THE EFFECTS OF THERAPEUTIC HIP HOP ACTIVITY GROUPS ON PERCEPTION OF SELF AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS IN AT-RISK URBAN ADOLESCENTS

A dissertation submitted to the Wright Institute
Graduate School of Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Psychology

by
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by

ELLIOT GANN

At-risk adolescents are caught between the competing pulls of youth culture and school. Therapeutic Hip Hop activity groups---based on Hip Hop Therapy---offer an immediately relevant way of engaging youth and providing an outlet for expression. This methodology meets many developmental needs of youth by providing a peer group that helps develop their identity and skills in social and psychological areas. The present study, employing an embedded, multi-method approach, analyzes the process of such groups in two high schools. It provides a qualitative study of how the intervention works based upon various psychoanalytic theories. It also provides a quantitative assessment of changes in students' perceptions of themselves and social supports. A significant change was found from qualitative results which supported the hypothesis while the quantitative results were less impressive and reasons for this are explored.

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Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgements ii
Table of Contents iii
List of Tables v

Chapter I: Introduction 1
Statement of the Problem 3
Purpose of Study 4
Hypothesis 5

Chapter II: Review of Literature 6
Challenges Faced by Underserved Urban Youth 6
Identity Formation in Early Childhood and Adolescence 11
Winnicott's Theory of Early Childhood Development and the Self 11
Blos and the Reawakening of Early Childhood Issues in Adolescence 14
Erikson and the Importance of the Peer Group in Adolescence 15
Current Educational Practices vs. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences 16
Hip Hop Culture and Rap, and Its Cultural Importance and Relevance to Underserved Urban Populations 21
Hip Hop Culture and Rap 21
Description and brief history 21
A Closer Look at Hip Hop Music, Identity, and Adolescent Development 24
Negative Aspects of Hip Hop and Street Culture 27
Traditional Forms of Group Interventions 28
Two Models of Group Interventions 28
Types of Group Interventions 30
Bibliotherapy 32
Empirical Evaluations of Various Forms of Group Interventions with Underserved Youth 34
Studies of cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups 34
Comparative studies between cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups and activity-based therapeutic groups 36
Studies focused on activity-based modalities 38
Summary comparison of group intervention studies 40
Psychoanalytically Informed Theories of Groups 41

Viewing group work and group therapy from a psychoanalytic perspective 41
Past Research on Impact of Therapeutic Hip Hop Interventions 44
Rap therapy and studies of rap therapy 46

Chapter III: Methods and Procedures 61
The Beats, Rhymes and Life Program 61
Embedded Multimodal Approach 64
Design/Approach 65
Background and Rationale for Tools Used for Assessment 69
Sample or Participants 72
Materials or Measures 72
Procedures 75
Data Analysis 76

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion 78
Qualitative Results 78
General Qualitative Trends and Observations of Oakland High School Group 78
General Qualitative Trends and Observations of Berkeley High School Group 85
Quantitative Results 94
Discussion 98
References 117

Appendices
Appendix A: Parent/Guardian Letter of Introduction 124
Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Consent Form (Oakland High) 126
Appendix C: Student Consent Form (Oakland High) 128
Appendix D: Parent/Guardian Consent Form (Berkeley) 130
Appendix E: Student Consent Form (Berkeley) 132
Appendix F: Modified Harter Survey Form 134
Appendix G: Protocol for Modified Harter Survey 137
Appendix H: Oakland High School Letter of Permission 138
Appendix I: Berkeley High School Letter of Permission 139
Appendix J: Letter of Consent for Research from Tomas Alvarez 140
Appendix K: A Brief Introductory History to Hip Hop & Rap Music 141
Appendix L: Procedure for Original BRL Program 146
Appendix M: Qualitative Observational Notes of Group Sessions 147
Oakland High School Qualitative Observations 147

Oakland High School Session #1 (3/5/08) 147
Oakland High School Session #4 (4/9/08) 149
Oakland High School Session #5 (4/16/08) 155
Oakland High School Session #6 (4/23/08) 161
Oakland High School Session, 4/30/08 166
Oakland High School Session, 5/6/08 172
Oakland High School Session, 5/7/08 174
Oakland High School Final Session, 5/14/08 178
Berkeley High School Observations 181
Berkeley High School, First Session, 3/6/08 181
Berkleley High School, 4/10/08 184
Berkleley High School, 4/24/08 189
Berkleley High School, Final Session 192

List of Tables

Table 1 Frequencies for Hip Hop intervention variables 95
Table 2 Frequencies for Social support variables 96
Table 3 Frequencies for Global self-concept and other self-related variables 97

Chapter I: Introduction

Students from lower-socioeconomic and traditionally underserved adolescent populations are some of the most needy and difficult to reach, to engage in the educational process, and to treat with psychological interventions. Consequently this population typically suffers from low test performances and high drop-out rates. These youths are exposed to community violence and crime, poverty, neglect, lack of health care and lack of access to relevant mental health services, and other disadvantages. This in turn places these young people in a position where they are at-risk for delinquency and substance abuse, and makes them more likely to reject the very educational and social services that might help them. This study adopts the definition for 'at-risk' supplied by Paone (2006):

> … students whose language, appearance, values, culture, family structures, and communities are different than the governing society. These students, who for the most part are immigrants, minorities, and socio-economically disadvantaged are believed to be educationally and/or culturally deprived. (Paone, 2006)

At-risk youth tend not to be interested in the very programs from which they could most benefit, such as group therapy, after-school tutoring, etc., due to the modality and content of the programs which are often academically or therapeutically based. In addition, they view many of the institutions associated with such programs as contrary to youth culture (e.g. programs associated with school and other institutions as well as with authorities, and thus not "cool"). Hip Hop or Rap Therapy is a strong candidate for reaching such youth as it is an immediately engaging and relevant intervention for these students. This is particularly so for traditionally underserved communities in which Hip

Hop is often a primary form of artistic self-expression for groups that are most at risk. Emotions can be expressed through the spoken and written "raps" (rhythmic and rhyming lyrical compositions most often set to a beat) in a safe environment with peers, instead of acted out in destructive ways. The modality of self-expression is already familiar and non-threatening to youth, especially since it is not ordinarily associated with school or other authorities seen as contrary to youth culture.

Although Rap Therapy and Therapeutic Hip Hop Activity Groups show much promise, a literature search has shown the number of quantitative assessments of the program efficacy to be limited. However, the limited number of studies have found a marked preference for the modality (Alvarez, 2006; Ciardiello, 2003; DeCarlo & Hockman, 2003; Pasagiannis, 2007; Tyson, 2002). The small number of studies is perhaps partly a function of the limited number of Rap Therapy groups, and the relative newness of the technique. It is therefore important that the method's mechanisms be studied and measures of its efficacy be made. This study focuses on understanding how and why such groups work.

It is also important to note the modality of intervention is via *groups*, since this is most relevant to the adolescent's developmental stage in which the peer group becomes the youths' focus, along with the task of identity formation. The peer group provides essential support as well as feedback to the individual. It is in the context of the adolescent's peer group that he or she begins to experiment with and develop individual identity, while separating and individuating from the family. Group interventions are most appropriate as they inherently provide a peer group that helps meet both these needs.

A specific group intervention that is highlighted in this study is the Beats, Rhymes and Life (BRL) program, started in 2004 by Tomas Alvarez, III, M.S.W. BRL was designed for work with at-risk high school students in a group setting, utilizing a modified version of Rap Therapy (also known as "Hip Hop Therapy") in which students analyzed Rap lyrics, composed their own, gave each other feedback and practiced their freestyle rapping collectively. Beats, Rhymes and Life has evolved over the years to become an organization that provides Therapeutic Hip Hop Activity Groups through schools and school-based health centers. BRL's website states that "Beats, Rhymes and Life draws upon elements of Hip Hop culture and music to motivate at-risk teens to explore their lives on a deeper level, develop useful skills, foster supportive peer relationships and increase self-efficacy" (Alvarez 2008). The group is run from a strengths-based perspective, and is tailored to the interests of students so as to engage the youth and further their personal development and interests. The structure of each session consists of a check-in with all group members, followed by discussions associated with a session theme, explored through individual and group Hip Hop activities. Relevant themes are chosen based on the experiences of the group members. Regular activities include Rap lyrics composition, Hip Hop music/beat composition, a feedback session with constructive criticism from peers on lyrics or beats, and a group freestyle activity to close out the sessions.

Statement of the Problem

The goal of this study is to determine the efficacy of the BRL program as a mental health intervention for at-risk youth. Specifically, how does the program affect participants' self-perception, as well as their perception of social support? How does it

impact the participants and in what ways---how does the program work? In addition, why do students come---is the modality of treatment (e.g. Hip Hop) really the draw? The study utilizes an embedded multi-modal approach that situates the researcher directly in the groups to observe, as well as administering pre- and post-intervention surveys. This method was chosen since it seemed to best address the questions of whether the intervention works, and if so, why and how it creates change. While there have been studies of at-risk youth, and outcome studies of group therapy, there is no study that has examined the efficacy Therapeutic Hip Hop activity groups along with the dynamic process of therapeutic uses of Hip Hop music and culture. To better understand this topic, it is necessary to examine the literature on the population being targeted.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to see whether the use of the Hip Hop modality in groups is effective in producing positive change for students who would not otherwise be reached. The use of a culturally relevant activity is used to overcome resistance to the therapeutic groups which hold certain stigma. Additionally, the goal is to assess the efficacy of the BRL program through surveying students' sense of self-worth and sense of social report over the course of the program, and providing an analysis of the results. The goal of this study is to assess the effect of Therapeutic Hip Hop Groups on the urban adolescents who participate in such programming that is currently being offered in certain public schools and through school-based health centers in the California Bay Area by the organization Beats, Rhymes and Life. This organization and service is founded, run, conceived, and delivered by Tomas Alvarez III, M.S.W. in an attempt to address some of the mental health needs of this population. The importance of relationship has been

noted, across all theoretical orientations in studies of therapeutic efficacy and change, to be the single most important factor. Thus, a culturally relevant and engaging intervention that immediately offers an opportunity for rapport via the modality in which it is delivered is invaluable. This study, one of the first of its type as an empirical study and program evaluation of Hip Hop Therapy, will seek to evaluate changes in the group dynamic and functioning, students' general self-concept, and their perception of social support from parents, classmates, teachers and close friends.

Hypothesis

The general hypothesis is that Therapeutic Hip Hop activity groups are an effective way to reach at-risk youth who are normally difficult to reach, and that it will make these adolescents feel better about themselves as well as more supported by the people around them. The reasoning is that the BRL groups are more appealing and more easily accessible because they are culturally relevant and already an area of interest to the participants in the group. In particular, it is hypothesized that this program will have greater appeal to at-risk youth than other modalities of group therapy. It is hypothesized that this will be evident both on the survey through participants' answers, as well as through qualitative observations made in the groups. The modality of intervention is also hypothesized to help create cohesion and a shared identity amongst members of the group, provide them with an alternative peer-group that displaces other peer groups that may support or encourage high-risk, destructive or delinquent behavior. It is also designed to help develop insight and reflective capacities in the participants.

Chapter II: Review of Literature

Challenges Faced by Undeserved Urban Youth

Adolescents in urban areas are exposed to many risk factors. Research (Rutter, 1981) has shown that urban children are at higher risk than rural children for increased delinquency and other behavior problems. According to current statistics and research (Cook et al 1996; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001) risks are even more pronounced for urban adolescents of color from lower-socioeconomic and traditionally underserved groups. Young males from these populations are probably most at risk. For example, the unemployment rate of African-American males exceeds 30%, much higher than for their female counterparts in the age range of 18-25. According to the U.S. Census (2001) the participation rate of African-American males in the labor force was 10% lower than for all men, whereas a higher percentage of African-American women (60%) were in the labor force as compared to all women (58%). Cook et al (1996) found that boys in urban areas from lower-income families tend to have lower occupational and educational expectations compared those in rural areas. Nearly all (99%) of the boys from low-income schools who participated in the study were African-American, while the majority of the other group constituting the middle-income schools were European-American (70%). Strong correlations were found between lower occupational expectations and lower educational expectations. These lower educational expectations were also associated with families where the boys did not have a biological father in their household, and many of these boys perceived difficulties in becoming successful in their local community. Interestingly, the lower occupational

expectations of these inner-city boys did not appear to stem from having fewer positive role models nor from a belief that education could not help them in the future as it would do for others.

Youths who drop out of high school are more prone to alcohol and drug abuse, involvement in criminal activity, and becoming teen parents, as well as having higher rates of unemployment and being more likely to receive public assistance (Boisjoly et al., 1998; Caspi et al., 1998; Freeman, 1996; Goldschmidt and Wang, 1999; Laird et al., 2001; Lochner & L, Moretti, 2004; Moore et al., 2002; SAMHSA, 2003). The 2006 data from the State of California Department of Education show that, in the Bay Area as well as statewide in California, traditionally underserved populations such as African American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander students are at higher risk of dropping out of high school than Asian, Caucasian/White, and Filipino students. This is also the case for Alameda County (the primary county served by the BRL program), and the surrounding Contra Costa and San Francisco counties for 2006. San Francisco and Alameda counties have seen an increase in high school dropouts since 2003. In the Bay Area in 2006, Alameda County has the second highest dropout rate (13%). Rates of arrest (which may nor may not be justified, as the Surgeon General's report notes) are also significantly higher for African-American and Latino youths than their Caucasian peers and, to a lesser extent, other ethnic groups both at the statewide level for California, and for Alameda, San Francisco, and Marin counties (State of California Department of Justice, 2005) .

One of the BRL interventions that are subjects of this study took place in Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) in Alameda County. OUSD has consistently had the

highest high school dropout rates in Alameda County from 1995-2006, with a rate of 27.4% in 2006. It also has the lowest rate of college readiness of all the school districts in the county from 1995-2005 (State of California Department of Education).

The conventional wisdom that emphasizes the importance of peer pressure during adolescence applies powerfully to underserved urban youth. Peer influence has been empirically shown to affect risk-taking behavior (e.g. drug usage, sexual activity) both in preventative and detrimental ways in these populations, including African-American urban adolescents (Beal, 2001; Maxwell, 2002; Rai et al, 2003). The developmental shift of influence from the family in childhood to peers in adolescence is very pronounced. At-risk urban adolescents are thereby placed in many situations that can lead to negative outcomes, especially when an individual's peer group is delinquent (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001).

Violence is a particular risk that urban youth face both as victims and as participants. In 2001, following the school shootings at Columbine, the Surgeon General produced a comprehensive multi-disciplinary report on youth violence in the United States which included statistics, risk factors, suggested interventions, efficacy of modality of treatments and interventions, and cost-effectiveness of programs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). The report identified a set of risk factors in an individual's life such as their school, family, peer group and community that interact in complex ways with the individual's characteristics and can lead to violent behavior. Lethal and gun-related violence, victimization data, arrest records, and hospital emergency room records indicate that general levels of violence have dropped (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). However, self-report surveys given

to students suggested that levels of youth violence had not dropped. Confidential self-report surveys showed that 10-15% of high school seniors had committed an act of serious violence in the recent past when they took the survey, and other self-report surveys also appear to contradict data indicating that levels of youth violence had decreased. Self-reported violence by high school seniors increased about 50% in the two decades prior to the report, a rise that correlates with trends in arrests for violent crimes. The Surgeon General's report suggested that due to the recent decrease in gun-related incidents, violent crimes may now come less often to the attention of the police.

The Surgeon General's report delineates specific risk factors for youth violence occurring in adolescence. These include childhood involvement in serious criminal acts that are not necessarily violent, as well as substance abuse before the onset on puberty. Other individual risk factors include aggressiveness, socioeconomic status of the individual's family (lower status putting members of this group at higher risk), being male, and having antisocial parents. A history of past offenses is also an important risk factor. The report notes that current research has found two tracks for antisocial behavior---the prepubescent (early) onset versus the postpubescent onset. The post-pubescent is far more closely associated with peer-influence (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). With the onset of adolescence the influence of the family is replaced by that of peers and therefore increases potential association with antisocial or delinquent peers. Weak social ties and belonging to a gang are the risk factors most predictive of violence. According to the Surgeon General's report racial and ethnic minorities, students in high schools, and urban youth are most at-risk of being killed in school-related violence. Sometimes ethnic/racial and gender differences may be

overestimated in these populations. The data from self-reporting surveys indicate that violence rates are more similar between young urban youths from ethnic/racial minorities and majorities, and between genders, than 'common knowledge' and the relatively high arrest rates of young males from minority groups would suggest.

Serious violence among youths is also associated with a lifestyle that includes precocious sex, drugs, guns and other risky behaviors. The Surgeon General's report states that successful interventions have to confront not only the violent behavior but also an individual's lifestyle to be effective. Effective interventions found to address individual and environmental conditions include parental training, teaching of individual skills, improving the social climates of schools, and changing adolescents' type or level of involvement in peer groups. Most youth violence begins in late adolescence. The report states that "The importance of late-onset violence prevention is not widely recognized or well understood. Substantial numbers of serious violent offenders emerge without warning signs in their childhood" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Chapter 3). One of the stated goals of the Surgeon General's report is to "Facilitate the entry of youths into effective intervention programs rather than incarcerating them" (Chapter 4). The BRL intervention addresses several issues raised by the report: it provides a peer group in which a positive environment with appropriate feedback is modeled and taught; it structures and fosters a discussion environment in which lifestyles and associated components are thought about critically; and it targets the target age-group in which most youth violence occurs. Furthermore, according to the Surgeon General's report, data analysis suggests that it is much more cost effective to use interventions targeting at-risk youth than to employ programs designed for the general population of

youth. Such programs and interventions are also much more cost effective, humane and productive than incarceration. However, as stated in the findings of the Surgeon General's report, many of the programs currently in place for prevention of youth violence and targeting at-risk youth are not of help to youth, and some may even have negative outcomes or consequences, necessitating research on the effects of such programming (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Furthermore, the quality of implementation is as important as the type of intervention in terms of a program's efficacy.

Identity Formation in Early Childhood and Adolescence

In order to understand the effects of an intervention such as Hip Hop therapy with the at-risk adolescent population, we need to understand developmental issues in this age group. This study will utilize some of D.W. Winnicott's (1951; 1953; 1965) theory of infant development. I will rely on Peter Blos' (1967) theoretical understanding of the ways adolescence re-opens infantile developmental, and on Erik Erikson's (1959; 1968) theory of identity-formation during adolescence.

Winnicott's Theory of Early Childhood Development and the Self

D.W. Winnicott provides a theory of creativity and play that sheds light on the dilemma students face within the complex interplay of competing school and peer groups, and his theory can help distinguish how to assist students towards success in the vital areas of education and socialization. His writings focused on the importance of mother-infant relationships and creativity. The mother-infant relationship is the original blueprint for how the individual learns to relate to and perceive the world, and the individual people within it. The "good-enough mother" is one who adapts to the child

and mirrors his gestures and expressions, allowing for the development of a "True Self" (Winnicott 1971; Winnicott 1965). In other words, a certain amount of the child's learning about the world takes the form of a reality that is imposed on the child.

Winnicott writes about the child's "spontaneous gesture" (Winnicott, 1965, p.145). The "good-enough mother" responds to the child's gesture here and there, and at other times teaches the child to accept an imposed reality. One moment the mother smiles when the child does something funny, the next moment the mother tells the child not to touch the hot stove. The combination and interplay of the "externally imposed" reality with the child's "created" reality gives the child a sense of how much play there is between spontaneity and conformity. The optimal balance, as facilitated by the good-enough mother, helps the child develop a sense that there is room for creativity and play in one's life, *and* that one also has to conform to external expectations and imposed realities sufficiently to survive and be productive in the real world. Too much exclusive interest in spontaneity and creating may lead to psychosis at the extreme limit, or when less pronounced to a failure to be productive. Too much exclusive interest in complying with an externally imposed reality leads to depression and passivity, or at least a lack of creativity. The good-enough mother, with her capacities to respond to the infant's spontaneous gesture, and then to switch gears and help the child sense the imperatives of an imposed reality, fosters in the child the capacities of creativity and play along with reality-testing and productivity. Only the "True Self," the source of those spontaneous gestures, is capable of being creative, precisely because they are the spontaneous gestures of an individual, as opposed to complying with something imposed on the infant.

In early stages of infancy the child does not know that it is separate from the

mother, and that its internal reality is separate from external reality. The mother, at certain moments, caters to the omnipotence of the infant, adapting to the infant's needs and letting him have the illusion that at his whim and desire he controls her, or even creates her. Then, at other moments, optimally in just the right combination, she lays down the law and lets the infant know that certain things are expected of him, including tolerating her inattention for periods of time. The mother, by providing the right balance between omnipotence and imposed reality, aids the development of the "True Self," in contrast to the "not good-enough mother" who substitutes her own gestures instead of reflecting back what her infant has communicated. Experience lies between, and draws upon both the internal reality and spontaneous gestures the child puts forth and the external reality and expectations that are imposed on the child in the process of socialization. According to Winnicott, there is a transitional phase of "subjective objects," between the infant's complete ignorance of the requirements of external reality and the slightly older child's growing grasp of reality and expectations. That transitional phase and its subjective objects (i.e. objects that are not entirely created by the infant but are also not entirely imposed by external reality) endure into more mature phases of development as the capacity to play and to be creative.

Gradually, and in palatable increments, the mother begins to adapt less and less to the infant's needs and omnipotent gestures, and thereby removes the child's illusion of being the exclusive focus of his mother's or anyone else's attention. This helps the child grasp and accept the external reality wherein he must live and function. Through this process the mother becomes an "objectively perceived environmental feature" (Winnicott, 1953, p. 150) and is differentiated from the subjective objects that the child

creates. Winnicott posits that if the baby's mother cannot reflect back the spontaneous gestures of the baby, for example if the mother is too depressed or too narcissistic to pay close attention to the baby's experience and needs, this incapacity on the mother's part serves to atrophy the baby's capacity to play and be creative. When the baby is provided the mother's momentary indulgences in its omnipotence, he learns to make spontaneous gestures which lead to creative acts. Thus, between the mother and the baby is a "transitional space" where creative thinking and play occur. The transitional suspension of reality and rules allow for more flexible thinking and play.

Blos and the Reawakening of Early Childhood Issues in Adolescence

Blos (1967), building on the pioneering work of Margret Mahler (1963) and her theory of separation and individuation during infancy, applied this to adolescence and proposed a second separation stage during this time, during which there is a reawakening of earlier issues experienced as an infant and young child. When engaged in the stage of separation and individuation during infancy the child internalizes images of the parents with whom s/he identified (the parental introjects) and included in the conception of him/herself. Later, the adolescent attempts to negotiate the separation through some regressive thoughts and actions which go along with parting with the individual's childhood conception of "I." During this stage of identity formation, there is essentially a reopening and reliving of these early attachment issues about separation and individuation, as well as Oedipal issues such as anger and resentment of parents (often expressed through acting out). The subjective experience upon the adolescent's successfully negotiated separation is a feeling of existing more distinctly as an individual. The adolescent reaches a new level of recognition of others as distinctly separate from

himself, and this helps the individual to move beyond just identifying with others and ~~is~~ to be better able to realize his own identity. The adolescent uses the peer group to help cope with the severing of intrapsychic ties to parents. Kroger (2004) also emphasizes the importance of the school as a "holding" environment to help the development of the adolescent as well as emphasizing the importance of the peer group and shift in identification. "In the world beyond the family unit, it is the school and peer group which can now supply the respect and esteem due children in the process of making sense according to their own needs and interests" (Kroger, 2004, p. 169).

Erikson and the Importance of the Peer Group in Adolescence

Kroger's theory is based upon Erikson's understanding of human development and life stages such as the search for identity during adolescence. According to Erikson's (1968) theory, identity is the central crisis to be negotiated during adolescence. "Ego identity" is the achievement of this phase and is "characterized by the actually attained but forever to-be-revised sense of the reality of the Self within social reality" (Erikson: 1968, 211). The word "crisis" connotes not only a time of "emotional turmoil and emergency" but also that of an "opportunity" (Muuss, 1996). Erikson (1959) writes of the transition from childhood to adolescence and the importance of ego-identity which is accomplished through recognition of achievements that are culturally valued. He also emphasizes the importance of identity with respect to others in society and in the context of peers:

> On the other hand, should a child feel that the environment tries to deprive him too radically of all the forms of expression which permit him to develop and to integrate the next step in his ego identity, he will resist with the astonishing

> strength encountered in animals who are suddenly forced to defend their lives. Indeed, in the social jungle of human existence, there is no feeling of being alive without a sense of ego identity. To understand this would be to understand the trouble of adolescents better, especially the trouble of all those who cannot just be "nice" boys and girls, but are desperately seeking for a satisfactory sense of belonging, be it in cliques and gangs here in our country or in inspiring mass movements in others. (Erikson, 1959, p. 90)

Erikson's eloquent explanation allows one to fully appreciate the full magnitude of the importance of belonging and recognition from one's peers in adolescence and the shift away from primary identification and approval of the adolescent's family (in particular the adolescent's parents). The common thread with Winnicott and Blos is the reflection of the individual from the other/s. In the case of the young child it is the mother, and in the case of the adolescent it is one's peer group. This is the foundation on which the concept of Self is built, including the separateness from parent or others who are reflecting to the individual. School plays a vital role in the development of identity with opportunities for adolescents to incorporate new information and experiences from social as well as academic experiences. Thus, education will be discussed and examined with a focus on its role in identity formation and developmentally appropriate uses, making special use of Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Current Educational Practices vs. Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

There is great overlap between psychological concerns and education. I will review here some educational theory with emphasis on Gardner's theory. In high school, educators have to take into account the developmental issues of their students. Students'

concerns about popularity, changes in their bodies, dating, and many other aspects of their lives, impact their educational experience. We know from the literature about trauma that violence and sexual abuse at home or in the community have a great effect on students' performance at school. Substance abuse and sexual activity can have a similarly large impact on school performance. One of the issues currently debated in the field of education is the overemphasis on a few basic skills---e.g. reading, writing and arithmetic (the "Three R's"). The concept of the Self is founded on one's abilities and evaluations of oneself, which include judgments and feedback incorporated from others (or "mirroring" in Winnicottian terms). In academic settings this can come in the form of interactions with teachers and peers, test performance, and overall grades, which center largely around the aforementioned skills. Some experts in the field of education and cognitive science, like Howard Gardner, propose a different paradigm that expands from the focus from a narrower band of basic skills and abilities.

Gardner's theory offers an alternative to the traditional paradigm in which different skills, or types of intelligences, are valued equally and used to help that person to learn basics in the modality in which they are strongest. The educational experience plays a vital role in identity formation and students' success in later endeavors. If such education can prevent the discouragement that at-risk youth find in the traditional educational practices and instead help students build their identities around their natural skills and strengths, then this may mitigate against many potential mental health issues and reduce delinquency in these populations.

Gardner (1983;1993) introduced the idea of multiple intelligences in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983). While his theory does not

seem to be widely embraced in practice in many public schools, it has profound implications for education, human potential, and society. In most public schools, especially in local Alameda County Public Schools (in particular Oakland Unified School District), the "Three R's" are emphasized while music and the visual and performing arts (which are encompassed in Gardner's multiple intelligences) are not valued in the same way, and even cut from the curriculum. This is common practice in what seems to be a majority of underserved and inner-city schools throughout the United States. Such schools often have limited budgets and are compelled to meet state standards and are dependent on students passing such tests which emphasize the "Three R's" in order to stay open.

The "Three R's" fall into two of the seven different categories of intelligence that Gardner puts forward, the two being "Linguistic intelligence" and "logical-mathematical intelligence." Linguistic intelligence involves words and use of language both spoken and written. Logical-mathematical intelligence involves ability to work with abstract thinking, logic, deductive thinking and numbers. Those who excel in this latter area also are strong in scientific thinking. The five other types of intelligence that Gardner proposes based upon his research are: "spatial intelligence," "musical intelligence," "bodily-kinesthetic intelligence," and two types of "personal intelligence"--- "interpersonal intelligence" and "intrapersonal intelligence" (Gardner 1993). Spatial intelligence involves vision and spatial judgment, and is often highly correlated with logical-mathematical intelligence. Musical intelligence involves ability with respect to rhythm, music and hearing. "Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence" is associated with movement and is "the ability to solve problems or to fashion products using one's whole

body, or parts of the body" (Gardner, 1993, page 9). "Interpersonal intelligence" is the ability to understand how others work, what motivates them, and how to work with them, whereas "intrapersonal intelligence" is the ability to look inward and assess oneself -- "the capacity to form an accurate, veridical model of oneself and to be able to use that model to operate effectively in life" (Gardner, 1993, page 9). According to Gardner's theory, different people have different intelligences and thus also different ways of learning. For example a person with a high spatial intelligence tends to be better at visual modes of learning and incorporating information, versus someone with high levels of linguistic intelligence who may learn better from lectures and hearing information spoken or seeing it in written form.

While schools address certain realities with their emphasis on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence---the need to read, write and perform basic mathematical operations for everyday living---this emphasis arguably devalues the abilities of those students whose intelligences lie in other areas. It also fails to optimally serve these students learning such basic life skills of reading and writing if the "Three R's" can be taught via the other intelligences in an alternative modality or style of learning. Gardner (1993) states "I'm concerned about those who don't shine in the standardized tests, and who, therefore, tend to be written off as not having gifts of any kind" (page 11). Students become discouraged when they perform poorly on standardized tests assessing linguistic and logical-mathematic intelligences. It should be noted that these tests often evaluate the specific culturally-biased sets of information and vocabulary that White mainstream society values. Many of these students already are disenfranchised youth of color who have already experienced racism, expectations of

failure, and lack of support in their academic endeavors. Social psychology literature shows that such expectations affect performance. There is often a vicious cycle in which the students' parents did not receive education and support, so they do not support their children's efforts, and thus the students are even more prone to fail at school. These are some of the many risk-factors that make it more difficult for at-risk students to persist and engage in learning. Due to the emphasis on the "Three R's" or linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences other potential strengths or areas of intelligence of students (e.g. musical intelligence) are ignored. Thus many students dismiss school and instead dedicate their time to other areas such peer groups (including gangs, among other types of peer groups) in which they feel more included or better appreciated.

If other types of intelligences were better fostered and recognized in schools, this would be an vital way to engage students and to discontinue the cycle of disenfranchisement. Gardner states that "the purpose of school should be to develop intelligences and to help people reach vocational and avocational goals that are appropriate to their particular spectrum of intelligences. People who are helped to do so, I believe, feel more engaged and competent, and therefore more included to serve society in a constructive way" (1993, page 9). In offering the multimodal therapeutic Hip Hop activity groups, the Beats, Rhymes and Life organization is an example of such a program that puts a premium on undervalued intelligences such as musical, visiospatial, inter and intrapersonal in addition to help developing these areas. This helps to reengage students through school groups that are constructive as opposed to joining more destructive formal and informal peer groups that encourage antisocial behavior. To better understand the inherent therapeutic aspects, encompassed intelligences, as well as

developmental and cultural relevance of BRL and other Hip Hop Therapies, a brief history of Hip Hop will be examined. A study of identity formation in male Bay Area adolescents will also be included.

