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Sampling an Inner DJ with Hip Hop Hopes: (Re)Writing Immigrant Identities for English Language Learners in Classroom Third Spaces

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AZTEC ACTIVISTS BY MELCHOR RAMIREZ, TUCSON, ARIZONA 2012 PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER TINSON

argue in this paper that inviting Raul's "inner DJ" (karimi, 2006) and his investment in hip hop culture served to (re)negotiate his school identities in ways that produced transformative third spaces (Gutierrez, Rhymes & Larson, 1995; Gutierrez, 2008) that supported his academic writing and a developing critical consciousness (Freire, 1970). This perspective rests in a foundational critical pedagogy that recognizes immigrant ELL students' resistance to dominant discourses of schooling and mainstream American society, and contends that these lived experiences offer productive opportunities for academic development.

Raul was a ninth grader in my intermediate English Language Learner (ELL) writing class when he wrote his immigration narrative of coming to America as an unaccompanied minor journeying north from El Salvador.

Intro

I made the trip to America alone [which] was scary. It took me one month and fifteen days from El Castillo, Provincia Norte, El Salvador to Springtown, Virginia. I was 12 years old when I made my journey to the U.S.A.

Raul was a ninth grader in my intermediate English Language Learner (ELL) writing class when he wrote his immigration narrative of coming to America as an unaccompanied minor journeying north from El Salvador. He moved around the East Coast to stay with different families in the two years before I met him, resulting in interruptions in his schooling, prolonged absences, and only partial identification of his learning needs. During this first year at Cuttersville High School (pseudonym), these struggles continued as he negotiated a schedule of ELL, Special Education (SpEd) and mainstream classes. Raul dwelled on the social margins, often observed to be sitting alone in the cafeteria, sometimes skipping lunch entirely for the refuge of a quieter space in the library, computer lab, or even the safety of the ELL homebase Room L2.

I recall one day after releasing my class to go to second lunch, I found him sitting quietly on the floor in the dark side hallway across from the ELL classroom L2 that lead to the ELL department office. He was hiding beneath his XXL hoodie sweatshirt, hanging barely baggy on his robust frame, listening to reggaeton artist Don Omar on his iPod. After the ritual exchanges of "what's up?" I asked him why he was not in the first half of class. With a familiar blank expression on his round face, over-stubbed to hide his adolescence, he admitted that he got confused about the rotating lunch schedule and went to first lunch by mistake. I invited him to hang out with me in the classroom, which was an opportunity to check in and maybe get some of his overdue work completed. We spent this quiet time listening to music, while he worked on finishing his draft about his "American Dream" of becoming a famous Hip Hop DJ. Although that Hip Hop dream may still be materializing, Raul eventually graduated high school into the reality of the immigrant struggles of work and living in the United States.

This paper interrogates some of the tensions that immigrant ELL students like Raul navigate between their multiple social and cultural identities in school spaces. I

In his essay "how I found my inner DJ" robert karimi (*sic*) (2006) proposes the notion of a "sampled consciousness" as a Hip Hop construct that recasts Hip Hop's fifth element, knowledge of self. karimi argues for this hybrid intersection of Hip Hop literacies and critical literacies in "sampling", which refers to the DJ's artistry of remixing parts of other songs, beats, lyrics, soundbites, etc. to create new mosaics of sonic art and discursive meaning through a new multilayered aesthetic. karimi explains that a sampled consciousness "is understood to have the power to transform reality"; it is:

a state of (self) being created by the act of sampling different experiences: education, stories, interactions, and observations. The individual takes these experiences, knowingly or unknowingly, and makes them part of their worldview, the way they create/interact. The consciousness is constantly in flux, alternating, adding, subtracting, choosing. Self (being) is being negotiated. We sample, blend, fade in and fade out the various experiences, remixing the self in service to its goal: zeroness. (p. 323)

As such, this third space study investigates the role of a critical pedagogy that engages the spatial practices of Raul's inner DJ by "sampling the words and sampling the worlds" of his immigrant narrative and Hip Hop hopes for a brighter future. Understanding and embracing Raul's inner DJ involves a remixing of his multiple institutional identities and (re)negotiation of his marginalization in schools. Along this line of inquiry, the principal research question explored in this paper is: How do immigrant ELL students (re)negotiate meanings and identities through hip hop discourses to produce third spaces in the secondary writing classroom? In addressing this question, this study aims to map the productive tensions of producing third spaces with students like Raul to co-construct glimpses of his hopeful future, one that strengthens his Hip Hop dreams that are the American Dream, if there continues to be one.

It is an important time in U.S. history to bring together the research, politics and education policy of immigrant ELLs, Hip Hop as global youth culture, and critical pedagogy. In the post-911 surveillance and security era, immigrant students, and Latinos in particular, face the growing militarization of southwestern borders, persecution of the undocumented, detention and separation of families, and constitutional struggles over educational rights. Over the last decade, the conservative, well-funded campaigns promoting English-only linguisticisms succeeded in eliminating bilingual education in California (1998), Arizona (2000), and Massachusetts (2002). The dismantling of the successful Mexican American Studies (MAS) program in Tucson, Arizona in 2011, despite years of dedicated community organizing and activism, and the constitutional battle in process, is a continued testament to the fierce political and ideological conflicts that play out in and through public education as a site of struggle. These current struggles reiterate that it is imperative to recognize how school spaces and institutionalized roles of teachers and students have the potential to both perpetuate and resist discourses of power that are represented in educational policy, institutional structures, and formal curricula. This study aims to contribute to better understanding and addressing these issues through production of third space for immigrant ELL students of the Hip Hop Nation.

