

How the History of Hip Hop Dance Has Led to a Struggle for Integration into Collegiate Dance Programs

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Abstract

This essay, *How the History of Hip Hop Dance has Led to a Struggle for Integration into Collegiate Dance Programs*, was written by Alexandra Rosen. Rosen is a senior (2020) at Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland where she has conducted this research through the Center for Dance, Music and Theater.

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary the term hip hop is defined as, “a cultural movement associated with especially rap music.” Nonetheless, the term has always included 4 elements; breakdancing, rapping, Djing/MCing and graffiti writing. All of these individual art forms can be referred to as hip hop and each has its own rich history worth exploring (this research will solely focus on hip hop dance). Additionally, it is important to note that hip hop goes beyond art forms. It is a culture. With hip hop being known as a street born culture it has sometimes been difficult to gain the respect of academia. However, it is clear to those who have learned and lived hip hop that the genre is built on the preservation of history and political resistance. Hip hop dance has evolved over time and has become a big part of American culture within the last decade (Hazzard-Donald). Many students are becoming interested in the dance form and have embodied the movement into their social culture. However, it is important for those doing the movement to understand the history behind it.

To further understand if colleges and universities are incorporating hip hop Dance, four institutions in Maryland were asked to fill out a brief survey. The institutions involved include Coppin State University (Baltimore, MD), University of Maryland College Park (College Park, MD), John Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) and Goucher College (Towson, MD). All of these institutions have a dance department but none of them have any hip hop major or minor

programs (Figure 5 and 8). That being said, each of the four programs have at least considered creating a hip hop dance related course (Figure 4) while only 25% of these institutions have considered creating a track in the subject area (Figure 3).

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In recent history, hip hop dance has become a prominent part of mainstream media in the United States. We see it everyday whether it is incorporated in advertisements for various products, in the wider media or in our aerobic classes. As much as young Americans enjoy the benefits of hip hop dance few realize its rich history, tracing back as far as the Atlantic slave trade. However, many white Americans of older generations continue to feel threatened by hip hop music and dance (Hazzard-Donald). It is the belief of this writer that the lack of integration of hip hop into higher education is for this reason. The United States has more than 5,000 colleges and universities, many of which contain dance programs. Only one of those institutions, The University of Southern California, offers a hip hop dance minor. In no other university or college can a dancer incorporate this genre as a major or minor. So why have hip hop programs never been integrated and when they have, why do they struggle to exist? This could be due to a variety of reasons including funding. However, taking a look at the history of hip hop in the United States in comparison to a more valued form of dance such as ballet may give one a better insight.

Hip Hop Defined

According to the Merriam Webster dictionary the term hip hop is defined as, “a cultural movement associated with especially rap music.” Although this definition is not entirely incorrect it leaves out many important details worth noting. As hip hop culture has grown it has of course evolved. Nonetheless, the term has always included 4 elements; breakdancing, rapping, Djing/MCing and graffiti writing. All of these individual art forms can be referred to as hip hop and each has its own rich history worth exploring. For the purpose of this paper this research will

solely focus on hip hop dance. Additionally, it is important to note that hip hop goes beyond art forms. It is a culture.

Dance in African Culture

In the 1600's when Africans were brought to the New World they were forced to leave everything behind. However, something that none of the slave traders or masters could take away was their culture. They arrived in the Western Hemisphere with memories, stories and experiences to share and to hold on to.

Africans were brought over on ships, traveling for up to three months with horrendous conditions and about 3-5 inches between people (BBCworldservice). While aboard such ships, captains would allow slaves to come up onto the deck if weather permitted. The purpose of this was to bathe them but also to force them to exercise. A physically fit slave was a desired trait of the slave traders. Those buying would pay top dollar if the slave was able to do more labor due to their physical state. Exercise for the slaves was referred to as "dancing the slaves" (Haskins). On occasion music would be played by slaves beating on drums or pots. The slaves were encouraged to dance by fear of being whipped. The forced nature of dancing on slave ships further emphasized that the Africans were no longer in their homeland and had lost their independence. African culture views dance as an expression of joy and freedom (Haskins). However they continued to move in traditional ways which aided in the preservation of the movement through generations.