Hip Hop Culture and Rap, and Its Cultural Importance and Relevance to Underserved Urban Populations

Hip Hop Culture and Rap

Many who are not familiar with the culture think of Hip Hop as a more recent phenomenon, but Hip Hop has been around for some thirty-plus years. ("Hip Hop" is spelled with capitals by many within the culture and is spelled so here, another source is being cited which does not spell it as such.) In his book *Hip Hop America* Nelson George begins to define and contextualize Hip Hop by stating in his foreword the following:

> At its most elemental level hip hop is a product of post-civil rights era America, a set of cultural forms originally nurtured by African-American, Carribean-American, and Latin American youth in and around New York in the '70's. Its most popular vehicle for expression has been music through dance, painting, fashion, video, crime and commerce are also its playing fields. (George, viii, 1999)

He goes on to describe Hip Hop's movement from its origins in the inner city Black and Puerto-Rican/Latino communities to popular culture. A summary history of Hip Hop and Rap is given in Appendix L in addition to the brief description given below.

Description and brief history.

In the mid to late 1970's during and following an economic and social crisis in New

York City's South Bronx, block parties and gatherings in public parks with three seminal DJ's gave rise to the beginning of Hip Hop music and culture. The pioneering DJ's were Kool Herc, Afrika Bambataa, and Grandmaster Flash who helped to shape the aggressive aesthetic and style of Hip Hop that is still the basis for the culture. They inhabited a particularly chaotic world---the South Bronx during the 1970's was subject to pronounced economic and industrial decline, intense gang warfare as well as clashes with cops, slumlords burning tenements to get insurance money, and other events that tore at the social fabric. Nelson (1998) states that Hip Hop, and the figurehead DJ's who helped launch its musical manifestation, came out of predominately Black and Hispanic youth, "b-boys---the dancers, graffiti writers, the kids just hanging out" reacting to this historical context as well as the music genres of disco and funk in New York City.

Hip Hop culture, consisting of Rapping (also known as "MC'ing"), DJ'ing (mixing and scratching of records, including production/composition of the musical background "beats" over which raps are performed), "graffiti" (also known as street art/urban muralism), and breakdancing (an acrobatic and aggressive rhythm-oriented form of dance also known as "B-Boying"), naturally involves self-expression and performance in public group settings, usually among urban youths' peers. This makes it ideal for use in group settings, especially for tackling subjects that are otherwise often difficult to discuss. Essentially, Hip Hop started as the voice of disenfranchised and it was, and is, inherently therapeutic since it offered various forms of channeling aggressive and potentially violent feelings and forces into creative outlets. "Battles" as competitions between rivals or even acquaintances and friends---especially in the form of breakdancing---were used as non-violent ways of resolving turf disputes between rival

gangs or crews. Formerly the gang leader of the Black Spades (one of the most notorious and powerful gangs in the Bronx) Afrika Bambaata started the Universal Zulu Nation as a way to peacefully bring together gang members under one umbrella and stop the gang violence that plagued the South Bronx. To this day it remains one of the largest and most important Hip Hop organizations in the world with active international chapters.

The beauty and appeal, as well as the practicality of Hip Hop resides in its raw form, that was born in the streets. Practitioners need a minimum of equipment. Hip Hop music requires only a beat (potentially created by a vocal percussion called "beatboxing" or recontextualizing and manipulating preexisting music such as the technique of sampling) and a voice for rapping, or ground on which to dance. Urban landscapes such as mailboxes, trains, walls, etc., become the canvas of the graffiti writer. The DJ creates the soundtrack with two turntables and a mixer, aided by the MC on the microphone who in turn encourages and incites the crowd to participate.

Style (with an aggressive, in-your-face, almost hyperbolic edge) is also essential in Hip Hop and is a driving force of the self-expression, which is directly connected to identity. After all, style is the branding of the individual and the way one conveys oneself to others filtered through the Hip Hop aesthetic and culture. It is Hip Hop culture's raw nature, immediacy, and flexibility/adaptability that make it so appealing and durable. That the vast majority of consumers of Rap albums have been, and continue to be suburban White youth also speaks volumes about the universal appeal of this art form, music, and modality of expression (Ross, 2007). Nelson George states in his book, "Now we all know that rap music, and hip hop style as a whole, has utterly broken through from its ghetto roots to assert a lasting influence on American clothing, magazine publishing,

television, language, sexuality, and social policy as well as its obvious presence in records and movies." The inherent channeling of aggressive energy and anger makes it ideal for youth, especially adolescents struggling with issues of identity, estrangement/alienation (whether racial, generational, etc.), social injustice, and other developmental issues---particularly those that relate to belonging to groups and peers. The fact that Hip Hop music and culture deal head on with such issues makes it a very powerful and relevant medium through which to express one's experience and feelings. At-risk youth are a population that struggle in particular with these issues and at-risk youth of color perhaps even more so, due to their legacy of subordination and disenfranchisement. In effect, Hip Hop is the modality of therapy that at-risk youth created for themselves and their following generations and it is still very much relevant and effective.

A Closer Look at Hip Hop Music, Identity, and Adolescent Development

Barrager (2006) conducted a qualitative, exploratory study looking at the role Rap/Hip Hop music played in the formation of male adolescent identity, specifically individuals in the Bay Area of eight different racial groups. Barrager notes that her topic of investigation is not well-explored, especially among non-African-Americans. The sample size of the study was 12, with participants ranging in age from 22-28 years of age. Three participants were Latino, three were African-American, two were Caucasian, two bi-racial, one Filipino-American, and one Chinese-American, all from the San Francisco Bay Area. The assumption was made that if a connection was discovered between Rap and identity then this meant that Rap went beyond the recreational and expressive, and this in turn had implications for the use of Rap and Rap Therapy in the field of social

work.

Barrager found that Rap indeed played an important role in identity formation, as well as a coping mechanism for normal developmental challenges associated with adolescence. For all of the subjects chosen, Rap music was a major part of their adolescent music choice, and at the time of the study the participants were producing or listening to Hip Hop and/or working with youth using it in some way. Six major themes/categories emerged which were the conclusions about the influence of Rap on the identity formation in male adolescents.

The findings supported the author's assumption that Rap influenced male adolescents' identity in a specific population---this population consisted of males who all felt alienated from the mainstream culture and were from urban environments. For all participants Rap acted as a force to bring them closer to "their emotional identities, their communities and the world," and gave them a strong sense of identity since they identified with the culture of Hip Hop (p. 21). Rapping was also viewed as a vehicle to express emotions, a way to cope with anger, and viewed as having calming and cathartic properties. It was also described as an alternative way to cope with other difficult emotions during adolescence such as sadness. Out of the total 12 respondents, 10 linked emotions to their identification or production of Hip Hop, despite the fact that there was no directive question regarding this topic given by the author/interviewer.

Barrager describes the formation of Hip Hop identities of her participants as "easy access to a self-reflexive tool" (p. 25). She also found that Hip Hop culture and Rap music served as a tool for all the participants to learn aspects about the world around them that was not offered in school, especially concerning the oppression and history of

people of color. The majority of the participants of color appreciated it as a voice for oppressed peoples and youth of color. Rap and Hip Hop culture was also found to provide them with male role models or "stronger identification with older siblings or fathers and father figures" (p. 21). Emceeing (or MC'ing), which is rapping to peers or an audience, was seen as important. This allows participants to adopt Hip Hop aliases or alter-egos which allowed for "confidence and motivation" to go before these groups to deliver messages. More than half the respondents discussed the role of Hip Hop in "accessing different parts of their personalities," especially with respect to anxiety about performing or in social situations (p. 25). Barrager's findings also indicated that Hip Hop played such an important role in the formation of respondents' identities and their work with youth that she states "younger generations will continue to have mentors in the hip-hop community as they pursue their own identity development" (p. 22). A majority of the respondents worked with youth, and all respondents identified Hip Hop and Rap music as a useful way to engage and work with youth.

Another commonality found among all respondents was the importance, both in their adolescence and at the time of the study, of the group aspect of Hip Hop and Rap culture. They expressed it giving them a sense of place, connection, and recognition. This crossed over racial lines, different walks of life, and as Barrager states, led to national and international communities that could be tapped into by respondents. As one participant in one of the earliest forms of the BRL group stated, "Man, there like an instant kinship with people who rap. I don't have to even know somebody but if we freestyle together its like we have been friends for a long time. I connect easier with other people who freestyle." (p. 32 Alvarez, 2006). In fact, Hip Hop was so strong an

influence in participants' lives that it was seen as the "the essence or foundation of their identities" (p. 42). This has particularly strong implications for the BRL intervention.

Barrager also states in her study that her participants used Rap music both as a way to cope with and modulate their affects as well as "to gain mastery over adolescent development (and afterwards)" (p. 42). She also notes the special quality of Hip Hop is that the "very unique component of hip-hop culture is the vulnerability allowances offered in creating this form of music amongst peers and the extent to which the psychological/emotional self is included in these lyrics" (p. 43). The implications of this study for clinical work suggest the use of Rap music as a way to more rapidly establish rapport and therapeutic alliance with an already existing form of therapy implicit in Hip Hop culture. Barrager also suggests the use of mentors in the Hip Hop community to reach adolescents to whom the youth can relate.

Negative Aspects of Hip Hop and Street Culture

While Hip Hop as an expressive art form has inherently therapeutic aspects, as a part of a bigger street culture it can often have detrimental pulls and messages. Glorification of antisocial behavior, misogyny, drugs, material belongings and money are often the subject matter of Rap songs. In schools there are also competing pulls for students from their peers to act in antisocial ways, contrary to the goals of the school to educate and socialize students. This creates a problem for those who would supplement and enrich the educational pursuits with group therapy and/or cultural enrichment, since pressure and influence from peers can be such a powerful force for adolescents seeking acceptance in groups. Plainly, this gap needs to be bridged in some manner. The next section will examine these more traditional approaches of group therapy and

interventions, and later sections will address the aforementioned gap.

Traditional Forms of Group Interventions

As aforementioned and highlighted by Erikson's work, groups play an integral part in adolescents' lives. Developmental issues tend to get played out and expressed in group experiences, and it is in these groups that adolescents find ways to adapt---whether they be positive or negative adaptations. Thus, group interventions make sense to help youth adapt in positive ways and cope with normal developmental issues, as well as those issues which at-risk youth face.

Two Models of Group Interventions

Group work with adolescents, like group work with other populations, can be classified as following one of two major approaches, with a good deal of overlap between each type of approach.

Social work, with its history of a more democratic process, tends to focus on groups as a way of having participants help each other in a "mutual aid" model, with the worker or professional as a helper to guide the process. Another element is the emphasis on the commonality of group members' issues and the aim of the group being "growth." "Strengths based" is another important phrase in the social work field, putting emphasis on what group members have to offer, as opposed to the "deficit model" (focus on dysfunction) central to most of the field of psychology (Malekoff, 2004).

Group psychotherapy, from a general clinical psychology view point, tends to focus more on the interpersonal issues and difficulties of the individuals in the group that arise in the context of the group, with emphasis on the use of the group to aid personal insight. Yalom (1995) provides a classic theoretical examination of such group

psychotherapy. He describes the group as a societal microcosm in which one's pathology comes to play through the interpersonal matrix. Proponents of psychoanalytic/psychodynamic group therapy such as Slavson (a pioneer in the field) point to the group as potentially altering a client's false perception of themselves and of others, as well as altering the client's behavior (1996). Slavson also believed strongly that older children and adolescents needed to "act out" their conflicts and that group therapy should be conducted via activities and projects. The groups should be environments where participants express their fears, anxieties, fantasies and wishes and where the therapist supports this expression in a permissive and non-judgmental way. Contrary to other theorists, Slavson did not believe group cohesion was necessary because he believed it got in the way of the needs of the individual. Instead he wanted to focus interventions on the individuals as opposed to the group. He also emphasized that adolescents, as opposed to children or adults (for whom he also tailored groups) needed to be treated differently because of their stage of development (Brabender, Fallon, and Smolar 2004).

Group therapy and groups in general are effective and economical ways to treat many clients at one time. Considerable research has been done on groups which support use of group therapy. Yalom (2005) summarizes the research findings of group therapy, stating that, "a persuasive body of outcome research has demonstrated unequivocally that group therapy is a highly effective form of psychotherapy and that it is at least equal to individual psychotherapy in its power to provide meaningful benefit."

Types of Group Interventions

There are various forms of group interventions used in mainstream mental health care settings, school and after school programs. These include the traditional cognitive-behavioral and psychoanalytic/psychodynamic talk therapies, activity groups (including art and music, some of which are psychoanalytic therapy groups), and bibliotherapy group interventions.

Cognitive-Behavioral Group Therapy holds some promise with its emphasis on skills, knowledge, and behavioral practice. It often works well because it focuses on individuals' own strengths, including the enhancement, and uses of these strengths. In pragmatic ways, it allows at-risk individuals to deal with frustration in ways that do not lead to destructive behaviors or outcomes. Instead the individual learns how to control his/herself in the group setting, and then to execute this in real life. According to anecdotal evidence from one mental health worker, this intervention was found to be useful with some inner city Black and Latino adolescents in community based settings (W.S. Adamson, personal communication, July 23rd, 2008). The problem, however, is the relevancy of these modalities of intervention.

The 'mutual aid' model that is more favored in social work provided the foundation for the work of Malekoff (2004), who has received international attention and praise for his writings and theory in the field of social work groups, especially with children and adolescents. In his text on group work with adolescents (and group work in general) he puts emphasis on strengths of group members, as opposed to the deficit model. Malekoff suggest that mental health professionals need to be careful of labeling and pathologizing clients. He defines group work as "as an educational process

emphasizing 1) the development and social adjustment of an individual through voluntary group association and 2) the use of this association as a means of furthering other socially desirable ends" (Malekoff, 2004). Malekoff refers to his theory and practice as "strengths-based group work" which is a framework that a group worker can work within, while also incorporating one's own theoretical orientation. He states seven main principles that comprise this practice with adolescents:

1. Form groups based on members' felt needs and wants, not diagnoses.
2. Structure groups to welcome the whole person, not just the troubled parts.
3. Integrate verbal and nonverbal activities.
4. Develop alliances with relevant other people in group members' lives.
5. Decentralize authority and turn control over to group members.
6. Maintain a dual focus on individual change and social reform.
7. Understand and respect group development as key to promoting change.

(Malekoff, page 37, 2004)

Malekoff incorporates various parts of theories and approaches into his structure and practice of group work. He acknowledges that while his framework has not been formally assessed, it is based on the research and ideas behind developmental resilience, solution-focused, story and narrative, health and wellness approaches. Cognitive-behavioral group therapy, in particular Sheldon Rose's work and development of the interactional approach of group therapy (1998), both influence and are incorporated into Malekoff's theory and practice. The interactional approach views the small group as an entity which can be used to reinforce prosocial behavior. This is particularly significant for group work with adolescents as they developmentally shift their attachment from their

families to peer groups. Other influences include behavioral-based problem-solving and sociorecreational methods.

The Beats, Rhymes and Life therapeutic Hip Hop program that is the focus of this study borrows much in way of structure and approach from Malekoff, including the adoption of the seven principles outlined above. BRL takes a more narrow and focused approach in terms of the modality of treatment, namely Hip Hop and Rap.

Bibliotherapy.

A good portion of the foundation for Rap Therapy and the BRL groups is based upon previously established work in bibliotherapy, so it is worth considering bibliotherapy in some depth here. Heath et al. (2005) define bibliotherapy as helping groups or individuals to gain insight into personal problems by way of books or stories. Its power lies in contextualizing issues that might be quite sensitive or difficult to talk about directly in the form of a story or poem, thereby creating a safe distance for the client to address such issues. According to the authors, who cite various studies making use of this approach, it has been has been used for treating a variety of issues in children and adolescents. The authors emphasize that the literature shows that the best results are achieved when bibliotherapy is integrated with other interventions and is not used as the only technique.

Bibliotherapy used in a culturally-sensitive and relevant way can be an effective intervention. For example, Holman (1996) found that use of a Puerto Rican poem was of significant help in ego-supportive work with a 16 year-old adolescent and helped to move treatment forward. The key aspect was that working with this poem was a validation of the client's ethnic identity. This implied the use of culturally-relevant material had

therapeutic value. In more general terms, Mazza (1999), among other researchers, has found the use of poetry, other literature, and the writing of journals have all proven useful in therapeutic settings, including groups settings to aid adolescents in coping with problems. The use of lyrics from pop songs also has considerable history in this context.

Bibliotherapy is one of the elements that comprise Rap Therapy, as well as the BRL program. This being said, traditional bibliotherapy simply does not have the same appeal to at-risk urban adolescent populations (especially when the groups are voluntary). The first and perhaps most obvious problem is that traditional bibliotherapy so closely resembles school work. At-risk students, as previously defined by Paone (2006), often are at-risk by definition due to academic under-performance and difficulties. These very students are often at odds with their schools and educational systems/institutions, institutions, which often communicate students' deficiencies to them while ignoring students' strengths. Students, of course, may be highly creative and talented in ways not obvious in a traditional school environment. If the method of intervention, in this case traditional bibliotherapy, resembles the very thing which students detest or in which they are told they are deficient, then participation is not very likely to be high, nor the modality appealing. The second problem, connected to the first, is that often the texts used in bibliotherapy are not in musical or recreational form, which is inherently part of adolescents' recreational lives. Recreation inherently has therapeutic aspects to it, and when the recreational and culturally-relevant aspects can be emphasized then the intervention becomes far more appealing to adolescents who otherwise would not participate.

Empirical Evaluations of Various Forms of Group Interventions with Underserved Youth

This section will first examine studies of cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups, then look at comparative studies between cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups and activity-based therapeutic groups, and then examine some studies focused on activity-based modalities.

Studies of cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups.

Cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups are often regarded as the standard modality for group interventions. However, there is strong reason to believe that these interventions may be of limited effectiveness in working with at-risk urban adolescents.

Cirillo etc al. (1994) conducted a study with 50 at-risk adolescents in order to assess the efficacy of social-cognitive groups in enhancing violence-avoidance beliefs, empathy, and personal development in at-risk adolescents. This study randomly assigned the participants to either experimental or control groups. The experimental group was exposed to cognitive group therapy intervention for two hours a week, and the control group did not participate in the social-cognitive process. Both groups were given surveys to assess the variables being tested before exposure to groups, upon completion, and three months after the intervention was done. Results indicated that social-cognitive groups were not effective as a way to enhance violence avoidance beliefs, empathy, or personal development in at-risk adolescents.

Other empirical studies examining cognitive-behavioral interventions with at-risk youth found contradictory results to Cirillo et al. These studies had more positive outcomes. Caty (2003) studied the effects of a school-based process-oriented group psychotherapy intervention on 115 young at-risk adolescents over 29 weeks. The

students were categorized as at-risk due to behavioral, emotional, and/or academic problems. This study was notable in that it was particularly culturally-sensitive, including therapists of color, a majority of whom spoke Spanish. More than 80% of the population of students participating in the study were from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds with the majority (70%) coming from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The study used a prettest and posttest design in which participants were given the Youth Self Report (YSR) which assessed for internalizing symptomatology, academic confidence and social competence. Researchers also used school archival data to compare participants' grade point average before and after the intervention. The results of the study were mixed: comparison of prettest and posttest results showed an improvement in internalizing symptomatology and a significant improvement in school performance. However, no significant improvements were found with respect to academic confidence or social competence for any of the participants. In addition, based on the results of the study the author suggests that interventions should start earlier in adolescence and be more comprehensive and longer lasting.

McCart (2006) found behavioral parent-training combined with a cognitive-behavioral talk therapy intervention for African-American adolescents with aggressive behavior problems to be somewhat effective. Although this study involved a smaller sample size (n=24), McCart used a wait-list control group to compare to those families in the intervention, as well as conducting a comparison of baseline, posttest, and three-month follow up assessments. When analyses were conducted to see if levels of aggressive behavior had changed over time, no significant difference was found. While little change in target behaviors was found over the period of intervention, the retention

rate of 89% for the participants in therapy was much higher than that usually reported for comparable populations in such interventions. McCart concluded that while retention of participants in the intervention was high, consistent attendance was not and that "research is needed to identify potential barriers to attendance among African-American youth and their parents, as low attendance will obviously influence the overall effectiveness of the treatment" (page 55).

Comparative studies between cognitive talk-based therapeutic groups and activity-based therapeutic groups.

Schechtman (2006) and Paone (2006) have conducted large-scale studies of the relative effectiveness of talk-based and activity-based therapeutic groups. They are in general agreement, and provide strong support for the use of activity-based therapeutic interventions with these populations. Bibliotherapy was identified by the Schechtman study as being particularly effective.

Paone's (2006) dissertation examined the effectiveness of group activity therapy versus traditional talk therapy on moral reasoning of at-risk first and second-year high school students in a small American city. The sample of at-risk students was primarily of Caucasian and Latino descent, with a small minority of African-American, Asian/Pacific Islander and American-Indian. This sample was representative of the larger student body from which it was drawn. A total of 87 students participated in the 12 weeks of the study for the pre and posttest. Participants were divided according to age and gender, and thereafter randomly assigned to a group activity therapy condition (n=39) or a group talk therapy condition (n=48). Participants were given the Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2) used to assess moral reasoning. The author found a significant increase in moral

reasoning in the group using the group activity therapy, while there was no change found for the comparison group. Qualitative data and feedback on the activity groups were found to be "overwhelmingly positive"---including the group describing the therapy sessions as a reason to attend school and as a safe place to share thoughts and feelings. The students expressed a desire to continue in the group in the future.

Shectman (2006) conducted a study in Israel that focused on the effects of incorporating bibliotherapy in conjunction with integrative counseling in the treatment of 61 (30 Arabs and 31 Jews) aggressive boys. The subjects' ages ranged from eight to sixteen years. There were 48 therapists (24 Arabs and 24 Jews) who were predominantly women (45 of 48), and additional novice counselors. The Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and Teacher Report Form (TRF) by Achenbach were the assessment tools used, as well as the Index of Empathy for Children and Adolescents, and the Client Satisfaction Scale, which was used to gauge client and therapist satisfaction with respect to the form of group intervention. There were three group conditions: integrated counseling, integrated counseling plus bibliotherapy, and a no-counseling group condition.

An integrative model was used which incorporates humanistic and psychodynamic approaches for the initial exploration and insight stages of treatment and made use of cognitive-behavioral techniques for the later "change" stage aimed at altering behaviors. Bibliotherapy was chosen due to the high levels of resistance and defensiveness.

The integrated counseling groups were mainly unstructured with a focus on exploring the feelings of aggression, causes of aggressive behavior, consequences, and ways to change. The integrated counseling with bibliotherapy addressed the same issues,

but the initial activity was the use of a poem, story, or film pertaining to aggressive behavior and consequences. The results of the study showed a reduction in aggression and an increase in empathy in the integrated counseling and integrated counseling with bibliotherapy conditions when compared to the "no counseling" condition. Bibliotherapy was also rated higher for therapist satisfaction as well as higher levels of empathy. The author also found that higher stages of change/readiness to change as well as more occurrences of insight, therapeutic change, and less resistance in the bibliotherapy condition versus just the use of integrated counseling.

Studies focused on activity-based modalities.

Several non-comparative studies of various forms of activity-based therapies point to the efficacy of these methods with populations of at-risk adolescents. Blowers (2007) studied a school-based after-school martial arts program targeting at-risk youth in order to promote mental health and prevent substance abuse. The subjects were at-risk high school students in a mid-sized city who participated in the martial arts program. The study compared these with two other groups: at-risk adolescents not in the intervention and with a low-risk comparison group. The study had a sample size of 90 students total, comprised of 35 males and 55 females. Variables examined for change in students included academic performance, self-esteem, substance use, and attitudes towards violence and conflict. High-risk youth in the treatment group improved from pretest baseline measures in all of these areas, and most significantly on self-esteem and less favorable attitude towards violence. High-risk youth who did not participate in the martial arts program did not show comparable positive changes. Neither of the high-risk groups, however, performed as well as the low-risk group.

Art-therapy in groups has also been found to be an effective treatment. Pifalo (2002) conducted a study with sexually abused girls (n=13) and adolescents, assessing the use of art therapy groups to treat trauma. A trauma checklist was administered pretest and posttest which was used to determine the level of the girls' dysfunction. The results showed all participants had a reduction in symptoms relating to trauma and anxiety, as well as an increased feeling of safety from harm, and a reduced sense of traumatization. The artwork was seen as a "container" for the clients' various feelings (especially rage and sadness) and it was seen as giving a voice to emotions that were previously suppressed.

Gold, Voracek, & Wigram (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of studies on various music therapy interventions done with children and adolescents with psychopathology that included developmental delays, sexual abuse, and juvenile delinquency, among other diagnoses. They concluded that music therapy overall has a "medium to large positive effect" (page 1). They also found that greater effects with developmental and behavioral disorders than were found for emotional effects. Eclectic, humanistic and psychodynamic approaches were found to be more effective than behavioral, as well as greater effects for behavioral and developmental outcomes than social skills and self-concept. Overall, they concluded that music therapy is effective for children and adolescents with psychopathology and recommend it be used in clinical work. Standley and Prickett's (1994) book on research done in the area of music therapy presents several empirical studies demonstrating the efficacy of music therapy, and substantially agrees with Gold, Voracek & Wigram's (2004) findings.

Summary comparison of group intervention studies.

Activity-based therapy groups seem to generally yield better results than social-cognitive groups within these populations. It therefore seems well-established that an activity-based approach is better suited for working with underserved urban youth, engaging them through less direct, but seemingly much more effective, means. There are also indications that activities that connect strongly to the culture of these populations help further the therapies, as one might expect. Hip Hop therapy not only has the cultural and recreational appeal, it also offers a more direct route to tap into and make use of aggressive urges and angry feelings through the musical outlet. This is naturally part of the expressive art form and culture of Hip Hop, which came out of ravaged communities and served to replace violent clashes with a less destructive form of expression. Spontaneous activities such as freestyling can be very cathartic as one can channel the conscious and unconscious feelings and urges into such an activity.

Where attendance has been monitored, the evidence indicates that therapeutic Hip Hop activity groups (Ciardiello, 2003; Pasagiannis 2007; Alvarez, 2006) tend to have higher attendance rates than cognitive therapy groups (McCart 2006; Pasagiannis 2007) studied, and, often, higher retention rates. Ciardiello (2003) in particular kept track of unexcused absences, which she found decreased over the period of her Hip Hop activity intervention. Alvarez (2006) noted that only one student missed one session during his Rap therapy intervention (with a total number of five students over a span of six sessions).

Whereas the cognitive-behavioral group therapy interventions yield mixed results, activity-centered therapies and groups seem to enjoy more consistent success according

to a review of the research literature. Activity-centered therapies also appear to be the preferred modality of treatment, perhaps accounting for their better overall results.

Psychoanalytically Informed Theories of Groups

Viewing group work and group therapy from a psychoanalytic perspective. Where Winnicott's theory helps explain how the BRL group serves the individual and the Eriksonian perspective is used to help understand the utility and appropriateness of the intervention, Wilfred Bion's theory of groups informs the functioning of the group and the understanding of its efficacy. Bion was one of the pioneers of group therapy and developed a theory of group behavior of humans which is generalizable outside of therapy. Thus, his theory can illuminate the uses of the BRL group in terms of immediate therapeutic benefits within the group, as well as more general positive outcomes in the context of other groups and settings of which adolescents/students are part.

Several different types of groups exist in the lives of urban adolescents. There are formal groups such as classes, teams, and the school itself. There are also more informal groups such as gangs or other groups of friends and peers. Groups can also form out of necessity -- sometimes instantaneously, as in the example of a person in a public setting who needs help in a medical emergency and strangers come together in an effort to aid the person. According to Bion's (1961) group theory, this would be a "work group" in which there is a designated task that the group seeks to achieve---in this case working together to save the person. Different members of the group take on different tasks and coordinate to accomplish the work of the group.

We can apply Bion's theory of groups, which he originally applied to small face-to face-groups, to a larger system---in this case the high school. A.K. Rice, one of Bion's

peers at the Tavistock Institute, made use of Bion's theories in applying them to understanding commercial institutions and organizations (Rice, 1953). In particular, he applied the concept of unconscious group processes to institutions in commercial and industrial settings (Rice, 1953). Thus, applying Bion's theory of groups is not a novel idea nor inappropriate, and the Tavistock Institute, of which Rice and Bion were members, has produced several other studies and literature on this subject. Institutions are large groups composed of many smaller groups, both formal and informal. Thus, in the high school, there is the entire community of students, teachers and staff---a very large group. Then there are the departments such as art, shop, English and P.E. Each contains a group of teachers and a larger group of teachers with all the students enrolled in classes. Then there are the classes themselves, each being a group. There is also the student government, with its respective leaders and subgroups among other student groups, and so on.

The concept of the work group is applicable for understanding and examining the different modes of functioning of groups of all types. Bion contrasted the *work group* with three other types of groups which he termed *basic assumption* groups. The work group has a clear agreed upon task as the members' common goal that is pursued rationally by the group. The basic assumption groups such as the *dependency group,* the *fight-flight group*, and the *pairing* group all display regressed forms of group functioning that stray from the purpose of the group. Each of the basic assumption groups suffers from distinct areas of conflict regarding individual group members' ambivalence regarding autonomy, independence, and from discrepancies between the individuals' needs and the needs of the group for the group's sake.

The school as institution can be viewed as a large work group, where the work or task of the group is the education and socialization of the students. Education includes not only learning information and critical thinking abilities, but also enhancement of creativity and associated abilities. These factors are often strongly linked: for example, much critical thinking requires creativity. Winnicott's emphasis on the importance of the fostering of creativity for healthy developmental achievements and facilitation of the true self for the infant/young child is important to take into account with regard to this point. When one considers this alongside Blos' theory of the regression and reawakening of early childhood issues during adolescence it becomes apparent that the individual is still malleable and adolescence is a vital window of opportunity. When one factors in developmental considerations presented by Erikson and Kroger, one sees that the peer group is the means by which to access this window. As the research cited in the Surgeon General's report on youth violence shows for late-onset adolescent offenders as well as other at-risk youth, this can make or break the foundation of a pro-social and productive future for the individual. For some adolescents, traditional schooling can do this. These tasks of the school, however, can be sabotaged and sidetracked by irrational forces, including group members who fall into basic assumption groups, for example, informal groups or cliques where there is peer approval for behaviors that run counter to the larger institution's work group task of education and socialization. These groups can exist within the school, and can result in attitudes where the fight/flight basic assumption predominates over the larger work group task of succeeding in educational terms.