Hip Hop as third space for immigrant ELLs

This paper contributes to research on immigrant ELLs through analysis of how Hip Hop culture promotes productive oral and written communication supported by engaging youth experiences of oppression in academic literacy development. I foreground the critical construct of third space as taken up in one strand of critical language and literacy research (Gutierrez, Rhymes & Larson, 1995; Gutierrez & Baquedano-Lopez, 1997; Gutierrez, Baquedano-Lopez, & Turner, 1997; Gutierrez & Orellana, 2006) that is particularly important for immigrant students. With an attention to critical discourse analysis of oral and written texts of the ELL classroom (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto & Shuart-Faris, 2005; Bloome & Clark, 2006), this paper builds on Gutierrez's (2008) evolving notion of a "grammar of third space" which focuses on different grammatical, lexical and semantic qualities of discourses of "social dreaming" within a collective third space. Immigrant students are encouraged to think of themselves as "historical actors" to consider how their past experiences and future visions of 'social dreaming' are manifested discursively and textually in teaching and learning spaces of the classroom.

It is an important time in U.S. history to bring together the research, politics and education policy of immigrant ELLs, Hip Hop as global youth culture, and critical pedagogy.

In this third space study, I also draw from critical studies of language and literacy (Leander, 2001, 2002; Leander & Rowe, 2006; Moje, Ciechanowski, Kramer, Ellis, Carrillo, & Callazo, 2004; Moje, 2004; Leander & Sheahy, 2004; Wilson, 2004; Wilson, Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000) that have incorporated cultural geographic perspectives on social space (Harvey, 1989; Lefebvre, 1974, 1991; Soja, 1996). In bridging education research on third space and Hip Hop culture, this study contributes in particular to better understanding how immigrant ELL students can identify with Hip Hop discourses (Ibrahim, 1999) and how teachers can draw on these non-school practices for developing academic literacy (Alexander-Smith, 2004; Dimitriadis, 2009; Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Kamberelis, 2001; Mahiri, 2004; Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002; Hill, 2009; Alim, 2011; Osumare, 2001). Petchauer's (2009) literature review of "Hip-Hop Educational Research" categorizes the emerging field as Hip Hop-based education, Hip Hop meaning(s) and identities, and Hip Hop aesthetics. Irby and Hall (2011) also reviewed research literature on Hip Hop to indicate a need for more research that is not from teacher-researchers and by outsiders to Hip Hop culture. They pointed toward new research directions toward "more expansive, penetrative, methodologically diverse studies . . . that capture how personal (e.g. race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, cultural disposition) and professional (teaching experience, educational background, grade level, subject area) identities shape the ways hip-hop pedagogies are implemented" (p. 234). While this is a teacher-researcher study, I contend that this paper still brings more diverse perspectives on Hip Hop culture in education research through new analytical methods and as I situate myself later on as an undocumented immigrant in the Hip Hop Nation.

Design & methods of a third space study

This paper is part of a larger ethnographic teacher-researcher study of a high school ELL writing class that aimed to redefine third space for immigrant ELL students (Hafner, 2012). This ethnographic case study employs methods of 'thick description' of the local research context (Geertz, 1973; Merriam, 1998), while also is guided by principles of critical ethnography that aim to problematize and make transparent the centrality of the researcher in rendering cultural portraits (Carspecken, 1996; Noblit, Floris & Murillo, 2004). I incorporate critical discourse analytic methods (Bloome & Clark, 2006; Fairclough, 1992, 2003) to look at 'micro-ethnographic' events of classroom interactions (Bloome et al., 2005). Data collection following ethnographic methods compiled a broad data set associated with classroom instruction over one school year, including fieldnotes, classroom video and audio, digital images, student work, semi-structured interviews, curriculum materials.

Analysis of these data was conducted through a recursive process of moving from broad theme or content analysis (Merriam, 1998) of field notes, and reviewing video and audio documentation, and other classroom artifacts, and then revisiting theoretical constructs in light of the data. Initial themes surrounding these classroom texts related to tensions surfacing from course content,

classroom participation and discussion surrounding tensions related to multiple social identities. More detailed codes and subcodes were developed to document varying modalities of classroom participation and textual production as they related to negotiating tensions around discourses of music/hip hop, immigration, race and ethnicity, marginalization, and resistance in school. Within identified critical events of classroom interaction, transcripts were reorganized by interactional units, which are a series of conversationally tied message units that entail both specific language as well as contextualization clues (e.g. intonation, pauses, stress, speed, volume, etc.). Interactional units were analyzed in terms of the social moves and social identities that were being projected into the classroom space through discursive moves, and the strategic interactions through material, abstract and experiential fields of meaning making. Critical discourse analysis with an attention to space and time allowed for a mapping of the shifting identities across teacher-student interactions in classroom spaces. Due to limitations in scope and focus, this paper provides only a partial discussion of the broader data analysis and findings that inform this argument.

Building Comm.Unity: Transformative designs for the ELL classroom

Academic and critical literacy development is negotiated around lived experience and negotiated social identities in the classroom third space that was governed by a spirit of Comm.Unity. This was a proposed collective identity that is reflected in the formula: communication + unity = Comm.Unity. Even though I am not a graff writer, a large graffitti-esque poster hung on the wall at the front of the classroom with the sub-text: Comm.Unity: The place where me, we and the world come together. I developed this notion of Comm.Unity previously during a summer school communications course for high school students with learning differences in which I developed a thematic unit around Hip Hop culture and personal expression through writing "verse" (e.g. rap) and creating "visuals" (e.g. graffiti). In developing Comm.Unity for a critical pedagogy, I have continued to use this construct in shaping collaborative learning communities in college education and youth development courses, and have increasingly invited students to co-construct and redefine its implications based on context.

