

#HipHopEd: The Compilation on Hip-hop Education

Christopher Emdin and Edmund Adjapong, editors

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In *#HipHopEd: The Compilation on Hip-hop Education*, editors Christopher Emdin and Edmund Adjapong have brought together a thought provoking and valuable collection of essays on a timely topic. They premise their volume on the idea that hip-hop – as a music, yes, though more so as a global cultural way of experiencing the world – can inform pedagogy and can effectively be utilized as a way to address and engage students. Especially for students who have been traditionally marginalized in American school systems, *#HipHopEd* seeks to reframe hip-hop in ways that can speak to understanding, critiquing, and overcoming what the variety of authors view as a historically oppressive culture.

Rather than limit its reach to using hip-hop text in the perhaps traditional ways of analyzing song lyrics in an English or language arts class, *#HipHopEd* seeks to address the oppression it sees through such varied lenses as education, sociology, anthropology, African American studies, philosophy, race, and feminism. In one related link to education research, *#HipHopEd* connects with Obioma Nnaemeka’s “Nego-feminism” in exploring the limitations of Western individualism, stressing African communal life (2004, “Nego-Feminism,” *Signs* 29 [2]: 357-85). Nnaemeka shows the dichotomy of Western and African belief systems in terms of visual senses (Western) versus auditory senses (African) (in Fennell and Arnot, 2004, “Decentering Hegemonic Gender Theory,” *Compare* 38 [5]: 531). Within its essays, *#HipHopEd* expands education’s reach by inhering to the classroom values of community and the auditory that in many ways have been ignored or themselves marginalized historically in the systems of American education.

Gloria Ladson-Billings’s essay, “From Big Homie the O.G., to GLB: Hip-hop and the Reinvention of a Pedagogue,” underlines that sense of community, while still retaining the value of each student’s lived experiences. Her pedagogy is to practice “the skill and facility to help students recognize and appreciate their culture of origin while also learning to develop fluency in at least one other culture” (22). Providing such an understanding, a teacher can empower a student not only to understand and be proud of his or her culture, but also to embrace the creation and development of an identity with that understanding as a foundation.

Identity creation and development is a strong and vibrant thread in *#HipHopEd*, and is centered on teachers as well as students. Matthew R. Morris and Lauren Leigh Kelly each focus on their personal journeys as individuals and teachers in their respective essays, moving from experiences of oppression and identity concealment to embracing his and her own culture and developing personal identities that inform and become elements of their own teaching practice.

Emdin in his “Introduction” lays out *#HipHopEd*’s clear goal of “[r]evealing well hidden truths about schools and their role as training facilities for socioeconomically disadvantaged youth” (5), and throughout the book essays address examples of teaching and learning in the traditional classroom that can fall short of addressing the needs of students. Pointedly, these authors and this collection provide ideas and solutions as well, bringing *#HipHopEd* from a theoretical framework to a practical guide.