Depending on where the ship arrived slaves were given some freedom. For example, in the West Indies and the Carribean slaves were allowed to retain parts of their culture. Despite

being forced to convert to Catholicism they were still allowed to worship their own gods (Haskins). Additionally the slaves were allowed to practice in any way they chose. This often meant through song and dance. Although still very limited, the sense of freedom led slaves to sustain their culture in the new world and to pass down their traditions.

In contrast slaves that arrived in North America had a very different experience. Upon arriving in North America slaves were immediately treated as if they were subhuman and considered the property of their owner. Like those in the West Indies and the Carribean they too were forced to adopt the religion of their colonizers. Slaves were forced to convert to Christianity and to give up all other practices and beliefs. This meant they were no longer allowed to sing and dance for religious purposes. Dancing was looked at as a sin and they were often told “Look out, Sister (or Brother), how you walk on the Cross, your foot might slip and your soul get lost” (Haskins, 8). This led to the creation of a variety of steps that kept the feet on the ground including shuffling, weight shifting, and bending and shifting of the knees (Haskins). Although, dance could not be used for religious ceremonies it was still commonly accepted in the fields or for agricultural purposes. Some plantations had large fields in which masters would leave the slaves alone to work. This often allowed them to dance without being punished. Other times slave owners would join in on the dancing because good crops brought them more money and it was therefore a positive event (Haskins). As slave owners observed and engaged in their dance they became intrigued by the art. As time went on owners began to ask the slaves to dance at their parties for entertainment purposes. Around the time of the French Revolution, this practice became very popular. It was referred to as the “Negro jig” (Haskins 8). Whites would join the slaves during this portion of the dance, especially during harvest times. Dance was very clearly

evolving to shape the African's new lives in North America. However, new slaves were constantly being brought over and with that memories and stories from their homeland were transported, allowing the traditions to stay alive and be passed down to new generations.

Eurocentric Dance Vs. African Dance

The main difference between African and European cultures is that Europe is an individualist culture and therefore values privacy. This is not to say that African culture does not have any privacy at all; however, it is limited due to it being a collective culture (Glass, 20). Most African communities will express privacy through personal restraint and avoidance of direct eye contact (Glass, 20). This has presented as a threatening characteristic to whites because they believe it represents untrustworthiness. African Americans did eventually adapt to some Eurocentric movement ideas. Partnering and moving away from group dance occurred in the United States when slave population spread into urban areas due to emancipation.

The importance of community in African culture is valued through expressing individuality and releasing the need for privacy and focus on self (Glass, 19). Communities in Africa feel a sense of cohesiveness and this can easily be seen through traditional movement. People dance with and for the community. When a solo dancer is moving they receive encouragement from the community through words, hand clapping, and singing (Glass, 20). This is very much in contrast to the stratified European world of dance.

European dance is rooted in elitism. One had to have an abundance of money to afford leisure time, costumes, lessons from the "dancing masters" (glass, 23), and largely decorated ballrooms. The movement itself rose from court dance. This reflected one's nobility in when and where they can dance. Those who were present were said to already be of "quality" and therefore

were allowed to dance. All could participate in the *danzi* which was an ordinary couples dance (Glass, 23). However, not all could participate in the *ballo*. This was reserved for only the most noble people. The movement patterns of clear and organized lines signified the etiquette of courtliness that their society represented (Glass, 23).

