**RUNNING HEAD**: Empowering African American Students

**Get In Where Ya’ Fit In, Nawmean: Empowering African American Students and Fostering Academic Achievement through Race Identity Development and Hip Hop Pedagogy**

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**Abstract**

In 2011, the black-white academic achievement gap persists despite society’s progress. Though African American students have earned the right to an education, after years of struggle led by civil rights leaders, some scholars attribute low achievement rates to a lack of motivation disregard. Other studies have described African American students as “anti-intellectual” and afraid of high achievement. Recent bodies of work have countered such arguments citing the implication as paradoxical considering the number of black lives lost in the struggle for education. Research shows achievement and motivation amongst African American students is dependent upon the healthy development of racial identity and a sense of empowerment. The examination of motivation theory through a cultural framework may gleam solutions towards closing the black-white achievement gap. This paper seeks to determine the best practices and strategies suited for empowering African American students and increasing intrinsic motivation, as well as, academic achievement through a review of the literature pertaining to motivation, racial identity development, and culturally responsive/ hip hop pedagogy.

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Explanations as to why the achievement gap persists between black and white students are in abundance as are statistics supporting the existence of an achievement gap. While this gap isn’t as large as it was 10, 20, or even 40 years ago, its width is still both substantial and alarming. To measure academic achievement, statistics below highlight national reading and writing averages, drop-out rates, and general preparedness across middle and high school aged students.

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| **Table 1. Average reading scale scores, by grade, selected years, and selected ethnicity** | | | | |
|  | 8th Grade | | 12th Grade | |
|  | 1992 | 2009 | 1992 | 2009 |
| National Average | 215 | 219 | 263 | 262 |
| White | 267 | 273 | 297 | 296 |
| Black | 237 | 246 | 273 | 269 |
| **Reading scale is from 0-500. 8th grade proficiency levels are as follows: Basic (243), Proficient (281), and Advanced (323). 12th grade proficiency levels are as follows: Basic (265), Proficient (302), and Advanced (346).** | | | | |
| **Data Source: U.S. Department of Education (USDE), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992-2009 assessments, NAEP Data Explorer** | | | | |

Table 1 displays the national reading average scores from 1992 and 2009. African Americans in the 8th grade remain 27 points behind white students and 19 points below basic. This is only a 3-point increase toward shortening the gap between black and white students since 1992. The average African American high school senior scored 27 points less than their white counterpart, again only a 3-point increment from 1992. However, in the case of high school seniors, it seems the achievement has widened since 1992.

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| **Table 2. Average writing scale scores, by grade, selected years, and selected ethnicity** | | | | |
|  | 8th Grade | | 12th Grade | |
|  | 1998 | 2009 | 1998 | 2009 |
| National Average | 156 | 150 | 153 | 150 |
| White | 157 | 164 | 155 | 159 |
| Black | 131 | 141 | 134 | 137 |
| **Reading scale is from 0-300. 8th grade proficiency levels are as follows: Below Basic (0-115), Basic (115-175), Proficient (175-225), and Advanced (225-300). 12th grade proficiency levels are as follows: Below Basic (0-127), Basic (127-179), Proficient (179-230), and Advanced (230-300).** | | | | |
| **Data Source: (USDE), (NCES), (NAEP), 1998-2009 assessments, NAEP Data Explorer** | | | | |

Table 2 illustrates the national average writing scores from 1998 and 2009. In 2009, the average black high school senior scored 137, compared to a score of 159 from their white counterpart. When compared to the average scores of 1998, there is a 1-point increase in the gap. As demonstrated in table 1, the black-white gap at the high school level seems to have increased.

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| **Table 3. Percentage of 10th graders who came to school unprepared, 2002** | | | |
|  | Came to school without book | Came to school without paper, pen, or pencil | Came to school without homework |
| White | 12.5 | 13.8 | 22.7 |
| Black | 23.4 | 22.5 | 28.6 |
| **Data Source: Cahalan, Ingels, Burns, Planty, & Daniels (2006). *United States High School Sophomores: A Twenty-Two Year Comparison, 1980-2002*, Data from (USDE), (NCES), *High School and Beyond Longitudinal Study of 1980 Sophomores*; National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988, “First Follow-up, 1990”; and Education Longitudinal Study of 2002, Base Year.** | | | |

Cahalan et al. (2006), in a longitudinal study comparing high school sophomores from 1980-2005, measured the general and academic unpreparedness of students. As illustrated in table 3, on average more African American students came to school without books, supplies (e.g. paper or pencils), and without completed homework. While other factors could have contributed to these findings (i.e. socio-economic status or other contextual barriers) the difference between black and white students remain alarming.