Classroom group norms of behavior (in place of rules) were collaboratively generated as guiding social codes that scaffold academic and critical literacy work. This classroom third space of Comm.Unity is characterized by tensions around the academic content, interactional processes and compositional products of academic tasks, which are negotiated from the standpoint of members' diverse worldviews—or cultural, linguistic, religious, class and gendered identities. As a critical pedagogical framework for a diverse group of immigrant ELLs, my notion of Comm.Unity is allied to ethnic studies programs that seek to build students' full humanity, build caring communities, and bridge gaps in building transformative education for teachers and students (Romero, Arce, & Cammarota, 2009; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2011; Ginwright, Noguera & Cammarota, 2006).

The classroom Comm.Unity of this study was an ELL writing class comprised of ELL students in Grades 9-11 with ranges of intermediate proficiency. The class enrollment fluctuated with 12-14 students because of student mobility as some left the area or country and others arrived mid-year. Students represented countries including El Salvador, Ecuador, Thailand, Korea, Cape Verde, Cameroon and Bangladesh. There was also a range of socioeconomic and class backgrounds of students and their families which reflected the college town of Cuttersville in the state of Northeast (pseudonym). Several students were children of academic professionals affiliated with local higher education institutions, but the majority of students had poor, rural, and working class backgrounds. Most of the Latino students like Raul had migrated in arduous journeys, and some also experienced arrest and detention at the U.S. southwestern borders before relocating to be near extended family in Northeast. Some students were in legal proceedings regarding pending deportation, petitions for legal immigration status, and securing home country passports. There were two teen mothers at the start of the year and four by the end of the year; so discourses of family, culture, and gender roles and identities, for men and women, were also central in the broader data analysis.

Many of these students, especially those with financial needs for family in the United States and/or their home countries, worked heavy part-time or full-time schedules, mostly in the kitchens of local food establishments and fast food chains. During the school year, several students were directly affected by immigration raids on such restaurants, targeted for their employment practices. Some students even skipped work and lost their jobs out of fear of arrest. This context is important to understanding how these third space tensions were integral to the classroom Comm.Unity by engaging students' diverse and multiple identities with attention to lines of oppression of their lived social spaces.

As a starting point for framing third space production in the Comm.Unity, it is relevant to position my own identity in relation to Hip Hop culture alongside Raul's membership engagement with the Hip Hop community. I am a long-time fan who was born along with the birth of Hip Hop and came of age in the Golden Age of Hip Hop. Out of respect, and in recognition of identity politics and claims of authenticity and "the real" (e.g. Forman, 2002), I situate myself on the sociocultural margins of the hip hop community. While I enjoy and appreciate the multiaesthetic arts of Hip Hop culture, and I believe in the power of the fifth element, knowledge of self, I am not one who contributes to cultural production directly. This is significant because it positions me outside the discourse community. By contrast, Raul was actively invested in the Hip Hop community, constantly plugged into the music, working and learning to DJ, wearing Hip Hop styles, producing social space imbued with Hip Hop discourses, and his Hip Hop hopes in writing about the future. Taken as a cultural difference between us, our lived experiences intersected around Hip Hop in ways that allowed for renegotiation of our common identities in school spaces. Irby and Hall (2011) suggest there is a need for new research that engages Hip Hop from the outside. I propose

this study as my remix as an undocumented immigrant of the Hip Hop Nation. I am a hip hop dreamer awaiting immigration reform.

Immigrant identities of a hip hop American Dream

What I am feeling in the USA, is that people can get a lot of opportunities working really hard to make it. But if you are just coming to have fun, it can make you pay the consequence, like getting in jail and being deported or even dying because there is a lot of violence in the best cities.

This excerpt from his narrative provides glimpses of Raul's take on the "American Dream." There is the hope of opportunity and meritocracy that rewards hard work but also the reality that social and cultural adjustments include many potential snares as people strive to get ahead. Raul faced his own struggles during the school year that entailed conflicts with his school obligations, family expectations, and his investment in Hip Hop. Further analysis of Raul's compositions and classroom participation reveals a particularly complex profile of an immigrant ELL student with special needs that becomes marginalized within institutional spaces of CHS, where 8.8% of the students were Latino and only 2.2% recorded as Limited English Proficient (LEP).

Raul would fit the deficit-laden label of an "at-risk" student, although his complex learning needs are obscured by intersecting lines of oppression as a second language learner, as an immigrant, as a low-income minority, as an adolescent male of color in America. Excessive absences, accumulated missed work, and failing grades were part of Raul's profile as a struggling student. He was often positioned in school as even further "at-risk" when he got arrested and had to serve a community service probation. Raul's lived experiences in school were greatly structured by his dual institutional designations as a SpEd and ELL student. These two institutional labels get stuck in disproportionate numbers to culturally and linguistically diverse students like Raul (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Harry & Klinger, 2006; Klinger & Artiles, 2003). These institutionalized identities, and the official and unofficial discourses that shape them, can have significant impact on tracking immigrant students along educational paths characterized by unchallenging subject matter and low expectations for student achievement (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). As immigrant students are often tracked by low expectations, often stemming from deficit perspectives of Limited English Proficiency, their learner identities can be shaped by a trajectory of frustration and failure rather than success and potential, which can lead to students' disengagement and resistance to school. In addition to the cultural-linguistic diversity of immigrant communities and the influence of varying historical conditions of migration, ELLs are affected by contexts of prior schooling, native language literacies, and divergent experiences across immigrant generations (Harklau, 1994; Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003; Roberge, 2002).

Bringing marginalized groups, especially immigrant ELL students like Raul and families from low-income households, further into the center of the educational process is of paramount importance.

Raul was sixteen years old and in the 9th Grade at the time of data collection. He emigrated from El Salvador in a 3-month journey over land as an unaccompanied child that turned 13 years old along the way. He arrived in the Cuttersville school district for grade 7 when his initial referrals for special education began. He relocated to Virginia where his father was living at the time since his parents migrated separately. However, this proved to be a "lost year" as Raul reportedly had periods of truancy for several weeks at a time. He returned to Cuttersville for Grade 9, when his Individualized Educational Program (IEP) underwent a formal annual review during the course of the study. Some of the details of his "non-specific disability in writing" included problems with generating written language in longer assignments, comprehension of longer reading assignments, retaining and recalling instructions, recalling information in testing situations, and short-term memory problems. A significant clue of narrating his institutional marginalization as a SpEd-ELL student is that the re-evaluation process for his IEP included the frequent backlog in referral and assessment processes, which in this case required a trained bilingual psychologist. Raul was eventually reassessed late in the spring of the school year.