African movement vocabulary includes the entire body. The arms, legs and torsos all move throughout the dance and signify different aspects of African life. The freedom of the torso and all parts of the body was complemented by loose fitting clothing below the waist and nudity above the waist. Posture in African dance is bent slightly over towards the land, feet are flat on the ground and the knees are bent. This signifies the stance of a worker, specifically agricultural laborers. In contrast most European dances solely focus on movement of the arms and legs and the dancers wore tight and constricting clothing. The lack of clothing in African dance “horrified eighteenth century Europeans” (Glass, 16). Furthermore, the posture of European ballet, for example, is very much upright with the arms pointed up towards the sky. This again, reflects the elitism that is expressed in Eurocentric dance forms.

Both Africa and Europe experience different cultures and dance itself plays a different role within each society. However, in the United States we see these two cultures clash beginning when slaves were brought over. European dance styles are still highly valued while African dances have adapted and changed over the years. As the political climate in the United States has shifted, so has African dance.

The Beginnings of Hip Hop in the United States

After the emancipation of slaves in 1863 African Americans began to move from rural areas into the cities. The migration of the black population into urban areas allowed a new style

of dance to emerge. As previously mentioned, rural dance included flat-footedness, bent posture and group dance. However, urban styles began to emerge when African Americans adopted an upright posture and began incorporating partnering. This signified a great change in traditional movement as dance moved away from line and group dancing (Hazzard-Donald). That is not to say that the vocabulary of African dance was not passed down through generations. Movement vocabulary very much survived the transition to urban areas but continued to be slightly adapted. Many children thought that what they were doing was “new” moves only to find out that their grandparents had done the same movement when they were children (Hazzard-Donald).

The new upright movement developed around the time of the return of African American soldiers from World War II. Black soldiers felt a new sense of national pride and were referred to as the “new negro” (Hazzard-Donald 222). This marked a brief moment in history where African American men were receiving jobs and felt stable within the economy. At the time, cultural movements “stuck a new defiance, public self-redefinition and cultural pride” (Hazzard-Donald 223). This soon came to an end when the United States moved to a service based economy. African American men began to lose their jobs and experienced a quick shift in economic status. Music and dance shifted along with the ever so familiar societal status of African Americans in the United States. Both music and dance were used to give a voice to those who were newly unemployed. With this new development, African American youth inherited economic instability which lead to the rise of hip hop. “Hip hop is an expressive cultural genre originating among lower and often marginalized working class African American youth” (Hazzard-Donal 224). Urban youth took on hip hop to express their viewpoints on the political climate. Hip hop dance in its roots is a masculine dance. It was performed by men or one man alone and used to show

male dominance (Hazzard-Donal). Women rarely danced hip hop and it was said to be unsuitable for partnering. Furthermore, it had influences from styles such as dance hall, dub and DJ style. TV shows such as *Soul Train* and *What's Happening* had great influences on the early rise of hip hop dance. Eventually the dance form broke up into three stages.

The first to develop was called waack dancing. This style appeared around 1972 and included moves such as locking, the robot, the spank along with splits and rapidly revolving spins. Waack dancing was described as an “outrageous style” and was the early inspiration for what would later become known as break dance (Hazzard-Donal, 225).

Breakdancing emerged around 1973-1974 and included movements such as acrobatics, headspins, backspins and foot work called top rockin’ (Hazzard-Donal). This style utilized competitive one-upmanship and led to the development of crews. These crews consisted of mainly African American men who used breakdance as a way to settle low level gang disputes and territorial dominance (Hazzard-Donal). In 1976 the group Zulu (later known as the Zulu Nation) made up of mostly of African American teens from the Bronx perfected the style of breakdance. The Zulu Nation brought together “the elements of peace, unity, love and having fun” (Africa Bambaataa). Hip hop pioneers such as Africa Bambaataa were inspired by civil rights activists and groups like the Black Panther Party. This encouraged them to share their African roots with the youth thus allowing hip hop culture to grow and become rich, especially in the South Bronx.