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| **Table 4. National high school drop-out rates, ages 16-24, by ethnic subgroups, 1980-2009** | | | | |
| Year | National Rate | White | Black | Black-White Gap |
| 1980 | 14.1 | 11.4 | 19.1 | 8.3 |
| 1990 | 12.1 | 9.0 | 13.2 | 4.2 |
| 2000 | 10.9 | 6.9 | 13.1 | 6.2 |
| 2009 | 8.1 | 5.2 | 17.6 | 12.4 |
| **Note, the data directly associated with the original table does not reference national average of student enrollment. Also, this data measures drop-out rates from age 16 and up, meaning younger students who may have dropped-out are not included.** | | | | |
| **Data Source: (USDE), (NCES, 2011), The Condition of Education 2011.** | | | | |

Lastly, table 4 demonstrates the national average high school drop-out rates. In 2009, the average drop-out rate amongst African American students was 17.6%. As for white students, the average drop-out rate was only 5.2%. The overall national average was 8.1%, which leaves African American students 12.4 points behind whites and approximately 9 points behind the national average.

As reflected in tables 1-4, African American students, in most cases, are behind the national average as well as white students. Several researchers have attempted to uncover the reasons this gap persists. Literature regarding African American students’ motivation and academic achievement cautions against deficit models in order to explain this phenomena. Deficit, typically, implicates the subject as inherently inferior. Some scholars agree acceptable theories include: achievement theory, test anxiety theory, social learning theory, and attribution theory. Where these theories fall short is their oversight of social, cultural, and racial impacts on the motivation and academic achievement of African Americans (Cokley, 2008; Ford & Harris, 1992; Rodgers, 2008).

Regardless of how many theories are postulated, the achievement gap persists and in some instances has widened over time. This paper seeks to present (a) a relevant and appropriate framework for discussing the motivation and achievement of African Americans, (b) determine the best pedagogical practices for shaping curriculum towards the empowerment of African American students, and (c) illustrate specific strategies, based on the above findings, for classroom implementation.

**Culturally Framed Motivation Theory by way of Invitations and Racial Identity Development**

Motivation is defined as a force that directs and maintains behavior. There is intrinsic (internal and personal) and extrinsic (external and environmental) motivation (Higareda, 2011; Wolters 2003; Woolfolk, 2001). Rodgers (2008), in table 5, applies a cultural frame to Eccles et al. (1983) Expectancy-Value motivation model. This model establishes expectancy for success and task value as predictors of motivation. Embedded within this model is one’s academic self-concept and self-efficacy.

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| **Table 5. A culturally framed application of Eccles et al.’s Expectancy-Value Motivation model** | | | | | | |
|  | Expectancy | | x Task Value | | | |
| Motivation = | Beliefs about the self | Self-efficacy | Cost | Intrinsic interest | Attainment value | Utility |
|  | Do I have a positive sense of myself as a student? | How likely is that I can achieve a positive academic outcome? | I may have to act differently | My parents will be proud of me | If I do well, there will be more educational opportunities available to me | By doing well, I may be awarded scholarships |
|  |  |  | I may be less accepted by my peers | I will defy racial stereotypes if I do well | If I do well, I will project a positive image of African American students | I will be better prepared for college and eligible for honors programs |
|  |  |  | How important are these things to me? | How important are these things to me? | Do I value these things? | Will these things be useful for short- and long-term goals? |
| **Source: Rodgers, 2008.** | | | | | | |

Simply put, academic self-concept is a student’s view of his/her academic ability in comparison to other students (Cokley 2000). Self-concept relies on a student’s attitudes, feelings, and perceptions about their academic skills (Lent, Brown, & Gore 1997), and is crucial in a student’s academic achievement (Cokley 2000; Graham, 1994; Reynolds 1988; Witherspoon, Speight & Thomas 1997), and intrinsic motivation (Cokley, Bernard, Cunningham, & Motoike 2001, cited in Cokley, 2000). Surprisingly, African American students often demonstrate higher levels of academic self-concept than their white counterparts even in the face of low academic-achievement (Graham 1994; van Laar 2000).