Bringing marginalized groups, especially immigrant ELL students like Raul and families from low-income households, further into the center of the educational process is of paramount importance. Differentiated approaches aimed at academic success for ELLs (e.g. Gebhard, Author & Wright, 2004) in an era of high stakes testing (Orelus, 2010; Pandya, 2011) need to increasingly incorporate critical pedagogies that draw on and interrogate the lived spaces of cultural and linguistic marginalization that are inherent for immigrant youth, and especially those that are low-income, undocumented, and undereducated.

These aspects of Raul's insitutional identities, and their programmatic role in shaping the school spaces he inhabited (including the quiet side hallways), are key to analysis and understanding of tensions he encountered and perpetuated in the classroom. Through closer ethnographic analysis of the broad data set, the chronotope (i.e. time-space construct; Bakhtin, 1986) of "mediating Raul" surfaced where Raul's "(mis)placed humor" during student sharing became a flash point; this was the case during the Comm.Unity Café readings of student compositions at the end of the focal unit. However, in looking more closely at challenges and opportunities in supporting Raul's learning, I also argue in this study that critical interrogation of the chronotope of immigration tied to his investment in Hip Hop culture offer moments of production of third space that generate transformative opportunities for renegotiating student identities in the classroom.

The DJ “doing my dream job”

Raul’s social identity and investment in Hip Hop culture, as a discourse community and commercial industry, was his hope to “get my driving license and get a car to become a famous DJ.” In the beginning of the school year through the Christmas break, Raul had been helping his uncle on Sunday nights working with him as a DJ in the nightclub despite being underage. As he recounted to me on several occasions, he was exposed to the nightlife both inside and outside the club after hours. As he wrote in his New Years Hopes composition: “I was DJing on December 31st, New Years; I was at the **Pacific Club** (sic) seeing all the people dancing. I felt so good.” He underlined and bolded the club name, which could carry many semiotic meanings, but in the least, represents an attempt to literally underscore that he was “doing my dream job.” He beamed with smiles and almost giddy pride at sharing with me what it is like to see people grooving to *his* music. He wrote in his immigration narrative later about his hopes in Hip Hop: “It feels really good that I could be famous someday and get a mansion with many kids and a wife.” While one can scrutinize such adolescent statements as idealistic day dreams, such hopeful visions for our immigrant students carry our national mythology of an American Dream that is attainable through hard work and dedication. However, as mainstream institutions readily point out, the educational and career pathways in business, law, medicine, or even education, and the trends toward dwindling K12 arts programs, signal ever narrowing opportunities for pursuing that dream by sampling the inner DJ in formal education curriculum.

Ironically, his progress toward these future goals was impeded by his work as a DJ, which became a source of tension and conflict with his familial obligations and school responsibilities. Unfortunately, one incident of his coming home at 5:00 a.m. on Monday morning after DJing on a Sunday night, and coming to school late and unprepared, would eventually be the cause for this dream job to end. This ending was negotiated in the context of an IEP re-evaluation meeting, and while he consented that these interests were in conflict, it is a hard reflection of third space tensions central to this analysis. Up until this incident, I was actively encouraging him to pursue his Hip Hop dreams and encouraging his textual exploration of this identity in writing assignments. The conflict that arose, however, forced me to retreat somewhat to an institutional space of teacher, with principal obligation to his best interests as a student and adolescent who had to refocus priorities and attention to school space.

Following the meeting I addressed the issue with him directly and in private. I explained that I understood how important the experience was because of his passion for Hip Hop music and that it was also a great opportunity to learn the skills of DJing working with his uncle. He recounted that after the club closed that night he was brought along by his uncle to eat with some “crazy” girls, which was accompanied by the sexualized suggestion of his reaction to their dancing style and other social behavior. We discussed directly that even though he loved DJing this was not something he could continue because there is no

way he can be ready for school being out so late, and especially the issue of respecting the wishes of his mother. At the end of our conversation following the IEP meeting, Raul admitted to me that he knew it was problematic and he eventually stopped DJing at the Pacific Club.

Reading the world through Hip Hop: ‘The government is always cheating’

The tensions of negotiating his DJ identity and investments in Hip Hop discourse communities becomes apparent in a key curriculum unit that was focused on students writing their own personal narrative of Coming to America. The unit began after the national holiday for Martin Luther King (MLK) Day and we had a discussion and viewing of MLK’s “I have a dream” speech in which the students discussed the meaning and significance of this civil rights leader, his work and message about the oppression of American history and contemporary politics. Students used this text to identify key nouns such as freedom, hopes, opportunity, and began to make intertextual connections to an immigrant narrative of a female student from El Salvador. This textual model was a significant connection for our many Salvadoran students in negotiating the tensions between home and school discourses. We engaged in textual analysis of the narrative while identifying different genre features of narratives such as descriptive language, simile/metaphor, and use of dialogue with correct punctuation. Students did writing skills work on organizing information by time and sequence, while practicing the past, present and future tense.