At-risk youth in particular are prone to be part of and submit to informal groups like gangs and other peer groups that encourage negative attitudes and influences, often

leading to self-destructive behaviors. These groups within the school that encourage such behavior can be seen as dependency groups in which members are protected and taken care of by a group leader. Such peer groups can also function as fight/flight groups that scapegoat the school, teachers, or larger society, identifying them as the "enemy," and therefore personifying all the things the group identifies as negative, undesirable and threatening. The peer group helps shape the individual's identity, one of the primary developmental struggles for an adolescent as they separate from their family and become more autonomous. The peer group is also particularly important because it serves to provide protection, support and care for the adolescent. Kroger (2004) notes the developmental importance of the peer group, "It is the peer group that, under optimal conditions, supplies support during the loss of childhood psychic structure. Just as the *rapprochement* child tries to re-engage mother or caretaker in its activities to cope with the pain of object loss, so too the adolescent seeks solace from peers while relinquishing intrapsychic object ties" (p. 62). While a negative peer group that operates primarily in a fight/flight or dependency mode may lead to acting out behavior that is ultimately self-destructive for the individual, the sense of belonging and resulting identity supplied by the group often overshadows this for an adolescent. A fundamental part of becoming autonomous and distinct from one's family is the establishing of one's own identity, which is in the context of other groups such as peers, who give feedback to the individual about themselves and with whom they identify.

Past Research on Impact of Therapeutic Hip Hop Interventions

While there have been a few qualitative studies of Hip Hop Therapy---particularly in group settings---none of them have made explicit and central use of psychoanalytic

theory to understand how and why the groups work. (Researchers refer to Rap Therapy interventions in a variety of ways. For the sake of continuity and clarity, this review will consistently use the term Hip Hop Therapy, but it should be noted that some authors and researchers refer to Hip Hop Therapy as Rap Therapy. In cases where a different aspect of Hip Hop culture is employed, that will be noted. Alvarez's BRL model started off as a Rap Therapy and has evolved to include beats/music and video production, one of the reasons to prompt the phrase Therapeutic Hip Hop Activity Groups.) Alvarez (2006) conducted a qualitative study on an early form of his BRL group intervention which made use of interviews and coding of video session of groups. This study was geared towards answering questions such as the usefulness of the Hip Hop modality and how this related to attendance. While psychodynamically informed, it used more of a narrative emphasis and was based on Malekoff's (2004) structure for group work. Pasagiannis (2007) also used a primarily qualitative emphasis, examining changes in two participants' speech through sessions, as well as monitoring attendance for the rest of the participants. Barrager's (2006) study was another qualitative attempt to assess the impact via narratives of young men reflecting on their use of Hip Hop in developing their identity during adolescence. Ciardiello (2003) also studied the use of Hip Hop Therapy along with other Hip Hop elements/activities (recording, music production, graffiti-style art), focusing on how this could be incorporated into more traditional CBT group approaches.

Past quantitative studies of Hip Hop Therapy have been limited in number, as well as in what they have examined and assessed. Only one study has attempted to directly measure impact on youth to assess for individual change as a result of the

intervention. The study was conducted by DeCarlo and Hockman (2003) and it compared three groups of adolescents (those who were incarcerated, status offenders and adolescents with no criminal record) who participated in Hip Hop Therapy groups. These participants were assessed posttest for preferred modality of treatment (traditional psychoeducation intervention vs. Hip Hop Therapy). Tyson (2002) examined the use of Hip Hop Therapy in a residential facility with at-risk youth. This study made use of a control group and examined preference for modality of group therapy, as well as self-concept and peer relations by the administration of pretest and posttest surveys. While Ciardiello's (2003) study was more qualitative than quantitative in nature, she did examine attendance rates ("away without leave") and looked for trends that related to the modality of intervention.

Both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the current study of the BRL program seek to fill in gaps in knowledge about Hip Hop-centered therapeutic interventions. With respect to quantitative aspects in this area of study, neither the impact on perception of self nor perception of social support has been conclusively studied. Nor has any previous study qualitatively examined the process and use of Hip Hop Therapy through a psychoanalytic lens or making real-time observation of group dynamics. The past studies of Hip Hop Therapy will be explored below in more detail, followed by a description of the current program being studied.

Rap therapy and studies of rap therapy.

While Hip Hop has been around for what is approaching four decades, Hip Hop Therapy in mental health and educational settings and the study of its applications are fairly recent. However, some cutting-edge clinicians and members of the mental health

community, as well as clinicians of the Hip Hop generation(s) have show interest in the matter. After all, when a clinician works with any population or group, culture is a variable that must be factored in and can be essential for establishing rapport. For adolescents who feel set aside by the mainstream culture, using a subculture as a gateway may be essential to establishing an initial rapport and modality for expression. For at-risk urban street youth, Hip Hop is usually the predominant cultural form. It is a unifying factor with which many adolescents from similar and different walks of life, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds identify. Therefore, what may appear as a loose affiliation or lifestyle can be mobilized into an intervention or way of engaging groups of youth in both structured and spontaneous ways to facilitate self-expression and peer support. Malekoff (2004), writing about group work with adolescents highlights the alternative utility of group work aside from just traditional insight-oriented psychotherapy groups in the following passage:

> It is critical for the group worker to hear behind seemingly unstructured activity such as spontaneous singing; rapping, dancing, and aimless horsing around. It is imperative for the group worker to be responsive to their curiosity and reflections about the world and about national and locals scenes, as well." (p. 24)

Implicitly, Malekoff is stating the importance of understanding the culture of the group, how the members communicate, relate, bond, etc., through play. If one is working with urban youth, especially inner-city minorities in the United States, that culture is highly likely to involve Hip Hop culture. If the adolescents' talents lay in the realm of Hip Hop culture and music, then a strengths-based approach would dictate that one should utilize these strengths, foster, and praise them for therapeutic purposes. "It is a

sad reality that there remain practitioners who believe that insight-oriented discussion is the only activity of value in group work and that worker competence is based upon the ability to "get them to talk" (p. 25 Malekoff). As a number of previously-cited studies show, activity-based therapeutic groups seem to function better and to have more positive outcomes. When we consider cultural relevance as a further vital factor reinforcing strengths-based and activity-based approaches, the case for Hip Hop or Rap therapeutic groups becomes almost overwhelming. Barrager's (2006) study is quite persuasive as well, as it presents further evidence of the significance in young people's lives and both a coping and identity mechanism.

Although the case for Rap Therapy appears to be strong, the literature yields a relatively small number of quantitative studies of Rap Therapy and other therapeutic uses of Hip Hop in group formats. There are a number of possible reasons for this: these therapies are relatively recent; there are not yet many such interventions compared to more traditional therapies; and because the dominant culture tends to set such cutting-edge techniques aside. Collectively, however, these studies present a strong case for the use of Rap Therapies.

The five studies that follow are wide ranging, but all have some common findings. When compared to more traditional interventions those that made use of Hip Hop Therapy modality or Hip Hop-oriented activities tended to be favored or yield better results. The studies also showed enhanced engagement of at-risk youth through the Hip Hop modality of the intervention. Many clinicians, researchers, and theoreticians have expressed the importance of and need for culturally sensitive and relevant interventions (Allen, 2005; Ciardiello, 2003; Kim, Omizo, & D'Andrea, 1998; Kobin and Tyson,

2006). Elligan (2004) has written a book on the use of Rap music in therapy. Both he and Allen (2005) suggest this as a culturally relevant and sensitive form of treatment that can be offered to clients who are difficult to engage or not interested in more traditional forms of therapy.

Tyson (1998) was one of the first to introduce Rap Therapy, in which clients listened to, discussed and analyzed Rap Lyrics, as a method of engaging those clients in the therapeutic process. One can see how Rap Therapy builds upon bibliotherapy and music therapy in culturally relevant ways. Tyson did so based on his experience working with clients who were mainly of ethnic and cultural minorities from low-income neighborhoods and who related strongly to Rap music (and the encompassing Hip Hop culture). In later work this was expanded upon. Tyson and Kobin (2006) emphasize the importance of clients' personal responses to lyrics and the potential clinical work that can be done with the responses. The authors highlight the use of such an intervention with clients in urban settings as both a rapport building device, fostering of empathy between client and clinician, and a mechanism of therapeutic expression. With respect to the development of rapport, Kobin and Tyson add that such a use of Hip Hop in therapy can help to address and break down racial barriers as well as the dynamics of power in the client/therapist relationship (2006).

Tyson (2002) further provides one of the most interesting studies, although the results are not conclusive. Tyson studied 14 adolescents at a residential facility in Miami. This facility catered to runaway, abandoned, neglected, abused and homeless urban youth, all involved in some way with the Department for Juvenile Justice.

Most of the 11 participants were African-American or Latino, with some

Caucasian members. The experimental group consisted of 5 members, and the control group of 6 members. The experimental design for each group consisted of pretest surveys followed by posttest surveys. The surveys used were the Self Concept Scale for Children and the Index of Peer Relations. The Hip Hop Therapy (HHT) consisted of 12 group sessions in which participants listened to parts of "conscious" Rap songs (songs oriented towards solutions, awareness and improvement) and then discussed their reactions.

The sample sizes were small, and statistically significant results were not obtained from this study. However, results trended in the direction of affirming the hypothesis – that the HHT participants would have the greatest improvements in self-concept and peer relations. Qualitatively, HHT participants expressed a strong enthusiasm for their sessions, including stating that the use of Rap music implicitly accorded them respect. Participants in the control group were said to express envy of their HHT peers. Four members of the HHT group expressed a wish to write, share and discuss their own Rap compositions. This requested self-expression is one of the main features of the BRL program.

DeCarlo and Hockman (2003), provide a more definitive and empirically valid study of the efficacy of Rap therapy with urban adolescents. This study compared the efficacy of Rap therapy to traditional psychoeducational group therapy for teaching and encouraging the use of prosocial skills in 21 African-American adolescent males from a large mid-Western city. The 21 participants were in eighth through tenth grades and between 13 and 15 years of age. The sample of participants consisted of three group conditions that were tested against each other. The first group consisted of seven violent

offenders incarcerated for homicide, the second group was made up of seven status offenders on probation, and the third (randomized) group consisted of seven participants with no history of offenses. Participants ranged from lower to upper middle socioeconomic class.

Each group of participants met twice weekly, in a psychoeducational group at the beginning of the week and the Rap therapy group at the end of the week. The method of Rap Therapy was chosen because of its cultural relevance to these populations. The prosocial skills that were the focus of the study were impulse control, morality and anger management.

One of the main tasks of the Rap therapy group was to analyze lyrics from songs chosen by the participants with the aforementioned concept items in mind. Group members were asked to write responses to excerpts of Rap songs classified as Gangster Rap, Political/Protest Rap, Positive Rap and Spiritual Rap, and were given specific topics on which to focus including female gender abuse, anger management, impulse control, reasoning, morality, responsibility and identity.

The psychoeducational group topics for discussion were chosen by group leaders or spontaneously by group members. The Rap Therapy Assessment Scale (RTAS), an 18-item measure designed for the study, was used to measure the efficacy of the treatments. This assessed participants' affective response to the two therapies, their assessment of each technique as a method of prosocial skills acquisition, and preference for each method of intervention. This tool was administered posttest to the participants.

Most results of the posttest questionnaire were overwhelmingly in favor of Rap Therapy. Every participant in all the groups felt the Rap therapy method was the most

enjoyable, the one they preferred the most, and the one they believed their schoolmates would prefer. It was also the mode they all preferred for the discussion of social relations. Rap therapy was also shown to be strongly preferred for feeling relaxed in sessions and feeling excited about the next sessions. Most participants felt their friends (as opposed to schoolmates) would prefer the Rap sessions.

Interestingly, only about half of the students believed that their parents would prefer Rap therapy, and less than one third of the students believed that the staff would prefer Rap therapy. Rap therapy was also the significantly preferred treatment to discuss and understand anger management, impulse control, avoid delinquent behavior, morality development, female gender abuse, relatedness to daily situations and decision-making. These constitute all the areas of discussion assessed in these trials. The results obtained strongly supported the cultural applicability of this intervention.

DeCarlo and Hockman's study also suggested that Rap therapy is useful across a broad range of clinical and correctional settings. This study provides the strongest empirical evidence in the literature that Rap therapy is favored strongly by underserved urban youth. It also suggests that the strengthening of prosocial skills---one of the primary objectives of group therapy – might be better achieved through Rap therapy than through conventional group therapy

Ciardiello (2003) also used Hip Hop Therapy with other additional Hip Hop elements as a group intervention for residents from five group home residential treatment facilities in New York. "The Lab" was the room in which participants met and engaged in the Rap Therapy. They were encouraged to make the room their own by decorating---including murals, graffiti and posters of their choice. The Lab group work program was

established due to residents' interest in Hip Hop. It was based on the theory of activity-centered therapy (ACT) programming which includes and combines sociorecreation (activities), psychotherapy (traditional group therapy in this case), cognitive behavioral principles (in this case "peer models and reward system"), and psychoeducation (p. 106). Ciardiello characterized the process of the clients decorating their room, discussing, listening to, and writing about song lyrics, as well as creating their own, as sociorecreation.

The therapeutic Hip Hop intervention met for hour-long sessions in which students listened to Rap songs, gave written responses in journals, expressed feelings in response to the music, and thoughts as to how the songs related to their own lives, a technique similar to other forms of Rap Therapy. In addition to methods put forward by Tyson, the clients had the opportunity to create their own songs and had access to turntables in the labs following sessions. Group size was limited to nine adolescents at one time, of both genders. The nature of the ACT model is open-ended (ongoing enrolling allowed) to deal with clients moving in and out of placements and new clients arriving who could potentially benefit from the intervention. Participation in The Lab was found to strongly affect the number of absences without leave of clients from the sessions. According to quarterly reports, over a nine-month period with 20 total participants in the program the total number of absences without leave in the first quarter was 32, which dropped down to 9 total in the last quarter. These findings suggest that the intervention was successful in reaching and retaining at-risk youth. Ciardiello concludes that such an intervention that meets urban adolescents "where they are" is a way to potentially engage and help them as effectively as possible. Ciardiello's intervention was

largely successful in its attempt to create an encompassing Hip Hop environment, and to ally that with several other approaches. This is the most similar to BRL, which is also moving in this general direction.

Alvarez (2006), the founder of the current intervention being studied, composed a qualitative study of his therapeutic Hip Hop program for his Master's Thesis entitled, "Beats, Rhymes and Life: Exploring the Use of Rap Therapy with Urban Adolescents." This study assessed the perceived benefits and usefulness of the intervention by both the youth participants as well as several school staff including mental health workers who referred participants to the program. The subjects interviewed were divided into two groups: group A was comprised of the five students participants and group B of five school staff at a public high school in the city of Berkeley, California. Berkeley High School is an ethnically, socioeconomically diverse school. The student participants, all from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, consisted of three African-American participants and two Caucasian participants, ranging in age from 15-18 years.

An action-based research approach was used in which the researcher was also a facilitator, since at the time of the study no other such programs existed. The study was therefore exploratory in nature. Open-ended interviews with students and staff (who worked directly with the youth) were used to collect data---a group interview was done with the student participants and individual interviews were done with the school staff participants. All of these interviews were video-taped, as were many of the actual group sessions. All of the student participants wrote raps previous to the intervention, demonstrating a preexisting interest in Hip Hop. Group B consisted of two bi-racial participants, one African-American, and two Caucasian participants (a school

psychologist, a vice-principal, a mental health intern, a BHS volunteer and a clinical supervisor) with an age range of 28-49.

The program took place over a six-week period, during which groups met once a week after school, for two hours at a time. Students were at-risk urban adolescents and were referred through the Berkeley High School health center following the submission of an information packet on the program to the health center, which was then distributed to participants.

Despite the argument for a quantitative design to measure efficacy, Alvarez points out that some outcomes can be very difficult to measure, and the judgment of seasoned professionals such as those who comprised the staff participants can have more validity than a careful quantitative study, especially since several of them were quite familiar with the student participants and their baseline functioning.

While the model of Tyson's (1998; 2002) and Elligan's (2004) Hip Hop/Rap Therapies were used as a basis for part of the activities of the group (the analysis and discussion of lyrics), Alvarez introduced the composition of original student Raps with peer feedback and a "freestyling" (improvised rapping) activity to the format of each group session. The freestyle session was conducted in a circle (known as a "cypher" in Hip Hop culture) with facilitators participating as well. This meant that material came directly out of the clients, and therefore makes the process potentially even more engaging than "traditional" Hip Hop/Rap Therapy due to personal investment in the process. An emphasis was put on a supportive group culture. Freestyling is a stream of consciousness form of expression and is potentially far more anxiety provoking than just the discussion of lyrics, as it involves performance in front of a peer group. This

however, also increases the potential for gains such as support from the group of peers. In addition, the more musical nature of the activity of rapping also offers a potentially transformative experience as the emotions evoked by music (as has been shown/implied through traditional music therapy studies) are combined with the personalized expressive elements of the lyrical content in the presence of peers (Bowden & Greenberg, 200; Gold, Voracek, & Wigram, 2004; Lefevre, 2004; Standley & Prickett, 1994). The freestyling and writing of raps---expressing each students narrative---in the context of the peer group and facilitators also presents the opportunity for a validation or "witnessing" as happens in narrative therapy, which can be a very confirming, instructive and therapeutic experience (Freedman & Combs, 1996). (A further description of Alvarez's program can be found in appendix M.)

The attendance rate of participants (96%) in the intervention was impressively high. The video-taped interviews were coded using deductive and inductive coding strategies. In addition, content analysis was used to determine what practices or factors would be the most useful for social work. The themes were divided into six areas which were: 1) Youth and Hip Hop; 2) Youth Attitudes towards therapy; 3) Rap as a tool for communication and Increasing Self-Confidence; 4) Rap as Therapeutic Intervention; 5) Rap as a coping strategy; and 6) Developing a Sense of Self Through Rap. All the adults interviewed said that Hip Hop music and culture played a significant role for students and was an important influence. All adults also indicated that the youths previously had negative views of therapy and were hard to engage in treatment because of that. Four out of five youth participants said if they had been offered traditional group therapy instead of Rap Therapy they would have not participated. All five of the students indicated a

preference for the Rap Therapy versus other forms of therapy. All youth participants agreed that Rap was a form of communication and that it increased self-confidence. All the adult participants agreed that Rap was a positive form of expression. Unequivocally, all youth and adult participants agreed that Hip Hop is a good way to engage youth in therapy. The adults all mentioned in their interviews an increase in self-esteem and confidence in the youth and viewed participation in the group as a positive experience. The entirety of the youth saw the group as an outlet for self-expression, the group as supportive, liked giving and receiving feedback to and from their peers, and felt a connection to the other members of the group. Four of five mentioned being inspired by other members of the group, and all youth mentioned enjoying writing activities. In addition, all youth participants wrote in their Rap journals both in and out of the group setting. Three of five adults saw the intervention as a chance for the youth participants to develop themselves. As one youth commented about the intervention and his journal:

> You see this book. This is my therapy. When I have a crappy day I write a rap about it in here. When I come home nobody asked my about my day. I got all kinds of drama in my home, not to mention the shit happening in my neighborhood. But I know I can always write a rap in my book. This book is my life. (p.36, Alvarez, 2006)

Alvarez concludes his study pointing out that the intervention reached youth not normally accessible and demonstrated it as an effective tool to engage youth in therapy. He states that writing Rap poetry and freestyling is useful in clinical settings and that mental health professionals and others working with this population should not pathologize youth for their interest in or identification with Hip Hop. The results and

responses of the adults in this study can be examined and contrasted with the beliefs of the youth participants in DeCarlo and Hockman's (2003) study, which expected that staff would not like the intervention.

While not Hip Hop Therapy in the "traditional" (that which is synonymous with "Rap Therapy") sense as defined earlier in this section, Pasagiannis (2007) used the element of Hip Hop DJ'ing as a modality of group therapy for at-risk youth. DJ'ing in Hip Hop culture involves the cueing, mixing, scratching, and selecting of records. This was used as part of a session which also involved a traditional group therapy. The adolescents with whom he worked were diagnosed with conduct and oppositional defiant disorders. Clients were referred within a New York inner-city mental health facility by individual therapists and based on age were put in an early adolescent group (ages 11-13) or adolescent group (14-18). Case studies were conducted on two participants (one male, one female, both 14 year-old African-Americans) in order to assess any change in verbal abilities during the intervention. The focus in this study was on the skills of the participants, in contrast to the other aforementioned studies on the therapeutic use of Hip Hop, which examined the perception and attitudes toward the modality of the intervention.

Pasagiannis assessed skills by "Turns of Speech" and "Word Count" (2007). Transcription was done of eight sessions, where each one was scored for the verbal and non-verbal affiliative behaviors. A computer program was developed to track Turns of Speech, Word Count, non-verbal and verbal affiliative behaviors, and Hip Hop Mastery words of the two adolescents. Results tended to suggest the use of Hip Hop DJ'ing intervention was effective. Sessions were compared to see the trends and changes, which

were an increase in retention and attendance for participants in the Hip Hop group and as compared to time-limited CBT. As for the case studies, both showed an increase in Turns of Speech and Word Count. The female participant was found to display a trend of an increase in Total Affiliative Behaviors, but this was not true for the male participant. Despite this, both participants showed an increase in Verbal Affiliative behaviors and a decrease in non-verbal affiliate behaviors which the author posited meant a shift to a "symbolic verbal mode" (Pasagiannis 2007). The author concludes that the utilization of the Hip Hop group intervention seems to be an effective way to retain at-risk adolescent youth in treatment, increase attendance, and improve their verbal communication and affiliative behaviors. Pasagiannis (2007) attributes the increased attendance and retention rates compared to other group interventions for the following reasons:

> The activity is naturally appealing, and redirects the action oriented predisposition of at-risk adolescents into the spinning and scratching of records' activity while minimizing the shaming aspect of being in treatment. In other words this intervention focused on providing a rite of passage experience, creating a work group experience, and expediting group cohesion through the use of an activity that directly tapped into adolescent interests. Other factors also contributed to the retention and attendance rates: sensitivity to racial, ethnic and cultural differences, containment of adolescent performance anxiety in the context of a peer group, encouragement, and modeling of not-knowing, as the therapist switched roles from that of a teacher to a student. (p. 102)

While no large scale study has been undertaken, the strong and consistent results from all of these studies indicates that Hip Hop Therapy is a relevant, meaningful, and

desirable modality of intervention. It is also a medium in which students can find their voice and in which they are comfortable operating. It results in far better attendance than normal, a major issue facing other interventions targeting at-risk youth.

It should be noted that almost every study to date, including this one, measures students' attitudes to Rap Therapy. Studies on effectiveness and outcomes are much more difficult to design and conduct. This applies, however, to studying most group therapy interventions, so the difficulty should not be seen as any way unique to Rap therapy. While one study (Passagianis, 2007) does have some evidence of skills/behaviors improving, for one student in a sample of two, the other study (Tyson, 2002) had insignificant data with respect to self and peer relations. Thus, outcome studies on Hip Hop Therapy are needed, since they are present only in very limited forms in the literature. An approach that has never been used previously to study group therapy (to my knowledge through review of the literature) is the embedded multimodal approach, which will be described in further detail in the following methods section. It is to be hoped that other such studies, with control groups, will follow.

Chapter III: Methods and Procedures

The Beats, Rhymes and Life Program

Drawing from Rap Therapy, Hip Hop Therapy, Group Therapy and Group Work frameworks, the BRL program serves as a therapeutic Hip Hop activity group which aims to create opportunities for creative expression, positive peer interaction and skills development for its youth participants. Although the BRL program initially focused solely on rap-based activities, it has in recent years, expanded its curriculum to include beat production in addition to rap-based programming to serve as catalyst for change and development.

Each session starts with a brief check-in. Following the check-in are various activities (e.g. individual and group writing activities, groups discussion, beat production activities) with students working collaboratively in a large group, as well as smaller groups doing different activities simultaneously. Sessions may also include beat production (instrumental Hip Hop music production) as the activity in which students will be provided with technology and instruction to construct mini-audio projects which they will share with the group and receive feedback. Discussion of life issues also serves as an activity, depending on the topics that arise from check-in. After a period of time the group reconvenes and students are encourage to provide each other with constructive feedback on their creative endeavors. During this time facilitators also model constructive feedback as needed. Each session concludes with a freestyle session in which the group will arrange in a circle, called a "cypher" and are encouraged to improvise raps over instrumental Hip Hop music. Participants may also choose to recite written raps (instead of freestyling). The main objective of the group "freestyle" activity

is to help group members tap into their creative selves, to foster a sense of mastery and to encourage supportive peer interactions.

The program aims to create and analyze Hip Hop music and explore life issues in a supportive environment. Activities range from lyric development and analysis to beat production to group discussion. The group is no longer solely adopting the traditional Hip Hop Therapy models, but draws from Group Therapy, Group Work and Therapeutic Activity Group framework. By incorporating beat production activities along with Rap-based activities and discussion the Beats, Rhymes and Life program serves as a therapeutic Hip Hop activity group. The evolution over the past few years from the more traditional Hip Hop Therapy format came as an adaptation to responses on a survey of interest among students.

The observed functioning of the group can be understood through Bion's group theory, in which the group stays on task with group members working together and supporting each other through constructive and positive feedback which provides the environment for students to express their feelings and experiences, with these mirrored back and validated by the group. This in turn is what helps students to feel better about themselves and more supported as well as staying on task and functioning as a work group. This also creates an alternative group and experience to more negative and destructive pulls present in the youths' lives.

The reason the group affects participants in this way is explained through the lens of Winnicottian theory with particular emphasis on his idea of *mirroring* which is essential to a sense of self and efficacy. This is also factoring in developmental theory from Erikson and theory that expands on this such as Blos' assertion that early issues

having to do with identity, separation and the development of the self arise again and are integral parts of adolescent development. Mirroring, the process whereby a mother reflects back to the infant what the infant communicates both verbally and non-verbally to her, is an essential part of the process that helps the individual to thrive. When the child makes spontaneous gestures and the mother recognizes these gestures repeatedly as they arise, it gives the child a chance to express itself and mentally thrive as a result.

In the case of BRL, the mirroring provided by the group and group leader back to the individuals can potentially supplement or otherwise improve the mental and emotional functioning of participants who did not have previous access to this type of supportive response. It can also help them to better express themselves. The importance of recognition and the individual's expression in the development of the self by attention from and interaction with others is in close accord with Winnicott's description of the mother-child relationship in the healthy development of the self, where the leader's attention is like the mother's gaze. The work of the group to support the individual and provide them with feedback (as in the case of mirroring) has implications for what the individual can take with them from the group experience and also supplement their ego functions (e.g. ability to tolerate frustration or hold a positive understanding of themselves in mind despite stressful circumstances). It is suggested that participants can use this experience to learn new ways of coping with the development and social stressors they face in more adaptive and prosocial ways.

The group facilitators' interventions coupled with the structure of the group that they reinforce also help to keep the group, and its individual members, to stay on task and functioning as a work group. It is expected that when the group or members are straying

from their task, that interventions made by the facilitators will serve to bring the group back to its work. In addition, there should be greater group cohesion and more participant identification with the group, as well as having a better and stronger sense of self as well by the end of the group. This should be observable by the researcher in interactions and general functioning of the group. In addition, it is hypothesized that group members will feel more supported by their peers and friends as a result of participating in the group, and that this may be carried over to other realms such as their family lives, and experience in school.

The predicted qualitative results are expected to be reflected in the quantitative results. As stated in Chapter I, it is hypothesized that the surveys administered posttest will show a positive change in these areas from those administered prettest, demonstrating an increase in perceived support from peers, schoolmates, family and teachers, as well as increased measures of overall view of themselves or "global self-concept" (Harter, 1985). The overall positive experience within the group is also hypothesized to help the participants adapt to the structure of school, as well as other areas of society.

Embedded Multimodal Approach

The research will combine quantitative and qualitative aspects using an "embedded, multimodal approach" (page 12, Harvey, 2007). This will be done in order to enhance understanding of the therapeutic groups being studied. The qualitative approach is a way to empirically study the intervention at a deeper level, and to study how and why the intervention works and what was happening within it. In order to do this, the researcher will be embedded in the group, present to observe and record several

sessions. While some interaction will be necessary in order to foster rapport with the participants and gain their trust, the researcher will not make interventions aside from rapport-building with participants, nor participate directly in the activities. The researcher will attempt to avoid interventions that change the behavior and perception of the participants and will remain a non-threatening and familiar presence in the group. The quantitative portion---comprised of questions and scales taken from Susan Harter's (1985; 1988) instruments---is another way to see if there will be change in individual participants' perspectives of themselves as a result of the intervention. This is in order to compare before and after results. As was stated in Chapter I, the purpose of this study will be to assess the efficacy of the Hip Hop modality of the BRL program and understand how the intervention will impact the student participants.

Design/Approach

The Beats, Rhymes and Life therapeutic group approach is an activity-focused intervention for adolescents which uses Rap music and Hip Hop culture as its modality of functioning. The therapeutic setting, facilitated by a mental health professional and an additional facilitator with an expertise in Hip Hop, allows urban youth to express their thoughts and feelings through a culturally-relevant art form in a positive peer-supported environment. The reason this intervention holds such promise is its appeal and power to attract young people to participate in therapeutic interventions in which they normally would not consider participating. Emphasis is put on the emotional well-being of the students and they are encouraged, via an initial check-in each session, to let the group know how they are and any issues that may have arisen in their life since the last meeting. This often leads to discussions within the group of common experiences participants have

had and support from peers within the group. Participants also compose their own original Rap poems/compositions to instrumental beats on topics of their choice or sometimes given topics by the facilitators. In addition, they are given the option to create their own original beats, or visual artwork to accompany musical productions of the group. Facilitators model appropriate constructive feedback for the participants. At the end of the Beats, Rhymes, and Life session is a group freestyle, or improvised Rap, in which all members are asked to participate.

The study will be viewed through the lens of psychoanalytic and social systems group theory in order to explain functioning of the group, structure, and outcomes as well as assessing the efficacy. Bion's theory of groups will be used in observing BRL sessions. Bion categorized functional groups accomplishing their designated task as "work groups," whereas groups that strayed from their tasks or objectives he categorized as falling into the category of "basic assumption groups." The term "basic assumption" refers to unconsciously agreed-upon principles that group members act upon in irrational ways. While there are three different basic assumption groups, I will focus on distinguishing between work and basic assumption mode of functioning for the BRL group, as this is related to the outcome of the intervention and what the study is seeking to assess. I will note when the group is in basic assumption mode versus work group mode and what interventions are made by the group facilitators as well as other events that return the group to work mode, if this happens. With these theories in mind, qualitative observations will be made in one group throughout several sessions with the myself as a non-participant.

The study also will assess for changes associated with participation in the group

via pretest and posttest measurements of perception of global self-concept and social support. Surveys administered will also assess if students find the modality of treatment useful. Should outcomes show an increase from pretest to posttest in more positive global self-concept and social support, this will be viewed as associated with the intervention.

