

HIP HOP PEDAGOGIES: AN ALTERNATIVE PRAXIS

by

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my mother, Tammy, without whose trust, guidance, and support I would not even be able to begin understanding the importance of my situation.

I also dedicate this work to Dr. Octavio Pimentel, who pushed me to further my education; to Dr. Nancy Wilson, who encouraged my decisions which in turn gave me the strength to pursue my passion; to Dr. Jaime Armin Mejía, who challenged my views to build my skills as a teacher and writer; and to Dr. Sherri Benn, and the Multicultural Students Affairs Office, who found me when I was lost.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study of Hip Hop Composition Pedagogy discusses and (re)defines educational spaces among students and faculty at the college level. This study explores composition teaching techniques related to ethnicity within college writing and the academy. In order to connect the diverse array of students to academic discourse, pedagogies should also be equipped to cater to various global learning styles and should resonate with students so information, like composition skill sets, can occur.

By accepting the validity of Hip Hop Pedagogies, teachers may expand the types of teaching methods available for them so as to connect with the diverse and global markets of students. It is important to incorporate and accept pedagogies that emphasize student-centered dialogue and experiences, since the language we use can rarely be separated from a context. Effective rhetorical devices are often found within various texts and media that are not typical or common in the limited anthologized texts taught in traditional First-year English composition courses.

I propose integrating Hip Hop Pedagogies into First-year English composition classes; teachers and students can evaluate Hip Hop texts and the rhetorical devices from different global cultures to bridge traditional rhetorical practices with real world applications. Comparing the opposite composition structures could encourage students to learn and accept alternative approaches to concepts of language, such as grammar, syntax, and structure, thus helping to guide and strengthen students' writing in a global market. This approach will aid by introducing students not accustomed to a certain style

of writing—reader responsible or writer responsible styles—by allowing a space for students to explore concepts. Hip Hop Pedagogies will provide a base to teach culturally comparative rhetorical analyses catered to texts found globally and to students from varied backgrounds.

This study (re)defines Hip Hop Pedagogies by using the structural definitions provided by Marc Lamont Hill and will recontextualize Hill’s definitions and purposes of Hip Hop education within a context of first-year English composition classes. This study investigates the following questions: “How can Hip Hop be used in college to make better writers?” as well as “How can Hip Hop be used to discover connections students commonly make with Hip Hop and learning “new” information cultivated by developing what students already know?” These leading questions will be contextualized by a survey distributed in select classes of first and second semester first-year English composition classrooms. This survey was adapted from one used in a summer youth program and created to gauge perceptions of writing, Hip Hop, African American Rhetoric, and African American Language among youth in the surrounding community.

## CHAPTER I

### Hip Hop Composition Pedagogy Study

Recently, I was asked to give a brief presentation about grammar to my colleagues in a Teaching Assistant Practicum. This class is designed to equip new teachers, primarily graduate students teaching first-year English composition courses, by providing helpful educational tools that incorporate information about designing, planning, and directing one's own classes. For my presentation, I focused on creating awareness of African American Rhetoric and African American Language, which differ in context, lexicon, and syntactical structure. I modeled an experiment conducted by Nancy Wilson and described in "Bias in The Writing Center: Tutor Perceptions of African American Language" inside the Practicum class. To gauge perceptions of minority languages in the academy, I coupled a survey of student sentences based on Wilson's experiment with a handout based on rules that inform African American Rhetoric; these rules are defined by Geneva Simtherman in *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*.

Wilson's experiment asked participants, faculty, and Writing Center tutors to analyze and classify writers based on writing samples. Participants intensely found various types of syntactical errors in the writing samples; the errors ranged from missing articles, non-restrictive commas, multiple negations, and copula + gerund type phrases ("Bias in The Writing Center" 177-78, 183). Participants labeled and categorized the writers as "English Language Learners," "African American Language," or "Nonstandard European American English" (178). The participants connected their ideologies with their academic perceptions of correctness. Furthermore, in their responses they continued

to demean and attack the ethos of minority writers. “The instructors’,” Wilson proclaims, “and [the] tutors’ comments in my study similarly conveyed such disdain, not only for the sentences in the survey but also for the individuals who might write them” (183). The results of Wilson’s experiment reveal a common academic misconception of individuals who subscribe to limited perceptions of African American Rhetoric that permeate the academy and who equate African American Rhetoric with lower academic performances.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Like Wilson’s participants, my colleagues and peers in the Teaching Assistant Practicum resisted the premise that African American Rhetoric or African American Language is valuable. They demonstrated an unwillingness to listen to or participate in the presentation. Moreover, they seemed repelled by the idea that teachers should foster students’ creativity and voices—including language variations—in first-year English composition courses. After ten minutes of enlightening a silent room of my peers, I closed my presentation. I faced blank stares and dumbfounded expressions. With raised eyebrows and enlarged eyes which I directed at the audience, I started to slowly walk away from the podium; I braced myself for the inevitable interruption, a question I knew was coming but still wasn’t ready for: “[y]ou actually expect us to let them slide with this?” In that moment I was frozen. Not only did the question corroborate Wilson’s findings, but this question also highlights the institutional effects of administration and classroom management.

By perpetuating the destructive cycle of suppressing marginalized individuals and linguistic characteristics, reflected in African American discourses, through exclusionary academic writing and restricted language paradigms, academics—through their

curriculum and administration—devalue students’ identities and cultures. The resulting depreciation and the systemic oppression of ethnic identities disenfranchise and exclude students of color as well as faculty of color from the academic conversation because of the little marginalized space they are often allowed to claim.

As a result of these exclusionary behaviors, minority faculty and students risk becoming disengaged in class discussions, thereby disinheriting them from academic discourses. Furthermore, colleges and universities associated with racist attitudes and practices can parallel reasons for faculty attrition. Daniel A. Sass, Belinda Bustos Flores, Lorena Claeys, and Bertha Pérez, authors of “Identifying Personal and Contextual Factors that Contribute to Attrition Rates for Texas Public School Teachers,” note this change in teacher turnover rates by mentioning that:

results suggest that currently minority teachers are leaving the profession at higher rates than White teachers. Although more research is needed to understand attrition rate differences, Kane and Orsini (1999) noted that minority teachers reported the lack of diversity among teacher and student populations, along with feelings of isolation, as the top reasons for leaving the profession. (4)

Institutions that do not make support systems available for students, faculty, or staff can alienate minority populations on campus. In that sense, schools that do not cater to diverse ethnic populations become depleted of minority cultural knowledge.

Teaching practices and methods (pedagogies) at the college level are developed in higher education, for the most part, by curriculum specialists and through interactions with mentors, thus incorporating previous methods by bringing them in contact with

strong educators. Do new college composition instructors stop to think about how those practices are formed? Sadly, no. Often, teaching practices are molded by administrative restrictions and guidelines that define a practical form of success. Outmoded ideologies and teaching practices cloud first-year English curricula while faculty tries to grasp what they know: “safe” practices that maintain this “standard” writing in the academy and teaching pedagogies that have been successful in terms of creating quantifiable writing assessments (i.e. grading scales). When educators encourage “safe” classes, teachers and students resort to recycling ideas—even if the ideas, lessons, and activities are obsolete and inequitable in today’s diverse classes. Teaching pedagogies grounded in Hip Hop culture and experience bridge gaps across ethnicity, age, and between teachers and students.

Incorporating Hip Hop Pedagogies<sup>1</sup> into first-year English composition classes allows faculty and students to gain missing cultural links in culturally drab campuses and can potentially limit the loss of student attendance and faculty attrition from institutions. Hip Hop Pedagogies are able to incorporate various language practices from multiple cultures because such language practices are seen within this global phenomenon, and Hip Hop Pedagogies can lessen the age gap between teacher and student. This relatively new teaching pedagogy has the potential to inform drab classes by engaging students, encouraging participation through language and writing, and connecting multicultural students through a wide range of topics and experiences found in Hip Hop culture. This type of classroom certainly has the potential to be successful at engaging students because of the material and cultural capital promoting retention among college students.

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term Hip Hop **P**edagogies instead of Hip Hop **p**edagogies to link this concept and praxis with Marc Lamont Hill’s various educational use of Hip Hop, which he qualifies and capitalizes types of hip hop-based pedagogies thus making this type of pedagogy, and its variants, specific to its uses.

Classes that retain students and encourage faculty to remain at the college or university are often courses designed by the teacher around special topics. Classes that demonstrate high levels of engaging activities, discussions, and classroom relationships between the instructors and the students are typically successful at engaging and maintaining student interest. Therefore, classes retaining students by engaging them are deemed successful. Classes that implement Hip Hop Pedagogies are able to use the global influence of Hip Hop cultures to entice students with innovative and engaging ways to learn information regarding composition and rhetoric; students and instructors are compelled to stay because of an exciting classroom atmosphere, thus making this type of pedagogy successful at engaging students to learn in first-year English composition classes.

Hip Hop Pedagogies also encourage students to connect information already learned or experienced to new information relating to composition and rhetoric, therefore valuing students' perceptions and voices in a transitional period when students all too often become lost in the wash of overwhelming sensations. As for faculty of color, those who practice Hip Hop Pedagogies will feel as though they belong to a certain community that values similar characteristics and which provides them with a sense of purpose because these faculty members will have established a bond to connect with students of color who already know and understand the difficult system of the academy. These bonds and pathways between the instructor and students have the potential to blossom into a nurturing mentorship.

The institutional recycling of pedagogies, mentioned above, can be resuscitated and rejuvenated so modern teaching practices and methods can be used in conjunction with these "safe" classes and can incorporate marginalized voices and perceptions in

academic discourses. One proposal of progression with pedagogies is the implementation or, at least, the acceptance of Hip Hop Pedagogies. The application of Hip Hop Pedagogies can span a multitude of curricula from science to liberal arts like English. Because the Western idea of intelligence is so ingrained in this notion of a written standard, Hip Hop Pedagogies, in the realm of first-year English teaching pedagogies, are going to be the center of my study because they open the possibilities about what counts as intelligence.

I am proposing to unravel the complexities of the culture of Hip Hop Pedagogies to create relevant first-year English composition pedagogies in order to further facilitate avenues of learning. To prove this, I am driven by the lack of scholarship over Hip Hop used in first-year English composition classes and the connection of Hip Hop with student populations who partake in Hip Hop culture. I gather data that can ultimately be used to produce more effective rhetorical strategies for writing for students from varied backgrounds. Not every teacher who utilizes Hip Hop Pedagogies will instruct their class in the same fashion while utilizing this method. Nor does every instructor have to implement Hip Hop Pedagogies to teach every lesson plan. More often than not, Hip Hop Pedagogies face resistance from the administration and from some students, but I believe educators should look to this form of instruction for innovative ways to connect students to information about composition and rhetoric provided in their classes. If educators open themselves to exploring what Hip Hop cultures have to offer in terms of relatable experience, language, and rhetorical applications, I am more than confident that increased positive attitudes about Hip Hop Pedagogies will push departmental and personal decisions in teaching practices, goals, and methods for student and teacher retention;



student impressions, in otherwise boring or disconnected classes, will strengthen because students and teachers will be more invested in class discussions and topics. Being actively involved with classroom procedures and discussions allows students to feel a sense of comfort and often boosts self-esteem and confidence.

### **Definition of Hip Hop Pedagogy**

Since Hip Hop Pedagogies play such a vital role in my thesis, I would like to lay down the foundations of this theory by clearly defining what I mean by this type of pedagogy. I define Hip Hop Pedagogies as methods of teaching first-year English courses that incorporate Hip Hop cultures, in all of their dimensions, from clothing to marketing to language and dance, within the classroom in order to further promote and facilitate avenues of learning. Author of *Beats, Rhymes and Classroom Life: Hip Hop Pedagogy and The Politics of Identity*, Marc Lamont Hill, separates Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE), as he refers to Hip Hop Pedagogies, into three categories: pedagogies that use Hip Hop to shape the lessons the teacher uses, pedagogies that analyze Hip Hop, and pedagogies that use Hip Hop to connect students to other areas of information or theories. Hip Hop Pedagogies, as used in my study, are a combination of all three categories Hill defines (Hill, *Beats, Rhymes and Classroom Life* 120-25). Hip Hop Pedagogies can be used to view the many composition pedagogies already in place within most first-year English composition classes. Educators can choose from a variety of pedagogies, such as Cultural, Critical, Coalition, or Collaboration, as well as many others, and Hip Hop cultures can easily blend in with a teacher's preferred pedagogy.

A Cultural pedagogy, for instance, is based on a teaching method derived from studying culture, and Jonathan Culler describes this practice as the "desire to recover the

popular culture as the expression of the people or give voice to the marginalized groups, . . . [a discovery of] mass culture as an ideological imposition, an oppressive ideological formation” which can also be perceived as avenues for analysis, education, and critique to be pursued (44-5). A Cultural pedagogy, for instance, creates a method of teaching or facilitating lessons through how people define society, based on works of art or expressed ideas created by those immersed in specific societies. Integrating Hip Hop cultures into Cultural Studies and Cultural pedagogies will make more engaged students and will enable effective alternative writing styles while gradually adjusting and/or accepting various forms of global compositions because the students are exposed to readily available global examples of linguistic, artistic, and societal practices.

The same type of outcome can be expected if educators merge Hip Hop Pedagogies with Critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy is defined by Ann George when she claims that a “critical pedagogy engages students in analysis of the unequal power relations that produce and are produced by cultural practices and institutions (including schools), and it aims to help students develop the tools that will enable them to challenge this inequality” (92). This pedagogy incorporates the cultural characteristics of communities and juxtaposes them next to the critical thinking of racial and ethnic viewpoints in order to “challenge this inequality” (92). Hip Hop cultures demonstrate many facets of racial and cultural oppression and are linked to a call-to-action type of persona that can be used to teach rhetorical practice in first-year English composition classes.

Along with outlets for Critical pedagogy, Coalition pedagogy can easily be incorporated with Hip Hop Pedagogies and in support the same type of learning

outcomes. These learning outcomes are possible not just because Coalition Pedagogy is closely tied to Critical pedagogy, but also because Hip Hop has expanded to a global market. Charise and Octavio Pimentel, authors of “Coalition Pedagogy: Building Bonds between Instructors and Students of Color,” loosely define Coalition pedagogy:

It largely builds upon Freire’s critical pedagogy while addressing the many difficulties professors have encountered when implementing critical pedagogy in diverse and predominantly white classrooms. . . .

Coalition pedagogy aims to expose those systems that are responsible for our ongoing oppression. Coalition pedagogy also encourages . . . a teaching pedagogy where students become active participants in their learning. (115-17)

Pimentel and Pimentel’s definition of Coalition pedagogy expresses a way to reverse power structures as a method of teaching. This description of Coalition pedagogy presents an image of a student-centered, or student-focused, way of teaching, a practice that includes all types of individuals and learners that should be noticed and encouraged in first-year English classes, especially in cultures like those found in America where individualism is so widely promoted. By reinforcing the ideals of Standard English-only, through its teaching methods, we as educators are impairing students and inadequately preparing them for higher learning expectations and the global market.

Even though American culture is primarily individualistic, the academy should still inspire cooperation among individuals, especially those identifying as minority, because of the marginalizing effects of the academy and even some American communities. Another teaching pedagogy that coalesces with Hip Hop Pedagogies is

Collaborative, Pedagogy which is based on the interaction of learning composition and rhetoric skills from one's peers. This method can be easily translated into Hip Hop Pedagogies because of the creative projects, musical genres, and class discussions that can be potentially generated from Hip Hop cultures in first-year English composition classes. There are a number of teaching methods that harmonize with Hip Hop Pedagogies. I will discuss composition pedagogies and Hip Hop praxis in first-year English classes more in-depth in my third chapter, which defines, outlines, and situates Hip Hop Pedagogies in coordination with other teaching methods in practice.

### **Goal of the Thesis**

The goal of my thesis is to (re)define the uses and spaces of Hip Hop Pedagogies so as to provide a relevant context for learning strategies in first-year English composition classes for students across generational or ethnic strata. By accepting the validity of using Hip Hop Pedagogies, teachers are able to expand the types of teaching methods available to them so as to connect with the diverse and global market of their students. It is important to incorporate and accept pedagogies that situate students at the center of the teaching method because the language with which instructors teach, use, and write can rarely be separated from a context, so teachers should implement varied methods of incorporating the language of their students. Moreover, in a world with fast-paced technological advances and transcontinental connections, a shared and expanded view of cultures, languages, and writings is needed in the global market.

Since Hip Hop has mastered this navigation of transcultural rhetoric, students can also learn to navigate transcultural composition and rhetoric from practices of Hip Hop culture. Effective rhetorical devices are found in a number of ways that are not typical or

common in the standard texts taught in traditional first-year English composition courses. By integrating Hip Hop Pedagogies in first-year English classes, teachers and students can evaluate and analyze texts found globally and rhetorical devices from different cultures and thereby bridge traditional rhetorical practices with real world applications. Comparing opposite compositional structures found from various media could encourage students' learning and accepting of alternative conceptions within language, such as grammar, syntax, and discourse structure to help guide and strengthen students' writing in a global market. This approach will aid in developing students not accustomed to a certain style of writing by allowing a space for them and allowing them a chance to grasp foreign concepts in their classes. Hip Hop Pedagogies will provide a basis for teaching comparative cultural rhetorical analysis that is sculpted and catered to a global, multi- and/or bilingual market of students. The questions guiding my study are the following:

1. In what ways does the implementing of Hip Hop Pedagogies foster multimodal literacies?
2. How do Hip Hop Pedagogies provide contexts for composition theories and pedagogies?
3. In what ways does implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies change students' perceptions of their writing (style, organization, analysis, invention) across race or age?

The lack of scholarship and development of Hip Hop Pedagogies within the context of college composition classes is the reason I propose this study. By focusing on a mixed method assessment through a cultural and critical lens, I plan to validate the effectiveness of Hip Hop Pedagogies in first-year English composition classes. However, I do

understand that there is more to the situation of instituting Hip Hop in an educational system than advocating from personal interest and suggesting linguistic, composition, and rhetorical advantages.

### **Review of Literature**

The topic of Hip Hop in schools has developed into the “hot button” issue of whether this music culture has any educational value. There have been multiple studies of Hip Hop, in linguistic contexts as well as in a social constructivist context, in order to validate Hip Hop’s historical, emotional, and/or personal connections to global or local events. However, there has been little qualitative or quantitative research to gauge how students enrolled in first-year English composition courses respond to the incorporation of Hip Hop Pedagogies as a method of instruction. Many of the texts and programs supplementing and/or encouraging the use of Hip Hop Pedagogies focus on using Hip Hop to connect literary elements to current events or popular culture in order for students to gain a better understanding of the information at hand or to further engage students in critical by thinking about the world around them.

Furthermore, a few scholars, such as Adam Banks, author of *Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age*, Kermit Campbell, author of *Gettin’ Our Groove On: Rhetoric, Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation*, Elaine Richardson, author of *Hiphop Literacies*, and Geneva Smitherman, author of *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America*, integrate Hip Hop, as a culture, into their teaching methods in order to draw on social practices and the rhetorical language to demonstrate differences between “Standard” Written English that is taught, practiced, and held on a high platform in America, as opposed to the characteristics of African American Rhetoric. The differences between these scholars and their works disprove the

myth of Standard Written English by incorporating various perspectives of cultural language practices.

Even though there are few scholars who pursue the topic of validating and incorporating Hip Hop Pedagogies into a pragmatic application, there are fewer participants who combine Hip Hop Pedagogies and apply to a formal first-year English compositional setting. In this study, I explore the qualitative characteristics of how the Hip Hop cultures can inform first-Year English writers in relation to the common areas, or topics, covered by composition instructors, such as grammar, syntax, argument, arrangement, and delivery. Rather than using Hip Hop to accompany and guide *either* African American Rhetoric in hopes of enlightening students of the rich history and multidimensional language surrounding Hip Hop *or* using Hip Hop to dissect literary elements found in poetry and creative writing, I hope to expand on the multiple styles and practices of Hip Hop Pedagogies and combine these practices so as to incorporate *both* forms in an exploration of language—from a structural aspect derived from rules and dialects (and cultures)—and from a social aspect drawn from oral and musical traditions.

There has been little to no reports of combining Hip Hop Pedagogies (literacies, basic elementals, and cultural languages) with first-year English college composition classes. While researching texts and programs, I broke my study into sections discussing the following: East Coast vs. West Coast: Rhetorical Underpinnings; Hip Hop as Pedagogy; Hip Hop's Methods; Put It on the Kanvas: An Analysis of Hip Hop Pedagogies; and Freestyle: Discussions, Outcomes, and Conclusions of Hip Hop Pedagogies. By breaking my study up into sections, I believe I will be able to better address the learning outcomes of Hip Hop Pedagogies.

Some of the scholars I mention above have laid down the groundwork for this study. For example, Geneva Smitherman's *Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America* provides syntactical and grammatical rules for "Black English," as Smitherman refers to this language pattern.<sup>2</sup> Not only does Smitherman's foundational perspective allow scholars, educators, and students to have a tangible and accepted site of reference for studies of language and composition, but her text also gives a voice to underrepresented populations in first-year English classes who identify with African American Rhetoric or "Black English" and culture. This text demonstrates comparative rhetorical differences in "Black English" and "Standard" Written English in order to clarify the distinctions between the two cultures as well as educating readers about "Black English." Smitherman also incorporates the history and importance of the context of the "Black English" speaker. These elements of history and context are important to understanding Smitherman's message as well as to understanding the context of African American Rhetoric because history and context can define the meaning "Black English," which is culturally different from "Standard" Written English. This cultural difference is all too commonly overlooked because "Black English" is not always accepted as a separate language. However, Richardson argues in *Hiphop Literacies* that

[o]ther scholars, Africologists, consider all forms of Ebonics as new African languages, rather than Black versions [dialects] of European languages. Rickford and Rickford (2000) offer a balanced explanation, pointing out African, European, and creole sources for various language

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<sup>2</sup> To clarify my use of quotations around "Black English," I am simply using quotations to indicate Smitherman's use of the term; also, the quotations reference the distinction between areas of study. For example "Black English" in my study refers to areas that emphasize grammar and syntax as opposed to African American Language and African American Rhetoric, which refer to areas that emphasize grammar, syntax, and other rhetorical devices like argument and narration patterns.



patterns in US Ebonics. . . . Most scholars of language agree that when Africans and Europeans “met,” their languages mingled to create new African- and European-influenced language systems. (2)

In some circles these theories and conceptions surrounding African American Language/Black English/Ebonics/African American Vernacular English can be met with emotions which argue against using or teaching the characteristics of “Black English.” By not teaching alternative forms of language and culture, in any sense, educators are limiting students’ skills in writing, lessening their global outlook, and quieting the minority voices in the classroom.

Smitherman’s reasoning for “Black English” voices was met with an Afrocentric pedagogical outlook. Staci M. Perryman-Clark’s *Afrocentric Teacher-Research: Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion* coupled student-centered pedagogies with an African Diaspora studies approach. Her methods for teaching first-year English involved Smitherman’s language structures but also juxtaposed ideas and traditional assessments of “Standard” Written English in order to create a comparative environment where her students think and write critically about African American Rhetoric on a broad scale (2012). These skills encouraged her students to develop their writing beyond more than just what was expected from a basic writer in a first-year English composition course as well as challenged their cultural ideologies on a global perspective. Perryman-Clark constructs an efficient and successful first-year English composition class that caters to alternative forms of writing and implements a student-centered, minority pedagogy. I propose that the teaching tools and lesson plans offered by Perryman-Clark’s approach

should be helpful in adapting lesson plans and essay prompts for structuring a class instructed by Hip Hop Pedagogies.

Even with the aid of Perryman-Clark's approach and her effective teaching strategies, her practice is not particularly informed by Hip Hop. Perryman-Clark's method is not conducive for me to construct a first-year English composition class based solely on her approach. For more Hip Hop instruction I look to Adam Banks, Marc Lamont Hill, and Kermit Campbell. Banks' *Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age* serves as a fantastic outline for creating a classroom that is cognitively stimulating, musically driven, and student-centered. Banks encourages students to develop the skills they already possess while generating the intellectual capability to synthesize general information, Banks then repurposes information for the classroom. He is able to translate terminology and processes from the Composition field into creative activities and discussions about music (particularly Hip Hop, Soul, and Funk) and social (in)equality. Although Banks does not load composition practice in his class lessons, he does mention his hesitation about his service project class' writing practices:

I was reluctant to ask people to write. That may sound odd . . . I found myself very sensitive to the fact that people who came to the course worked and had families and often high levels of anxiety about writing, and I probably felt concerned about messing up a good thing [most likely meaning the class' conversations] by making it too much like "school."  
(69)

Although this class is not formally integrated with college systems, the makeup of the students can reflect college classrooms. Banks' lack of writing assignments leaves a

space to insert this proposed study into the academic discourse which focuses on teaching writing with Hip Hop culture. His teaching methods and ideas are nevertheless pivotal to creating inclusive Hip Hop Pedagogies that encompass all four foundational elements of Hip Hop—emceeing, deejaying, break dancing, and graffiti—as the framework for teaching and developing first-year English composition courses. Even though Banks propels the field forward, there is still more research to be done in terms of producing inclusive Hip Hop Pedagogies for Rhetoric and Composition.

Marc Lamont Hill also creates the same type of Hip Hop-based approach as Banks' class. Hill's classroom also provides his study with more examples of how to integrate Hip Hop into lesson plans. Unfortunately, his approach lacks sufficient composition and rhetoric guidelines to create a first-year English composition approach with Hip Hop Pedagogies. Hill's method for integrating Hip Hop into his class focuses on discussions of themes found in the text as well as literary elements such as alliteration, metaphor, and tone. Hill's study also provides information about different types of pedagogies that utilize Hip Hop. Although the majority of his text does center on Hip Hop, most of the direction is toward instruction as literary elements. Hill, however, does establish an important link between students who are close to this study's target population. Students involved with Hip Hop in some facet of their education can gain knowledge based on previous experiences and can become engaged culturally when prompted by engaging settings. He demonstrates a student-centered approach, similar to Perryman-Clark's, but emphasizes a Hip Hop learning discourse rather than a broad scale African American Rhetoric learning discourse. The difference between Banks' and Hill's students is the literary aspect in which Hill situates his lesson plans.

One example of a text where Hip Hop, Rhetoric, and Composition do intersect is *Gettin' Our Groove On* by Kermit Campbell whose study outlines the history of Ebonics in the schools and Hip Hop's history from a rhetorical viewpoint in the context of rap (i.e., signifying, boasting, snaps, the dozens, and ethos of a "gangsta") as opposed to Hip Hop's history of the four foundational elements and of rap solely as a literary genre. Campbell provides significant details connecting effective rhetorical features, such as the appeals of ethos, logos, pathos, and rap texts and images. However, Campbell does not focus on composition and Hip Hop culture alone; he primarily focuses on rap and rhetoric. I draw on Campbell's examples in order to illustrate different perspectives of rhetorical effects that can be found in rap and Hip Hop culture.

Elaine Richardson is another author who provides texts and a context that can be used to validate Hip Hop culture. Richardson's *Hiphop Literacies* connects the language primarily used in Hip Hop culture to African American Rhetoric and "Black English." This text extends Smitherman's grammar and syntax rules to incorporate the discourse of Hip Hop in the field of "Black English" and Africa Diaspora studies. Richardson provides a historical context, much like Campbell and Smitherman do, in order to construct a framework for her study. She uses this foundation as a reference point to juxtapose the linguistic and perceptual influence within and on Hip Hop, both on a global and local level. Although this text is vital in linking Hip Hop and African American Rhetoric as well as "Black English," this study is not focused on first-year English composition studies. This also allows my study to be situated in the conversation of how Hip Hop, as a culture, can aid in producing more effective first-year English writers.

## Methods

I hope to incorporate dialogue and lesson plans from a Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric Program I co-taught with a graduate student from the creative writing program at Texas State University. Reyes Ramirez and I partnered with the local Youth Service Bureau (YSB), a non-profit organization, in San Marcos, Texas, to educate adolescents from ages 11 to 18. I surveyed the youth population at YSB in order to better understand how to connect Hip Hop and writing in the classroom. The group had five to 30 individuals. All of the participants were under the supervision of the YSB staff, with the addition of Reyes Ramirez and myself. This Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric Program was open to any youth interested in learning about the origins of Hip Hop culture as well as in identifying and utilizing composition skills that foster growth in terms of writing skills. Every Tuesday for one month, Reyes and I spent approximately one hour discussing rapping, dancing, graffiti, or deejaying, and how each element can translate into writing, either fiction or nonfiction, essays or poetry, or simple communication. Those who wished to participate filled out an anonymous survey asking them about their preference of music, how often they listened to music, their demographic, if they liked to write, why they liked to write, and if they thought music and writing were connected. I told them that any question they felt uncomfortable answering need not be answered. These questions were later used in order to gather data and produce a pilot program that aims to join Hip Hop Pedagogies in the first-year English composition classes at the university level. There were very few risks in this survey since no personal questions were asked. No compensation was given to the participants of the summer program.

I understand that the summer writing program and my college class, will be restricted in a number of ways. One of the most important restrictions to gathering data from these students is how to account for the biases in evaluating the written or empirical data. Brian Huot, author of *(Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning*, acknowledges that there is a separation between assessments used for personal educational gain, such as the classroom, and corporate educational gain, such as testing agencies and departmental outcomes (29-31). In this “isolation,” Huot contends, that historically the two bodies—college writing assessment, a class assessment, and educational assessment, an assessment carried out by or for a third party—had limited communication (Hout 29-31). He also mentions that assessments historically indicate traits valued by the assessor or the community. However, I use assessments from the summer program, a “college writing assessment” to direct what becomes an educational assessment. This not only ties both types of assessment together but also demonstrates writing assessments are an extension of the administrator of that assessment and can be used as a positive influence in first-year composition classes. Whoever gives the evaluation is reflecting some aspect of the community’s belief in a particular culture as well as an individual’s belief in a particular culture at a certain time.

When the 2013-2014 academic school year arrived at Texas State, there were restrictions on my teaching methods and classroom facilitations due to my graduate student standing. Because of my academic classification, there are suggested methods and a standard curriculum I was prompted to follow; therefore, the parts of my Hip Hop Composition Pedagogy in my classes were limited to examples, discussions, critical thinking about the interaction between the Hip Hop genre and the Hip Hop culture, and

the arguments between language and literature. I also collected anonymous surveys similar to the Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric Program from other first-year English composition classes. These surveys allowed me to gain a better understanding how to connect Hip Hop Pedagogies with Composition and Rhetoric as well as providing me with much of my qualitative data for assessing if Hip Hop Pedagogies can produce more effective first-year English writers along with the portfolio assessments of student writing samples. I collected student responses and perspectives from individual volunteers so genuine outlooks on Hip Hop in the first-Year English composition courses can be appropriately applied. This provided more data for quantitative analysis as well as recorded any significant difference from my initial proposal.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

Although these limitations and restrictions hindered some of the practical applications of Hip Hop Pedagogies, with the additive scholastic literature, I was able to fill in the gaps in my study. I understand that mixed method evaluation has to generate results based on experiments and experience. With the hands-on approach of making observations during the summer and creating pilot programs based on Hip Hop Pedagogies that incorporate Composition and Rhetoric, I am able to combine practical knowledge with assessments that validate Hip Hop Pedagogies to increase first-year English composition and rhetoric skills in first-year English classes. I assessed such skills using the following: (1) surveys that allow students to identify their reaction to Hip Hop, (2) Composition and Rhetoric theory and practice, (3) how the two fields of scholarship interact, and (4) written essays from first-year English composition courses taken so as to critique the students' ability to generate knowledge and an understanding from multiple

and diverse sources. By combining these types of assessments, I was able to effectively conclude that Hip Hop Pedagogies can prove useful in first-year English composition courses.

