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Showing Out: Africanisms and Hip-hop Mindfulness as Black Cultural Praxis of Excellence, Resistance, Joy, and Love

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Abstract. In this essay, we center hip-hop culture and Black cultural legacies. We envision and offer a two-fold framework which illuminates the intersection between the two. We explore ways that the Black cultural experience (or better yet Black cultural praxis) has always brilliantly and organically demonstrated the shape and form of a scholarship of consequence. Black cultural praxis, or reflective action with a Black emancipatory influence, has always allowed freedom of movement, freedom of body, freedom of tongue, and freedom of voice. We translate what this cultural praxis teaches and urges regarding the transformation, unbinding, and freeing of both educators and educational spaces. We demonstrate how the intersection of hip-hop culture and Black cultural legacies can be instructive and transformative to educators. We invite educators to reimagine their classroom spaces by not only focusing on learning *about* hip hop but *from* it as well.

Keywords: Hip-Hop, Black Culture, Africanisms, African Cultural Legacies

This article illuminates how Black cultural practices have long served as both evidence and example of what Black mattering looks like in daily life. We suggest that it is the audacity in the everydayness of Black culture that college educators must come to not just appreciate and accommodate but rather to adopt and incorporate in their own professional philosophies and practices. We therefore argue that higher education cannot simply include Black cultural experiences and activities into the college experience and call that mattering. There must be a mindset change among those who teach and lead that is informed by Black cultural values, beliefs, habits, and histories.

In this essay, we center hip-hop culture and Black cultural legacies. We envision and offer a two-fold framework which illuminates the intersection between the two. We explore ways that the Black cultural experience (or better yet Black cultural praxis) has always brilliantly and organically demonstrated the shape and form of a scholarship of consequence. Black cultural praxis, or reflective action with a Black emancipatory influence, has always allowed freedom of movement, freedom of body, freedom of tongue, and freedom of voice. We translate what this cultural praxis teaches and urges regarding the transformation, unbinding, and freeing of both educators and educational spaces. We demonstrate how the intersection of hip-hop culture and Black cultural legacies can be instructive and transformative to educators. We invite educators to reimagine their classroom spaces by not only focusing on learning *about* hip hop but *from* it as well.

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Overview of African Cultural Legacies

Tete ka asom ene Kakyere
A proverb of the Akan people ("Ancient things remain in the ear.") (Vansina, 1971)

In his song *DNA* (2017), Kendrick Lamar, 12-time Grammy artist, boldly proclaims that he has *loyalty* and *royalty* inside his DNA. Lamar brilliantly explains the powerful impact of epigenetics and cultural legacies by highlighting that *power, poison, pain, and joy* are all a part of his DNA. In other words, our ancestors' experiences and cultural legacies are encoded in our DNA and includes triumphs and joys. From a Black emancipatory framework, King and Swartz (2014) refer to Lamar's understanding of the depth of Black cultural legacies and the impact on Black people's contemporary lives as (re)membering. (Re)membering can be understood as an act of reassembling cultural legacies that Europeans sought to *dis*member. These cultural legacies include Africans' identities, essence, and beings including languages, names, families, drums, and gods that were stripped from Africans during the enslavement and colonization of Black people around the globe.

Culture is the essential nucleus of what makes us human and "(t)he mind through memory carries culture from generation to generation" (Vansina, 1985). When we fail to situate hip-hop within African Diasporic culture or truncate Black history by starting our narratives with enslavement, it essentially reduces Black people to acultural beings—and, therefore, non-human. Against all odds, Black people do and have done what people all over the globe do—pass down cultural legacies—often in tacit, unseen, and powerful ways. Worldwide, we see evidence of Black cultural legacies among African descendant people. We will unpack and demonstrate the seamless connection to hip-hop and describe hip-hop as agentive, potent, and life-sustaining for Black scholars—whether they are educators or students.

Notwithstanding the caveat regarding overgeneralizations about cultural groups, a significant body of research has demonstrated general cultural strengths and legacies among people of the African diaspora (Boykin, 1994; Hale, 2001; Hale-Benson, 1986; Hilliard, 1992; King, 2005; Shade, 1997). Instead of adopting the common deficit-based beliefs (e.g., "What's wrong with Black students?", "They don't know anything," "They don't want to learn," or "We have to fix them"), educators would benefit from using students' cultural strengths as starting points for instruction (Boutte, 2016).

