

# Curricular Goals, Music and Pacing: The Case Study for Hip Hop Music in Children's Educational Television

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As an answer to the McCollum and Bryant (2003) charge for scholars to use the pacing index that they created to measure the pace of current children's programs, this paper examines the use of Hip Hop music in a children's television show, Hip Hop Harry, and the relationship that this show has with the eighty-five shows that were analyzed in McCollum and Bryant's initial study. Hip Hop Harry is an Emmy award nominated show on The Learning Channel, which prides itself on using Hip Hop culture and music as a medium to educate preschoolers from diverse backgrounds. Through content analysis, the paper highlights the curriculum goals presented in eight of the show's episodes, reveals the pacing index of the show, and exposes the difference between traditional curriculum-based programming and the use of the Hip Hop format of curriculum-based programming as a tool to educate children.

There is little debate that television is a vehicle for a variety of messages and that children, in some form, can and are learning from television viewing<sup>1</sup>. However, what children learn, and whether it evokes positive or negative reactions or effects, is up for debate. When reading about the role of television in young children's lives, a multitude of literature exists that condemns television for young children due to the potential negative effects<sup>2</sup>. However, many scholars believe that television can be beneficial to children, and not enough research has focused on the benefits of educational television<sup>3</sup>. Shalom Fisch<sup>4</sup> states, "Far less attention has been paid to the positive effects that educational television programs can hold." If television is indeed a medium through which children learn violence or persuaded to act and think differently,<sup>5</sup> then this same medium can also be used to encourage mental development and engage children in educational lessons.

<sup>1</sup> Brain R. Clifford, Barrie Gunter, Hugh M. Culbertson and J. McAleer, *Television and Children: Program Evaluation, Comprehension, and Impact*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Jane M. Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why Our Children Don't Think*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990); Jerry Mander, *Four arguments for the Elimination of Television*, (New York: Morrow, 1978); Frederick Zimmerman and Dimitri A. Christakis, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study of National Data," *Pediatrics and Adolescents in Medicine* 159, (2005) 619-625.

<sup>3</sup> Jennings L. Bryant and others, *Effects of Two Years' Viewing of Blue's Clues*, (Tuscaloosa: Institute for Communication Research, University of Alabama, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Shalom M Fisch, "Vast Wasteland or Vast Opportunity? Effects of Educational Television on Children's Academic Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes," in *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*. ed. Jennings Bryant, and Dolf Zillmann, 2nd ed. (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002), 397-426.

<sup>5</sup> Craig A. Anderson and Brad J. Bushman, "The Effects of Media Violence on Society," *Psychology* 295, no. 5564 (2002), 2377-2379. Jeffrey G. Johnson, Patricia Cohen, Elizabeth M. Smailes, Stephanie Kasen, and Judith S. Brooks. "Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior during Adolescence and Adulthood," *Science* 295, (2002). 2468-2471.

Since children are exposed to an array of mass media every day, many parents are cautious about the kind of media their children are subjected to and often screen their children's exposure. Unfortunately, not everything that is popular with kids is beneficial for them, nor can parents control every aspect of their child's mediated environment. This can result in a battle of wills between what the parents deem appropriate, and what children deem acceptable<sup>6</sup>. For example, in 2012, the most popular program for children ages 6-11 was *American Idol*<sup>7</sup>—a program that, although extremely popular, does not necessarily have any educational benefits or provide kid-friendly music. Viewers of all ages enjoyed the program, however, *American Idol's* intended audience was young children and no curricular lessons were present.

Children are very perceptive, keen to popular music, media, and culture that they have been inundated with throughout their daily lives. Because of this, they desire and ask for the same trends and music that adults do—just put on some Beyoncé music in a group of kids and watch what happens<sup>8</sup>. Children learn from their environment and take cues from older family members to help them cue in to what they find enjoyable, fun, and cool. Educational programs must be developed to not only entertain children and use references from their environment, but to also teach them valuable life lessons. These educational programs, also known as *edutainment*, are not just curricular-based entertainment for kids, but they are also extremely profitable for the television industry.<sup>9</sup> New shows and products are constantly being developed, licensed, and promoted in an effort to vie for market share in a multi-billion dollar industry.<sup>10</sup>

### Children's Television Programming

For young children, television is as an educational tool that can teach them essential social, cognitive, and affective cues that they will eventually need to develop<sup>11</sup>. Whether it is a violent crime drama or a cartoon, kids will learn from the information presented on the screen. As former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson aptly noted, "All television is educational. The only question is: what does it teach?"<sup>12</sup> Even though there are numerous critics that report that television is not educational in a positive way

<sup>6</sup> Juliet B. Schor, *Born to Buy: The Commercialized Child and the New Consumer Culture*, (New York: Scribner, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Nielsen Media Research, *YTD Rankers - 6-11*, (2008).

<sup>8</sup> Schor, *Born to Buy*.

<sup>9</sup> Alison Alexander and James Owers, "The Economics of Children's Television," in *The Children's Television Community*, ed. J. Alison Bryant (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007), 57-74.

<sup>10</sup> Joy Tashjian and Jamie Campbell Naidoo, "Licensing and Merchandising in Children's Television and Media," In *The Children's Television Community*, ed. J. Alison Bryant, (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007), 165-187.

<sup>11</sup> Gordon L. Berry, "The Medium of Television and the School Curriculum," in *Children and Television: Images in a Changing Sociocultural World*, ed. Gordon L. Berry, and Joy Keiko Asamen (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 103-113.

<sup>12</sup> John C. Condry, *The Psychology of Television*, (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1989), p.85.

for children,<sup>13</sup> because it hampers children play<sup>14</sup> and could lead to violence,<sup>15</sup> there is a vast amount of evidence that shows educational television is beneficial to youth, specifically at-risk ones.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is essential to create television programs that not only teach essential social cues, but also constructs identity for children and engages them in educational discourse.<sup>17</sup> Educational programs in children's television host content that involves actions, ideas, character portrayals, and models that can help children develop pro-social behavior as well as problem-solving skills.<sup>18</sup> In environments with low parental interaction or socioeconomic status, the use of television as an educational tool, provides children with exposure to new experiences that may not otherwise be readily available.

November 10, 2014 marked the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first broadcast of *Sesame Street*, one of the most successful children's television programs of all time. This curriculum-based show was built on the concepts of encouraging flexible thinking and teaching children skills that will prepare them for the future.<sup>19</sup> *Sesame Street* was the first educational program for children to be produced with systematically developed curriculum for children while using state-of-the-art production equipment and techniques.<sup>20</sup> One technique that *Sesame Street* incorporated into the program was the use of music as a teaching tool—each song was created to fulfill specific educational curriculum. Although multiple types of musical genres have been used in the production of *Sesame Street*, it's generally known for its melodic classics such as its theme song or Kermit the Frog's lamentations of being green.<sup>21</sup> This ambitious curriculum was initially designed to prepare inner-city children for school by engaging preschoolers in intellectual skills; teaching them flexible-thinking skills; helping them develop creative problem-solving skills, as well as encouraging them to develop social relationships.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, when the program first aired in 1969, the multiracial cast,

<sup>13</sup> Jane M. Healy, *Endangered Minds: Why our Children Don't Think*; Jerry Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*; Zimmerman and Christakis, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes"

<sup>14</sup> Marie Winn, *The Plug-in Drug: Television, Children and the Family*, (New York: Viking, 1977).