The third and final stage of hip hop is known as rap dancing. This developed as a response to the athletic requirements of break dancing by incorporating less athletic forms of popular dance (Hazzard-Donald, 227). Rap dance was still influenced by breakdance but also

took influence from rhythm-and-blues. This style of hip hop continued the trend of male domination, however it was not presented as exclusively male. There were opportunities for male-female partnering.

These three stages of hip hop have continued to evolve as new generations begin to develop their own styles within the movement. Throughout history, hip hop dance has made white people feel threatened and intimidated (Hazzard-Donald). However the mainstream media played a major role in hip hop dance becoming widely accepted as seen today.

Hip Hop in the Media

Hip hop has had a long history of fighting for space within society. The white American people place a high value on ballet and modern dance while looking down upon hip hop. There is no denying that the threatening and intimidated feeling white people get stemmed from the history of slavery within the United States. However, beginning around the 2000s hip hop suddenly became accepted as a part of American popular culture.

Hip hop itself began to see a shift in its culture in 1981 when mass media began to cover the dance genre (Hazzard-Donald). It lost a lot of its competitive nature when dancers began to rehearse and focus more on being chosen for movies or TV. Hip hop was built on gestures and movement that signified the experiences of marginalized communities (Hazzard-Donald).

Although, the dance was shone in the media, most white Americans still failed to see the rich and diverse culture that hip hop rose from. Furthermore, the breakthrough of female hip hop artists created a new view of the genre. The woman fought against the toxic masculinity and began to use more movement within their videos.

Today, we see hip hop in its most “accepted” form. It is used to advertise various products and performed in aerobic classes (Hazzard-Donald, 231) just to name a few examples. Social media and competitive TV shows acted as catalysts for hip hop’s acceptance into popular culture. In 2008 *America’s Best Dance Crew* premiered and showcased top hip hop crews from all over the country. Each week crews would compete a new routine in hopes of getting votes and making it to the end of the competition. The show ran for 8 seasons and joined top shows like *So You Think You Can Dance* and *America’s Got Talent*. TV shows gave hip hop dancers a platform to showcase their art. Nonetheless, the genre saw many shifts over time. Since more and more people were attempting to do hip hop movement it began to lose the athleticism that was so important to original breakdancing. The movement became simple and the music began to shift to become more “danceable” (Hazzard-Donald, 231). Beyond TV, younger generations are now being exposed to hip hop dance through social media. The dance industry has quickly found a way to utilize the online presence through creating videos in classes. For some choreographers these are weekly videos that advertise their classes by showcasing their unique choreography and the top professional dancers in them. This is a great way to put out art and allow younger generations to explore hip hop through movement. However, it is yet another contributing factor to the watering down of hip hop culture. The kids online are not going to take the time to learn where these movements come from. They are simply going to watch the five minute video and attempt to recreate what they saw.

Social media presence has proven to be good and bad for many different cultures and industries. There are many people who have begun to attempt to fix the negative effects through their teachings. This can be seen in many urban areas and described using the expression “each

one, teach one.” This term is the pact that the older generations take on a responsibility to share knowledge and history of hip hop dance with the younger generations. Additionally, more and more colleges are incorporating hip hop studies into their curriculums.

Hip Hop Studies in Higher Education

With hip hop being known as a street born culture it can sometimes be difficult to gain the respect of academia. However, it is clear to those whose life is embedded in hip hop culture that the genre is built on the preservation of history and political resistance. While this can be threatening to elite white Americans it is very important to understand how such a culture evolved throughout United States history. This is why many colleges and universities are beginning to incorporate hip hop studies into their curriculum. Many institutions are adding courses that cover the topic. Additionally, more and more are adding minors within departments of African Studies or American History Studies. This is a big step for hip hop culture and will allow students with all different backgrounds to understand the cultural significance that is hip hop. Listed below are a few Institutions who have already incorporated hip hop Studies into their course catalogs.

