

New Report: Hip-Hop Education Working For Marginalized Students



New York, NY – A new report reveals an emerging pattern of success among marginalized students participating in Hip-Hop education, leading to higher attendance and graduation rates.

Re-Imagining Teaching and Learning: A Snapshot of Hip-Hop Education, a groundbreaking report and national scan of Hip-Hop educational programs by the Hip-Hop Education Center (H2ED Center) at the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education (Metro Center) at the New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, is being released today.

“Hip-Hop”based education is empowering thousands of youth and adults in the U.S. and around the world to develop their identity, voice, and leadership in society,” said Martha Diaz, Co-Principal Investigator and Founding Director of the H2ED Center at the Metro Center. “We are pleased to present our findings and use this report as an opportunity to analyze, dialog, and harness Hip-Hop to catapult students and teachers to higher levels of success within both elementary and higher education.”

Re-Imagining Teaching and Learning: A Snapshot of Hip-Hop Education underscores how the culturally rich and indigenous art form of Hip-Hop encompasses key elements and skill-building activities including English language arts, entrepreneurship, leadership and team building, career development, identity formation, media literacy, storytelling, writing, oral debate, negotiating, and problem solving.

Pedro Noguera, Executive Director of Metro Center explains, “Given the importance and presence of Hip-Hop in the lives of youth, Hip-Hop has great potential to positively impact their educational experiences.”

The report was made possible through generous support from the Nathan Cummings Foundation. Maurine D. Knighton, Director of the Arts & Culture Program at the Nathan Cummings Foundation explains, “the emergence of Hip Hop pedagogy is an exciting development that promises to extend the power of the art form to the classroom and beyond. It will engage young people and elevate their voices in ways that could transform lives and change the world. We are pleased to support the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education’s initial survey of the field and look forward to its dissemination.”

“Hip-Hop’s elements provide significant life and career building skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, self-awareness, time management, and teamwork,” said Edward Fergus, Ph.D., Deputy Director at the Metro Center.

An overwhelming 76% of the nearly 300 Hip-Hop participants, courses, and programs indexed in Re-Imagining Teaching and Learning: A Snapshot of Hip-Hop Education integrate what Afrika Bambaataa, the “Godfather” of Hip-Hop culture calls the “fifth element”, or knowledge of self and community. The report also finds that in many instances, the history and development of Hip-Hop culture is used to engage students and teach about community development, organizing, and social justice.

Other key findings from Re-Imagining Teaching and Learning: A Snapshot of Hip-Hop Education include:

Programs indicated that students had higher attendance and graduation rates.

94.6% parents support the courses and programs, either by contributing financially, volunteering their time, and/or

enrolling their children in a program.

Government agencies, foundations, institutions of higher learning, NGOs, internal staff, and students evaluated 100 out of the 212 Hip-Hop education programs.

A decade after No Child Left Behind, the United States is still being left behind with regards to academic performance. Out of 34 countries, the United States ranked 14th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math. With 70% of eighth graders in the U.S. lacking proficiency in reading, it is time to reassess teaching methods and pedagogy. The glaring crisis of dropouts indicates there is an urgency to re-engage students with learning. According to Diaz, this is where Hip-Hop Education comes in.

As the report's findings show, in communities around the nation youth are learning to organize and build community, collaborate on music, publish books, and start businesses through Hip-Hop. It is critical that we harness Hip-Hop's impact and potential to transform the education field. Diaz explains, "The investigation of Hip-Hop education's potential has only just begun. Research must continue to help define and understand the terms posited by Hip-Hop education, including Hip-Hop culture, Hip-Hop aesthetics, Hip-Hop theater, Hip-Hop activism, Hip-Hop social entrepreneurship, and Hip-Hop philanthropy."

The report highlights challenges and issues expressed in the report about the negative stigma associated with Hip-Hop and the confusion about Hip-Hop culture/history, in addition to capacity building, infrastructure, and professional development of the field of Hip-Hop Education. Obtaining buy-in and administrative support and the loss or lack of funding were also major challenges. Throughout this economic downturn, arts funding has suffered severe cuts and Hip-Hop education is disproportionately affected.

Available for download on the H2ED Center website, (<http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/hiphopeducation/Research>

[h](#)), the findings of Re-Imagining Teaching and Learning: A Snapshot of Hip-Hop Education will be presented at the upcoming meeting of the Hip-Hop Education Center Think Tank, “Rolling Deep, Moving Forward: Professionalizing Hip-Hop Education”, at New York University, November 11, 2011. Practitioners, teaching artists, community leaders, administrators, business professionals, and business professionals, including Diana Mulligan (Rap Cool Health – Denver, CO), Mazi Mutafa (Word Beats Life – Washington, DC), Dr. Raymond Codrington (The Aspen Institute – New York, NY), TC Ellis (High School of the Recording Arts – St. Paul, Minnesota), Toni Blackman (U.S. State Department’s Hip Hop Cultural Envoy), Carlos 139 Mare Rodriguez (H2ED Center Scholar in Residence), along with Hip-Hop academicians and researchers from New York University, University of Wisconsin – Madison, Columbia University, Syracuse University, University of Chicago, Brooklyn College, and George Mason University will gather to discuss the scan and the future of Hip-Hop education.

The Metropolitan Center for Urban Education is a comprehensive center at New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development that focuses on educational research, policy, and practice. The Metro Center acts as a partner and resource at the local and national levels in strengthening and improving access, opportunity, and the quality of education in our schools. Our mission is to target issues related to educational equity by providing leadership and support to students, teachers, parents, administrators, and policymakers.

The Hip-Hop Education Center (H2ED Center) was formed to fully promulgate and explore the potential of Hip-Hop pedagogy. Officially launched in June 2010 through a partnership between the Hip-Hop Association and the Metropolitan Center for Urban Education at New York University, the H2ED Center is committed to providing effective affordable assistance to failing

schools and underserved communities to increase student engagement, academic achievement and social equity.