A summary of 11 of the major dimensions of Black culture (or cultural legacies) that have been cited in the literature as *deep culture* can be seen in Table 1. These dimensions are sustained by Black people across the globe—often in unconscious ways. They are stable though they morph over time and contexts; thus, educators should be intentional about observing *how* they show up. Ultimately, the vision is for educational institutions to integrate these (or other emerging or existing) cultural strengths as part of the pro-Black nucleus of curriculum and instruction, instead of merely using them as a bridge to learning Eurocentric content.

Table 1

Dimensions of African American Culture

African American Cultural Dimensions
1. Spirituality—an approach to life as being essentially vitalistic rather than mechanistic, with the conviction that nonmaterial forces influence people's everyday lives.
2. Harmony—the notion that one's fare is interrelated with other elements in the scheme of things, so that humankind and nature are harmonically conjoined.
3. Movement—an emphasis on the interweaving of movement, rhythm, percussiveness, music, and dance, all of which are taken as central to psychological health.
4. Verve—a propensity for relatively high levels of stimulation and for action that is energetic and lively.
5. Affect—an emphasis on emotions and feelings, together with a specific sensitivity to emotional cues and a tendency to be emotionally expressive.
6. Communalism/collectivity—a commitment to social connectedness, which includes an awareness that social bonds and responsibilities transcend individual privilege.
7. Expressive individualism—the cultivation of a distinctive personality and proclivity for spontaneous, genuine personal expression.
8. Oral tradition—strengths in oral/aural modes of communication, in which both speaking and listening are treated as performances, and cultivation of oral virtuosity. The ability to use alliterative, metaphorically colorful, graphic forms of spoken language.
9. Social time perspective—an orientation in which time is treated as passing through a social space rather than a material one, and in which time can be recurring, personal, and phenomenological. Time is acknowledged as a social construct.
10. Perseverance—ability to maintain a sense of agency and strength in the face of adversities.
11. Improvisation—substitution of alternatives that are more sensitive to Black culture.

The Hip-Hop Mindset Overview

In two years, hip-hop will turn 50. For the past five decades, hip-hop has fully and unapologetically embraced Black youth and young adults, situating their ways of thinking, being, and doing in the center of what is now a global culture. Hip-hop has

served as an important cultural system of inclusion for Black intellectual thought and growth (Chang, 2005; Hamilton, 2004; George, 2005; Jenkins, 2013b, 2020). At the same time that Black and Brown students were being silenced and pushed out of traditional P-12 classrooms, they began to create a cultural alternative. Hip-hop became a cultural space that welcomed their social criticisms; affirmed their lived experiences; and cheered on their expressions of rage against the power structures of America. Hip-hop culture has always brought marginalized communities into the center and allowed them to testify. This happens not just within the music, but more often, in the varied spaces created within the larger culture. In the article, "Hip Hop: A Culture of Vision and Voice," Sean McCollom (n.d.) stresses that,

> Hip Hop embraces these artistic elements, most definitely. But it also has blended and transcended them to become a means for seeing, celebrating, experiencing, understanding, confronting, and commenting on life and the world. Hip-Hop, in other words, is a way of living—a *culture*.

For many young adults, hip-hop has been such a critical cultural life experience that they have carried it with them onto their college campus and into their college experience. In his book, *Hip-Hop Culture in the Lives of College Students*, Petchauer (2012) shares the cultural value of resistant or underground spaces (as they are known in hip-hop). According to Petchauer (2012), the notion of the underground is a contemporary hip-hop lexicon that communicates ideas of non-conformity, self-creation, personal freedom, and alternative space. Within hip-hop culture, the underground is the space where folks "keep it real." The power structures of large commercial institutions cannot intercede and control the thoughts and work production of underground artists. Campus hip-hop spaces often create this same sort of grass-roots, culturally free space. Not only is there a sense of true intellectual and personal freedom, but in many ways, there is an intentional commitment to move in uncontrolled, uncensored, and unoppressed ways.