### **Outline of the Thesis**

“East Coast vs. West Coast: Rhetorical Underpinnings,” the second chapter, lays at a brief foundation of rhetoric and composition studies so as to view global or ethnic composition and rhetoric in classes like First-year English composition courses as opposed to limiting students and scholarship to Western, or Americanized, ideologies of writing techniques. This chapter looks at various cultures and dominant practices to understand the traits students and faculty better may embody, specialize, and/or encourage in classes so as to avoid the misrepresentation of individuals and social contexts in future situations.

The third chapter, “Hip Hop as Pedagogy,” discusses the differences of Hip Hop Pedagogies as described in Hill’s book. I use to argue for implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies into the canon of pedagogies used among teachers and taught in Composition Pedagogy or similar type classes. This section also provides the background information I argue for implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies in first-year English composition classes especially because of the limited research as well as the lack of connections between scholarship, praxis, and the concern for student-centered pedagogies.

The fourth chapter, “Hip Hop’s Methods,” reflects the practical and theoretical uses of Hip Hop Pedagogies, both in how other scholars use this method as well as how I propose a first-year English composition course could benefit from this type of praxis. I plan to question, observe, and answer the following:



1. In what ways does the implementing of Hip Hop Pedagogies foster multimodal literacies?
2. How do Hip Hop Pedagogies provide contexts for composition theories and teaching pedagogies?
3. In what ways does implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies change students' perceptions of their writing (style, organization, analysis, invention) across race or age?

Many of these questions respond to the topics covered in a first-year English composition course. For example, by considering multimodal literacies in a Hip Hop context, instructors allow a wide range of examples to initiate discussions ranging from technical literacies, advertisements, Critical Discourse Analysis, and communication via technology as well as job placement. These topics can be characterized and deliberated through a range of devices, and students can be encouraged to think critically about the fast-paced, ever-evolving world around them. This initiation of critical thinking also creates new pathways for nurturing a safe place to explore cultural language and writing practices different from "Standard" Written English, which can in turn broaden students' worldly perspectives, appreciation, and/or understanding of global interactions.

Within the "Put It on the Kanvas: An Analysis of Hip Hop Pedagogies" chapter, chapter five, I attempt to construct what I believe are the best ways to grade, or assess, the practical applications of a first-year English composition course that utilizes Hip Hop Pedagogies. These suggestions are, as most teaching ideas or tools, borrowed from other teachers' texts and/or inspired by people and things around me; these assessments can always be modified to accommodate personal needs or wants to fit particular classes and

student-driven assignments if the effort is put forth. Moreover, this chapter outlines assessments that are specific to classifying and qualifying certain traits found in first-year English composition classes, such as grammar, syntax, argument, arrangement, and delivery. I primarily target certain traits reflected in students' writing: rhetorical traits; authentic voice; critical thinking about worldly issues; and the effective use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. I also gauge students' overall ability to improve their writing as well as their ability to grasp information given in the classroom.

The sixth chapter, "Freestyle: Discussions, Outcomes, and Conclusions of Hip Hop Pedagogies," summarizes this study's findings and concludes my opinion of Hip Hop Pedagogies in terms of their efficiency in first-year English composition courses. This chapter looks at the course in comparison to programs and texts that typically use Hip Hop as a means of *either* addressing African American Rhetoric (Hip Hop in narrow terms of language and history) *or* using Hip Hop to facilitate literary discussions (Hip Hop in forms of poetry and musical-social contexts). I then use my findings to generate a discussion of student productivity among other first-year English composition course participants who have been instructed with a more modest approach. Through this study I hope to provide a context for Hip Hop Pedagogies so educators can expand their teaching methods and create culturally responsive writing spaces by incorporating parts of Hip Hop cultures.

This last chapter discusses the project in its entirety. "Freestyle: Discussions, Outcomes, and Conclusions of Hip Hop Pedagogies" assesses the overall flexibility and the likelihood of Hip Hop Pedagogies continuing to develop into an accepted form of teaching by the majority. This chapter hopes to reflect on the process of this project and

divulge any changes or alterations I would have made as well as what implications those changes may affect. I also plan to state the future hopes and expectations of this field in terms of possible areas of expansion by other scholars that are pushing the limits of this kind of educational research.

By developing alternative praxes like Hip Hop Pedagogies which can be used in first-year English composition classes, students can develop and learn multiple techniques of composition and rhetoric seen in canonized and non-canonized texts. If educators implement texts with diverse and global influences, a tangential approach to teaching ethnic texts can encourage development in students' learning, writing, and critical thinking. These qualities stem from students' ability to engage in comparable analysis and collaboration between various, transcultural rhetoric and composition texts.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **East Coast vs. West Coast: Rhetorical Underpinnings**

I have assimilated. Let's face it. Students with little to no representation of their culture may reflect these same words after acknowledging texts used in first-year English composition courses. The audience, similar to students, will most likely become familiar with the ideologies rooted in Western Eurocentric rhetorical frameworks. I have therefore decided to begin laying down a brief foundational premise of rhetoric and composition skill sets with a classical rhetorical model in order to juxtapose these practices with alternative, ethnic rhetorical styles of composition and rhetoric on a global scale. This adjoining approach allows one to view language and writing as occurring at intersections rather than separately. These intersections can ultimately then be used to inform and shape classroom praxis in order to better serve students of and in global settings.

The purpose of this chapter is to situate my study in the parameters of composition and rhetoric as a discourse. The conversations surrounding Ethnic Rhetorics, which my study serves as an extension of, commonly involve conversations with and comparisons to texts and concepts grounded in classical Greek and Western praxis of composition and rhetoric. In order to engage and expand conversations of Ethnic Rhetorics and Hip Hop Pedagogies this chapter orients frameworks, ideologies, and practical applications of these fields.

#### **Wildin' out West**

Many characteristics of Americanized or Western styles of writing and rhetoric stem from practices developed from classical Greek ideologies. Early sophists urged and argued views of learned knowledge for public gain and profit. This use of language also

proved useful in shaping civil duties among citizens. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, editors of the second edition of *The Rhetorical Tradition: Reading from Classical Times to the Present*, describe the sophistic movement as altering perceptions from an endowed thinking process to a manipulated human capability of changing capacities for knowledge regardless of one's status. The sophists' main rhetorical tactic was to argue by juxtaposing opposing views (one for and one against a topic), and the more effective argument would be the more persuasive. Fabricating dialogues or arguments with opposing views allows an audience to create binary opinions about a topic, thereby limiting the amount of possibilities an audience can favor. Since sophists did believe in a sole truth, only in probable knowledge which could be cultivated and learned (Bizzell and Herzberg 22), sophists utilized any and every avenue they can gain information from to construct knowledge about a topic. The more one knew about a topic the more persuasive one can construct an argument.

By overloading oneself with a variety of information, one becomes ill-equipped to discover or develop ideologies, or so some thought. However, the students of the sophistic movement left behind prominent teachings, like the power of words and the search for a truth or, in Platonic terms, a Truth. These trajectories lead to Western ideologies being grounded in civil liberties and rhetorical exigencies as well as to scientific methods and logical thinking.

The Platonic movement in the Classical era of Rhetoric was defined by the altruistic quest for internal knowledge of good and bad Truths. "True Rhetoric," Bizzell and Herzberg clarify, "as displayed in *Phaedrus* becomes the method whereby the philosopher and his pupil free themselves from conventional beliefs and all worldly

encumbrances in the pursuit and eventual attainment of transcendent absolute truth” (29). The quest for definitive Truths encourages Plato to outline or sculpt his arguments in specific ways. This style of argumentation can be seen in *Phaedrus* and current Western styles of argumentation as (1) defining terms, (2) relating the topic to an experience, and (3) questioning the term through difference or oppositional binaries. This same type of organization can still be seen today in first-year English composition courses.

On the other hand, the Aristotelian movement focused on other defining skills to strengthen an argument. Bizzell and Herzberg display Aristotle’s break down rhetoric in “From *Rhetoric*” as “fall[ing] into three divisions, determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed — it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech’s end and object. . . . From this it follows that there are three divisions of oratory —(1) [*sic*] political, (2) forensic, and (3) the ceremonial . . .” (185). These divisions of oratory are the primary factors for determining the most effective way to use rhetoric. Speakers craft the performance of their speech based on the political, forensic,<sup>3</sup> or ceremonial themes, depending on rhetorical exigencies. Aristotle later goes on to define the speech’s end, based on who is addressed, by writing, “rhetoric has three distinct ends in view, one for each of its three kinds. The political orator aims at establishing the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action” (185), while forensic speech focuses primarily on how hard sciences, such as biology, as well as issues pertaining to evidence and ceremonial oratory are centered on elements of display. These distinct ends of rhetoric and composition are still followed today in contemporary academia.

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<sup>3</sup> Forensic situations consist of events where one is speaking in order to prove evidence of one’s innocence or guilt.

Another tool utilized by Aristotle to classify and develop arguments and rhetoric is the use of artistic proofs (ethos, logos, and pathos) and inartistic proofs (manipulated existing evidence). Artistic proofs are further broken down into enthymemes, maxims, and examples (Bizzell and Herzberg 171). These rational appeals depend on inferences, contexts, and definitions. Bizzell and Herzberg clarify Aristotle's reasoning for artistic proofs stem from

the pure rationality of his appeals can be questioned on grounds that all three kinds are culture-bound: The maxim is by definition a piece of received wisdom; the example must be drawn from history or mythology known to the audience; and the enthymeme is usually developed from premises that accord with the audience's view of the world, what is taken to be common sense. (173)

Language uses ideologies to create, defend, or persuade, having to stem from an analyzed and logical perspective in order to originate from empirical knowledge or truths, unlike with Plato or of Platonic followers of thought.

These classical conceptions of rhetoric lead to influential movements throughout Western prescriptions of civil duty and human understanding, such as during the Enlightenment when classical rhetoric communication styles were favored in tangent with rigorous scientific advancements. Knowledge or information then becomes an act of investigation and of deciphering the truth—however absolute; the path to uncovering knowledge can then be deemed as a discovery or an act of recovery. This era of rhetoric, of Western ideologies, was led by Descartes' scientific discovery of truth within human nature or by Francis Bacon's and John Locke's notions of uncovering truths through

deciphering experiences, sensations, and perception within human nature. Locke comments in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that “the resolution and eagerness wherewith they [pathways of knowledge and understanding] are maintained, may perhaps have reason to suspect, that either there is no such thing as truth at all, or that mankind hath no sufficient means to attain a certain knowledge of it” (8). His views oppose the once popular Platonic outlook on absolute truths, but his conception of knowledge is garnered from experience. Locke describes how ideas come to be conceived within human concepts by asserting “these two, . . . external material things, as objects of sensation [external objects conveyed to the mind that construct an understanding], and the operations of our own minds within, as the objects of reflection [internal sense], are to me the only originals from whence all our ideas take their beginnings” (11).

Locke’s concepts of created linguistic meaning rather than innate knowledge or absolute truths, or Truths, later proved instrumental to linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. In his *Course of General Linguistics*, Saussure denotes a difference between language and speaking. Saussure states, “In separating language from speaking we are at the same time separating: (1) what is social from what is individual; and (2) what is essential from what is accessory and more or less accidental” (76). Saussure continues to suggest that language is the artifact that incorporates the user, thus effectively changing the individual’s way of being (76). Since language is ever-changing, the user constantly has to evolve the meanings and usage of language thus also changing what the user identifies with or as. Saussure, however, proposes an alternative outlook about speaking (rather than his conception on language) by mentioning the following:



Speaking, on the contrary, is an individual act. It is willful and intellectual. Within the act, we should distinguish between: (1) the combinations by which the speaker uses the language code for expressing his own thought; and (2) the psychophysical mechanism that allows him to exteriorize those combinations. To summarize, these are the characteristics of language:

(1) Language is a well-defined object in the heterogeneous mass of speech facts. It can be localized in the limited segment of speaking-circuit where an auditory image becomes associated with a concept. It is the social side of speech, outside the individual who can never create nor modify it by himself; it exists only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of a community. (76)

Saussure's theory of language and speech emphasizes the role of experience and perception in creating accepted meanings for individuals and among communities, similar to John Locke's concepts during the Enlightenment era. This concept of socially constructed language ideologies is not only similar to Locke's theory of sensation and perception (mentioned later in his same *Essay*), but is also important in constructing my argument. This study views socially constructed meanings lay at the center of and is necessary to understanding many diverse composition and rhetoric texts with global influences.

As Western concepts of rhetoric and composition flourished and evolved, theorists built and scaffolded trends and ideas from previous concepts. Kenneth Burke expands the concept of argumentation or rhetoric by bolstering and manipulating

Aristotle's canon to incorporate the dramatistic pentad: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose ("From *A Grammar of Motives* 1298). In Kenneth Burke's *A Grammar of Motives*, he connects knowledge and truths to a method of discovery through an examination of the text and context, rather than simply implementing Aristotle's artistic and inartistic proofs. Burke conceives "The book [*A Grammar of Motives*] is concerned with the basic forms of thought which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motives. These forms of thought can be embodied profoundly or trivially, truthfully, or falsely" (1298). This expanded version of argumentation through interpretation creates a more developed understanding of language through social contexts. The influences of a community for Burke not only preserve meanings of a given language but also allow for a creation or extension of a realistic functionality of linguistic symbols and concepts: "*For rhetoric as such is not rooted in any past condition of human society. It is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic, and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols*" (Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* 43). Burke's notion of language and communication as symbols was not a new concept.

Similar to Burke's concepts of language and the communal effects on ideologies and language within a symbolic discursive practice, Saussure's theory of signified and signifier also deconstructs the power of words and symbols within a cultural standpoint by emphasizing that "[language] assumes that ready-made ideas exist before words [due to the interconnectedness of communities and communication] [. . . ;] it lets us assume

that the linking of a name and thing is a very simple operation – an assumption that is anything but true” (78). Saussure continues his critique by mentioning that

the linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of sound, the impression that it makes on our senses. The sound-image is sensory [with reference to Locke’s development of created knowledge through experience, perception, and sensation]. (78)

This “sound-image” is referred to as the “sign” which represents the concept as a whole rather than a partial visual or textual image (“signified”) or sound utterance (“signifier”). The concept is an amalgamation of a visual representation—pictorial or symbolic—and an aural conception of an idea that has been defined or created within an experience (78-9). These Western or Eurocentric ideologies of sign, signifier, and signified in rhetoric and composition’s uses of language have been accepted over time.

However, a desire for knowledge, whether interpersonal or intrapersonal, primarily, does seem to be a persistent focus. The collaboration between knowledge, language, and sociocultural aspects, in terms of Western ideologies, has been translated from forms of rhetoric and composition that identify with civil responsibilities, altruistic and internal Truths, to identifiable and discoverable information.

Alternatively, the use of rhetoric and composition changes throughout time and for communities or cultures. How does one define “culture” or how does the definition of culture shape how language creates meaning? Scott Richard Lyons, author of *X-Marks: Native American Signatures of Assent*, describes the evolution of Native American

“culture” and the sociocultural implications of the created word by noting that the “current cultural revival . . . is pursued in four ways. First, through heritage language revitalization. . . . Second, through ceremonial renewal. . . . Third, in everyday life practices. . . . Fourth, in academic indigenization” (75). Lyons continues to deconstruct the historical references of “culture” further by mentioning that “‘culture’ comes from the Latin *colere*, signifying the activities of nurturing, caring for something, tending to it, and subsequently bettering it. . . . This was the stuff of agriculture, a manipulation of nature to produce a desirable outcome. . . . It also reveals why we have long thought of culture as an engine of personal ‘growth’” (77-8). The “personal growth” once deemed desirable was done only if the “person” exhibited characteristics appropriate for the collective nation.

Not only does Lyons connect the once earthly possibilities and practices to personal manifestations, but he also then goes on to connect “culture” to a nationalistic mentality: “In Germany, Johann Gottfried von Herder championed what we would now call cultural relativism, arguing that the *Volk* of any nation possessed any *Kultur* of its own that could be accessed through folktales, mythologies, music, dance, craft, art, and social customs, and this was by no means to be denigrated as lesser” (78). Lyons then denotes the shift that changed “culture” into how we associate the term today, more or less, by noting that “[Raymond] Williams’ third sense of modern culture was associated with the seismic political shifts of the nineteenth century, when culture morphed from a synonym for civilization to its antonym; that is, civilization became a disease and culture was the cure” (79). This definition of culture was used interchangeably with class and ultimately with ethnic differences. Romanticizing differences creates an “us/them” binary

that further propagates dominant ideologies. This view in turn limits students and scholars from interacting with various rhetoric and composition skill sets in their classes.

### **Global Phenomenon**

By no means am I suggesting that the Aristotelian canon, from which dominant Western Eurocentric ideas of Rhetoric stem, and African American forms of Rhetoric are the same. Both global rhetorics should be taught as parallels. I am merely illustrating the praxis of introducing students to global composition and rhetoric through Hip Hop culture. However, this connection does present a deeper and graphically interesting correlation that implies that African American Rhetoric and Classical Western Rhetoric are parallel to each other. Kermit Campbell, author of *Gettin' Our Groove On: Language, and Literacy for the Hip Hop Generation*, highlights this similar connection by mentioning Bizzell and Herzberg's work:

I give Bizzell and Herzberg [*The Rhetorical Tradition*] mad props for being the first to recognize, in a formal way, black vernacular discursive practices as part of the Western rhetorical tradition. Most anthologies, canons, and histories of Western or American rhetoric scarcely even mention the long tradition of African American formal oratory [. . .] let alone African American vernacular discourses (such as signifying, storytelling, toasts, or the dozens). (24)

Campbell validates the limited recognition and inclusion of African American Language and African American Rhetoric, and other Ethnic Rhetorics for that matter.

Matthew McCool, author of *Writing around the World: A Guide to Writing across Cultures*, states, "the goal of most American writing is to inform and persuade, a process

challenged by a need to write clear and concise prose. Beautiful as this strategy may sound, it is not universal” (2). Different ethnicities or cultural groups have cultivated their identities around concepts of communication similar to, but not the same as, those rooted in Western rhetoric and composition. However, the dominant standards of writing in first-year English composition courses, especially in America, still adhere to or favor Western hegemonic groups, thus creating or continuing a hierarchy which limits parallel composition and rhetoric techniques discovered or developed by minority students and scholars.

Historically, pockets of civilization shared similar mutual needs, such as communication for survival. This epicenter of communication across human history has changed over time to best serve specific groups of people. These divergent theories of communication have been proposed in many civilizations, even in romanticized Classical or Hellenic communities. One particular instance is mentioned by Eric Havelock, a classicist, who argues

Greek culture gradually took on the stylistic and cognitive characteristics of literacy, as opposed to orality: hypotaxis, the subordination of one idea to another in logical hierarchies; generalizations that appeal to the reason and text-assisted memory for validation; a questioning relationship to authority and custom, encouraging the disinterested criticism of ideas; and over all, a greater ability to think abstractly. (*The Rhetorical Tradition* 20)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Eric Havelock, *The Literature Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1982.

What is interesting here is what is *not* being said or emphasized. Since Greek cultures took on literacy over orality, this distinction implies the implementation of hierarchies not only between reading/writing and hearing/speaking but also between cultures or communities that inherently use orality over literacy, as described by Havelock.

However, cultures that prized orality over literacy, most commonly those now grouped as ethnic (the ethnic in Ethnic Rhetorics) or which have traits found in the communication of minority communities, did not diminish their logic; there were simply other “stylistic and cognitive” characteristics that defined “other” cultures. Claude Lèvi-Strauss, author of *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture*, noted the prejudice against oral-based cultures by asserting that “the way of thinking among people we call, usually and wrongly, ‘primitive’ – let’s describe them rather as ‘without writing,’ because I think this is really the discriminatory factor between them and us” which has expanded into qualities noted as lesser (15). The “us/them” binary in linguistic and cultural context is primarily constituted by the hierarchy instilled by literacy/orality discrepancies and preferences. Lèvi-Strauss defends the function of humanistic thinking—oral- or literacy-based—by stating, “all the populations without writing . . . [are] determined by the basic needs of life . . . finding subsistence, satisfying sexual drives and so on” (17-8). The varying cultures that did not favor literacy equally were denigrated as “primitive” because, according to Lèvi-Strauss, anthropologists separated human thought into expression and mythic origins or human thought that desired the use of developing or finding information, hence the scientific method or scientific thinking (17-8). These divisions are similar to Classical Western schools of thought (like those by Descartes,

Locke, Aristotle, Plato), and Eastern or “Other”/“Alternative”/“Ethnic” schools of thought were defined by orality and mysticism.

In *Reading Chinese Fortune Cookie: The Making of Chinese American Rhetoric*, LuMing Mao describes differences in the theories of Eurocentric composition and rhetoric and Chinese/Chinese American theories of composition and rhetoric by emphasizing the cultural stereotypes held within his classes and addressing traditional Chinese perceptions of one’s self. Two traits—orality and mysticism—are major factors diversifying Chinese/Chinese American theories of rhetoric and composition and from Eurocentric theories of rhetoric and composition and will seem similar to those found in other major, oral-based rhetoric and composition Ethnic cultures.

Mao’s students admit their stereotyped perceptions when Mao mentions that “they think I [Mao] am too ‘non-committal,’ ‘hard to read,’ and even ‘tricky.’ Through these kinds of exchanges, fragmented and tentative, we begin to see beyond the limits of our own face and our own boundaries, and we begin to experience, perhaps still indirectly, the dynamics of the other face in its own otherness [. . . so as] to negotiate togetherness-in-difference” (45). This negotiation of personal and others’ biases ultimately allows interpersonal communication to begin, but initial negotiation of cultural differences first have to be addressed. Mao is aware of the many differences that underlie and propagate ethnic stereotypes. However, until one is able to address and identify what makes one different, the process of developing and growth cannot take place; the act of being together becomes hindered because communication may be lacking between individuals and cultures.



On the other hand, the communication (written or verbal) between individuals, especially among varying cultures, has to acknowledge the continuous process of change from interactions and external stimuli. Reflection of one's self correlates to the community, both as an internal gain and as a public responsibility. This Chinese notion of integrity, or "face," as Mao refers to it, differs from mainstream American culture in that American or Western cultures tend to center rhetoric and composition on an "I/me" dichotomy of direct responsiveness rather than on a communal frame. However, Chinese indirectness is a perceived or stereotyped characteristic; this communication can be applied in ethnic minority communities to demonstrate meta-knowledge of a specific culture (Mao 63). This meta-knowledge is also entwined by a cultural sense of time. In compositions, Chinese/Chinese American texts base temporal logics on a culture's past history or the past history of one's self first, which then develop the present or future. This element is used to define the future based on the ability to create and develop one's character for a specific context (46-7). Nearing the end of Chinese/Chinese American texts, the main idea of a text can be seen last so as to leave the most important idea as an impression on the reader.

Another composition and rhetoric outlook based on orally-based skill sets stems from African American or African-based Rhetorics and composition sociocultural contexts which can divulge many inherent meanings of language. Along with different grammatical and syntactical structures, African American Language and African American Rhetoric are based on a sociocultural and historical level, with such traits as narrative sequencing, tonal shifts or talk singing, boasting, toasting, signifying, playing the dozens, and call and response (Richardson 11). Call and response is an important

rhetorical trait to African American Language and African American Rhetoric. In *Afrocentric Teacher-Research: Rethinking Appropriateness and Inclusion*, Perryman-Clark begins to connect call and response to discursive practices within the classroom by mentioning Beverly Moss' interpretation of call and response as someone having the ability to create "collective identities and cultural understandings" (40). Perryman-Clark then adds Rhea Estelle Lathan's interpretation of call and response as "an intellectual act that involves critical reflection of both the call and the response" (40). This exchange of information can now be verbal and non-verbal as well as critically engaging in reciprocal thoughts of both the speaker and audience.

In *Talkin and Testifyin*, Smitherman defines (at length) these characteristics as talk singing. She mentions the importance of this trait by stating that "tonal semantics achieves its meaning from the listener's association of the tone with the feeling of being 'happy'" (137). Smitherman goes on to state that "the listener recognizes the shift from straight talk to talk-singing and becomes extra alert and attentive to the speaker" (137-39). Musical influences and orality greatly affect the rhetorical construction of meaning in African American Language and African American Rhetoric. This musicality closely connected to African American Rhetoric also draws a parallel to Saussure's concepts of the importance of utterances. "By applying a contemporary sociolinguistic perspective to the use of tone in Black English," Smitherman explains, "we can see that it is highly functional. . . since there is an interaction between what is said, how it is said, who says it, to whom it is said, and the sociocultural context in which it is said" (*Talkin and Testifyin* 136). She continues to speak about tonal importance in linguistic meanings by

mentioning that “listeners are affected by *all* this information – not just the ‘pure’ words – interpreting a speaker’s utterance” (136). Smitherman concludes by stating,

Black speech depends on utterances and will employ tonal contouring. . . .

In fact, given that (to paraphrase Baraka [Gates, Saussure, and even Burke somewhat]) word sound and word use trip a familiar social cord, it is nearly impossible to filter out the strictly linguistic-cognitive abstract meaning from the sociocultural psycho-emotive meaning. (136)

Musical aspects of language, whether embedded in the language or absorbed at the peripheries, are an essential aspect of African American Rhetoric because they demonstrate and/or represent various sociocultural, reflective mindsets from a collective standpoint. However, tonal shifts, or talk singing, are not the only characteristic that defines African American Language or African American Rhetoric.

Smitherman also explains Toasts as “represent[ing] a form of verbal art requiring memory and linguistic fluency from the narrators. Akin to grand epics in the Graeco-Roman style, the movement of the Toast is episodic, lengthy, and detailed. . . . The toast-teller must be adept at linguistic improvisation in order to capture the rhythmic structure and narrative sense of each line in his or her own words” (159). The Toast, in Smitherman’s definition, is similar to the meta-knowledge in Chinese/Chinese American rhetoric, in that orality is prized via this form of meta-knowledge either in memorization or by recalling culturally and historically relevant narratives.

Signification, or Signifying (Afrocentric, not the Eurocentric form of “sign,” “signified,” and “signifier” that Saussure discusses), can also be linked to orality and memorization in an African American Rhetorical context. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. offers

an insight to the origins of Signifying, or Signifyin(g) rather, in his work *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* by stating:

[t]his confrontation [between Afro-American culture and American cultural ideologies and meaning] is both political and metaphysical. We might profit somewhat by thinking of the curiously ironic relationship between these signifiers as a confrontation defined by the politics of semantics, semantics here defined as the study of classification of changes in the signification of words, and more especially the relationships between theories of denotation and naming, as well as connotation and ambiguity. The relationship that black “Signification” bears to the English “signification” is, paradoxically, a relation of difference inscribed within a relation of identity. That, it seems to me, is inherent in the nature of the metaphorical substitution and the pun, particularly those rhetorical tropes dependent on the repetition of a word with a change denoted by a difference in sound or a letter (agnominatio), and in homonymic puns (anatanacsis). (45)

In other words, Signifyin(g) is a characteristic of African American Language or African American Rhetoric in which words, phrases, puns, or tropes are (re)created based on the manipulation of the original English meaning as a method of indirection. The Signified (Afro-American not Eurocentric) meaning usually comes in the form of an implied pun and also incorporates cultural factors. The Signifyin(g) mentioned by Gates emphasizes the words within a culture which lead me to connect the influences of oral cultures and the experiences that ultimately create meaning or, in Gates’ case, tropes. The Dozens, or

playin the dozens, is a sub-category of Signifyin(g) and implements specific rules (Smitherman, *Word from the Mother* 28).

However, the reflection of orality and even various versions of literacy arguably illustrate parallel ideologies in composition and rhetoric studies that should be introduced in first-year English composition courses, rather than just introducing the dominant Western ideologies that stem from Classical Greek schools of thought. Krista Ratcliffe, author of *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness*, introduces the idea of listening to multiple texts that are often left out of conversation simultaneously in order to develop knowledge about rhetorical exigencies. As she asserts,

A rhetoric of listening interrupts the emphasis of Western logic to perpetrate either-or reasoning, for instance, to recognize differences. Such simultaneous recognitions are important because they afford a place for productively engaging differences, especially those differences that might otherwise be relegated to the status of “excess.” *Excess* refers to that which is discarded in a culture’s dialogue-as-Hegelian-dialectic; that is, when the thesis and antithesis are put into play the excess is what is left out of the resulting synthesis. (95)

This theory can be extended to Western and ethnic ideologies of composition and rhetoric as disciplines rather than as particular texts can be used to interrupt a discipline. This chapter, and by extension this study, aims to, in Ratcliffe’s terms, “rhetorically listen” to a variety of composition and rhetoric skill sets in order to improve the term in first-year English composition classes.

McCool describes writers around the world in *Writing around the World: A Guide to Writing across Cultures* as being two different types of writers based on the cultural context. Writers can embody characteristics that stem from either “writer responsible cultures” or “reader responsible cultures.” McCool describes writer responsible cultures or writer responsibility by stating that this occurs

when the burden of communication is on the writer. Writer responsible cultures emphasize clarity and concision, actions over nouns, practicality instead of theory, and deductive or tight claims of reasoning. Writer responsible cultures also use an AB to BC to CD pattern. Also called parallel progression, the goal of the writer responsibility is to capture and maintain interest by guiding the reader through each point. (2)

However, reader responsible cultures differ in terms of writing practices. As McCool notes:

reader responsibility is when the burden of communication is on the reader. Reader responsible cultures emphasize flowery and ornate prose, subjects over actions, theory instead of practice, and inductive or quasi-inductive line of reasoning. Reader responsible cultures use an AB to CD to EF pattern. Also called sequential progression, the goal of reader responsibility is to provide rich detail and context of a topic. (2)

Many countries follow these writer responsible or reader responsible types of characteristics in terms of writing styles.

On the other hand, instructors also must not forget the orality versus literacy discrepancy that influences writer responsible and reader responsible traits, such as the

meta-knowledge that infiltrates composition. McCool later goes on to list a number of countries that seem to prescribe to either writer responsible or reader responsible cultures as well as mixed-responsible cultures, in countries that embody shared qualities of both writer and reader responsible cultures. Based on McCool's list (123), I have adapted that list into a table with his "loose approximations of cultural writing strategies" (123) listed at the end of the chapter in Table 1.

As McCool demonstrates, different cultures, both national and sociocultural, prescribe varying types of composition and rhetoric. Robert B. Kaplan, author of "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," asserts "logic (in the popular, rather than the logician's sense of the word) which is the basis of rhetoric, is evolved out of a culture; it is not universal. Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture. It is effected by canons of taste within a given culture at a given time" (12). Kaplan's thoughts about rhetoric are accurate in the sense that rhetoric varies across time, space, that canons are locally controlled.