Figure 1

Institution	Location	What’s offered	Name	Components
Columbia College	Chicago, IL	Minor	‘Hip Hop Minor’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Music ● Dance ● Business ● Art ● Radio ● Cultural studies
Wellesley College	Wellesley, MA	Seminar	‘Beats, Rhythm and Life: Hip Hop Studies’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rap ● Graffiti ● Break dance ● DJing

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MCing ● Cultural studies
Bowie State University	Bowie, MD	Minor	‘Hip Hop Studies and Visual Culture Minor’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Research ● Critical Discourse ● Creative projects in all 4 elements
The University of Arizona	Arizona	Focus	‘African Studies minor with Hip Hop Culture Focus’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dance ● Rap ● Graffiti ● Fashion ● Business ● Film ● Cultural studies
Penn State University	Berks, PA	Course	‘Critical Approaches to Hip Hop’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social movements ● Political movements

All of these programs and courses demonstrate a clear growth for hip hop culture within academia. Nonetheless, it is important to note that none of these colleges and universities (Figure 1) offer a course or program specifically in hip hop dance.

To further understand if colleges and universities are incorporating hip hop dance, four institutions in Maryland were asked to fill out a brief survey. The Institutions involved include Coppin State University (Baltimore, MD), University of Maryland College Park (College Park, MD), John Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) and Goucher College (Towson, MD). All of these institutions have a dance department but none of them have any hip hop major or minor programs (Figure 5 and 8). That being said, each of the four programs have at least considered creating a hip hop dance related course (Figure 4) while only 25% of these institutions have considered creating a track in the subject area (Figure 3).

The Survey and Methods

The survey was created using google forms and sent out via email. It contained 14 questions which included a variety of short answers and yes/no questions. The first four

questions were to gather basic information such as name, institution, title of position, and email. The following seven questions were yes/no questions. These were questions that needed little to no explanation such as “Does your institution have a dance department?” (Figure 4) and “Has your department/program ever considered hip hop dance related course work?” (Figure 3). With these questions those who filled out the survey did have an opportunity to elaborate if they chose to. The last six questions were short answers. These were perhaps the most informative answers and told more about each program and where they stand in terms of hip hop dance. The first question in this section was “Briefly describe why or why not the department has incorporated a hip hop dance major, minor or course.” This was intended to get background information about each department before getting into specific details. It was useful to get an understanding of what the goal of each department was and how they are currently operating. Next the departments were asked “What is the hiring process at your institution?” The purpose of this was to get a bit more information on the basic qualifications that a potential higher needs in order to be considered. Many hip hop dancers do not have graduate degrees nor is it possible for one to major in hip hop. For this reason it is very hard for a qualified hip hop dancer to be employed in higher education despite their knowledge and abundance of experience. For this reason the following question was “How do you feel the hiring process has impacted the inclusion of hip hop dance studies at your institution?” (Figure 2).

The next question presented was “Do you see any benefits to a hip hop dance studies program within your institution? Why or why not?” This was to allow department chairs to be able to think about what the benefits could be and potentially start dialogue within these four departments. Subsequently those filling out the survey were asked “Do you see any hurdles or

potential drawbacks to incorporating a hip hop curriculum into your institution’s dance program?” To remain unbiased both of these questions were necessary. Both serve the same purpose of encouraging thought into the idea of a hip hop major or minor. Lastly, the departments were asked “With hip hop culture on the rise do you feel that a hip hop dance program will encourage new students to apply for your institution? Why or why not?”

According to an OpEd in the New York Times written by Ellen Ruppel Shell, the amount that students are paying in tuition and student debt is not being repaid through much higher income post graduation than those with a high school diploma. The trend of students not attending college has put institutions into a place where they are suddenly competing for a smaller pool of applicants. For this reason the question is raised whether hip hop dance programs could change enrollment or not. Based on the answers received in the survey, it was determined what programs in the Baltimore area are interested in incorporating hip hop dance into their programs.

