

Appreciate hip hop (global youth culture) as an asset, not a liability

During a break at the 2010 Black Expo Education Conference, Indy community leader Kamau Jywanza and B&LPI's John Loflin discussed the idea of expanding the idea of cultural competency.

Though both grew up a part of the Civil Rights generation, they were aware of youth culture, in particular the “hip hop” generation. John knew youth culture as a global reality. His travels to Europe, South America, Asia, the Middle East, and Australia brought him in contact with this “global youth culture” which of course essentially roots itself in the experiences of Black American youth.

This spurred Kamau's insight:

If our public schools must have culturally competent teachers, curriculum, and pedagogy, then along with African/African American, Latino, working-class white cultures, global youth culture (aka hip hop) must become one of the cultures taken into account in the school and classroom.

- [Cultural Competency and global youth culture](#)

“Hip hop [is] a ‘Critical Cultural Movement’ due to its historic and continued orientations towards healing broken families and supporting cultural and spiritual connectedness; resisting and critiquing peoples, spaces, and systems that promote fragmentation and divisiveness; and fighting (literally) for a peaceful, restorative, and humanizing existence--a movement towards self-actualization.”

~ Thurman Bridges, 2011 *Journal of Negro Education*

“Some Indy community leaders are critical of youth and others who see being Black as speaking slang, and having braided hair, sagging pants, and skewed hats. They say that blackness is knowing Black history and appreciating African values, not dressing like a hoodlum. Right or wrong, this disconnects followers of global hip hop culture from participation in shared community decision-making.

~ Jose Evans 2005 *Indy Star* “[Hip hop defines Black urban youth](#)”

“While progressive hip-hop culture functions as the voice of resistance for America's black youth, it also provides a blueprint for the possibilities of positive social change for the entire society—helping America live up to its promise of liberty and justice for all.” ~Dr. Shawn Ginwright, *Black in School*

Proposed Action Item

AACI will start an effort to form a collaboration with the local hip hop community (music, art, dance, film, poetry, food, fashion, politics, pedagogy) by connecting with Indy's [The Build](#) collective and the [Kheprw Institute](#). The AACI needs a dialogue on how to give an on-going hip hop perspective to the evolving Black Agenda for Black Indianapolis.

“The real lives of those that are affected by injustice, lawlessness, and corruption created (and continue to create) hip hop as a way out of oppression.” ~ KRS-ONE, *Ruminations*, 2003

“Rather than focusing on how to change black youth and their culture, we need strategies that use the innovative and creative energy of Black youth as a platform to build a strong socio-political awareness in our classrooms and communities.” ~ Dr. Shawn Ginwright, *Black in School*

These AACI efforts would

- tap into the oppositional culture of hip hop, validating its innovative and creative energy
- challenge scholars to research and analyze, and teachers to appreciate global youth culture as a culture they must regard if they are to be culturally competent.
 - [Hip Hop-Based Education: Early childhood and elementary education.](#)