Knowing and aligning this connection of differing cultural composition and rhetorical techniques with dominant Western ideologies in first-year English composition courses, allow students to become aware of varying effective techniques for identifying and using rhetoric and composition on a global scale and to de-center dominant Eurocentric ideals of writing while still engaging important texts. This exposure to various composition and rhetorical techniques also encourages students to seek the representation of texts and language that validate their cultures in their classes. Kaplan decenters various forms of thought by students who learned English as a second language

and notes that syntactical and contrastive grammar elements are viewed differently, thus calling for a change in instruction. To view Kaplan's figure of Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education, see figure 1a at the end of this chapter.<sup>5</sup>

Based on Mona Baker's qualifications for lexical meaning in her *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, we can see how knowing and understanding a variety of languages will prove useful in English composition classes. However, for this study I will primarily focus on the contrastive elements of ethnic rhetoric within minority communities to illustrate effective rhetorical and composition usage that differs from "Standard" Written English in various literary texts. Clayann Gillian Panetta gives Robert Kaplan credit for coining the term contrastive rhetoric in "Contrastive Rhetoric in Technical Writing Pedagogy at Urban Institutions." She describes Kaplan's method by stating that when "analyzing compositions written by ESL students, he realized that the differences he had noted were not simply grammatical or surfaces matters . . . but underlying differences, including 'paragraph order and structure'" (3). Through Baker's guidelines of lexical structures and Kaplan's method of comparative rhetoric, this study will show how useful culturally responsible classes can be so educators and students can be given tools in a culturally responsible manner.

Western cultures commonly associated with English dominant language communities structure texts or messages in terms of parallel progression. Parallel progression focuses the text's surface meaning so sentences and ideas have an overlapping theme of topics from the beginning to end (McCool 2). Writer responsible cultures typically utilize succinct patterns of communication that convey meaning to the

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<sup>5</sup> I have asked Wiley Publishers to reproduce Kaplan's graphic depictions of paragraph construction based on various languages on March 28, 2014 and granted permission to use this graphic on April 9, 2014. To view Wiley Publication's permission, see Appendix J.



reader with a limited amount of details. Ulla Connor and Mary Farmer, authors of “The Teaching of Topical Structure Analysis as a Revision Strategy for ESL Writers,” indicate “parallel progression, sentence topics are usually semantically identical. . . . This kind of progress – repetition of topic – is meant to reinforce the idea for the reader” (130). In writer responsible cultures, ideas and original thought are more prized than detail and memorization because writer responsible communities are typically stable, which leads to a low uncertainty index, meaning those included in writer responsible cultures have more stable society/government/living conditions for them to spend more time with abstract thoughts and concepts.

However, in reader responsible cultures, characterizing ethnic communities, writers would also incorporate more details than data or logos related arguments. Reader responsible cultures tend to favor the sequential progression of writing. This style of writing has differentiating sentence topics which make the topical structure of the text seem less connected to the writer responsible reader. Conner and Farmer elaborate by stating, “in sequential progression of the sentence topics, which are always different, [topics] are typically derived from the content of the comment in the previous sentence” (130). These tangents of the speaker continuously develop throughout the text and are attributed to reader responsible characteristics that signify his or her wealth of information. The ability to gain and memorize an extended amount of information is prized in reader responsible cultures because meta-knowledge is derived from an extensive and revered history of tradition and wisdom. Keep in mind that this characteristic of meta-knowledge can be derived from orality, which can be expected to be passed down through generations via philosophy, griots, and story-telling. Of course,

there is always a possibility of having writers imitate a mixture of both writer responsible and reader responsible cultures, like in African American Language and African American Rhetoric, where the message would then be decoded by the context of the message.

### **When Two Become One: Context and Text**

More text is often than not, influenced by outside factors and perceptions. According to Baker, “different languages use different devices for signalling information structure, and translators [writers, readers, and assessors] must develop a sensitivity to the various signalling systems available in the languages they work with” (161-62). This communicative approach puts the responsibility of creating meaning on the audience, or readers, to decode the message from the sender, regardless of language barriers. One has to overcome language barriers is to understand the words used in the message. For many minority language practices associated with Ethnic rhetoric and composition, one instrumental factor in understanding the implied meaning of the message is to analyze the surrounding context of the word or phrase. It is often necessary to understand the meanings of compositions by decoding the context of the speaker as well as the message.

Baker credits D.A. Cruse for dividing lexical, or word meaning and utterance, into four categories (almost similar to Aristotle’s understanding of rhetoric and Burke’s dramatistic pentad): evoked meaning, propositional meaning, presuppositional meaning, and expressive meaning (11). These four categories provide the backdrop for validating and qualifying how cultures create, analyze, or ultimately translate the meanings of words. However, I will primarily discuss (1) evoked and (2) propositional meaning because that amount of information will be sufficient to provide a context of meaning. (1)

Evoked meaning is dependent on a community of speakers who use particular words in particular situations, whether the community is classified in terms of area, time, or class. Time, including age, area (and to some extension ethnicity), and economic class determine the community's dialect, while situational structures determine the community's language register, which is further divided into the field, tenor, and mode of discourse. This answers the "what's going on" of the situation, the "who's involved" in the situation, and the "how is the situation taking place."

If Ethnic rhetorics and compositions are able to be analyzed and reflect language in a holistic and textual approach, then terms specific to each cultural group can qualify as an evoked meaning because terms can be used in multiple ways with different rhetorical effects within their specific community, which differs culturally (geographically, socioeconomically, as well as historically). An example of such is the dualistic "Standard" Written English and African American Rhetorical contextual copula "be." In this sense, according to Smitherman, this copula often indicates habitual, recurring actions regardless of time as opposed to the sentences with the absence of "be," which signifies an action that is only relevant to the present. This copula—"be" verb—can also represent an issue of emphasis as well as a form to indicate future actions depending on the context (*Talking and Testifyin* 19-20). Moreover, Baker describes a (2) propositional meaning as "a word or utterance [that] arises from the relation between it and what it refers to or describes in a real or imaginary world" (11). Therefore, "be" in African American Language or Rhetorical use can reflect the connections Baker notes within implied meanings and applied meaning, while also being described in terms of (3) expressive meanings which "relates to the speaker's feelings or attitude rather than to

what the words refer to” (11). Baker once again indicates that the audience should refer to the context of the message to verify the implied meanings of the words that compose the sentence or message. Not only do these complex linguistic guidelines support the argument for African American Language as a valid and distinct form of language, but also these complex situational components of language describe the fluidity of linguistic concepts thus identifying language as dynamic.

Even though African American Language and African American Rhetoric have rules of grammar and consciously choose words to fit within the communication patterns of the community, socially conscious individuals can challenge community practices and concepts which could eventually lead to altering the propositional meaning of a word. This potentially poses a problem for some words used in African American Language and African American Rhetoric, especially words used in hip hop songs<sup>6</sup> in particular, because some words are not “owned” by a specific culture. This fluxuation then drives the continual evolution of Hip Hop’s linguistic style and game.

This contextual limitation is different when some languages do not have words to describe some things. For example, some cultures do not have a word that translates into the English word for “snow.” In this example the word “snow” could be inferred as “owned” by English culture for practical purposes, but in reality the word “snow” is not exclusively “owned” by any one culture; it is a shared experience. In African American Language and African American Rhetoric, words and meanings are shared and borrowed quite closely with English cultures, which could cause non-practitioners of African American Language and African American Rhetoric some confusion. Because words are

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<sup>6</sup> **hip hop** spelt in lower case, for this study denotes the genre of music whereas **Hip Hop** correlates to the discourse or culture of Hip Hop which includes the musical genre.

not solely “owned” by one culture, and experiences are generated, the words can be altered or have different meanings between individuals within the same community or culture, or individuals between two or more distinct, collective entities of a culture.

The propositional meaning depends on how the community relates to the use of a particular word. If the community is faced with a situation that challenges the community’s meaning of a generally practiced word, then the community’s meaning of the word could change. Language is a dynamic and ever-changing system. Although simple terms such as “be” do provide a link to grammatical and structural commonalities among different cultural languages, simple terms are merely the pieces of a bigger picture of how different cultures and communities respond to writings and prompts, as well as how individuals see the world. If educators are more culturally responsive and responsible in their classrooms, educators will be better equipped to provide students with more, well-developed lessons and greater insight to the global market.

In *Image-Music-Text* Roland Barthes mentions that “the Text can be approached, experienced, in reaction to the sign [the Eurocentric notion of the “sign,” “signified,” and “signifier”]. The work closes on a signified” (158). Barthes also goes on to say, “text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination. The plural Text depends, that is, not on the ambiguity of its contents but on what might be called the *stereographic plurality* of its weave of signifiers” (159). Barthes interpretation of texts and “signifiers” implies a greater need to expand students’ and scholars’ awareness of composition and rhetoric techniques in order to include and read multiple meanings drawn from various cultures and experiences. The reader, in Barthes’ view, is limiting the

text because of the possible significations [both ethnic and Eurocentric views], and this exposure should be happening in institutions and even in first-year English composition courses.

Table 1-McCool's Writer and Reader Responsible Cultures

Writer Responsible	Mixed	Reader Responsible
Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Ireland, Netherland, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, United States	Arab Countries, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Iran, Luxembourg, Norway, Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad, Venezuela	Argentina, Brazil, China, Columbia, East Africa, Ecuador, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Japan, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Salvador, Serbia, South Korea, Slovakia, Spain, Suriname Turkey, Uruguay Vietnam

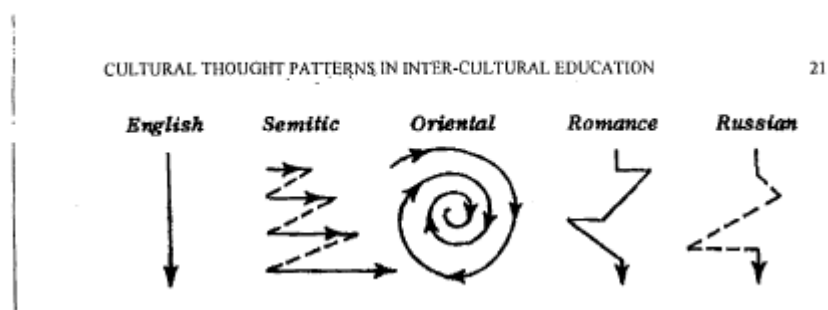


Figure 1a-Kaplan's Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education

## CHAPTER III

### Hip Hop as A Pedagogy

#### The Composition of a Hip Hop Class

After five p.m. the campus belongs to the students. Most faculty stop working on campus and rush home for a well needed hour or so of relaxation until lesson planning, answering emails, writing articles or books,—or a combination of all three—consume their night. Seldom does one think about integrating a scholastic life with a personal life. An academic job can easily consume the majority of an instructor's time. What about the intersections of job and classes? The campus comes alive after five. Students rush to computer labs and evening classes; gather for social or other organized meetings like fraternities, sororities, or study groups; or relocate to dining halls either to actually eat or to just meet up with friends. This was the time I saw a particular group of students come alive on campus. It had to have been close to seven at night when I came to the LBJ Student Center (Lyndon Baines Johnson Student Center); I too was on my way to a meeting when I saw a group of about six African-American males huddled in a circle performing a cipher.

A. Shahid Stover, author of *Hip Hop Intellectual Resistance*, describes lyrical ciphers or battles as conversations enacting call and response as well as grassroots responses to situational contexts and between artists. The ritual of call and response is a aspect of African American Rhetoric while grassroots response is a quality commonly seen simultaneously and in dominant and Ethnic Rhetorics. Both call and response and grassroots responses are rhetoric and composition techniques commonly used by minority populations in order to bring awareness to unjust treatments or situations. These



techniques can be utilized to challenge dominant narratives or policies. Stover interprets ciphers as “one eMCee finishes or is creatively interrupted, then another eMCee takes control of the lyrical content and contributes to the continuation of lyrical flow” (28). This sequence of actions demonstrates how artists interact with each other.

Stover later goes on to recall the importance of these battles by stating that “battles constitute an evolutionary leap in skills, techniques and aesthetics of eMCeeing through two eMCees putting their creative abilities to the ultimate test by clashing for cultural recognition, lyrical dominance and social respect. Lyrical battles take place in freestyle ciphers, on stage and even on recorded music” (28). That evening at the LBYS Student Center, I wanted to stop and observe this linguistic and cultural performance that is commonly known as a “rap battle.” Not every day does one see a cipher (also spelt cypher) at Texas State University. As I slowly passed these excited lyricists, the group exploded into a bunch of “OHHHs” and “DAAMMNNs”; someone must have either been dissed (or putdown) or had such a profound lyrical experience the group could not handle their emotions.

Unable to stay and watch this performance because of my meeting, I made my way up the stairs. I wondered how my first-year English composition course would look with those students enrolled. How would any class with those students enrolled look? Would the teacher encourage those students to quiet down and compliantly focus on the task at hand? Would the instructor misinterpret the call and response banter as a sign of disrespect or as innovate paths of connecting or questioning information? I became curious about how these students interacted in their everyday classroom settings. I know I incorporate aspects of Hip Hop culture as part of my pedagogy, but other teachers may

struggle to reach students of color integrated in Hip Hop culture or students who may channel their energies differently. Hip Hop Pedagogies are not canonized, nor are they commonly associated with “good” teaching practices. Many teachers open to incorporating alternative praxis that maximizes student potential from a global perspective profit from pedagogies such as Hip Hop Pedagogies because Hip Hop, and other praxes, can provide avenues for students to become better writers. In this chapter I describe how Hip Hop can be utilized in a first-year English composition course within the guidelines set for Texas State University first-year English composition classes. However, in order to provide a sufficient basis for the curriculum of first-year English composition courses influenced by Hip Hop Pedagogies, I examine the composite demographics and attitudes of diverse classes in which their performative discourses embody educational potential as well as define Hip Hop Pedagogies in a social context.

Although the sight of the cipher ignited ideas of musical and interactive instruction inside my first-year English composition classes, the panoramic scene from the LBJ Student Center started to drain my future thoughts of lesson plans. The self-segregation of the student body can be reminiscent of what often happens in classes if the instructor does not assign seats. Those students involved with the cipher congregated under a wall-mounted television in the middle section of the LBJ Student Center on the first floor; they were looked upon by other students of color who were sitting in the same general area and were stared at by White students sitting in the section across the building or in the neighboring Starbucks. The cultural isolation these students displayed in the LBJ Student Center should not happen in the classroom. However, this scene of isolation is somewhat familiar. According to the United States National Center for Education

Statistics, 71.5 percent of Bachelor degrees were awarded to White, non-Hispanics while 9.8 percent of Bachelor degrees were awarded to Black, non-Hispanic, 8.1 percent of Hispanics, were awarded Bachelor degrees, and 7.0 percent of Asian or Pacific Islander were awarded Bachelor degrees in 2012. The average number of the ethnic population of students awarded four-year degrees is somewhat telling of the cultural dynamics of academic institutions. The limited minority representation can indicate a lack of support and representation which leads to feelings of isolation. Gaps caused by self-segregation, like the one found in LBJ Student Center and limited cultural or ethnic instruction can be bridged by facilitated instruction and student participation fused with the very instrument students participate in or embody—Hip Hop culture.

If teachers could capitalize on the energy these ciphering students show outside of class, levels of class participation would increase. The amount of information students could potentially learn would hypothetically be elevated as well. This potential commitment to education would translate into reinforcing knowledge gained in first-year English composition courses through understanding new ideas, scaffolding existing knowledge, and relating information in terms that correlate to situations with which students are familiar. It is not uncommon to find students across ethnicities and ages to be involved with Hip Hop culture in some way or another, similar to the students engaged with the cipher. Students intersect Hip Hop culture in their everyday life (e.g., by listening to music between classes, partying, being online, and/or by watching television) with a few academic realms (e.g. sporting activities, classroom norms, and/or school projects). Hip Hop has simply been deemed unfairly as a negative tool by the dominant group because a misappropriation of the cultural capital produces stereotypes and

inadequate deconstruction of images and texts related to Hip Hop culture or the hip hop genre.

The level of involvement students have with Hip Hop is relatively high; however, the level of rigor associated with Hip Hop inside the academy varies. Emery Petchauer, author of *Hip-Hop Culture in College Students' Lives: Elements, Embodiment, and Higher Edutainment*, describes the progress of the education field incorporating Hip Hop culture, including the cipher, within the academic discourse, in order to positively affect student outcomes of learning. Petchauer comments on this level of intensity by writing that “Scholars have made this analytical shift by entering the creative and communal spaces of hip-hop: *ciphers*. . . (also called a cypher) is the communal space in which people create and participate in hip-hop. . . . This expansion in research beyond rap and to ciphers has initiated an aesthetic turn in scholarship” (6). Petchauer continues to model the importance of Hip Hop culture in student lives as well as in campus responsibilities.

A connection between students and scholarship can be positive: “A rich body of scholarship in student development and engagement has made clear that subcultures, student organizations, and identity play a large part in the lives of students on campus, particularly those from various minority backgrounds. . . . This knowledge has helped campus personnel better understand their students and thus better serve them” (Petchauer 7). As Petchauer states, the level of academic integrity surrounding Hip Hop has increased due to the acknowledgement surrounding the wealth of educational capital invested in Hip Hop culture by scholars, activists, participants, and supporters. A number of students, like those involved with the cipher that night at Texas State, can profit from

Hip Hop in the class mostly because they are already interacting with Hip Hop culture in some way or another.

However, student interaction with Hip Hop culture is not the only trait that defines any one's identity. Students often group themselves outside of their classes based on social constructs related to their identity. These socially dynamic and constructed areas are places educators can look to for teachable moments. Mary Bucholtz, author of *White Kids: Language, Race, and Styles of Youth Identity*, notes that "speakers can 'do' identity via other linguistic (and nonlinguistic) resources as well. . . . In order to discover the social meanings of linguistic forms, it is necessary to know how these forms are interpreted by participants in the cultural and interactional context in which they are used" (8-9). Bucholtz understands the importance of identity development and the connection ethnographers in educational settings have established with curriculum, identity, and social literacies. When students feel the same level of comfort as they do with people they trust, students are more open to interpreting and thinking critically about issues of communication and worldly experiences which provide the foundations for writing prompts and for analyzing textual evidence.

When students cannot see themselves represented in their classes, either in class discussions, readings, or visual representations, students are unresponsive to the information presented in that class; students may then become educationally stunted and disengaged. Eleazar Vasquez III, Angel Lopez, Carrie Straub et.al., authors of "Empirical Research on Ethnic Minority Students: 1995-2009," note the lack of representation and inadequate ability to facilitate education based on cultural linguistic differences (CDL) by mentioning that "The percentage of CLD students in public schools has increased from

22 percent to 42 percent in 2003, primarily due to growth in Hispanic enrollments” (90).

Vasquez et. al. continue to illustrate this marginalization by asserting that

additionally, more students from culturally diverse backgrounds and those living in poverty are attending public schools. ‘Of the 21.9 million children less than six years of age in 1998 [. . . ,] five million (25%) were living in poverty’ . . . . Over 50 percent of non-white children were living in poverty; 72 percent lived in racially isolated neighborhoods. (90)

Marginalized ethnicities—whether students, faculty, and/or staff—view the educational system differently than those in power.

Author of *Your Average Nigga: Performing Race Literacy and Masculinity*,

Vershawn Ashanti Young, discusses the outlook on education for Black males—youth and adult—by stating, “but it’s not just black boys who are concerned with how language and school literacy affect perceptions of their racial performance; some black male professors are too” (4). This view extends my previous examples of how underrepresented people of color can be denigrated in colleges and universities when ethnic identities and language practices become marginalized and trivialized. Minority students, Black or otherwise, are continuously called upon to perform an ethnicity.

This performance of ethnicity continuously occurs while the dominant group supplies the foundational standards which everyone else has to measure up to or perform for. This creates a performer/observer or performer/audience binary that eventually becomes inherent, and as a result, the dominant norms are reinforced unconsciously. Bucholtz critiques this system of recycled oppression by mentioning that “through hegemony, social inequality is discursively framed and taken for granted, natural, and

right” (15). Although framing power structures as the “Standard” in the social realm is common, college educators are also encouraging this cycle in their classes, even in first-year English composition courses, where students learn important aspects of how to compose their writing, like mimicking style.

When composition teachers introduce style into their classes, for instance, one common practice is to have students model different types of writers in order to identify stylistic features and become acquainted with acceptable practices for various rhetorical situations. Cheryl Glenn and Melissa A. Goldthwaite, editors of *The St. Martin’s Guide to Teaching Writing*, inform, primarily new, composition teachers that

Style was either right or wrong, correct or incorrect, and in general only an attempt to write in a high “literary” style was acceptable. Gradually, this dichotomy between good and bad gave way to three hierarchical levels of style that many of us were raised on: formal or literary style; informal or colloquial style; and vulgar or illiterate style. Of the three, only formal style was considered proper for writing; the other two instead reflected the way people talk. (206)

These hierarchies of style are still practiced today.

More often than not, educators who have students model styles will choose professional writers that cater to the teacher’s biases, which often represent the dominant group’s biases as well. Instructors inform students about style, or language for that matter, since language can rarely be separated from its context, so a hierarchy is enforced similar to the one that Glenn and Goldthwaite observe although different terminology is used to describe style. A form of enforced assimilation is what students who prescribe to

this compositional and rhetorical skill set take away when practices like the one noted in *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing* are observed without adequate exposure to alternative praxis. This is not a technique for empowering students to gain style, but rather a technique that manipulates culturally diverse voices into whitewashed noise. This rhetorical situation of academic responsibility in many first-year English composition classes insinuates that one's home language belongs there: at home and not in the classroom or in any professional setting. If the teacher does not recognize marginalized literacy practices, then the students' identities and voices as minorities are limited.

Glenn and Goldthwaite proceed to comment on alternative practices for demonstrating different avenues for first-year English composition students for acquiring style by mentioning that "in the *St. Martin's Handbook*, Andrea Lunsford encourages her readers to recognize the characteristics of particular *geographic regions*, of particular *occupations or professions*, [and] of particular *social, cultural, or ethnic groups*" (211). Although I do admit this is a novel activity for initiating conversations about stylistic differences, Lunsford's tactic will also highlight the inequalities of language and identity because many of the "recognized" markers will most likely be those indeed deemed "not normal" or "different from the standard." This exclusivity would then cause students to have the realization of once again (re)classifying one's self into the "formal," "informal or colloquial," or "vulgar" category, thus connecting one's home language or alternative language with a level of assimilated difference.

The outcome of this classification could lead to marginalized individuals' lowered self-esteem and diminished cultural pride. The space between understanding knowledge and regurgitating information will become wider; students will become less engaged in



the lessons since accurate representations are left out and current models are skewed to encourage the privileged genre of “Standard” Written English. Students can utilize Hip Hop, and some do, as a means of creating a space to enact identity and resist limitations urged by those in power. H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman, co-authors of *Articulate While Black: Barack Obama, Language, and Race in the U.S.*, suggest that “The Hip Hop artist’s pen allows the young and the oppressed to not just write rhymes but to right wrong. In the process, youth write themselves into history in a way that restores their humanity. In this profound sense, the mic provides a sense of power to those who are often made acutely aware of their overwhelming sense of powerlessness” (149). If students are already tapping into this musical application of cultural and linguistic literacy to create a space that combats their marginalization, educators should build upon this edifice of educational and cultural capital to promote a new praxis for a more accurate representation of a global classroom.

First-year English composition teachers should create a safe space or what A. Suresh Canagarajah refers to as “safe houses” for students, especially marginalized minority students, as a space where creating the opportunity for their voices to be heard should be fostered rather than squandered. In “Safe Houses in the Contact Zone: Coping Strategies of African-American Students in the Academy,” Canagarajah writes that students of color “appreciate the importance of *safe houses*—which she [Mary Louise Pratt] defines in passing as ‘social and intellectual spaces where groups can constitute themselves as horizontal, homogeneous, sovereign communities with high degrees of trust, shared understanding, and temporary protection from legacies of oppression’ (40)” (174). First-year English composition courses are important outlets and potential safe

houses for students to develop identity and valuable linguistic practices. Incorporating Hip Hop not only encourages the exploration of this attempt of advancing literacy, but Hip Hop in the first-year English composition classes also fosters an engaging and safe environment to express, create, and challenge ideologies through multiple avenues in which First-year English composition classes can facilitate growth.

As I mentioned before, Hip Hop culture is included in a number of students' lives, both inside and outside the classroom. Raphael Travis and Anne Deepak, authors of "Empowerment in Context: Lessons from Hip-Hop Culture for Social Work Practice," identified a study that measured youths in which "65% of youths of all races who listened to recorded music in a typical day listened to hip-hop or rap" (qtd. in 205). They further note that "[h]ip-hop culture has been embraced by youths globally as a form of storytelling, political critique, resistance to power, and entertainment" (205). Not only can Hip Hop enrich lesson plans, but it can reflect linguistic and cultural practices on a wide scale through lyrics, videos, novels, video games, merchandise, and interviews. These parts of Hip Hop culture can allow educators and students to incorporate multimodal learning in first-year English composition courses which provide a foundation for rhetorical and linguistic analysis as well as critically thinking about global issues.

H. Samy Alim, Awad Ibrahim, and Alastair Pennycook, editors of *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, refer to the influence of American Hip Hop globally by mentioning that "this perspective, then, the global spread of Hip Hop is the global spread of (African) American culture: 'Hip Hop is and always will be a culture of the African – American minority. But it has

become an international language, a style that connects and defines the self-image of countless teenagers” (28). They continue elaborating on American Hip Hop’s global influence by commenting that “while this perspective captures several important points—Hip Hop is indeed a globally marketed phenomenon, and American Hip Hop is dominant” (28). Hip Hop has the ability to embody African American origins and in turn reflect localized discourse specific to African diaspora culture world-wide. This transaction of ideologies becomes both shared and representative of knowledge students, teachers, activists, and supporters of Hip Hop can relate to or build off of in the classroom, in terms of linguistic, cultural, compositional and rhetorical elements.

Being able to understand and practice concepts such as ethnicity and class that underlie Hip Hop cultural discourses, students and teachers will be better equipped to understand the range of culturally diverse information which many expect students to critically think about and analyze at the university level. Teachers should strive to produce information and expose instances that reflect student identities and even teacher identities. Vershawn Young asserts that “My response, which admittedly may be easier said than done, is that teachers should be more, not less, critical of the ‘marketplace.’ We should prepare students for societal change, not merely to fit in. Our job should be educating students, not refashioning them into what we imagine the ‘marketplace’ demands they should be” (112). Young’s suggestion is a valid call to action—a suggestion similar to other scholars’. Akin to Young, Alim et. al. proclaim that “I [Alim] argue (as Smitherman does) that linguists and educators are obligated to present the current social and linguistic reality to students who are economically, politically, and socially subjugated in mainstream institutions” (*Global Linguistic Flows* 214). If teachers

are trying to implement more culturally diverse works that accurately reflect the representation of the classroom, and the country, then this model of co-representation by the use of Hip Hop in the classroom will encourage the use of pluralized Englishes.

What is disturbing is the resistance, to not just at how this kind of pedagogy can be received, but to how this ideology accumulates such negative connotations from peers, educators, and other institutions. This reaction not only affects the students by limiting the body of knowledge, decreasing the provided space for self-reflection and/or inhibiting engagement within the academy, but the polemic acknowledgment of diversity reduces minority students' and educators' counter-narratives—and authority—to some extent. Young asserts that ethnicity and performance share an interlocking relationship; therefore, the disconnect of language, race, and identity is rare, so the expectation for the same disconnection in academia is causing students and educators, primarily of color, deleterious effects when developing or navigating both identity or academic discourses. The performer/observer or performer/audience binary is evident; as Young states, “and since school and the hood remain racialized as white and black and I remain intimately connected to both, I still perform race in both sides. . . . I am required to perform my academic (read white) and ghetto (read black) languages in order to quell and fulfill the racial, class, and gender fantasies that others have of me” (3). He continues by saying that “the fact is, while racial performance may vary among blacks—for example, not everyone wants to be white—the requirement to perform race is pervasive” (3).

Even teaching assistants who serve in institutions should have the ability to decide about course material and the theory that instructs their pedagogy without fearing repercussions and sacrificing portions of personal identity. This view is based on the idea

that institutions allow such freedoms for teaching assistants and provide an unwavering foundational support system to those individuals. Authors of “Black People Tend to Talk Eubonics: Race and Curricular Diversity in Higher Education,” Austin Jackson and Geneva Smitherman comment on the institutional progress regarding cultural diversity and curriculum by stating:

Such courses now include texts and readings from African American, Latino, feminist, gay/lesbian, and other writers who had been excluded from these courses, as well as a pedagogical imperative to “interrogate,” “investigate,” “explore,” and create *sensitivity* toward diversity. The second major change has been in the diversification of faculty, staff, undergraduates and graduate students—and teaching assistants. (47; emphasis added)

Although Jackson and Smitherman give homage to the progress of diversity, the academy has over the years shown that the academy still propagates the same ideals—ethnicity and class being equitable to success. Faculty, staff, and students still perform and/or create identities within social spaces, many times through language. Teaching is another acclimation to a hierarchy in which institutions encourage a performance of identity through language.

Young acknowledges the somewhat counterproductive role educators have become burdened with when taking on and acknowledging minority literacy practices. Young applies this critique to Canagarajah’s classroom structure and self-assessment: “The approach I [Canagarajah] adopted for my course called for a *sensitivity* to the vernacular discourses and communicative conventions that minority students bring to the

classroom, while enabling them to gradually cross discourse boundaries and get acquainted with the academic conventions”(120; emphasis added). Young continues his analysis by stating:

His [Canagarajah’s] approach seems promising, but in the next sentences we learn what this “sensitivity to their vernacular” means in relation to “academic conventions”: “Although students are encouraged to employ their vernacular discourses in their own community [. . . ,] they are expected to master academic discourse to communicate effectively in college (120).

The progress Jackson and Smitherman mention and which Canagarajah instills in his classes highlights the tension in regard to language still prevalent in the academy.

The constant act of performing is reminiscent of the DuBoisian veil or his notion of double-consciousness that W.E. B. DuBois describes in *The Souls of Black Folk*, which Black people still struggle with on a daily basis:

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, —a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, —an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring

ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (2)

Hip Hop discourse not only has a literal performance aspect in which cultural and academic information can be (de)constructed and learned, but Hip Hop can also embody many different avenues of rhetorical effects or devices and situations that are tangentially linked to race, language, and identity in a global way. This literal and figurative performance of race can be bridged with Hip Hop and presented in first-year English composition courses, thus demonstrating a more representative and truthful projection of society. This wider breadth can in turn provide linguistic and cultural portrayals of the global student.

### **Hip Hop Composition Classroom**

This section of “Hip Hop as a Pedagogy” defines and discusses the differences among Hip Hop Pedagogies as described in Marc Lamont Hill’s groundbreaking *Beats, Rhymes and Classroom Life* (previously mentioned in chapter one). I also argue for implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies into the canon of pedagogies used by composition teachers of first-year English composition courses. This section also provides background information for implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies in first-year English composition classes, especially because of limited research as well as the lack of connections between scholarship, praxis, and a concern for marginalized students.

The pedagogies a teacher utilizes to implement different rhetorical techniques and compositional strategies in a first Year composition course vary from class to class and from teacher to teacher. Traditional composition pedagogies are derived from individuals with specialized knowledge in the English/writing fields and who provide information

that becomes translated into strategies for students and other educators so as to create and connect compositional and rhetorical skills to comprehension. The methods in which connections are made between writing and comprehension, or meaning, are what separate the types of pedagogies educators use in their classes in order to join students who may not fully participate physically or cognitively with their lessons. The potential behind different composition pedagogies drives this study.

Traditional pedagogies, over the years, became canonized due to the frequent sharing of these practices in academic discourses. Advances in technology and shifts between generational personality traits are also factors in developing or evolving the commonly accepted canon of pedagogies used to instruct first-year English composition classes. Expressive, Collaborative, Critical, Cultural, and Digital/Technological pedagogies are utilized so often that many educators who plan to teach, or are teaching first-year English composition courses become acquainted with these methods of teaching composition early on and accept these methods as the foundation of common introductory writing/ English classes. Gary Tate, Amy Rupiper, and Kurt Schick, editors of *A Guide to Composition Pedagogy*, explain and expand upon the ways foundational teaching methods can be utilized by educators. This text defines compositional pedagogies associated with the aforementioned traditional canon and is opposed to the traditional rhetorical canon many theorists invest in and which defines and prizes classical rhetorical ideologies and techniques mentioned in chapter two.