Figure 2

Number	Question
1	Name
2	Name of institution
3	Title or Position
4	Does the institution you work for offer any Hip Hop Studies majors or minors? Yes No
5	Does the institution you work for offer any Hip Hop Studies courses or concentrations in a major? Yes No
	*If yes please specify (Course or concentration title and department it is offered in)
6	Does your institution have a dance program? Yes No

	*If no, proceed to question 10
7	Does the dance department offer Hip Hop classes? Yes No
	*If yes please give a brief description of the course work offered
8	Has the department ever considered incorporating a Hip Hop track or related courses? Yes No
9	Briefly describe why or why not the department has incorporated a Hip Hop Dance major, minor or course.
10	What is the hiring process at your institution?
11	How do you feel the hiring process will impact the inclusion of Hip Hop Dance Studies?
12	Do you see any benefits to a Hip Hop Dance Studies program within your institution?
13	Do you see any hurdles or potential drawbacks to incorporating a Hip Hop curriculum into your institution's dance program?
14	With Hip Hop Culture on the rise do you feel that a Hip Hop Dance program will encourage new students to apply for your institution? Why or why not?

Results and Discussion

Hip hop dance has evolved over time and has become a big part of American culture within the last decade (Hazard-Donald). Many students are becoming interested in the dance form and have embodied the movement into their social culture. Nonetheless, hip hop is more than just the movement. For this reason it is important for those doing the movement to understand the history behind it. Dance major and minor programs all offer dance history courses. The value of knowing the history of ballet and modern is clearly understood in today's higher education programs. Hip hop history is no different.

Four institutions in Maryland answered a short survey to better understand the efforts being put forth to this idea of hip hop programs in collegiate dance departments. 50% of the Maryland institutions surveyed said they offer a course in hip hop studies (Figure 7). Those courses were described as dance focused classes with components in culture and history, including graffiti writing, MCing, rapping and DJing. However, 100% of institutions involved said that they offer hip hop dance classes (Figure 9) either in the form of a course or master class. The difference being that the courses are solely focused on the physical movement of hip hop dance. Furthermore, only one of the institutions said that they have considered a hip hop track (Figure 3). This particular program is rather new and is therefore in a developmental phase. Because of this it is possible that the institution is working to create an innovative program that will attract a wide variety of dancers as it grows and takes in more students.

In response to question 9 (Figure 2) two of the institutions shared that their curriculum involves African movement thus allowing hip hop to naturally become a part of that. One of these programs has an overall focus on African, African American and Afro-Caribbean dance forms which inherently allows hip hop to fall into the mission of the department. The other institution offers Africanist movement as a technique course alongside other Eurocentric dance forms. Within this program they offer traditional West African movement at the lower levels before moving to higher levels where they offer hip hop and jazz. The other two institutions who do not offer hip hop within their curriculum (note: students do have opportunities to take hip hop) also elaborated. For one, the program is new and being built up. Hip hop being included in their curriculum as a track or emphasis is still being developed. Additionally, they are looking to gain students to hopefully be able to fill this track but at this time are unable to. In contrast to all

the other institutions, the last one expressed that they have a clear focus on classical techniques. This established mission of the department does not necessarily allow for hip hop to easily find a place within the department as it did with the other institutions in the area. With that being said if the department is historically known for being classical dance based than it is likely that those seeking African movement or hip hop will search elsewhere. Maintaining a clear image of a department is just as important and that is not to say that the students at this institution have no access to hip hop. They are very much encouraged to be versatile dancers.