Raul’s composition from this unit met similar organizational challenges of lost pre-writing and a string of absences set him back in his writing process. One decision I made in this process was to allow him to rework his previous unfinished New Years Hopes essay. In this unfinished work he talked about his dreams of becoming a Hip Hop DJ, so we negotiated how he could continue developing these ideas and incorporate them as the “after” part of his immigration story; the writing process and unit was scaffolded sequentially in before, during and after segments, each with distinct language objectives related to time, verb tense, transitions, etc. As he was behind in the drafting stages, I was concerned that he would not be able to complete the composition. He reinvested himself in that draft and was able to expand his ideas considerably. He evidenced his discourse knowledge and incorporated more descriptive supporting details in defining reggaeton’s musical genealogy “from basic beats of hip hop, reggae, dancehall and all the Latino rhythms like bachata, merengue, salsa and cumbias.” Aside from the material wealth of musical success so prevalent in discourses of Hip Hop bling bling, his justification relates to dreams of family: “It feels really good that I could be famous someday and get a mansion with many kids and a wife.” His cultural identity and pride is a clear motivation for his future success, as he also wishes proudly to become a famous rapper to “defend all my Latin people.” This reference clearly illustrates an identification with Hip Hop, and reggaeton, as a discursive form that is a source of community pride. In the concluding paragraph of his essay he connects his musical dreams to the chronotope, or time-

space in Bakhtinian terms (1986), of the American Dream being achieved through hard work. A critical awareness of the tensions between myth and reality of these immigrant discourses is also clear as he comments that “if you are just coming to have fun, it can make you pay the consequences, like getting in jail and being deported or even dying because there is a lot of violence in the best cities.” This statement also indexes class position of his lived experience and the space-times of his arduous immigration journey as an unaccompanied youth traveling by land from El Salvador.

Raul’s understanding of political themes of Hip Hop discourse such as class politics is evident in an informal interaction in which the teacher is scaffolding the students’ own critical literacy and “reading of the world” through Hip Hop. As narrated in the opening vignette, the classroom interaction occurred when the teacher and student had the time and space for a focused exchange over a lunch period when Raul decided to stay in the classroom. The represented interaction below illustrates how the teacher and student negotiate this relationship in immigrant discourses of his Hip Hop hopes and the American Dream. This transcript is an excerpt from the full Hip Hop Hopes (Appendix) that is the basis for detailed analysis of the interactional units (Appendix) that informed the identity mapping diagram presented in the subsequent section.

Transcript: Hip Hop Hopes (Excerpt covering IUs 2-4)

1. Teacher: So when you are talking about your hope related to your music, how does the music make you feel? Why do you love hip hop? Why do you love reggaeton?
2. Raul: I don’t know. I just love it.
3. Teacher: Why? You got a reason. This is about you figuring it out.
4. Teacher: Why? What do you love about reggaeton?
5. Raul: Huh? (*Staring at the floor*)
6. Teacher: Why do you love, why do you love music? Why do you love hip hop and reggaeton
7. Raul: I don’t know, the beats, hip hop and ...
8. Teacher : What does it tell you about the world?
9. Raul: It tells you many things happening in the world.
10. Teacher: Like?
11. Raul: Like, the government is always cheating about us.
12. Raul: That people are from minus class, little class.
13. Teacher: Lower class
14. Raul: Yea, lower class. They just think that we are like nothing.
15. Raul: That’s just what I think ... and also I like the dance, how XXXX (Spanish). (*breaking into a smile, changing tone*). Yeah. (*sweeping his head to the side*)

The teacher prompts the student to explicitly reflect on the discursive meanings he draws from Hip Hop. When probed for the reason why he loves Hip Hop, the student is not able to immediately articulate a reason (Line 2, 7); although upon second questioning he mentions “the beats” which is a reference to the material aesthetics of pulsing rhythms that drive the dance floor (Line 15) in the work of the DJ. He mentions in later interactions that the reason he loves DJing is because it makes him feel great that people can “come together to my music” which is source of fulfillment and hope for a musical future.

The teacher changes his line of inquiry, however, by asking directly about how Hip Hop discourses are representative of a critical literacy that helps Raul “read the world” (Freire, 1970); “What does it tell you about the

world?” (Line 8). The student responds with a social critique about inequitable class politics and a social position as “low class” that is oppressed by a government that “is always cheating about us” (Line 11), implying his own lived spaces of marginalization and hardship both in his home country and as an immigrant in the United States. Here the community of “us” could refer to the low-income communities in general, or more specifically to the Salvadoran or Latino immigrant community with which he identifies. Fairclough (2003) explains that space and time, co-constituted as space-time, are socially constructed and represented in texts, and also constitute a linking of different scales of social life (Harvey, 1989, 1996, 2006). In this example, the space-time of Raul resituates himself on the margins of these abstract spaces of a global class politics, in which the government does not equally represent the interests of all its citizens equally. His immigrant identity and lived spaces (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996) of his physical migration over land are rooted in material spaces of poverty. After advancing his social critique at a global space-time, Raul repositions himself locally on these margins of political discourse, by qualifying in the subsequent line that this is “just what I think” as if he is not in his place to critique the system, especially not from within the official spaces of the school and classroom. However, the analysis and argument of this paper supports Raul to bring his critical “sampled consciousness” into the classroom as a basis for academic literacy development.

Mapping student identities: Teacher and student (re)negotiating profession and passion

Analysis of this critical spatial event with Raul, the classroom transcript of Hip Hop Hopes (Appendix), lead to an elaborated analysis that was the basis for the identity mapping (Figure 1). Analysis of both space-time scales and temporalities provided clues to later identifying the discursive boundaries of interactional units (see Appendix). I conducted a detailed line-by-line analysis of the transcribed interactions with an attention to the communicative functions of each interlocutor to identify the particular discursive meanings being negotiated and their implications for social identities being animated in classroom space (Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto, & Shuart-Faris, 2005). I revisited in a recursive fashion each of these different spatial analyses across the transcript, revising and deepening analysis in order to identify discursive boundaries and interactional units. Detailed analysis of interactional units over a 20-page matrix lead to the mapping in Figure 1 of shifting identities of Raul as teacher an student renegotiated immigrant identities in the classroom.