Hip-hop emcee and educator, KRS-One offers the idea that hip-hop is essentially about conscious movement. This means that it goes beyond being a culture that is simply inherited and taken for granted. Rather, hip-hop cultural participation demands intentionality:

> When you look at the terms, hip and hop-just what the terms mean—not getting philosophical yet. Just the term hip-hop. "Hip" means to know and "hop" means to move. Awareness-movement. Consciousness-movement, action, activity. Intelligence-movement, action activity. So hip-hop means conscious movement. Springing, leaping. "I'm hip to my hop." "I know why I move." "My movements-I'm aware of what I'm doing." "I'm deliberate" (I AM RAP, https://fb.watch/2453SF5_Uv/).

This concept of "conscious movement" is the foundation of the hip-hop mindset. How do we, as higher education instructors, move with a cultural intentionality as professionals? How do we incorporate a cultural purposefulness in our practice? In the context of the hip-hop mindset, conscious movement is not about learning how

to include hip-hop in the classroom so that your students can feel more included. Rather, this is about wrestling with how Black culture and Black cultural production matters to you as a person. Adopting a hip-hop mindset does not mean learning how to use hip-hop activities to teach *other* subjects. Rather, this framework pushes educators to sit as cultural learners and to allow hip-hop culture to teach you. Black culture is the subject, not the tool. The hip-hop mindset makes central Black habits of mind—ways of thinking, being and doing—and situates these mindsets as meaningful forms of knowledge that can teach us new approaches to leadership and professional practice (Jenkins, 2021). For colleges and universities to become authentic spaces of Black mattering, hip-hop culture specifically and Black culture more broadly must move from the campus underground (specialized courses, co-curricular programs, themed professional trainings) and become one of the major knowledge sources that informs how college educators and administrators lead, teach, research, advise, and engage with students and colleagues. The most critical takeaway is understanding hip-hop as a culture that embodies an ethic of excellence, freedom, and love.

The Hip-Hop Mindset is a theoretical framework informed by multiple research studies of hip-hop culture including a phenomenological study of culture in the lives of college students (Jenkins, 2013a); an ethnographic study of community-based hip-hop spaces (Jenkins, 2013b); a lyrical analysis of the knowledge production found in hip-hop music (Jenkins, 2011); a narrative study of the impact of campus open mics (Jenkins et al., 2017); and a phenomenological study of hip-hop habits of mind among elite educators and scholars (Jenkins, 2021).

This collective work establishes hip-hop as a cultural way of being and doing that directly influences how one shows up in the world—whether that means how they show up as a student or how they show up as a professional. When we say "show up," we mean the values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that a person brings into any space that they enter—their mindset. There are nine practices that form The Hip-Hop Mindset. A practice is defined as "a way of doing something" or "the application of an idea or belief" (https://www.dictionary.com/browse/practice). It is important to stress that in hip-hop cultural spaces, people are free to not just have their beliefs, values and attitudes, but they are also free to put their beliefs into action and to display those attitudes fully. These practices, which form the Hip-Hop Mindset Framework, are organized below in Table 2.

Table 2

The Hip-Hop Mindset Framework

Mindset	**Drive:** Having large ambitions, dreams and goals
Practice 1	Hunger: Dreaming, grinding, and working to not just meet one's goals but to "slay" them.
Practice 2	Competitiveness: Having high expectations and ambition to be the best. Black culture cheers and applauds those who "show up" and "show out." Further, it was two Black men (Muhammad Ali

	and L.L. Cool J) who made popular the term, "G.O.A.T." (Greatest of All Time)
Practice 3	Honor & Kinship: Kinship is about shining independently while maintaining community connectedness. Honor concerns having gratitude for the ways that others have "put you on" and learning to do the same.
Mindset	**Approach: T**he way one performs or "shows up" in their work
Practice 4	Creativity/Originality: Being original and/or unique; a value for innovating—being able to transform or remix something old into something new. Hip-hop artists are "seers" or visionaries who can see utility in what others may view as worthless.
Practice 5	Authenticity/Integrity: Representing oneself and/or community in a way that is real, clear, and true. Hip-hop is about accountability and showing up as your full, whole self (not a watered-down version to please others).
Practice 6	Ingenuity/Cultural Efficacy: Ingenuity concerns being clever and inventive. But before you invent anything, you must first believe that you can. Cultural efficacy is an optimistic belief in, appreciation for, and respect of one's culture and the people in it. You cannot represent the culture if you do not love it.
Mindset	**Posture: O**ne's presence within their work space
Practice 7	Confidence: A strong belief in one's ability. Confidence concerns having the guts to be a non-conformist; to tell the truth; and to try something new.
Practice 8	Claiming Space: "Owning" any space that you occupy. To own it means to confidently enter, move through it, and transform it knowing that you have the right (the talent, the skills, the ability) to do so.
Practice 9	Commanding Attention: Having a dynamic and engaging presence and knowing how to move the community. Speaking boldly and bravely (speaking loudly, in your language, and about the things that matter to your people). In hip-hop, microphones project your voice, they do not silence voices. Being heard is important.

