to present their authentic selves, and allows students to be unapologetic in their presence and voice (Nevado, 2020). In the pursuit of understanding how Hip-Hop the process of white faculty might further commit to their

own race conscious self-identity work, it became apparent that there are further conversations to be had around the steps to infusing Hip-Hop based education and understanding its impact. Part of those conversations must include how committing to whiteness impedes one's ability to access this cultural resource of Hip-Hop, pursuing the possibilities of Hip-Hop based education when safety is not an option, and how Hip-Hop Based education is a platform to push for innovative approaches. In the wrap up, we must revisit the previously mentioned profound lyrical guidelines provided by Jay Electronica, "Build a home, Teach a class, start a revolution". As it resonates with the study's themes and findings, we must end on the line that follows the previously stated verse, "free the mind, heal the body, talking evolution", which encapsulates the breadth and importance of this work. By furthering the practitioner's critical engagement with their own identity and the healing of their mind and body, we elevate the likelihood of such practitioners to create spaces where students activate their agency, wealth of cultural and social capital, which is tantamount to shifting our educational spaces towards a reality of anti-racism, equity, and just plain dopeness.

EPILOGUE

There were several moments in this study that caused me to self-reflect. I have shifted my thinking as a result of the findings and discovered new insights from Hip-Hop education. In addition, the process from start to finish has pushed my development as a researcher and practitioner. The findings in this study have been powerful as well as the steps of preparation, execution of the process, and analyzing and reflecting on the results, lessons learned and the overall experience.

Preparation

Getting Community Approval

As I approached this project, I was able to draw intersections between my identity as a Hip-Hop head and budding scholar. It was critical to find community in the scholarship world that identified with the importance of Hip-Hop in education. The discovery of previous and current scholarship presented various opportunities for me to develop a network of Hip-Hop scholars. I found most solace from those who also came to the craft as a Hip-Hop practitioner. I learned the importance of not losing my voice and identity, and how to develop arguments and perspectives that are worthy of academic discourse.

Committing to the Topic, as a Way to Commit to Myself as a Scholar

The interest in blending the topics of racism and whiteness/white supremacy along with Hip-Hop/Hip-Hop based education was a result of my commitment to dismantle anti-racist practices in the classroom and the pursuit of knowledge using the lens of Hip-Hop. This issue is personally important to me and what I felt was critical issues to address in collaboration with the communities I serve and exist within. As a Hip-Hop head and emcee, I was often baffled by the

participants interest in Hip-Hop elements (Emceeing, deejaying, dancing, and grafitti) but not share the same interest or understanding of its intersections with white supremacy, racism, and class. I would argue that these longstanding isms are a result of a system of patriarchy and white supremacy and is at the root of the social justice message that is often conveyed through Hip-Hop. There is a golden moment within Hip-Hop culture where white people can confront these oppressive social structures.

Process (Valuing the Process)

The Cypher

In an attempt to further mesh the worlds of scholarship and the culture of Hip-Hop, I reflected on which elements of the culture would directly and indirectly foster exposure to the participants. It was important to use the Cypher as a platform to create dialogue, shape data collection, and create an experience for the participants that modeled how Hip-Hop can be cultivated in spaces of learning. One important factor in the culture of Hip-Hop is authenticity and being true to ones self and others. Which was a foundation perspective of why utilizing the Cypher was a step to adhere to that thinking and center voices who work towards that state of being.

Finding Community to Withstand the Obstacles

I was inspired by the existing scholarship and felt motivated to further develop my voice and my communities' voice within hip-hop education scholarship. During the completion of this study I have published three articles that are a mix of encouraging Hip-Hop in education and recognizing the brilliant voices that exist in my Hip-Hop community. The key element in all of the publication ventures is that I was intentional in collaborating with peers that were practicing scholars and Hip-Hop education practitioners. It was in those processes that I further recognized

the importance and need for the Cypher as a tool for scholarship and practice. Simultaneously I learned so much about myself in community with other Hip-Hop heads, that I feel it was foundational and a catalyst for this study.