The study will focus on the following measures, gathering a range of data to provide an overall assessment of the BRL program and its efficacy.

1. Measures of changes in students' sense of global self-worth, their perceptions of social support and their view of the program itself will be made via pretest and posttest surveys based on those of Harter (1985; 1988).
2. Chronological age, ethnicity, gender, prior experience in the BRL program and other background details will be recorded.
3. Attendance and retention data for the students will be recorded.
4. Group leader characteristics and qualifications will be recorded, as well as efficacy of interventions and style during sessions.
5. A series of qualitative observations will be made of one of the BRL groups to provide detailed evidence of the program's progress, and to provide a basis for speculative interpretation of the program's effectiveness and the reasons for its effectiveness (i.e. is the group in a basic assumption mode or a work group mode of functioning, and for what reasons or interventions does it shift between modes?).

BRL was chosen for this study because it is a well thought-out program that addresses the needs of at-risk adolescents in many different ways simultaneously and is

unique in its combination of a clinical basis and a cultural relevance.

The BRL program was selected because it is a cutting-edge and relatively new intervention with lots of promise, that has not been psychoanalytically nor quantitatively studied prior to this author's research. Fiscal and educational sponsors also expressed interest in learning more about the efficacy of the intervention. The organizer of this program was interested in having his program assessed and agreed that having an outside third party would be the preferred way to study the program and its efficacy. Learning more about such programs also has implications for educational, health, and social policy.

Before the commencement of the program there will be an orientation meeting for potential participants to learn about the nature, structure and goals of the BRL program. Youth who are interested will be informed both about the BRL program, as well as the study and given permission slips with informed consent forms for both the participants and their parents (if the participants are minors). Participants will be informed both verbally at the meeting as well as on the letter that participation in the study will be strictly voluntary and that it will not be necessary to participate in the BRL group (see appendices). A copy of the letter and consent forms will be left in the office of the schools' respective health center. Following this will be the first true session, in which surveys will be administered. After the administration of surveys the program will commence. The programming will run for 10 weeks, meeting once a week with each session running approximately two hours and following a regular structure of activities. For the penultimate or final session, surveys will be administered again for the posttest.

Background and Rationale for Tools Used for Assessment

This section introduces the tools used in the study, the underlying rationale for their use, as well as the procedures for how they will be used to assess for functioning of the group.

In the process of studying socio-emotional development of the self at different developmental stages in the lifespan, Susan Harter (1985; 1988) developed various surveys designed to assess the related areas of self-esteem and perception of social support. She derived a theory of the factors contributing to and consequences of self-esteem based upon William James' (1893) hypothesis that self-esteem is reflective of ability in areas in which success is valued, and Cooley's (1902) perspective that self-esteem is the internalization of evaluations made by important figures in an individual's life.

In James' theory, general self-esteem was calculated by the ratio of success in valued areas to individuals' desired ideal achievements. Harter asserts that her empirical research has shown support for this theory via agreement or differences of individuals' perception of their competence and the ranking importance of success in the several domains assessed by the *Self-Perception Profile for Children* (1985). She states that the results of this tool are highly predictive of an individual's evaluation of their global self-worth (*Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents*, 1985). The *Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents* is an extension of the *Self-Perception Profile for Children* that takes into consideration developmental changes in the evaluation of self and includes domains/factors such as *scholastic competence, social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, job competence, romantic appeal, behavioral conduct, close*

friendship, and *global self-worth*---an independent overall assessment of oneself. Global self-worth encompasses how happy one is with the way he or she is leading their life, how much the adolescent likes themselves as a person, and how happy he or she is with the way they are: a measure of their global worth as a person. This final measure is not viewed by Harter as a sum, average or aggregate of all the other scales, but a direct measure of an overall "gestalt-like" general evaluation of oneself (page 4, 1988). In the past other surveys and assessments have put together responses to various different areas to reach an overall measure of self-esteem. For this sample, the Global Self-Esteem scale had Cronbach's alpha of .50 (pre-test) and .62 (post-test). Items for each sub-scale were averaged.

Cooley's theory of self led Harter to develop the second instrument to be used in this study, the *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents*. The theory of self proposed by Cooley is based on the view of the self as a social construction built from one's perceptions of what other important people in one's life thought of the individual---the "looking glass self." This means that the individual tries to gauge what others' judgments are and this contributes to one's self-concept. Harter points to Mead (1934) as building on Cooley's theory of the "looking glass self" with his introduction of the idea of the "generalized other" that encompassed the attitudes and opinions of significant others in the individual's life towards him or her. Harter argues that this inherently implies the individual evaluates the various significant individuals' opinions and that the subject gives more weight to some opinions than others.

With this in mind, Harter created the *Social Support Survey* "to tap the perceived *support* and *regard* which significant others manifest toward the self" (Harter, 1985, p.1).

This then would provide a way to assess the impact of perceived regard from others on one's self-perception, factoring in several different sources of support and regard that play a role in the shaping of oneself and attempting to determine to what extent each one impacts this. In defining "social support" Harter links this directly to global self-worth as defined and assessed in the *Self-Perception Profile for Children/Adolescents*. In the manual of the *Social Support Scale*, she states that this scale was designed with the intention of finding which sources of social support are predictive of global self-worth. The items in the scale assess for the perceived regard of others towards the individual with respect to items such as "which others treated them like a person, liked them the way they are, cared about their feelings, understood them, and listened to their problems...social support *in the form of positive regard from others* was the central construct" (Harter, 1988, p. 1).

Thus we see the rationale and theory underlying Harter's scales. As to the actual structure, the *Social Support Scale* consists of four different subscales aimed at tapping into the respective potential sources of support: a) parents, b) teachers, c) classmates, and d) close friends. The parent scale is meant to assess to what extent subjects think their parents are interested in hearing about their children's problems, understand them, are concerned about their feelings, like them as they are, show genuine concern for them through their interactions, and value what their children do. The classmate scale measures how much subjects think their classmates interact with them; like them how they are; are friendly; make fun of them; listen to what the individual says; and ask them to join in games or activities. The teacher support scale taps the degree to which the subjects perceive their teacher cares about them; helps them to perform optimally; aids

them if they are upset; treats them fairly; and treats them as a person (Harter, 1985). Harter differentiates close friends from classmates as it is not necessarily the case that their close friends are classmates, or that the subjects have any close friends, and so a separate set of questions, similar to the ones outlined above, are posed for such close friend relationships. For this sample, Cronbach's alpha for Social Support subscales were as follows: Parent support (pre-test, alpha = .91; post-test, alpha = .65), Teacher support (pre-test, alpha = .76; post-test, alpha = .76), and Friend support (pre-test, alpha = .80; post-test, alpha = .93). Items for each sub-scale were averaged. Items about classmates did not cohere well enough (alpha < .50) to make a scale, so these items were used separately.

Sample or Participants

Participants will be taken from two local high schools (Berkeley High School and Oakland High School), in the ninth through twelfth grades. Some students have already participated in the BRL program for a semester at Berkeley High School. It is anticipated that additional Berkeley High students and most of the Oakland High students will join via referrals from their respective school-based health centers as well as on-campus recruitment by BRL staff. For all Oakland High students, this will be their first experience with the BRL program. Participation in the program and study will be voluntary.

Materials or Measures

Surveys will be based on those designed by Susan Harter, Ph.D. (*Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents*, 1988; *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents*, 1985). The survey will be redesigned in part to fit the current research objectives. It will include

the Global Self-Concept subscale taken from the *Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents* and the full *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents*, as well as additional questions regarding the Hip Hop modality of the intervention in the same question format. Additionally, a qualitative survey will be attached which assesses attitudes and opinions regarding themselves and various related issues.

Harter's original survey design (1985; 1988) featured a potentially confusing and somewhat cumbersome two column response format of the scales. The instruments for this study will be adapted according to the protocol used by Wichstrom (1995), converting Harter's format to a single item "self-description" format using "I" statements. The example that Wichstrom uses to demonstrate the new format is "I often forget what I learn" which corresponds to a two part question on Harter's version, such as "Some teenagers often remember what they learn, but some teenagers often forget what they learn." In Harter's format the respondent is then asked to pick one of four responses: "really true for me" for the first or second statement, or "sort of true for me" for the first or second statement. As in Harter's scale four different responses options are given. However, in Wichstrom's (1995) version the options pertaining to the statement are: "1 (*Describes me very poorly*), 2 (*Describes me quite poorly*), 3 (*Describes me quite well*), and 4 (*Describes me very well*)" (page 104).

There are sound reasons to adopt Wichstrom's changes to Harter's survey. In his study assessing the reliability, validity and question format of the Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA), Wichstrom administered the survey to 11,315 Norwegian adolescents---a subsample of 880 completed the original SPPA with the two statement format, and the rest of the sample completed the revised version. Compared to the

original version of the SPPA, the modified SPPA showed "substantially better reliability, better convergent validity, and better factorial validity than the original version" (Wichstrom, 1995, p. 100). Wichstrom concluded from the study that it was not necessary to use the original format of the SPPA. When I contacted Wichstrom via personal communication (2007) he agreed that it would be more efficient to use his format for administration of *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents*. The Wichstrom version is also both easier to read and less confusing and time-consuming to complete, both of which are important considerations, particularly when surveying the youth in this study. It was therefore considered both methodologically sound and procedurally prudent to adapt the survey in the manner proposed by Wichstrom.

Six additional questions (with counterbalancing in the form of with positive and negative phrasings of the question) relating directly to the Hip Hop modality of the intervention will be added to the survey to assess whether the proposed cultural relevance of the intervention plays a role in student attendance. These questions will follow the same format as the Wichstrom adaptation of Harter's survey. For items about liking the Hop Hop modality, pre-test items did not cohere with acceptable reliability, but post-test items had Cronbach's alpha of .64.

Age, gender, ethnicity and prior program participation will be recorded for statistical purposes. This assessment will be administered prior to the beginning of group activities for the pretest and the posttest will be administered in the final or the penultimate session. As for the identification of students with respect to the surveys they complete, identities will be protected by use of a key to which only the researcher has access.

A series of sessions will be observed for both of the therapeutic Rap groups, so that the structure and dynamics of the group sessions are known. One group in particular will be closely observed from its initial formative stages to its conclusion.

Procedures

First, contact will be made with the participating schools and their respective districts to obtain permission from their administrations, and to learn of and follow the protocols of each institution/district. Permission and release forms will be given to participants and their parents prior informing them of the nature of the study and its goals, and the potential benefits to society of the study. Confidentiality will be a fundamental condition, and the participants and parents will be informed of this via the letter and consent forms, and a key will be used to protect student identity. Students will be informed by the facilitator of BRL that the research is happening and that this research could help decide if the program is helpful to students, but it will be explained that there is no penalty for choosing not to participate in the study. The protocol given by the Wright Institute's Human Subjects Committee will be followed to ensure all ethical guidelines are followed.

To promote maximum response to the release forms, these will be stapled to and sent out with the permission forms that the group facilitator will distribute to the students at the orientation meeting on the respective school campuses where the BRL program has contracted to do its programming. These forms will be due to the program facilitator as of the second meeting of class, which will be at the beginning of the session, prior to the initiation of the therapeutic portion of the program. Copies of the assessment tools will be kept in the office of each school, respectively so that parents can see the instruments if

they choose, before they sign the letter. With school/district permission, the first survey will be administered to all the students who handed in signed consent forms. If no permission is eventually forthcoming, those students will not be included in the study.

A pretest will be administered in the first session of each group. If necessary the survey items will be read aloud. A post test will be administered in the final or the penultimate session. Debriefing will take place at the final session of each group.

Therapeutic sessions will be observed, and I will be present to take notes on the group process. I will participate in helping students understand the mechanics of responding to the surveys.

Observation of the sessions themselves will also serve as a source of data for later interpretations. However, while observing sessions, I will bear in mind Bion's theory of groups; in particular the *work group* versus the *basic assumption* mode of group functioning will be one of the main distinguishing features that will be noted. Interventions made by group facilitators will be noted. This is in order to better understand how the groups work.

Upon completion of the surveys and study, participants will be informed of the purpose and structure of the study, and that results will be available when the dissertation is completed. They will be given a piece of paper with contact information to obtain the results. The consent forms will be put in a locked cabinet and kept for two years duration at the Wright Institute following the completion of the study.

Data Analysis

T-tests were used to determine whether changes between pretest and post-test scores were of statistical significance. Paired t-tests were run for participants' pre- and

post-test attitudes towards the Hip Hop modality of the intervention, Global self-concept, and Social support subscales. T-tests were run for the sample as a whole and separately for students who had and had not had the hip hop intervention before. For the item "Be by oneself at recess", a Wilcoxon signed ranks test was run to compare pre-and post-test scores. Independent sample t-tests were also run to compare scores on all scales for the group who had previously had the intervention and the group who had not. Pearson's two-tailed correlations between age and ethnicity were run but none were significant.

Finally, qualitative observations were used to assess the efficacy of the BRL method and the reasons why it is effective. These were interpreted in the light of the other data gathered, and using the perspectives provided by the works of Bion and Winnicott, among other theorists.

Chapter IV: Results and Discussion

Qualitative Results

All notes on group sessions observed and quotations taken from these sessions were approximations of what happened and are not an exact transcript or verbatim account of what occurred.

General Qualitative Trends and Observations of Oakland High School Group

One of the most notable changes observed during the study was the difference in the mode of group functioning and the duration of that functioning from the formation of the group to the conclusion. Whereas at the beginning of the intervention the group was more often in a basic assumption mode of functioning, by the end it had shifted to significantly more time spent as a work group that functioned to accomplish its goals. This happened on both individual and group levels, which are, of course, inextricably linked.

A prime illustration of the changes in the group were illustrated by the student Brian who can be seen as an example of changes on an individual level who also personified changes in functionality of the group. At the commencement of the group, Brian was sleeping and talking on the phone during group activities, and showed a general lack of involvement or visible interest. The task of the group, as well as the task of the individuals of which the group was comprised, was to support the artistic and emotional development of its members in addition to creating an artistic end product. By virtue of sleeping and talking on his cell phone during sessions (dissociating from the group and its task), Brian was mostly uninvolved in these tasks and helping the group to do its work. The group also allowed Brian to do this and failed to self-correct itself until

Corey (another student) commented on Brian's behavior to Brian. This in itself is of note as Brian could have easily been scapegoated as personifying all the badness in the group and attacked or ridiculed. However, this did not occur and Corey fulfilled his role as a functional group member when he confronted Brian in a task-oriented way about how his behavior was disrespectful towards the group. Tomas also intervened by talking to Brian and inquired about his sleeping habits. Interestingly, by the conclusion of the program, Brian had become an active and enthusiastic participant and leader in the group. It was he who came up with the chorus and title of the song that the group recorded. It was also quite striking that following the conclusion of the program Brian became a junior counselor for other younger students through the program that partnered with BRL to provide the intervention at Oakland High. This was quite a transformation for a student who had been so ambivalent about participating in the group early on and so limited in his ability to reflect and engage. As the group progressed, it and Brian became engaged in more and more thoughtful discussion and productive work activities. It seemed that when Brian was offered the opportunity and environment with the proper structure and leadership that he was able to change and thrive.

Since Brian's level of involvement and functionality often seemed representative of the group's, it is not surprising that by termination of the program the group and individuals therein were far more often in the work group mode of functioning than basic assumption modes. Whereas at the beginning of the group he was a potential fight/flight group leader who would have had to been scapegoated if the group were to become a work group, by the end of the group Brian instead became a work group leader. This seemed to happen through the good-enough mother role that the group and its leaders

played for him. During the course of the intervention, respect between student participants and towards leaders increased, as did the students' capacities to express their experience by verbal and artistic means. It was also clear that students' self-esteem increased as they became more proficient writers, rappers, producers and communicators and as they became more identified with the group and its other members.

There seemed to be certain interventions in particular that helped the group to stay on task. The group activities and exercises led by Tomas and Rob, such as the role playing exercise in the fourth session, both gave a clear structure and task for the session as well as fostering reflection and empathy. After a while, students often exhibited such empathy, as in a session where one of the facilitators apologized for bringing in an aspect of his outside life into the group. As can be seen by the following passage, the students have internalized and utilized the approach of the facilitators:

> Rob then apologizes for bringing in his outside life into the group, feeling that he has disrupted the group, and the group supports him and lets him know that he can share. One student says the group is about beats, rhymes and *life,* the student emphasizing the last part. (Appendix M, Oakland, 4/23/08)

One can see even within the session, role-modeling by leaders and older group members set a precedent in terms of openness to new ideas, tolerance, and demonstrated to group members that it was safe to talk about potentially difficult, anxiety-provoking, and personal subject matter without being attacked. This is certainly indicative of a high-functioning group that is both supportive of its members and is focused on achieving its task. This was exemplified in a notable exchange in the fourth session of the Oakland

High group on 4/9/08 during an activity in which students were given identities, or "character types" as Tomas described them, and asked to act out these identities. Essentially, the students were asked to empathize with the roles they were given, and as they participated in the activity they demonstrated empathy, insight, and increased levels of reflection.

> When the last student is reached the group seems to have calmed down, is able to focus and stay on task, and work together. Rob, whose identity was "overweight" says he felt "alienated" and the student who was the "gay male" follows his comment by stating that he felt that way, too. The group seems to like the activity, responds well, and one of the students, Harry, makes an observation as to what the activity was about. When Tomas and Rob ask him further, this student talked about empathy and relates how he treats his gay cousin and recounts his views on compassion and treating gay people with respect. After this student (who is one of the oldest members of the group) speaks the other members of the group remain silent. It seems Harry has set a precedent and also shared something personal as well as setting a norm for the group, which none of the other group members challenge. There is a new tone in the group, somewhat more sober and mature. After a while another member talks again about the way that he dresses and how he is judged by it in certain ways by people. Tomas asks if the group can identify with him. Various students in the group begin to tell stories about their own experiences that reflect this student's experience of discrimination. (Appendix M, Oakland High School, 4/9/08)

With Tomas' facilitation, the group was able to make use of Harry's comment to

continue to give words to their emotional experiences and support each other, one of the main tasks of the BRL intervention.

Tomas and Rob made extensive use of humor to communicate when they thought that the group was not achieving its task and to get the group back "on track" or into work group mode when it had fallen into a basic assumption mode. For example, during the "Who Am I?" activity in the first session, Tomas used humor to pull the group back together when it was falling apart, making use of the word "luxurious" that a student had offered and using it in a spontaneous joke. Following this intervention the group was able to move back to the activity and work at hand, and was far more cohesive.

The use of humor in the context of the group leaders' interventions also highlighted another important aspect of the work that Tomas and Rob did: they were attentive to the communication and needs of group members. With the example in the incorporation of the word "luxurious" that the student had offered in the activity, Tomas showed that he had listened to the student, was able to play with his idea, reflected back the student's offering as well as noticing where the group was at and reined the group back in so that it became more functional. He and Rob were attentive to attention-seeking behavior that was potentially disruptive to the functioning and task of the group, to address the individual student's need/s at that moment in time (to have attention and to be reflected), and to engage the students and integrate this into the group through the use of humor, as well as getting the group back on task. It was evident following this intervention that the group was back on task since students who had not been participating began to do so and the group was productive for the rest of the session.

When one considers that the BRL group was a voluntary after-school activity and

required students to stay on campus---or in the case of one student to commute from a different school---it is quite striking that students came as consistently as they did. On top of this, by the end of the group the students' ability to listen and focus had significantly improved. It was clear that the group had found its common identity (and respective individual student identities) through its shared creation and interests. This can be seen directly by the song and video it created entitled "My Life," in which each student contributed their own creative pieces, whether it was rapped lyrics conveying a part of themselves or Corey who chose to conceptualize and direct the music video instead of rapping on the song. Even the willingness to freestyle seemed to be a barometer for cohesion and level of functioning of the group. While individual students hesitated to rap in the cypher (the circular rapping group in which participants take turns freestyling) early on during the BRL program, the final session saw the "non-rapping" member Corey freestyling alongside his peers. Another striking result was the significant increase in group members' abilities to listen to each other, reflect their experiences and provide thoughtful feedback to each other.

Student self-groupings also changed. At the outset, subgroups and "pairing" groups were evident and hindered the functioning of the larger group. In the final sessions the group members were able to act cooperatively and delay the need for immediate individual gratification. In addition, side commentary or belittling and irrelevant remarks (Brian saying "gay gangsta" and using primitive defenses such as projecting his anxiety onto another person) declined in its frequency, and the participants were better able to focus on the task of the group and cope with their anxiety with more mature defenses such as sublimating it through the creation of art and music.

Overall, the progress that the students made in this group in terms of their working with and supporting one another was remarkable. The following extract from my notes from the final session (5/14/08) gives some idea their sense of their growth, empathy, group unity and accomplishment:

> Tomas has each person "appreciated" where every member of the group states what they appreciate about that person. David volunteers to start, and begins with Corey, stating that he liked how Corey brought "spunk" and ideas that no one else would have brought to the group. David then states that Harry improved in his writing and brought a special energy. David says that he liked Evan's storytelling and that Kerry "stepped it up" and that he "didn't mess around." David says that he liked Tomas' flow, Rob's big words (group agrees and laughs), and also how Rob put the group "in check," at times as well as figured out how to use different words to describe things.
>
> Corey begins his appreciations and seems to get stuck on Tomas. David supports and helps him, which enables Corey to move on. Corey points out that Rob brings compassion to the group as well. Harry recognizes David's improvement in working with others and being patient, as well as the fact that Corey is a producer and should keep on doing this. Harry appreciates that David speaks his mind and has great stories, and that Kerry stepped up a lot in the group and when it was time to do it, he did it. He appreciated the combination of Tomas and Rob, noting that Tomas is a "chameleon" and Rob is a "dictionary." Harry also mentions me, appreciating the note-taking and writing that I did while observing the group. He says that Brian was too shy and nervous at first, that he probably

"thought we were better than him, but he let the beast out and could grow."

Evan gives his appreciations, stating that David "brings it to the table," and he appreciated him for doing things aside from just rapping. Evan also appreciates Harry for stepping up to the plate, even when one of Harry's teachers from outside the group was unfair to him. Evan adds that he appreciated Kerry for his humor, and Kerry thanks Tomas, "big ups" (respectfully acknowledges) me, and said that he wanted to emulate Rob and "step up." Kerry thanks David for helping him find his voice, noting that David told him he would find his voice. Kerry also thanks Corey, notes that Harry stepped up his game, Evan gives Kerry a hand-shake. Kerry thanks Tomas, adding, "you a nice man and a good person and he tells Rob he is "a cool cat" and "big." Tomas and Rob do their appreciations and the group concludes. (Appendix M, Oakland High, 5/14/08)

The above passage is a strong contrast to the acting-out behavior, lack of cohesion and dysfunction of the group at the beginning of the BRL intervention. Respect for each other, the facilitators, and the tasks of the group were communicated both explicitly through the students' appreciations, and also implicitly through their behavior.

General Qualitative Trends and Observations of Berkeley High School Group

The observations made concurrently of the Berkeley High group were different to those made of the Oakland High group. The Berkeley High group had already been meeting for a semester when I began observing. This group demonstrated positive individual development, but was less often in work group mode. On the group level, members were encouraged, appreciated and given support by their peers, however this higher level of functioning was difficult to maintain because of the more frequent shifts

in the modes of group functioning throughout the intervention in comparison to the Oakland group.

The group seemed fragmented at times and did not have consistent attendance of some of its members, thus more often operating in a basic assumption mode. New members, or old members who had not come for some time, were in some cases present for only for one or a few sessions. The arrival of new members in the second semester undoubtedly disrupted the dynamics of the established group. The disruption caused by the introduction of new members, or reintroduction of old members can be seen in the following excerpt from my session notes on 4/24/08:

> At the beginning of the session there are only a few students, including one female student. Peter is playing his beats and Oliver is being negatively critical of them. Tomas tells Oliver to give constructive feedback, and jokes with him about having time to improve because he is a sophomore. Oliver, John and Peter are going to present so the group circles the chairs up. Tomas starts the check-in. Meanwhile, Leo (an adult volunteer photographer) is present and has begun taking pictures. Jeremy starts the check-in and reports that he has been suspended for five days because he got into a fight. He relates how it happened, and then states that he is glad he found his rhyme book.
>
> The female student, Michelle, who had been present at the very beginning of the year, said she was willing to do the C.D. cover during her check-in. Oliver also checks in and states that he was not at school this week and had nothing going on. Rob tells the group he is going to Thailand, and then bops Oliver on the leg to get him to focus and get his attention, since Oliver has fallen off task and is

> not paying attention and instead is being distracting....Oliver says that today seems different---both the day itself as well as the group. John suggests that this could be because the group got smaller. Tomas adds that the classroom and chair layout is different, and that Jeremy and Michelle are present whereas they normally do not attend....Oliver has begun recording and the group has laughed at him in response to the way he is rapping, changing his voice. Michelle tells him that he should use his normal voice, and James chimes in saying that she has "put him on blast" (meaning she has put the spotlight on him and drawn attention to, thus potentially embarrassing Oliver). Oliver states that he now feels "on the other side of the encouragement thing" (meaning he does not feel encouraged, referencing what the facilitators have been telling him about encouraging other members). (Appendix M, Berkeley High, 4/24/08)

The above passage demonstrates the predominant basic assumption mode of functioning of the Berkeley High group on 4/24/08, which concluded with further in-fighting between Oliver and other members of the group. From the beginning of the session the group struggled to maintain focus, support each other and instead devolved into a basic assumption group in which Oliver was scapegoated. This could be seen when the group laughed at Oliver while he was rapping, Michelle commented that he should do it more naturally, and then Oliver's friend noted that Michelle had "blown up his spot" indicating that Oliver had been publicly humiliated by Michelle's criticism. The addition of the two students who had not been present in the last group meeting degraded the overall functionality for that session and led to a basic assumption mode of functioning as described by Oliver, who stated that something was different about the

group and this was clearly affecting him. Clearly the change in group composition disrupted the established dynamics of the group that had been present two weeks prior. In the 4/24/08 session there was no concluding activity, an important built-in ritual and structure of the BRL group. The group fell apart at the end of the session and members left at different times. This was a notable shift from the 4/10/08 session I observed two weeks prior in which John had stated "we ain't got no slackers in this group!" after a functional work-oriented session that ended with a positive freestyle activity.

It was of note that Tomas and Rob worked hard and effectively through many small interventions to increase cohesion and shift the group back to work group mode predominantly by the use of humor and supportive statements within individual sessions. However, from a broader temporal perspective the tasks of incorporating new members in addition to providing peer support and music-making proved somewhat more difficult than for the group at Oakland High. Considering the above-mentioned challenges, the Berkeley High group did well in that it still was able to produce a final collective project and help its members to change in positive ways. There were many switches back and forth between basic assumption mode/s to work group mode throughout sessions over the course of the semester. In contrast to the Oakland High group, the Berkeley High group did not do as many structured activities during my time of observation, which made integrating new members increasingly difficult. New members (or old members who had been absent) were expected to participate in the group without a structured reintegration process. Structured rituals such as the freestyle cypher at the end of sessions were not consistently done, as in the session on 4/24/08 discussed previously.

At times single students personified the difficulty and basic assumption mode

functioning of the group. In the sessions observed this student was Oliver, who often positioned himself as a provocative opposing figure, as well as a potential scapegoat in opposition to Rob and Tomas (and the task of the group) and who seemed vulnerable to being attacked.

> Tomas approaches Oliver, who seems to be resistant to the task of the group, and tries to help him, praising him and the other student and telling him that he has to be a leader even if he gets frustrated. Oliver says that he is frustrated that he can't curse and seems particularly stuck on this point, contrary to what Tomas has told him. John makes a joke. Oliver has demonstrated provocative behavior through his intonation, body language, and resistance to the task. Tomas presents writing without cursing as a "challenge." Tomas is also trying to encourage Oliver's partner Alex to help him, and tells him that he is a producer, to which Alex responds that he didn't make the beat. Tomas tells him that he can still be project manager. Oliver then starts to give feedback to others, including John....John is now recording and Oliver makes a joke while he is doing this, Tomas tells Oliver to encourage John and lets him know it makes people self-conscious when he jokes while they are rapping. (Appendix M, Berkeley High, 4/10/08)

Within a short span of time, Oliver tried to engage Tomas in a power struggle over cursing in his song lyrics thereby provoking Tomas, in addition to mocking his partner. Luckily, Tomas sidestepped these provocative behaviors, and made an empathic remark that Oliver finally seemed to respond to, after which the group was able to get back on task. However, leading up to this moment, both Oliver and the group had struggled as when the group interpreted Tomas' feedback towards a student as an insult

("the group to respond[s] in unison by saying "Ohhhhh," indicating that Tomas has "dissed" him") or Oliver's partner Alex who resisted and was dismissive of Tomas' help.

It appeared that Oliver made attempts to position Tomas and Rob, who were representatives of the tasks of the group, as potential scapegoats in his opposition and resistance to the work of the group. Such an action would indicate a fight/flight group in a basic assumption mode of functioning. It was not uncommon for Oliver to project his feelings of anxiety, fear of criticism and vulnerability onto them through his provocations. It was clear that these were attention-seeking behaviors and that Oliver was struggling to work through these issues.

For the most part (with the exception of Oliver), the longer the students were involved and the more often they came seemed to be directly related to their identification and involvement in the group. These were also the students who appeared to reap the most benefit from the group. A prime example of this is the student Nate, who showed significant progress from the beginning of the group to the end. Nate initially presented as somewhat shy and lacking self-confidence when rapping in front of his peers. Later, his presentation became far more confident, and he became a fully incorporated member who also clearly identified with and felt comfortable in the group. He often participated in and sometimes led discussions, and it seemed often at these points in time that the group was more predominantly in work group mode.

> Nate raps again and the group likes this, responding with approval. Nate continues to rap and someone farts, the group laughs, but Nate continues. John gives positive feedback, as does Tomas. The group seems to be focused on its task of making music at this point. Tomas suggests that group members pair up

> and work with each to help support other students to write their verses....Nate announces that he got into a local college and is going there, and the group and the leaders are excited for him. (Appendix M, Berkeley High, 4/10/08)

Nate demonstrated a level of confidence to continue rapping even when someone farted (a considerable achievement in a group of adolescent males) and sharing his sense of accomplishment of getting into college. He is supported by the group, who is excited for and empathizes with him.

A single session from Berkeley High provides a number of examples of intermittent high functioning in that group. John, while his subgroup was struggling in the second session (Berkeley High, 4/10/08), was able to observe the group's dysfunction and make a process comment about his subgroup and disagreement. Following this Tomas stressed the importance of communication to the group and they responded positively, if temporarily. Subsequently, a student who was participating in the group for the first time began to rap louder and louder as he was incorporated into the group. Later in the same session, Tomas supported a student who was struggling to record his rap. When the group bursting out laughing at his efforts, Tomas told him "you'll get through it." This student, John, recorded his entire verse all the way through and then the group clapped for him, clearly identified with his efforts. Towards the end of the session, John even stated, "we ain't got no slackers in this group!" commenting on the effort he and the group had put in and had mutually recognized.