Similarly, self-efficacy is one’s belief in their ability to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1997). Johnson-Reid and colleagues (2005) found that, “…students with higher academic self-efficacy, regardless of earlier achievement or ability, work harder and persist longer (Pjares, 2002); have better learning strategies, such as personal goal setting or time monitoring (Zimmerman, 2000); and are less likely to engage in risky behaviors…that negatively affect school success while controlling for general self-esteem (Chung and Elias, 1996).” Self-esteem is highly correlated to both academic self-concept and self-efficacy, but is different. A student’s self-esteem measures how worthy they feel when faced with a task. It’s an emotional response as opposed to self-efficacy (Cokley, 2003; Higareda, 2011; Woolfolk, 2010). Naturally, students who are motivated and confident in their academic ability will work harder, learn to evaluate their progress frequently, and employ self-regulatory strategies (Pajares 2002; Usher and Pjares, 2006).Arguably, the most important aspect of motivation theory is often self-efficacy. One way to conceptualize the academic motivation and self-efficacy of African American students is the invitation approach (Usher & Pajares, 2006).

Pajares and Usher (2006) in their study on invitation theory as a source of academic self-efficacy attempted to extend the theoretical tenets of social cognitive theory and self-efficacy by testing Bandura’s (1997) earlier study. Bandura’s original framework included the following tenets as principal sources of self-efficacy: (1) mastery experiences, (2) vicarious experiences, (3) social persuasions, and (4) emotional and psychological indexes. Researchers proposed invitations as a fifth tenet of self-efficacy and examined the productiveness of each source as a function of race and gender. Invitational theory describes the beliefs people develop about themselves and about others (Pajares & Usher, 2006). These beliefs become the frame of reference through which one interprets experiences (Purkey, 2000; Purkey and Novak, 1996; Pajares & Usher, 2006).

Invitations can serve as a source of empowerment and it is believed that people can intentionally send uplifting messages to themselves and others in order to improve one’s well-being. In this way, people are able to realize their own potential and enhance the potential of others (Purkey, 2000). “Positive invitations convey the message that people are able, valuable, responsible, and forgiving. Negative invitations suggest that people are not valued and that they are incapable of participating positively in their own development,” (Pajares & Usher, 2006).

Pajares and colleagues (2006) found invitations were highly predictive of academic self-efficacy beliefs for boys and girls, whites and African Americans. As expected, African American students preferred a sensitive learning orientation that highlights people rather than objects and relies upon social cues, as opposed to nonsocial cues. As implied by an African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child,” African American beliefs about themselves and schooling benefits from positive messages sent to them by other members (e.g. Teachers, peers, neighbors, etc.) of the African American community (Boykin 1986; Denbo 2002). Overall, invitations – intrinsic or extrinsic- are beneficial to a student’s development of behavioral and psychological tools in their academic growth, even more so for African Americans. Lastly, Pajares and Usher (2006) argue invitations should be considered as aspects of a much more comprehensive culturally responsive pedagogy.

Rodgers, in her study on racial identity, centrality and giftedness in African American students (2008), calls for an inclusion of race centrality in the consideration of motivating African American students. She found that black students with well-developed racial identities, often had higher grade point averages. Correlated to this, she found that “gifted” students inherently demonstrated strong connectedness with being black, more so than non- gifted students (Carter, 2008; Cross & Vandiver 2001; Obrien, Martinez-Pons, & Kopala 1999; Rodgers, 2008). In other words, African American students’ self-esteem, self-efficacy, and academic self-concept fare better when their racial identities have fully developed.

A positive African American identity is characterized by three traits: (a) connectedness - envisioning one’s self as a part of the racial group, (b) awareness – of stereotypes and limitations based on social and economic outcomes, and (c) achievement as an African American (Oyserman, Grant, & Ager, 1995, cited in Carter, 2008). Black racial identity development, also referred to as race centrality, is “the degree to which an individual values race as a core part of his/her self-concept” (Carter, 2008; Rodgers, 2008). Table 6 outlines the stages of racial development, as it pertains to African Americans, from the least healthy to the most healthy (Cross & Vandiver, 2001, cited in Rodgers, 2008).