<sup>15</sup> Jeffry G. Johnson, Patricia Cohen, Elizabeth M. Smailes, Stephanie Kasen, and Judith S. Brooks. "Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior during Adolescence and Adulthood." *Science* 295, (2002). 2468-2471

<sup>16</sup> Zimmerman and Christakis, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes"

<sup>17</sup> James A. Anderson and Milton E. Ploghoft, "Children and Media in Media Education," in *Children and Television: Images in a Changing Sociocultural World*, ed. Gordon L. Berry, and Joy Keiko Asamen (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993), 89-102.

<sup>18</sup> Berry, "The Medium of Television and the School Curriculum"

<sup>19</sup> Dan Anderson, "Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 557, (1998), 24-38.; Gerald Lesser, *Children and Television: Lessons from Sesame Street* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

<sup>20</sup> Dan Anderson, Jennings Bryant, Alice Wilder, Angela Santomero, Marsha Williams, and Alisha M. Crawley, "Researching Blue's Clues: Viewing Behavior and Impact," *Media Psychology* 2, no. 2 (2000), 179-194.; S Ball and G. A. Bogatz, *The First Year of Sesame Street: An Evaluation* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Services, 1970).

<sup>21</sup> Michael Davis, *Street Gang: The Complete History of Sesame Street* (New York, Viking, 2008).

<sup>22</sup> Anderson, "Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron"; Charlotte F. Cole, Beth A. Richman and Susan K. McCann Brown, "The World of Sesame Street Research," in "G" Is for "Growing": Thirty

urban setting and the jaunty, catchy tunes gave *Sesame Street* a unique feel and sound that reached beyond the white middle class.<sup>23</sup> Although initially intended for urban youth, this highly researched curriculum has aided in school-readiness at all socio-economic levels.<sup>24</sup> Longitudinal studies have shown *Sesame Street* to “exert a significant effect on children’s academic skills and social behavior, both in the United States and abroad.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed, children who watch the show early in life, did significantly better in school as a teen, were less aggressive, and were more likely to read for leisure.<sup>26</sup> *Sesame Street*, through proven research and literature, is indeed a powerful and entertaining educational tool.

Another popular and innovative children’s television show hit the airwaves in 1996: *Blue’s Clues*. This groundbreaking program was designed to teach preschoolers problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.<sup>27</sup> Unlike the majority of children’s programs on the air at the time, however, *Blue’s Clues*’ key motive was not merely entertainment and profitability.<sup>28</sup> Rather, much like *Sesame Street*, it sought to engage and educate children by presenting challenging content based on a strict curriculum and provide educational tools that helped to develop their young minds.<sup>29</sup> The show encouraged active participation from the audience, and presented hands-on, age-appropriate experiences,<sup>30</sup> all while providing a thinking-skills curriculum. One unique aspect to the show—that may have influenced its popularity and impact—is that Nickelodeon aired the same show for five consecutive days, thus repeating the lesson to children multiple times—a tactic that led to an increase in audience size with each additional airing.<sup>31</sup> The repetition it provided allowed children a greater likelihood of retaining the information that was presented in the show.<sup>32</sup> The success of *Blue’s Clues*

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*Years of Research on Children and Sesame Street* ed. Shalom M. Fisch and Rosemarie T. Truglio (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001), 147-179.; Lesser, *Lessons from Sesame Street*.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Davis, *Street Gang: The Complete History of Sesame Street*

<sup>24</sup> Shalom M. Fisch, Rosemarie T. Truglio, and Charlotte F. Cole, “The Impact of Sesame Street on Preschool Children: A Review and Synthesis of 20 Years’ Research,” *Media Psychology* 1, no. 2 (1999), 165-190.; Cole, “The World of Sesame Street Research”

<sup>25</sup> Fisch, “The Impact of Sesame Street on Preschool Children,” p.185.

<sup>26</sup> Aletha C. Huston, Dan R. Anderson, John C. Wright, Deb L. Linebarger, and K. L. Schmitt. “Sesame Street Viewers as Adolescents: The Recontact Study,” in “G” Is for “Growing”: *Thirty Years of Research on Children and Sesame Street*, ed Shalom M. Fisch and Rosemarie T. Truglio (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Anderson, “Researching Blue’s Clues”; Bryant, *Effects of Two Years’ Viewing of Blue’s Clues*

<sup>28</sup> Alexander, “The Economics of Children’s Television”; Aletha C. Huston, John C. Wright, Ellen Wartella, Mabel L. Rice, Bruce A. Watkins, Toni Campbell and Richard Potts, “Communication More Than Content: Formal Features of Children’s Television Programs,” *Journal of Communications* 31, no. 3 (1981), 32-48.

<sup>29</sup> Bryant, *Effects of Two Years’ Viewing of Blue’s Clues*

<sup>30</sup> Anderson, “Researching Blue’s Clues”

<sup>31</sup> David S. Bickham, Aletha Huston, and Mare Schmidt, “Attention, Comprehension, and the Educational Influences of Television,” in *Handbook of Children and the Media*, ed. Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage., 2011), 113-138.

<sup>32</sup> Bryant, *Effects of Two Years’ Viewing of Blue’s Clues*; Bickham, “Attention, Comprehension, and the Educational Influences of Television”

provides superb evidence that when children's television is created with "knowledge of child development, has a systematic curriculum, and is designed with a research-based understanding of how children use and understand television, it can be a powerful and positive influence."<sup>33</sup>

Television is a significant educator among young children. When educational content is used, it can be credited in helping with child development, teaching reading and thinking skills, suggesting pro-social behavior, as well as developing problem-solving skills.<sup>34</sup> Despite evidence to the contrary, television's critics and naysayers have been sleeping on all of the positive educational content that has been circulating for more than a quarter of a century.<sup>35</sup> Shows such as *Sesame Street* and *Blue's Clues* are just a two examples of how television has been used to spark excitement in young children while teaching them skills that are potentially invaluable to their future success. However, one thing that most current edutainment is not known for is its advancement in music. The music in most current children's television programs are almost a default to the type of music that *Sesame Street* initially created—melodic and simple with a jaunty beat. Although time and culture have changed since 1969, the music of children's television has not.