Several comments made by students at in the final session were revealing of their perceptions of the program and their progress.

Oliver asks Tomas how he got into rapping and Tomas tells the group about his

friend Khalil with whom he used to rap. Tomas says that he messes up all the time when he raps and Howard says he's really good. Then the group asks him if he smoked weed to freestyle better, since Nick says he needed it. Tomas says he had a friend he still wanted to "get open" (really let go and get in the zone so as get some excited or do something really well) when he was not high, and Tomas tells the group that he can "get loose anytime."

The group seems related to Tomas and to be open. They discuss Lupe Fiasco, (a rapper), and Larry is still working on the survey. Tomas asks how this program has helped and Nick says he is more confident freestyling, with which Adrian agrees. Andrew says Tomas taught the difference between underground and commercial, as well as helping students with their patience. Larry said he understood Hip Hop better, and it made him look at the world differently. Adrian says he understands more styles and Nick says he understands the lyrics better, citing Lupe's lyrics as an example.

The group decides that they liked the freestyle session and recording, and John states that he enjoyed the discussions. Tomas asks what he liked about it, and Oliver says the experience he gained in the cypher. He notes that it's different having cyphers with his friends. Andrew goes outside for a minute to use his phone. Tomas asks how the group feels about the recording and Oliver responds that here he gets more feedback. Tomas reminds them not to cut each other off or interrupt since some members have begun to do this. Adrian says he learned to give better feedback. (Appendix M, Berkeley High, Final Session) Even Oliver, who appeared to be the most resistant member of the group, noted

that by the end of the sessions he enjoyed freestyling and gaining experience in the cypher. Oliver's curiosity in the final session about how Tomas got into rapping is of note. Here Oliver was able to think of Tomas as a person who had emotional experiences and interests independent of him, and identified with Tomas. He contrasted this with the cyphers that he had had with his friends, thus implying that he valued the BRL group as more helpful and better than the informal peer group cyphers. Oliver also stated that he was aware that in the group he got more feedback than with his friends, which is significant since he was able to reflect on and evaluate his experience in the group. Correspondingly, Adrian noted that he learned to *give* better feedback, and he seemed aware that his reflective and communicative functions had increased as well. Both he and Nick were able to articulate how the program helped their sense of self-efficacy and they said that as a result they were able to freestyle confidently. Larry not only noted that he learned from the group, but that it changed his world view.

Despite the quantity of positive feedback, the group still seemed to have difficulty during their final session.

> Oliver and Tomas are talking and Oliver is "confused" as the group starts its final freestyle session. Oliver is defiant when talking with Tomas, who is trying to get through to him and confront him about his behavior and what is going on. There seems to be a lot of anxiety, and Oliver is rolling his eyes, refusing to stand up with the rest of the group. Larry didn't stand up for part of this activity as well. The group seems to fall apart and the rapping content appears to regress to mainly misogynistic material. Oliver refuses to give his contact info on a sheet that Tomas is passing out. (Appendix M, Berkeley High, Final Session.)

The above passage gives further examples of Oliver acting out in a provocative manner, where his behavior was both an indicator and a contributor to the basic assumption mode of functioning. This passage was the conclusion of the final session, and as such one must consider the ambivalence the group and its members likely felt about terminating when evaluating the group's behavior, especially without Rob present. High levels of anxiety prevented thought and reflection, increased defensiveness, and led to a basic assumption group. Larry's resistance was of note, as was the regression indicated by the material that was rapped about by those who did participate in the freestyle cypher. It seemed that through the misogynistic content of the raps women became the scapegoat of the fight/flight group.

Overall, while the group struggled, it did achieve the task of creating a final project/album. The program also helped change the perspectives of several of the group members, even the apparently more "resistant" members such as Oliver. It was also apparent that the Hip Hop modality was an important factor in the appeal to the participants since they cited various things that they learned about Hip Hop and rapping in technical and experiential realms.

Quantitative Results

The study examined students from two participating local high schools who were between the ages of 14 and 19. While participation in the program was voluntary, many of the students were referred through the respective health centers at the schools. All of the students were considered at-risk according to Paone's (2006) aforementioned definition of this term.

All participants were male, the average age was 17 ($M = 17.08$, $SD = 1.61$, Range

= 14 to 20). Most (62%) respondents were African-American or of partly African-American background (15%). Two other respondents were Asian-American and one was Caucasian. About half each of the sample came from Berkeley (46%) and Oakland High Schools (54%). Five out of six (83%) of the students from Berkeley High had had previous experience with the BRL program, whereas none of the Oakland High students had had previous experience with it.

Table 1 shows participants' reports of how they liked the modality of the intervention. Participants most agreed that they looked forward to Hip Hop group sessions because they liked the activities, and that Hip Hop (freestyle rapping, making beats, creating rap videos and the other activities in the BRL group) made them feel better about themselves. They were somewhat likely to agree that rapping in the group allowed them to discuss things that were difficult to talk about anywhere else. They were least likely to agree that they attended the group because they felt they had to---implying that they came by their own choice, a choice which was most likely motivated by their appreciation for the modality and the Hip Hop activities. At post-test, participants reported that they very much liked the Hip Hop intervention ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.42$). There was no difference between groups who had previously had or had not had the intervention. Thus the modality of the intervention proved to be very important to students and a significant finding.

Table 1

Frequencies for Hip Hop intervention variables

Post-test

Variables	N	*M* (*SD*)
Look forward to hip hop group and activities	13	3.85 (0.38)
Hip hop makes me feel better about myself	12	3.50 (0.80)
Rapping in the group lets me talk about things that are tough to talk about anywhere else	13	3.00 (0.71)
I only come to group because I am supposed to	13	1.15 (0.38)

Items scored 1 = Very untrue, 2 = Sort of untrue, 3 = Sort of true, 4 = Very true

Table 2 shows changes in Social Support subscales from pre-test to post-test. Students new to the intervention perceived themselves as being more supported by friends at post-test than pre-test (there was no significant difference for students who had had the intervention before). Thus, the intervention had a significant effect on students who had not participated in it before as they perceived themselves as being more supported by their friends.

Table 2

Frequencies for Social support variables

Variables	N	Pre-test *M* (*SD*)	Post-test *M* (*SD*)	df	*t*
Friend support	13	3.50 (0.54)	3.62 (0.65)	12	-.73
New to intervention	8	3.48 (0.66)	3.73 (0.52)	7	-2.39*

Had intervention	5	3.53 (0.30)	3.43 (0.85)	4	.26
Parent support	12	3.25 (0.74)	3.34 (0.50)	11	-.46
New to intervention	7	3.52 (0.55)	3.46 (0.54)	6	.62
Had intervention	5	2.87 (0.86)	3.17 (0.42)	4	-.65
Teacher support	12	3.22 (0.62)	2.97 (0.74)	11	.98
New to intervention	7	3.38 (0.60)	3.00 (0.81)	6	.99
Had intervention	5	3.00 (0.63)	2.93 (0.73)	4	.21

Items scored 1 = Very untrue, 2 = Sort of untrue, 3 = Sort of true, 4 = Very true * $p < .05$

Table 3 shows changes in self-related measures and perceived effect of the intervention on the self. Students in both groups reported spending more time alone at recess at the post-test than at the pre-test. Students who had had the intervention before were more likely to report that the Hip Hop intervention made them like themselves better at the post-test than at the pre-test ($z = -2.00, p < .05$).

Table 3

Frequencies for Global self-concept and other self-related variables

Variables	N	Pre-test *M* (*SD*)	Post-test *M* (*SD*)	df	*t*
Global self-concept	13	3.57 (0.33)	3.68 (0.37)	12	-.99
New to intervention	8	3.68 (0.25)	3.83 (0.23)	7	-1.17
Had intervention	5	3.40 (0.44)	3.44 (0.46)	4	-.20

Be by oneself at recess	12	2.83 (1.27)	3.42 (1.00)	11	-2.55*
New to intervention	7	3.43 (0.79)	3.86 (0.38)	6	-1.44
Had intervention	5	2.00 (1.41)	2.80 (1.30)	4	-2.14+
Hip Hop makes me feel better about myself	11	3.00 (1.18)	3.45 (0.82)	10	-1.24
New to intervention	7	3.43 (1.13)	3.57 (0.79)	6	-.26
Had intervention	4	2.25 (0.96)	3.25 (0.96)	-	-

Note. Items scored 1 = Very untrue, 2 = Sort of untrue, 3 = Sort of true, 4 = Very true

* $p < .05$ + $p < .10$ Hip Hop makes me feel better about myself did not use t-test.

Discussion

The qualitative findings indicated that the BRL therapeutic Hip Hop activity group was a productive and positive experience for the participants in the Oakland and Berkley High groups. This intervention had success on the levels of both group functioning as well as individual development. It was also clear that the Hip Hop modality of the intervention was central to the success of the groups from qualitative as well as a quantitative findings, which was consistent with previous studies' findings (DeCarlo and Hockman, 2003; Tyson, 2002). While there was strong evidence from qualitative results, the quantitative indicated that participants had not yet experienced change in support from parents, teachers, classmates, nor in their general self-concept. Participants did indicate, however, that Hip Hop made them feel better about themselves, and that the intervention had a significant effect on students who had not participated in it before as they perceived themselves as being more supported by their friends. It should

be noted that the sample size was 13 (and for some questions on the survey 12) thus it is possible that an effect was not seen due to the limited sample size.

For both groups it seemed quite evident that the Hip Hop modality of the groups was a major factor in attracting the students to attend the group on a strictly voluntary basis. Students may have attended the sessions for other reasons, but the Hip Hop modality clearly played a role in interest, attendance, identity, motivation and the work of the group. This suggests that the intervention was developmentally as well as culturally relevant.

The qualitative findings strongly support the conclusion that the intervention did improve students' self-concept as well as the level of support that the students experienced and demonstrated for each other. In particular, this qualitative finding was supported by the Oakland High group which had never experienced the intervention before. The results from the Berkeley High group also support this conclusion but with somewhat more ambiguous results.

The significant changes seen in the Oakland High School group from the beginning of the intervention to the final session were striking and demonstrated the efficacy of BRL in changing students' self-perception and increasing social support. This was supported by the quantitative finding that the Oakland students perceived themselves as being more supported by their friends by the end of the intervention, suggesting that they had made new friends who supported them through the BRL intervention. We can see this by viewing the progress of the individuals, and by looking at the groups through a Winnicottian perspective where the group and leaders functioned as the "good enough mother" to students. This in turn led to a higher-functioning group comprised of students

who had had their individual needs met and were less likely to act as fight/flight group leaders and/or to be scapegoated.

The example of Brian and his transformation through the Oakland intervention is illustrative of this change in student self-perception. Brian started in the group as a member who was either uninvolved and dissociated (e.g. sleeping or on his phone), or distracting and provocative much of the time (making comments like "gay gangsta" while other students spoke). In this sense Brian had a strong valence to be a potential scapegoat and pull the group into a basic assumption mode, perhaps a fight/flight group in which he could be singled out and verbally attacked for his provocative behavior. He could, and did at times, distract the group from its work and lead it to fall off task through his behaviors. This was not, however, the case most of the time, and both the group and Tomas did not attack Brian, nor fall victim to his provocation. In fact, as detailed in the session notes, Corey stepped in to confront Brian about his behavior, and Tomas became curious about Brian's sleepiness, talking with him about it (Appendix M, Oakland High School, 4/23/08). In attending to Brian, the group members and leaders (Tomas and Corey) were acting as Winnicott describes the "good enough" mother who allows the child (Brian in this case) to express itself and reflects its wishes, needs, and omnipotence, but also imposes the reality of the rules and structure of the group. This in turn helped Brian and the group to function better.

In these actions the group demonstrated a high level of functioning as well as support from leaders and students alike who composed the group. Instead of straying off course or coming into conflict, the group self-corrected itself by addressing the issues in a rational and effective way. Brian went on to become a vital member of the group and an

effective leader. In addition, he became a junior counselor through the school-based health program, working to help other students. This was a remarkable development and seems likely to be a reflection of the impact the program had on him.

Corey is another student who illustrated the effect of the BRL group intervention through his change from the beginning of the program to the conclusion. At the start of the group, Corey presented as quite inhibited, he attended somewhat sporadically, and he declined to participate in the freestyle cypher at the conclusion of sessions out of shyness. Corey did not seem interested in the rapping or beat-making aspects of the activities, although he did participate in discussions. The BRL group, however, in its multi-modal and flexible approach to working with youth, was able to accommodate and include Corey in a such a way that he became an essential part of the group. The group's functional flexibility was largely attributable to the leaders, Tomas and Rob. Corey was encouraged to storyboard, direct, and produce the music video for the song, which gave him a chance to become a fundamental working member of the group, contributing to its task. Essentially, Tomas and Rob acted as the good-enough mother that reflected, encouraged, and fostered Corey's creativity and spontaneous gestures.

From this point on, Corey became much more involved in sessions and identified with the group as a whole, as opposed to just pairing with his good friend Evan, who provided his original impetus for attending the group. Corey played a leadership role, deciding on a range of artistic and technical aspects for the video. He also became more open and communicative with other group members, demonstrating an increase in perceived support and connection from his peers in the group. For example, "Rob has Isaac name themes and writes down the ones that are centered around "my life," which he

writes on the whiteboard. Brian is suggesting ideas, and when Corey offers his idea, Brian reaches out and give him a "pound" (an affirmative handshake showing respect) (Appendix M, Oakland High, 4/16/08). By the end of the group he had become friendly with Brian, whom he had originally confronted for his provocative behavior. A remarkable event which demonstrated a significant increase in confidence was when Corey participated in the freestyle cypher in the final session. This also demonstrated a significant increase in perceived social support, since a young man who had been too shy, anxious and/or not interested in this activity at the commencement of the group was now able to participate in and visibly enjoy such a group activity.

When examined further on a dynamic group level, one can see the progression of the Oakland High group towards increased identification and cohesion over time. This identification meant that by the end of the group individual members were capable of putting the common goal of the group ahead of themselves and delay gratifying their individual impulses and wishes in the moment. By the end of the group the came to want to fulfill the work of the group and gained a sense of efficacy from doing so, as opposed to satisfying individual impulses to cope with their anxiety. They were able to channel their impulsive desires to fulfill destructive and aggressive wishes, and to convert anxious feelings (previously expressed as acting out within the group or not attending sessions) into rapping and creating a final collective project (e.g. the song and video).

The process of expressing aggressive impulses is more formally known in psychoanalytic and Ego Psychology as "sublimation," which is a higher order and more mature defense as a way of dealing with various impulses and anxiety. The use of such a mature defense is a clear progression from the beginning of the group when, for example,

group members used more primitive defenses as they struggled to work together, and as they talked over and were unable to listen to each other. At that point in the group, they were unable control or to deal with their anxiety in a more functional way to help the group. By the sixth session, however, the group clearly was functional and highly identified with each other. This can be seen in the following excerpt from my session transcript in which students listen to and build off of each other's ideas and recognize their shared work, as illustrated by Brian's insight that the chorus is the "best part" since all the members of the group contributed to making it:

> A video camera is set up to film the session and after the group has finished practicing the song, the group is asked to give feedback on the song, to name its strengths and weaknesses. David gives feedback, as well as Harry and Isaac; Isaac states that he finds it useful performing the song differently and he expresses some concern about doing the song to a different beat---namely the beat that members of the group will make today. It is striking how cooperative and cohesive the group is, with all group members attentive to each other and listening, as well as giving thoughtful feedback.
>
> Rob says that the job of the group is done if the group members can take one thing away from it and if they have learned from the experience. Mike responds to Harry's feedback by suggesting that the group practice the hook. Brian affirms that this is a good idea, and Evan suggests that the group members not read from their pages and instead "use swagger." Tomas likes the feedback, and agrees with Evan's suggestion for "more swagger." Tomas says that they should act as if they are rapping in front of a microphone recording. Brian chimes

in that the best part of the song is the chorus, since everyone came up with it. (Appendix M, Oakland High Session, 4/23/08)

The students changed their behavior since they found a way of being in the group that also addressed their personal needs. This included a shared sense of identity and cohesion (both characteristics of a true work group), and they derived a sense of meaning, place and purpose from accomplishing work within the group. For example, giving each other feedback was useful not only for the individuals who gave and received it, but also for the goal of the group and other group members. By the end of the group, Brian had learned that he could get attention in other ways aside from his earlier, provocative behaviors. He learned that he could get attention, recognition and be a leader by making his mind available and useful to the group, and through his creative suggestions and reflective thought process.

It is of note that the Oakland intervention was more successful in the functionality and final results of the group, especially in terms of the amount of time spent in work group mode versus that of the Berkeley group. In the latter Oliver was often disruptive and provocative, and Tomas probably should have addressed Oliver's needs and acting out behavior in a more direct way. This type of intervention can be framed as addressing Oliver's needs which are representative of or personified the group's needs. In addressing Oliver's behavior and returning the group to work mode, Tomas would encounter the possibility of scapegoating Oliver by kicking him out of the group via use of an aggressive and hostile action such as threat or humiliation. The other option would have been a wise, "leaderly" intervention such as an insight-oriented interpretation of Oliver's behavior, question, or shift in activity. When thinking about Oliver's behavior

in the final session, one must consider the effect that Rob's absence for the final session of the intervention had on the group and its members. They knew this in advance, and perhaps Oliver was expressing ambivalence for the group about Rob's absence. This is connected to the difficulty of ending and ambivalence of separation (one of the main developmental goals of Oliver's current phase of development that Blos referred to) and attachment. Oliver even stated following the feedback portion of the final session (in which he complained about not being able to curse) that he "likes talking shit," acknowledging his aggressive and provocative behavior, but in a way that showed some insight. He stated this while the group was listening to the final collective album/mixtape that the group had made. When he stated this he made himself vulnerable by admitting that he was provocative and acted hostile on purpose, implying that he did this for a defensive reason. Oliver and others likely felt at an unconscious level a sense of abandonment by both the group leaders and the group. This is quite common and to be expected during both individual psychotherapy, as well as in groups. Oliver's reaction was particularly prominent, as can be seen in the concluding freestyle activity of the final session where he is hostile in both verbal and non-verbal ways that suggest a separation and dissociation from the group.

> Oliver and Tomas are talking and Oliver is "confused" as the group starts its final freestyle session. Oliver is defiant when talking with Tomas, who is trying to get through to him and confront him about his behavior and what is going on. There seems to be a lot of anxiety, and Oliver is rolling his eyes, refusing to stand up with the rest of the group. Larry didn't stand up for part of this activity as well. The group seems to fall apart and the

rapping content appears to regress to mainly misogynistic material. Oliver refuses to give his contact info on a sheet that Tomas is passing out (Appendix M, Berkeley High, Final Session).

Perhaps by devaluing the group and creating conflict, it was easier for Oliver to separate and individuate. If he could disavow his neediness and dependency and instead project this onto the group, then he would not (at that moment, at least) have to deal with these feelings in himself. In this case, Oliver's reactions can also be thought of as representing the group, since the group allowed him to continue doing this. At an unconscious level perhaps the group was acting out because its members felt abandoned, and perhaps even had omnipotent fantasies of destroying or at least driving Rob out of the group. By acting out, Oliver and the group can be seen as testing Tomas to see if he can contain and "handle" them and their angry, aggressive feelings or if he will be destroyed (in reality unable to handle or contain them) as well.

As for the Berkeley High group's repeated struggles to stay in work group mode, it is likely that frequent changes in group composition and a fewer number of structured activities observed during sessions led to a predominant basic assumption mode of functioning. Consistency is a very important factor in creating a stable work group with which members come to identify. It is not reasonable to expect a group that is not established to be able to function, especially if one of the goals of the group is to serve an emotionally supportive function. Trust takes time to build, as do group dynamics. That is why attendance is equally important and linked to the problems with a changing group composition. Changes in group members and composition affect the task of a group: for example, if new members suddenly appear, will they remain in the group or will they

disappear as past group members had? When thinking about one of the tasks of the group, to create songs and a final project, are they contributing to this by writing songs and other such things? Would these group members even be around long enough to do so? These are important factors that contribute to group cohesion, collective identity, and functionality of groups.

Despite some struggle to stay on task and in work group mode, the Berkeley High group did function at this level at various points in time and achieved the task of completing a final project, as well as a live performance of its music. It also had a significant impact on its members and changed their self-perception, self-efficacy, taught them new skills, and gave them some insight (although perhaps not as deep as the Oakland High group) into themselves and others, another task of the group. This is of note and clearly demonstrates the value of the intervention. Even Oliver, arguably one of if not the most resistant member of the group, acknowledged the impact the group had on him and the unique opportunities that it presented him. He cited the group as being better and more effective in terms of its cyphers and facilitating his freestyling as compared to doing it with his friends. Oliver also stated that he appreciated the feedback which he got in the group.

> Tomas asks what he liked about it, and Oliver says the experience he gained in the cypher. He notes that it's different having cyphers with his friends. Andrew goes outside for a minute to use his phone. Tomas asks how the group feels about the recording and Oliver responds that here he gets more feedback. Tomas reminds them not to cut each other off or interrupt since some members have begun to do this. Adrian says he learned to give better feedback. (Appendix M, Berkeley

High, Final Session)

The underlying message Oliver communicated by his feedback was that he valued the group's reflective function, was able to think about this and incorporate it, and at a very basic level he acknowledged that the group had a positive impact on him and he identified with it at some level. In making such a statement, Oliver was highlighting both a qualitative difference as to the level of functioning (where the BRL group was higher functioning than his peer group) and its resulting usefulness to him. Also of note is Oliver's identification with Tomas when "Oliver asks Tomas how he got into rapping" (Appendix M, Oakland High, Final Session). This is important since it indicated that Oliver thought about Tomas as a person with feelings and experiences, as opposed to just an object to be used in a limited capacity (e.g. a provider of food and resources who is disposable and to whom he does not relate).

Nate is another student who illustrated the significant impact of the group on its members. When Nate first joined the group he was shy and lacking in self-confidence, especially when rapping and freestyling in the cypher. By the end of the intervention he was enthusiastically and unabashedly rapping and freestyling every session.

> Nate gives his disc with his beats to be played and he raps over it. Tomas responds by telling him that he had nice beat selection, and asks him what he wants to do with it. Nate plays another beat and another student states that he doesn't like it. Nate raps again and the group likes this, responding with approval. (Appendix M, Berkeley High, 4/10/08)

Nate showed no inhibition about sharing his new works, or even announcing personal news and achievements (e.g. getting into college) to the group. He seemed to

relish the opportunity and feedback that his participation and contributions elicited.

It was clear that other members of the group aside from Nate and Oliver greatly benefited from the BRL intervention. John stands as yet another illustration of this as can be seen both from individual moments in which he was clearly aided by support from the group and group leaders (while recording his verse in the second session on 4/10/08), as well as the feedback that he gave. John's contribution to the work group mode at a potential anxiety-provoking moment appeared to help keep the group on track. This can be seen when, "Nate continues to rap and someone farts, the group laughs, but Nate continues. John gives positive feedback, as does Tomas. The group seems to be focused on its task of making music at this point" (Appendix M, Berkeley High, 4/10/08). Not only did John support Nate and thus contribute as a member of the group, on this occasion, he also demonstrated his ability to get back on track with the help of the leader and reflect on his participation in a switch to basic assumption mode of functioning in the following excerpt from the same session:

> John and Oliver are playing with each other and joking around, waiting for Tomas and reading lyrics. Tomas tells them to clean their stuff up, they are bickering a little bit. John says "Sorry there's a little group problem," and Tomas says "okay," then brings them into the circle where he is facilitating, and tells Oliver he needs to communicate with John and others, and that Oliver needs to clarify what he is saying. (Appendix M, Berkeley High School, 4/10/08)

John's process comments in this session as well as his statement "we ain't got no slackers in this group" also reflect how he benefited and perceived the group as both functional and useful with members who were helping the group to achieve its task

(Berkeley High School, 4/10/08). Other members also gave corroborating positive feedback echoing Oliver, Nate and John's comments, noting the usefulness of the group and noticing improvements in their Hip Hop skills as well as confidence. It is no small feat to have an adolescent male stating that he learned about Hip Hop and that due to his participation in the group "Larry said he understood Hip Hop better, and it made him look at the world differently" (Appendix M, Berkeley High, Final Session). Even short term members who attended only one session were observed to benefit, such as the new member who joined the session on 4/10/08 and was observed to start rapping louder and with a more confident presentation almost immediately when encouraged by the group and its leaders.

According to the surveys administered to students at both Berkeley and Oakland High Schools, the Hip Hop modality of the intervention was key to the success of the groups from a qualitative as well as a quantitative perspective. The quantitative results indicated that while participants had not yet experienced change in support from parents, teachers, friends, nor in their general self-concept, participants did indicate that Hip Hop made them feel better about themselves. In addition, the intervention had a significant effect on students who had not participated in it before as they perceived themselves as being more supported by their friends.

Quantitative results present some interesting trends. For example, students new to the BRL intervention perceived themselves as being more supported by friends at post-test than at pretest, which is consistent with the main hypothesis. However, this trend was not predicted specifically for this sub-group of students whom had not participated in the BRL program before. It is possible that students who had been involved the past

semester at Berkeley High (and thus had had the intervention already) already had a constant level of perceived support from pretest to posttest because they were still involved in the intervention and had an established group of peers and friends in it. The Oakland High group, on the other hand, had just formed, and offered students who had never had such an experience, nor perhaps such a positive support group (as qualitative results seem to indicate), and so there was a measureable shift in the perception of support from friends. In this case their new acquaintances in the BRL group became friends and companions with whom the students identified. The level of trust, identification and friendship among the Oakland group can be seen by mature forms of communication (e.g. verbalizing emotions and thoughts with articulated specific feedback; and ability to listen to and reflect others' feedback as in the final session when group members recognized and appreciated each other), as well as associative and communicative verbal and non-verbal behaviors that the group demonstrated when shooting the music video (e.g. arms around each others shoulders, paying attention and being patient while each individual's part was shot, etc.).

Another trend that was noted was that students who had had the intervention before were more likely to report that Hip Hop made them feel better about themselves at the post-test than at the pre-test. One possibility is that they experienced greater effects due to longer exposure to the program. Another possibility is that they were already familiar with the intervention and more aware of its impact on them. Thus, with the insight they gained from the group experience, they would be able to reflect back on what they had learned and experienced in the group. It is possible that the benefits they reaped from the Therapeutic Hip Hop activity group (awareness of and insight into their

emotions, communication skills, cooperative group activities, etc.) translated into their everyday lives. Perhaps they were able to recognize this change and attribute it to their experience in the group as well as the modality of the group. This finding has implications for the therapeutic uses of Hip Hop in clinical and educational settings. The most agreed upon statements about the Hip Hop modality of the intervention on the survey were that the students looked forward to the Hip Hop group and activities (average score of 3.85, SD = 0.38, where the maximum was 4 which indicated the highest level of agreement) followed closely by a statement indicating that Hip Hop made the students feel better about themselves (average score of 3.5, SD = 0.80, again with 4 indicating the highest level of agreement).

In the context of the strong positive effect indicated by the qualitative observations within the classroom, the quantitative results pertaining to self-concept and social support seem to be of questionable value. There are several factors that lead to limitations in the value of the quantitative findings. First and foremost, the sample size (n=13 or for some items n=12) was small, and thus the validity of the statistical conclusions are innately suspect. Secondly, the small sample size also means that it unlikely to detect small to moderate effect sizes, meaning the difference in pretest and posttest ratings would have to be very large to be statistically significant. Thirdly, the intervention and the period of this research were only a few weeks in length---greater effects might have been seen if the program had continued over a longer duration of time.

It is likely that a number of other effects further limited the validity of the quantitative research. For example, at the outset of the intervention, students reported high positive self-perceptions, which were not distinguishable from the high positive

reports at posttest, possibly due to a ceiling effect (although if there was any change it would seem that the trend was towards improvement). A possible contributing factor to the high positive self-perceptions at the outset is that male adolescents, especially in the inner city, are discouraged from showing feelings and or expressing vulnerability. This, coupled with the machismo, braggadocio, grandiosity and sense of omnipotence that are common themes in Rap lyrics, Hip Hop music and culture, might lead to a more defended and less realistic report from the students about initial self-perceptions, even given the anonymity of the survey.

Further quantitative findings did not show significant increased perceived support from parents, teachers and classmates. However, it may be that the very success of the BRL intervention led students to expect *more* support from these groups, thus making the current amount of support and interest they received seem comparatively disappointing. In other words, the lack of change in perception of support from these other groups could be accounted for by the realization that they were not, in fact, getting this level of interest or support from these other groups. In addition, the short time frame of the intervention may not have been enough for the students to change sufficiently so as to generate consistently better responses from individuals outside the program. As mentioned previously, perceived support from friends *did* improve significantly for those students who had not already had the intervention, which could be explained by the new friendships which were established *within* their BRL group---something clearly indicated by the qualitative findings.

It is recommended that the questions in these surveys be reconsidered in future studies of this type. Perhaps the assessment tools used for this study were not the right

ones to measure what was being sought to be studied. Future questions might be more focused on what happens to students *in* the program, as opposed to questions which include reference to students' experiences in external situations where there are far more variables at play. These outside variables, such as interactions with family members, teachers, classmates and friends are usually more poorly understood, harder to control for, and far more numerous than the variables in the program.

For future research in a more comprehensive study of the program researchers might consider administering surveys that assess the perceptions of parents, teachers and friends in contrast to exclusively assessing the students' perceptions. Another option would be to focus less on unobservable phenomena *outside* the group such as teachers, classmates, and parents, and instead focus on changes observable *inside* the group. The quantitative portion of the study assessed for different kinds of changes than were observed in the qualitative portion. If the quantitative surveys had included statements like "I can work in groups with people I do not know to get to positive outcomes" or "Expressing my feelings to a group of my peers can help me understand myself better" there might have well have been statistically significant changes. In addition, this would have been a more direct measurement of the program's efficacy. Future researchers should also consider using quantitative and qualitative methods to measure similar constructs. In addition, a follow-up study a year later would be a good way to assess long-term impact. Another important factor future researchers should consider is that the *Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents* and in particular the *Social Support Scale for Children and Adolescents* does not seem appropriate to the age groups observed in this study in terms of questions that were asked, and how they were phrased. The wording

seems somewhat stilted, and perhaps for urban youth of color, the rather formal and academic way in which questions are phrased is off-putting. This was, in fact, the feedback given from the students in response to the survey in the final session following post-test. This speaks to cultural factors and the potential lack of validity and reliability of the tests across race and socioeconomic lines. In addition, some of the double negative phrasings of items are confusing, although Wichstrom's (1995) system did simplify Harter's more complicated formatting from the original form of the surveys.