As illustrated in Table 2, cultural authenticity, cultural confidence, and cultural efficacy are central aspects of the hip-hop mindset. This is particularly salient for educators. Cultural efficacy concerns a sense of cultural agency-having positive beliefs about a culture, understanding the strong contributions of a culture, authentically loving a culture (Jenkins, 2013a). Before educators can adopt a culturally inclusive pedagogical practice, they must first simply believe that Black culture matters—that it is positive and worthy of study in the first place. For non-Black educators, this might require developing a personal relationship with the

culture so that they can experience the deep professional benefits that occur when led by Black culture. While many Black professionals love Black culture, they may not identify with hip-hop culture or may not view it as valuable or beneficial. Several scholars have documented their love/hate relationship with hip-hop due to the misogynistic and homophobic messages found in some hip-hop music (Bradley, 2015; Durham et al., 2013; Hurt et al., 2006; Love, 2016a; Morgan, 1999). Therefore, when educators engage in hip-hop based education, it is imperative to create a space where students can value and critique hip-hop as a larger culture that both includes and moves beyond its musical element. This might mean pushing oneself to be re-educated to critically understand hip-hop culture while integrating it into professional practice.

For many educators, regardless of race, if we allow ourselves to be led by hip-hop culture, we will come to see that Black youth have been organically demonstrating what Black mattering looks like for decades. Hip-hop artists do not hesitate to proclaim Black culture and Black people as dope, fly, fresh, and the best. They will write a whole song and not feel compelled to talk about anything but the Black experience. They use quintessentially African beats and rhythms, and they dance in ways that allow their body to be free. The youth that created hip-hop, created their own freedom using their culture as the blueprint. They simply followed what they felt. We need more of this "freedom feeling" in education as opposed to the conventional colonized and controlling pedagogies often used in higher education.

Because the reality is students are not the only ones suffering and miserable in educational institutions, a hip-hop mindset can influence educators' drive, approach, and posture as a professional. Educators also need to "get free." The pressure to conform is strong in educational environments for Black students, teachers, administrators, and scholars. What hip-hop culture, and the broader African cultural experience from which it is rooted, gifts Black people is the permission to be our authentic selves.

Cultural Intersections of the Hip Hop and Black Cultural Dimensions

In this section, we explicate the intersection of the Hip-Hop Mindset Framework with the African Cultural Legacies Framework in order to demonstrate the consistency, pervasiveness, and continuity of Black culture. We seek to particularly analyze and demonstrate how a contemporary extended culture like hip-hop aligns perfectly with the longer history of African Cultural Legacies. The values, practices, moods, beliefs, and overall vibes are all congruent. What this ultimately means is that in order to center Blackness as an educator, foundational truths about Black culture cannot be escaped. We also pose several critical questions that push educators to wrestle with the implications that these habits of mind and cultural legacies have for their professional practices. As presented in Table 3, the intersections between hip-hop mindsets (drive, approach, and posture) and Black culture (oral tradition; verve, affect, communalism/collectivity; expressive individualism; social time perspective; movement; perseverance; spirituality; harmony; and improvisation) are apparent and powerful.

Table 3

Intersections Between Hip-Hop and Black Cultural Dimensions

Black Cultural Dimensions	Hip-Hop Cultural Practices	Critical Questions
Oral Tradition	• The spoken word: Lyrics, rhymes, verbal freestyles, poetry • Vocal Creativity: Flow, style, and creative content • Microphone: Projects voice and symbolizes your words are important	• How much or how little is the oral tradition embraced in our instructional practices? • As instructors, how do we flow? • How comfortable are we with our own voice? • To whom am I passing the mic? In other words, what voices are included as scholars and experts? (Quaye & Harper, 2007; Wichelns, 2021; Millard-Ball et al., 2021; Saunders & Kardia, 1997). • What language is allowed in the spaces that we curate? • Can students actually say it "slick" or must they conform to particular ways of speaking and expressing? • Can we, as the educator, relax our own tongue and engage students more creatively?
Verve	• Booming bass, aggressive emcees • Audacious acts • Over-the-top antics • Showiness • Loudness • "In your face" attitudes	• As educators, how loud can we turn up the volume? • What kind of energy are we willing to bring to faculty meetings? • What is the level of change we are comfortable creating in our curriculum? • How will we reconcile "keeping it real" with