The subsequent interactional units of the transcript show a shift in chronotopes (Bakhtin, 1986) that reflect a discursive movement across time and space. This also affirms the student’s musical dreams and positions him and the teacher on equal ground being passionate about their work. These chronotopic shifts and renegotiations of student identity are represented in mapping of space-time shifts. Through the remaining interactional units, we trace a shifting of chronotopes that allows space for diverse student identities to be incorporated in classroom work. In interactional units (IUs) 5-6, it prompts a time-space shift

from the student's Hip Hop hopes of the future to the chronotope of immigration which is the focus of the composition. As the teacher relates the chronotope of the student's personal immigration and his discovery of Hip Hop, the student shifts the time-space stating that Hip Hop music is important to his future. IU7 shows a time-space shift to the present as the teacher prompts the student to reflect on what he can do to work toward this future goal which sets up an invitation to talk about his present activities as a DJ (IU8). With several time/tense shifts, the teacher critiques the immigration myth of the American Dream building discursively on the student's previous reflection on Hip Hop as critical literacy by nominalizing America as a "nobody" that is not going to "show up at your doorstep."

The chronotopic shift of IU8 takes the exchange into the time-space of a Hip Hop club and Raul's current activities as a DJ mixing music. These exchanges within the club chronotope are significant as the teacher prompts the student to reflect on the emotional sensation—the lived spaces—of making people "come together" and "move to my music." This repositions the student as Hip Hop DJ, as an important and central community member in Hip Hop, and as the one who produces the musical space of the Hip Hop dance party. Ironically, the student's sense of importance within the club time-space reflects a principal third space tension of the study: the student's strong investment in Hip Hop, and the teacher's encouragement and attempts to build academic literacy from those lived spaces. Yet, an eventual Hip Hop-home-school conflict repositions both teacher and student within dominant institutional spaces that discourage the DJ.

IUs 9-11 are also significant in repositioning the student as having valid professional aspirations as a DJ, affirming that making music and making people move is personally fulfilling which is of great importance in choosing a profession that is a "labor of love." The teacher makes chronotopic parallels in asking if students would want a teacher that does not like teaching, to which he answers emphatically "No!" This shift to the chronotope of fulfillment of teachers—and, therefore, myself as his teacher—can also be interpreted as a statement about the current interaction (i.e. Hip Hop Hopes as critical spatial event) as fulfilling and that my relationship with him as his teacher is fulfilling. In making this chronotopic parallel of the DJ and the teacher as having equally fulfilling "labors of love", teacher-student discourse puts the DJ and the teacher on equal professional ground that I argue represents third space production in the classroom. Nevertheless, in IU-12, the teacher quickly shifts back to the present academic task and the time-space of the writing assignment. As it appears that the student has lost the focus on the conversation as scaffolding for his writing assignment, the teacher proceeds to review the key ideas that were discussed, underscoring in particular the emotional reflections of the student on his sense of fulfillment and hope in making people dance and move: "That gives you hope, joy, happiness."

Transcript – Hip Hop Hopes (Space-time scales & line numbers from transcript analysis)

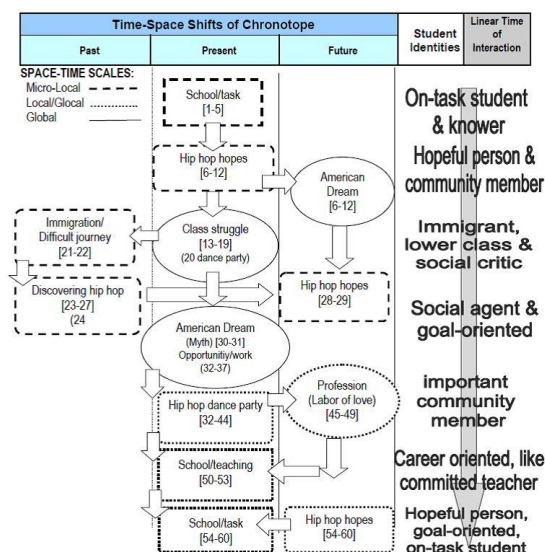


FIGURE 1. MAPPING IMMIGRANT STUDENT IDENTITIES IN CLASSROOM DISCOURSE

Implications

The consistent theme of Hip Hop discourses are prevalent in this study of Raul's multiple identities as seen in analysis of focal data discussed in this paper. These data also illustrate the content themes of his immigrant experience that reflect a first-hand awareness of contexts of poverty and economic and social survival in America and El Salvador, his "two hoods" as he later represented in a visual text for a project on describing place. Murray Forman (2002) draws on Lefebvre's spatial theory (1991) to frame and analyze the inherent spatialities of Hip Hop discourses and the lived spatial practices that shape identity construction of its community members. He writes, "The prioritization of spatial practices and spatial discourses underlying hip-hop culture offers a means through which to view both the ways that spaces and places are constructed and the unique kinds of space or place that are constructed" (Forman, 2002, p. 3).

As data and analysis of the broader study illustrate, Raul's investments in Hip Hop discourses are a prominent situated identity which is layered in his classroom participation in the ELL composition classroom. The tensions that arise in negotiating his Hip Hop identities, and their hybrid mixtures of his ethnic and immigrant identities, present both challenge and opportunity in building investments in his academic literacy and school spatial practices. Textual analysis of Raul's compositions provides an important perspective on how he negotiated the multiple meanings stemming from his academic and personal (i.e. social, cultural, linguistic, ethnic, racial) identities. Situated at the nexus of his student identity as a member of the ELL writing class and as a "struggling" SpEd-ELL student, Raul's meaning-making process involved the constant interplay of participation and resistance in academic tasks largely due to his (dis)organizational problems related to his identified (and unidentified) learning needs. The discursive representations in the focal transcripts evidence how Hip

Hop culture and discourse has offered him a lens of critical consciousness through which he makes meaning of his lived experience; the beats, rhymes and life through which he gains a partial view of the world (Hill, 2009). In addition, attempts to encourage his DJ identity are shown to have important potential for student engagement that builds academic literacy by incorporating his funds of knowledge and lived experience through Hip Hop. His Hip Hop dreams are clearly voiced and narrated in his compositions discussed in the data analysis. Narrative analysis of his work over the school year reveals these consistent chronotopes of his Hip Hop dreams as part of his immigrant hopes. Nevertheless, these findings also illustrate the need for deeper consideration of the tensions of negotiating school identities with his personal identities as an immigrant Latino male, an invested member of Hip Hop culture, and his marginalization as a "low class" person "cheated" by the government, as his words describe.