### Hip Hop Harry

One show that has successfully been merging educational television with curricular goals and Hip Hop culture is the program *Hip Hop Harry*. Once on The Learning Channel's "Ready, Set, Learn" educational time block (now in syndication), it is only one example of a slew of new educational programs created to engage, entertain, and fulfill the educational and informational needs of children in underrepresented and minority groups.<sup>36</sup> Programs such as *Hip Hop Harry*, *Ni Hao, Kai Lan*, *Signing Time*, *Dora the Explorer* and *Go, Diego, Go!* all place cultural elements from underrepresented and minority groups in the narrative and educational plotlines. By applying these cultural elements, it provides children in underrepresented and minority groups a vehicle for learning that would not be available otherwise. Because of this, a critical examination of the current state of children's educational programming is essential in staying abreast of the ever-changing television and popular culture. Without an understanding of the

<sup>33</sup> Anderson, "Researching Blue's Clues," p. 192-193.

<sup>34</sup> Anderson, "Educational Television Is Not an Oxymoron"; Bickham, "Attention, Comprehension, and the Educational Influences of Television"; Fisch, "The Impact of Sesame Street on Preschool Children"; Donald H. Miechenbaum, and Lorraine Turk, "Implications of Research on Disadvantaged Children and Cognitive Training Programs for Educational Television," *Journal of Special Education*, 6 (1972), 27-41.

<sup>35</sup> Johnson, "Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior"; Zimmerman, "Children's Television Viewing and Cognitive Outcomes"

<sup>36</sup> J. Cory Allen, "The Economic Structure of the Commercial Electronic Children's Media Industries," in *Handbook of Children and the Media*, ed. Dorothy G. Singer and Jerome L. Singer (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001), 477-493.

effects of edutainment—positive or negative—there can be no collaboration between communication scholars and the media industry.

*Hip Hop Harry* is a Hip Hop music centered, children's educational television program. Unlike other edutainment centered shows, which generally use music from nursery rhymes, *Hip Hop Harry* uses the popularity of Hip Hop music as a vehicle to educate, inform, enlighten, inspire, and encourage children to explore, create, and learn in a positive environment.<sup>37</sup> As the first edutainment series to incorporate Hip Hop culture into the plot, character, and spectacle of the show, *Hip Hop Harry* is a highly engaging program that focuses on teaching preschool-aged children valuable life lessons based on academics through dancing and rhyming.<sup>38</sup>

On each episode, children flock to Hip Hop Central, the after-school community center that serves as a haven for boys and girls of different ethnicities, cultures, and social classes. It is at Hip Hop Central where numerous positive life-lessons, pro-social values, as well as curricular lessons are taught. These educational and entertaining ideas are interwoven into the plot and presented to the children through the lens of Hip Hop culture. The Hip Hop framework of dance, art, music, and language—all of which help educate the children on issues dealing with mental, physical, and emotional growth—are incorporated into every episode and allows children to more easily identify with and understand the curricular lessons in the program. Four overarching curricular goals are achieved in every episode of *Hip Hop Harry*. Viewers of the show see presentations of: (a) social and emotional skills; (b) cognitive and educational skills; (c) physical and health skills; and (d) artistic and creative skills.

Claude Brooks created *Hip Hop Harry* in 2006 as “an alternative way to help kids learn” and a way to show kids learning could be fun. Brooks' inspiration for creating the show originated when he noticed rhyming to be “a precursor for literacy” and the call and response nature of Hip Hop to be “an organic way for kids to retain new ideas.”<sup>39</sup> It was this realization that led Brooks to create a show that incorporated rapping and Hip Hop culture into the program, by connecting with children through urban music and dance while simultaneously exposing them to systematic educational curriculum. *Hip Hop Harry's* format and popularity has provided numerous children a fresh approach to learning through song, dance, and music—a ubiquitous and essential part of life. Even though some people have criticized the negative effects of Hip Hop music on American culture,<sup>40</sup> Brooks took an innovative leap at contradicting that view by combining television and Hip Hop music as a primary text for educating youth. By doing so, Brooks extends the grasp to educate children who watch the show in a manner that was not possible before the two media crossed paths and merged.

<sup>37</sup> *Hip Hop Harry*, Directed by Brian Campbell, DVD (TTPI Hip Hop Harry Productions, 2006).

<sup>38</sup> D. Hammonds, “Hip Hop Harry! A Kid-Friendly Rapper Stars in a New Educational Series for Kids.” 2007. Retrieved April 9, 2008, from [http://www.familymagazinegroup.com/entertainment/story\\_Hip+Hop+Harry!.html](http://www.familymagazinegroup.com/entertainment/story_Hip+Hop+Harry!.html)

<sup>39</sup> Hammonds, *Kid-Friendly Rapper*, p. 1

<sup>40</sup> William E. Perkins, *Droppin' Science: Critical Essays on Rap Music and Hip Hop Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

## Hip Hop Music

As many people can attest, music fulfills many physical, psychological, mental, and emotional human needs.<sup>41</sup> Although there are numerous genres that affect individuals differently, music has the ability to connect people, communicate emotion, and educate the masses. In every generation, people use music to develop new and unique identities by borrowing from past generations, creating new sounds, and adding updated twists to out of date melodies.<sup>42</sup> One genre of music that does just that is Hip Hop. Hip Hop is a young, urban, and modern form of music that was created by African Americans in the 1970s and has become extremely popular in mainstream society.<sup>43</sup> It was originally created as a form of cultural art used to express many of the sentiments and experiences of people within the African American community. This art emulates intrinsic forms of expressions in the African and African American cultures through dance and music.

This “postmodern popular art”<sup>44</sup> began as more than just listening to music or jamming to rhymes; it was created to challenge the traditional ideals of music by creating elaborate beats, melodic lyrics, and dance music to be appreciated through movement.<sup>45</sup> In short, the music relies on an intricate weaving of sound and dance.<sup>46</sup> Unlike other forms of music, Hip Hop “communicates aspiration and frustration, community and aggression, creativity and street reality, style and substance”<sup>47</sup> – making it the poetry of a group that has been disregarded because of race and social class.<sup>48</sup> Hip Hop music is “the most startlingly original and fastest growing genre in popular music.”<sup>49</sup> One reason is that Hip Hop is not just about music, but a culture that exudes style, art, rhythm, and dancing, and has the ability to connect with people of all ages, races, and creeds.<sup>50</sup> The energetic sound of Hip Hop takes pieces of life from popular culture and works to aid in providing “the common cultural background necessary for

<sup>41</sup> Elijah Mickel and Christopher Mickel, “Family therapy in transition: Choice Theory and Music,” *International Journal of Reality Therapy* 21, (2002), 37-40.

<sup>42</sup> Perkins, *Droppin’ Science*.

<sup>43</sup> Henry A Rhodes, “The Evolution of Rap Music in the United States,” *Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute’s Curricular Resources*, Curriculum Unit 93.04.04 (1993). Retrieved, August 30, 2009 from <http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/guides/1993/4/93.04.04.x.html>

<sup>44</sup> Jon Pareles, “How Rap Moves to Television’s Beat,” *The New York Times*, Jan 14, 1990.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Shusterman, “The Fine Art of Rap,” *New Literary History* 22, no. 3 (1991), p.613-632.

<sup>46</sup> Greg Dimitriadis, “Hip Hop: From Live Performance to Mediated Narrative,” *Popular Music* 15, no. 2 (1996), 179-194.