Although creating and accepting common methods of teaching first-year English composition courses allow vast numbers of educators to teach basic principles of writing in a similar fashion and provide the landscape in which educators can build lessons plans



and other practical applications, one hindrance with accepting the traditional roles for teachers and students of the composition canon is that some instructors may not feel the necessity to exceed these boundaries of the canon. Instructors may not develop an alternative landscape in order to cultivate a multitude of students, including marginalized minority students; rather, instructors use the parameters of traditional composition pedagogies to inform their praxis but do not necessarily use the pedagogies to accommodate the diverse array of students found in twenty-first century classes. Teachers may choose to structure their delivery of information and/or the classroom setting with multiple or singular influences from the composition canon. This in turn limits students' perception of English, writing, and meaning-making because teachers restrict themselves to only traditional notions of foundational composition pedagogies.

However, because some educators find valuable pedagogical methods to connect specialized knowledge with writing skills that can be transferred in the first-year English composition classes to students and teachers, an additional insertion to the compositional canon should be made. Based on the (re)purposing of Hip Hop in the first-year English composition classes to demonstrate the multiple uses of both traditional rhetoric and composition canons and on the need to provide spaces for culturally diverse and artistic voices, I argue that Hip Hop Pedagogies be interjected into the conversation of canonical composition pedagogies.

Marc Lamont Hill defines the intersections of scholarship, Hip Hop culture, composition pedagogies, and praxis as Hip-Hop-Based Education (HHBE) (10). Hill's innovative outlook on teaching methods with Hip Hop culture is constructed by dividing the purposes of Hip Hop culture into three different contexts that can be layered and/or

(re)constructed with canonized rhetoric and/or composition markers, to develop deeper connections with a range of diverse students. Hill concludes that the three types of Hip Hop Pedagogies being utilized are “Pedagogies *of* Hip Hop,” “Pedagogies *about* Hip Hop,” and “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop” (120-23). These pedagogies incorporate Hip Hop culture in first-year English composition classes initially through three very different perspectives.

“Pedagogies *of* Hip Hop,” for instance, “reflect the various ways that hip hop culture authorizes particular values, truth claims, and subject positions while implicitly or explicitly contesting others” (Hill 120). To clarify the implications of this type of pedagogy, I draw on Pretchaur’s “I Feel What He Was Doin’: Urban Teacher Development, Hip Hop Aesthetics, and Justice-Oriented Teaching” as well as Emdin’s “The Rap Cypher, the Battle, and Reality Pedagogy: Developing Communication and Argumentation in Urban Science Education,” two chapters in *Schooling Hip Hop: Expanding Hip-Hop Based Education Across the Curriculum*, co-edited by Hill and Pretchaur. “Pedagogies *of* Hip Hop” looks to Hip Hop culture as a pathway to generating and connecting meaning, experiences, and information in first-year English composition classes and across disciplines because of the socially constructed reality surrounding students’ lives (*Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life* 120). The drive to authenticate an experience, thought, or value, either intrinsically or extrinsically, is dependent on an individual’s specialized knowledge which is developed from shared and learned experiences—cognitively, physically, and/or emotionally gained. Authentication is seen as parallel to developing meaning, in that individuals create new knowledge based on

previous perspectives; individuals learn information gained from previous experiences, linguistically, socially, and/or culturally.

Instructors can use Hip Hop Pedagogies to navigate academic discourses through Hip Hop's edifice of -isms, which in turn provide the basis for class discussions and critical thinking about the environments surrounding students, both collegiately and publically. Emdin reinforces this notion with the creation of a "Reality Pedagogy" he states, "focuses on five main concepts/steps (The 5 C's) in which teachers can engage. They are: congenerative dialogues/cyphers, coteaching, cosmopolitanism, context focusing/incorporation into instruction, and content development" (*Schooling Hip Hop* 20). The basis of his "Reality Pedagogy" is similar to Hill's classification of "Pedagogy of Hip Hop" because both methods are immersed in the emotive and physical application of using Hip Hop culture to direct students to a greater understanding of concrete and abstract meanings presented in the classroom.

Emdin's 5 C's integrate elements of Hip Hop culture by allowing students and faculty to explore their general and specific knowledge already assumed and then to scaffold this knowledge into new information and understandings from a collaborative process with other students in the class. This relationship between Hip Hop culture and the academy fosters "safe houses" which encourages participants to investigate issues of ethnicity, class, gender, and age, freely and limits the pressure on individuals to perform or uphold mandated standards that ultimately can dissuade students away from classroom and academic settings. By drawing on previous knowledge, learned or experienced, students and faculty are given the chance to enhance their class setting with information

specifically catered to each individual or class. This then becomes a pathway to alternative methods of creatively learning new information across academic discourses.

Once this pathway is established, student perceptions of academic discourses change. Students and faculty may begin to value student-centered pedagogies because students are increasingly valued. If scaffolding new information is built on previous knowledge students already perceive as authentic, they become more aware and more open to the possibilities of learning since their opinions and outlooks are valued and authenticated by the academy. Educators adopting this philosophy of Hip Hop Pedagogies in their classes can draw on Expressive, Rhetorical, Cultural, Critical, Collaborative, and Digital canonized composition pedagogies to complement their teachings and lesson plans. Students and faculty validate or authenticate both old and new knowledge through shared experience by involving “Pedagogies of Hip Hop” and incorporating voices from other students, which in turn create collaborative involvement.

Petchauer uses the authenticating element that drives Hip Hop culture as a marker to evaluate students’ critical thinking skills within the context of social justice which highlights the interconnectedness of “Pedagogies of Hip Hop” with Expressive, Collaborative, and Critical pedagogies. In order to carry out his evaluation, Petchauer bases his study, and praxis, on the aesthetic values of Hip Hop culture: the autonomy/distance binary and kinetic consumption. He explains by stating that “[a]utonomy/distance refers to the characteristics of hip-hop that resist compartmentalization and problematize modernist dichotomies. In other words, hip-hop is seldom ‘either/or’ but more often ‘both/and’” (*Schooling Hip Hop* 30-1). Kinetic consumption, Petchauer argues, is largely an emotive response in addition to a cognitive

and/or physical response. He continues by stating, “[a] key feature in authenticity and appreciation in any hip-hop activity is when the audience or participants experience a deep affective resonance illustrated through some kinetic response [reminiscent to call and response]” (*Schooling Hip Hop* 30-1).

By using aesthetic elements of Hip Hop culture, Petchauer is able to include his students’ own authentic values, voices, and perspectives of a socially constructed event in describing his students’ responses to a dilapidated school and the youths’ rallying cry for having better class standards in which the class reads about. When Petchauer evaluates his students’ written responses, he is able to effectively assess students’ clarity or comprehension of the social justice issue (which easily translate as an essay prompt), the applicability and outcomes of the social justice issue to other environments (which translates into students’ critical thinking), and the relatability of the social justice issue—which is created by the students’ previous and learned knowledge, thus authenticating the issue and connecting reality to the academy.

Petchauer’s assessment not only addresses Emdin’s 5 C’s (congenerative dialogues/cyphers, coteaching, cosmopolitanism, context focusing, and content development) but also accurately demonstrates the constructive intertextuality of Hip Hop culture to elevate students’ critical thinking on a collegiate rhetoric and composition level. Many times students reach higher education with limited perspectives about life, mostly in ways that do not encompass the larger connections of reality, scholarship, and personal experiences; they compartmentalize situations and knowledge as separate entities, thus limiting the potential to expand their global perspectives. Compartmentalizing issues encourages students to view issues as black/white,

“either/or,” rather than as “both/and” and inhibits the scaffolding of information from deconstructing the autonomy/distance binary and performing kinesthetic consumption.

By implementing or reinforcing the (de)construction of the liminal binary and the kinesthetic consumption of information within first-year English composition courses, facilitators interrupt the dominant hierarchy that frequently stifles minority voices.

Petchauer elaborates on this practice by mentioning the use of the autonomy/distance binary, kinesthetic consumption, and by extension “Pedagogies of Hip Hop” by stating, “[a]n African-centered epistemology based upon affect further elucidates kinetic consumption. According to this system of knowing, affective or emotional experiences are initial, valid, and important ways of knowing the world and building knowledge” (*Hip-Hop Culture* 72). The act of creating meaning and building information based on personal and learned knowledge centers on the authentication of the individuals’ information according to Petchauer’s account of African-centered pedagogies. Rather than subscribing to dominant pedagogies that offer pre-constructed meanings and pathways to information choices for students to pick, which may not resonate with marginalized students due to their learned experiences and prior knowledge, educators should be able to manipulate multiple pedagogies to connect a diverse array of old and new information and allow students to gain knowledge by actively participating in analyzing academic discourses. Although “Pedagogies of Hip Hop” may not use Hip Hop culture directly, facilitators include elements of Hip Hop culture indirectly in the praxis of their teaching in order to connect students’ lives and existing knowledge to academic discourses and new ways of creating meaning in their classes.

On the other hand, the second lens with which to view and utilize Hip Hop in first-year English composition classes stems from what Hill calls “‘Pedagogies *about* hip-hop,’ or the use of educational spaces to analyze, critique, and (re)produce hip-hop texts. When engaging in pedagogies about hip-hop, students and teachers operate as cultural critics who deploy critical literacies in order to identify and respond to structures of power and meaning within hip-hop texts” (*Beats, Rhymes and Classroom Life* 122). This classification of Hip Hop Pedagogies is common among educators who use Hip Hop as an avenue to teach pragmatic tools such as literary terms within first-year English composition classes. Many times teachers use Hip Hop texts (rap songs, lyrics, music videos) to facilitate lessons of literary terms, such as metaphor, simile, tone, and theme. Hill did just that in *Beats, Rhymes and Classroom Life*. Although this text has become a “must-read” for anyone invested or interested in Hip Hop Pedagogies, Hill’s text falls somewhat short of addressing the rich potential for composition and rhetoric applications. Hill uses hip hop texts to encourage critical thinking and connect reality to academic discourses for students deemed marginalized by the institution.

As Hill creates lesson plans and carries out class discussions, students recognize the “safe houses” which instill a freedom to explore and focus on the intersections of reality and identity. The process of opening academic space for students to use language associated with Hip Hop—also associated with their cultural identity—creates a pathway for students to look at “texts” in a critical light, even though those “texts” are extensions of Hip Hop culture. The class utilizes both “Pedagogies *about* Hip Hop” as well as traditional compositional pedagogies: Collaborative pedagogies with encouraging open class dialogues and peer mentorship; Critical pedagogies through questioning topics of

classism, racism, sexism, and marginalization that were prevalent themes in the “texts”; Cultural pedagogies as the integration of music in classes which can be seen as conversations of art; and Digital pedagogies from the multiple technologies used to investigate and create different “texts.” The method Hill uses in this particular class implements Hip Hop as the main focus of learning, the epicenter for academic conversations and scaffolding of new knowledge stemming from Hip Hop texts. “Pedagogies *about* Hip Hop” use Hip Hop culture as the source or materials for classroom conversations.

However, the third lens to implement Hip Hop in first-year English composition classes is “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop” and can also prove useful in first-year English composition courses. Hill describes the purpose of “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop” as “develop[ing] and articulat[ing] concrete processes for using hip-hop texts to enhance student motivation, transmit subject area knowledge, and develop habits of mind appropriate for learning” (123). This process incorporates multiple avenues of Hip Hop culture in the classroom in order to promote students’ understanding of scholastic information. Educators that utilize this method of teaching can demonstrate curriculum specific ideologies by pairing new information with an article from Hip Hop culture, thus making the class environment more engaging for students to learn and build upon their existing knowledge.

Hill’s focus in his ethnographic research of his alternative class is to “enable the students to develop ‘the ability to read and write in a manner that allows one to de-center dominant (hegemonic) conceptions of reality. . . .’” Hill also drew from “critical race theory’s focus on counterstorytelling as a means by which to move the experiences of



marginalized people to the center of public discourse” to ground his study and implement Hip Hop in that class (*Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life* 18). The integration of Hip Hop culture to create and use “Pedagogy *with* Hip Hop” provides a space for Hill to insert specific topics related to notions correlating with critical race theory. These topics which not only lead to creating data to support Hill’s Hip Hop Based Education but also lead marginalized students to participate and think critically about the intersections of identity and a number of other topics, thus countering the dominant hierarchy commonly perpetuated in the academy. By coupling Hip Hop culture with academic discourses, educators can teach students to value their voice and create a more interactive class while gathering new or clarified information.

When Petchauer addresses the autonomy/distance binary, previously discussed in “Pedagogies of Hip Hop” as “*edutainment*” in another work that elaborates on this same idea (*Hip-Hop Culture in College Students’ Lives*), the translation and definition become a tool of “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop,” the third lens of Hip Hop Pedagogies. As he states, “as an amalgamation of the words *entertainment* and *education* it refers to a process during which people learn or have their consciousness raised as a secondary or simultaneous result of listening to music for entertainment or enjoyment. More broadly, it refers to education that happens indirectly or as an implication of an activity” (72). “Edutainment” heightens critical thinking among students while increasing participation because individuals are connected to the material: (1) cognitively, such as by formulating logical and critical responses, discussions, and essays that correlate to the topic; (2) physically similar to written responses used in Petchauer’s evaluation mentioned earlier, students can create texts—written or, as I later argue, visual—that demonstrate the

comprehension of the topic; and (3) emotionally, which is seen in the personal responses, pathos, and ethos of the writers in first-year English composition classes. The concept of edutainment directly correlates to invoking elements of Hip Hop culture to increase specific topics constructed for particular curricula, thus skewing the term, and purpose, of edutainment to be classified as a pedagogical tool of “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop.”

The aesthetic quality of Hip Hop culture can be used in many combinations of Hip Hop Pedagogies. Many first-year English composition courses call for students to be able to write essays, narratives, and argumentative papers, and instructors assess these compositions in a way similar to Petchauer’s assessment in “I Feel What He Was Doin.” Petchauer asks questions similar to those asked in first-year English composition classes: How clear is the writing or meaning? Does the writer understand the prompt? Does the writer integrate outside sources or use personal experiences? However, teachers evaluate student writing primarily based on traditional composition pedagogies and focus of assessment which influence their teaching praxis rather than utilizing and including Hip Hop Pedagogies along with the canon to create an inclusive first-year English composition class for all students. Although first-year English composition teachers may not facilitate their classes through Hip Hop Pedagogies, there are similar underlying elements between Hip Hop Pedagogies and foundational composition and rhetoric pedagogies that are often overlooked and left unconnected. If Hip Hop Pedagogies were to be included in the canon or at least in the conversation of composition pedagogies that take place when instructors begin to learn about “how to teach” first-year English composition courses, the ability to connect to all students would encourage greater

productivity in first-year English composition classes like those described in the previous section, “Composition of a Hip Hop Classroom.”

This connection to Hip Hop culture students—transitioning from youth to adult—and teachers come in contact with can be measured. That data, in turn, can validate or, at least, initiate conversations regarding the flexibility of Hip Hop in the classroom, more specifically the first-year English composition classes.

## CHAPTER IV

### Hip Hop's Method

This chapter provides the research methodology to data describing first-year English composition students' growth of composition and rhetoric skills in correlation to Hip Hop Pedagogies. I also divulge lesson plans, essay prompts, and classroom discussions and activities that stem from Hip Hop Pedagogies and praxis. Within this chapter I also discuss perceptions and attitudes surrounding this instruction. As I present this information, I connect my educational artifacts to other composition pedagogies, alternative lesson plan arrangements, and other sources of educational influences.

During the process of conducting this study, I blended my instruction with multiple pedagogies including Hip Hop Pedagogies, in order to utilize my classes as the variable that implemented Hip Hop Pedagogies and assessed students' growth in writing and critical thinking. This research project uses a concurrent mixed methods approach to gather, record, and analyze data. According to John W. Creswell, author of *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, this approach to procedural research requires investigators to “converge or merge quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem. . . . [and] collects both forms of data at the same time and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results” (14-5). Using a concurrent mixed methods approach for this research project is most beneficial for garnering layers of information to analyze and interpret.

The best way to understand student needs is to understand the student, which means that this study must include information provided by the student. Qualitative

information provides a space for students to create a voice for trends and ideas, which then allows researchers to review the students' process of learning as data. This qualitative data can be student opinions in written or verbal responses, and these responses can foster multimodal learning, creative and critical thinking, as well as personal growth and understanding, similar to the landmark Flower-Hayes model (Flowers and Hayes 467-478). The qualitative data allow me to capture the students' process throughout a prolonged period of time. I am extremely lucky have a generous amount of returning students registering for the second semester of my first-year English composition course. This high-returning student rate allows me to extend this study's assessment to incorporate a full spectrum of writing and rhetorical skills for both semesters of first-year English composition courses rather than limit the study to basic fundamental composition and rhetoric techniques implemented in one full semester.

Along with the qualitative information I collected and analyzed, I also gathered quantitative data which in this study include Hip Hop Perception Surveys and numerical grades given to students in order to assess their composition and rhetoric skills and their understanding of such techniques as they progress through first-year English composition classes. I say classes to indicate the magnitude of this study. I am overseeing two first semester first-year English composition classes as well as one second semester first-year English composition class to which I have access to numerical grades which defines student success. I disbursed 64 Hip Hop Perception Surveys to two first semester first-year English composition classes and 50 Hip Hop Perception Surveys in the second semester first-year English composition class for a total of 114 surveys. This feedback allows me to compare qualitative data indicating support or lack of support for Hip Hop

culture and Hip Hop Pedagogies as a viable method for teaching first-year English composition classes while utilizing Hip Hop culture while calculating influences of ethnicity and/or age.

Those first semester first-year English composition classes that allowed the Hip Hop Perception Surveys to be distributed were given to two distinctly different instructors at the beginning of the Fall semester; Joseph Cantu\*<sup>7</sup> and Michelle Brown\* were the instructors of the two classes whose students participated in the in Hip Hop Perception Survey. During the second semester of first-year English composition classes, I asked another distinctly different instructor, Stephanie Garza,\* to pass out the Hip Hop Perception Survey to her second semester first-year English composition class in conjunction with Cantu's and Brown's second semester First-year English composition class. The numerical, or quantifiable, data gathered from these surveys will be discussed in the next section as well as in the Analysis chapter. To view a sample of the Hip Hop Perception Survey adapted from the YSB summer youth Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric Program, see Appendix C.

The intent of this methodological strategy of application allows me to interrogate the praxis and implementation of composition *and* rhetoric skills within Hip Hop Pedagogies for first-year English composition classes. Both empirical and qualitative data regarding attitudes or perceptions about teaching styles (indirectly) and writing quality (directly) are all gathered, interpreted, and analyzed within the concurrent mixed methods mode of research. The mixed methods process of gathering data was the most efficient for carrying out this study.

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<sup>7</sup> \*Asterisk indicates pseudonym given to individuals in order to protect their identity.

## **Hip Hop's Facilitation of Learning**

In his song, "Underground King," Drake proclaims "every pretty girl tell me that's the shit that she like/ so why am I in class if this is who I'm tryin' be like?/ So I drop out, lessons I was taught are quick to fade/ As soon as I realize that turnin' papers in won't get me paid" (Take Care). Drake's epiphany in his song is similar to that of many students who find themselves stuck in a class with limited creative outlets or coursework that is unreflective of practical applications like connections to future career pathways or connections to students' lived experiences. Students may "drop out" of school or mentally "drop out" of class and in turn have the "lessons . . . quick to fade" when the students are not stimulated by the level of class engagement. When students are engaged in class and want to take part in academics, they can effectively turn classroom lessons into pay-days (writing resumes, graduate school, job opportunities), or what is known in African American discourses as "makin' a way outta no way." A connection to Hip Hop is a way to increase a level of class engagement and encourage first-year English composition course production and efficiency through a variety of compositionally, rhetorically, and linguistically challenging tactics.

For this study I assessed participants enrolled in first semester first-year English composition courses designated as ENG 1310 at Texas State University. I also assessed participants enrolled in second semester first-year English composition courses designated as ENG 1320. Having this assessment located within Texas State is important because of the school's status as a Hispanic Serving Institute (HSI). This label designates this location as ethnically diverse by having "full-time equivalent undergraduate enrollment that is at least 25% Hispanic" (Flores and Park 116). This status as a Hispanic

Serving Institute affects the demographics of the First-year English composition classes. Flores and Park note the campus make-up in Texas in terms of ethnicity, commenting that “MSIs [Minority Serving Institutions] currently enroll more than 2.3 million students, or approximately 14% of all higher education students. . . . HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] . . . enroll about 16% Black [. . . ;] HSIs serve approximately 42% of all Hispanic students” (116). The large population of minorities interacting on the Texas State campus as well as the close proximity to Huston-Tilison, an HBCU, and large metropolitan areas encourage a dynamic sociocultural and sociolinguistic convergence.

These various demographics are essentials to understanding the performances and perceptions of the classes. The first semester first-year English composition classes were assessed in multiple ways, both qualitatively and quantitatively. I surveyed 67 individuals from other ENG 1310 classes in order to compare perceptions of utilizing Hip Hop within an English classroom. Of 67 participants, 30 were collected from two of Brown’s ENG 1310 classes. I added survey results from two of her classes in order to represent the sample size of 30. Brown is a white, middle-class, married female in her early- to mid-twenties. Her classroom was loosely structured in terms of student dialogue and was laden with technology and culturally and digitally influenced pedagogies. The remaining 37 participants for the first semester first-year English composition course Hip Hop Perception Survey were filled out by Joseph Cantu’s two first-year English composition classes. I added survey results from two of his classes in order to represent the sample size of 37. Cantu is a Hispanic, single, middle-class male in his early twenties. His class was structured as to not deviate from the syllabus while still embracing culturally diverse



readings, praxis, and alternative ethnic pedagogies. I also utilized two of my own first semester first-year English composition courses to compare aptitudes of writing with Hip Hop. This includes integrating the curriculum with Hip Hop Pedagogies to assess the students' progress as well as to gather numerical data from students' class participation, critical thinking skills, essays, and creative projects.

Comparing varying data from differing classes—both between (Brown and Cantu) classes during the first semester but also between the first and second semester of first-year English (Brown, Cantu, and Garza)—allows me to track and quantify the success or failure of Hip Hop Pedagogies in relation to first-year English composition courses. However, the ethnographic, or qualitative, data from my two ENG 1310 classes also provide me with insight into students' perceptions of Hip Hop Pedagogies in relation to writing, rhetoric, and language. The students in my two ENG 1310 classes were comprised of 40 students. These 40 participants were graded on a point scale. That ranged from 900-1,000, equating to an A; 800-899, equating to a B; 700-799, equating to a C; 600-699, equating a D; and 599 and below received an F grade. Students failing to withdraw from the course or failing to register for an “Incomplete” grade (meaning that by the end of the semester the student is still officially enrolled in the course, but fails to complete the course by not completing the required final examination) receive a U grade. The “U” grade is equal to an unearned “F.”

In both semesters of my first-year English composition courses, I structured the classroom around interaction with peers as well as with multiple modes of texts such as traditional readings from *The Bedford Handbook* and visual texts like marketing advertisements, news stories, blogs, and Twitter posts. These classes were assessed with a

portfolio system that, as previously mentioned, depended on points rather than percentages as well as on qualitative student responses. This system provides flexibility as well as clarity for the students to track their own productivity and growth; I believe this system allows students to develop as writers and critical thinkers and/or readers during their initial years in a college or university setting without the added stress of calculating grades or the worry of performing to certain standards.

Brian Huot, author of *(Re)Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning*, acknowledges that

Knowledge about and experience in asking questions is expertise that English teaching professionals and others can use to conduct writing assessments. . . . Employing qualitative methods that appear to be suited for gathering and analyzing information about literacy and its teaching should also alter the products that assessments can produce [. . . and] can provide thick descriptions of the kind of writing instruction and performances that occur in our classrooms and programs. (152)

The addition of the portfolio and the students' active participation as factors of the class assessment secure active participation and community building among students and myself which heighten the level of learning because students can see growth in their writing over the course of a semester, and this growth reflects a flexible, realistic model of writing.

As this study continued, twenty more participants were added to the initial 64 participants to assess the range and depth of composition, rhetoric, and linguistic skills. Students are expected to master additional skills in conjunction with techniques learned

in first semester first-year English composition courses. These skill sets (learned in both semesters) are then utilized as a transition based on Writing Across the Curriculum pedagogies. The additional twenty participants to assess the characteristics of a second semester first-year English composition course were my students. Within that group, ten of those twenty participants were former students who had enrolled in my ENG 1310 the previous semester. This phenomenon adds another dimension of analysis to the calculations and conclusions. The returning ten participants provide a small-scale longitudinal study in that the returning participants will have been exposed to Hip Hop Pedagogies in both semesters of first-year English composition courses. Rather than measuring the partial growth of students' composition, rhetoric, and critical thinking abilities, this aspect of the study allows me to view their work with more consistency.

In order to efficiently provide students with foundational knowledge that can be applicable across curricula but which can also serve as the initial introduction to advanced English/Liberal Arts courses as well as general life skills, Texas State categorizes core skill sets and techniques recommended for students enrolled in each semester first-year English composition courses. The level of the students' success is designated by the letter grade entered at the end of each semester by students finishing the courses. These skill sets differ for students, depending on the term of semester the student is enrolled and which Texas State deems suitable for college readiness according to the First Year Handbook:

*English 1310* is a course in expository writing. . . . with emphasis on the improvement of papers through revision and the critical reading of substantive nonfiction texts. While self-expressive and narrative writing

may serve as a means of supporting ideas within a given paper, such writing is not, in itself, the focus of the course. After completing English 1310, you should be able to draft, revise, and edit a text appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience, in which you demonstrate the ability to 1. formulate a thesis (central idea); 2. develop that thesis in an orderly way; 3. form clear and effective paragraphs and sentences; 4. use an appropriate vocabulary; 5. apply the grammatical and mechanical conventions of written English; 6. apply critical reading skills to your own writing and to the writing of others; and 7. <sup>\*8</sup>demonstrate critical thinking skills, communication skills, teamwork, and personal responsibility (7;emphasis added)

As for the second semester first-year English composition course, Texas State qualifies additional skills in addition to the writing skills learned in the first semester of English 1310:

*English 1320* is a continuation of English 1310, with emphasis on expository writing as a means of analyzing and understanding texts. . . . Rather, it is a composition course in which you learn to read critically and to draw on written sources to support your ideas. All papers in the course are documented, with at least one of them (1000-word minimum) requiring the use of several print and/or online sources. After completing English 1320, you should be able to draft, revise, and edit a text appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience, in which you demonstrate the ability to 1. understand and analyze a variety of texts; 2.

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<sup>8</sup>. \* Identified as Core Objectives for the Communication Component of the 2014 Texas Core Curriculum.

quote, paraphrase, and summarize print and/or online sources to support your ideas; and 3. use standard procedures of citation and documentation.

(8; emphasis added)

The structure for my classes focuses on teaching the students recommended skill sets and techniques through the implementation of Hip Hop Pedagogies. The quantitative assessment provides the numerical data that correlate with the level of Texas State standards of student success or failure in the particular first-year English composition courses.

### **Integrating Hip Hop Pedagogies in First-year English Composition Courses**

This section integrates Hip Hop pedagogies with core standards and curricula mandated by Texas State University in a narrower scope, with composition pedagogies. By Hip Hop Pedagogies, I am referring to the type of practices and defined methods or terms of teaching that utilize Hip Hop, such as the three differential terms noted in Hill's *Beats, Rhymes and Classroom Life* as "Pedagogies of Hip Hop," "Pedagogies about Hip Hop," and "Pedagogies with Hip Hop (120-23) that I elaborated upon in the previous chapter. I will give specific examples of Hip Hop Pedagogies within a first-year English composition course to bridge the theory and practice initiated in this study and to provide a context to the Hip Hop Perception Survey.

This particular Hip Hop Perception Survey was adapted from the Youth Service Bureau (YSB), a nonprofit organization in San Marcos, Texas. A survey for the youth population at YSB was created to better understand how to connect Hip Hop and writing in the classroom. In the summer of 2013, I was able to partner with this non-profit organization to create and co-teach, along with a creative writing graduate student, Reyes

Ramirez, a program to educate adolescents from ages 11 to 18. This program was called Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric Program. The group participating in this program could be as large as 30 individuals. This Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric Program was open to any youth interested in learning about the origins of Hip Hop culture as well as in identifying and utilizing composition skills. Every Tuesday for one month, Reyes and I spent approximately one hour discussing either rapping, dancing, graffiti, or deejaying, and how that element can translate into writing, either fiction or nonfiction, essays or poetry, or simple communication and rhetoric.

Those who wished to participate filled out an anonymous survey asking them about their preference of music, how often they listen to music, their demographics, if they like to write, why they like to write, and if they think music and writing are connected. I stated that any question they felt uncomfortable answering did not have to be answered. These questions were later used to gather data and produce lesson plans and a curriculum that aimed at joining Hip Hop Pedagogies in the first-year English composition classes with the university standards mentioned earlier.

The Hip Hop Perception Survey distributed in the first-year English composition courses incorporated the same questions from the YSB survey but with two additional questions specific to first-year English composition courses: (1) Would you (the student) be more engaged in a classroom that incorporated Hip Hop? (2) Can Hip Hop be used in an English class? These added questions allowed me to understand how students perceive Hip Hop both as a musical form and as a form that can be tapped for cultural and educational potential without leading students into a pre-constructed answer.

Based on the results for the Hip Hop Perception Survey and on the core curriculum Texas State suggests for students enrolled in first-year English composition courses, I created correlating syllabi, essay prompts, and lesson plans that embody Hip Hop Pedagogies. The examples presented here can always be adapted to alternative lessons, students, and curricula. For a full view of the syllabus—both first semester and second semester—please view Appendix D and Appendix E, respectively.

### **Hip Hop in ENG 1310 (College Writing I)**

Including various composition, rhetoric, and linguistic skills connected to numerous cultures is a very important aspect to my personal teaching philosophy as well as to Hip Hop Pedagogies since these pedagogies can act as the bridge to Afrocentric Pedagogy and non-dominant styles of thought and writing. By exposing students in first-year English composition courses to alternative methods of thinking and writing via Hip Hop culture, students are intrigued by new and innovative ways to connect modern ideas of related information to expanded versions of that same knowledge. Incorporating Hip Hop Pedagogies in the context of mandated curricula encourages students to learn applicable information while being exposed to global composition and rhetoric skills instead of simply focusing on Western, traditional writing skills prescribed in almost every college class. For example, in my first semester first-year English composition course, one thematic unit discussed is Education. During this particular lesson plan, I had assigned a section to read from Victor Villanueva's *Bootstraps: From an American Academic of Color*, which alluded to various types of education. The students read this excerpt before coming to class the following day, and I began class by reading a Tupac Shakur poem, "A Rose That Grew from Concrete." This poem is said to have been

influenced by Ben E. King's song "Spanish Harlem." After reading Tupac's poem, I played the song for the class to show how artists can be inspired from any source and to illustrate how to carry themes through texts. Both the song and the poem discussed perseverance. After playing the song and reading the poem, I asked what these texts were about and how they connected to Villanueva's *Bootstraps* and/or the theme of Education. The class' conversational dynamic grew. Students began to question how one learns and who controls education in America. Students also began to discuss if education is the only way to define success. These discussions were pivotal in developing critical thinking and reading skills. Throughout this conversation, many students referred to Villanueva's text and Tupac's imagery in his poem to show how individuals learn and persevere and grow. The example of home language and school language from Villanueva's text had a major impact on the students. I categorize this particular lesson plan as "Pedagogy of Hip Hop" because this lesson used Hip Hop (Tupac's poem) to build on and question knowledge (ideas of Education and success) in relation to deconstructing normative views in society.