Reading, Writing, and Rhyming (Beats, Rhymes and Life)

As I researched the existing literature, developed the studies framework, then executed the actual study, the more I realized I was inspired to return to Hip-Hop music and community-based work. When I felt a lull in my writing or struggled to determine my next step, I felt a natural gravitation to my peers that are practicing Hip-Hop artists and musicians. Being in a space of spontaneous creativity that requires the rawness that Hip-Hop music demands inspires me to return to my Hip-Hop sensibilities. Returning to my Hip-Hop roots was critical in completing this study. I needed to make sure my voice remained authentic as I shared the study's findings.

Findings and Lessons

The depth and breadth of this topic requires deep exploration and longevity. Taking on a study that was engaging identity, race, and Hip-Hop, within education, is a large task. Early on in this process I wanted to believe there would be some easily organized findings that would offer all that was needed from at least a foundational standpoint. I knew there were layers connected to this exploration, and that this was going to be a messy process. And yet, there is still so much more to be discovered. Because Hip-Hop continues to be viewed in academia as a fleeting fad, despite its global impact, there is limited educational scholarship. As a Hip-Hop scholar I am tasked to address the pejorative treatment and devaluing of Hip-Hop. There must be more scholarship to fully showcase the breadth of Hip-Hop's impact on topics such as race, education, and whiteness.

Positionality - the Gift and the Curse

Taking on topics of identity, race, and Hip-Hop requires some very intentional self-work by scholars. As a white identified hetero cis gendered male, discussing and further exploring race and Hip-Hop I can be viewed as a virtual outsider, even though I have Hip-Hop roots as a practitioner. It should also be clearly stated that I believe this movement and narrative should be led by black and brown scholars, in collaboration with community teaching artists.

Simultaneously, any white co-conspirators must utilize their position and privilege to support the guidance provided by said leadership. Furthermore, white co-conspirators must also commit to the process of sustained critical self-reflection, which is central to this study, and a key ingredient in committing to anti-racist work.

An additional critical element in this study was having participants be transparent when sharing their ideologies on topics of race, identity, whiteness, and Hip-Hop. In asking that of participants I must also ask myself, as a white identified person, how did I come to this place, in Hip-Hop. In utilizing this culture as a tool for identity and teaching construction, how am I using and sacrificing my own privileges to abolish structures and practices that continue to uphold racist and oppressive realities? Although I do work at always examining everything with a race conscious lens, this study further tasked me to continue interrogating my own privilege. This was elevated while working with participants as they shared their reflections on these uncomfortable topics and experienced the power in our position as faculty in higher education.

Inspiration – the Possibilities and Impact of This Can Be Massive

During this research, I was motivated by engaging Hip Hop education because it is personally important to me. During this process I was also challenged to be an objective researcher and to understand participants' perspectives and ambivalence to the study. The

biggest shift has been the spark that this study created on my campus. The interest in this study elevated Hip-Hop Based Education as a tool worthy of shaping discussions in educational spaces. As an educator, a researcher, and a Hip-Hop artist, this process confirmed the interconnectedness of these seemingly different topics. Recognizing this overlap was important. This discovery countered any moments of imposter syndrome or doubts that Hip-Hop should be taken seriously as a tool that can be used to address inequities in education and beyond.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Stage 1: The Self: K.O.S. Knowledge of Self

1. Am I committed to continuous learning of cultural knowledge and contexts?
2. Do I Display a critical consciousness on practice in and out of school?
3. Do I challenge whiteness and hegemonic epistemologies in school?
4. Why does race matter? And what does it have to do with my teaching?
5. How have you engaged whiteness and race within your practice?

Stage 2: The Culture: Rap is something you do, Hip-Hop is something you live

1. What is your understanding of hip-hop culture?
2. How do you define hip-hop culture?
3. How would you describe Hip-Hop's engagement of race?
4. How do you think the hip-hop culture engages whiteness?
5. How would you describe the hip-hop cultures' influence on the students in your class/campus?

Stage 3: The Student: Native son, speaking in my native tongue

1. What strategies can be used to reach those students heavily influenced by Hip-Hop?
2. In what ways can you create spaces for students to teach you about Hip-Hop?
3. With your experience, how has Hip-Hop engaged race in your space as an educator?
4. In what way has Hip-Hop tasked you to engage your own identity and privilege in a space with students?
5. How can your application of Hip-Hop based educational practices offer a sustainable model for critical self-reflection around whiteness, power and privilege?