It is clear that this intervention is an effective and important one with significant potential to create change in an often difficult to reach population. The modality of the intervention proved to be an important motivating factor for participation, which has implications for policy and practice regarding both clinical and educational programs that target this population. Currently, California's Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) states as part of its purpose and intent, "to expand the kinds of successful, innovative service programs for children...including culturally and linguistically competent approaches for underserved populations" (California Department of Mental Health, page 2). The act also states that the State Department of Mental Health will "establish a program designed to prevent mental illnesses from becoming severe and disabling. The program shall emphasize improving timely access to services for underserved populations" (California Department of Mental Health, page 2). This statement falls under the section entitled "Prevention and Early Intervention Programs" which aims to curtail mental illness as to help citizens and cut costs for the state by dealing with mental health problems early on.

BRL is clearly an innovative and effective program aimed at underserved youth.

It provides immediate preventative services to this population in a high accessible way, both physically---through the location in school-based health centers and the schools---as well as being culturally, linguistically, and psychologically competent in ways that respect the underserved and at-risk populations which it targets. It is clear that other organizations value BRL's work as the group has received a California Wellness Foundation grant for $25,000 in addition to a separate BECTAL grant, along with offers from Stars Behavioral Health Group for programming contracts in a day program and also offers from Seneca Center. Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services (ACBHCS) has also contracted with BRL for consultation on the African American Mental Health Needs Assessment as well as youth retreats for their Transitional Age youth. BRL currently works closely with various departments within ACBHCS. Mr. Alvarez has also been invited to present his work with the BRL program and be a panelist in the San Francisco State University Counseling Department, the Alameda County School-based Health Center Directors Forum, the San Mateo County Department of Education Forum, the California Institute for Mental Health's Mental Health Policy Forum, and the California Institute for Mental Health's Cultural Competency Summit. It is clear that these organizations appreciate the cutting edge approach and efficacy of BRL's intervention. It is suggested that further research be done to investigate potential of this and other similar interventions that are innovative programs which address the needs of youth and show significant promise.

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Appendix A

PARENT/GUARDIAN LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

February 2008

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is Elliot Gann, M.A., and I am graduate student at The Wright Institute, a doctoral program in clinical psychology located in Berkeley, California. I am conducting a study for my doctoral thesis on the *Beats, Rhymes and Life* (*BRL*) group which uses Rap Therapy with at-risk adolescent males and is run by Tomas Alvarez, M.S.W. in which your child has expressed interest in participating. Your child's participation would assist in the completion of the study. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the group affects its participants and can potentially help them, as well as to help clinicians develop more youth-friendly interventions. If you choose to let your child participate (by signing the attached consent form and having your child complete the student consent form), your child's participation would answer a series of questions regarding perceptions of themselves, important people around them, and the BRL group. These surveys will be given at the very beginning of the group before starting the actual BRL activities, and again at the end of the group. I also plan to sit in and take notes on several of the groups to observe and understand how the group works. In considering participation please consider the following:

1. Participation involves minimal risk to your child beyond the possibility of some mild anxiety in considering and responding to the topic, questions and/or materials.

2. Participation results in no direct benefits to your child beyond what might be gained by the experience of participating in a research study, and contributing to a better understanding of the topic.

3. Confidentiality will be protected to the full extent of the law. A key will be used to protect the identity of participants so that your child will be assigned a number instead of their name for their survey, and only the researcher will have the key which matches the number to names. This key will be kept in a locked file cabinet. Consent forms will also be kept in a locked cabinet and stored for two years upon completion of the study at the Wright Institute.

4. If you have any questions or problems as a result of participating in the study you may contact Elliot Gann, M.A. at (510) 395-2967 or egann@wrightinst.edu

5) Your child's participation is completely voluntary. If your child participates or you are interested in seeing the surveys before signing the consent forms, the surveys will be available at the school health center's office for you to view. Refusal to participate involves no penalty or loss of benefits and your child may discontinue participation at

any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

6) You may receive further information regarding the purpose and/or results of the study following participation by calling Elliot Gann, M.A. at the above contact listed.

I appreciate your considering participation in the study and welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions that you may have concerning your participation in the study. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Elliot Gann, M.A.,

Appendix B

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM (OAKLAND HIGH)

I, _____(*print parent name*), hereby authorize Elliot Gann, M.A. to gather information from my child for a study being conducted in association with the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. The nature of the study and my child's participation in it has been explained to me and I understand the following:

1. The study is a study of the *Beats, Rhymes and Life* (*BRL*) group which uses Rap Therapy with at-risk adolescent males. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the group affects its participants and can potentially help them, as well as to help clinicians develop more youth-friendly interventions.

2. My child's participation will involve minimal risk and is not anticipated beyond the risks of anxiety experienced in everyday conversation. Copies of the assessment tools will be kept in the office of each school, respectively, so that I can see the instruments if I choose, before I sign this consent for my child. If any uncomfortable feelings come up as a result of the survey I am aware that my child can seek services through the school's health center by contacting Susan Yee, Health Center Supervisor at Oakland High School Wildcats Health Center (510) 205-5566.

3. My child's participation results in no direct benefits to him beyond what might be gained by the experience of participating in a research study, and contributing to a greater scientific knowledge important to providing effective interventions to at-risk urban youth.

4. My child's confidentiality will be protected to the full extent of the law. My child will be assigned a number in place of his name when they fill out the survey and only Elliot Gann, M.A. will have the key that matches the ID number to his name, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. With the exception of the signed Consent Form, that legally must be stored in the confidential files of the Wright Institute Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, only Elliot Gann, M.A. and his thesis advisors will have access to data collected.

5. If I have any questions or problems as a result of participating in the study I may contact Elliot Gann, M.A. at (510) 395-2967.

6. My child's participation is voluntary and has been gained without coercion. My child's refusal to participate would involve no penalty or loss of benefits and he may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he is otherwise entitled.

7. I may receive further information regarding the purpose and/or results of the study following my participation by calling or emailing Elliot Gann, M.A. respectively at (510) 395-2967 or egann@wrightinst.edu

Thank you for your consideration. Please return this consent form as soon as possible, indicating your permission for you child to participate in this study. Please retain a copy for your records.

_____

Name of participant

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Appendix C

STUDENT CONSENT FORM (OAKLAND HIGH)

I, _____(*print student name*), hereby authorize Elliot Gann, M.A. to gather information from me for a study being conducted in association with the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. The nature of the study and my participation in it has been explained to me and I understand the following:

1. The study is a study of the *Beats, Rhymes and Life* (*BRL*) group which uses Rap Therapy with at-risk adolescent males. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the group affects its participants and can potentially help them, as well as to help clinicians develop more youth-friendly interventions.

2. My participation will involve minimal risk and is not anticipated beyond the risks of anxiety experienced in everyday conversation. If any uncomfortable feelings come up as a result of the survey I am aware that I can seek services through the school's health center by contacting Susan Yee, Health Center Supervisor at Oakland High School Wildcats Health Center (510) 205-5566.

3. My participation results in no direct benefits to me beyond what might be gained by the experience of participating in a research study, and contributing to a greater scientific knowledge important to providing effective interventions to at-risk urban youth.

4. My confidentiality will be protected to the full extent of the law. I will be assigned a number in place of my name when I fill out the survey and only Elliot Gann, M.A. will have the key that matches the ID number to my name, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. With the exception of the signed Consent Form, that legally must be stored in the confidential files of the Wright Institute Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, only Elliot Gann, M.A. and his thesis advisors will have access to data collected.

5. If I have any questions or problems as a result of participating in the study I may contact Elliot Gann, M.A. at (510) 395-2967.

6. My participation is voluntary and has been gained without coercion. My refusal to participate would involve no penalty or loss of benefits and I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

7. I may receive further information regarding the purpose and/or results of the study following my participation by calling or emailing Elliot Gann, M.A. respectively at (510) 395-2967 or egann@wrightinst.edu

Thank you for your consideration. Please return this consent form as soon as

possible, indicating your permission to participate in this study. Please retain a copy for your records.

_____
Name of participant

_____ _____
Signature of participant Date

Appendix D

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM (BERKELEY)

I, _____(*print parent name*), hereby authorize Elliot Gann, M.A. to gather information from my child for a study being conducted in association with the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. The nature of the study and my child's participation in it has been explained to me and I understand the following:

1. The study is a study of the *Beats, Rhymes and Life* (*BRL*) group which uses Rap Therapy with at-risk adolescent males. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the group affects its participants and can potentially help them, as well as to help clinicians develop more youth-friendly interventions.

2. My child's participation will involve minimal risk and is not anticipated beyond the risks of anxiety experienced in everyday conversation. Copies of the assessment tools will be kept in the office of each school, respectively, so that I can see the instruments if I choose, before I sign this consent for my child. If any uncomfortable feelings come up as a result of the survey I am aware that my child can seek services through the school's health center by contacting Berkeley High School Health Center.

3. My child's participation results in no direct benefits to him beyond what might be gained by the experience of participating in a research study, and contributing to a greater scientific knowledge important to providing effective interventions to at-risk urban youth.

4. My child's confidentiality will be protected to the full extent of the law. My child will be assigned a number in place of his name when they fill out the survey and only Elliot Gann, M.A. will have the key that matches the ID number to his name, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. With the exception of the signed Consent Form, that legally must be stored in the confidential files of the Wright Institute Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, only Elliot Gann, M.A. and his thesis advisors will have access to data collected.

5. If I have any questions or problems as a result of participating in the study I may contact Elliot Gann, M.A. at (510) 395-2967.

6. My child's participation is voluntary and has been gained without coercion. My child's refusal to participate would involve no penalty or loss of benefits and he may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which he is otherwise entitled.

7. I may receive further information regarding the purpose and/or results of the study following my participation by calling or emailing Elliot Gann, M.A. respectively at (510) 395-2967 or egann@wrightinst.edu

Thank you for your consideration. Please return this consent form as soon as possible, indicating your permission for you child to participate in this study. Please retain a copy for your records.

_____

Name of participant

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Appendix E

STUDENT CONSENT FORM (BERKELEY)

I, _____(*print student name*), hereby authorize Elliot Gann, M.A. to gather information from me for a study being conducted in association with the Wright Institute in Berkeley, California. The nature of the study and my participation in it has been explained to me and I understand the following:

1. The study is a study of the *Beats, Rhymes and Life* (*BRL*) group which uses Rap Therapy with at-risk adolescent males. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of how the group affects its participants and can potentially help them, as well as to help clinicians develop more youth-friendly interventions.

2. My participation will involve minimal risk and is not anticipated beyond the risks of anxiety experienced in everyday conversation. If any uncomfortable feelings come up as a result of the survey I am aware that I can seek services through the school's health center by contacting Berkeley High School Health Center.

3. My participation results in no direct benefits to me beyond what might be gained by the experience of participating in a research study, and contributing to a greater scientific knowledge important to providing effective interventions to at-risk urban youth.

4. My confidentiality will be protected to the full extent of the law. I will be assigned a number in place of my name when I fill out the survey and only Elliot Gann, M.A. will have the key that matches the ID number to my name, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. With the exception of the signed Consent Form, that legally must be stored in the confidential files of the Wright Institute Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, only Elliot Gann, M.A. and his thesis advisors will have access to data collected.

5. If I have any questions or problems as a result of participating in the study I may contact Elliot Gann, M.A. at (510) 395-2967.

6. My participation is voluntary and has been gained without coercion. My refusal to participate would involve no penalty or loss of benefits and I may discontinue my participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

7. I may receive further information regarding the purpose and/or results of the study following my participation by calling or emailing Elliot Gann, M.A. respectively at (510) 395-2967 or egann@wrightinst.edu

Thank you for your consideration. Please return this consent form as soon as possible, indicating your permission to participate in this study. Please retain a copy for

your records.

_____

Name of participant

_____ _____

Signature of participant Date

Appendix F

MODIFIED HARTER SURVEY FORM

Keyed ID Number_____ **Age**_____ **Name of School**_____

Gender (circle one): Male Female

Ethnicity (circle one): African-American Latino Asian-American/Pacific Islander Caucasian American Indian/Native American Other _____*(specify)*

Previous experience in Beats, Rhymes & Life program (circle one): yes no

SAMPLE SENTENCE Circle the number (1,2,3, or 4) that best applies to you.	**Very untrue**	**Sort of untrue**	**Sort of true**	**Very true**
a) I like to go to movies in my spare time.	1	2	3	4
WHAT I AM LIKE				
1. I look forward to the group Beats, Rhymes and Life sessions because I like the hip hop activities.	1	2	3	4
2. I am often disappointed with myself.	1	2	3	4
3. I think rapping in the group lets me talk about things that are tough to talk about anywhere else.	1	2	3	4
4. I <u>don't</u> like the way I am leading my life.	1	2	3	4
5. I <u>only</u> come to the group because I am supposed to.	1	2	3	4
6. I am happy with myself most of the time.	1	2	3	4
7. I like the kind of person I am.	1	2	3	4
8. Freestyling, writing rhymes, or working on beats has <u>not</u> made me like myself more as a person	1	2	3	4
9. I am very happy being the way I am.	1	2	3	4

PEOPLE IN MY LIFE				
1. My parents *don't* really *understand* me.	1	2	3	4
2. My classmates like me the way I am.	1	2	3	4
3. My teacher *helps* me if I am *upset* and have a problem.	1	2	3	4

People in my life	**Very untrue**	**Sort of untrue**	**Sort of true**	**Very true**
4. I have a close friend who I can tell problems to.	1	2	3	4
5. My parents *don't* seem to want to hear about my problems.	1	2	3	4
6. I have classmates that I can become friends with.	1	2	3	4
7. I *don't* have a teacher who *helps* me to do my very best.	1	2	3	4
8. I have a close friend who really understands me.	1	2	3	4
9. I have parents who *care* about my feelings.	1	2	3	4
10. I have classmates who sometimes make fun of me.	1	2	3	4
11. I have a teacher who *cares* about me.	1	2	3	4
12. I have a close friend who I can talk to about things that bother me.	1	2	3	4
13. My parents treat me like a person who really matters.	1	2	3	4
14. My classmates pay attention to what I say.	1	2	3	4
15. I *don't* have a teacher who is *fair* to me.	1	2	3	4
16. I *don't* have a close friend who I like to spend time with.	1	2	3	4
17. My parents like me *the way I am.*	1	2	3	4
18. I *don't* get asked to play in games with classmates very often.	1	2	3	4
19. I *don't* have a teacher who cares if I feel bad.	1	2	3	4

20. I *don't* have a close friend who really *listens* to what I say.	1	2	3	4
21. My parents *don't* act like what I do is *important*.	1	2	3	4
22. I often spend recess being *alone*.	1	2	3	4
23. My teacher treats me like a *person.*	1	2	3	4
24. I *don't* have a close friend who *cares* about my feelings.	1	2	3	4

Appendix G

PROTOCOL FOR MODIFIED HARTER SURVEY

Instructions to participants:

We have some sentences here, and as you can see from the top of your sheet where it says "What I Am Like," we are interested in what each of you is like. As you can see in the section marked "People in My Life," we are also interested in several kinds of people in your life. This is a survey, *not* a test. There are no right or wrong answers. Since teenagers are very different from one another, each of your will be putting down something different.

First let me explain how these questions work. There is a sample question at the top, marked a). I'll read it aloud and you follow along with me. This question talks about what you like to do. (Examiner reads sample question aloud.) Think about whether that is true for you. If that is very untrue circle "1" for "Very untrue," if it is sort of untrue circle "2" for "Sort of untrue," if it is sort of true circle "3" for "Sort of true," and if it is very true circle "4" for "Very true." Make sure for each sentence you only circle one number. Ok that was just for practice. Continue with these sentences on your own. For each one, just circle one number, the one that is most true for you, what you are most like.

Appendix H

OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL LETTER OF PERMISSION

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL
1023 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland, California 94610
(510) 879-3040
FAX (510) 879-3049

February 12th, 2008

The Wright Institute
2728 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, California 94704

To Whom It May Concern:

Oakland High School gives permission for Elliot Gann to locate his research in this institution. We do not have a Human Subject Review Board and, therefore, request that The Wright Institute Human Subject Review Committee (HSR) perform a review of the research proposed by a Mr. Gann. Oakland High School will abide by the standards related to the protection of all participants in the research approved by The Wright Institute HSR Committee.

Sincerely,

Mary Scott
Principal
Oakland High School

Appendix I

BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL LETTER OF PERMISSION

Berkeley Unified School District

2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Berkeley, California 94704-1180
(510) 644-6206 Fax: (510) 540-5358 www.berkeley.k12.ca.us

William Huyett
Superintendent

February 15, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:
Elliot Gann has the District's permission and support to conduct a research study of the Beats, Rhymes and Life (BRL) Program, a therapeutically-based project funded by The California Wellness Foundation and sponsored by the Berkeley High School Health Center. The study is authorized to be conducted at Berkeley High School as well as BTECH.
We are aware Mr. Gann will be administering pre/post test surveys, sitting in on sessions, and submitting release forms and information as to the nature of this study to both parents and students. We also understand Mr. Gann will be in compliance with the ethical standards outlined by the Wright Institute's Human Subject Review Committee. We believe this project will be of interest to the students of Berkeley High and the BRL Program, and we look forward to receiving the results of the study as well.

Respectfully,

Mark Coplan, Public Information Officer

Appendix J

LETTER OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH FROM TOMAS ALVAREZ III, M.S.W.

Using Hip Hop as a Vehicle for Youth Development

January 8, 2008

The Wright Institute
2728 Durant Avenue
Berkeley, California 94704

To Whom It May Concern:

Elliot Gann has permission to conduct a research study of the Beats, Rhymes and Life (BRL) therapeutic Hip Hop program. I extend permission to conduct research on all BRL programs for the duration of this study. I am aware Mr. Gann will be administering pre/post test surveys as well as submitting release forms and information as to the nature of this study to both parents and students. I also understand Mr. Gann will be in compliance with the ethical standards outlined by the Wright Institute's Human Subject Review Committee.

Respectfully,

T. Tomas Alvarez III, M.S.W., B.S.W.
Founder/Executive Director
Beats, Rhymes and Life

Appendix K

A Brief Introductory History to Hip Hop and Rap Music

Elliot Gann

Many who are not familiar with the culture think of Hip Hop as a more recent phenomenon, but Hip Hop has been around for some thirty-plus years. In his book *Hip Hop America* Nelson George begins to define and contextualize Hip Hop ("Hip Hop" is spelled with capitals by many within the culture, and old school MC/rapper, historian, activist KRS One emphasizes this---thus throughout this text, unless another source is being cited which does not spell it as such, "Hip Hop" is spelled with capitals) by stating in his foreword that,

> At its most elemental level hip hop is a product of post-civil rights era America, a set of cultural forms of originally nurtured by African-American Carribean-American, and Latin American youth in and around New York in the '70's. Its most popular vehicle for expression has been music through dance, painting, fashion, video, crime and commerce are also its playing fields. (George, viii, 1999)

The author goes on to state Hip Hop's movement from its origins in the inner city Black and Puerto-Rican/Latino communities to popular culture. But where, when and how exactly did this culture that has so markedly impacted out society start? One must understand the local history of New York City's South Bronx, as well as the culture and background of the many ethnic minorities who gathered and interacted there to fully understand the origins of Hip Hop.

In the mid to late 1970's during and following an economic and social crisis in

New York City's South Bronx, block parties and gatherings in public parks with three seminal DJ's gave rise to the beginning of Hip Hop music and culture. The pioneering DJ's were Kool Herc, Afrika Bambataa, and Grandmaster Flash who helped to shape the aggressive aesthetic and style of Hip Hop that is still the basis for the culture. They inhabited a particularly chaotic world---the South Bronx during the 1970's was subject to pronounced economic and industrial decline, intense gang warfare as well as clashes with cops, slumlords burning tenements to get insurance money, and other events that tore at the social fabric. Nelson (1998) states that Hip Hop, and the figurehead DJ's who helped launch and shape its musical manifestation, came out of predominately Black and Hispanic youth, "b-boys---the dancers, graffiti writers, the kids just hanging out" reacting to this historical context as well as the music genres of disco and funk in New York City (P. XI).

Kool Herc (hailing originally from Jamaica) contributed to the early development of Hip Hop music in many important ways. In Jamaica DJ's had large, often homemade sound-systems, and Kool Herc was no exception with his towering P.A. speakers that boomed bass and rhythms. Herc also played rare and obscure records instead of playing just the popular tracks. Encouraged by his father, he soaked the records so that the labels would come off and other DJ's wouldn't know what signature tracks he was playing and couldn't steal his sound (George 1998; Chang 2005). One's individual style is quite important in Hip Hop culture and this is exemplary of the competitive spirit and style on which the culture places so much emphasis. Another essential stylistic and structural breakthrough in the musical development of Hip Hop for which Herc was responsible was his emphasis on the instrumental "break" section of records which usually had a

stripped down rhythm section with prominent drums and percussion. He had observed while DJ'ing parties that dancers saved their best moves and seemed to respond the most to these sections. Thus, Herc created a technical innovation in DJ'ing when he took two copies of the same record and upon the first copy's instrumental break finishing he would reintroduce this section with the second copy, then back-cuing the first record to repeat this again. This creation of live loops is what became the standard musical format for Hip Hop "beats" or the background track over which rappers or "MC's" would rap. Another important cultural influence from his Jamaican heritage was the place of the DJ's to "toast" or speak, sometimes chant or rhyme in a braggadocios manner, which Herc and his Jamaican friend would do (George 1998; Chang 2005). Having an MC would who hype the songs alongside the DJ soon became ingrained in the culture.

Though exposed to and initially somewhat part of the gang culture of the West and South Bronx, Herc, like many of his local peers moved from these beginnings to the more individually-focused Hip Hop culture that was emerging. Eventually these gangs, which had started in the late '60's fizzled out by the mid to early '70's (Chang, 2005). Afrika Bambaata, formerly the head of one of the largest and most notorious gangs in the Bronx, the Black Spades, became a champion of peace and unity through Hip Hop. He would eventually found the Universal Zulu Nation. This organization still exists today with chapters all over the country and world, bringing together DJ's, breakdancers (also known as B-Boys), graffiti artists and other Hip Hop community members. He was also known for his eclectic record collection and incorporating many different styles of music. Both Herc and Bambaata would use what became classic records and staples of B-Boy jams with their easily recognizable drum breaks. Grand Wizard Theodore was credited

as creating the "scratch" in which the DJ rhythmically moves the record back and forth as a percussive element, although Grandmaster Flash made it popular. Flash added in tricks and flare to his DJ'ing performance which many DJ's for years would emulate and build upon. Flash also had his squad of MC's who accompanied him and with whom he performed. It was one of these MC's named "Cowboy" who coined the phrase "Hip Hop" (George, 1998).

Hip Hop began to grow rapidly in New York in the mid to late '70's and by 1979 what had begun as a recreational activity was now becoming a full-fledged art form spreading rapidly to the rest of the country. "Rapper's Delight," while not the first official rap record (King Tim III was the first but not nearly as big a hit), was the breakthrough pioneering "rap" record, and is the origin of the word "rapper" as a name for MC's (George, 1998). For many, this was their first taste of Hip Hop music. By 1984 following national Hip Hop tours like the Fresh Fest Tour and Run DMC hit stadiums in major cities, spreading Hip Hop through large scale performances. George (1998) argues that, for the audiences "Not only were they converted as listeners, many customers came away convinced they could perform, too" (page 131). Regional scenes, record labels and groups were growing in various parts of the United States---particular regional records outsold those from New York, the birthplace and mecca of Hip Hop, in their respective areas.

The west coast, especially Los Angeles, contributed to a large component of the early development of Hip Hop via the dance styles of locking and popping which influenced breakdancing. Niggaz With Attitude (N.W.A.), comprised of legendary producer and rapper Dr. Dre and Ice Cube among others, was the West's answer to New

York and blew open the door, both aesthetically in terms of its aggressive and "gangsta" sound as well as the regionalism of its hit "Straight Outta Compton." The album, as well as the group, was embraced on a national level and helped pioneer the genre of "gangsta rap." The album came out in 1988 and in the next two years several west coast rappers were signed to major label deals.

In the Bay Area, Too Short and E-40 had enjoyed much local success and were among the west coast rappers signed to major labels. Too Short, a legend in Oakland and the Bay Area, had been making rap music since the late '70's. Hustling his tapes on the streets as well as buslines throughout the East Bay, Too Short made a name for himself. His DIY "out of the trunk" (as in selling albums out of the trunk of one's car) approach is exemplary of a certain Bay Area aesthetic that is still quite pertinent and widespread today. It is a virtual rite of passage for young rappers, especially in the East Bay, to hustle their tapes on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, or at shows and parties.

Appendix L

PROCEDURE FOR ORIGINAL BEATS, RHYMES AND LIFE PROGRAM

The *Beats, Rhymes and Life* Rap Therapy groups will meet once a week for 10 weeks, with the first week being the orientation. Each session will last approximately 2 hours and follow a structured schedule of activities. Each session will start off with a brief check-in whereby participants will have an opportunity to comment on their current mood. The check-in will be followed by a group writing activity where by participants will have an opportunity to write rap poetry (rhymes) while listening to instrumental Hip Hop music (beats). Participants will be allowed to choose their own topics to write about. In some instances participants will be encouraged (and challenged) to write about topics relevant to their lives. These topics will be strategically determined and used to encourage a reflective process. At the conclusion of the writing activity, participants will be encouraged to share their 'rhymes' with the group for feedback. Feedback will be limited to constructive-only (e.g., what did you liked about song, how could song be improved) and modeled for group participants by group facilitators.

Each session will also include a group 'freestyle' (improvisational rap) activity in which participants will arrange in a circle and be encouraged to rap improvisationally over instrumental Hip Hop music. Participants may also choose to recite written raps (instead of freestyling). The main objective of the group 'freestyle' activity is to help group members foster a sense of mastery and encourage positive peer interactions. (Alvarez, 2005, p. 9)

Appendix M

QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONAL NOTES OF GROUP SESSIONS

All notes on group sessions observed and quotations taken from these sessions were approximations of what happened and are not an exact transcript or verbatim account of what occurred.

Oakland High School Qualitative Observations

Oakland High School, Session #1 (3/5/08)

Rob, the co-facilitator of the group, is in the basement with a few of the students, waiting for other students to arrive. The session begins and I give the survey to three students. While taking the survey, one student (the youngest in the group) whispers out loud "no" in response to the item on the survey asking if the students have a teacher who cares about them. After the students finish the survey, Tomas (founder of BRL and the other facilitator) and Rob start the group with a check-in and explain the functioning of the group. He asks which students rap, and how they got into making beats and rapping. The facilitators pose the question about why Hip Hop is so popular and a discussion follows. Students suggest that it is a way to express one's emotions and it borrows from many different kinds of music. The facilitators ask why it started, and the students respond that it was created to make something new, for people to express themselves. Tomas and Rob give out a homework assignment---a Hip Hop treasure hunt. Then they initiate a conversation about the "community agreements" which Tomas writes on the whiteboard. These are agreements generated with the group and all members of the group including the leaders agree to abide by these guidelines. The agreements are as follows:

1) Everyone contributes.
2) "One mic" (only one person, who metaphorically has "the mic" talks at one time).
3) Cursing is okay.
4) Keep it real.
5) Be open/feel free.
6) Give constructive feedback.
7) Be on time.
8) Respect this space.
9) Ask for help if needed.

Following this is the discussion of how to go about giving feedback, and how this interplays with the issue posed: "what if [someone or something] is wack?" Tomas presents how to deliver constructive criticism and why this is important. He reviews which students know which computer-based beat making programs and who wanted to make beats. During this session, two students arrive late and join the group, taking the total number of students from three to five.

Then the group does an exercise called "Who am I?" in which each person gives a word---either a noun or an adjective---to describe themselves. There is a joking interplay between the facilitators, and Tomas and Rob take attention seeking behavior from the students and use it to engage and play with the members of the group. One of the students gives "luxurious" as the adjective to describe himself and Tomas pulls out a dollar bill, joking about how he is so luxurious that he can use money as toilet paper. The group laughs and this intervention seems to interest the students and pull the group together. The group seems to be in a basic assumption mode of functioning (possibly

fight/flight), but firms up and shifts into a work group mode when the facilitators give the students structure. The group quickly engages, goes into a circle and there is a friendly atmosphere. Students who didn't participate before now participate. Tomas supports participants when they stumble, display anxiety or doubt by complimenting them, and he encourages them to speak with "power." The group seems to pick up more confidence from this.

The group seemed to be cohesive, supportive, on task and mostly in a work group mode with some joking around. While at the beginning Keith and Jeff were chatting between themselves during some activities and implied a potential pairing group mode, there was a shift to a much more solid work group as the session went on.

Oakland High School, Session #4 (4/9/08)

(4/2/08 had been cancelled due to school fair.) The session starts with food that is brought by Tomas and Rob, students are making sandwiches for themselves etc., while also interacting with each other and fooling around. There is a friendly casual atmosphere and the sign-in sheet is passed around and the chairs have been pulled into a circle with students taking seats. Check-in begins and Brian starts, telling the group that he stayed with his girlfriend the whole week. This leads to talking about students' plans for spring break and Tomas checking in with each individual, which then leads the group to fall off task and become somewhat chaotic with students talking out of turn and Tomas redirecting the group. The next student in the circle, Kerry, checks in and discusses lots of activities. He sits next to two students who are his friends and Tomas identifies them as the "Three Musketeers." They inform the group they know each other from working at a program together. At this time a student comes in late and Tomas brings him up to

speed about spring break. This student does a brief check-in, and then a teacher enters the room, surprising the group, and interrupting the "flow." Tomas hands out a permission form and has the group members fill it out, which they do quietly. There is some noise and talking from the "Three Musketeers" during this time, which seems to indicate a fragmentation/sub-grouping within the group.

Tomas introduces an activity called "Judgment" and also talks about the project that the group will be doing. Tomas has everyone stand up for the "project" and directs the group as to how the activity will proceed. He states that none of the members are allowed to use words and they will have a "character type" on their back with a card which they cannot see and everyone else can. They will have to guess after ten minutes who they are based on how people interact with them non-verbally. He has the group think about how to interact and for ten minutes they cannot speak. At this point the group members are still talking and seem anxious. The "Three Musketeers" are still talking a little and the group does not seem on task and still seems fragmented. Some of the characters are "person living with AIDS," "sexy female," and "police officer." While the group has been instructed to be quiet during this time, Brian asks a questions and Tomas redirects him, reminding him of the instructions. Another member comes in late in the middle of this activity. The group laughs, there is talking, a couple of the students start rough-housing and playing around and Rob has to break them up. The group seems to struggle and Rob calls a time out, stating, "remember to interact with everyone and remember that interaction." There is now a lot of laughing in the group, which is off task most of the time.