Another example that demonstrates Hip Hop Pedagogies in the context of first-year English composition courses is using a Hip Hop music video for two different purposes: developing an outline of an essay and performing Critical Discourse Analysis and/or visual rhetoric analysis. One of my colleagues in the graduate English program used Hip Hop music videos to demonstrate how to outline a five-paragraph essay. This instructor played a music video first and then asked students to write down a summary of the video. After this, the students proceeded to take their written summaries and decided what the artist's three main points were. The instructor helped them by noting or hinting



at the students to decipher what the verses were mostly about. They also had to make sure to identify what the supporting details were that the artist used. The students then had to create a conclusion for the artist. After outlining one video together, the instructor played another video and had the students outline another music video by themselves. This lesson plan implements the “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop” because this instructor used hip hop to facilitate and engage students with constructing or drafting outlines of an essay.

Another way to utilize Hip Hop music videos within the first-year English composition courses is to integrate visual rhetoric analysis in class activities. This activity is adapted from Critical Discourse Analysis which is adapted from Huckin’s “Critical Discourse Analysis.” The thematic unit of visual rhetoric in my ENG 1310 class allows students to develop an understanding of how society works to communicate different messages to different audiences. I introduced this concept with Macklemore and Ryan Lewis’ Hip Hop music video “Thrift Shop” as well as A\$AP Rocky’s “Fashion Killa” in order to juxtapose opposing views of materialism, satire, and gender roles. After viewing the two music videos, the class discussed how the videos were created in conjunction with the lyrics in order to create certain types of messages that affect reality. Critical Discourse Analysis continued to be studied through articles—both print and online—as well as movies and television shows that students brought in to deconstruct as a class. The students actively participated in this unit because analyzing visual rhetoric was new to most of them, but they were still able to relate issues (like gender discrimination) found while analyzing media to their day-to-day lives and experiences. This lesson plan could also be considered a type of “Pedagogy *with* Hip Hop” as well as “Pedagogy *about* Hip Hop” because not only does this lesson plan use hip hop to facilitate learning, but it

also uses the culture of Hip Hop and educational practices to critically analyze and interpret constructed meanings.

Even introducing Hip Hop artists and cultures from international perspectives initiates conversations and reflections of various viewpoints and rhetorical outlooks that students can begin to appreciate in first-year English composition courses. For instance, integrating lyrics, music videos, or documentaries that depict youth and hip hop artists from Mexico and Brazil, as well as Germany and France who connect similar concepts discussed in terms of American Hip Hop culture can expand the same applied ideologies to a global context. Parisian artists, Big City Brains, expanded the fundamental concept of break dancing. They incorporate theatrical elements and bring “breaking” to the global stage. This collaboration of creativity and Hip Hop culture meshed with established folklore, like Pinocchio and personal narratives not to only tell stories through dance and performance but also to heighten universal experiences by engaging in new collaborations that include the hip hop generation. Elaine Richardson, author of *Hip Hop Literacies*, mentions another global hip hop group, “White, middle-class, conservative, German-language rap group Die Fantastischen Vier (The Fantastic Four)” (74), which shows signs relevant to the artists’ community. This connects to American socio-contexts ““by interaction[s] of different communities of color, creative reaction[s] to the inner cities’ increasing pauperization—a trend, which in Europe, too, disproportionately affects migrants and communities of color”” (74). This type of “edutainment” can be inspired or encouraged with Hip Hop Pedagogies and global perspectives of composition and rhetoric within first-year English composition courses.

Within this first semester first-year English composition course, I also introduced the use of “Ciphers” instead of “Peer Reviews.” I implemented this term in the second semester first-year English composition course as well. I utilized this term not only to bring Hip Hop Pedagogies’ spirit of “edutainment” into the class but also to encourage the collaborative efforts in artistry that musicians strive and encourage. This collaborative engagement is an integral aspect of Collaborative pedagogies. In *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*, bell hooks asserts the importance of collaborating by stating that “we learn best when there is an interactive relationship between student and teacher” (19). “Ciphers” continue to build this interactive and dynamic relationship between teachers and students but, most importantly, between students and their fellow peers. By enforcing the spirit of Hip Hop and emphasizing this concept of Hip Hop Pedagogies by continuously using Hip Hop terminology, students gradually build a community in the class and begin to rely on other students to help create pieces of art.

The collaborators (peer editors) assume these roles just as musical artists would if pairs of individuals collaborate on a song. The artists (students) gain a better understanding of how to control and edit their own texts and develop accountability among individuals. On “Cipher” days in the class, students understand that the stakes are high. Students know they need to come to class prepared or they will be cut out/dissed, dismissed rather, from the learning and engaging community and be held responsible for their own edits. The rule for students to build on this environment is to come to class with two copies of their work, one copy for the teacher (the MC) and one copy for the collaborator (the peer editor). These copies can be on paper or digital files. Once a “Cipher” begins, students and I initiate remixing our ideas of composition and rhetoric

though collaboration, critical questioning, and reflection. For a full version of a “Cipher” worksheet, see Appendix F.

The first semester first-year English composition class I taught was designed to introduce students to Hip Hop Pedagogies as a way to learn alternative methods to writing and critically thinking about topics that expand the scope of learning composition and rhetoric skills. This class introduces students to Hip Hop Pedagogies in a somewhat subtle manner. I say subtle because the second semester first-year English composition course is designed to integrate Hip Hop Pedagogies in practically every lesson to some degree.

### **Hip Hop in ENG 1320 (College Writing II)**

In the second semester first-year English composition courses, I implemented Hip Hop Pedagogies in a way that was more developed and which covered more aesthetics associated with the spectrum of Hip Hop cultural artifacts. This choice was made to emphasize the authenticity of Hip Hop, to “feel” culture as well as garner an understanding of cultural writing and rhetoric while linking mandated skill sets offered in first-year English composition courses. I constructed my second semester ENG 1320 class around the theme of marginalization. Arlette Ingram Willis, Mary Montavon, Helena Hall, Catherine Hunter, LaTanya Burke, and Ana Herrera, authors of *On Critically Conscious Research: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research*, suggest that “Teachers and students use these stereotypical identity markers [American stereotypes of race] of the ‘Other’ as ‘monolithic characterizations that homogenize diverse populations into subordinate racial groups’” (90). By structuring the class around problems of marginalization, I can complicate issues of identity and bring awareness to


certain cultural issues while still utilizing skill sets needed in 1320. I used this theme as a pathway to build lesson plans and class discussions that encourage avenues in research. This connection of centering the class on a theme allows me to pull outside sources and draw from Hip Hop cultural artifacts while still providing students the required composition and rhetoric skill sets and techniques taught in second semester first-year English courses.

I provided students a 1320 playlist I created before the start of the second semester. I wanted to provide students a playlist so they would have a song for each class. Each song correlates with either the topic being discussed in class or the reading for homework students previously finished. I mention in the syllabus as well as on the first day of class that the playlist is also a way to generate ideas for journal writings and discussions. The primary reason for using a class playlist is to create connections between realistic applications of class topics and to provide transitions into lesson plans. The notion of creating a playlist is adapted from Joycelyn A. Wilson's course that teaches concepts of Black Aesthetics. This idea of a Hip Hop generated warm-up is mentioned in Wilson's chapter, "The MC in Y-O-U: Leadership Pedagogy and Southern Hip-Hop in the HBCU Classroom," from Hill and Petchauer's *Schooling Hip-Hop*. Wilson notes that "at the beginning of each class session, students take part in an activity called the 'Jump Off.' The purpose of the 'Jump Off' is to get students thinking about the ways in which hip-hop samples and pulls from elder cultural traditions, musical forms, lifestyles, and ways of being" (69). This Hip Hop activity initiates critical thinking and can be used in a variety of ways. In my ENG 1320, I utilized the "Jump Off" to push the semester's theme

of marginalization and issues of argumentation (a common trope that separates the two semesters of first-year English).

The classroom playlist also combines what some Hip Hop fans consider as mainstream Hip Hop and Conscious Hip Hop, or in some forms this playlist samples from “Old school,” “Gangsta,” and from the “Modern” Hip Hop era which was done intentionally to blur the lines that tend to separate a culture entrenched in oppression and which is often inseparable from race (Smitherman, 98). In *Word from the Mother: Language and African Americans*, Smitherman lays out the faux pas of this dividing way of thinking by concluding that “this is an illusionary dichotomy, emanating from old-line bourgeois thinking, and it surely delights our contemporary would-be oppressors. It is designed to divide, to confuse, to distract. Reminds me of those old Harlem Renaissance and Black Movement arguments about art for art’s sake vs. art for people (or politics’) sake—polemics of distraction to get us off course” (97-8). By initiating this conversation of dichotomies in Hip Hop, she creates space for individuals and even classes to capitalize on the rhetoric of Institutions, Oppressions, and Narratives. The space Smitherman highlights can then pressure discussions of the skills and techniques used to write and aspects of rhetoric in various forms which classes learn throughout first-year English composition courses. Not only does the ENG 1320 playlist include songs relevant to the modern, global student, in terms of current songs, but the playlist also includes songs pertinent to Hip Hop culture like A Tribe Called Quest, MC Lyte, Notorious B.I.G., and Outkast.

In the syllabus for ENG 1320, I also use differing fonts to illustrate the use of different texts that will be supplemented in the class as an avenue to explore Hip Hop

culture and how other ways, individuals, cultures, and groups of people are marginalized. The additional font used in the syllabus is a graffiti-like type of font named “Grand Stylus” or “.” I choose to utilize this type of font to emphasize the Hip Hop Pedagogies that are encouraged in my classes. This font is also used to indicate lesson plans that are centered on activities or discussions fostered by a Hip Hop-centered approach. I believe using different modes of writing in the syllabus reflects the creative class I try to provide my students, as I try to instill the idea that learning and writing are often seen as types of hustles.

In the academic realm, students and teachers ascribe to certain expectations and ways of learning in their classes. However, as Petchauer mentions in *Hip-Hop Culture in College Students’ Lives*, “typically institutions of higher education do a poor job of adjusting to the experiences and mindsets of students who are not from majority groups. In other words, the ways that students from non-dominant groups approach education do not always fit into sanctioned cultural, ideological, or epistemological ways of universities” (55). For students who do not see traditional learning as an easy method of gaining knowledge, learning or garnering information through alternative methods is something not unlike the rebellious spirit of Hip Hop culture. The saying, “makin’ a way outta no way,” is almost synonymous with minority cultures because of the oppressive history in America, so non-traditional students (including minority students) should not continuously be penalized for not being able to utilize this academic hustle.

Jason Palmeri, author of *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*, mentions that

When we require students to read and write in only print texts, we greatly limit the kinds of experiences they can draw upon to make knowledge in their school-based writing. If we wish to create classrooms that welcome all the diverse bodies of knowledge that students bring to the classrooms, we must enable students to employ auditory modalities of research (such as interviews and oral storytelling). The inclusion of auditory forms of knowledge making in composition may be particularly helpful to students who come from cultural backgrounds that place high value on oral tradition as a way of making and recording knowledge. (83)

These qualities that Palmeri notes are especially important to the global classes of today. Westernized forms of composition and rhetoric commonly tend to exclude forms of writing and language that prize orality as a form of knowledge.

Issues of sampling, intellectual property, and citations are all important aspects of second semester first-year English, and Hip Hop Pedagogies provide avenues for discussing those topics. For instance, Adam Banks' *Digital Griot* addresses this complicated situation. One of his projects in this study calls for

participants [to] create their own beats by layering various samples and other elements and learn[ing] to blend one song into another, the way a DJ would at a party or on a mix tape, as a way of teaching writers to attend more closely to how to set transitions between ideas and sources in the text. I want to use this activity to explore the tensions in copyright debates. (82)



Banks' innovative project complicates Westernized and regulated restrictions on intellectual property but at the same time challenges this notion by extending the limits of acceptable knowledge based on Eastern or Ethnic minority rhetorics and standards. Earlier in Banks' study, he identifies that the griot was somewhat of a sacred position to hold in African culture because the griot's purpose was to tell the history of their family, their culture. This oral narrative tradition signifies (in the Afrocentric and Eurocentric sense) knowledge. This recalls the meta-knowledge of Asian and other oral cultures prizing the ability to memorize long excerpts of ancient philosophers and academics within specific cultures. The ability to remember long passages signify an education and therefore equate to knowledge. Global rhetorical dynamics such as these have the potential to changed classes of today, and both learning and teaching styles should reflect these changes. Teachers can ultimately develop different methods for learning, research, and writing based on the tactics found in Hip Hop culture, such as sampling, ciphering, and freestyling.

In my second semester first-year English composition course, I have select class periods designated for "in-class freestyles." These classes utilize peers and meta-knowledge for brainstorming and drafting for upcoming papers/essays. Composition instructors and writers understand how important the drafting process is to creating a text. By setting aside time in class for students to develop pre-writing processes, the teacher models Process Pedagogy, implements strategies for how to write effective essays, and encourages students to know that writing is, indeed, a process with many stages and revisions. This modeling enforces the notions of intrapersonal growth through writing for individuals. "In-class freestyles" also encourage Collaborative Pedagogy with peer

facilitation and input. With students' brainstorming and drafting essays, often students find themselves at junctions of unsure topics or confused about which direction to take their texts. Their peers offer suggestions and resources that trigger ideas and concepts for the essay. The theme for the terminology, "in-class freestyle," is similar to my use of "Cipher." The continual use of Hip Hop based terminology not only excites students about an out-dated theme in first-year English composition classes but encourages students to build a community in their classroom and to take pride in their "art" or text.

### Hip Hop Perception Survey Results

The results of the Hip Hop Perception Survey have been graphically depicted below according first-year English composition instructor and semester. For a full reading of the Hip Hop Perception Survey results, continue after Table 6-Michelle Brown Eng 1320 Results.

Table 2-Joseph Cantu's Eng 1310 Results

Age												
17 y.o.	18 y.o.	19 y.o.	20 y.o.	21 y.o.	22 y.o.	23 y.o.						
1	25	8	1	1	0	1						
2.70%	67.57%	21.62%	2.70%	2.70%	0.00%	2.70%						
Ethnicity (self-identified)												
Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	No Answer						
22	4	7	0	0	0	4						
59.46%	10.81%	18.92%	0	0	0	10.81%						
Type of Music (self-identified)												
Pop	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Jazz/Blues/R&B	Rock	Alternative, Indie, Acoustic	Christian	EDM	Screamo	Emo	Electronic/House	Reggae/Dubstep	Classical
4	8	11	0	6	6	2	1	1	1	2	2	0
10.81%	21.62%	29.73%	0	16.21%	16.21%	5.40%	2.70%	2.70%	2.70%	5.40%	5.40%	0
Time Spent During Free Time												
Listening to Music	Watching T.V.	Playing Video Games	Reading Books	Surfing the Net	Social Media	Outdoors						
15	3	4	1	3	6	12						
40.54%	8.11%	10.81%	2.70%	8.11%	16.22%	32.43%						
Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?				Do You Enjoy Writing?								
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	No Answer	Yes	Somewhat	No	Indifferent	No Answer				
14	8	11	4	8	2	18	0	9				
37.83%	21.62%	29.73%	18.81%	21.62%	5.40%	48.65%	24.32%					
Do You Think Hip Hop Can Be Used in a Classroom?				Do You Like Hip Hop?								
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	No Answer	Yes	Somewhat	No	Indifferent	No Answer				
8	12	14	3	18	8	5	0	6				
21.62%	32.43%	37.83%	8.11%	52.48.65%	21.62%	13.50%	16.21%					

Age													
17 y.o.	18 y.o.	19 y.o.	20 y.o.	21 y.o.	22 y.o.	23 y.o.							
0	20	10	0	0	0	0							
0	66.67%	33.33%	0	0	0	0							
Ethnicity (self-identified)													
Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	No Answer							
17	3	10	0	0	0	0							
56.67%	10%	33.33%	0	0	0	0							
Type of Music (self-identified)													
Pop	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Jazz/Blues/R&B	Rock	Alternative, Indie, Acoustic	Christian	EDM	Screamo	Emo	Electronic/House	Reggae/Dubstep	Classical	All
2	10	13	2	6	5	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	2
6.67%	33.33%	43.66%	6.667	20.00%	16.67%	0	0	0	0	10%	3.33%	3.33%	6.67%
Time Spent During Free Time													
Listening to Music	Watching T.V.	Playing Video Games	Reading Books	Surfing the Net	Social Media	Outdoors	Sleeping						
12	3	1	0	3	6	6	1						
40.00%	10%	3.33%	0	10%	20.00%	20.00%	3.33%						
Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?							Do You Enjoy Writing?						
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	No Answer				Yes	Somewhat	No	Indifferent	No Answer		
9	6	15	0				13	8	7	1	1		
30.00%	20.00%	50.00%	0				43.33%	26.67%	23.33%	3.33%	3.33%		
Do You Think Hip Hop Can Be Used in a Classroom?							Do You Like Hip Hop?						
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	Unsure	No Answer			Yes	Somewhat	No	Indifferent	No Answer		
7	7	16	1	1			21	5	4	0	0		
							70.00%	16.67%	13.33%	0.00%	0.00%		

Table 3-Michelle Brown's Eng 1310 Results

Table 4-Stephanie Garza's Eng 1320 Results

Age													
17 y.o.	18 y.o.	19 y.o.	20 y.o.	21 y.o.	22 y.o.	23 y.o.							
0	12	6	1	1	0	0							
	57.14%	28.57%	4.76%	4.76%									
Ethnicity (self-identified)													
Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	No Answer							
9	2	10	1	0	1								
42.86%	10%	47.62%	4.76%		4.76%								
Type of Music (self-identified)													
Pop	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Jazz/Blues/R&B	Rock	Alternative, Indie, Acoustic	Christian	EDM	Screamo	Emo	Electronic/House	Reggae/Dubstep	Classical	All
4	5	12	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	2
19.05%	23.81%	57.14%		14.29%	4.76%	4.76%	4.76%				4.76%	4.76%	9.54%
Time Spent During Free Time													
Listening to Music	Watching T.V.	Playing Video Games	Reading Books	Surfing the Net	Social Media	Outdoors	Sleeping						
4	5	0	2	4	3	4	0						
19.05%	24%		9.52%	19%	14.29%	19.04%							
Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?							Do You Enjoy Writing?						
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	No Answer				Yes	Somewhat	No	Indifferent	No Answer		
2	8	10					10	0	7	0	3		
9.52%	38.10%	47.62%					47.62%		33.33%		14.29%		
Do You Think Hip Hop Can Be Used in a Classroom?							Do You Like Hip Hop?						
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	Unsure	No Answer			Yes	Somewhat	No	Indifferent	No Answer		
1	1	16	2	0			15	3	0	0	2		
4.76%	4.76%	76.19%	9.52%				71.43%	14.29%			10.00%		

Table 5-Joseph Cantu's Eng 1320 Results

Age																
17 y.o.	18 y.o.	19 y.o.	20 y.o.	21 y.o.	22 y.o.	23 y.o.										
1	4	8	0	1	0	0										
7.14%	28.57%	57.14%		7.14%												
Ethnicity (self-identified)																
Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	No Answer										
4	4	7	0	0	0											
28.57%	29%	50.00%														
Type of Music (self-identified)																
Pop	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Jazz/Blues/R&B	Rock	Alternative	Christian	EDM	Screamo	Emo	Electronic	Reggae/Dub	Classical	All	Show tunes	Reggae	Salsa
3	1	6	4	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
21.43%	7.14%	42.86%	28.57%	7.14%	14.29%							7.14%	0.00%	7.14%	7.14%	7.14%
Time Spent During Free Time																
Listening to Music	Watching T.V.	Playing Video Games	Reading Books	Surfing the Internet	Social Media	Outdoors	Sleeping									
10	1	0	1	1	0	0	0									
71.25%	7%		7.14%	7%												
Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?						Do You Enjoy Writing?										
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	No Answer													
4	5	5														
28.57%	35.71%	35.71%														
Do You Think Hip Hop Can Be Used in a Classroom?						Do You Like Hip Hop?										
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	Unsure													
3	4	6	1													
21.43%	28.57%	42.86%	7.14%													

Table 6-Michelle Brown's Eng 1320 Results

Age																
17 y.o.	18 y.o.	19 y.o.	20 y.o.	21 y.o.	22 y.o.	23 y.o.										
0	9	7	0	0	0	0										
0	56.25%	43.75%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%										
Ethnicity (self-identified)																
Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Pacific Islander	Other	No Answer										
11	1	2	1	0	1*white/Jamaican	0										
68.75%	6%	12.50%	6.25%	0	6.25%	0										
Type of Music (self-identified)																
Pop	Country	Rap/Hip Hop	Jazz/Blues/R&B	Rock	Alternative, Indie, etc.	Christian	EDM	Screamo	Emo	Electronic	Reggae/D	Classical	All	Showtune	Reggeton	Salsa
1	6	9	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.25%	37.50%	56.25%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%	12.50%										
Time Spent During Free Time																
Listening to Music	Watching T.V.	Playing Video Games	Reading Books	Surfing the Internet	Social Media	Outdoors	Sleeping									
3	3	0	1	1	6	7	0									
18.75%	19%		6.25%	6%	37.50%	43.75%										
Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?							Do You Enjoy Writing?									
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	No Answer													
7	8	1	0													
43.75%	50.00%	6.25%	0													
Do You Think Hip Hop Can Be Used in a Classroom?							Do You Like Hip Hop?									
No	Somewhat/Maybe	Yes	Unsure													
8	1	4	3													
50.00%	6.25%	25.00%	18.75%													

The data collected from the Hip Hop Perception Survey was disseminated in Joseph Cantu's and Michelle Brown's first semester first-year English composition classes and collected data, such as ethnicity and age as well a preference in music, activities students participate in during their free time, and perceptions of writing, and attitudes about Hip Hop. Full graphic representations of these results are located in Appendix G. Of the 37 participants in Cantu's class, one survey was partially filled out,

allowing me to include only the demographic information (n=37). This sample size is from combining surveys from two ENG 1310 classes Cantu instructed. Cantu's first semester first-year English classroom was composed of 67.5% individuals who identified as eighteen-year-olds; 21.6% identified as nineteen-year-olds; and 8.1% identified as twenty-years or older of age. The ethnicity of Cantu's 1310 classes were primarily composed and self-identified as three main ethnicities: 59.46% Caucasian comprising as the majority; 20.588% Hispanic students comprising as the second largest ethnic group; and 11.765% African-Americans, making them the smallest group of minority students. Cantu's students also wrote in the type of music they *most enjoyed* listening to—I categorized the genres of music for ease of organization and data calculation.

The students comprising Cantu's two first semester first-year English composition classes often spend their time doing activities during their free time other than writing. Some students in Cantu's classes, 48.65%, noted that writing is not something they like to do. However, 21.62% do like to write, and 5.40% of the students do not mind, or somewhat enjoy, writing. As English teachers, we just cannot imagine not having the feeling of being compelled to write in our free time. So what do the students participate in instead of writing? Some students, 40.54%, according to Cantu's first semester first-year English composition course, spend their time listening to music, 32.43% spend time participating in outdoor activities, 16.21% of Cantu's students spend their time on social media, 10.81% of these students spend their free time playing video games, 8.1% of these students either use their free time to watch television or surf the net, and 2.7% read books in their spare time.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected listening to music and outdoors thus increasing data for each category.

Within this class, the largest portion of free time is designated as to listening to music. Out of the self-identified genres of music that the students suggested, one popular genre of music, Rap/Hip Hop, occurs more frequently in Cantu's class, with 29.73% of the students listening to it, with Country following second 21.62%, then 16.21% of the class said they enjoyed Rock. Although 16.21% also enjoy Indie/Acoustic/Alternative music, 10.81% of the class enjoy Pop music, 5.40% of the students like various forms of Christian music, 5.40% also like Electronic/House music, 5.40% students like Reggae/Dubstep, 2.70% of the class said they prefer EDM (Electronic Dance Music), Screamo, or Emo (Emotional) music.<sup>10</sup>

Even though not all of the students who participated in this Hip Hop Perception Survey in Cantu's 1310 class identified Rap/Hip Hop as their *favorite* musical genre, 48.65% of the students did state they *liked* Hip Hop. Within Cantu's class, 21.62% students mentioned they somewhat liked Hip Hop, and 13.5% of students do not like Hip Hop. These positive attitudes toward Hip Hop are a hopeful promise that Hip Hop Pedagogies can be successful in the classes. In fact, in Cantu's classroom, 29.73% of the students believe they would be more engaged in a class that utilized Hip Hop, and 37.83% of these students also believe that Hip Hop can be used in an English classroom.

The rest of the ENG 1310 surveys came from Brown's first semester first-year English composition course. This class of surveys equates to 30 pieces of data (n=30). Brown's first semester first-year English class was composed of 66.667% of students who classified themselves as eighteen-year-olds, and 33.333% said they were nineteen-year-old. Brown's class composition was similar to ethnicity to Cantu's with 56.667%

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<sup>10</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected Rap/Hip Hop and Country thus increasing data for each category.

self-identified as Caucasian and as the majority, 33.334% self-identified as Hispanic, and 10.0% self-identified as African-American.

The students in Brown's first semester first-year English composition class followed similar trends as Cantu's class, except in attitudes about writing. Some students, 43.33%, enjoyed writing; 26.67% of the students somewhat enjoyed writing, 23.33% of the students did not enjoy writing, and 3.33% of the students did not answer the question. Of Brown's students, 40.0%, spent their free time listening to music 20.0% spent their time on social media, 20.0% participated in outdoor activities in their free time, 10.0% of the students surfed the net, 10.0% of the students watched television in their free time, and 3.33% of the students spent their free time playing video games.<sup>11</sup> With listening to music being the most popular activity within this classroom during their free time, what was the most popular genre of music? In Brown's class, Rap/Hip Hop was identified more frequently as the students' favorite genre of music, which is similar to Cantu's class. Only 43.664% of her students self-identified Rap/Hip Hop as their *favorite* type of music, and 33.334% of students stated Country music was their favorite genre, while 20.0% of the students rated Rock as the third most popular form of music in this class. Although 16.667% of the students qualified Indie/Acoustic/Alternative forms of music to rank as the fourth most frequently self-identified, and 10.0% of the students chose Electronic/House music as their favorite; Jazz/Blues/R&B, Pop, and "all" received 6.67% of the students, qualifying this music as their favorite music, respectively.

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<sup>11</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected listening to music and outdoors thus increasing data for each category.

Reggae/Dubstep and Classical both received 3.33% of students identifying this music as their favorite, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

Correlating to the wide range of musical preferences, the majority of the students accepts, or is at least open to Hip Hop in this classroom, with 70.00% by indicating they *like Hip Hop*, 16.67% of students agree they somewhat like Hip Hop, and 13.33% of Brown's students saying they do not like Hip Hop. This positive reception of Hip Hop could be related to this class' willingness to learn from Hip Hop. Half of the classroom, 50.00%, said they would be more likely to be engaged in a class that used Hip Hop and 50.00% agreed that Hip Hop can be used in an English class.

The total number of second semester first-year English composition courses' Hip Hop Perception Surveys I received was 50. Stephanie Garza's classroom provided 20 Surveys (n=20). In terms of second semester first-year English composition classes, Garza's ENG 1320 class is composed of 57.14% eighteen-year-old students, 28.571% nineteen-year-old students, and 4.762% twenty-and twenty-one-year old students, respectively. The ethnicity of the class was 42.857% Caucasian, 47.619% Hispanic, 9.524% African American, and 4.762% of Asian descent or self-identified as "other" (Salvadorian). Some of Garza's students (19.05%) spent their free time listening to music, being outside, or surfing the net, respectively. Other students spent their free time watching television (23.81%), updating social media (14.288%), or reading books (9.524%). Garza's students also tend to find writing enjoyable with 47.62% of the class, and 33.33% of the students did not find writing an engaging activity, and 14.29% of the students did not answer that question. The most commonly identified genre of music the

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<sup>12</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected Rap/Hip Hop and Country thus increasing data for each category.



students noted as their *favorite* was Rap/Hip Hop with 57.143% of the class self-identifying with this genre. Country music was 23.81% of the class' favorite genre of music, 19.05 % of the class favored Pop, and 14.288% of the students preferred Rock. However, 4.762% of the class decided that either Indie/Alternative/Acoustic, Christian, EDM, Reggae/Dubstep, Classical, or "all" was the type of genre that fit their favorite musical preference, respectively.<sup>13</sup> Since Hip Hop/Rap is the most popular form of music for Garza's second semester first-year English composition course, it is not surprising to see students positively respond to class with Hip Hop. These students, 76.19%, thought English classes can use Hip Hop whereas 4.76% of the students somewhat think Hip Hop can be used in and English class or do not think it can be used, respectively. However, 9.52% of the students are unsure of the implementation of Hip Hop in English classes. Of the 20 students, 47.619% agree that they would be more engaged in a class that uses Hip Hop. Although not all the students actively participate in Hip Hop discourses, there are avenues in which to use Hip Hop culture in the class so as to encourage both types of students: those involved with Hip Hop and those favoring other forms of music and entertainment.

Cantu's second semester first-year English composition course provided fourteen Hip Hop Perception Surveys (n=14). The majority of his class identified themselves as teenage minorities. Within his class 57.143% said they were nineteen-years-old while 28.571% of the class identified as eighteen-year-old students. One individual (7.143%) identified himself or herself as a seventeen-years-old, and another student responded that he or she was twenty-one-years of age (7.143%). In regard to the ethnicity that Cantu's

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<sup>13</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected Rap/Hip Hop and Country thus increasing data for each category.

students self-identified as, 50.00% of the class self-identified as Hispanic, while 28.571% self-identified as African American, and 28.571% self-identified as Caucasian.

The results for favoring writing are still similar from first semester to second semester in Cantu's class (the reasons for this are based on student perception, not necessarily teacher instruction) at 64.285% while others, 35.71%, seemed to dislike writing. While students are not busy writing or concentrating on schoolwork, Cantu's students listen to music (71.249%) during their free time. Students otherwise surf internet, watch television, play video games, or read books with 7.143% of the class participating in these activities, respectively.

However, when students were asked to think about class interaction in relation to Hip Hop, 35.714% of the students agreed they would be more engaged in a class that utilized Hip Hop, and 35.714% somewhat agreed they would be engaged in that same classroom. Only 28.571% of the students did not think utilizing Hip Hop in a class would engage them more. On the other hand, 42.857 % of students did believe that Hip Hop specifically be used in an English class. Some students, 28.571%, somewhat agreed that Hip Hop can be used in an English class, while 21.429% of the students did not agree or think Hip Hop can be used in an English class, and 7.14% of the students were unsure of the use of Hip Hop in English classes.

This information effectively correlates to the students' taste in music. Within Cantu's class, 42.857% of students *most frequently* self-identified as listening to rap/Hip Hop. Jazz/Blues/R&B was identified by 28.571 % of the students as being their favorite genre. The next identified favorite type of music was Pop music which 21.429% of students self-identifying this as their favorite. Alternative/Indie/Acoustic was totaled as

14.286% of the students and Country, Rock, Show tunes, Reggeaton, Salsa, and Classical music was selected by 7.143% of the students, respectively, as their favorite type of music. Although the variation of musical genre representation within Cantu's second semester First-year English class is not surprising, the general attitude toward Hip Hop is slightly more surprising. More students, 78.571%, agreed that they *liked Hip Hop* while 7.143% said they did not like Hip Hop, 7.143% only somewhat liked Hip Hop and 7.143% was indifferent towards Hip Hop. These attitudes were similar in Mrs. Brown's second semester First-year English composition classroom.