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| **Table 6. Cross and Vandiver’s (2001)** Theory **of Black Identity Development** | | |
| Least Developed | Pre-encounter | **Assimilation** |
|  |  | Sense of self is centered around being an American and an individual |
|  |  | **Miseducation** |
|  |  | Accepts the negative stereotypes and historical misinformation about his racial or ethnic group without question |
|  |  | **Racial self-hatred** |
|  |  | Experiences profoundly negative feelings about being black |
|  | Immersion-emersion | **Anti-White** |
|  |  | Consumed by hatred of white people and society and all that it represents |
|  |  | **Intense Black involvement** |
|  |  | Has an simplistic and somewhat romantic and obsessive commitment to all things black |
|  | Internalization | **Nationalist** |
| Most developed |  | Stresses an Afrocentric perspective and engages in the problems of the black community |
|  |  | **Biculturalist** |
|  |  | Gives equal importance to being black and being American and can engage in both without conflict |
|  |  | **Multiculturalist** |
|  |  | Most well developed form of racial identity at which one can successfully manage two or more social identities |
| **Source: Rodgers (2008).** | | |

Similar to how an English-learning student develops language skills, African American students must develop their identities in terms of race and culture. Assimilation represents the least developed identity and multiculturalist represents the healthiest level of identity development. A similar study conducted by Carter (2008) attests, black students’ racial identity has a great impact on academic achievement and behavior (Cokley, 2003; Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998). As African American children develop their identities, motivation increases and their academic self-concept is heightened.

Past studies have argued the reason for African American low academic-achievement is their fear of being labeled “uncool” by peers if perceived as smart (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Peterson-Lewis & Bratton, 2004). Other studies have described African American students as “anti-intellectuals”, wherein high academic achievement and learning for learning sake is deemed “white” (McWhorter, 2000). On the contrary, students for whom race is central highly value academic achievement, even at the expense of acceptance (Rodgers 2008; Cokley 2003). In an effort to debunk the myth of the anti-intellectual, Cokley (2003) wrote:

“The perception that African Americans do not value education is paradoxical and historically shortsighted when one considers that many African Americans fought, and in some cases sacrificed their lives, during the civil rights movement to ensure that future generations of African Americans could have the right to a quality education wherever they wanted” (pg. 525).

In fact, “connectedness to the Black community and awareness of racial discrimination is significant to the development of Black students ’race consciousness,” and ultimately improves attitudes towards the utility of school (Carter, 2008).

As established in various studies, a factor predictive of academic achievement and campus involvement has been the ethnic makeup of one’s environment or school. Specifically, studies examining the success of African American students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU’s) show higher GPA’s and campus involvement than black students at predominantly white schools (Allen 1992; Allen, Epps & Haniff 1991; Cokley 2000; Davis 1994; Sellers, Chavous & Cooke 1998). In summary, black students at black schools are more socially involved and have higher career aspirations. Additionally, these students have higher academic self-concepts than black students at white schools. Also cited in the literature, strong relationships with faculty increased academic achievement (Cokley, 2003). These findings are not a call for de-facto segregation of schools, by any means. Merely, an attempt to draw attention to the educational environment of African American students and stress it’s role in boosting motivation, self-esteem, academic self-concept, and achievement.

**Environments & Pedagogy: Offerings from Afro-centricity, Multiculturalism and Hip Hop**

Sankofa Shule Charted School (SSCS) flies the RBG flag (Pan-African flag; Red for the blood of our ancestors, Black for the color of our skins, and Green for land we’ve cultivated) proudly, every morning, alongside the American flag. SSCS is an African-centered charter school in Lansing, Michigan, founded on a model intended to serve African American boys. Leaders and community members later decided the model was sound for all children, boys and girls, black or white. While some may feared the phrase “African-Centered”, Sankofa Shule is a successful model with strong and positive outcomes for African American children. Independent black institutions, such as SSCS, with Afrocentric frameworks have existed for over 20 years and have an extensive history all their own (F. River & S. River 1991). Teachers instruct from a perspective rooted in ancient African ideals of the Ma’at (ancient Egyptian ideology for truth, balance, justice, peace, and morality). Table 7 further illustrates SSCS’ model.