As a teacher-researcher, I also draw methodological and epistemological implications from this third space study on how teachers' own reflective practice, enacted through our own multiple identities, can both encourage and discourage the development of both critical and academic literacies in the classroom. As a critical teacher-researcher, I aim to engage reflexively in how my own identities influence the production of third spaces, which rests in recognizing and navigating social tensions. Following Solsken, Willett & Wilson-Keenan (2000), my intention is to "disrupt the prevalent dichotomy in research whereby classroom practices are described in terms of either celebration or critique in favor of a more complex view of the necessary interweaving of celebration and critique" (p. 204). I caution that an essentialized conception of immigrant and ELL students has become a substitute for deficit perspectives of "low income", "at-risk", "minority", "bilingual/bicultural" students, among other labels. Being critically aware of how we position immigrant ELL students, especially those with SpEd designations, has increasing relevance and intersection across urban and suburban contexts as immigrant populations migrate, relocate, and are resettled to transform the (sub)urban social spaces of schools and communities across the United States. There is a need to look at the cultural, linguistic, and discursive resources immigrant ELL students bring to the classroom, which includes investments in global Hip Hop culture, as well as the need to resist oppressive discourses that inhibit progress and prosperity toward that American Dream. Academic writing can provide that critical spatial praxis (Soja, 1996) that can be transformative for immigrant ELL students, and their teachers alike, as we allow the work of words become the work of transforming our world.

The negotiation of meaning and identities in the production of hybrid third spaces (Bhabha, 1996) as sites of cultural conflict has direct implications for considering school practices, curriculum and texts as colonizing. This implies the need for considering the experiences of immigrant ELLs, and non-dominant students generally, who can experience doubling of consciousness or dissonance between home discourses and school

discourses. This dissonance, however, also reveals tensions that can also be mobilized in producing a hybrid social space of cultural production in the classroom. "Thirdspace, then, becomes a productive hybrid cultural space, rather than a fragmented angst-ridden psychological space, only if teachers and students incorporate divergent texts in the hope of generating new knowledges and discourses" (Moje et al 2004; p. 43).

This also entails a balancing of institutionalized power structures not only reified in teachers' roles and responsibilities, but also in how students' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge (Moll, 1990; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) are incorporated in the negotiation of academic meanings and identities within a permeable curriculum (Dyson, 1993). The instructional synergy between the content and process of classroom third spaces indicate, however, the need for a respatialization of classroom pedagogy in which teacher and students can relinquish traditional classroom roles, identities and hierarchies. This encourages a redefinition of curriculum as social practice that reframes dialogic instruction that includes and constructs multiple forms of knowing that are rooted in students' lived experiences (Gutierrez & Baquedano-Lopez, 1997).

Outro

Hip Hop as cultural discourse constitutes one of the principal social communities that have points of convergence for the teacher and student, thereby serving as a discursive field for (re)negotiating meaning and participation in the lived spaces of school. The meditations on Hip Hop as a cultural and commercial phenomenon have become more widely prevalent across an array of arts and humanities, and social science disciplines, especially as the musical and discursive permutations of Hip Hop are seen in global spaces and are politically intertwined with social movements and struggles of the oppressed (e.g. M. Dyson, 2003). Hip hop is making its way across the world, in local and global ways, through its main discursive forms, or the four traditional elements, which include rapping, DJing, break dancing and graffiti. The fifth element of knowledge of self, speaks to a Freirean critical consciousness of the social conditions of the oppressed and how one is historically located, with the liberatory goal of positive social transformation. "It [hip hop] provides a sustained articulation of the social partitioning of race and the diverse experiences of being young and black or Latino in North America" (Forman, 2002, p.3).

There is increasing investigation by practitioners and researchers on tapping Hip Hop as popular culture as well as a valued discourse community that finds relevant intersections for building academic and critical literacies, particularly with urban youth of color (Alexander-Smith, 2004; Dimitriadis, 2009; Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Morrell, 2004; Kamberelis, 2001; Mahiri, 2004). Au (2005) provides an intriguing essay on how rap music has engaged in a discursive battle with education, using textual analysis of lyrical discourse that traces lived experiences of alienation and marginalization in school spaces. Nevertheless, invoking hip hop discourses in school curriculum to engage youth of color can quickly fall into the

snares of disempowering ideologies and benign multiculturalism in ways that are reproductive of oppressive structures.

In this study, I aim to engage these discursive tensions in significant ways that are in students' interests and have some contributions to improving classroom practice for immigrant ELLs; yet I too heed cautions of the trap of the "pseudocritical educator" (Macedo & Araujo Freire, 1998) who does not engage the tensions of Hip Hop and its cultural meaning for youth identity development. This shared identity and membership in a Hip Hop discourse community was intentionally reified by me as the teacher at different strategic moments as a means to engage the students in academic tasks. While there was the general interest in tapping students' funds of knowledge in creating a dialogic and permeable curriculum (Dyson, 1993), Hip Hop culture, and Raul's aspirations of becoming a DJ, were particular third spaces I pursued strategically as a means of engaging his student identity through academic writing, building Community relationships, and developing a critical "sampled consciousness" (Karimi, 2006) in the ELL classroom that has the power to transform realities.