In Brown's class (n=16), which supplied 16 surveys, 81.25% of the class said they *liked Hip Hop*, while 6.25% said they somewhat liked Hip Hop, and 12.5% of the class said they did not like Hip Hop. Even with a general acceptance towards Hip Hop, Brown's class did not have as dynamic numbers when the students self-identified their favorite type of music. Rap/Hip Hop, 56.25%, was the most self-identified genre and the students' *favorite* music within this class. However, in Brown's second semester first-year English composition class, Country was the second most frequent self-identified favorite musical genre with 37.5 % of the students; and 12.5 % of the students liking Jazz/Blues/R&B, Rock, Alternative/Indie/Acoustic, or Christian, respectively. Only 6.25% of the students favored Pop music.<sup>14</sup> Even though students entertain themselves outside, 43.75%, or occupy social media, 37.5%, some of the students listen to music in their spare time, 18.75%, or watched television, 18.75%, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected Rap/Hip Hop and Country thus increasing data for each category.

<sup>15</sup> These figures reflect students' self-selection of multiple activities. For example, one student selected listening to music and outdoors thus increasing data for each category.

With Rap/Hip Hop being frequently identified most often as the favorite type of music for students in Brown's class, it is somewhat interesting to see that only 6.25% of the students said they would be more engaged in a classroom that involved Hip Hop, and 50.0% of the students only somewhat agreed they would be more engaged with classes that used Hip Hop. There were 43.75% of the students who disagreed with believing they would be more engaged in a Hip Hop class. These results may allow me to conclude that Brown's students are open to the possibility of Hip Hop Pedagogies, but they are not fully aware of the educational implications of such a course, therefore limiting their definitive answers. Brown's class answers, however, are definitive when asked about Hip Hop in an English classroom. The students who disagreed with utilizing Hip Hop in English classes were 50.0%, whereas 25.0% students agreed English classes could utilize Hip Hop, 6.25% were somewhat agreeable, and 18.75% of the students were just unsure of using Hip Hop in an English class. Their indecisiveness was not only restricted to Hip Hop Pedagogy questions. Of Brown's 16 students, 50.0% agreed they liked to write, but 37.5% do not like to write and 12.5% of the students only somewhat liked to write.

Throughout the responses to the Hip Hop Perception Survey, comments in regard to writing mirrored the perceptions of students' reasons for listening to music. Some of the students' comments for liking or not liking writing were this: "I like to write if the topic interests me," "It helps me get my emotions out," "I like it on a personal level," or even "I like the challenge." In terms of why these participants like their favorite type of music, most commonly Rap/Hip Hop, some of their comments were this: "It's relaxing," "I like that it tells a story," "I grew up on it," "I can relate to it," and "I enjoy the raps with the deeper lyrical meaning." If writing lets someone get his or her "emotions out,"

then it can be “relaxing”; listening to music with “deeper lyrical meaning” can be a “challenge”; many people like to listen to or “tell stor[ies]” because they “grew up on it.” There are obvious connections between music, composition, and rhetoric. Hip Hop Pedagogies offer an essential gateway to connecting what students already participate in and bridges their prior knowledge.

Many individuals—scholars, administration, and students alike—believe Hip Hop to be about just demeaning actions, inflated nonsense, or “poor” English, therefore judging Hip Hop as an unfit vehicle for teaching any subject. However, the reality is that Hip Hop is not only rife with cultural capital and information, but just the popularity of Hip Hop alone—categorizing it in pop culture—is enough to solidify its space in American lives, at least, and it is not going anywhere. Ignorance of Hip Hop culture or the categorizing of Hip Hop as merely a musical genre that is “loud,” “doesn’t say anything,” and only “puts down women” (*Hip Hop Perception Survey*) represents stunting attitudes that are nurtured in monocultural first-year English composition classes. Hip Hop in the classroom can help to bridge these misguided perceptions and encourage learning in first-year English composition courses.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Put It on the Kanvas: An Analysis of Hip Hop Pedagogies**

#### **Deciphering the Kanvas**

“Put It on the Kanvas” was inspired by a conversation a few colleagues of mine had one day in my office. We were discussing pop culture and the value of aesthetics in first-year English composition classes. We debated the multiple uses of art and language as well as how art and language can often constitute a rhetorical situation. One of the graduate students was unsure about this concept. I used Hip Hop to demonstrate and explain:

“Music is art. Lyrics constitute part of the musical concept; therefore, language is art,” I said to him.

“Okay,” he said, as he followed along with my somewhat simple freestyle syllogism.

“OutKast, a Southern based rap/hip hop music duo, specifically designed their name with a ‘k’ instead of a ‘c.’ This spelling denotes an aspect of a rhetorical situation through their use of language. This is just one way we can initiate conversations in classes with Hip Hop or pop culture; these are some of the aesthetics we view that have value,” I continued to try and connect my colleague’s and my own opinion over the connection between art and language and how they help constitute a rhetorical situation. I grab textual evidence conveniently located on my desk and urge him to read my multi-colored highlighting marks in Joycelyn A. Wilson’s chapter, “The MC in Y-O-U.” This chapter provides an excellent rhetorical definition of OutKast’s identity by stating

that “they rename and revise by replacing a ‘k’ for the ‘c’ in the conventional spelling of the word, which describes someone who is unaccepted or marginalized to the peripheries of societies” (*Schooling Hip-Hop* 72-3).

Wilson continues to demonstrate OutKast’s sociocultural signifying (an African oral tradition used to create an alternative meaning when using pre-constructed symbols; see chapter two) by asserting that “[t]hey echo and rename, they change the spelling, but moreover they create an acronym—Operating Under The Krooked American System Too-long—in order to *school on* a new meaning of the word as it relates to their worldview and experiences” (73). For a rap/hip hop duo to construct an identity from the social dynamics of their surroundings and upbringing basically shouts rhetorical exigencies. The discussion in my office moved on to the subject of this study, and I tried to elaborate and link the concept of OutKast’s use of signifying, or what Wilson calls “schoolfying,” with the aesthetics of Hip Hop and this chapter. Then it clicked. The four foundational elements of Hip Hop culture—emceeing, breaking, deejaying, and graffiti—need to have some sort of platform or venue on which to be viewed and enjoyed, critiqued, or analyzed. Every artist needs a canvas, whether figurative or literal. By spelling “kanvas” with a “k” rather than a “c,” I not only give homage to OutKast’s “schoolfying” rhetorical exigencies, but I also purposely emphasize the aesthetics of Hip Hop culture that guide my praxis. I believe it is important to bring awareness to the multiplicity of meanings found not only in Hip Hop and pop culture but in classical literature and everyday experiences; the day we stop attempting to deconstruct meaning is the day we stop learning.

This chapter is my conceptual and literal “kanvas” where I intend to analyze and critique the findings of the Hip Hop Perception Survey as well as other qualitative data gathered from Texas State’s mandated student/teacher course evaluations. This chapter also analyzes the three questions used as a foundational guideline of assessment for this project. The three prominent questions guiding this study are the following:

1. In what ways does implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies foster multimodal literacies?
2. How do Hip Hop Pedagogies provide contexts for composition theories and teaching pedagogies?
3. In what ways does implementing Hip Hop Pedagogies change students’ perceptions of their writing (style, organization, analysis, invention) across race and/or age?

Chapter five also canvases, or “kanvases” rather, critiques of what I believe are the best ways to grade, or assess, the practical applications of a first-year English composition course that utilizes Hip Hop Pedagogies. I want to take a moment here to mention that these suggestions are, as most teaching ideas or tools, borrowed from other teachers, texts, and/or inspired by people and things around me. These assessments can always be modified to accommodate personal needs or wants to fit particular classes and student-driven assignments if the effort is put forth. Moreover, this chapter outlines assessments specific to classifying and qualifying certain traits found in first-year English composition classes, such as grammar, syntax, argument, arrangement, and delivery. I am primarily targeting certain traits reflected in students’ writing: rhetorical traits; authentic voice; critically thinking about worldly issues; and effective use of grammar, spelling,



and punctuation. I also gauge students' overall ability to improve their writing as well as their ability to grasp information given in class.

### **Writing's on the Wall: Kanvasing 1310**

In my first semester first-year English composition class, instruction was designed in three sections to support three themes: Language, Education, and Rhetoric and Composition in the Media. These themes allowed me to implement slight inclusions of aesthetic value found in Hip Hop cultures while laying the foundational composition and rhetoric skill sets required by my home institution. This layout also allows the freedom to expose students to various global forms of writing styles, such as Romance, Chinese, and African-based texts. The first unit of language focuses on grammar, spelling, and punctuation. In order to assess student improvement with regard to these basic composition skills, the unit worked in tangent with their diagnostic essay from the second class day. The students periodically revised for comma splices, fragments, run-ons sentences, as well as stylistic choices for types of punctuation so as to manage the meaning of their writing, similar to spelling and grammar affecting the meaning and coherence of their essays.

To introduce concepts, I played multimedia clips of Hip Hop before class officially started or at the beginning of class to garner excitement and engage with topics discussed in class. Most clips either included captions I put on the screen or set lyrics up while music played in the background. If the video was pertinent to the activity, I printed lyrics for the students and encouraged note-taking and collaborative brainstorming. During the lesson plan for commas, for instance, I played "Commas" by L.E.P. Bogus Boys featuring Lil' Wayne and Ma\$. Granted, the lyrics are what some individuals

deem as stereotypical-rap-song-lyrics that include partying, money, and women. However, students ultimately connected correct and incorrect ways of how to use a comma, with the aid of structured classroom instruction and the *Bedford Handbook*, a concept that initiated the process of creating new knowledge with an entertaining experience. Throughout the semester, students consistently referred to the “comma song” when they argued or reasoned for structural meaning within their essays that could be (mis)constructed through bad spelling, grammar, and/or punctuation.

This practice of fusing Hip Hop culture, the global exposure to composition and rhetoric skill sets, and Writing Across Curriculum standards builds on student-centered pedagogies such as Basic Writing and Collaborative pedagogies. Deborah Mutnick mentions Mina Shaughnessy’s critical work in “On the Academic Margins: Basic Writing Pedagogy,” commenting that

she [Shaughnessy] believed that the kinds of errors made by basic writers are a key to their development as writers. . . . Shaughnessy cogently argues that basic writing errors are produced by a mixture of “[v]ariant and standard forms [. . .] as if students had half-learned two inflectional systems,” indicating not dialect interference or vernacular speech but hybrid codes created by the writer’s attempt to appear literate. (186)

By blending various forms of language with “standard” or accepted practices of pedagogies and curriculum, students can learn from their “errors,” as mentioned by Mutnick and Shaughnessy.

Student “error,” after all, is what faculty, staff, and students expect to occur in the transitional spaces like first-year English composition courses. But as Mutnick and

Shaughnessy posit, the types of “errors” from students enrolled in first-year English composition courses are “hybrid” errors, stemming from learned or pre-constructed, created language systems and from the students’ attempt to correct the pre-constructed language system (Mutnick 186). When students come to first-year English composition courses, they come to the class with created language structures (be they a regional dialect or L1/L2/L3-etc. type of language variations). The language spoken outside of academic settings, like students’ home language, are then brought by the students to the class, automatically mixing with the “standard” form of English urged in first-year English composition courses. This friction between language variation in a constructed space generates the type of “error” as “half-learned systems” and ultimately encourages students to “*appear* literate” (Mutnick 186). If students cannot master various language codes as Mutnick and Shaughnessy describe students having, the blending of different language structures then creates the “error.”

In contrastive, I challenge this notion of hybridity because I believe that the students’ “errors” simply reflect a dual form of a linguistic sociocultural context, an oppositional binary where the student can develop sound writing techniques. I believe the “hybrid code” mentioned earlier by Mutnick and Shaughnessy is more than a physical constriction of students’ writing process. The “error” also reflects the teacher’s ability to translate composition and rhetoric praxis so as to have students comprehend concepts and information. If the transaction of knowledge between teacher and student is interrupted, the teacher is also responsible for the “errors” seen in basic writers. By expanding on Mutnick and Shaughnessy’s term and notion of “hybrid code,” I argue for a “hybrid error” as a symbol of Mutnick and Shaughnessy’s “hybrid code” and of discursive

practices of errors within a metacognitive concept. By understanding that “errors” are generated by the students *and the faculty*, students are able to (de)construct multiple composition and rhetoric techniques. Students are then generally more accepting of sociocultural linguistic concepts solely based on “standard” or traditional approaches and techniques to rhetoric and composition founded on and for dominant Western power structures. This challenge involving the “hybrid error” now becomes more than the physical representation of students’ attempts to connect reconstructed identities through language ideologies, but instead symbolizes the intersections of new and existing information based on instructed global praxis.

In terms of effective language use based on global praxis, I exposed my students to various rhetorical styles. My first semester first-year English composition students read Victor Villaneueva, Gloria Anzaldúa, Geneva Smitherman, David Bartholomae, and Adam Banks. These authors represent different linguistic styles, such as Spanish/English Rhetoric, Chicana/ Lesbian Rhetoric, African American Rhetoric, European American Rhetoric, and African American/European American Rhetoric respectively. What I mean by African American/European American Rhetoric, in this case, refers to how Banks’ *Digital Griots* entwines history and oral traditions important to African American Rhetoric, while primarily adhering to Standard European American Rhetoric commonly seen as the currency in academic realms.

Introducing the portion of Banks’ study in class was designed as an introduction to African American Rhetoric for students of my first semester first-year English composition class. This excerpt also provided a connection to the issue of the students’

writing process. Banks outlines the importance of the digital griot (deejay) by stating the following:

the “digital griot,” an amalgamation of all these figures, offers a useful model for conceptualizing black rhetorical excellence bridging print, oral, and digital communication, demonstrating

- knowledge of the traditions and cultures of his or her own community
- the technological skills and abilities able to produce in multiple modalities
- the ability to employ those skills
- awareness of the layered ethical commitments
- the ability to “move the crowd.” (25-6)

These key concepts of African American Rhetoric translate into metaphorical and literal conceptions of applicable deejaying techniques which Banks parallels to the shout-out, crate-digging, mixing, remixing, mix tape anthologies, and sampling (26). This specialized skill set is reminiscent of the writing process which is integral to composition and rhetoric skills required for current first-year English composition courses.

Students often invest their time with citations; research; organization—both coherence and cohesion—editing; drafting, free-writing, pre-writing; and composing information in order to recall and continue conversations presented and encouraged by ideologies and texts. The similarities of skills utilized in current first-year English composition classes, such as the writing processes and Banks’ African American Rhetorical approach to acknowledging the digital griot, resonate and extend to another

appropriated form of Western composition and rhetoric favored techniques. This delineated Western ideology of rhetoric I am referring to is Aristotle's five-part canon. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, in their synopsis of Aristotle, clarify the "five 'canons' or stages in the composing process known to later rhetoricians [as]: invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery" (175). I illustrate Banks' conversation, the current first-year English writing process, and the Aristotelian trends in a comparative chart below in table 7.

I am by no means suggesting that the Aristotelian canon, from which the dominant Western Eurocentric ideas of Rhetoric stem, and the African American forms of Rhetoric are the same. Both global rhetorics should be taught in the same way. I am merely illustrating the praxis of introducing students to global composition and rhetoric through pathways of Hip Hop culture. However, this connection does present a deeper and graphically interesting correlation that implies, and my bias is obviously inclusive from my study, that African American Rhetoric and Classical Rhetoric are parallel to each other. Kermit Campbell highlights this similar connection by mentioning Bizzell and Herzberg's work:

I give Bizzell and Herzberg [*The Rhetorical Tradition*] mad props for being the first to recognize, in a formal way, black vernacular discursive practices as part of the Western rhetorical tradition. Most anthologies, canons, and histories of Western or American rhetoric scarcely even mention the long tradition of African American formal oratory . . . let alone African American vernacular discourses (such as signifying, storytelling, toasts, or the dozens). (24)

Campbell's comment validates the limited recognition or exclusion of African American Language and Rhetoric.

Even though the foundation of African American Rhetoric as well as this study are rooted in what Geneva Smitherman describes as developing from the African oral tradition, "one in which the concept of Nommo, the magic power of the Word, was believed necessary to actualize life and give man mastery over things" (*Talkin and Testifyin* 78), I am more concerned, in regard to the context of this study, with Smitherman's concept of Black English or African American Language. In *Word from the Mother*, she states that "The root of African American speech lie[s] in the counter language, the resistance discourse, that was created as a communication system unintelligible to speakers of the dominant master class" (3). The rhetoric created out of the non-dominant narrative should be brought to the forefront of first-year English composition classes because instruction based on global perspectives can link students' lives to these composition and rhetoric skill sets that students may not have known existed and which can ignite creative ways of learning.

Along with the Banks' reading, I show an online multimedia clip that tells the story of "Shine" which Banks discusses in his first chapter and which is part of the excerpt I had my first semester first-year English composition students read. This reading assignment is intentional because my students not only become exposed to African American Rhetoric in terms of the writing process, but my students also become aware of African American Rhetoric in terms of characters, narration, and orality. By using a multimedia clip to demonstrate "Shine," I can facilitate students becoming able to hear the rhythmic patterns, tonal inflections, and other qualities associated with African

American Rhetoric. Staci Perryman-Clark specifies characteristics and/or patterns associated with “African-based rhetorical styles”: “1. call and response. . . 2. signifying. . . 3. rhymic, dramatic, evocative language or imagery. . . 4. narrative sequencing. . . 5. cultural values, community consciousness. . . 6. cultural references. . . 7. field dependency” (“Africanized Patterns of Expression” 256-57). By being able to hear and see the difference between “African-based,” to use Perryman-Clark’s term, Rhetoric and “Standard” Western Rhetoric, or “Standard” Written English, students become more exposed to global perspectives, and “edutainment,” a term from the previous chapter.

Introducing African American Rhetoric with Banks’ study was juxtaposed to David Bartholomae’s “Inventing the University.” My first semester first-year English composition class had been assigned Bartholomae’s essay before reading Banks’ *Digital Griots* excerpt. The goal of assigning this essay is to initiate conversations of rhetorical situations and perceptions of audience: in other words, introducing students to the rhetorical triangle. Having students explore Bartholomae’s concepts from his Basic Writing pedagogies and basic writers in general allows students as well as educators to conceptualize defined goals for expository writing courses, such as identifying audience and relating personal experience or developing one’s ethos. Bartholomae mentions basic writers in stages of development in “Inventing the University” by stating that “[t]he movement toward the specialized discourse [effective writing ultimately] begins (or perhaps, best begins) when a student can both define a position of privilege, a position that sets him against a ‘common’ discourse” (392). He continues by describing the implications for basic writers who either do not progress in a successive manner or who receive adequate composition and rhetoric instruction:



the invisible conventions, the prepared phrases [in essay writing] remain too distant for the statement to be completed. The writer must get inside of a discourse [academe] he can only partially imagine. The act of constructing a sentence, then, becomes something like an act of transcription, where the voice on the tape [a mix tape maybe] unexpectedly fades away and becomes inaudible. (393)

The success of a writer, basic or otherwise, depends on the ability to assess, analyze, and develop composition-and rhetoric-based techniques. First-year English composition classes represent a space that allows this type of growth; however, inadequate instruction and restricted exposure to global exigencies limit student development and classroom and/or campus interaction. Diverse campuses like Texas State can be used to reflect on the various linguistic patterns utilized by the attending students. As I mentioned earlier, Texas State is an HSI and some students have familial and/or cultural connections to Latino/a ideologies which the university should embrace rather than exclude.

Assessing audiences, like those who identify with Latino/a ideologies, and honing one's voice are important techniques that should be found in first semester first-year English composition courses at Texas State. In order for students to develop composition and rhetoric skills and engage in critical reflection for some students, I also include a chapter of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza*: "How to Tame a Wild Tongue." To illustrate her rhetoric, I begin the class with a Spoken Word piece that code-switches between Spanish and English, similar to the excerpt from Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*. Glenn A. Martínez, author of *Mexican Americans and Language: Del Dicho al Hecho*, clarifies the multiple types of code-switching by

commenting that “a speaker may decide to include a single Spanish word (with Spanish pronunciation) within a stretch of English discourse. A speaker may instead decide to include an entire Spanish phrase within an English sentence or to produce one sentence in Spanish and the other in English” (95). Martínez then continues to define the primary types of code-switching:

**intersentential code switching** occurs when the language switch happens at a sentence boundary . . . [;] **intrasentential code switching** occurs when the speaker switches languages within boundaries of a single sentence . . . [;] **insertion** occurs when a bilingual speaker for any given reason inserts a word, phrase, or sentence from language A in the course of a discourse that is predominantly in language B . . . [;] sometimes code switching can appear to be a constant back and forth between two languages, making it difficult to determine a matrix [predominant] language and an embedded [intruding] language. [Pieter] Muysken refers to this a type of code switching as **alteration**. (95-97)

All various types of code-switching can be found in *Borderlands*.

Because of the intersections of language and identity that influence Anzaldúa as well as my 1310 instruction, it is important to include text, visual, and auditory modes of communication in one’s teaching. This reinforces the topics addressed in *Borderlands* and provides representation of diverse cultures in the class which students can identify with because of similar, shared experiences. Fatemeh Zahedi, William Van Pelt, and Jaeki Song note the importance of cultural factors on interpersonal communication by commenting that:

linguistic approaches assume that language is not a description of reality but an act of reality. Interpretivist approaches assume that language use is subjective, so that textual interpretation is influenced by personal experiences and circumstances, requiring extraneous information about the originator and interpreter of the text. Therefore, interpreting and recognizing text information involve personal biases. (84)

Whether students understand these connections of writing and biases when they first enter first-year English composition classes is partially part of the hindrance in students developing into effective writers.

First-year English composition courses can use Hip Hop culture—and derivatives thereof, like Spoken Word—to initiate the (de)construction of students' biases in order to more effectively assess audience and identify one's own voice and style. These skills can then continue to grow, and students will learn to communicate critical concepts and ideas effectively based on scholarship while engaging in the classroom and college setting.

I will never forget one student's reaction when he became aware of his bias. After the class watched the Spoken Word clip that code-switched between English and Spanish, my first semester first-year English composition classes discussed our views and transitioned into an activity planned to deconstruct the excerpt from Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* in the 1310 reader ("How to Tame a Wild Tounge"). From the beginning of class until that day, I could tell by his unnerving actions one of the students, Travis,\*<sup>16</sup> that something was unsettling him. He commented "I just don't like it."

I replied "Like what?" to Travis.

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<sup>16</sup> \*Asterisk indicates pseudonym given to individuals in order to protect their identity.

Startled because he did not think I could hear him, he admitted, “How she writes. I just don’t understand it, and it’s frustrating.”

“Hmm . . .” I paused for dramatic effect.

“I mean . . . if it was in English and French or even Cajun, I could get it and be ok, but I don’t know Spanish. I just don’t like it,” he resounded with a final exhausted look.

“That’s the point” I responded to him hopefully. “You were the exact audience she had in mind. How do you think she felt when she struggled with English, or similar to the clip at the beginning of class that mentioned language being an identity; what happens when that is tested?” A few short seconds pass by in silence, and then I add, “Do you think Anzaldúa was effective in getting you to think or feel how she felt?” Then the “Aha moment” occurred to him. He started to understand the impact of an audience and started to broaden his perceptions of language identity constructs. The Spoken Word—a distant cousin of Hip Hop culture—only emphasized that day’s lesson: language, identity, and audience. The impact of Anzaldúa’s text in the class left a lasting impression. Because many texts introduced in 1310 can restrict concepts of language and identity, students, especially bilingual or multilingual students, can come to see themselves or various cultures in a skewed light.

Another student, Jasmine,\*<sup>17</sup> in that same class, used intersentence code-switching within her essay because she felt empowered after that lesson. Before that class, she confided in me that she was worried and almost ashamed of her Spanish language background. Her father discouraged her from using Spanish, even though he was a Spanish/English translator, because he did not want her to be considered “un-

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<sup>17</sup> \*Asterisk indicates pseudonym given to individuals in order to protect their identity.

American” or of a lesser status than anyone else. However, after introducing the students to a variety of alternative composition and rhetoric insights, this particular student started to experiment with her writing. In one of her essays, she wrote “Spanish is what makes me unique, especially when I am away from my hometown. *Cuando estoy lejos de mi ciudad natal, yo siempre necesito hablar mi lengua materna Inglés, pero no es mi lengua materna*” (1). See her full essay in Appendix H. Jasmine’s father’s view of Spanish is not entirely new.

Some minority populations in the US choose to assimilate values from the dominant culture in order to alleviate external pressures of discrimination. In other words, the lay belief is that if the marginalized individual, in America, can embody more national characteristics, then less discrimination will befall on the once marginalized individual. Arlene Dávila illustrates the policing attitudes of “Americanizing” on Latino/a cultures by stating,

Americanization does not erase differences as much as it feeds from these differences, and uses them as the very basis for the differential ranking of individuals and groupings. I believe that culture and language among Latinos functions this way insofar as even the most “Americanized” Latino is always to belong less to the national community on the basis of his/her intangible “culture.” (68)

Dávila clarifies marginalized assimilation for protection. She implies “Americanization” primarily facilitates a loss of a differing culture in *hopes* of joining a nationalistic culture, but discrimination will often still continue to occur.

Being able to express her identity through language was important for Jasmine. She was able to find that by reading Anzaldúa's work and critically thinking through topics discussed in class. When students fail to become engaged in the classroom, either by lack of "edutainment" or by lack of resonating with topics and/or figure-heads, students limit the potential to reflect and build on writing skills that can be utilized every day. These types of classroom practices should, and can, be utilized in both semesters of first-year English composition classes.

### **Gallery Viewing: Kanvasing 1320**

It is important to note the various types of rhetoric and composition styles used in my first semester first-year English composition class, not only because this course builds off of language concepts and global interpretations of effective communication, but also because my second semester first-year English composition course emphasizes intersectionality and marginalization through language and rhetorical exigencies. These intersections encourage concepts like Hip Hop Pedagogies to grow and develop. Mao states that the intrinsic value of terms like "other" or "'alternative' acknowledges, and in fact reproduces a hierarchical division between (the dominant) one and the (subordinate) other—because it is precisely such division that motivates the emergence of an alternative as the 'disruptive' other" (14). Whether "alternative" is utilized in congruence with identity, language, or pedagogies, the simple fact that the practice is not dominant or is compared to the "standard" implies a lesser form, thereby creating a hierarchy. This division based on cultural aspects is similar to identity performance in terms of ethnic identity. Mary Bucholtz asserts that "the hegemony of whiteness is typically exerted not by calling attention to white racial dominance but instead by treating whiteness as

unremarkable — even unnoticeable. Indeed, in a variety of contexts, whiteness is unmarked — that is, it is ideologically positioned as racially normative” (15).

This American approach to instruction and thought caught the attention of Toni Morrison who comments on the misrepresentation of academe’s skewed and biased hierarchical structure of race and texts in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*:

rather I [Morrison] use this term [Africanism] for the denotative and connotative blackness that African people have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people. As a trope, little restraint has been attached to its uses. As disabling virus within literary discourse, Africanism has become, in the Eurocentric tradition that American education favors, both a way of talking about and policing matters of class, sexual license, and repression, formations and exercises of power, and mediations on ethics and accountability.” (“Black Matters” 6-7)

Encouraging various, global teaching practices and texts opens up possible avenues for students to accept differing modes of teaching composition and rhetoric.

By exposing students to alternative forms of composition, students begin to think critically about their identity and sociopolitical practices that are dominant in inhabited discourses. Much like the rhetorical situation from the naming of OutKast, students begin to hone language practices where they are familiar with and utilize critical thinking skills in a responsive manner. As Ratcliffe asserts in *Rhetorical Listening* “for sight only gets

us so far; we have to listen to other people, not so that they will do the work for us, but as Morrison reminds us in *Beloved*, so that *we* and *they* may lay *our* stories alongside one another's" (8). The skills students gain from analyzing various rhetorical exigencies can only improve from incorporating varied global texts and "edutaining" lesson plans and/or activities.

One activity I planned for my second semester First-year English composition class was adapted from Maryellen Weimer's article "First Day of Class Activities that Create a Climate for Learning" The activity, "First Day Graffiti," encouraged class discussions and participation while integrating Hip Hop culture with class norms. It consisted of five large pieces of paper, markers, tape, and five open-ended prompts (one prompt on each poster or poster-sized piece of paper). The prompts were as follows:

1. I learn best in classes where the teacher is
2. Peers help me learn best by
3. I am most likely to participate in classes when
4. Here's something that makes it difficult to learn in a course
5. Here's something that makes it easy to learn in a course

I wrote these prompts in the same type of graffiti font found on my 1320 syllabus and asked students to get up and walk around the room and tag their name and answers to the prompts. Tagging is a word specific to Hip Hop cultural contexts, more specifically graffiti contexts, in which the artist signs his or her symbol or name and that identifies the work as his or her own.

While the students walked around the room, I played music from our class playlist. The upbeat environment encouraged students to talk to each other about who



they were and their answers to the posted questions. After the students finished tagging the paper and sat down, I chose two specific questions (one for new students and one for returning students) to explain their answers and introduce themselves to the class. “First Day Graffiti” implements techniques correlating to “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop.” The poster-sized papers now hang in my office and serve as a reminder of the type of students that ultimately influence lesson plans. Because I value student-centered pedagogies, I constantly look to artifacts from the classroom to help me shape and reshape lesson plans to better fit the types of students in each class.

Educators should focus on student-centered pedagogies in order to encourage a broad range of praxis so multiple composition and rhetoric techniques can empower students to value what A. Suresh Canagarajah calls “World Englishes.” He defines the varieties of World Englishes by stating, “World Englishes (WE) are rule governed, with the well-established norms and communicative functions suitable for their new environment” (“The Place of World Englishes in Composition” 1618). He continues to explain a beneficial aspect of bilingual and multilingual speakers by stating that, “[a]fter all, multilingual speakers have a much larger speech community with which to use their varieties” (1619). Shared global interaction of language and experiences is becoming more prevalent. Hip Hop culture is a viable avenue to access conversations that tap into global topics and allows educators and students to utilize a wider variety of composition and rhetoric techniques.

One significant change from the first semester and second semester first-year English composition classes is argumentation. One activity, “Trial and Jury,” later adapted to “West Coast vs. Dirty South,” primarily focuses on integrating claims of

argumentation as well as supporting statements. This activity is a combination of Hill's "Pedagogies *of* Hip Hop" and "Pedagogies *about* Hip Hop" because students used articles from Hip Hop magazines and argued in support of specific artists. The core premise of this activity was to have students use articles from *XXL* magazine that provided insight to Tupac, Kendrick Lamar/ Black Hippy/TDE, and OutKast. In groups, students argued against an opposing team for who the best artist or group was/is. At the end of the activity, the class discussed the type of claims and support used in the faux debate, such as ethos and pathos, claims of values and of judgment. We also conversed about which arguments they felt were more effective. This activity correlated with the syllabus so students could draw from class discussions based off of the class playlist as well as the class-supplemental articles.