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| **Table 7. Sankofa Shule Charter School, 10-Step model for teaching** | |
| **Teachers must work to employ the following ideals daily:** | |
| Respect | For all cultures and all people; For self and heritage; For all cultures/heritages; For nature and all living things. |
| Expect | Are always set high; All children can accomplish anything; Disregard labels, e.g. “economically deprived” or “at-risk”. |
| Success | Comes with encouragement and learning; Involves family, community, and school. |
| Reward, Invest, Praise | Reward them for doing well; Invest time paying attention to their improvement (academically, emotionally, with their peers); Reward with trust; Praise their efforts. |
| Take Away Privileges | When behavior is an issue, privileges are taken away. |
| The Afrocentric Perspective | European history is put into perspective and taught truthfully; African history and its relevance to the rest of world is highlighted. |
| Multisensory | All senses are incorporated into each lesson. |
| Multimodal | Teaching styles are flexible and reflective of students’ various learning styles. |
| Multi-Dimensional | The whole child is taught and cared for (health, intellectual stability, and spirituality); If one dimension is neglected, a student cannot learn. |
| Hotep | Peace; with peers, teachers, community and environment. |
| **Source: F. Rivers and S. Rivers (2002), *Sankofa Shule Spells Success for African American Children* (Ed. McAdoo, 2002)** | |

The tenets listed above are typical of afro-centered institutions and share common traits with multicultural approaches. According to the literature, educators seeking to implement a successful multicultural curriculum should accomplish the following (Boateng 1990):

1. Draw on the cultural experiences of all students when scaffolding in order to reach their full potential and teach students to view events from diverse cultural perspectives.
2. Help students overcome their fear of diversity.
3. Teach students view cultural differences in an egalitarian mode instead of inferior-superior mode.
4. Expand students’ ideas on what it means to be human in a culturally diverse world.
5. Help students develop a cross-cultural competency.

Both Afrocentric and multicultural approaches encourage the healthy development, enrichment and academic success of students, especially students of color. In the case of African American students, afro-centered environments can augment their racial identity development, as would most tenets of multiculturalism.

*Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*

Culturally responsive pedagogy is essentially, “a compilation of ideas and explanations from a variety of scholars,” across the field education (Gay, 2000). It is always validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory. Culturally responsible instruction is affirming of students’ worth, bridging together their lived experiences and cultures. It translates into academic competence, courage, personal confidence, and motivation. Such teachers aren’t afraid to defy conventions in order to better serve students of multiethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. A culturally responsive pedagogy, “…releases the intellect of students of color from the constraining manacles of mainstream canonic of knowledge and the ways of knowing,” ultimately helping students realize there is no single version of the truth; knowledge is never total or permanent and should never exist without dissent. As with racial identity development, invitations, and Afrocentricity, collaboration, and connectedness are central.

*Hip Hop Pedagogy*

Hip Hop culture encompasses the lived experiences of urban youth world-wide. In America, hip hop and its creation is attributed to African American and Latino communities of historically low socio-economic status (Rose, 1991, cited in Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2002). Hip Hop took root after the assignation of Malcolm X and arose at the height of the Bush/Reagon era; during global anti-apartheid struggles and the fight to free Mandela. Hip-Hopers were born from civil rights and black power leaders; raised in the traditions of dissent and civil-disobedience. Founded on the premise of love, peace, happiness, and having fun, hip hop can be credited with ending gang wars and bringing peace to minority communities (Chang 2005; Kitwana, 2002). The four base elements of hip hop – deejaying, emceeing, graffiti art, and breakdancing – and the fifth element – knowledge – lend themselves to the classroom; underlining creativity, ingenuity, resourcefulness, empowerment, diversity, cooperation, collaboration, and expression In recent years, the globalization of hip hop has expanded the scope of hip hop culture and in most cases transcending race, religion, space and cultural differences.

