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My Spring 2026 sabbatical leave was dedicated to making substantial progress on bringing my book manuscript to fruition and determining the best publishing home. The manuscript is built on a multi-year ethnographic study of a critical debate apprenticeship i established for students in public high schools rooted in critical theory and critical literacies. The uninterrupted time allowed me to substantially revise the manuscript, deepen its theoretical and personal grounding, and pursue an unplanned line of research that has since become one of the most meaningful parts of the project. What follows describes both the work outlined in my Statement of Purpose and the additional directions the project took given the sustained time my sabbatical provided.

This spring, Dr. Ernest Morrell passed away. He had raised the funding that made the original project possible and was reading this manuscript closely as i revised it. Losing him changed how i approached writing.

I made substantial revisions to the book's chapters, which included rethinking structure, framing, and flow rather than making incremental edits. Alongside this revision work, i read extensively in scholarship published since i completed my original research, updating the literature review to reflect recent additions to the field. I also returned to my field notes, researcher memos, and student artifacts for another layer of analysis. Separately, i began unearthing thousands of hours of video footage from the original research, which i'm considering how to incorporate, whether into this book or into a future project of its own.

The sabbatical also gave me space to write more extensively about my own positionality and what drew me to this work. Whereas the manuscript had previously framed my orientation through a Hip-Hop and Ethnic Studies epistemology, i spent considerable time this spring reflecting on my Grunge roots as part of that same story. That work led me back to the first concert i ever attended: a free Rock the Vote show at Magnuson Park when i was twelve, headlined by artists including Cypress Hill and Pearl Jam. The show was organized in part to expose Ticketmaster's exploitation of touring artists and to mobilize young people as civic actors, including registering them to vote. As part of developing this framing, i reached out to two of the artists from that show. One agreed to an interview, though scheduling did not come together this spring given his touring commitments; the other artist began following my work on social media but has not yet agreed to an interview. I plan to revisit both as the manuscript moves toward completion and consider this for another article if it doesn't make it into the final manuscript.

Talking with the instructors i hired for the original Institute, people who have been part of this work with me since i started Hip-Hop Debate in Seattle in 2006, led me to add a new chapter about who staffed the program and why i chose them. The manuscript is built around one longitudinal critical ethnographic study in New York, but this chapter lets me weave in the broader twenty-year history behind it. The faculty i hired ranged from some of the top college debate coaches and debaters in the country to Hip-Hop recording and teaching artists with whom i had already worked and supported in becoming debate teachers; what they shared was fluency in ethnic studies and in the performance-based, Hip-Hop-inflected curriculum the project was built around. This chapter also makes room for the less visible, harder parts of the work: covering a student's expenses out of my own pocket when they faced eviction, making sure students had food and subway fare, coordinating with campus police so they understood why our students were there, and working with facilities and dining staff to get rooms, tech, and meals in place. None of this appeared in the original narrative, but it was as much a part of building the project as anything else.

One of the most meaningful additions to the book was not part of my original proposal: scheduling follow-up interviews with several of the young people who participated in the original debate apprenticeship research at the heart of the manuscript. They were teenagers just entering college when i last spoke with them about the book. Now, they have graduate degrees, coach debate, and are authors and educators. Coordinating these interviews takes real effort, since most participants are now early-career professionals with limited flexibility over their schedules, so this work is on-going. Their reflections on how the apprenticeship shaped their own critical literacies will add a long-term, participant-driven perspective the book has not had until now.

Revisiting this research also led me to revise the syllabi in my own courses to more directly incorporate the book's findings. I also spent time reflecting on how this work has already been used in the classroom over the years, both in my own teaching and by former students who have drawn on it, a dimension of the project's reach that had not occurred to me to document until this semester.

Another part of this sabbatical was spent determining the best publishing home for the manuscript, in conversation with acquisition editors and colleagues involved in the original research. Teachers College Press, with whom i had been in early conversation, shared that Hip-Hop education already makes up a substantial part of their list and recommended Routledge as a stronger fit for this project. Conversations with colleagues who have published widely also sharpened what i was looking for: i wanted this book to reach readers well beyond current English teachers, professors, or debate coaches, and to read with the pace of narrative nonfiction rather than academic prose. After weighing format, audience, and fit across these options, i narrowed my focus to

two presses: Beacon Press and Routledge. Determining the right fit took longer than i anticipated, but it has resulted in a stronger, more targeted submission than moving forward with the first available option would have.

This sabbatical gave me more than the time to finish revising a manuscript; it gave me room to notice what the project could become once i wasn't managing it around a full teaching and service load. I am grateful to Sonoma State for that time, and i return to campus with a stronger, more personal book and a clearer path to publication.