Question 10 (Figure 2) is important in understanding the role that the history of hip hop has played within higher education because generally those who are trained in the genre are people of color. However, “80-90% of faculty and staff in most colleges and universities are still white” (Kayes). This could be due to a variety of reasons, one being the qualifications for consideration for a position at a place of higher learning. 100% of the responses gathered for this question demonstrate a need for a degree in dance in order to be considered for a faculty position. The degrees that were specified most often were a PhD or an MFA. Along with the degree an extensive career in teaching and professional work is needed. Furthermore question 11 (Figure 2) asks the surveyors to think about what impact this could have on hip hops inclusion in their dance department. 75% of the respondents seemed unphased by the criteria to higher faculty. They expressed that they either hire someone who is classically trained with experience in hip hop or that they simply see it as giving the same respect to hip hop as other world dance forms by not shifting their basic qualifications. However, one institution stated “Most MFA degree candidates are not knowledgeable or trained in black dance, forcing us to hire adjuncts.” This is a very prominent concern for institutions inquiring about hip hop programs. Those who

are hired as adjuncts receive less pay due to their part time employment status and do not receive employment benefits (Bettinger and Long). This is a representation of the way our society has systematically made it harder for cultural art such as hip hop dance to be represented in higher education. Those trained and qualified to teach hip hop are either hired as an adjunct with less benefits or not hired at all. The unfortunate reality is that most hip hop dancers who grew up in hip hop culture and were taught through the passing down of oral traditions are not given the opportunities to take space in a place of higher learning. This keeps the role hip hop dance plays within the dance world at a lower level than ballet and modern.

Each institution was asked to evaluate the benefits and potential hurdles of incorporating a hip hop dance studies track in their institutions dance program. Questions 12 (Figure 2) was generally answered the same by all four institutions. They all see a unique approach to learning dance through hip hop that allows dancers to become versatile and learn to move their hips and rib cage independently. Additionally, they said that hip hop movement allows dancers to work from a lower center of gravity and from a rhythmically dynamic standpoint. For these reasons all but one institution said that they see benefits to a hip hop dance program. The one who said that they did not see it benefiting their program said it was simply because they do not “have the personnel” to be able to sustain a program specifically for hip hop dance. In terms of potential drawbacks, question 13 on the survey (Figure 2), to having a hip hop dance program, two of the institutions saw none at this given moment. One of the other institutions simply saw studio space being a hurdle to jump through. While maintaining their pre-professional program studio space must be prioritized for classical technique classes in which open classes such as hip hop are often sacrificed due to lack of space. The last institution that raised a potential drawback explained that

they feel the program and therefore genre will not be taken seriously. Due to the lack of representation throughout the United States it is the fear of this institution that hip hops social and commercial upbringing might eliminate it from being held to high standards alongside ballet and modern dance.

Lastly, each institution was asked if they felt a hip hop program would increase new students applying to their institutions (Figure 2). 100% of those surveyed said that they believe it would. Hip hop is attracting many young men and women to dance. Additionally, it has a rich culture which has been passed down for generations. Hip hop culture deserves to be present within academia and hip hop dance specifically will encourage dancers to be diverse in movement and thought.

Conclusion

Hip hop is a culture that has stemmed as far back as slavery. Although it is easy to overlook this fact when all everyday Americans see is the movement being demonstrated on television. Hip hop dance is an entertaining art form. It is athletic, big and bold. Nonetheless, hip hop dance “provides something for everyone” (Huntington). It becomes a part of the identity of those who spend hours listening to rap music and dancing to the breaks in the music. Each movement has a rich meaning and can be traced back to the ancestors of black Americans today. It is necessary to shed light on this matter because many educators are unaware of hip hop culture and its intellectual possibilities (Hill and Petchauer). To understand the history of hip hop is to understand the movement. The two go hand in hand. Without the support of hip hop dance in academia the art form will become lost in “the commercialization, globalization, codification, commodilization process” (Huntington).