The time is up and the group forms into a circle after milling around a bit. They

sit down and Rob asks what the activity was like, one student states, "weird" and the group responds with laughter. The different identities/"characters" are put on the board and each student must guess which identity they were assigned. Rob notes "the people who had something good acted confident." As the identity of one student is revealed to be "gay male" the group responds with laughter, seeming to move into fight/flight mode and scapegoating, or at least preparing to scapegoat this individual or what this individual represents---gay males in general. A student states, "people who can't speak have it bad," in response to the activity, and the group laughs again when another student finds out his sign said "sexy female," which is put on the board. The student who was assigned "gay male" says "David (another student) must have been the gay guy," and the student who was the "sexy female" shows empathy for his character as Tomas asks him what his experience was like, stating that he didn't like how he was treated.

When the last student is reached the group seems to have calmed down, is able to focus and stay on task, and work together. Rob, whose identity was "overweight" says he felt "alienated" and the student who was the "gay male" follows his comment by stating that he felt that way, too. The group seems to like the activity, responds well, and one of the students, Harry, makes an observation as to what the activity was about. When Tomas and Rob ask him further, this student talked about empathy and relates how he treats his gay cousin and recounts his views on compassion and treating gay people with respect. After this student (who is one of the oldest members of the group) speaks the other members of the group remain silent. It seems Harry has set a precedent and also shared something personal as well as setting a norm for the group, which none of the other group members challenge. There is a new tone in the group, somewhat more sober

and mature. After a while another member talks again about the way that he dresses and how he is judged by it in certain ways by people. Tomas asks if the group can identify with him. Various students in the group begin to tell stories about their own experiences that reflect this student's experience of discrimination.

One student relates a story about a Chinese woman who locked her door when she saw him pass her on the street, and a girl who judged him as a "bad person" because he was silent. When asked what he thinks and how he feels by the group leaders he responds that he laughs about it and thinks about it sometimes, and says "it's just how they were raised."

Brian and some other students now begin to talk all at the same time and Tomas shushes them (to which they respond), and Brian tells a story about an experience he had in which he and family members ran into a group of White people who told them that they were "hunting niggers." Tomas asks him about feeling judged then attempts to get students who didn't talk to participate, but instead the student who started off the discussion goes again and talks about getting along with others and that maybe people need help from other people. Evan tells the group an experience he had in which he was mistaken for being Hispanic (he is actually Asian/Pacific-Islander) and he says that this ends up being a good thing. Some people see him as a "square" or a "punk." Tomas points out that this student reacts differently to how different people treat him, which leads the student to telling a story about when some young men tried to rob him, and when he refused to give them his belongings and money despite the men having a gun and they pistol-whipped him on his head. The group is listening attentively at this point and it seems as if there is a reverence for him.

Another student, David, joins in and tells about his experience with a "racist" teacher at their school. Rob follows this up by talking about what judgment each group member makes, and Tomas points out that he conceded to the projection/judgment of the "racist" teacher. Harry relates his own story about prejudice of a teacher he had when he was the only black kid in the class, and meanwhile some group members seem distracted and anxious while he is talking, while others seem engaged and focused. (While this discussion has been going on, a group member Kerry has been gone between 15-20 minutes and he has still not returned.) Tomas asks about other students' situations and asks the group's advice on one question. Harry again responds, and the group seems to be dependent on him to speak and react.

Meanwhile, Kerry has come back in with his hand over his stomach and the group shifts their attention to him and laughs. Tomas makes a joke about the piece of toilet paper that is stuck on his shoe and brings him into the activity. At this point Brian looks like he has fallen asleep as he is resting his head on his arm and his eyes are closed, while another student is texting under his desk, and there seems to be some pairing and talking by a few students on the side. Tomas walks over to where Brian is and lightly bops him on the head in a playful manner as to wake him up. Tomas preps to play a song about the writing topic that is selected for the group and makes a joke about Brian, who had been sleeping. This seems to ease some tension and incorporate Brian back into the group. The song is played and most of the group is listening, they seem attentive and seem to be thinking.

After the song has finished Rob asks what the song is about and some of the members respond. Tomas plays beats for the group to choose from in order to write a

song. The "Three Musketeers" approve of a certain beat, and meanwhile Brian is sleeping again. The group is having a hard time deciding and coming to a consensus. The three friends are participating but the other group members on the other side of the room/group are not involved in the same way (Brian is one of these students and is still sleeping while Mike remains quite and reserved). The third group member who is next to these two expresses indifference as to which beat should be chosen and the beat that is favored by the three students is picked to be used.

The group then does some writing to the beat and Tomas checks in with Brian, asking him if he is okay and why he is tired. Brian explains he stays up to two or three o'clock in the morning watching T.V. and has trouble falling asleep. Tomas suggests that he go to bed earlier and offers ways to "train" himself to progressively go to sleep earlier and earlier. Tomas goes over to Mike to try and help him, then returns to Brian to tell him the assignment and encourage him to participate, helping him with the activity. Throughout the entire session, Tomas remains very non-judgmental, open and friendly in his demeanor.

Tomas then has the students each present what they've written to the group and guides them, suggesting the group can give feedback. Rob supports a student who messes up over the beat and is having a difficult time, encourages him to do his verse *a capella*, and then asks the group for their feedback. Next CH goes and the group is mostly silent at this point. When Rob does his verse the group seems in awe of him, they laugh and are impressed by his big words. Tomas goes, and following him Brian presents what he has written, which is only one line. The group tries to support Brian and help him by offering him lines for his verse. Corey's "cousin" Evan then goes and the

group seems excited and impressed by his verse, giving him good feedback. Another student, David struggles with his rap and Tomas aids him, while Brian mumbles "gay gangsta---gangsta" on the side. After this the freestyle rapping activity starts and the students have all stood up, with Tomas encouraging group members to rap and participate. Tomas tells Brian he can talk about how "dope" (great) he is, but that he and others cannot rap about how "wack" (bad) others are.

The group doesn't seem fully into the rapping activity, and one member is sitting back and not really joining. Rob starts rapping after the first student, since the second student passes on his turn. When Rob displays his fluency and ability in freestyle rapping the group seems to get more into it. Following him Tomas raps then two more students pass, and Evan goes, messes up, then the group laughs. He chooses to pass and Tomas encourages the group to keep going. Keith is fooling around and the group cracks up laughing, which interrupts the flow. The group is struggling, moving in and out, and Keith goes but he struggles as well, giving only one line. Tomas raps and Brian raps one line, appearing very shy and giving a joking line. Tomas supports and encourages Mike, who goes then stumbles a bit. It is time to end the group and the students leave.

Oakland High School Session #5 (4/16/08)

The students are eating the food that Tomas has brought and there is a new student present who was not at the last meeting. Introductions are done at the check-in at the beginning of the meeting, with each member stating what they bring to the group. Mike is reading his notebook and Rob prompts the students who have not yet said what they bring to the group. Rob also teases Tomas and then Harry breaks down the structure and how the group works for the new student, Isaac. Two students are now talking at the

same time and Brian talks over and says he will go first, Tomas interjects a joke about how Brian is "eating again" which makes everyone laughing.

There are some missing group members and Brian wonders about Keith. There are only five sessions left and the group discusses making the final project. In the middle of the discussion, the group begins to talk and joke about mustard since some students are still eating sandwiches. The group transitions to the standard check-in and Brian starts it off. Harry goes next and while Harry is talking Brian interrupts. The instructions for the check-in are that each student must use a different adjective/word to describe how they are doing so that they may not repeat what other students have said. Brian explains this during the check-in to Isaac, who has arrived a few minutes late.

Tomas talks about the music video as the final project and goes over what has been done so far, as well as the different sub-genres/types of rap. Brian suggests extra time to shoot the music video and the group seems interested. Brian agrees with Harry and everyone in the group is interested in rapping in the video. Tomas tells the group that they need to write a song and figure out a concept. Harry suggests a message about rap in the community. Tomas then asks the group if this is resonating, and brings Isaac into the conversation, asking him what he likes to write. Isaac does not come up with anything so Tomas tells the group that they will have a ten minute writing session and students can do whatever kind of rap they feel.

The group seems to be focused on the task and all appear to be working and thinking hard. Brian sees Evan's lyrics and is surprised at how much he does. They discuss this and Evan explains he wrote it yesterday. Brian seems to have stopped writing even though the beat keeps going and the writing session is not done. Rob sees

who wants to go first. Tomas says they will rap about their identity and this is the central theme of the song. Brian says that Tomas should go first, however he is speaking out of turn and Tomas ignores and does not respond to him. Harry volunteers to go first. Brian smashes his hand down on his desk and Lee is drumming on his. The group seems to listen to Tomas, however, Evan and Brian. are smiling and laughing, and do not seem fully involved. Tomas asks the group to identify themes, then Rob sings and makes the group laugh.

David performs his rap and then Brian answers questions about himself. His answer includes a joke about his "veins" and Tomas points out that this is a metaphor. Brian talks while Tomas asks who is going and Tomas makes a joke about how the desk he is putting his weight on has "a gangsta lean." Isaac (the new student) then recites his verse. With the help of the group Isaac decides his verse is about "street life" and Evan says his is "fun rap," while Isaac's is a "new category." Tomas throws his hands up and asks for feedback from the group, since no one is volunteering to give it. Isaac says "fun rap, what he said!" Isaac goes with "message rap" about racism, White and Black people, the volume on the stereo is lowered and the group becomes very quiet. Isaac is somewhat bashful and seems anxious. Tomas asks for another theme, and the group comes to the word "discrimination." Lee leaves the group to use the phone in the middle of Brian's feedback session.

Corey shows up, and Tomas gives him a seat, he has Corey introduce himself to the group and asks him what he brings to the group. "I bring connection to the group" he states and Tomas tells him the activity the group is doing. Mike goes and he only has two bars, then Tomas encourages the group to give Mike feedback and identify the

theme. The group gives their thoughts and Tomas checks in with Mike to see if this is accurate and whether the group correctly understood. Following this Tomas recites his own verse, and when Tomas clears his throat, Brian says something while Tomas is talking, then mimics Tomas' throat clearing. Tomas, despite stumbling a bit while rapping, continues and then has the group identify the theme in his song. A few of the members of the group contribute their thoughts, however there seems to be a deadness in the group, and different members seem in different places mentally.

Mike is writing, looking down, while other members seem to be doing different things. Rob goes and after he performs his verse Brian says that he thinks this is a message rap, explaining why he thinks this as he goes to get some water. Evan and Brian say everyone's songs have to do with "life," and Tomas follows this idea, states that "life" ties all their verses together and suggests that the group write a rap about this. Corey suggests that the group should start filming now for the video and Tomas responds by saying that this is a good idea, he states that the group will vote on this. Tomas tries to emphasize connecting to each others' raps and transitioning from one person's verse to another. Evan suggests that the group use an original beat, and Tomas asks who wants to do this. He says Evan can make a beat next week and each person will write a four to sixteen bar verse. Tomas asks if the group wants to write to a different beat and the group says yes. Harry responds very strongly to one beat and Tomas asks if the group wants this beat, to which the group agrees.

Tomas invites members who want to write the chorus to come over to where he is and Harry and Brian go over. They show Tomas what they have and start working on an idea for the chorus. Corey and Lee join them. They form a small circle. Meanwhile Rob

is giving advice to Mike, Isaac, and David to help them with their writing. Rob has Isaac name themes and writes down the ones that are centered around "my life," which he writes on the whiteboard. Brian is suggesting ideas, and when Corey offers his idea, Brian reaches out and give him a "pound" (an affirmative handshake showing respect). They are now trying to figure out who can sing, and Rob states that the subgroup of students who are working on the chorus of the song with Tomas can contribute.

The group working on the chorus with Tomas really seems to gel and is in a work group mode when they are singing the chorus to the beat. This song becomes stronger and stronger. Mike gets up for a sandwich and Brian is making jokes, singing the chorus with other students and Tomas is trying to get the other subgroup on the side to hear the chorus. They are still talking while he is trying to communicate it to them, but they respond that they have heard it and like it. Tomas now encourages the whole group to do the chorus together, even though the group on the side is writing. Brian is now rapping the chorus, and Isaac and Corey are talking. Tomas talks, the Brian interjects and wants to do a verse. Tomas explains that Harry will go first on the song, then Brian. Meanwhile Mike and Isaac are talking, Tomas raps his verse and needs some more lyrics--a few students make suggestions as to what he could add.

Rob has been working separately with the other subgroup while this is happening. Tomas goes over to the other group to see how they're doing. Tomas comes back and helps Brian with his lyrics, taking out a couple of words from his verse to make it work and easier to rap. Rob lets the group know that there are 15 minutes left and pulls the group back into the big group. He has everyone share what they've done, starting with the chorus, and the whole group says it together. Harry struggles at first with his verse

and starts over---the whole group follows suit and starts the chorus again---it is now clear the group is in a work group mode of functioning. Harry does his verse, all of the group does the chorus together, then Brian goes and then the chorus is sung again by the group. Corey however, does not sing along with the chorus, nor does Rob. When one student has trouble doing his verse and loses his bearing on the song, Brian starts the chorus again for him, going twice so that Mike can follow him, and this eases Mike into his verse and seems to decrease his anxiety.

The teacher to whom the classroom belongs knocks on the door. Meanwhile Corey does not have anything to rap. Tomas suggests the group can meet for two or three hour sessions the next two times and the group eagerly agrees to this. Tomas tells the group members who are present to let the other group members who are not present know about the assigned homework to do four to sixteen bar verses. Brian eagerly agrees when Tomas asks if the group should now have their regular freestyle session. It is clear that Brian has now fully joined the group and is involved.

Brian wants me to do a beatbox (make drum/percussive noises with ones mouth), however this is not possible, and following this Mike takes off to do something. Rob says the group probably does not want him to beatbox and Lee says that he will do it. Everyone except for Corey stands up. Evan mentions that a certain person Keith is not there to mess people up, and then Tomas chooses the topic of "money" that Brian suggested the group members should freestyle about. Evan and then Harry rap after him, with Isaac following and Mike returns while this is happening. It is David's turn and he curses, and says a profane statement and the group laughs at this. The group seems much more cohesive. It is Rob's his turn to rap, but he chooses to pass and Brian goes instead.

Corey then picks the next topic which is "death." Lee is beatboxing and Mike begins to rap, then stops. Brian supports, as do other members of the group and encourage him, then Corey (who is hesitant). Brian is now very involved and quite supportive. Rob starts beatboxing and others join in such as David and Evan. Harry raps and the then the group agrees that they need the beat from the boombox back. Isaac raps then David after him and then Rob, who is then prompted by Brian to do a topic. Brian himself goes and the cypher/freestyle session finishes up. One group member asks Rob if he will "really be 29" to which Rob responds that he will and the group wishes him a happy birthday. Tomas reminds the group of their homework and then reorganizes the room, the group members leave.

Oakland High School Session #6 (4/23/08)

The meeting starts with food as usual and group members come into the room. Tomas sets up the beat making in an adjacent room and lets the students know if one of them wants to make beats they are welcome to do this now. Most of the group is present in the main room and they begin practicing rapping the song together as a group---it seems quite apparent that the group is cohesive, especially when they are doing the chorus together.

A video camera is set up to film the session and after the group has finished practicing the song, the group is asked to give feedback on the song, to name its strengths and weaknesses. David gives feedback, as well as Harry and Isaac; Isaac states that he finds it useful performing the song differently and he expresses some concern about doing the song to a different beat---namely the beat that members of the group will make today. It is striking how cooperative and cohesive the group is, with all group members

attentive to each other and listening, as well as giving thoughtful feedback.

Rob says that the job of the group is done if the group members can take one thing away from it and if they have learned from the experience. Mike responds to Harry's feedback by suggesting that the group practice the hook. Brian affirms that this is a good idea, and Evan suggests that the group members not read from their pages and instead "use swagger." Tomas likes the feedback, and agrees with Evan's suggestion for "more swagger." Tomas says that they should act as if they are rapping in front of a microphone recording. Brian chimes in that the best part of the song is the chorus, since everyone came up with it.

Tomas suggests that the group record to the beat that they have been using and suddenly the group members as well as Brian (who can be heard prominently) start speaking at the same time. Tomas redirects the group and helps them to figure out how all the verses will fit together, what the song structure will be like, and where the chorus will be. The question is posed as to whether it will it be first or after the verses. The students seem to be taking turns talking and Tomas suggests that the chorus can be the intro to the song. Rob then apologizes for bringing in his outside life into the group, feeling that he has disrupted the group, and the group supports him and lets him know that he can share. One student says the group is about beats, rhymes and *life,* the student emphasizing the last part. Tomas checks the camera and Rob emphasizes learning the verse very well is important.

Tomas asks the group what the next step is in making the song. Mike suggests that when everyone is done with their verses then can try to make the beat. Brian reflects and repeats this, and states that he has been making beats. He and several other students

are done with their verses. Evan states that he also has experience making beats and Tomas says that two people should make the beat, so he has the group vote on who it should be. Brian and Evan are elected to make the beat and they go with Tomas to the other room. Rob works with the rest of the group and has them stand up to get the feeling of rapping. A subgroup forms with Rob, Harry and Kerry practicing their verses, while Mike, Isaac, and David are working on the side by themselves. The group comes back together and Rob tells Harry and Kerry about the pocket in the beat (meaning where lyrics sound best rhythmically and fit with the beat), to keep this in mind. Kerry's phone rings and he turns it off, then goes back to practicing. Mike, Isaac, and David are on the side together still. Kerry seems to rap louder now, gaining more confidence and Rob says the transition in the song from his verse to the other part is good. Rob tells Harry he needs to enunciate "all the girls want me," telling him to imagine it and Isaac stars to react and come up with ideas, building off of the feedback Rob has given.

Rob checks in with the other group and Harry seems to be rapping louder and with more confidence as well. Rob has him do his verse *a capella* and practice his parts, then has him start again. This time Rob is adlibbing behind Harry's verse to support him and when it goes to Kerry's verse and Kerry messes up, Rob has him start again. Harry gives Kerry some advice and feedback and Rob agrees with the feedback that Harry gives, as well as how he has suggested to alter the chorus. Kerry seems to have improved and is rapping with more facility; Harry is enthusiastically watching him and listening intently. Rob raps Kerry's verse to help him with it and states "you gon' get there" to Kerry. Harry gives him advice that he is putting "too many words in one line" and Rob checks in with the other group. Rob comes back and raps interactively with Harry. Then

Kerry comes back in and seems to have improved as well, although he stumbles a little. The group goes again with each student repeating their verse, practicing one after another and Harry plays off of Kerry's last verse. Rob brings David into the circle and Kerry picks up on Rob and others' energy, rapping louder, which then in turn gets David even more into the process. They briefly stop and take a break, then David raps again. Rob praises David's effective use of cursing, contrasting it with unnecessary use of cursing. David goes again and struggles to get his verse right, the group responds by supporting him and they all laugh. Rob offers some support as well and has him do it acapella. David says he was trying to make a verse like Rob's, and Rob encourages him to do his own style. The group practices the song again, one student at a time, and eventually Isaac joins them. The group members continue to rap *a capella* and do this several times more, encouraging Isaac to keep going when he struggles. The group seems to be coming together through practicing and are progressively getting better each time.

Rob gives a pep speech, really feeling the beat and has the group practice again. Rob praises the group for taking criticism and being good at that and the group hears the beat in the other room and likes it. The other group starts singing the chorus---Corey comes in late and suggests an idea for the video for the songs with the students walking around in the street. The group practices the lyrics to the beat in the other room. Mike joins the group and does his verse, then Rob asks the group for feedback for Mike and the group in turn praises him.

Rob talks about the video shoot for next time and then the group takes a short break. After the break the group comes together for the closing freestyle session activity, while the beatmaking group is still in the other room working. Harry goes first, and then

Rob asks him and the other students where in the world they would want to go if they could go anywhere. The beatmaking group comes in and Rob asks them what the process was like. Brian says his suggestion was dismissed at first, but then the group took his suggestion at the end. Brian states that it was fun and the beat is played on the stereo for the group to hear.

Harry goes to the bathroom and Tomas suggest that the group members try rapping to the beat. David raps first, rapping much louder at the end and the group sings the chorus all together. Rob stops the group for a moment, telling Harry. to give his idea to the group about the chorus. Tomas follows this by suggesting that group start on the "one" (meaning the first note). Rob and Tomas suggest that the group record the song next week and plan to post the beat on the BRL myspace site so students have access to it. The next two weeks the group will do two hour sessions and Rob suggests the group goes until five o'clock in order to practice.

Tomas begins burning C.D.'s with the beat on it to give to the students and there is a sense of excitement in the group. Brian walks to the bathroom, and Corey is now filming the group with the camera. Tomas asks the students if they thought this was what the program would be like and David says he loves it, and it is not what he thought it would be like. Rob refocuses the group and they start the song from the beginning. Evan is on the side with Tomas and Brian is as well. Kerry snaps at Evan, and Evan shakes his head. Brian responds by saying "I know you like that beat, though." Rob tells Kerry during practice run when to begin rapping. Rob encourages the students to learn their lyrics, and the group takes a break. When they return from the break the group prepares for the freestyle activity to close the session. Evan is writing on the side, and Brian starts

his rap, with Harry joining in and rapping following him. David has a headache, Harry is joking with him and hits him playfully---the group responds by laughing. Kerry begins rapping following this, then Tomas, and Rob. Rob states that BRL is family, rallying the group and stating it with enthusiasm. Isaac raps after he says this and his rapping seems to get better, as does Mike and even Corey contributes something, though minimal (he has never rapped before in this activity and is usually reserved). Harry raps following Corey and then David asks Tomas for beats to have for his demo. Brian raps about getting a text message and not listening, while Evan is still on the side writing his rap. Corey leaves early and then after a few minutes the session ends.

Oakland High School (4/30/08)

There is pizza waiting for the group that Tomas has ordered and the students eat as they enter the room. Today two professional local Hip Hop DJ's are present, DJ Haylow and Sake One, as well as a photographer named Leo who takes pictures. Rob begins the check-in and directs everyone into the circle. Tomas is filming as well with the video camera. Corey, then Mike, Evan, David, and Kerry enter the circle, followed by Brian, Sake, Leo, Haylow and Rob. Tomas says they will record the song, then shoot the video. Tomas has the guests introduce themselves, starting with Leo, then Haylow (who discusses what he does on a local Hip Hop T.V. show), then Sake who states that he is curious about how music affects the kids and helps them get better. Evan asks him if they can be on his T.V. show and Haylow says "yes," to which Evan asks "where do I sign up?" The group laughs in response.

Tomas brings up the town meeting next, and says that the state of California may take over the school and Evan responds that he heard teachers might get fired. Tomas

says that test scores haven't been high enough and asks if the students know what the drop-out rate is. Brian says 50%, another student says 60%, and Tomas says 45%. David asks if transfers are considered drop-out, and Tomas asks the students for reasons for dropouts, playing off of this question. Jeff says the K.C. (high school exit exam) exam and another student add "credits" (not having enough) and "seniors dropping out," and the "need to get a job" are also given as answers. Evan adds "teachers," and Brian said that students are getting killed, Sake adds that some students are "locked up," and Evan has said in addition to his remark about teachers being the reasons students drop out because "teachers get on your last nerve." Brian mentions truancy. Tomas asks what they see in peers that they can think of. Sake brings up pregnancy, and then the conversation moves back to the K.C., credits, and the group seems able to engage and interested at this point. Tomas asks if they wanted to improve attendance, test scores, etc., what would the students suggest?

Jeff says that the only thing holding him back is the K.C., he has all his credits, etc. but math is his weakness and even though he is trying hard, he feels like he wants to give up. Even though he doesn't, he feels this is holding people back. Corey says that the school is giving more tests every year, more than dances and there has been a decrease in dances since last year. Tomas asks if there should be more activities and the students respond yes, these make you want to go to school. Tomas asks what kind of activities would they want to see? Jeff says activities like this and Corey says it seems like the teachers want the student to fail.

Evan says teachers could do a better job, and repeat what he doesn't get, is that they are not teaching. Jeff agrees, Brian is talking on his phone, and he interrupts Tomas

while he is talking and says if he gets the call to go outside and be respectful to the group. The group seems to be angry and disappointed at this point, and perhaps less of a work group. Jeff goes on and says that a teacher of his makes sure that everyone in the class knows each other so they can seek help from each other. Tomas reflects and says "if it feels more like a community." Jeff agrees with this. This is followed by Evan stating that it is the teacher's fault, but it is also his own fault for not working hard enough. David says that his teacher is tough and he is surprised he passed. Brian says he had trouble with his teacher, too. David said he heard that the school would not let people switch out of a specific class and the teacher requested that they not be able to switch out.

Sake adds into the conversation the importance of voicing one's opinion and Haylow elaborates on this point talking about ways to go about this. Sake says the teachers are being evaluated as well. Evan says overall that the teacher they have been talking about is a good teacher, but probably it's the way she is teaching/grading and the final is weighted too much. Brian is now sleeping on the desk and Tomas uses Sake as an example for the group, pointing out that he has his Masters in Social Work even though he got kicked out of his high school.

Rob states the students need to be accountable for themselves, and he got put into lower classes when he was in school but he took action and told them he wanted to be in higher classes. Sake says in high school that students encounter all sorts of obstacles and that "high school is full of haters," and that like Tomas said they should look beyond high school. Mike begins to talk and Corey goes over to Brian (who appears to be still sleeping) and says "it's rude" and Brian gets up. Mike says he moves away from distracting peers in order to help himself focus. Jeff tells the group that he talks in class

and still gets "A's," adding that he gets his work done and the teacher is after him. He states that he pointed out to her that he does his work, and after he talked to her that she did not bother him any more, and the group laughs in response.

Haylow talks about his bad performance in high school, but that he was lucky to go to college and there he found out what he wanted to do. Sake follows up by saying that in college the students are treated like adults and they have work to do there. Rob reminds the group to "remember what we're here for, to support each other, use each other," and Haylow says that the students should help each other on the outside. Tomas then breaks the group in two, the audio and video groups. He says that they will record in 30 minutes and then Jeff talks about pizza and the other students respond. The video group is not recording today.

Rob works with the audio group and Evan with the video group, and Tomas lets the group know that Leo will be taking pictures, as well as video footage of the session today. The groups then break up and Tomas asks if the other students know where ER is. No one seems to know or remembers at first. Corey is the only group member who joins Tomas to do video. He is observing the recording sub-group which is part of the larger audio group.

The group members start to practice individually and then the group does the chorus all together. Frank is supposed to go, then he restarts and he goes, then Kerry, who messes up, and Rob decides to restart the group. The group now seems cohesive and supportive. Kerry performs his rap, then Frank comes back and is singing along. Mike now goes and he raps clear and loud, with confidence not seen before. Evan goes and Rob tells the group they are still sounding like they're reading from their papers and tells

them to "come with fire," like on the chorus. He tells them that they have really good verses and the group starts again, this time much louder on the chorus. Kerry is now notably louder, and when he stumbles Rob gets very excited and supports him, encouraging them to start over with Frank rapping, then Kerry goes again and has improved again, moving onto David for his verse, but then they have to stop and restart at him. The group supports and does "Fuck that shit!" very loud on David's part with him, showing the group has united its energy and is throwing its support behind its members.

David then goes to the other room with Corey and Brian who are working with Sake and Haylow talking about the DVD, potential content, and they are particularly involved in talking about the "bloopers" section. Evan comes in and asks Brian if they are ready to go and Brian says for next week, then telling them about the bloopers section in the film and that he wants to film them recording.

The group then unites altogether "practicing" with Corey filming and Leo taking photos. Tomas asks to do his verse and then after this he has the group break. During the break some kids are just hanging out talking. In the other room Kerry is recording and is cheered on by the group at the end of his verse. Brian is imitating him and someone responds to him by teasing him playfully in return. Corey is filming the recording process, and David begins to rap his verse while recording it. Evan picks up a phone call walks out of the room, then Brian leaves as well. Rob stops the recording process for a minute to remind the students to do the chorus in addition to their verse. Rob then tells David to focus on his flow, not the volume, and Rob and Tomas congratulate him. Now it is Mike's turn to record and Rob leaves, while Brian enters. Leo, who is photographing the recording process, asks who made the beat. Brian says he did, and then he and Corey

corrects his statement crediting Evan as well. Brian talks about the melodic flute part in the beat which he helped to make, and Leo takes off.

There is now confusion about who should record next since George is not present and Tomas directs Brian to go. Tomas tells him his verse is good, but he needs to practice, and tells him to do it next week, but they will get him on the chorus now. Brian checks the mic, Rob says he shouldn't do the whole chorus and David corrects Brian when he messes it up, telling him the correct lyrics now for the second time as the group had already corrected Brian once before. Brian now does his verse correctly and Evan says "cool," and smiles. Tomas responds by saying "great" after it is recorded and then Evan begins to record and Brian leaves the room. Evan stops midway, runs out of breath, stumbles, and Rob gives him an example of how to do it so this won't happen. He explains that he needs "energy" in his verse, and Evan responds by saying "ooo," trying again. Tomas asks if he wants to do it in two chunks because he stumbled again and Evan says "yes" he would like to redo his verse.

There is some confusion first about redoing it or not, and the group gives him the suggestion as to how, and supports him. Tomas advises him to enjoy it and Rob comes over and shows him, offering more support. Evan gets frustrated, he re-records, then Tomas laughs and supports Evan some more. Evan says "I mumbled" and David says "ya you did." Evan goes again (Kerry, Harry, Rob and David are present and the special education teacher has entered the room at this point) and Tomas supports him, telling him not to worry. Tomas has him finish and offers him more encouragement. The group claps for him, followed by Rob calling to the main room and asking if they want to hear the song. Everyone comes into the recording area and listens attentively. Tomas has

David do his dubs and the special education teacher leaves. David is stopped while recording because he is yelling and the group laughs and jokes about this.

Tomas has everyone come back in and checks who has their permission slips to leave the campus for the video shoot. They are working on artist bios he tells them, that Corey is putting together and Tomas sees if anyone wants to do a freestyle session. No one says "yes" except Haylow. Brian and Mike leave. Rob, Haylow, Evan, and Harry are into the freestyle session and even get Leo to do it. The group claps for it members and supports them, as different members rap and meanwhile Corey is doing the storyboard for the video on the side.

Oakland High School (5/6/08)

The group is outside the normal classroom in order to shoot the music video. Harry and Kerry are practicing their verses, and Tomas has them restart and do it louder. The group listens and watches attentively, and seems to be very excited about shooting the video. The group is being filmed by Corey and meanwhile some students are chattering. Mike says to David about the scene that is being filmed "they shook hands like three times." Tomas gets a shot of Harry looking off into the distance and the group/others laugh a little. The group wanted me to be a teacher, however I stated that I had to observe.

Tomas is trying to get the group, especially Harry and Kerry, to decide where to shoot and Tomas suggests that Harry and Kerry go along with the decision of the group. The group is deciding and also laughing in the process of making this decision. There is a notable buzz of energy and excitement, but also a sense that the group knows and understands its task and can follow the leaders (mainly Tomas). Tomas gets individual

shots of Harry, then Kerry and Corey leaves for a minute. Tomas takes over and films Mike as well as David, then Corey comes back and Tomas gets them altogether as a group to film. He brings Brian out for this and Brian says he'll "pretend to be sleeping." Tomas encourages the group and they respond to him, becoming more enthusiastic and cooperative. He suggests they sing the chorus, which they do.