		students and the pressures to "maintain professionalism" that come from the institution? • Who gets to decide what professionalism looks like?
Affect	• Freedom to express emotions • Speaking truth to power • Rawness and realness	• As educators, how do we feel? • Are we allowing ourselves to feel? • Can our classrooms become a space where everyone is allowed to be human rather than expert machines with all of the answers?
Communalism/Collectively	• Community of practice (Squad) • Shared interests and experiences with Community • Expectation to "represent" the community	• Who is our crew? • How do they make us better? • What larger community experiences do we draw from in our work? • How diverse is that experience? • What have we experienced in life? • Are we comfortable claiming our experience and telling the truth about who we are?
Expressive Individualism	• A value for being unique and different • A desire to stand out • Independence and interdependence: Each member of the squad has their own success and works collaboratively to make the larger brand successful	• What is our contribution? • What is our talent? • What magic do we bring to your work?

Social Time Perspective	• The party doesn't start until the place is packed • Freedom to wait until everything is ready	• How can we work to ensure that students are ready to engage rather than diving into a pre-planned lesson? • How might educators slow down and make time for community building before instruction begins?
Movement	• Breakdancing • Body language (Posture/swag)	• How can we recognize movement as critical to the psychological and physical welfare of students and educators? • How do we positively or negatively/stereotypically read body language or everyday body movement?
Perseverance	• Telling (and hearing) the story of endurance is valued • Hanging in there when on the "come up" (trying to make it)	• What have students and educators endured in order to be where we are? • Who are we currently and how did we get there?
Spirituality	• Drawing from and embracing natural, non-physical, forms of energy that flow through the human experience	• What is our purpose, calling, and passion? • How does teaching fit with our purpose, calling, and passion?
Harmony	• Cyphers as circles of energy in which performers share the mic and commune in a shared space • Hip hop artists recognize and embrace the inherent beauty in their geologic	• How can we create spaces not only where people are in harmony, but places where we are also in harmony with the rhythms of nature?

	spaces (e.g., urban, rural, suburban) regardless of pervasive deficit narratives about these spaces.	
Improvisation	• The DJ's creative talent for mixing and ear for rhythm • Freestyling in dancing and emceeing • Creativity in dressing, language, etc.	• As instructors, how are you fostering space for teachable moments or discussions that were not on the course agenda? • How are you allowing for creative expression in your instruction or in your classroom? • What languages are welcomed in the classroom?

Oral tradition is one of the most obvious ways that hip-hop culture carries forward African cultural legacies. When most people think of hip-hop, they envision an emcee. The oral tradition in hip-hop concerns lyrics, rhymes, and verbal freestyles that tell stories or share opinions. The spoken word. The microphone, as a visual symbol, communicates that one's voice matters. Passing the mic or grabbing the mic is an important act of creating or taking space to allow new voices to speak. Dropping the mic is a swag-filled act of confidence that indicates there is nothing left to be said—I said it all. But voice is central in hip-hop. Sharing the experience, shouting the truth, saying what needs to be said, passing down street knowledge or family wisdom are all elements of hip-hop culture inherited from this African cultural legacy. An educator that is not comfortable speaking freely, openly, and truthfully may not be comfortable creating a space for students to do the same (Riddle, 2018; Boutte et al., 2011; Rademacher, 2018).

Verve: Booming bass, aggressive emcees, audacious acts, over-the-top antics, showiness, boastfulness—hip-hop is loud, energetic and in your face. Those that love it, value the way that hip-hop hypes us and moves us. The energy is always maxed to the limit. It makes us feel alive. Verve concerns both the cultures of quiet that drive many P-12 classroom environments and college campuses, and it also concerns our level of comfort with turning up our energy as professionals (Rademacher, 2018).