The class and I began every class with different songs during the "Jump-off" (see previous chapter for discussion) which allowed us to engage in multiple issues of marginality from different viewpoints and cultural aspects, including Tupac (protest rhetoric, reflection), OutKast (location, segregation), and Notorious B.I.G (nostalgia, self-love), through lyrics and sociopolitical situations. By taking time to develop critical discussion based on the "Jump Off," students adequately drew information from class conversations as well as artifacts to argue effectively. Brown Low, Eloise Tan, and Jacqueline Clemencki, provide insight to strategies for using Hip Hop in an authentic manner by suggesting that an "emphasis can also be placed upon the performative, playful, even post-modern aspects of rap music, such as sampling and the ways in which it, like many Black vernacular modes, works in the way of irony and satire—both inside and outside the object of critique, playing on the audience's ability to recognize the

difference” (133). Low et al. state that “a fourth strategy for educators working with the stereotypes of authenticity in hip-hop is to open up discussion on the complexity of performing identities” (133). Methods of authenticating exigencies utilized in Hip Hop cultures can be implemented in first-year English composition classes through the “Jump Off.”

Classrooms that follow or allow Hip Hop Pedagogies foster student learning. Not only are students engaging in “edutaining” classes open to global topics, but this kind of class, for example, provides multiple perspectives on issues everyone can relate to, either through issues of marginalization or through skill sets developed from in-class activities structured to aid in creating and mastering the goals set by the first-year composition program at Texas State University.

Although I use various modes of instruction within the classroom—in both first and second semester first-year English composition courses—students are required to present visual presentations during the semester as part of their overall grade. This visual component is easily implemented by the students. Many times students are interacting with their peers online through laptops, *Twitter*, *Vine*, and *Facebook* in order to analyze conversations, images, songs (like our class playlist), and news stories. Jason Palmeri mentions the positive correlation between increased multimodal learning or interaction with classroom instruction by noting that

in this way, [Anne] Berthoff radically asserts that transforming the representation of a concept from one medium or modality to another—from drawing to report, from puppet to play—can ultimately be a way to engage students in actively reflecting on the processes through which they

make meaning of the world. In Berthoff's view, students may gain a richer understanding of a concept with multiple symbol systems. (42)

By incorporating multimodal learning techniques in the first-year English composition classes, students are encouraged to create meaning-making pathways. With the additive incentive of global composition and rhetoric techniques, students will vastly improve on or greatly expand their pathways for meaning-making.

One student, Daniel,\*<sup>18</sup> for example, showed signs of expanding his outlook for writing techniques based on Hip Hop Pedagogies. In my first-year English composition courses, both semesters, I referred to my peer-edit workshops as Ciphers (see previous chapter for a full description). At the beginning of the semester of ENG 1310, he did not participate much in the class, and his grades were moderate. As the semester progressed, each essay grade increased, and his participation in class became more and more lively. Daniel became more attentive to his writing and rhetoric skills by the end of the semester. On his final exam he confessed “something I found really cool were the Cyphers, and being a fan of hip hop culture I really enjoyed it. I also got to see comments from my peers which really helped me work and improve writing in all new ways” (3). “Pedagogies *with* Hip Hop” encouraged Daniel to find his voice and become more confident as a writer. One of the primary attributes of a cipher, a voice, a quality that drew me to this concept and led to changing the name of peer reviews, is the level of skill and authenticity required to be involved in a cipher: “respect [reputation] will only come with his [or her] own intellectual growth as manifested in the quality and sharpness of his [or her] lyrical prowess” (Stover 28). A class depends on collaboration (an aspect of

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<sup>18</sup> \*Asterisk indicates pseudonym given to individuals in order to protect their identity.

Collaborative pedagogies), respect, and creativity, much like with ciphers and Hip Hop culture.

I also wanted to continue and extend the literal and metaphoric connection for music as writing, or more specifically, composition and rhetoric, in my second semester first-year English composition course, so I planned an interactive rhetorical music and writing workshop for my class. I wanted to demonstrate how music reflects various avenues of composition and rhetoric while bridging both first and second semester first-year English composition course goals. I did not plan this lesson because I was obsessed with vinyl records, but because I was inspired by Kermit E. Campbell's passion to change how he teaches his writing course:

the point here is to find ways to redeem the oral in the academic contact zone [Pratt]. . . . And redemption of the oral is possible in the oral traditions of Native Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, and certain ethnic Caucasian American groups. Yet as an art based on the oral and written word, on poetic expression and performance, Hip hop on its own might be our best hope of redeeming the oral for a generation that is increasingly being defined by it. (149)

He goes on to explain the use of the contact zone in his classroom by commenting "I [Campbell] saw it as a way of recognizing and affirming the literate practices of those whom the academic community regards as (*à la* Ong) nonliterate" (149).

His drive to encourage non-dominant practices in the classroom, such as his contact zone praxis, creates nontraditional classroom practices. He states that when "playing Pac records (and many others, of course) in a writing class, I would also want

the class to bust a few moves, to get students completely out of traditional classroom mode. I haven't quite pulled this off yet, and maybe I'm dreaming" (149). I too dream of having the same unconventional classes. By including vinyls in my lesson plan, I planned to bring to class my record player and play some of my records: Nina Simone's *Little Girl Blue*; James Brown's *The Atlanta Symphony Conducted by Charles Sherrell Presents: James Brown and the Soul G's*; Sugar Hill Gang *Rapper's Delight*; Frankie Smith's *Double Dutch Bus*; Chaka Khan's *I Feel for You*; The Isely Brothers' *Between the Sheets*; Queen's *Queen: Greatest Hits*, and select songs to represent skill sets acquired by the students in class in order to connect 1310 and 1320. Of course, there are many other vinyl records that could be brought into the classroom, such as records by Fleetwood Mac and Dolly Parton, to scaffold, sample, and remix rhetorical concepts and techniques connected to ENG 1310 and 1320.

Each album/song represents composition and rhetoric techniques students should have learned in either the first or second semester first-year English composition course, as well as in other possible avenues which students can explore in upper-level English courses. For example, Nina Simone's album/song is representative of the personal narrative expository writing students focus on in first semester first-year English composition courses. The James Brown album can serve two functions, especially for classes that do implement Hip Hop Pedagogies or African American Rhetoric. This album is representative of the audience interaction often connected to call and response characteristics. For a full chart of classroom connections to the albums, see Table 8 below.

## Critiquing the Kanvas

The final outcomes of my first two-semester first-year English composition students were positive. Out of 41 students in two classes, four students received the new university U grade for students who quit coming and who did not complete assignments. There were two students receiving failing grades, and one student passed with a D. Three students left the semester with a C grade. Six students had a B grade at the end of the semester, and 25 students received A grades.

The students' overall perceptions of my Hip Hop Pedagogies were generally positive and encouraging, as 68% of the class "strongly agrees" that I communicate effectively, 25% only "agree" with that statement, and 6% of the class remained neutral. Moreover, 62% of the students "strongly agreed" that the class instruction was organized as opposed to the 37% of students who only "agreed" with that statement. In terms of goal achievement, 62% of the students "strongly agreed" my goals were made clear throughout the semester, and 37% of the "students agreed" with that same statement. The majority, 75%, of the class "strongly agreed" I continued to hold class as scheduled while only 25% of the class held agreeing views. Most importantly, 93% of the students strongly agreed that there was an opportunity for learning in my classroom, and 6% remained "neutral." For data collected from Texas State University, please see House Bill 2504 <http://hb2504.txstate.edu/viewspi.html#141010410> and Texas State's graphical analysis in Appendix I.

Table 7-Banks, Writing, and Aristotle

<b>Banks</b>	<b>Current Writing Process</b>	<b>Aristotelian</b>
Mix Tape Anthologies	Drafting/Free Write	Invention
Sampling	Organization	Arrangement
Mixing, Remixing	Editing	Style
Crate-digging	Scaffolding	Memory
Shout-out	Citations, Research	Delivery

Table 8- Vinyl Classroom Connections

<b>Album</b>	<b>Technique</b>	<b>Semester</b>	<b>Upper English</b>	<b>Song</b>
Nina Simone	Narrative, Boasting, Ethos/Logos/Pathos	1310	Poetry	I Loves You Porgy
James Brown	Audience, Call and Response, Boasting	1310	Performing Arts	Give It Up and Turn It Loose
Sugar Hill	Cohesive paragraphs, Signifying, Conflict/Confrontation	1310, 1320	American Literature, World Literature	
Frankie Smith	Concepts of language, Open Source Thinking, Impromptu,	1310, 1320	Ethnic Rhetorics	Double Dutch Bus
Chaka Khan	Sampling, Digital Editing	1320	Technical Communications	
Isley Brothers	Rhetorical situation/exigencies, Ethos/Logos/Pathos	1310, 1320	Creative Writing, Poetry	
Queen	Research, Plagiarism, Argument, Impromptu	1320	Creative Writing	Under Pressure
Fleetwood Mac	Sampling, Mixing, Open Source Thinking	1320		



## CHAPTER VI

### **Freestyle: Discussions, Outcomes, and Conclusion of Hip Hop Pedagogies**

Kermit Campbell says it best when he writes “I ain’t inclined to dismiss cultural or pop-cultural material simply because it’s deemed by some as morally reprehensible or because some black folk think it makes us look bad” (91). I often kept that in mind as I worked through this study and my first year of teaching. I strongly believe in the power of culture and language—in various forms—as a means of aiding people of color, especially first-year English composition students, to become more invested in education.

### **Discussion and Outcomes**

As I bring this examination to a close, there are questions I still have to answer. A couple of the comments I received from student evaluations on my teaching practices were “she has great potential to be a great teacher because of her hip-hop philosophy,” but the comment that continues to haunt me is “she could have explained things better.” What concerns me about this comment is how much the students need me to give explicit instructions or how much of the comment was referring to my own code-switching? Many times I engaged in African American Rhetoric while talking to my students in order to gain a level of personhood so the students see me as an instructor open to discussing all matters and participating in conversations rather than being seen as a staunch, overly-professorial type of instructor. I embrace my authentic language identity inside and outside of the classroom. So how much of the misunderstanding with how I explained Hip Hop Pedagogies was because of my linguistic change-up and how much of it was due to my first year of teaching in a formal setting?

Another possibility for this miscommunication is the students' perceptions of Hip Hop culture in its entirety. As I have demonstrated, Hip Hop culture embodies many varied aspects, from language, ideologies, aesthetics, and philosophy, to community dynamics. It is possible, and common, that students fail to view and experience Hip Hop culture as more than rap lyrics. This was evident in the Hip Hop Perception Surveys distributed to select first-year English composition classes. I was privileged to see some of the participants' responses, extending not only to the questions asked on the survey but also to some participants volunteering additional information. One participant who described his or her favorite music as "hip-hop" went on to answer "no" to the question of being more engaged in a class that uses Hip Hop and then explained that "Hip-Hop has painted an ugly picture of itself because of 'its' offensive and vulgar qualities." The participant then went on to describe that no one would benefit from this type of class, stating, "writing & song making are completely different, even though they both use language."

Another participant, who identified "indie" as his or her favorite type of music, completely disregarded Hip Hop. When asked if Hip Hop could be used in first-year English composition classes, the participant stated, "I think it could, but for the unmotivated. Maybe they could write their own rap or something." When asked who could benefit with a teacher using Hip Hop, the participant had a similar answer: "Unmotivated people, because most of them listen to rap anyway and it would help them become interested in what they were doing." Thank goodness for other responses such as this eighteen-year-old's who identified "classical music" as his or her favorite genre of music. This participant agreed that he or she would be more engaged in a class with Hip

Hop and believes Hip Hop can be used in first-year English composition classes to “analyze lyrics to see arguments and perspectives.” When asked about who would benefit from teachers using Hip Hop in a class, this participant responded by saying, “every single person in the classroom and those who talk to individuals who are involved in the activity.”

These responses only increase my awareness of the skewed perceptions of Hip Hop culture and the stereotypes associated with racial minorities as well as its untapped potential within the academy. But the academy is not all to blame. Some of the students are close-minded to the thought of using Hip Hop culture in classes almost as much as some of the administration because of their lack of awareness of Hip Hop cultural discourse. There is more to Hip Hop culture than money, hoes, and bitches, so expanding limited perceptions can only benefit individuals in the long run. In regard to global composition and rhetoric skill sets, Hip Hop culture allows first-year English composition classes to expand perspectives and scaffold knowledge while developing the mandated techniques for first-year English composition courses.

The Hip Hop Perception Survey provided some challenges for citing the benefits of this incorporation when analyzing data. Besides the unexpected comments I could never anticipate, I also did not calculate class, gender, or location. Although some participants did provide this information—one participant made it known that he/she was from Houston—I did not provide space for these characteristics because I felt that regardless of gender, location, or class, Hip Hop Pedagogies can implement topics across all strata in some form or fashion. For example, my students in my second semester first-year English composition class read an excerpt from Elaine Richardson’s *Hiphop*

*Literacies.* This section stated that we could discuss gender identity in terms of being marginalized. Of course, this lesson plan was broken down into two or three classes with female and male representation in Hip Hop for comparison. This discussion prompts controversial issues and LBGTQIA community representation. Also, the characteristics of class, gender, and location were able to be supplemented by other data gathered.

The primary reason I included ethnicity in the Hip Hop Perception Survey is because race or ethnicity are so often inextricably linked to language ideologies as well as to the perceptions of music, specifically hip-hop (the music genre) or Hip Hop culture, as seen in very blunt participant responses. However, not all of the surveys are fully filled out, which provides for some margin of error. I would have also liked to have compiled 1310 and 1320 data into semester percentages for each question and each class in order to generate a grand total. I would then repeat this process for the second semester first-year English composition course's grand total. The next step would then be to compare the Hip Hop Perception Surveys between first and second semester first-year English composition courses.

Some faults in this survey that I acknowledge and which may skew my results are my biases and the late addition of Garza's second semester first-year English composition classes. In an attempt to control my bias, I did not hand out the Hip Hop Perception Surveys to any of my first-year English composition courses. Another area for error I must acknowledge is the absence of a T-test. This test analyzes the margin of error in quantitative data. Because of the selective sample size and the large number of variables, I did not perform a T-test. Another area that could call for some concern in terms of the Hip Hop Perception Survey results is the issue of the participants' self-identifying. This

option not only allows me to qualitatively observe data while attempting to gather quantitative data, but I have to factor in the participants' selection of choosing multiple options. This variable has to be calculated for a variety of questions as well as for various participants. Only the physical surveys provided me with the constant in terms of (n), or sample size, for ethnicity and other factors like genre of music that I could use to track participant responses.

This project had time restraints that restricted some of the second semester first-year English numerical grading data and their assessment of my teaching style. The minor longitudinal study I had hoped to carry out was not possible. This could have changed the outcome of this study's overall perceptions of Hip Hop Pedagogies in terms of a class' intensity. What I mean by class intensity is the level of Hip Hop Pedagogies being integrated into class instruction. My first semester first-year English composition class was mild to moderate in terms of accepting Hip Hop Pedagogies' integration. That kind of class was designed not to overwhelm the students with a primarily Hip Hop-based pedagogical approach; whereas my second semester first-year English composition course was designed with a high level of intensity and immersed in this approach.

### **The Future of Hip Hop Pedagogies**

In terms of Hip Hop Pedagogies' efficiency in first-year English composition courses, I maintain the position it can be used effectively to implement and introduce global aspects of composition and rhetoric techniques. I will not be able to discuss this chapter or course in comparison to programs and texts that typically use Hip Hop as a means of *either* addressing African American Rhetoric (Hip Hop in narrow terms of language and history) *or* using Hip Hop to facilitate literary discussions (Hip Hop in

forms of poetry and musical-social contexts). I found it difficult to compare courses and studies like Perryman-Clark's, Cambell's, and Banks' not only because my course was happening in real time while the studies seemed to be polished and tightly packaged, but the studies, other than Perryman-Clark, also did not provide comparable grade assessments.

Although in comparison to other colleagues in my department, I may have had a large number of A and B grades; however, my overall grades were within the boundaries for first-year English. I suspect my large amount of passing grades were in part due to my point system and my portfolio requirement which encourages revision and overall productivity of student growth. Through this study I hope I have provided a context for using Hip Hop Pedagogies in first-year English, so that other educators can expand their teaching methods and create culturally responsive writing spaces through the implementation of Hip Hop culture.

The assessment of the overall flexibility and the likelihood of Hip Hop Pedagogies continuing to develop and becoming accepted as a form of teaching composition and rhetoric by the majority of educators are hopeful. With the amount of scholarship and scholastic conferences on the rise, and with Ohio State Senator Nina Turner quoting Tupac on Melissa Harris-Perry's show—the same Melissa Harris-Perry that discussed Hip Hop at Harvard—students, faculty, and staff cannot help but take note of the dramatic changes occurring within academic fields. This section reflects on the process of this project and divulges any changes or alterations I would have made as well as what implications those changes may effect. The outcomes of this study show positive possibilities for learning and teaching composition and rhetoric in first-year English

which should be used to encourage alternative praxis that de-center traditional educational roles.

APPENDIX SECTION

Appendix A



**Institutional Review Board Application**

**Certificate of Approval**

**Applicant: Alexis McGee**

**Application Number : 2013I6586**

**Project Title: Hip Hop Writing and Rhetoric**

**Date of Approval: 08/07/13 09:38:44**

**Expiration Date: None(Application Approved - Exempt)**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Blanks".

Assistant Vice President for Research  
and Federal Relations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Lane".

Chair, Institutional Review Board



## Appendix B



### Institutional Review Board

### Request For Exemption

## Certificate of Approval

Applicant: Alexis McGee

Request Number : EXP2013D426221X

Date of Approval: 09/17/13

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Blundie".

Assistant Vice President for Research  
and Federal Relations

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Lane".

Chair, Institutional Review Board

## Appendix C

### Hip Hop Perception Survey

1. What is your age?
2. Please check the ethnicity/ race you identify with? Check all that apply.

☐ Caucasian ☐ African American ☐ Hispanic

☐ Asian ☐ Pacific Islander

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

3. What type of music do you listen to most of the time?

4. Why do you like your favorite type of music?

5. Do you like Hip Hop?

6. Why do/don't you like Hip Hop?

7. Who is your favorite artist?

8. What song would you pick to be your theme song (best represents you)?

9. Why would you pick #8 to be your theme song?

10. Circle the best answer:

I spend more time

listening to music | watching tv | playing video games  
reading books | surfing the net | social media | outdoor  
activities

11. Do you like to write? Why/why not?

12. Would you be more engaged and interested in a class that uses Hip Hop? Why?

13. Do you think Hip Hop can be used in the English classroom?

How?

14. Who would benefit from the teacher using Hip Hop in the classroom? Why?

## Appendix D

### English 1320 Syllabus (partial)

#### *Course Description:*

This course is an extension of English 1310. English 1320 is a course in expository writing and focuses on developing ideas, expressing them clearly, considering the effect of the message, fostering understanding, and building the skills needed to communicate persuasively. First-year English classes involve the command of written literacy skills that enable people to exchange messages appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience. Because reading, viewing, and writing are inextricably linked, first-year English also emphasizes critical reading and viewing, thus initiating the teaching, analysis, and comprehension of a variety of texts, including expository, literary, visual, and contextual based texts that represent diverse voices and ideas- **including your own**. You will study the principles of effective composition and rhetoric, with emphasis on the improvement of papers, through revision, critical reading, and critical thinking of substantive or nonfiction texts, literature, and multimodal technologies. This course aims to expose students to the diverse and wide range of communication thus enlightening students to successful college writing in terms of local and global perspectives. You can find more outcomes in the First-year English Handbook at [www.english.txstate.edu/about/learning.html](http://www.english.txstate.edu/about/learning.html).

#### *Course Objectives:*

After completing the English 1320 course you should be able to draft, revise, and edit a paper for a particular audience and purpose in which you demonstrate the ability to formulate and develop a thesis, form clear and effective paragraphs, use appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical and mechanical conventions of written English. You should also be able to apply critical reading skills to your own writing and to the writing of others, and demonstrate critical thinking skills, communication skills, teamwork and personal responsibility. The papers written inside, and outside, of class should also include effective use of citation, or documentation, and integration of analysis, summarization, and/or paraphrase intellectual ideas that support students' original thought and argumentation. During the course of the class you will produce multiple texts on various subjects. These texts include the following: **FIVE essays, TWO Visual Projects, Journal Responses, In Class Quizzes, Homework** that consists of assignments intended for completion out-of-class, one current event assignment, and a **MANDATORY IN-CLASS, WRITTEN FINAL EXAM**.

#### *Attendance Policy:*

Because the skills taught in first-year English are cumulative, **regular and punctual attendance is essential**. Many instructors conduct their courses as workshops in which students' draft and revise their papers and comment on one another's work. You cannot benefit from such activities unless you are there to participate. If you miss class, you forgo your opportunity to gain knowledge and improve on your writing skills. I understand the class may be considered "early"

to some individuals, but you are responsible for getting to class on time. **If there is a valid emergency**, please contact me for added information. **Please look to your classmates, syllabus, notes, and common sense before making hasty decisions.** If you miss more than four classes, the possibility to maintain a passing grade may become more difficult. After six unexcused absences, the possibility of passing may be fairly slim.

### ***Late Work/ Make-Up Work Policy:***

**I do not accept late work.** That's it; I'm not yo mamma. Just don't turn in anything late. You are in college and responsible for your actions. Assignments are due on the day specified on the syllabus, otherwise 10 points will be deducted from the assignment. There are few chances to make-up assignments in my class-only for excused absences. **I also do not drop grades.** After seeing this policy, make sure you turn in your assignments. If you don't participate in class, you limit yourself in learning and in passing the class.

### **Grades:**

#### ***Cipher (Peer Review)***

Along with each essay, you will be responsible for edits and revisions. Language and writing, by extension, is continuously changing, and your work should represent that dynamic relationship. On the day of the Cipher, please **bring TWO complete hard copies** of your paper (one copy is for the instructor and the other is for the editor/collaborator). Similar to a rap battle/Cipher- for those of you who are familiar with this cultural dialogue- if you come unprepared, you get defeated in a sense. In this class, we want positive Ciphers, we want to push the limits of our artistic work, so bring completed bodies of works in order to have dynamic, engaging spaces for artists/authors/writers (that means you all) to build off each other. Being active encourages creativity and stimulates better writing from you and your peers. Ciphers foster cultural, verbal, and physical exchanges of appreciation and builds communities of artists. This will directly affect your "Peer Editing/Cipher" grade and ultimately your final essay grades.

#### ***Current Event***

The class will present a visual representation on the effects of composition and rhetoric in today's society. This presentation will be linked with the topic of your choosing to write and argue for at any point in the semester at the beginning of the class. Please notify me a class before you plan to present your current event. The students will act as the "resident expert" on the subject and instruct the class how rhetoric was used within the text and how composition can/was used to create or deliver the project or text they decided to write about to specific audiences. Students will discuss the summary of the text, why the text is important, and lead discussions on anything that was interesting to them. You may not use a song, video clip or text already used in class for your current event.

#### ***Journal Responses***

Each student is responsible for keeping a journal, either electronic or written. **Each response and discussion is worth 20 points.** For each designated reading, respond to the text in a number

of ways ranging from how you identified with the author, how the writing confused you, what the text reminded you of (i.e. other texts you've read), or ideas the text/author generated. I will start classes with your recorded "journal response discussions" that are due before class begins. For each class there will be a corresponding song that we will also look at and discuss the connections to reality, ideas, and themes to the text. Feel free to explore the class playlist and use this as a method to trigger a response. Remember I will check your journals **before class starts**.

#### Playlist for 1320

1. "My Philosophy" by Boogie Down Productions (1/14/14)
2. "I Can" by NAS (1/16/14)
3. "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash (1/21/14)
4. "Hip Hop Has Saved My Life" by Lupe Fiasco feat. Nikki Jean (1/23/14)
5. "Back in the Days" by Biggie Smalls (1/28/14)
6. "Changes" by Tupac (1/30/14)
7. "Rosa Parks" by Outkast (2/4/14)
8. "The Questions" by Common and Mos Def (2/6/14)
9. "The Other Side" & "Possibility (2<sup>nd</sup> Movement)" by The Roots (2/18/14)
10. "B\*tch Bad" by Lupe Fiasco & "Beez in the Trap" by Nicki Minaj (2/27/14)
11. "Mathematics" by Mos Def (3/4/14)
12. "Poor Georgie"/ "Ruffneck" MC Lyte (3/18/14)
13. "Black Boy Fly" by Kendrick Lamar- (3/25/14)
14. "Neon Cathedrals" by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis (3/27/14)
15. "Misunderstood" by Common (4/1/14)
16. "Beautiful Morning" and "The Becoming" By Little Brother (4/8/14)
17. "Love Rain" by Jill Scott feat. Mos Def/"Love Rain Remix" feat. Biggie (4/10/14)

#### Additional Recommended Songs:

- |                                                |                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. "Renegade" by Jay-Z feat. Eminem            | 9. "My Mic Sound Nice" by Salt N Peppa                            |
| 2. "Georgia Bush" by Lil' Wayne                | 10. "Can I Kick It" & "Bonita Apple bottom" By Tribe called Quest |
| 3. "Lost Ones" by Lauryn Hill                  | 11. "Around My Way (Freedom Ain't Free)" by Lupe Fiasco           |
| 4. "Prisoner of Consciousness" by Talib Kwalei | 12. "The New Style" by The Beastie Boys                           |
| 5. "Minority Report" by Jay-Z                  | 13. "This or That" by Black Sheep                                 |
| 6. "Fight the Power" by Public Enemy           |                                                                   |
| 7. "Fuck the Police" by NWA                    |                                                                   |
| 8. "Love Is Blind" by Eve                      |                                                                   |

**Tentative Schedule (1320):**

<b>Date</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>Homework</b>
(T) January 14	Get To Know You, Syllabus, Expectations	
(Th) January 16	Creating the rubric, <b>Essay 1 Assigned (Position)</b>	A! p.8-12
(T) January 21	Critical Reading	A! p.30-35
(Th) January 23	Analysis, Summarize, Paraphrase	A! p. 4-5, A! p. 16-23 ( Stop @ ("counterarguments..."))
(T) January 28	What is an argument: Forms and Methods	A! p. 23,24,91-96,99-101
(Th) January 30	(De)constructing Arguments; Responding to Arguments	Liminal Research article (TRACS)
(T) February 4	Trial and Jury: <i>rap, Jay-Z, Outkast, Biggie</i> <b>Argument Paper (essay 1) due</b>	Petchaur's "Hip-Hop Is Like Breathing" p. 54-69(TRACS),
(Th) February 6	Finding Sources, <b>Essay 2 (Thesis Proposal) Assigned</b>	Work on paper 2
(T) February 11*	Resources, Library visit	A! p.159-167, Work on paper 2
(Th) February 13	<i>after 2</i>	A! p. 185-186, Work on paper 2
(T) February 18	<b>Essay 2(Thesis Proposal) Due</b>	A! p. 234-243 (sample on p. 243)
(Th) February 20*	MLA traditional citation/format	A! p. 254-257 (sample on p. 258)
(T) February 25	APA traditional citation/format, revisions due	A! p. 278-280 (Nina Power)
(Th) February 27	<i>BEYONCE: THE VISUAL ALBUM</i> , Television, and Internet citations; <b>Annotated Bibliography (paper 3) assigned</b>	Richardson's <u>Hip Hop Literacies</u> chapters 3&4 (TRACS), Work on paper 3
(T) March 4	Hierarchies/Hegemony	Richardson's <u>Hip Hop Literacies</u> chapters 3&4 (TRACS), Work on paper 3
(Th) March 6	<i>after 2</i>	Work on Research Paper
(T) March 11	Spring Break-No Class	
(Th) March 13	Spring Break-No Class	* A! p. 185-186
(T) March 18	<b>Research <del>essay</del> <sup>228-298</sup>, final questions/edits for essay 3</b>	A! p. 318

(Th) March 20*	<b>Essay 3 (Annotated Bibliography) Due</b>	
(T) March 25	Gender and Media?	A! p. 396-397
(Th) March 27	Violence and Society?, Revisions due for Annotated Bibliography	A! pg. 403, Work on paper 4
(T) April 1	In-Class <del>essay</del>	Work on paper 4
(Th) April 3	<del>essay</del>	Banks and Richardson event and response, Work on paper 4
(T) April 8	Narrative vs. Research, <b>Essay 4 (Research Paper) Due</b>	
(Th) April 10	Music as Narration, Presentation sign up	
(T) April 15	Presentation Development Day	
(Th) April 17* <i>last day to withdraw</i>	Presentation Development Day	Work on Presentation
(T) April 22	Presentations	Work on Presentation
(Th) April 24	Presentations	Work on Presentation
(T) April 29* <i>last day of class</i>	<b>Essay 5 (Creative Project &amp; Write Up ) Due</b> , Presentation, Semester wrap-up	
(Th) May 6* <i>finals begin May 1</i>	<b>(T) May 6 Final @ 11-1:30 p.m.</b>	

## Appendix E

### English 1310 Syllabus (partial)

#### *Course Description:*

English 1310 is a course in expository writing. You will study the principles of effective composition, with emphasis on the improvement of papers through revision and the critical readings of substantive or nonfiction texts, literature, and multimodal technologies. This course aims to expose students to the diverse and wide range of communication thus enlightening students to successful college writing in terms of local and global perspectives. You can find more outcomes at [www.english.txstate.edu/about/learning.html](http://www.english.txstate.edu/about/learning.html).

#### *Course Objectives:*

After completing English 1310 course you should be able to draft, revise, and edit a paper for a particular audience and purpose in which you demonstrate the ability to formulate and develop a thesis, form clear and effective paragraphs, use appropriate vocabulary, apply grammatical and mechanical conventions of written English, apply critical reading skills to your own writing and to the writing of others, and demonstrate critical thinking skills, communication skills, teamwork and personal responsibility. During the course of the class you will produce multiple texts on various subjects. These texts include the following: FIVE essays, ONE Visual Project, Journal Responses, In Class Quizzes, Homework that consists of assignments intended for completion out-of-class, and a MANDATORY, WRITTEN FINAL EXAM.

#### *Attendance Policy:*

Because the skills taught in first-year English are cumulative, regular and punctual attendance is essential. Many instructors conduct their courses as workshops in which students' draft and revise their papers and comment on one another's work. You cannot benefit from such activities unless you are there to participate. If you miss one class, you forgo your opportunity to gain knowledge and improve on your writing skills. I understand the class may be considered "early", but you are responsible for getting to class on time. If there is a **valid** emergency, please contact me for added information. (\* Please look to your classmates, syllabus, notes, and common sense before making hasty decisions) If you miss more than four classes, the possibility to maintain a passing grade may become more difficult. After six unexcused absences, the possibility of passing may be fairly slim.

#### *Grades:*

##### *Cipher (Peer Review)*

Along with each essay, you will be responsible for edits and revision. Language and writing, by extension, is continuously changing and your work should represent that dynamic relationship. On the day of the Cipher, please **bring TWO complete hard copies** of your paper (one copy is for the instructor and the other is for the editor). Similar to rap battle/Cipher- for those of you who are familiar with this cultural dialogue- if you come unprepared, you get defeated in a sense. In this class, we want positive Ciphers, so bring completed bodies of works in order to have



other artists/authors/writers (that means you all) can encourage one another and build off each other. Being active engages and encourages better writing from you and your peers. This will directly affect your “Peer Editing/Revision” grade and ultimately your final essay grades.

### ***Visual Presentation***

The class will present a visual representation on the effects of composition and rhetoric today toward the end of the semester. This presentation will be linked with the topic they choose to write and argue for in ESSAY # 5. The students may work in a group for the presentation **ONLY**; each presenter must turn in separate essays. The students will act as the “resident expert” on the subject and instruct the class how rhetoric was used within the text and how composition can/was used to create or deliver the project or text they decided to write about. Students will discuss the summary of the text, why the text is important, and lead discussions on anything that was interesting to them.