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS | INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

TO: Adam Freas
Educational Leadership
Benerd School of Education

CC: Dr. Delores McNair, Faculty Advisor

FROM: Sandy Ellenbolt

DATE: December 17, 2019

RE: **IRB** Approval Protocol Freas, #20-67

Your proposal entitled *“Beats, Rhymes and Life: Countering the Enactment of Systemic Whiteness in Higher Education: Hip-Hop Tools and Practices,”* submitted to the University of the Pacific **IRB** has been approved. Your project received an Exempt review.

You are authorized to work with **25** as human subjects, based on your approved protocol. This approval is effective through **December 15, 2019**.

NOTE: Enclosed is your IRB approved consent document with the official stamp of IRB approval. **You are required to only use the stamped version of this consent form by duplicating and distributing to subjects. (Online consent should replicate approved consent document).** Consent forms that differ from approved consent are not permitted and use of any other consent document may result in noncompliance of research.

It is your responsibility according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulations to submit an annual **Active Protocol Status/Continuation Form**. This form is required to request a continuation or when submitting your required closure report. Please be aware that procedural changes or amendments must be submitted to the **IRB** for review and approval prior to implementing changes. Changes may NOT be made without Pacific **IRB** approval except to eliminate apparent immediate hazards. Revisions made without prior **IRB** approval may result in noncompliance of research. To initiate the review process for procedural changes, complete **Protocol Revision Form** and submit to IRB@pacific.edu.

Best wishes for continued success in your research. Feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

Sandy Ellenbolt

IRB Administrator
University of the Pacific
3601 Pacific Ave
Stockton, CA 95211
(hours: 7:00-3:30)

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Countering the Enactment of Whiteness: Hip-Hop Tools and Practices

You are invited to participate in a research study which will involve white identified community college faculty who currently work to be a student-centered practitioner. The investigators that will be conducting this study is Adam Freas, who is a doctoral student in the Benerd School of Education at the University of the Pacific. You are selected as a possible participant in this study because you fit the demographic interest of the study.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact Hip-Hop culture and Hip-Hop based educational tools and practices can have on white faculty who are committed to interrogating their identity and the constructs of whiteness, as it relates to implementing a sustainable process to interrogate race as a critically self-reflective educator and the development of a culturally sustaining practice in urban educational spaces.

There are some possible risks involved for participants. There is the potential that questions may be emotionally challenging or create anxiety. Risks could also be associated with sharing criminal or other behavior that could negatively impact your reputation. There are some benefits to this research, particularly that participants may feel some positive emotions associated with sharing experiences. If participants are interested, investigators will provide a summary of findings that may be useful for future decision making.

If you have any questions about the research at any time, please call Adam Freas at (916) 650-2965. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project please call the Research & Graduate Studies Office, University of the Pacific (209) 946-3903. In the event of a research-related injury, please contact your regular medical provider and bill through your normal insurance carrier, then contact the Office of Research & Graduate Studies.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Measures to insure your confidentiality include using a pseudonym for all participants and campus locations. The data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the study is completed.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and your decision whether or not to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time with out penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, that you will receive a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You will be offered a copy of this signed form to keep.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Greetings,

This email is regarding a current dissertation research study that is exploring the impact of Hip-Hop based educational practices on community college instructional faculty. More specifically the purpose of this study is to examine the impact Hip-Hop based education can have on white faculty who are committed to interrogating their identity and the constructs of whiteness, as it relates to implementing a sustainable process to interrogate race as a critically self-reflective educator and the development of a culturally sustaining practice in urban educational spaces. The study is specifically looking for participants that fit the following demographic make up:

- Community College classroom faculty,
- Who identify as white
- Who are at least 25 years old and no older than 60 years of age

If you fit the demographic make up and are interested learning more about what the commitment of participating in the study would look like, please contact me and we can discuss the study in further detail.

Introductory info below:

Dissertation study:

Beats, Rhymes and Life: Countering the Enactment of Systemic Whiteness in Higher Education:
Hip-Hop Tools and Practices

Participants will take part in a one-on-one interview and group sessions exploring constructs of race, whiteness, identity, and Hip-Hop Based Educational practices.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Adam Freas
Doctoral Candidate
University of the Pacific
Sacramento City College Counseling Faculty