Affect: "One of the most important things hip-hop gives its community is the permission to feel and to express those feelings. From anger to rage; from love to lust; from top dog confidence to underdog hunger; being centered in a hip-hop mindset is to be centered in authenticity and truth and to express that truth

regardless of the consequences" (Jenkins, p. 2021). Hip-hop is probably one of the few spaces in society where young adults are not only rewarded for speaking truth to power, but they are actually expected to be as raw and real as possible. One of the critical characteristics of effective teaching in P-20 educational settings, particularly in times of social unrest, is the ability to allow students to react to the world around them (Linsenmeyer & Lucas, 2017; Sathy et al., 2020). Flexibility to amend the syllabus, throw out the lesson plan and create a space where students can just speak and heal is essential for educators who are comfortable facilitating such discussions. For others, acknowledging the need to thoughtfully (but quickly) plan a guided engagement around the issues is also okay. But educators should let students know that we will talk, and that silence will not be the response to social unrest in our classrooms (Landis, 2008). As citizen scholars, we can reflect on what we are feeling as well.

Communalism/Collectivity: The crew or squad is a major aspect of hip-hop culture. Association with a highly skilled community of artists is critical to the reputation of a hip-hop artist. The members of a crew also push each other to be better. They are essentially a community of practice who share a deep interest in something (hip-hop) and work collaboratively to get better at it (Jenkins, 2021). But hip-hop culture is not simply about a cliquish association to a small crew or squad. Artists speak quite often to their community experience—larger social realities that might involve a shared since of place, circumstance, joy, resilience, oppression, and hardship (Love, 2016a, 2016b). It is also important to note that hip-hop began with young cultural conveners planning parties in rec rooms and gatherings at local parks (Chang, 2005). People gathering, dancing, socializing, and having fun has always been essential to hip-hop culture.

Expressive Individualism: Hip-hop culture is a particularly vivid example of this African cultural legacy, which is markedly different from Western concepts of individualism (Boutte et al., 2017). As mentioned earlier, within hip-hop crews, each member shines and stands out individually, but they are still very much a part of a crew or community whose resources, association, power, expertise, talents, and affirmation are very important to the individual artist. Each person's success makes the crew look good. But largely hip-hop artists are always striving to stand out as unique and different-to make their own unique contribution to the field. We need a lot more of this in the field of education. The ability to cultivate one's distinct professional personality or, in other words to just "be ourselves," is vital. Too often, educators are being molded and "trained" to be the same rather than distinctly different. A hip-hop crew wants that difference to shine rather than be shut down. Many educators need to start the process of becoming more of ourselves by first thinking deeply about who we are professionally.

Social Time Perspective: The African Diasporic community is notoriously known for viewing time as a flexible concept (Streamas, 2021). Hip-hop is no different. There is actually brilliance in this perspective when we view it through the lens of something like a hip-hop concert. The concert promoter might be concerned with the schedule and timeline (they are paying people by the hour, and they want to avoid riots of angry fans). But the artist only cares about taking the stage when

everything is right—they aren't concerned with being on time. This means the concert doesn't begin with a bunch of empty seats. Critical mass is important. Regardless of what is advertised on the poster, parties don't start until the place is packed, or it will look like a failure. In many ways, this is about cultivating a culture of care and mattering. Ensuring that the community is present is important. Within the education arena, this might mean more than checking to ensure that all bodies are in the classroom. A student being physically present and a student being mentally present are two different things. This is about not taking the stage until you have an audience. Ensuring there is transitional time to get into the mood of learning is necessary. This gives the students time to address issues or release emotions that may have occurred on the way to class, to munch a snack if their bellies are still empty, or to greet and say what's up to friends and comrades. There is much to do within the time constraints of any course, whether it is a high school or college classroom. But no learning will occur (whether you are talking or not) until the crowd is ready and present.