<sup>47</sup> Russell Simmons and Nelson George, *Life and Def: Sex, Drugs, Money, and God* (New York: Crown, 2002), p.5.

<sup>48</sup> Terri M. Adams and Douglas B. Fuller, “The Words Have Changed but the Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music,” *Journal of Black Studies* 36, (2006): 938-957.

<sup>49</sup> Pareles, *The New York Times*, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> Dimitriadis, “Hip hop: Performance Narrative”; Simmons, *Life and Def*

artistic creation.”<sup>51</sup> The lyrics in Hip Hop tell stories and ask for engagement from the audience, which serves as a community. It is a form of oral story telling that has been credited with encouraging narrative forms and word play, and promoting consumers to listen to the message in the lyrics over just dancing to the beat.<sup>52</sup> Currently, there are few, if any, children’s shows that incorporate the melodic rhythm, pace, or context of Hip Hop music and dance moves as a central form of edutainment in the same way as *Hip Hop Harry*. As such, it is essential to incorporate Hip Hop music into educational television to fill the needs of children of different cultural backgrounds.

Within Hip Hop, a sub-genre labeled as “knowledge rap” exists in which lyricists combine their role as artist and poet with the role of realist and teacher. Scholar Richard Shusterman states that knowledge rap “insists on uniting the aesthetic and cognitive”<sup>53</sup> with artistic meaning and value. Knowledge rap’s goal of educating the listener, allows educational creativity in the lyrics, which allows the listeners to have numerous interpretations and perspectives on the music.<sup>54</sup> Knowledge rap may have potential in educational television, for it incorporates educating the listener as well as entertaining them. In addition, the rhythmic nature of the music may engage listeners who might normally disconnect from it.

Like other genres of music, Hip Hop has many critics that dislike the recent direction in which the music has shifted (e.g. pop, country, rock). Critics feel that faster-paced lyrics, which focus on gaining material possessions and trivializing women, is giving society negative connotations about Hip Hop, as well as creating false ideals and standards in young African Americans.<sup>55</sup> However, the exotic beats and artistic use of words continues to make this genre of music one of the most popular in today’s culture. Additionally, Hip Hop music is creating a shift in the culture of America, where Madison Avenue is now mixing with entertainment and Hip Hop culture. Hip Hop is no longer “black music” but new music, a mainstream culture that is found in television, movies, clothing, and even politics.<sup>56</sup> The consumption of Hip Hop music and culture has led to a transformation of American society and how generations of individuals relate to each other.

<sup>51</sup> Shusterman, *Fine Art of Rap*, p. 662.

<sup>52</sup> Dimitriadis, “Hip Hop: Performance Narrative.”

<sup>53</sup> Shusterman, *Fine art of rap*, p.626.

<sup>54</sup> Dimitriadis, “Hip hop: Performance Narrative.”

<sup>55</sup> Adams and Fuller, “Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music”; Brown, Veda, “Guiding the Influence of Hip Hop Music on Middle-School Students’ Feelings, Thinking, and Behaving,” *The Negro Educational Review* 57, no. 1-2 (2006), 49-68.; Monk-Turner, Elizabeth and D’Ontae Sylvertooth, “Rap Music: Gender Difference in Derogatory Word Use,” *American Communication Journal* 10, no. 4 (2008), p.1-12; Tricia Rose, *The Hip Hop Wars* (New York: Civitas Books, 2008).

<sup>56</sup> Steve Stoute, *The Tanning of America: How Hip Hop Created a Culture that Rewrote the Rules of the New Economy* (New York: Gotham Books, 2013).



## Pacing in Television

Understanding the messages that are presented on television requires viewers, both adults and children alike, to decipher various audio and visual cues from the content of the program.<sup>57</sup> These cues are presented as different edits and changes designed to frame not only the unique scenes, but also to highlight certain messages. The rate at which these scenes, characters, and activity changes is known as pacing, a technique used in television programming to gain and retain audience attention.<sup>58</sup> The pace of a show can vary from slow to fast, and is connected to the number of changes to a new scene, changes in a familiar scene, auditory changes, changes in the characters, as well as the length of active music, talking, and motion.<sup>59</sup> Pacing has been credited with allowing more messages to be presented during single episodes by presenting more information through continuous changes in movement, sights, and sounds.<sup>60</sup>

The use of pacing in children's television programming has been a heavily debated topic among scholars for the last thirty years. Scholars have indicated that the faster the pace, the more attention will be paid to it, for the rapid changes in a program can catch the attention of the viewer. However, research has also indicated that young children retain fewer curricular lessons at a fast pace than at a slower pace.<sup>61</sup> One of the major criticisms of rapid pacing in children's programming stems from children not being able to remember what they have seen and being burned out from cognitive overload.<sup>62</sup> Critics of *Sesame Street* wrote that the show used too much time in overloading children with unnecessary scenes, did not provide enough time in presenting substantial education, and that the nature of the show did not allow children to process the content due to the influx of rapidly moving images.<sup>63</sup> One criticism of pacing in children's educational television is that shows using this technique "are based on the premise that such formats encourage shallow or passive processing, reduces mental effort, and short attention span."<sup>64</sup> However, some of the most outspoken critics about special effects and pacing in television do not have any scientific proof that fast pacing is detrimental or even that educational television shows employ fast pacing

<sup>57</sup> Annie Lang, Seth Geiger, Melody Strickwerda, and Janine Summer, "The Effects of Related and Unrelated Cuts on Viewers' Memory for Television: A Limited Capacity Theory of Television Viewing," *Communication Research* 20 (1993), 4-29.

<sup>58</sup> Huston, "Formal Features of Children's Television Programs"

<sup>59</sup> John C. Wright, Aletha C. Huston, Rhonda P. Ross, Sandra L. Calvert, David Rolandelli, Lee Ann Weeks, Pouran Raeissi, and Richard Potts, "Pace and Continuity of Television Programs: Effects on Children's Attention and Comprehension," *Departmental Psychology* 20, no. 4 (1984), 653-666.

<sup>60</sup> McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

<sup>61</sup> Cynthia Nichols, "How Fast Can They Learn? Developmental Differences in Information Acquisition of Educational and Narrative Content Through Pacing and Distance" (PhD diss., The University of Alabama, 2010).

<sup>62</sup> Jerome Singer, "The Power and Limitations of Television: A Cognitive-Affective Analysis," in *The Entertainment Functions of Television*, ed. Percy H. Tannenbaum (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1980), 31-65.

<sup>63</sup> Miechenbaum, "Implications of Research on Disadvantaged Children"

<sup>64</sup> Wright, "Pace and Continuity of Television Programs," p. 653.

techniques to convey messages to children.<sup>65</sup> However, it is unknown whether Hip Hop music will affect the pace of the program.