The group has become even more cohesive and they laugh when David starts to rap. Tomas recognizes this and encourages them to support David. He brings them inside and suggests another idea for shooting. David messes up, and he and the group laugh---it is apparent that there is even more cohesion and the group is in work mode. Mike and David go back and forth lip synching their part. The group cracks up. David is doing his part, then Mike goes, the group is helping behind them, backing them up and all the members seem engaged.

Tomas gives Brian instructions to "bust through" the group of others for his part of the video and song. The others are helping Brian and making suggestions for how he should do it. Brian thinks he messed up and Tomas supports and encourages, and Brian responds to this, performing even better. Tomas compliments the group on their dancing and supporting each other. When the group goes out side they run into a group member who has been at football and not able to attend the group as of late. The group is now back to making the video and is on track with Harry rapping, and Rob and Tomas giving them good feedback, stating "great job!"

For the next scene the group goes outside and scouts a location, deciding on the top of the wall by the football field. Now Mike is in front of the Wildcats emblem and then Kerry and Corey are as well, being shot. The group becomes very playful, they are

in front of the fieldgoals, joking, messing a round. Tomas goes to the studio and Rob stays with the group, now shooting David's part. Rob suggests that Mike can get on the basketball hoop, but Mike decides he does not want to do this. The group returns to the room and Tomas gives out forms on which he has them put down their contact, phone number, M.C. name/moniker, etc. He reminds them that next time they will do the chorus as a group because Evan was not present today. One group member asks about the DVD, and Tomas says it will be ready at the premier of the album/video.

The group circles up for the freestyle session, Brian has gone to the bathroom, he then comes back and Rob starts the beats to rap over. Mike and David are not standing up while the rest of the group members are. David is sitting down filling out his form. Harry starts the freestyle, and most of the group members are in the circle. Mike stands up and joins the circle. All of the group is participating and even Corey raps (he has never participated/rapped before) with Tomas and the group encouraging him as he does it, giving him positive feedback. Brian raps more than he has before as well and he is supported by Tomas. He continues and gives Tomas as well as the rest of people present a hand slap. Going around the circle again, everyone in the group raps, including Corey again and Tomas gives the song on C.D. to all the group members, who seem very excited about it.

Oakland High School (5/7/08)

The group (consisting of David, Harry, Corey, Kerry and Brian) is meeting early today to shoot the music video, however they are waiting to have the door unlocked to the room in which they normally meet. Tomas explains in the hallway the music video and DVD menu, as well as that he plans to do individual interviews with each of the

students. Tomas gives the students a breakdown of what to do. The group seems attentive and interested. They have to wait some more in the hallway outside of the room in which they normally meet. A few of them are on their phones, and Tomas lets the students eat and make their sandwiches. Rob and Mike arrive, and Mike lets Tomas know that Evan is not coming. There is some grumbling over the food among the students. Tomas talks to Rob, and Kerry, Harry, Brian and David are eating together and talking, with Mike on the side. Tomas goes to find out about getting the door open and Harry jokes that he should bring water back as well.

They get the key to the room and the group gets in---they spend a few minutes setting up, then Tomas writes on the board and says "let's get started!" Brian comes back in when he hears this, and Tomas tries to get the group going for check-in. The group moves into a circle and Tomas asks about ER and where he is. Brian goes outside to grab a yoga matt, and Corey asks how to start, stating that he is feeling depressed. Tomas inquires about this and Corey says he is upset about everything.

David then does his check-in and then Mike states that he is okay. Harry says that he is full, and said that yesterday he found out he didn't pass the K.C. He says that he talked to his dad, who told him not to give up and Brian pipes in. Harry says he can get his diploma elsewhere. Kerry says that he is feeling goofy, and the group laughs and makes noises.

Tomas says that he is feeling a lot of things, he is excited, a little stressed, but he expresses hope and that he is not ready for it to be the last session. Brian asks if it has to be the last session, and Tomas says that "formally, yes" but he will be back. Brian says about himself that he is "cool" but Brian does not present this way. Tomas says "is it?"

and Corey then states that it is "depressing." Rob inquires about this, and Corey says since the beginning of High School it's been like this. Rob offers that Corey can talk about it if he wants and Rob says states about himself that he is "all over the place" but he is trying to be present. Tomas asks Rob how he feels about the ending of the group and Rob says how the group members and Rob feel about termination (sad, upset, "all over the place" etc.) shows that it is a good group, he is not sad about it because he knows it's not the end. Tomas looks at Corey, and Corey says that it did feel like it went by fast. Tomas asks if it feels like that for the others, but no other group members respond. The group appears to be sad about ending.

Tomas states that he has been doing groups for four years, and that this final project is by far one of the most ambitious. Tomas names all the things that have happened and tells the group about the BRL showcase that will happen in a few weeks and the premiere of their video at this event. He also mentions that Berkeley High School will have their C.D. release at this event and that the students should invite their friends and family. David says he's going to "put it in my phone right now." Mike is on the phone, while the other members seem engaged, and Brian suggests that at the showcase they have a purple carpet.

Tomas asks for people to show their hands for which students think their family would be interested and Tomas asks for ideas/feedback on the event. No other group members have any suggestions. Tomas asks the group for their ideas about naming the song and DVD, and Harry responds, saying he thought it was going to be called "my life." Tomas draws a diagram of the DVD menu, and Brian suggests that they do a group picture on the back of the DVD. Tomas says everyone has to come for the group picture,

so all the group members should make sure to come (Tomas tells someone to tell ER, who is not present). Kerry then leaves to take a phone call, and David and Harry are joking, there seems to be some pairing and the group seems a little fragmented. Kerry then returns, and Tomas begins to give structure to the DVD. He says that the film will include bios and Corey suggests credits in it as well. Tomas instructs students to write down the ideas for their scenes.

The group wants a longer session since Tomas says they have limited time. Tomas plays the song with vocals on it for the students and Brian has run outside at this point. He comes back in looking for a rubber band. The group reacts when they hear that a curse word has been removed from the song. David says that it takes away the feeling and Rob points out that they can use the video to do this instead, the visual will communicate what was said originally. Tomas is outside now with Brian shooting the video and the group is inside, focused on brainstorming for the video and in a work group mode.

Rob asks the group if they have heard about the cyclone in Myanmar and the group briefly talks about this. The group now has all members present in the circle in the classroom and they are writing ideas. After 10-15 minutes Rob and Tomas propose an idea of how to end the video. They suggest that the group can be doing the song *a capella* at the conclusion of the video and then the group starts doing this, chanting together, Tomas stops the beat so it is just the group, who seem very into it. Harry goes and he says his ideas of the video. Rob suggests they can do all indoor shots one at a time. Harry states his idea and Tomas helps him to refine it. Tomas then asks if anyone else has ideas for the beginning of the video and Corey gives a specific idea of how the

video goes. The group seems to like his idea. Tomas suggests the group go outside and shoot it, with one member staying behind. Brian volunteers, Tomas takes the group to the stairs and suggests that Harry talk about KC on the stairs and Harry and Kerry are also on the stairs next to him.

Oakland High School (Final Session) 5/14/08

Leo is present, and Tomas starts the group with check-in and asks the students, "How do you feel about the program ending and how are you doing today?" David wants the program to keep going, and says his week is pretty cool. He forgot his permission slip. Kerry wants BRL to keep going as well. Harry feels good about it and also wishes that it would keep going. He says that he will go back to the program for the summer. Mike says that time is short, and Corey "can't feel anything." A member of the group suggests that they are cooperating as a group now, the members will see each other after the end of this program, and their friendship won't end. Leo compliments the students. Rob says the group bonded well and that it is "not over." Tomas says this has been an exciting time and a sad time. He notes that things have been very chaotic. Brian is mad that the program has ended, then someone makes a joke and the group laughs. Brian tells the group that his girl gave him his phone back. Evan is about to go and then someone knocks on the door. Evan says that his day has been cool and it may be the last day for the program "but beginning of beats, rhymes and life" and music production.

The students complete the surveys that they are given at the end and David is joking about his the part that asks for I.D./ethnicity. They joke some at the end when they are finishing up and then I debrief them on the purpose of the study, etc. They then go on to do the photo shoot with Leo for about 30 minutes. I then, prompted by Rob and

the students, played some beats for the students. The students then complete the student evaluation of the program---the group is quiet while this is happening. Mike leaves early, then Brian leaves, and after this the group is done filling out the surveys.

Tomas has the group come in closer and does a feedback session with the video camera. There is now only David, Corey, Harry, Evan, and Kerry present. Harry begins and states that he and the other group members came in not knowing each other except for his friends. He saw the group working together and the program has been a "good thing." It allowed him to write about different things and if other students and peers could see how the group was capable of doing the things that they did, that other students would realize that they were capable of this as well. David then states that he likes how everyone knew what they had to do and that feedback was incorporated into the program. He also states that the program was effective in getting people together and that it had "no flaws." If it did, he says, it would be the students' fault because Tomas and the other leaders provided what was needed. Evan says the only problem was that the program was too short and it should have been longer. He notes that the group never argued and instead they helped each other, noting that they formed "a bond." Corey says that if he could change the program, that people would have to work together as a group and not as individuals. Kerry says that people came to the show and that group members got along well. Harry adds that the goal for the group in the future should be to produce at least two songs.

Tomas asks the group if the intervention was what they thought it would be. David says that he thought there would not be laughs and they would be more time pressured. He also thought the group would be more strict, but he thinks the group "was

strict enough." Rob says he thought the group was a challenge, but he is impressed. Corey points out that they forgot Evan's part on the video for the song the group has made, and Tomas says for the video they will use photos of Evan for his part. The group begins to talk about how they got involved in the program and first joined the group. Evan says that he was not going to come to the last session and Corey told him to come. David said he was not going to come either but he did. Harry found out from David, and Harry said he was in for five minutes "and it was over." He notes that he has been made a better writer by limiting his use of "cuss words."

Tomas has each person "appreciated" where every member of the group states what they appreciate about that person. David volunteers to start, and begins with Corey, stating that he liked how Corey brought "spunk" and ideas that no one else would have brought to the group. David then states that Harry improved in his writing and brought a special energy. David says that he liked Evan's storytelling and that Kerry "stepped it up" and that he "didn't mess around." David says that he liked Tomas' flow, Rob's big words (group agrees and laughs), and also how Rob put the group "in check," at times as well as figured out how to use different words to describe things.

Corey begins his appreciations and seems to get stuck on Tomas. David supports and helps him, which enables Corey to move on. Corey points out that Rob brings compassion to the group as well. Harry recognizes David's improvement in working with others and being patient, as well as the fact that Corey is a producer and should keep on doing this. Harry appreciates that David speaks his mind and has great stories, and that Kerry stepped up a lot in the group and when it was time to do it, he did it. He appreciated the combination of Tomas and Rob, noting that Tomas is a "chameleon" and

Rob is a "dictionary." Harry also mentions me, appreciating the note-taking and writing that I did while observing the group. He says that Brian was too shy and nervous at first, that he probably "thought we were better than him, but he let the beast out and could grow."

Evan gives his appreciations, stating that David "brings it to the table," and he appreciated him for doing things aside from just rapping. Evan also appreciates Harry for stepping up to the plate, even when one of Harry's teachers from outside the group was unfair to him. Evan adds that he appreciated Kerry for his humor, and Kerry thanks Tomas, "big ups" (respectfully acknowledges) me, and said that he wanted to emulate Rob and "step up." Kerry thanks David for helping him find his voice, noting that David told him he would find his voice. Kerry also thanks Corey, notes that Harry stepped up his game, Evan gives Kerry a hand-shake. Kerry thanks Tomas, adding, "you a nice man and a good person and he tells Rob he is "a cool cat" and "big." Tomas and Rob do their appreciations and the group concludes.

Berkeley High School observations

Berkeley High School, first session (3/6/08)

At the beginning of the group Tomas is trying to get students off the computer and to "gather up." The facilitators welcome back two of the students who haven't been to the group for a while and informs the students who weren't present in the last meeting about what has happened. They check in about missing members, then have the regular check-in where the students state how they are doing and how their week was, as well as if anything notable happened to them. When Tomas starts the check-in one student is still listening to beats on his Ipod. Tomas grabs a tissue for a kid who is sniffing and

needs it, and Rob takes over leading the check-in. He has to press one student to talk. The student with the Ipod has one earphone out, and when it is his turn to check-in he turns his music off. The group seems to be in a basic assumption mode, just as much as the beginning as when students were having trouble gathering up. Another student is not listening to the student with the headphones and Tomas redirects the check-in to him, asks him what is going on. Rob and Tomas talk a bit, and the student with the headphones turns his beats back on. It is currently another student's turn to check-in and he seems hesitant to participate---Tomas teases him and makes a joke, this seems to loosen up the group and brings them together for a short period of time.

Tomas introduces me and then the group goes into rapping their verses that they've done for songs that are in progress. They are building a song and practice it, with the intent of recording it. However, the student with the Ipod and headphones puts them back in his ear and there is a side conversation while the first student starts to rap his part. Two students leave the room and following Tomas' suggestion about how to change the song (take out the word "hoes" in students' lyrics) the group seems to fall apart. Rob emphasizes that students should be putting "feeling" into it. One student proposes a chorus to the song the group is working on and the group accepts it. Rob encourages another student to contribute their idea, then adds his own idea to it as well. However, after making his suggestion, Rob pulls back and states to the group "this is your song" in order to encourage them to participate and this seems to bring the group back together.

Tomas has the group stand up---most of the students do, some remain seated who don't have their parts written and they are working on their verse. The group now seems focused on the task, and are actively working on the chorus. Rob and Tomas switch their

attention to one of the students who is trying to write his verse. Tomas in particular is helping him, standing next to him and trying to help him reword his verse. There seems to be some struggle/resistance on the part of the student and Tomas is trying to help him revise the verse into something more positive, which the student is able to do. Rob meanwhile tells a student in a joking way that he should change the chorus of the song since it doesn't rhyme---both Tomas and Rob seem to be keeping the students on task at this point and the students are responding well to the interventions.

The students practice their raps and after a little while Tomas brings the group back together, redirecting them and the group seems to switch to a more chaotic mode, possibly fight/flight. One student is asked to do his rap but seems confused and doesn't know when to start rapping, however the group becomes supportive of him and he is encouraged. When Rob tries to convince this student again to change the word that doesn't rhyme, this student resists and he and Rob debate this. The student who handles the making of the beats splits off to record his verse, pairing up with another student and the group seems to switch into a pairing, then a fight/flight and scapegoating mode, struggling amongst themselves.

When the students are asked to practice and record their verses the group seems to come back together. Some other students are now recording while others are writing and seem mostly on task despite some fragmentation of the group and some pairing, with pairs or small subgroups sitting together and talking as well as writing. The group reconvenes again and is now focused on making a chorus for the song, which unites the group and the students in the group want Rob and Tomas to rap on the song with them.

Several times over the course of the session there appears to be pairing and

mumbling/side conversations among students. At one point when a side conversation is happening during a group discussion, Rob comments on this. A student who had been outside the group re-enters the room at the same time. The group then reconstitutes itself and there is an interruption by an announcement from the loudspeaker in the room. Tomas comments on the interruption and the group stays together and on task. Rob then follows this up with some positive feedback, praising the students and their work. The group is able to achieve its task as it writes the chorus for the song and the group seems to brim with excitement.

Meanwhile, Tomas has given money to a student to get drinks for the group and after 10 or 15 minutes this student returns. The group seems to become a bit anxious and Rob makes a joke, to which the group responds with laughter and maintains itself. The song for which they have written the chorus is then played and everyone is listening intently and is focused. The group laughs when they hear someone rap and Tomas makes jokes which seems to aid in the group staying together and diffusing anxiety. Tomas and Rob stop the group now, as they have gone over the ending time, and the group concludes.

Berkeley High School (4/10/08)

To start, the group listens to songs that have already been recorded. The group seems relaxed and ready, and they are able to listen. Rob is facilitating, asking what the students think. The members are giving feedback, stating that they think the chorus needs more work and they seem able to listen and give feedback, taking turns. Rob then asks the students what the chorus is, and none can recite it which leads to an awkward moment.

The students are then asked to recite their verses, and they seem embarrassed since they do not know them by heart. Meanwhile, other students are making jokes and this seems to comfort a particular student who has been asked to recite his verse. Tomas then encourages the student to rap it and Peter starts rapping, however, not loud enough for others to hear. Rob starts the beat over, and one student who has been asked to recite his verse states that he is sick, and then after awhile does his verse anyway. The next student goes, and as Z is trying to give feedback the group seems to fall apart since other members are not listening and Tomas steps in to redirect them. Z gives his feedback again, which is positive, namely that the student has a good chorus and rhythm. Tomas asks the group if they want to record, then tells them to be prepared for next week. Oliver states that he has another song prepared, but that it is not completed.

There is more joking and teasing from Rob and Tomas directed towards the group members in response to lack of preparation. The next beat is played and Nate is rapping on this one with the group listening to him. The group is focused. A student gives him feedback that his verse is "very clean," he liked it and both the beat and vocals are good. The next student said he liked it, too, but there is a space in the song which needed a couple words. Tomas tells the students that if they can make it radio friendly and appeal to a broader audience that this may offer them more opportunities and encourages them to write outside of class.

A few of the students play a song for the group that they did with their friends and the group focuses on it, listening intently. Several students give positive feedback on the tracks and when someone asks "which one?" the group bursts into laughter. Tomas gives his feedback that it needs to be louder and references Pat who is "too quiet" which leads

the group to respond in unison by saying "Ohhhhh," indicating that Tomas has "dissed" him, however Tomas responds to this by stating that this is "honest, real feedback" and indicates that he is not trying to insult him.

Nate gives his disc with his beats to be played and he raps over it. Tomas responds by telling him that he had nice beat selection, and asks him what he wants to do with it. Nate plays another beat and another student states that he doesn't like it. Nate raps again and the group likes this, responding with approval. Nate continues to rap and someone farts, the group laughs, but Nate continues. Pat gives positive feedback, as does Tomas. The group seems to be focused on its task of making music at this point. Tomas suggests that group members pair up and work with each to help support other students to write their verses.

Nate announces that he got into a local college and is going there, and the group and the leaders are excited for him. There is talk about the album/final project and the students inquire about the schedule, which is followed by Tomas and Rob pointing out to the other students that they did not come prepared. Nate and Pat protest, Nate stating that he did, and Rob responds "the whole song, not the verse" and Tomas asks what the students want to do, stating that it is "your time." Oliver states that he has his verse.

Tomas then sets up the computer for a couple of students and the other students come together and look at the lyrics and listen to beats. The students at the computer talk to Tomas about transferring files. Nate and another student listen to beats together on the computer and Rob has joined them. Pat and Oliver are playing with each other and joking around, waiting for Tomas and reading lyrics. Tomas tells them to clean their stuff up, they are bickering a little bit. Pat says "Sorry there's a little group problem,"

and Tomas says "okay," then brings them into the circle where he is facilitating, and tells Oliver he needs to communicate with Pat and others, and that Oliver needs to clarify what he is saying. Some students are talking while others are giving each other feedback on their verses and in the middle of this Pat answers his phone. It is clear the group is rather fragmented and off task despite trying to accomplish its work. Pat wants to "edit as he goes" when he is given feedback, and Tomas helps him to edit.

One student leaves at 4:30pm and says goodbye to the other students. Tomas approaches Oliver, who seems to be resistant to the task of the group, and tries to help him, praising him and the other student and telling him that he has to be a leader even if he gets frustrated. Oliver says that he is frustrated that he can't curse and seems particularly stuck on this point, contrary to what Tomas has told him. Pat makes a joke. Oliver has demonstrated provocative behavior through his intonation, body language, and resistance to the task. Tomas presents writing without cursing as a "challenge." Tomas is also trying to encourage Oliver's partner Alex to help him, and tells him that he is a producer, to which Alex responds that he didn't make the beat. Tomas tells him that he can still be project manager. Oliver then starts to give feedback to others, including Pat. The group is reassembled to go over lyrics during which process Oliver is trying to replace curse words. As the group composes and practices the chorus it seems to come together more. When a problem arises because a student forgot his copy of the chorus lyrics, Tomas suggests a solution and Pat instead volunteers to use his pad. Tomas recognizes the solution, and the group has now become more functional. Tomas encourages the group and congratulates them, he recognizes that they are doing a good job and asks one student who is just visiting the group if he wants to be part of the

program.

The students begin to write more and one of them observes that Pat, who is looking at his phone, seems distracted from the task. Pat says "don't worry about that" and makes a joke, the group seems back on track and Tomas says he hopes they will be able to get to another song next time. The new student is rapping louder and seems more confident, and the group seems to have taken him in.

Pat is now recording and Oliver makes a joke while he is doing this, Tomas tells Oliver to encourage Pat and lets him know it makes people self-conscious when he jokes while they are rapping. Pat is still having trouble recording his entire verse all the way through, and Tomas suggests Oliver go and record and Pat goes after him. Oliver says he sees why it is difficult for Pat, and Pat tries twice again to record. The group laughs, Tomas supports him saying "you'll get through it" and Pat then records and gets through his entire verse, with the group applauding for him. Pat tries again, messes up twice, then goes back at it again with a good attitude and Tomas is pushing him gently, trying to help. Pat does it and Oliver and the others in the group approve---Tomas congratulates him and Oliver observes that he (Oliver) wrote it, which is perhaps why it was so hard. The new student is recording and says "homeys!" loudly, which leads Tomas and the other kids to playfully tease him. Pat jokingly tells Oliver to shut up. The new student has to stop recording since the time is up and Tomas again encourages the group, giving them praise and constructive feedback. Pat states "we ain't got no slackers in this group!"

The group transitions into a circle in order to do the freestyle rap cypher. Tomas tells the group to stand up, which they do and the group now seems more on task and

cohesive as the members are getting into the activity. Tomas supports a student who is struggling to keep rapping and who "falls off." The group members are now picking topics for each other to rap about, however it seems that they are getting back at each other for receiving difficult topics, by assigning each other hard topics in return. Tomas keeps the activity going when Nate falls off in his rap. Pat does a good freestyle and the group enjoys and laughs, then they go *a capella* and this becomes quite funny, ending on a positive and cohesive note, introducing the new member at the end.

Berkeley High School (4/24/08)

At the beginning of the session there are only a few students, including one female student. Peter is playing his beats and Oliver is being negatively critical of them. Tomas tells Oliver to give constructive feedback, and jokes with him about having time to improve because he is a sophomore. Oliver, Pat and Peter are going to present so the group circles the chairs up. Tomas starts the check-in. Meanwhile, Leo (an adult volunteer photographer) is present and has begun taking pictures. Jeremy starts the check-in and reports that he has been suspended for five days because he got into a fight. He relates how it happened, and then states that he is glad he found his rhyme book.

The female student, Michelle, who had been present at the very beginning of the year, said she was willing to do the C.D. cover during her check-in. Oliver also checks in and states that he was not at school this week and had nothing going on. Rob tells the group he is going to Thailand, and then bops Oliver on the leg to get him to focus and get his attention, since Oliver has fallen off task and is not paying attention and instead is being distracting. Tomas reports that he is good and that he is feeling happy. Peter says that he has been sick for four weeks now, talks about his math class and a test of some

sort, and then Oliver asks him what he'll do this weekend. Peter says that his mom took his money. Nate reports that he has A.P. practice credits/course and he has finals coming up. Peter comments that he finds it easier to study by himself, and then the group moves to talking about what they are going to do today, focusing particularly on the songs. Oliver says that today seems different--both the day itself as well as the group. Pat suggests that this could be because the group got smaller. Tomas adds that the classroom and chair layout is different, and that Jeremy and Michelle are present whereas they normally do not attend.

Tomas asks if anyone has ideas for the album cover which leads to a discussion about a name for the album/mixtape. Michelle suggests a name that has something to do with Berkeley High, or possibly taking peoples' artists names. Oliver and Peter then present their song and perform their lyrics which is about being at a club and seducing girls. Peter is rapping softly and Rob makes a joke about him whispering in a girl's ear. He encourages him to perform it as if he were recording. Rick enters the room shortly after this (45 minutes late) and Peter is in the middle of doing his lyrics. Oliver expresses concern about the sequencing of the track, and then raps his verse that he has for their song and Tomas approves of it saying it is "heat." He asks if they think it fits and do they like it. Michelle asks Rick where he has been and meanwhile Oliver and Peter are talking about the beat. Oliver is still worried about the formatting, and then he prepares to record. Rob is talking with Rick about getting suspended and not going to prom. Oliver has begun recording and the group has laughed at him in response to the way he is rapping, changing his voice. Michelle tells him that he should use his normal voice, and R chimes in saying that she has "put him on blast" (meaning she has put the spotlight on

him and drawn attention to, thus potentially embarrassing Oliver). Oliver states that he now feels "on the other side of the encouragement thing" (meaning he does not feel encouraged, referencing what the facilitators have been telling him about encouraging other members). Peter begins to practice his verse and Oliver is now writing by himself, Rob gets Pat to rap his verse. Peter is now recording his verse and Rob has Adrian rap his verse, as different group members are writing or reading their verses. P asks Rob if he ever lost his rhymebook, and Rob responds that he has. P tells him how happy he was to find his lost rhymebook, followed by Pat rapping his verse again. Rob then raps his, as they are all practicing together. For the moment the group appears to be in the work group mode.

Oliver is currently recording and he tells Peter to "shut up," to which Tomas responds by telling Peter to give Oliver encouragement instead of what he is currently doing. Rob then tells Oliver that his lyrics will be stuck in his head. Oliver raps his verse then gives up and gets upset. Rob tells him he's putting unnecessary pressure on himself, and Oliver chooses to switch with Peter letting Peter record now. Tomas tells them that other students need to record and Oliver wants to hear what he has done. Oliver and Peter are about to leave, but before they do, they have P listen to their voices. Peter and Oliver begin to argue about "doing it right," and seem to be upset about their track and end up leaving. Michelle is about to leave as well, and Tomas asks her if she wants to record and stay five or ten minutes. He also asks her about the album cover. At this point Pat goes outside, and at this point P is recording. Michelle sticks around a little longer and P is still recording at this point. Michelle leaves after P finishes recording his verse. Rob is joking around with Pat. P goes over and talks with Adrian after recording,

and Rob approaches them and says he (Rob) will do a freestyle, but then he goes outside. Pat gets ready to record and Rob comes back. P and Adrian are still writing and listening to music. P and Adrian leave and now just Tomas, Rob, the photographer Leo, and Pat who remain. They listen to a song and then end the session.

Berkeley High School (Final Session)

The students are eating and not all the members are present. Howard, Oliver, Peter, Pat, P and Andrew are present. Tomas asks how Hip Hop has changed and if the students have noticed. The students say that it has and they use Lil Wayne as an example. P says that it is more complex. Tomas gets Peter to come into the circle and Tomas summarizes the survey that is going to be administered, as well as telling the students about the upcoming BRL showcase event, the certificates that will be presented to them, and other matters. The group seems a little distracted and possibly in pairing mode, but overall is generally focused. Oliver asks about if Tomas gets paid and does this for a living, Tomas explains to him the situation. Adrian arrives late and Rob is not present---he has gone to New York this week. I administer the survey for the post-test.

Adrian asks where Rob is and the students finish up the surveys. The group gives feedback on the survey, including that "games" and "recess" do not apply, and I debrief them on the study. During this time P cracks his nose with his hand on purpose (not injuring himself, as if he had cracked his knuckle). The group then does a second set of surveys, on which they seem to be able to better focus. Peter picks up his phone twice during this time, and Tomas also turns on music during this time. Oliver asks Tomas how he got into rapping and Tomas tells the group about his friend Khalil with whom he used to rap. Tomas says that he messes up all the time when he raps and Howard says

he's really good. Then the group asks him if he smoked weed to freestyle better, since Nick says he needed it. Tomas says he had a friend he still wanted to "get open" (really let go and get in the zone so as get some excited or do something really well) when he was not high, and Tomas tells the group that he can "get loose anytime."

The group seems related to Tomas and to be open. They discuss Lupe Fiasco, (a rapper), and Larry is still working on the survey. Tomas asks how this program has helped and Nick says he is more confident freestyling, with which Adrian agrees. Andrew says Tomas taught the difference between underground and commercial, as well as helping students with their patience. Larry said he understood Hip Hop better, and it made him look at the world differently. Adrian says he understands more styles and Nick says he understands the lyrics better, citing Lupe's lyrics as an example.

The group decides that they liked the freestyle session and recording, and Pat states that he enjoyed the discussions. Tomas asks what he liked about it, and Oliver says the experience he gained in the cypher. He notes that it's different having cyphers with his friends. Andrew goes outside for a minute to use his phone. Tomas asks how the group feels about the recording and Oliver responds that here he gets more feedback. Tomas reminds them not to cut each other off or interrupt since some members have begun to do this. Adrian says he learned to give better feedback.

When asked for the least interesting parts of the group, Oliver says reading articles and check-in is "lame" because everyone says the same thing. Andrew says he didn't like the freestyle session. The group also does not like the reading activity. Larry suggests that the leaders choose more interesting topics for the reading activity. When Tomas asks for how BRL sessions could improve, Andrew suggests that they be given

buffalo wings and says that at Oakland High they eat sandwiches. The group cracks up and laughs. Oliver says the group should have more equipment for all the students to use at the same time. Andrew suggests it would be better if they met more than once a week. The group members also suggest having a separate recording room, and Pat says they could have made more songs based on their discussions. Andrew adds that they should bring studio equipment every time and that he would like to have field trips.

Tomas asks if they'd do it again and the group says "yes." He then asks them what skills they have learned. Andrew says he learned to be open minded to new subjects, conversation and ideas. Larry says learning to freestyle. Nick says the topics are better and Oliver says make more important, like having assignments. Pat said he learned to challenge himself, and Adrian put more thought into his songs. Nick goes outside for a minute during this discussion. Pat begins to talk and Oliver is talking over him. Oliver complains about not being able to curse, whereas Andrew states that he likes that---it made him think outside the box. The group then moves on to listening to the album and Tomas shows them the artwork. Oliver states that he "likes talking shit." The group is now listening to songs, and Oliver is listening to music and writing lyrics while the rest of the group focuses on their songs that are playing. Tomas asks what they think about performing and the group seems to come together briefly at this point.

Oliver and Tomas are talking and Oliver is "confused" as the group starts its final freestyle session. Oliver is defiant when talking with Tomas, who is trying to get through to him and confront him about his behavior and what is going on. There seems to be a lot of anxiety, and Oliver is rolling his eyes, refusing to stand up with the rest of the group. Larry didn't stand up for part of this activity as well. The group seems to fall apart and

the rapping content appears to regress to mainly misogynistic material. Oliver refuses to give his contact info on a sheet that Tomas is passing out.