Movement: Hip-hop, of course, has an explicit focus on movement through breakdance. The term breakdance comes from the practice of creating a break in the music so that dancers could perform. That is how essential movement was to the culture. At the old-school hip-hop parties, space was created both in the music by the DJ and on the dance floor by the crowd for dancers to show off and show out. Ultimately, this was the culture creating space for bodies to do what they need to do: move. This is important insight for P-20 educational environments because it seems the higher one climbs in education the less mobile the learning becomes. Kindergartners are always moving while participants in doctoral seminars might often sit in a conversational circle. Even in that very literal example, and accounting for differing levels of physical mobility among classroom participants, more can probably be done to mobilize the higher education classroom. This might include embracing place-based learning and going off campus or project-based learning that requires the agility and flexibility for students to engage and communicate with each other (Braxton et al., 2004; Kuh, 2008). It might also involve adopting instructional strategies like flipped classrooms that situate the lecture at home allowing for more action in the classroom. Or it may be as simple as just allowing more freedom for students to experience content in both mental and physical ways. It is a critical insight for educators to recognize that sitting still isn't natural at any age.

Perseverance: So many hip-hop songs talk about the hardships an artist has endured and the ways they pushed to come out on top. The act of remembering as a source of affirmation and motivation is a cultural legacy present throughout the African Diaspora and hip-hop culture. It makes sense that a community of people that have been the target of American disenfranchisement, oppression, and discrimination would speak on how they survived this experience if given a microphone to talk to the world. Hip-hop rhymes and lyrics are a form of testimony to the tenacity of a community—to not just make it and stay alive but to thrive and come out winning. More opportunities for all of us in education to share our stories and tell our truths are needed. Offering opportunities for cultural reflection, self-authorship, and testimony is very important in the education of Black college

students (Harper, 2010; Patton et al., 2017; Rendon et al., 2004) and the educators who teach and advise them. Understanding ourselves as cultural beings has been affirmed as the critical first step in anti-racist work (Gorski & Dalton, 2019; Helms, 1995, 1997; Kendi, 2019). Every person on a college campus needs an opportunity to explore deeply where they have been, what they have been, and who they currently are (Boyd, 1998).

Spirituality: Musical genres often create clear lines and distinctions between certain types of music. For example, Black spiritual music might be classified as gospel with hip-hop music only being included if the content explicitly discusses a religious faith. But many artists and cultural producers argue that their work is a mix of the social, the political, and the spiritual (Giorgis, 2015; Robinson, 2020). Hip-hop performers and artists often view their craft as part of their life purpose to speak truth to power on behalf of humanity—particularly for and with people who have been or are minoritized.

When the "spiritual" is understood as that which transcends religious boundaries, it becomes a space that includes any form of cultural production that expresses the natural, non-physical form of energy that flows through the human experience. Black cultural music production has always tapped this sense of spirituality through drums, banjo, guitar, organ, dance, voice, or beatbox. The power of the music and the audience's soul-filled response to it affirms the supernaturalness of life. Spirituality in this sense and particularly in relation to the field of education has no concern with religious teaching. It concerns what drives us as human beings. Often those who are brave enough to unapologetically and publicly love Blackness do so because they feel that love in the core of their being (Rodriguez, 2001). Central to the very concept of spirituality is connectedness. It is not simply that an incredible energy exists, it is about your connection to that energy. Likewise, when it comes to anti-racism in education, it is not enough that there now exists an incredible amount of energy for this work. Educators must wrestle with their connection to it, and, more specifically, their connection to Black people. In his work examining the "class-inflected nature of activist identifies," Stephen Valocchi (2012) suggests that among activists, the closer a person's life is (or has been) to the struggle for which they fight, the more their sense of activism shifts from being a career commitment to being a calling or way of life.

Harmony: In many ways, hip-hop culture has served as an example of humankind's hardheaded determination not to give up on the idea that harmony is possible. The incredible forms of economic, political, social oppression, and racism faced by the communities of youth and young adults that both created and carried forth hip-hop culture (Chang, 2005; Hill, 2016; Jenkins, 2006; Lomax, 2011) would make anyone doubt that living in harmony is the natural course of life. The building of the United States required the exact opposite of harmony—it called for physical division of people and severe differences in the lived experiences of those people (Kendi, 2016; Wilkerson, 2020)—one community living in peace and the other living in terror. The land that surrounded African Americans from slave labor camps to housing projects were social jails that limited movement and freedom (Alexander, 2010). But yet, young people saw community as more than the physical land or

buildings that surrounded them. They clung to the people close to them and to the culture that those people created. They found ways to stay conjoined and develop a sense of community and placemaking through the culture. This is why hip-hop artists constantly reference where they are from, even when they are from economically oppressed neighborhoods. Using the lyrics of their songs, hip-hop artists culturally transformed housing projects like Queensbridge and Marcy Houses into badges of honor and historical landmarks (Jenkins, 2021). They choose to show their community love, not judgement or contempt. Living in harmony has long been an African value. And Black people, Black activists, Black educators, and Black students continue to do whatever is necessary (protest, call-out, call-in) to transform our institutions into spaces where Black people can truly live in peace.