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APPENDIX – Hip Hop Hopes Transcript w/ Interactional Units (IUs 1-12)

Context: During lunch period, when the student (RM) has chosen to spend time working on unfinished composition on New Year's Hopes, which was originally due before the Christmas and New Years holiday break. The student is sitting at the computer station next to the teacher's desk in the front of the room. The teacher is arranging materials near bulletin boards at the back of the

u-shaped classroom desk set-up. Conversation begins from across the room and teacher makes his way to be next to the student as the transcript of classroom interaction begins.

<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 1 – Student on-task, teacher moves to scaffold student writing; Student establishes hip hop discourse and interspatial links to future hope</p>
<p>T: So what are you working on?</p>
<p>RM: My essay</p>
<p>T: So you are on the computer right now? So, you need help with anything? You got an idea about the pieces?</p>
<p>RM: I am working on my music, my rapping, my hopes (<i>point to different writing on the computer screen</i>)</p>
<p>T: There you go.</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 2 – Teacher takes up hip hop discourse and scaffolds student reflection on investments</p>
<p>T: So when you are talking about your hope related to your music, how does the music make you feel? Why do you love hip hop? Why do you love reggaeton?</p>
<p>RM: I don't know. I just love it.</p>
<p>T: Why? You got a reason. This is about you figuring it out.</p>
<p>T: Why? What do you love about reggaeton?</p>
<p>RM: Huh? (<i>Staring at the floor</i>)</p>
<p>T: Why do you love, why do you love music? Why do you love hip hop and reggaeton</p>
<p>I don't know, the beats, hip hop and ...</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 3 – Teacher shifts inquiry to discursive level of hip hop as textual representation of the world; Student signals marginalized as 'low class' and social critique in global chronotope of systemic injustice</p>
<p>T: What does it tell you about the world?</p>
<p>RM: It tells you many things happening in the world.</p>
<p>T: Like?</p>
<p>RM: Like, the government is always cheating about us.</p>
<p>RM: That people are from minus class, little class.</p>
<p>T: Lower class</p>
<p>RM: Yea, lower class. They just think that we are like nothing.</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 4 – Student discursively reverts and situates himself on the margins, underscoring his perspective based in lived experience</p>
<p>RM: That's just what I think ... and also I like the dance, how XXXX (inaudible Spanish). (<i>breaking into a</i></p>

<p><i>smile, changing tone</i>). Yeah. (<i>sweeping his head to the side</i>)</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 5 – Teacher redirects to immigration narrative, proposes/acknowledged an interspatiality of immigration & American dream; scaffolding academic task at hand;</p>
<p>T: So how does that relate to you and coming to America?</p>
<p>T: You came to America, you had a difficult journey.</p>
<p>T: You found reggaeton, you found music</p>
<p>RM: No, well that was already here</p>
<p>T: But you found it. It was something that you found</p>
<p>RM: I think about that kind of music in my future.</p>
<p>RM: That is something that is important to me.</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 6 – Student restates interspatiality of hip hop and his future goals; teacher prompts his reflection on agency in fulfilling mythologized American dream and present activities</p>
<p>T: How do you think you can make it part of your future?</p>
<p>T: What do you think you will have to do?</p>
<p>T: Because people always talk about coming to America, there's lots of opportunities,</p>
<p>T: but nobody is going to show up at your doorstep with a record contract.</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 7: Teacher prompts student to think about present activities; recognizes student membership in Hip Hop discourse community; invites student lived experience into school discourse, task.</p>
<p>T: What have you been doing?</p>
<p>RM: I have been trying to mix music;</p>
<p>RM: So my cousin can put it on in his dancing parties</p>
<p>T: So start DJing parties.</p>
<p>RM: I Start djing, yea,</p>
<p>T: And you have a connection, you know somebody that owns a club, so you get to go and dj a little bit.</p>
<p>INTERACTIONAL UNIT 8 – Teacher prompts student reflection on lived space of DJing a dance party (i.e emotional experience, personal fulfillment); repositions student within chronotope of dance party as powerful, influential.</p>
<p>T: What is the feeling that you get when you are out there?</p>
<p>RM: People are dancing, it's so cool. When people can come together to your music. That feels really good.</p>

T: How does that make you feel?
RM: Really good
RM: People enjoy the music, my music
T: You got everybody up there moving and jumping and having a good time.
RM: Yea
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 9 – Teacher recharacterizes the dance party chronotope as ‘fulfillment’ for a DJ, and constituting a professional aspiration
T: Yea, so that’s something that makes you fulfilled
T: So that’s something about you making that as part of your profession,
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 10: Shifts to global time-space of having enjoyable work (i.e. labor of love)
T: hopefully we have jobs that we love to do also,
RM: Yea
T: It makes working ... right.
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 11 – Teacher uses hypothetical parallel to teaching as a ‘labor of love’ to validate students’ passion, fulfillment as DJ
T: You don’t want to have a teacher that hates teaching.
RM: Nooo!
T: because they won’t be a very good teacher.
T: So you know, anyway ...
INTERACTIONAL UNIT 12 – Shift back to teacher scaffolding writing task with explicit summary of ideas and instruction to include in text
T: So that’s something right there. It makes people, when people are dancing –
T: Put that in there!
[RM turns back to computer, puts hands to keyboard to type]
T: That’s why I asked you. I didn’t ask you because ... –right? [T slaps him on the shoulder; slight laughter]
T: [Continues talking to Ss who is facing the computer] We were talking about your life in America and your hopes for your music.
T: What did you just explain to me.
T: You love it when people are dancing. How does it make you feel, right? That’s hopeful, what you just told me. When you make people move and dance. That gives you hope, joy, happiness. <i>(Teacher walks away from student, and student remains seated at computer and typing)</i>



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