### ***Journal Responses***

Each student is responsible for keeping a journal, either electronic or written. **Each response and discussion is worth 20 points.** For each designated reading you may respond to the text in a number of ways ranging from how you identified with the author how the writing confused you, what the text reminded you of (i.e. other texts you’ve read) or ideas the text/author generated. For the classes that we will have “journal response discussions” you will be responsible for discussion your thoughts about the text. I will collect your journals. For those who wish to keep an **electronic journal**, you must be ready to either **print** out a copy of your response before class time **or** you may **email** me **before class is over**.

### **Tentative Schedule (1310):**

<b>Date</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>Homework</b>
<b>Thematic Unit: Structure</b>		
August 26	Get To Know You, Syllabus, Expectations	
August 28	BH Portfolio pg.59-60, <b>Essay 1 Due</b> , (Writing Center Visit)	BH 243-254,147-149, 198-205
August 30	Subject/Verb Agreement, Parallelism, Word Choice	BH 243-254,147-149, 198-205
September 2	Labor Day ( <b>NO CLASS</b> )	
September 4	Comma, Semi-Colon, Colon	BH 354-370, 379-384, 384-387
September 6	Thesis	BH pg. 19,25-29
September 9	<b>Assign Essay #2</b> , Paragraphs and P.I.E (BH pg.62-89)	Burke (on TRACS)
September 11 *12 <sup>th</sup> day of class, last day to	Rhetorical Effectiveness/ Rhetorical Triangle	Work on paper

drop with 100% refund		
September 13	Cipher (Peer Review)	Work on paper
<b>Thematic Unit: Language</b>		
September 16	<b>Essay #2 DUE, SRTOL</b>	Bartholomae (on TRACS)
September 18	Critical Reading, Creativity In Writing	Banks (on TRACS)
September 20	Writing Process, Essay #2 returned	Locke RW pg. 125
September 23	Meaning	Anzaldúa RW pg. 527
September 25	Style, <b>Essay # 2 Revisions Due</b>	Smitherman, Royster (TRACS)
September 27	Cultural Language Differences, <b>Essay #3 Assigned</b>	Work on paper
September 30	Cipher	Work on paper
<b>Thematic Unit: Education</b>		
October 2	<b>Essay #3 DUE, Logos</b>	“Deductive Reasoning” RW pg. 597-606
October 4	MLA Citation	BH 517-519, 530
October 7	<b>Conferences</b>	“Pathos” RW pg. 606-608
October 9	Pathos	“Ethos”RW pg. 608-611
October 11	Ethos, Essay # 3 Returned	Martin Luther King RW pg. 202
October 14	Ethos, Logos, Pathos in context, Argument, Critical Reading	Freiere RW pg.62
October 16	Style, Critical Reading	Gatto (on TRACS)
October 18	Delivery, <b>Essay # 3 Revisions Due</b>	Villanueva (on TRACS)
October 21	Introductions, Conclusions	BH pg. 91-97
October 23	Essay # 4 Assigned, Group Cipher	
October 25	Argument, Thesis Workshop	BH pg. 104
October 28	<b>Essay # 4 DUE</b>	
<b>Thematic Unit: Rhetoric and Composition in the Media</b>		
October 30	Arrangement	Lunsford (on TRACS)
November 1	Revisiting the Rhetorical Triangle, Essay # 4 returned	Hogarth RW pg. 320
November 4	Visual Rhetoric	Achebe RW pg. 129
November 6	Music as Composition, <b>Essay # 4 Revisions Due</b>	
November 8	Critical Discourse Analysis	BYOT (Bring Your Own Text)
November 11	Advertising and Rhetoric, <b>Essay # 5 Assigned</b>	Work on Essay # 5

November 15	Political Rhetoric and Writing	Work on Essay # 5
November 18	Cipher	Work on Essay # 5
November 20	<b>Essay # 5 DUE</b> , Visual Presentation Product Development day	Work on Visual Project
November 22	Visual Presentation Product Development day	Work on Visual Presentation Project
November 25	<b>Visual Presentation Due</b>	Work on Visual Presentation Project
December 2	<b>Visual Presentation Due</b>	
December 4* *Last day of official class	Semester Wrap-Up	
December 9 (MWF 9:00-9:50 a.m.)	<b>FINAL EXAM 8-10:30 a.m.</b>	
December 11 (MWF 10-10:50 a.m.)	<b>Final Exam 11-1:30 p.m.</b>	

## Appendix F

### EXTENDED CIPHER

LET ME GET ON THAT COLLABO: Use the following questions to help guide and shape your fellow artists in the writing community, so he or she can perform his or her work on the highest stage.

SPRT THAT ONE NO TIME: Make verbal and written suggestions

DON'T DIS!: Always remain constructive, engaging, and encouraging to help the artist.

WHO'S ON THAT HOOK?: For those who are peer editing another artist's work, make sure to tag (sign your name) in the correct spaces.

### WORKIN' IN THE STUDIO:

COLLABORATOR (editor): \_\_\_\_\_

ORIGINAL ARTIST (paper being edited): \_\_\_\_\_

Directions:

- 1) PARTNER UP WITH ANOTHER ARTIST IN THE COMMUNITY
- 2) COLLABORATOR LOOK FOR SPECIFIC ITEMS NOTED IN THE "CIPHER CONTRACT" (THIS IS THE CONTRACT).
- 3) MAKE SURE TO NOTE CHANGES ON THE PAPER AND EXPLAIN SUGGESTIONS TO THE ORIGINAL ARTIST.

FIRST THING- READ THE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How is the artist engaging the audience (B for Bang)?
- What kind of transition does the artist use to link the Bang to the thesis statement (L for Link)?
- What is the thesis's main idea and supporting detail (T for Thesis)? How can the thesis be improved?
- How focused is the thesis? Does the thesis statement answer the prompt?

SECOND THING- READ THE BODY PARAGRAPHS AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS.

- What is the main point of the first paragraph? Is this main point the first supporting detail mentioned in the thesis statement?
- What is the explanation of this paragraph? Does it tell why this main point is important?
- How does the paragraph support the P.I.E. format?
- Did you notice any grammar, punctuation, or spelling mishaps? Where? What?
- What words, sentences, ideas can be cut or modified?
  - How does this affect the meaning?

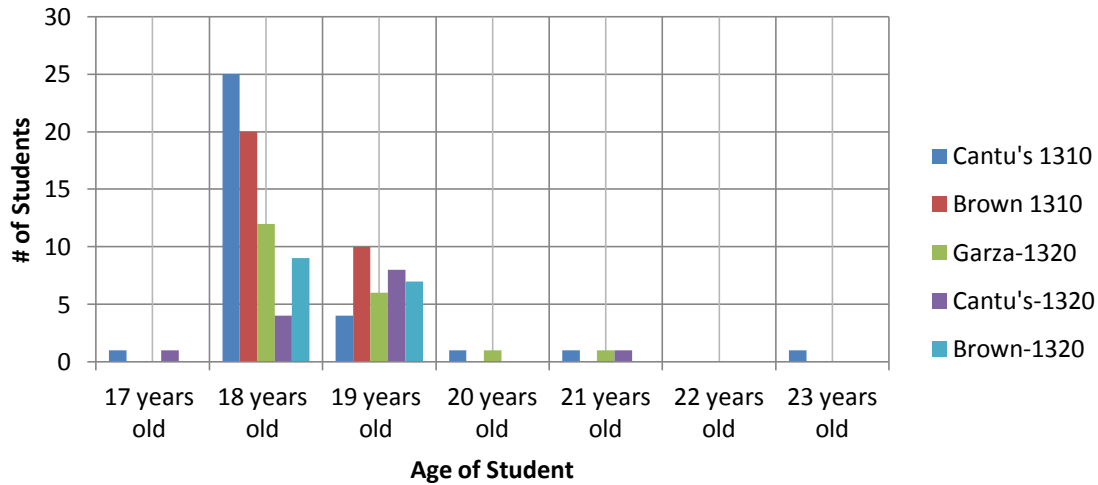
~~THIS~~ ~~THING~~ READ THE CONCLUSION

- How is the thesis statement restated?
- Where is there evidence of summarization (S.A.Y)? Be specific.
- Where is there evidence of analysis (S.A.Y)? Be specific.
- Have you made any constructive comments for promoting their conclusion?

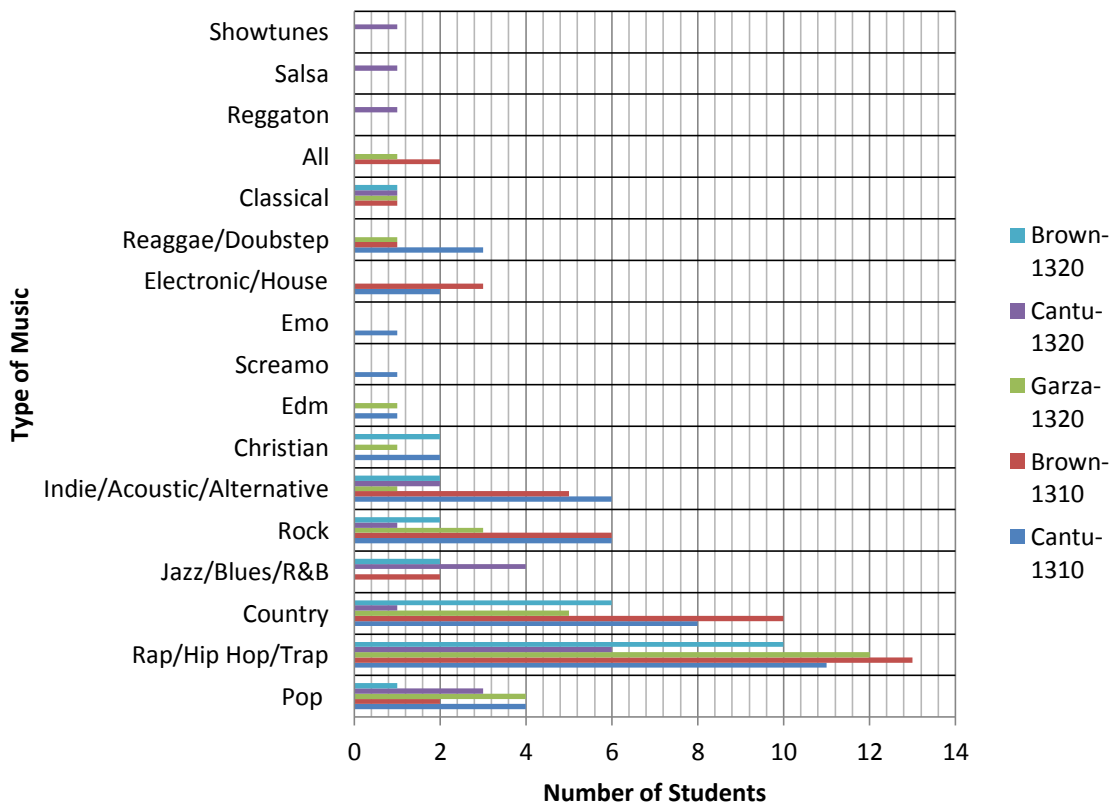
WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THIS ~~TRAC~~ (essay)?

## Appendix G

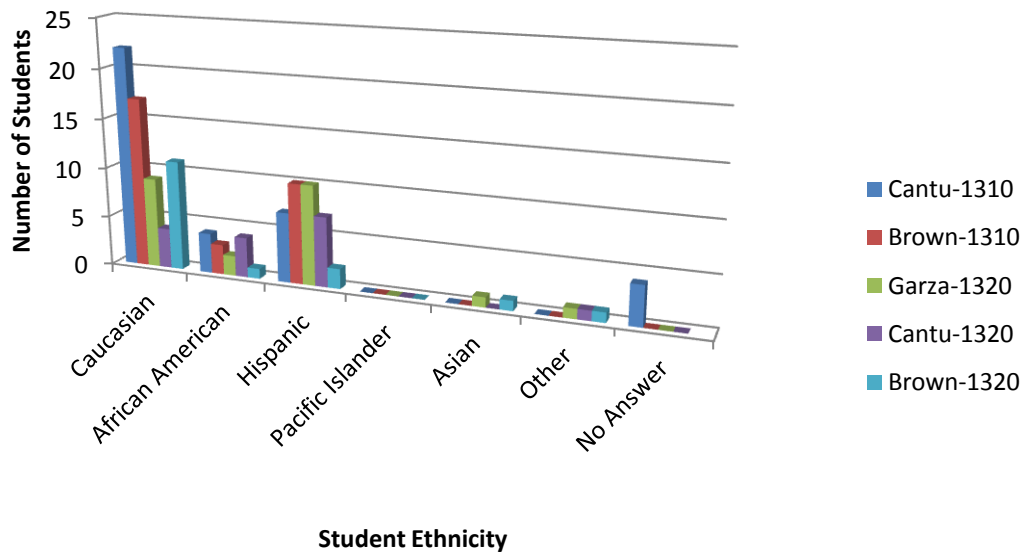
### Age of Students in First Year English Composition Classes (Eng 1310 & 1320)



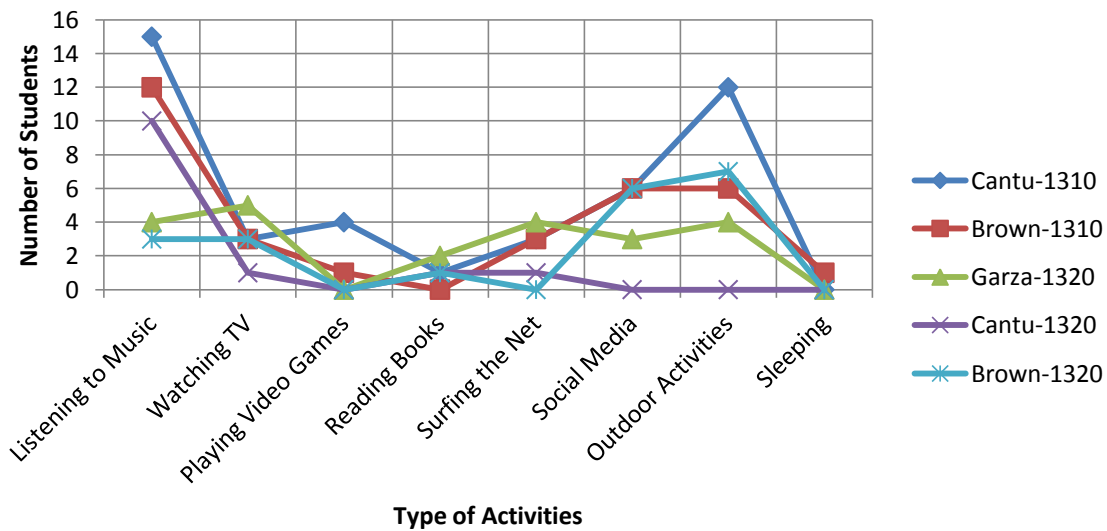
### Music Genres Students Self-Identified as Their Favorite



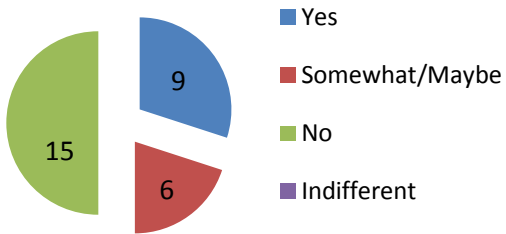
## Student Ehtnicity of First Year English Classrooms (self-identified)



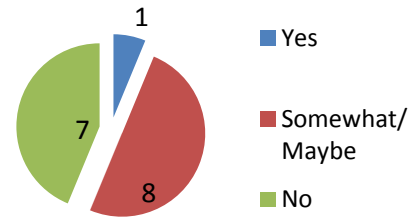
## Activities that First Year English Students Participate in During Free Time



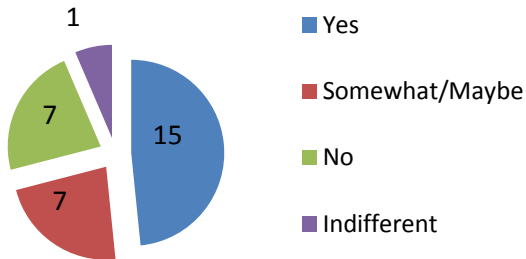
**Would You Be More Engaged in a Class with Hip Hop?-Brown's 1310**



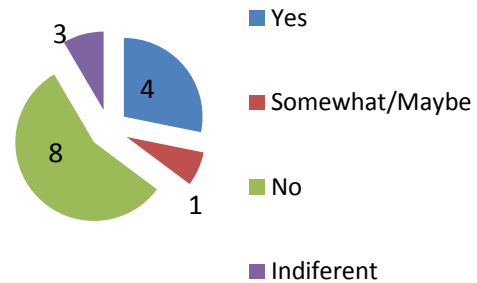
**Would You Be More Engaged in a Class That Uses Hip Hop?-Brown's 1320**



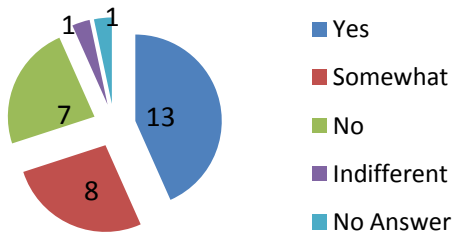
**Can Hip Hop Be Used in English Classrooms?- Brown's 1310**



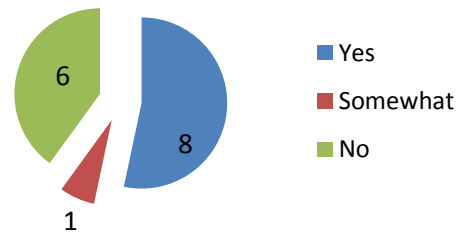
**Can Hip Hop Be Used in English Classrooms?-Brown's 1320**



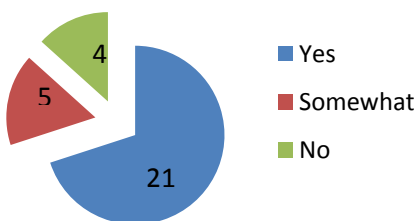
**Do You Like to Write?- Brown's 1310**



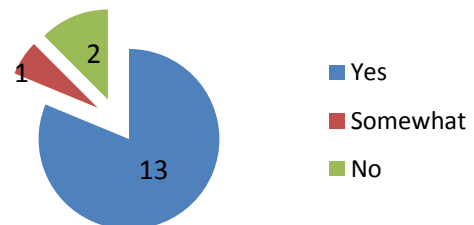
**Do You Like to Write?-Brown's 1320**



**Do You Like Hip Hop?-Brown's- 1310**

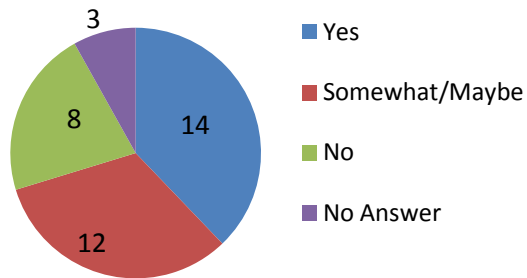


**Do You Lik Hip Hop?-Brown's 1320**

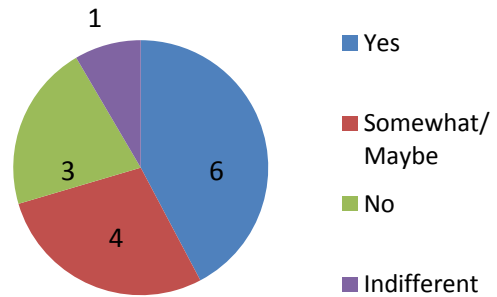




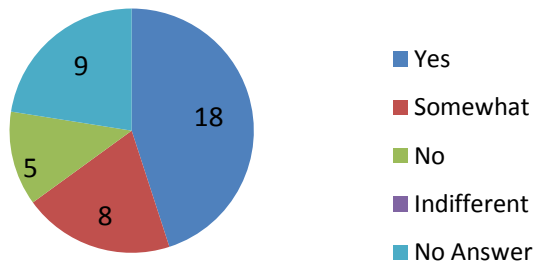
**Can Hip Hop Be Used in English Classrooms?-Cantu's-1310**



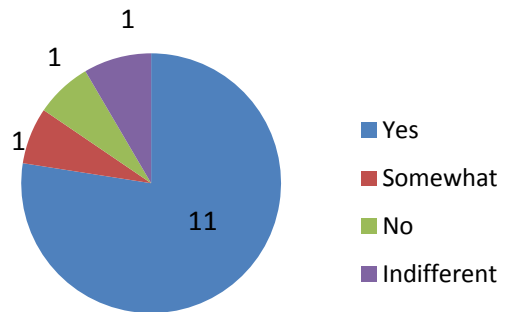
**Can Hip Hop Be Used in English Classrooms?-Cantu's 1320**



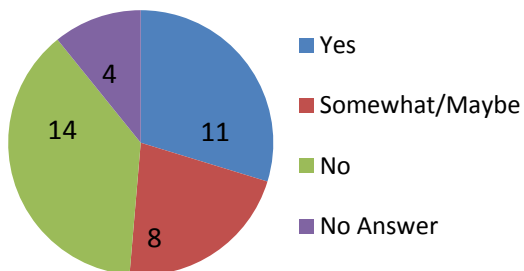
**Do You Like Hip Hop?- Cantu's 1310**



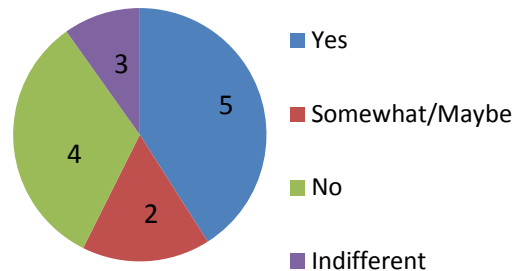
**Do You Like Hip Hop?-Cantu's 1320**



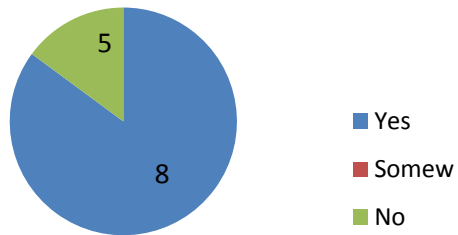
**Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?- Cantu's 1310**



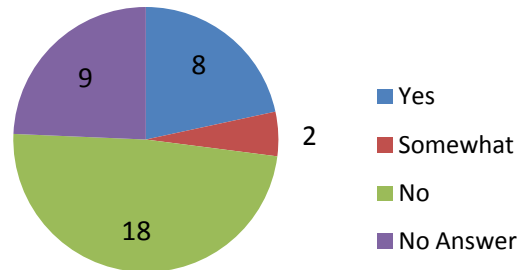
**Would You Be More Engaged in a Classroom with Hip Hop?- Cantu's 1320**



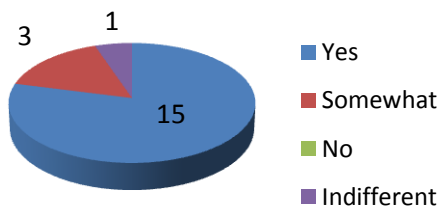
**Do You Like to Write?-Cantu's  
1320**



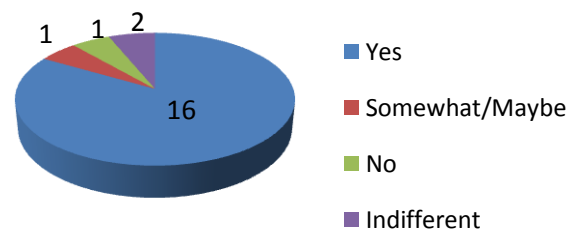
**Do You Like to Write?-Cantu's  
1310**



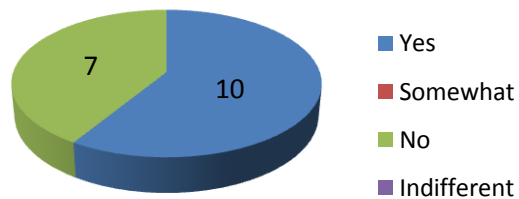
**Do You Like Hip Hop?-  
Garza's 1320**



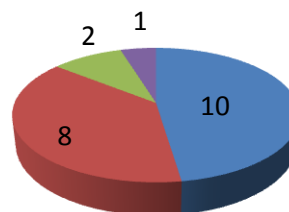
**Can Hip Hop Be Used in English  
Classroom- Garza's 1320**



**Do You Like to Write?- Garza's  
1320**



**Would You Be More Engaged in  
a Classroom with Hip Hop?-  
Garza's 1320**



## Appendix H

### Speaking out of the Ordinary

Language is the method of human communication, either spoken or written. Language for me is what defines my personality. Spanish is what makes me unique, especially when I am away from my hometown. *Cuando estoy lejos de mi ciudad natal, yo siempre necesito hablar mi lengua materna Inglés, pero no es mi lengua materna.* According to Gloria Anzaldúa in *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, “Language is a primary part of a person’s identity.” I was once punished for speaking my native language and that is why language is a part of our identity. Language allows me to think more creatively, having a different perspective, and have the freedom to express myself to interact with other people from different cultures.

I should not have to ignore my native language just because someone tells me I cannot speak Spanish, and then pay the consequences when I speak it. I find the situation absurd whenever I cannot talk Spanish just like Anzaldúa experienced her consequence, “I remember being sent to the corner for talking back to my teacher,” but in reality, she was just trying to pronounce her name. When I was a freshman in high school, my English teacher was American and she warned us at the beginning of the school year not to speak Spanish because she felt that we were talking bad about her. I said “*Nombre guay*,” to one of my peers and was sent to detention. She received the wrong idea that I cuss at one of the peers. I taught myself how ridiculous the situation was because she did not even know what I said. Ever since I have been in Elementary school I was thought to speak English because it is the primary language we have to use in the United States. I felt discouraged that I have to hide my identity. I should not be hiding my Spanish because someone else does not like this language, or when somebody tells me I am not

allow to speak it. This is what Anzaldúa meant by “Language is a part of one’s identity.” Besides using language for speaking, I use it to have an open mind to creativity.

Language is not just about speaking words but it is a way to express our ideas. Language helps us identify one another, from what ethnicity we come from. I am living in an environment different than where I was raised and because of that, I feel I have a different perspective than other people. Having known different languages helps a person be creative. According to Lera Boroditsk, an assistant professor in psychology, “People who speak different languages do indeed think differently and that even affect how they see the world”. Language is like a gift, it is something that we should appreciate and share with other cultures, but instead we take advantage of it. We are not just born with language, we learn and learning different languages helps us have an open mind to new ideas. I am bilingual, so speaking two languages gives me two perspectives, one from each language. With my Spanish language I can have more creative ideas and I think more freely. With English, I always had the sense that we needed to think the same and we can only focus on one idea when it came to writing. Language does not only help me be productive with work but also helps me interact with others.

Even though Texas State is a diverse university, I felt misplaced the first couple of weeks because I hardly saw any Hispanics. Weeks passed and I started to meet people who were bilingual as me, but I found out that we all have different cultures. A friend I met was born in Guanajuato Mexico, and then moved to Austin. I noticed that when she speaks, she has an accent, something that I do not hear where I come from. I have another friend who is Hispanic as well but she does not know the traditional Spanish music; corridos, polkas, and cumbias. Although we are all from the same ethnicity, everyone had


different perspective of the culture. This helps me interact with other people because I am learning about their norms, their interpretations of Latinos, and how we are similar to one another. I see language as a religion because everyone has their own beliefs, but no one is right or wrong. We approach people from different cultures so we can learn more about them. There is a stereotype towards people by the way they speak, dress, race, and it should not be like that. Anyone has the right to expose their language to the community, to have a better interpretation of one another. Learning a language can be fascinating.


Anzaldúa made me realize that I should appreciate my language more because not all people know two languages, even if I am supposed to hide my Spanish. “Who is to say that robbing a people of its language is less violent than a war?” What disrupted me was that I hid my identity, not that I went to detention. I have the freedom, the right to express myself, to be productive, and to think creatively. There is no reason to judge one another in their language, culture, or norms. At the end I realized that no matter where you come from, you always want to stick with your traditions, I know I have. *Al hablar mi lengua materna hace sentir que estoy en mi casa.* Speaking my native language makes me feel like I am at home.

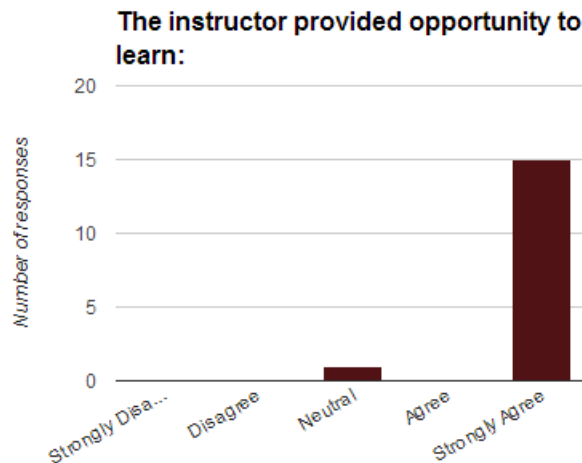
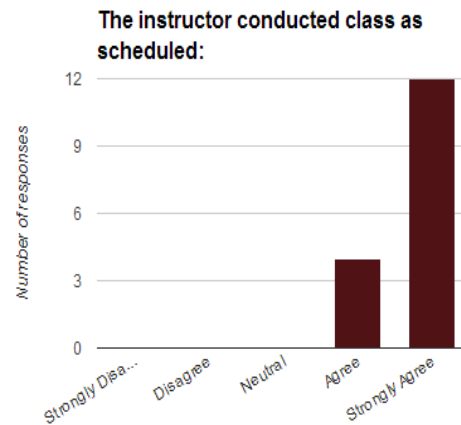
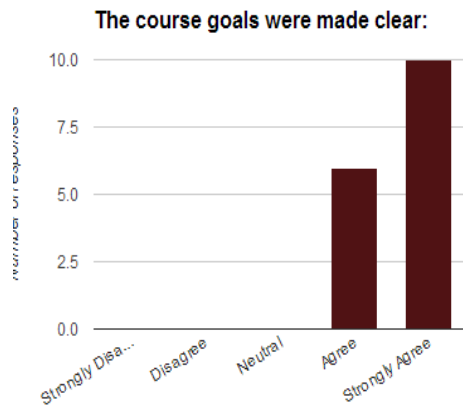
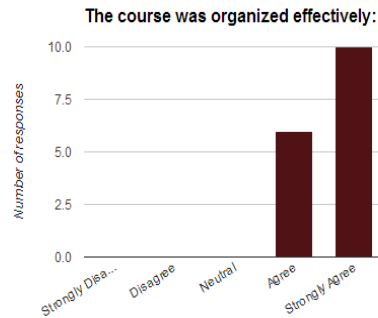
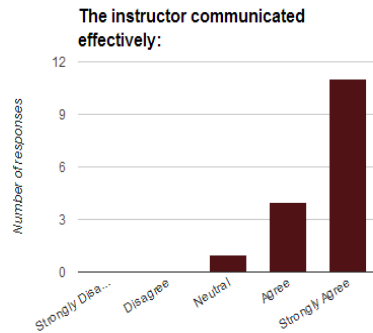
## Appendix I

Fall 2013 ENG1310 Section 029  
College Writing I

Alexis McGee

 Download Syllabus

 Download Vita



## Appendix J

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Date: Wednesday, April 9, 2014 3:09 PM

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Dear Alexis McGee:

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