Improvisation is also central to hip-hop culture. The most obvious form is through the techniques of DJing, dancing, and emceeing. These performative aspects of the culture require an ability to freestyle and improvise. But beyond the musical elements, the larger culture itself is a story of improvisation—the creation of an alternative experience that was more sensitive to Black and Latinx youth culture. If schools today are still actively struggling to better include and welcome Black student cultures and voices, imagine what schools were culturally like in the 1980s. Young people like DJ Kool Herc (a student at an alternative vocational school credited with co-hosting the first hip-hop party that launched the culture) might not have been a part of creating hip-hop if their schools were actually spaces where they could engage and work out their cultural ideas (Jenkins, 2021). Those type of cultural incubator spaces did not exist at the time, so young people took to basement rec rooms and neighborhood parks and created them. Ultimately, improvisation is about invention, being able to create something more relevant, more accessible, more interesting than what exists. This is every educator's call to action in the current moment. When what we have does not work, it is time to create something new—to *flip and expand the script*.

Conclusion: Black Cultural Praxis as Strategies for Black Mattering

Black cultural frameworks, like the intersection of the hip-hop mindset and African cultural legacies, provide strategies for activating Black mattering university courses in actionable ways. In this case, Black mattering is not simply about caring for Black students or even having fundamental values and beliefs that racism, inequity, and discrimination are wrong. These frameworks pull us into a wider conversation about Black people broadly—Black communities, Black histories, Black ancestors, Black youth, Black artists, Black teachers, Black educational leaders, Black neighbors, and Black activists.

Educators at all levels can begin to reckon with how they interact and engage (or limit interaction and engagement) with the beauty and depth of Blackness that surrounds them every day. Is it possible to effectively teach Black college students in a classroom if Black culture is detested when heard on the radio, observed in meetings, or walked past it on the streets? If high levels of verve, affect, movement, and vocal expression are in direct opposition to how classrooms are managed, then Black culture might actually *not matter* in respective educational

spaces. This is why we argue that simply creating a lesson plan incorporating hip-hop or Black culture is inadequate. Our classrooms and professional philosophies at large are in need of a cultural revolution. Educators must build our capacity to not just understand cultural ways of being and doing when we see it in students, but more importantly, we must come to understand how we can embrace those same mindsets and cultural legacies in how we act, move, think, create, and facilitate as professionals. How can we move, flow, and approach teaching differently? There is much to take away from the intersections of these frameworks. For educators, freeing ourselves will entail being more flexible, honest, human, vocal, expressive, creative, unique, and authentic.

In her powerful talk, "The Masters Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," Audre Lord (1984) states:

> Those of us who stand outside the circle of this society's definition of acceptable women; those of us who have been forged in the crucibles of difference—those of us who are poor, who are lesbians, who are Black, who are older—know that survival is not an academic skill. It is learning how to take our differences and make them strengths. For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support. (p. 2)

In this article, we argue for educators of all races to do a better job embracing and embodying Black culture in their professional ways of life. Whether you are a white college professor with little exposure to and knowledge about Black cultural experiences and histories or a Black college professor who has been taught to discard Black culture in order to succeed, we offer two cultural frameworks that can be used to redirect professional mindsets and reorder the professional movement of educators in ways that are informed by Black cultural ways of knowing, being, and doing. We often hope to have comrades in the struggle—university presidents who get it, faculty who honestly admit they need to do better, and administrators who are radically pushing, challenging, and changing the system. But, the reality is that some institutions have these people and some institutions just do not. Some educators in higher education like the institution just the way it is—it works for them. We cannot define the master's house as our only knowledge base or source for professional development.

Instead, we must revolutionize the way that we conceive of concepts like "knowledge," "professionalism," and "scholar." This means challenging ourselves to imagine various types of life experiences as spaces of significant learning and professional development. Ultimately, we must begin to view culture itself as a source of knowledge that can and should inform the ways we conceptualize, develop, and engage our professional approach and practice.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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