To move forward colleges and universities will have to make significant changes beginning with their hiring processes. For example, perhaps a well respected hip hop dancer is hired as a full time faculty while taking classes to earn a higher degree. The lack of an MFA or PhD does not make a dancer unfit to teach the movement or the culture that is hip hop dance. It is time that higher education begins to hold cultural dances such as hip hop to as high of a standard as ballet and modern. Through the survey conducted in this study it was mentioned by all four institutions that building versatile dancers is important. Each of them see the benefits of hip hop dance techniques in creating diverse and dynamic movers. Additionally, in secondary schools hip hop is being used to encourage students to use popular culture to aid in learning and motivation (Brown). If younger students are learning about hip hop culture and becoming interested in the subject matter, shouldn't places of higher learning continue to encourage that interest by integrating hip hop studies into their history, dance and music programs? Hip hop culture was built on activism to fight for issues such as urbanization, gentrification, police brutality and education cuts. For this reason, hip hop teachings "is well positioned to weigh the effects of these issues on hip hop and larger society" (Tinson and McBride). Through this research this author hopes to encourage places of higher learning to further their understanding of hip hop dance and culture through incorporation of hip hop studies within their institution's dance departments.

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Appendix

Figure 3: Has your dance program/department ever considered incorporating a hip hop track?

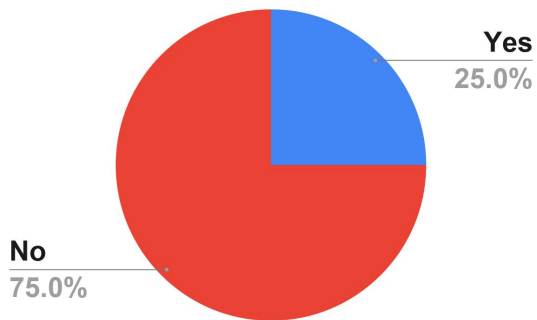


Figure 4: Has the dance program/department ever considered incorporating any hip hop related courses?

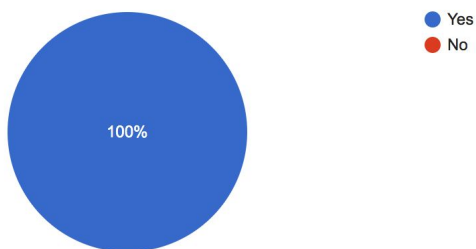


Figure 5: Does your institution have a dance program?

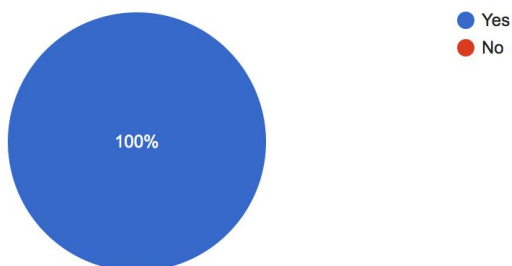


Figure 6: Does your institution offer any hip hop studies concentrations?

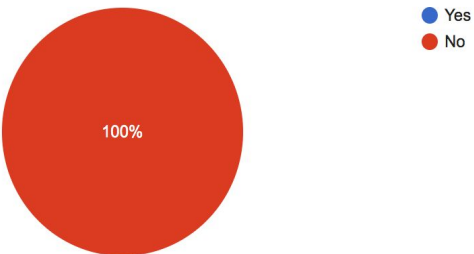


Figure 7: Does your institution offer any hip hop studies courses?



Figure 8: Does your institution offer a hip hop studies major or minor?

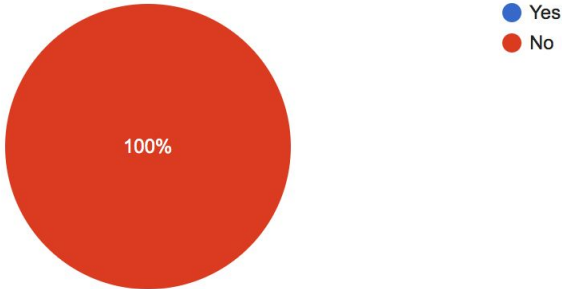


Figure 9: Does the dance program/department offer hip hop classes?