In 2003, researchers McCollum and Bryant developed a pacing index that established a formula for examining and coding television shows. It was through this that a pacing index for 85 of the top-rated United States children television programming were examined, and significant differences in the pacing of curriculum-based children's programming and non-curriculum based children's television programming were revealed—shows that are geared towards educational curricula being slower than shows for children that are geared solely towards entertaining. The study also indicated that critics of *Sesame Street* who argued that the show was full of fast-paced images and sounds, were incorrect in their assumptions, and indicated that curriculum-based shows do not generally employ fast pacing. The authors encouraged fellow scholars to continue where they left off in the examination of the pacing of scenes, images, and audio in children's television programming through the pacing index they established through their work.

## Method

As an answer to the McCollum and Bryant<sup>66</sup> charge for scholars to use the pacing index they created, this paper examines the unique children's television show, *Hip Hop Harry*, and the relationship that it has with the 85 shows that were analyzed in the McCollum and Bryant study. However, instead of an in-depth comparison of all the shows from the study, the authors will only compare the *Hip Hop Harry* show against the curriculum-based programs. This paper also examines *Hip Hop Harry's* educational goals, as well as explores whether a children's program can use Hip Hop music and dance to employ its curricular goals to succeed in conveying its message that education can be entertaining and fun.

In order to effectively look at pacing in *Hip Hop Harry*, the authors will use the following to guide the collection of the data and help define the parameters of the content analysis:

RQ1: How does *Hip Hop Harry* incorporate curricular goals into each show?

H1: The overall pacing of *Hip Hop Harry* is faster than other curriculum-based shows.

H2: Since *Hip Hop Harry* uses the rhythmic sounds of Hip Hop as the main vehicle for its message, the program will present more auditory changes and active music than other children's shows.

H3: Since *Hip Hop Harry* uses the rhythmic motions and dance of Hip Hop as the main vehicle for its message, the program will present more active motion than other children's shows.

<sup>65</sup> McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

<sup>66</sup> McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"

## Content Analysis

Content analysis was chosen as the method for this study, because as other research has indicated, it provides scientific data that can be generalized to the larger population,<sup>67</sup> and would be the best fit for the parameters of this research. The shows used for this exploratory study came from the eight available *Hip Hop Harry* videos produced by The Learning Channel.

## Unit of Analysis

Two units of analysis existed for this exploratory research. First, the sample for the content analysis was selected by examining every “problem segment” that existed within *Hip Hop Harry*. A “problem segment” was defined as one or more characters that had conflict or an issue develop that was resolved through communication during the episode. The segments varied in complexity from a shorter segment with a simple resolution to a lengthier segment with more complicated problems. There were between two and six segments per video, yielding a population of thirty-four problem segments over eight episodes.

The problem segments were then reviewed for several variables including: character descriptions, lesson themes, ethnicity of the characters, number of individual versus group dances or songs, the song message type-whether the message was interpersonal, personal, a lesson to teach a child how to do something, or a moral lesson, the type and reason for dancing on the show, who introduced the problem and how, as well as who resolved the problem and how. Cumulative episode data as well as individual problem segment data was collected through dichotomous and categorical response options. The majority of the variables were descriptive data that helped establish the trends in the show.

The second part of this study examined the pacing of *Hip Hop Harry*. The sample for this was determined by modeling the coding after McCollum and Bryant’s study,<sup>68</sup> which examined the pacing of all children’s television shows. Since this paper did not recollect the data regarding other shows, the coders emulated the formulas and collection process presented in the research. In order to determine the pacing for *Hip Hop Harry*, the authors chose 5-minute segments from each of the eight episodes and used the mean of these to determine the true pacing index of the show. Although analyzing the pace of the entire show would be best, the authors decided to emulate McCollum and Bryant’s study as closely as possible, and looked at the 5-minute segment to show a representation of the shows pacing. In order to get a better representation of the show, the authors decided to code different 5-minute segments of the show, 0-5 minutes, 5-10 minutes, 10-15 minutes, and 15-20 minutes. Each portion of

<sup>67</sup> Harold H Kassarian, “Content Analysis in Consumer Behavior,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 4, no. 1 (1977) 8-18.

<sup>68</sup> McCollum and Bryant, “Pacing in Children's Television Programming”

the show was then present in the analysis, and gave a more accurate portrayal of *Hip Hop Harry*.

### Training and Reliability

Two graduate students were used to code the data. Training sessions were conducted to educate both the coders on the variables and refine the coding schema. After the training sessions established the consistency of the schema, a subset of 20% of the problem segments was used to test for reliability. The Holsti<sup>69</sup> generalized formula calculated the inter-coder agreement on each coding category, yielding overall reliability of 95.76% within the problem segment content analysis. After the satisfactory reliability was obtained, the problem segments were analyzed for trends and descriptive information.

For the coding of the show's pace, a sample coding was conducted to ensure that the coders had a comprehensive understanding of the parameters of the study. Coding occurred in real time to examine duration as well as frequency measures. The segments were watched as many times as necessary until the coders were positive all the variables were accounted for and coded correctly. Discussion between coders was permitted. Based off McCollum and Bryant's study,<sup>70</sup> the coders examined a 5-minute segment from each of the eight available episodes for seven unique elements: unrelated camera shifts, related camera shifts, camera cuts, auditory changes, active motion, active talking, and active music. A subsequent intercoder reliability check yielded the following kappas for the data: unrelated camera shifts, 1.000, related camera shifts, .873, camera cuts, .931, auditory changes, .975, active motion, .990, active talking, .931, and active music, 1.000. The mean kappa for this intercoder test was .952.

### Results

*Hip Hop Harry* prides itself on being an educational show that entertains and educates based on four overarching curriculum goals. Table 1 shows the overall results for the content analysis of the eight episodes. The table presents all eight episodes and the 30 problem segments within each episode with lesson themes that support the curricular goals per problem segment. The table indicates that *Hip Hop Harry* not only offers solutions to problems through hip hop music and dance, but also that the curriculum goals of the show are fulfilled in each episode<sup>71</sup>. The curricular goals—(a) social and emotional skills; (b) cognitive and educational skills; (c) physical and health skills; and (d) artistic and creative skills—were met in the episodes by having problem segments touching the subjects of safety, team work, sharing, responsibility, lying, making friends, materialism, politeness, math, reading, science, fairness, learning dance, gaining confidence, embracing difference, strengthening memory, exercising, eating healthy, and manners. In particular, *Hip Hop Harry* placed special emphasis on social

<sup>69</sup> O. R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1969).

<sup>70</sup> McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming."

<sup>71</sup> Hammonds, "Hip Hop Harry! A kid-friendly rapper"

and emotional skills building within the program. Therefore, RQ1 is answered. *Hip Hop Harry* is a curriculum based show, which used various topics to communicate important messages to children.