In an in an interview with, teacher and emcee, Gabriel “Asheru” Benn he stated, “As an emcee, I saw the importance of Hip Hop in the classroom because of the automatic metaphor of teacher to emcee. The emcees’ job is to get the audience excited and ‘move the crowd’. Call and response, visual aids, and passionate delivery are all tools of a good emcee; all tools of a great teacher.” Asheru is a teacher in Washington, D.C., serving an urban population through his groundbreaking program, Hip Hop Education Literacy Project ([www.edlyrics.com](http://www.edlyrics.com)). He went on to say, “Hip Hop is relevant in teaching because it serves as a springboard for critical analysis, multicultural relevance, and making real world connection with language, syntax, and poetic devices. Above all that, for many underserved youth, both in rural and urban areas, Hip Hop music and culture is the language and predominant subculture.” There is a burgeoning group of artist, scholars, hip hop practitioners, and activist who agree.

Hip Hop scholar and CNN pundit, Marc Lamont-Hill (2009) frames what hip hop pedagogy looks like, considering identity, race, and relevant education theories. Hip Hop pedagogy, “…creates spaces of both voice and silence, centering and marginalization, empowerment and domination” (Lamont-Hill, 2009). In this way, students and educators – together – can challenge the canonical knowledge while bridging cultural gaps with one another. Lamont-Hill refers to this continuously evolving pedagogy as Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE).

Hip Hop based curriculum can help to “scaffold canonical knowledge (Hill, 2008; Morell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Rice, 2003), increase student engagement (Mahiri, 1998; Stoval, 2006), and raise critical consciousness (Dimitriadis, 2001; Duncan-Andrade & Morell, 2005; Hill, 2006; Pardue, 2004).” Literature shows hip hop as especially relevant in developing critical media literacy (Hill, 2006; Morell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). Through this growing body of research, HHBE scholars have constructed a strong case for the pedagogical value of incorporating hip hop across a variety of content areas.

**Discussion: Findings and Best Practices**

The underlying motif across the literature pertaining to African American students and academic achievement is empowerment. Empowerment equates to high intrinsic motivation, academic achievement and a strong academic self-concept. Educators can help their African American students reach empowerment by creating environments that foster motivation and cultivates a positive racial identity. While the ideology of Afrocentric education may be best suited for predominately African American environments, non-black teachers in diverse settings can still garner empowerment by incorporating tenets of multiculturalism while acknowledging the development of their racial identities.

The coupling of invitation theory with a culturally framed perspective on motivation, and the acknowledgement of African American students’ positive racial identity development process ultimately fosters intrinsic motivation, strengthens academic self-concept, and increases academic achievement amongst African Americans. With the amalgamation of Hip Hop pedagogy and principles of culturally responsive pedagogy, educators can create a classroom and school climate that meets the needs of every student, but specifically heightens the success of African American students towards closing the black-white achievement gap.

Scholars suggests, the primary and most effective strategy in implementing HHBE is to use hip hop as texts, especially in scaffolding traditional knowledge and standard-based instruction across content areas such as Literature and Social Studies. Replacing classic texts for hip hop completely is not advised; however, in some cases, it may be preferably and warranted. Hip Hop, while valid, should never deprive students of necessary exposure to canonical texts. Furthermore, the potential of using hip hop as primary, companion or supplemental material is limitless.

Hip Hop’s rich and diverse culture stimulates dialogue on topics such as oppressions, freedom, liberations, and peace. Its viability is most evident in content areas of English, literature, literacy and social studies but can easily be adapted to math, science, and language development. Moreover, hip hop as a content area itself facilitates discussion concerning minority and urban communities across several sub-topics: politics, socio-economics, gender, race relations, globalization, media literacy, and language. HHBE’s power is predicated on one simple truth: when students can see themselves in the text, lessons become authentic and relevant (Taliaferro, 2009).

**Limitations and Implications for Future Research**

It is important to note the data used to describe the black-white achievement gap is not extensive and does not belay all contextual barriers or contributing factors. Also, many studies in the literature implied gender-specific differences in motivation and academic achievement amongst African American students. Further research should consider these findings in designing gender- and race-specific practices toward fostering empowerment and increasing academic achievement. In discussing the positive racial identity development of African American students, there was limited discussion concerning the identity development of multi-racial students. Do these students identify as black? If so, how does their identity development process differ? The literature also indicated there may be slight, but significant, differences in identity development amongst “gifted” students and learning-disabled students. An extension of this research should address this issue. Additionally, future research in the form of a case-study should be conducted in order to fully examine the effectiveness of both African-centered and hip hop based education programs. Finally, an extension of this paper will outline specific and detailed lesson plans, incorporating all findings.

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