*Problem Segments, Solutions, and Implied Curricular Lessons*

Episode	Problem	Problem Title	Lesson Themes		Problem Resolution Through Hip Hop		Curricular Goals Met (1) Social/emotional (2) Cognitive/Educational (3) Physical/Health; (4) Artistic/Creative
			Individual Dance	Group Song	Individual Dance	Group Dance	
1.2	Exercise is Fitness Fun	Teaching Dance, Exercise, Manners, Safety	0	1	0	1	3,4
1.2	Writing Poems	Reading	1	0	1	0	2
2.1	Stretch	Safety, Exercise	0	0	0	0	3
2.2	Drinking Water	Healthy Eating	0	1	0	1	3
2.3	Wanting to Win	Teamwork	0	1	0	1	1
3.1	I want to learn	Teaching Dance, Embracing Differences	0	0	0	0	1,3,4
3.2	Learning New Dances	Safety, Teaching Dance, Confidence, Embracing Differences	0	1	0	1	1,3
4.1	Shapes of Life	Math, Being Fair, Memory	0	1	0	1	1,2
4.2	Introduce Yourself	Making Friends, Confidence, Embracing Friends	0	1	0	1	1
4.3	Show Me How	Teamwork, Sharing, Making Friends, Politeness, Being Fair, Confidence,	0	0	0	0	1

		Embracing Differences					
5.1	Let's Share	Teamwork, Sharing, Being Fair, Manners	1	0	1	0	1
5.2	Different Ways to Share	Sharing, Materialism, Politeness, Being Fair, Manners	0	1	0	1	1
5.3	Consequences of Lying	Responsibility, Lying, Politeness, Manners	1	0	1	0	1
5.4	Forgiving a Friend	Teamwork, Sharing, Responsibility, Making Friends, Politeness, Being Fair, Embracing Differences,	0	0	1	0	1
5.5	Teamwork	Teamwork, Responsibility	0	1	0	1	1
6.1	Dad's Birthday	Materialism, Reading	0	1	0	1	1,2
6.2	Words Have Power	Sharing, Politeness, Manners	1	0	1	0	1
7.1	Going on A Picnic	Safety, Teamwork, Making Friends, Materialism, Politeness, Embracing Differences, Healthy Eating	1	0	0	1	1,3
7.2	Share Share Share	Teamwork, Sharing, Responsibility, Politeness, Being Fair, Embracing Differences, Manners	0	1	0	0	1

## CURRICULAR GOALS, MUSIC AND PACING

7.3	Good Manners	Safety, Sharing, Responsibilit y, Politeness, Being Fair, Healthy Eating, Manners	0	1	0	1	1,3
7.4	Double Dutch Dazzlers	Teamwork, Teaching Dance, Confidence, Embracing Differences, Exercise	0	1	0	1	1,3,4
7.5	Any Kind of Food You Like	Safety, Responsibilit y, Healthy Eating	0	1	0	1	1,3
8.1	Hand Bone	Materialism, Embracing Differences	0	1	0	1	1
8.2	Shake the room	Politeness, Embracing Differences, Memory	0	1	0	1	1
8.3	Beat Box	Materialism, Embracing Differences	1	0	1	0	1
8.4	Tap Tap Tap	Materialism, Exercise	1	0	1	0	1,3
8.5	Red Means Stop	Responsibilit y, Reading, Teaching Dance, Memory	0	1	0	1	1,3,4
8.7	Shake Your Maracas	Materialism, Confidence, Embracing Diversity	1	0	1	0	1
8.8	Everybody Jam Along	Teamwork, Materialism, Teaching Dance, Embracing Differences, Memory	0	1	0	1	1,3,4

Table 1

Table 2 highlights the overall difference in the pacing score for the curriculum based television shows, ordered from highest to lowest. This table shows support for

H1. The program with the slowest pace was *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, with an index of 14.95. The fastest-paced program was *Bill Nye the Science Guy* with an index score of 56.90. It should be noted that the clip of *Bill Nye the Science Guy* that was used for analysis was a very unusual segment due to a video montage being shown during the 5-minute segment<sup>72</sup>. If this video clip montage had not affected the score, *Hip Hop Harry* would have the highest pacing of all curriculum-based shows with a value of 44.83.

*Curriculum Based Programs' Pacing Index and Network*

Show	Network	Pacing Index
<i>Bill Nye the Science Guy</i>	PBS	56.90
<i>Hip Hop Harry</i>	The Learning Channel	44.83
<i>Gullah Gullah Island</i>	Nickelodeon	37.00
<i>Rupert</i>	PBS	35.55
<i>Arthur</i>	PBS	31.10
<i>Barney</i>	PBS	31.00
<i>Magic School Bus</i>	PBS	28.95
<i>Lamb Chop's Play-Along</i>	PBS	28.70
<i>Allegra's Window</i>	Nickelodeon	28.50
<i>Wishbone</i>	PBS	28.10
<i>Where... Carmen San Diego?</i>	PBS	27.55
<i>Big Comfy Couch</i>	PBS	27.05
<i>Kratts' Creatures</i>	PBS	26.95
<i>Sesame Street</i>	PBS	24.80
<i>Shining Time Station</i>	PBS	23.35
<i>Puzzle Place</i>	PBS	23.10
<i>Blue's Clues</i>	Nickelodeon	21.85
<i>Reading Rainbow</i>	PBS	20.60
<i>Storytime</i>	PBS	15.75
<i>Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood</i>	PBS	14.95

Table 2

Table 3 presents the overall pacing index for the eight shows of *Hip Hop Harry* and the mean of each of the pacing index categories. As the table indicates, the pace of the show ranges from 38.7, at the slowest to 50.05 at its peak. Upon further examination, this indicates that even the slowest *Hip Hop Harry* pace was faster than all other curriculum-based programs, except for *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, and as McCollum and Bryant indicated, this high pacing value might not have been accurate due to a video montage that was selected for coding (2003). Thus, H1 is further supported. However, it

<sup>72</sup> McCollum and Bryant, "Pacing in Children's Television Programming"



is important to note, that *Hip Hop Harry* had a highest number of camera edits of all the programs – which influenced the pacing score of the show.

### *Hip Hop Harry Pacing Index*

Episode Name	Time Run (Min)	Camera Cuts	Related Shifts	Un-related Shifts	Auditory Changes	Active Motion	Active Music	Active Talking	Pacing Index
I like to Move	0-5	129	10	29	37	51	48	47	50.05
Fancy Footwork	5-10	97	3	43	35	55	54	22	45.7
You Can Dance	10-15	99	3	43	26	35	22	72	42.9
Making New Friends	15-20	105	25	14	40	67	61	37	49.5
My Favorite Things	0-5	110	25	29	38	21	21	76	43.75
Words Have Power	5-10	107	0	14	33	43	43	55	40.55
Perfect Picnic	10-15	73	15	43	24	32	29	43	37.8
Music Makers	15-20	92	35	43	30	41	46	50	48.45
<b>Mean</b>		102	15	32	33	43	41	50	44.84

Table 3

To further determine the cause of this higher pace, Table 4 presents the pacing index and score for each of the 19 curriculum-based shows and the mean pacing score of the *Hip Hop Harry Shows*. In the general category of camera cuts, *Hip Hop Harry* had a mean of 102 cuts. The show with second highest number of camera cuts was *Rupert* with 80 edits. The program with the fewest number of camera edits was *Storytime* ( $n=1$ ). T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ( $t(26) = 6.195, p<.001$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=101.50, SD=16.04$ ) were compared to the camera cuts in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=42.16, SD=24.85$ ).

In terms of related scene shifts, *Bill Nye the Science Guy* yielded the most related camera shifts ( $n=110$ ), *Lamb Chop's Play-Along* had the fewest number of related camera shifts ( $n=1$ ), and *Hip Hop Harry* had 15 related camera shifts. After the *Bill Nye the Science Guy* outlier was removed,  $t$ -tests did not indicate any significant differences ( $t(25) = 1.496, p<.147$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=14.50, SD=12.74$ ) were compared to the related shifts in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=8.47, SD=7.99$ ).

*Hip Hop Harry* had the most unrelated shifts ( $n=32$ ) with the next show, *Bill Nye the Science Guy* had only 7 unrelated camera shifts, and the majority of shows had no unrelated camera shifts. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ( $t(26) = 7.917, p<.001$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=32.25, SD=12.81$ ) were compared to the unrelated shifts in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=2.25, SD=7.20$ ).

In terms of auditory changes, *Hip Hop Harry*, scored had relatively few ( $n=33$ ) as compared to *Blue's Clues*, which had the greatest number of auditory changes ( $n=112$ ). *Hip Hop Harry* dedicated an average of 41% of the show to active music, whereas *Rupert* had active music in 80% of the program. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ( $t(26) = 2.563, p<.017$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=32.88, SD=5.77$ ) were compared to the auditory changes in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=53.80, SD=22.56$ ). This does not support H2, indicating that auditory changes occur more often in other curricular programs than it does *Hip Hop Harry*.

In terms of active motion, *Hip Hop Harry* had the second greatest amount of time featuring characters in active motion with 43% of the show; however, *Puzzle Place* had the most amount of the program time (50%) dedicated to active motion. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ( $t(26) = 5.424, p<.001$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=43.13, SD=14.43$ ) were compared to the active motion in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=11.35, SD=13.85$ ). Thus, H3 is supported. The active motion in *Hip Hop Harry* is greater than that of other curricular shows.

In terms of active music, *Hip Hop Harry* was extremely close to the mean amount of active music with 41% of the show; however, *Rupert* had the most amount of the active music in the program (80%) and *Reading Rainbow* dedicated to the least amount to active music. T-tests did not indicate any significant differences ( $t(26) = 0.293, p<.772$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=40.50, SD=14.88$ ) were compared to the active music in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=42.95, SD=21.54$ ). This does not support H2, indicating that the amount of active music in *Hip Hop Harry* is the same as other curricular programs.

Many of the programs analyzed by McCollum and Bryant featured a great deal of active talking—16 of the 20 shows had active talking greater than 70% of the time. However, *Hip Hop Harry* had the lowest amount of active talking out of all of the shows presented with active talking only being used by the characters 50% of the time. T-tests indicated statistically significant differences ( $t(26) = 4.735, p<.001$ ) when the individual *Hip Hop Harry* shows ( $\mu=50.25, SD=17.71$ ) were compared to the active talking in the other curricular programs ( $\mu=81.85, SD=15.26$ ).

*Individual Curriculum-Based Programs' Pacing Indices and Scores*

<b>Program</b>	<b>Pacing Index</b>	<b>Camera Cuts (n)</b>	<b>Related Shifts (n)</b>	<b>Unrelated Shifts (n)</b>	<b>Auditory Changes (n)</b>	<b>Active Motion (%)</b>	<b>Active Music (%)</b>	<b>Active Talking (%)</b>
<i>Allegra's Window</i>	28.50	33	3	0	70	7	70	98
<i>Arthur</i>	31.10	61	5	2	60	1	28	82
<i>Barney</i>	31.00	60	2	0	63	10	63	90
<i>Big Comfy Couch</i>	27.05	36	6	0	60	19	35	94
<i>Bill Nye the Science Guy</i>	56.90	16	110	7	51	16	57	71
<i>Blue's Clues</i>	21.85	25	2	0	112	3	17	77
<i>Gullah Gullah Island</i>	37.00	65	12	0	80	18	70	94
<i>Hip Hop Harry</i>	44.83	102	15	32	33	43	41	50
<i>Kratts' Creatures</i>	26.95	46	30	0	33	1	70	65
<i>Lamb Chop's Play-Along</i>	28.70	37	1	2	45	0	48	93
<i>Magic School Bus</i>	28.95	58	5	0	83	14	32	77
<i>Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood</i>	14.95	12	3	0	25	5	47	53
<i>Puzzle Place</i>	23.10	17	3	0	60	50	34	97
<i>Reading Rainbow</i>	20.60	46	9	0	39	1	9	87
<i>Rupert</i>	35.55	80	8	0	61	20	80	63
<i>Sesame Street</i>	24.80	29	5	2	25	1	25	95
<i>Shining Time Station</i>	23.35	33	18	0	40	9	43	71
<i>Storytime</i>	15.75	1	24	0	20	0	11	98
<i>Where... Carmen San Diego?</i>	27.55	44	6	0	62	1	61	96
<i>Wishbone</i>	28.10	78	4	0	54	8	18	86

Table 4

## Discussion and Conclusions

Using television as a medium for education is essential in keeping children abreast of technology and exposing them to events, images, and scenarios that they may not normally encounter. As America's number one pastime, children spend more than

four hours a day viewing television programming—educational or not.<sup>73</sup> Although *Sesame Street* is by far the most consistent, curriculum-based television show that produces children’s educational programming that has been deemed superb; there is always room in the market for more shows—particularly ones that incorporate Hip Hop culture. *Hip Hop Harry* is a good case study to examine how curriculum-based television can incorporate the changing trends of our culture. Not only was the show extremely innovative, *Hip Hop Harry* created a buzz around young consumers all over the United States. Combining elements of popular Hip Hop music and dance with education elements allows young viewers—specifically young urban viewers—to fully immerse themselves into the program. Using Hip Hop music as a vessel for learning provides younger viewers with situations that they are more likely to face in the classroom or on the playground.

Although the ideal scenario for children watching television is for kids to be actively engaged with parents while watching it, this cannot always be accomplished. Whether a child is a latchkey kid, the parent is otherwise engaged, working, or perhaps not even present in the home, it is difficult to create the ideal watching scenario in every home. Even if a parent watches with the child, explains the lesson, and reiterates it throughout the day, they cannot always be an active participant. This is an unrealistic scenario—particularly in urban and lower income group where both parents are often working and unable to actively participate. Therefore, television must be sensitive to the needs of these children and incorporate popular styles of music and cultural cues that will create a better connection for learning. Children’s television must use the curricular advancements that programs such as *Blue’s Clues* and *Sesame Street* has offered, but also incorporate more ethnic cultural cues and push the musical boundaries. By doing so, it will create more active engagement for underrepresented, urban, and minority children.

Children naturally want to watch what entertains them, and often watch what an older sibling or family member has on. Some programs—particularly educational ones—may not seem as enticing to a young child as a program intended for an older counterpart. However, an educational program that is exciting, fun, and offers cultural cues—such as a giant rapping bear—that they understand may with a child in ways that a calm program, like *Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood*, would not.<sup>74</sup> For many children, a breakdancing bear with a cool, fun, and funky demeanor would not only be enjoyable to watch, but would also be extremely relatable as urban cultural references are presented in the program. By using these popular cultural references and making learning an active experience, the program creates an environment that is enticing to young children. By pulling from Hip Hop culture, music and dance, a child may

<sup>73</sup> Rachael Cox, Helen Skouteris, Daniela Dell’Aquila, Lousie L. Hardy, and Leonie Rutherford, “Television Viewing Behavior among Preschoolers: Implications for Public Health Recommendations,” *Journal of Pediatrics and Child Health* 49, no. 2 (2013), p. E103-E111.

<sup>74</sup> James F. McCollum and Jennings Bryant, “Pacing in Children’s Television Programming,” *Mass Communication and Society* 6, no. 2 (2003), 115-136.

become so engaged with the show that at the end of it, they could easily join in with singing and dancing along with the characters as they rap about their love for learning.

In comparison to some of the more traditional curriculum based children's television programming, *Hip Hop Harry* follows all of the intended educational goals per show and adds flavor and fun for children of all ethnicities. Like its counterparts on networks devoted to producing educational programming, *Hip Hop Harry* uses pacing techniques to garner children's attention and to present multiple messages. It could be argued that the faster pace of *Hip Hop Harry* may be directly related to the Hip Hop culture itself, however, further analysis suggests this pace was more likely due to the way the program was edited rather than the music and culture of Hip Hop itself. If this is true, then it stands to be argued that there is no real reason for Hip Hop music and culture to not be incorporated into children's television programming. Rather, it should be encouraged in order to connect with underrepresented and minority children, providing them with social cues to which they can relate. Additionally, if the program was edited to reduce the frenetic nature of the camera cuts and unrelated shifts, then the program could allow for greater retention of its educational content.

The consumption of Hip Hop music and culture has led to a transformation of American society – that allows for more open, inclusive and culturally diverse messages and frameworks.<sup>75</sup> So it is no surprise that this can also be seen in children's television. While shows such as *Barney* and *Blue's Clues* use nursery rhymes, with soothing melodies, *Hip Hop Harry* uses upbeat rhythms that engage the listener to become involved and drawn into the music.<sup>76</sup> This upbeat rhythm could, potentially, draw in an audience of young viewers that would not be interested in other educational programs because of its connection to the Hip Hop culture. Programs that are intended to connect with urban youth are not only beneficial to children of all socio-economic levels, but to less advantaged children as well. If a program can connect with urban children, and present entertainment they can identify with, it may be able to expose them to a variety of curricular lesson that can not only benefit them, but entertain them as well.

Even though other children's television programs are traditional in their use of slower paces, *Hip Hop Harry* utilizes multiple camera cuts and unrelated scenes shifts to add a unique element of excitement to the show. These angles and shift not only speed the pace, but add interesting visual elements as well. However, in terms of using more auditory changes, the directors of the show likely understand that they must give children time to process the educational messages, which can be seen in the comparable pacing elements to other shows. Although there does seem to be more active talking and auditory change in other curriculum-based shows, *Hip Hop Harry* has a higher pace in terms of camera cuts and actual action of the characters. It would be interesting to see which elements are the most consequential in children's attention and retention of information.

<sup>75</sup> Stout, *Tanning of America*

<sup>76</sup> Sandra L. Calvert, "Impact of Televised Songs on Children's and Young Adults' Memory of Verbally Presented Content," *Media Psychology* 3 (2001): 325-342.

By making the pace of the music more natural to the young urban viewer, it might be easier for them to connect with and attend to—as their orienting reflexes may be more attuned to the faster pace of Hip Hop music. The very nature of the music in *Hip Hop Harry* tells stories and asks for engagement from the audience, which serves as a community. The call and repeat nature of the lyrics not only emulates the Hip Hop music, but also traditional educational television.<sup>77</sup> Its lyrics, rhythm, and rhyme are a form of oral story-telling that creates additional emphasis on encouraging narrative forms and word play, and promoting children to listen to the message in the lyrics over just dancing to the beat.<sup>78</sup> The very nature of the Hip Hop music in *Hip Hop Harry* may allow the program to break through the static in the lives of urban viewers and emphasize the education message of the program itself.

However, one limitation to consider is that *Hip Hop Harry* is now in syndication and is no longer producing live or current shows. Although this does not affect the results of the pacing index, the nature of the syndication may indicate that it no longer reaches its urban audience. Because of this, the positive impact that the program could have on urban youth may never be fully understood or felt. Another factor to consider to truly understanding the pacing of *Hip Hop Harry* would be how individuals process rap and Hip Hop. Although the methods may be similar to how individuals learn through music, the pace and rhythmic patterns in rap and Hip Hop may affect how well an individual may retain and recall information. Thus, it is essential for children's programming to integrate Hip Hop pace, music, and culture into the shows to entertain and educate a segment of the population that children's programming does not normally attend. The combination of the pace and the curricular lessons give youths an opportunity to learn social cues that might not normally be available to them. The fact that the program is off the air only indicates a great need for educational programming specifically geared toward the urban youth.

Pacing is an excellent way to gauge how a show compares to other shows, and is a good benchmark for further research. However, the pacing model lacks depth for qualitative insight regarding the influence of Hip Hop on educational television and more in-depth research should be conducted. Additionally, pacing does not explain how well the child observing the show will retain information. Several factors, such as social influence, socioeconomic status, education level, parental interaction, creativity, and problem solving abilities should all be considered when determining how well a child might learn from the program. In addition, consideration should include the examination of children's television shows that are based off music and dance in relation to other shows that focus on words and images. Another possible area of research is to examine the actual level on enjoyment for children when watching shows with a faster pace than shows with a slower pace.

McCollum and Bryant's challenge by examining pacing and the show's popularity, as well as update the pacing index to determine if the developments of new

<sup>77</sup> Anderson, "Researching Blue's Clues: Viewing Behavior and Impact"

<sup>78</sup> Dimitriadis, "Hip Hop: Performance Narrative"

television programs are faster paced than shows from a decade before. Much research has examined this area in the past; the potential opportunities for research on this subject are endless. Although this study does examine a different type of program, other shows and media, such as edutainment games on the Internet, have yet to be explored—particularly in connection to the world of Hip Hop. In the future, further research should explore how the tanning of America is influencing children’s music, culture, and educational television. Although *Hip Hop Harry* is somewhat reminiscent of a big purple dinosaur, the program intrinsically treats kids differently. It does not pander to them, but rather speak to them in a language and nature that they can understand, connect with, and appreciate.

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